



**Meeting:** Northeast PARC Meeting

**Date:** September 29-30, 1999

**Location:** Wetlands Institute - Stone Harbor, NJ

## Proceedings

### Meeting Minutes Day 1, Wednesday, September 29, 1999

Facilitator: Alison Haskell (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Start-up Committee: Alison Haskell (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Eric Stiles (NJ Div. Fish, Game and Wildlife) and Chris Raithel (RI Div. Fish, Wildlife and Estuarine Resources)

The meeting began at approximately 1:20 p.m. with 45 participants (attendance list attached). The facilitator, Alison Haskell, introduced Dr. Larry Niles, Chief, NJ Div. Fish, Game and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program. Larry welcomed the group and gave a brief description of his involvement with the Northeast Partners in Flight for which he has chaired.

Alison Haskell introduced Dr. Whit Gibbons from Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, Georgia. Whit gave an informative and enthusiastic slide presentation on PARC's mission, structure and goals in relation to herp conservation. He stated PARC is not set-up to establish policies, and he discussed the importance of people becoming educated, aware and familiar with amphibians and reptiles. Whit also explained how PARC differs from other groups; for example PARC includes amphibians and reptiles, it is habitat focused, and PARC involves collaboration among state agencies, federal agencies, non-governmental agencies, universities and the private sector. Whit discussed PARC priorities such as establishing a web-based database and information for all amphibian and reptiles, providing broad-based education particularly for children, and developing fellowships or internships. He acknowledged the importance of land developers and managers in herp conservation, and expressed the need for them to become involved with PARC. He also discussed potential funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Following Whit Gibbons overview of PARC, Eric Stiles introduced representatives from the working groups (formed at the Atlanta Georgia meeting (June 2, 1999)) who subsequently provided summaries and status updates.

-The summary of the "**Monitoring**" group was presented by Eric Stiles, NJ Fish, Game and Wildlife. He indicated that the group was renamed Inventory & Monitoring Group. The mission of this group is to "facilitate and coordinate the collection and dissemination of inventory and monitoring data for use in conservation of amphibians and reptiles". They discussed the issue of how, why and what to monitor. How to Monitor included (a) providing centralized information source (www site), (b) identifying comparable techniques, compile and distribute them, (c) compilation of guidelines for when and how long to monitor and inventory, (d) Criteria for site selection, (e) criteria for selecting which species to monitor at varying spatial scales. Why Monitor included (a)

herpetofauna are bio-indicators to the quality of the worldwide environment, which has direct implications for humans, (b) continued presence of herpetofauna in North American and worldwide contributed to the maintenance of biological diversity, (c) baseline data are necessary to use in identifying trends, stabilities, and problems associated with herpetofaunal populations and their habitats. What to monitor included animal parameters, environmental - habitat loss, invasives, commercialization, toxic pollution, disease/parasites, and global climate change. The framework for monitoring methods are broad-based inventory, select species and methods, and choose spatial and temporal scale. The group identified a priority task of develop techniques and identify existing programs.

- Dr. Joseph Mitchell, University of Richmond, presented a summary of the "**Management**" group. Habitat management includes borders, buffers, ecosystem management, education of managers, state managers and national managers. Dr. Mitchell stressed the importance of creating a national database on amphibians and reptiles. The goals of the "Management" group were to (a) define regional structure, (b) identify managers practices and issues, (c) list of managers in a directory, (d) list of projects that are currently taking place, (e) collect as many reports/publications on amphibians and reptiles as possible.

- Laura Herbeck, U.S. Forest Service, presented the summary of the "**Research**" group. At the Atlanta meeting, the group agreed to (a) work on a PARC Symposium to be held in Mexico, June, 2000, (b) work on a GIS database - unified with other databases from other agencies, states, private, etc., (c) PARC research e-mail list serve. Goals of the Research Group were to (a) establish research priorities, (b) organize a research symposium, (c) adopt an interdisciplinary approach, (d) establish funding for population level research, (e) compile a state-by-states species list and status, (f) encourage amateur involvement - get the public involved, (g) research wetland and upland conservation for amphibians and reptiles.

- A summary of "**Policy, Trade, and Regulations**" group was presented by Sherry Krest, USFWS-DEC. This group is in the process of planning a November, 1999 meeting to be held at Merrit Island National Wildlife Refuge, Florida. This is a list of recommendations this group came up with at the meeting in Atlanta, GA.

Invasive Species: 1) develop a database on amphibians and reptiles, 2) make policy recommendations to the U.S. Invasive Species Policy Council, 3) facilitate state communication, cooperation regarding guidelines for conserving amphibians and reptiles using best management practices, 4) more use of risk assessments. Disease and Parasitism: 1) coordinate with medical and veterinary professionals to better understand and address the issues. Habitat Loss/Degradation: (a) suggests that the Clean ter Act needs to be revised to address a number of herp-related concerns, and (b) work toward conservation goals through incentives such as a Herp Habitat Incentive Program. Toxic Pollutants: (a) establish a multi-level, multi-scale effort to collect agriculture and forestry BMPs on pollution, (b) develop policies on "herp criteria" for pesticides, (c) develop "herp friendly" Integrated Pest Management guidelines, (d) incorporate Confined Animal Feeding Operations into the Clean Water Act. Use / Commercialization: (a) regulations need to be based on sound science and need to have the input from law enforcement personnel, (b) model

herp regulations need to be developed by PARC that states could then use as a regulatory model, (c) animal welfare policies that are specific to amphibians and reptiles need to be developed, (d) regulations related to use need to be coordinated among states and agencies, (e) a federal and state trade database is needed, (f) more support of law enforcement is essential, (g) any use of herps must be sustainable - therefore sustainable use policies are absolutely critical. The goal of PTR is to incorporate amphibians and reptiles into landscaping policies.

- Eric Stiles, NJ Div. Fish, Game & Wildlife, summarized the status of the "**Education/Outreach**" group, as we were unable to find someone from the committee that also resides in the northeastern states. A meeting is scheduled for April, 2000. Education/Outreach Goals: Goals need to be set by first answering the following questions and requirements: what is the message PARC wants address, do we need brochures, who/what input from other groups/organizations and identify target audience.

Following the Committee status updates, Alison Haskell, used the PARC Posters that were available at the Atlanta meeting to provide an overview of the national PARC mission, structure, and goals. The PARC Mission Statement was read to the group: "To conserve amphibians, reptiles and their habitats as integral parts of our ecosystem and culture through proactive and coordinated public/private partnerships." A lengthy group discussion was held regarding the wording of the PARC Mission Statement and if it should be changed to reflect the NE PARC group. The overwhelming consensus among the group was that the national PARC Mission Statement did not need to be changed for the needs of the NE PARC goals. A vote was taken; it was unanimous to adopt the PARC Mission Statement for the NE Group.

## Meeting Minutes Day 2, Wednesday, September 29, 1999

The last part of the meeting involved a brainstorming session where the group defined priority action items, discussed structure, established the next meeting location and chairpersons, and identified an action plan for FY 2000. The session involved a listing of NE PARC action items, a narrowing of these items by eliminating duplicate or combining similar ideas, lumping items into categories of (a) Research, (b) Monitoring/Inventory, (c) Information/Education, (d) Policy/Trade/Regulations, (e) Habitat Management, and (f) All.

The results of the brainstorming session are "**Northeast PARC Priority Action List**", "**Northeast Action Plan for FY 2000**", and the next meeting will be hosted in NY by Al Breisch, NY DEC and chaired by Al, Eric Stiles, and Chris Raithel.

### **NORTHEAST PARC PRIORITY LIST** (generated at Stone Harbor, NJ, September 29-30, 1999)

1. Protect, conserve, restore and mitigate habitat fragmentation (HM)
  - Designate specific herp habitat or management targets and dates for the NE.
2. Guidelines for standard sampling techniques and certification criteria for consultants (PTR)
3. Promote public awareness of conservation issues (IE)
  - Popularize herp declines
  - Educate policy makers on herp declines
  - Promote public awareness of conservation issues
4. Funding sources (All)
5. Create opportunities for students and volunteers to help (All)

6. Identify landscape attributes necessary to support metapopulations (R)
7. Develop model state herp regulations (PTR)
8. Research - Study - Assess common species (R)
9. Assess vulnerability of species to commercialization (R)
  - Evaluate impacts of pet trade on native herps
10. Identify regional threats to herp populations (R)
  - Identify and understand reasons for decline
11. Understand what's out there (inventory, status, assessment) (M)
12. Assess biological characteristics that make species vulnerable (R)
  - Species status - a risk assessment
13. Develop BMPs (HM)
  - Landowners
  - Land planners
  - Land managers
  - Develop recommendations for private landowners
14. Coordinate herp monitoring among States (M)
  - Develop and maintain working relationships with herpetocultural community

[Note: HM=Habitat Management; PTR=Policy, Trade and Regulation; IE=Information/Education; R=Research; M=Monitoring; ALL=all of the aforementioned categories]

#### NORTHEAST PARC ACTION PLAN FY 2000

ACTION	TIME FRAME	WHO
Avoid Duplication - Find out what's already being done by national working groups to avoid duplication of effort, and to share northeast regional expertise and ideas	November 30, 1999	Eric Stiles
Meeting Summary - Summarize Northeast Regional PARC meeting outcomes and share information with National PARC	November 30, 1999	Alison Haskell, Eric Stiles, and Terry Terry
Northeast Regional PARC Structure - Do we need to define it? Options are several: stay as entire group or split into working groups? Interim recommendation involved a team "leader(s)", stay as a large group but with a point-person for various topics to maintain focus on ideas and serve as a liaison with national PARC.	Deferred for Next Meeting	NA
Recommendations on standardizing state/federal "listing"; Review the Northeast Wildlife Diversity and Endangered Species Technical Committee document on herps	Deferred for Next Meeting	NA
Develop Model State Herp Regulations using minimum standards (include technical advice regarding development of herp protection; to provide a model as support for states with weak legislation; national model may be best route to connect states and regions)	Outline for Next Meeting	Scott Smith, Don Schwab, Tom French, Dave Jenkins, and Al Breisch
Priority List of Northeast PARC Goals and Tasks (use priority list generated at Stone Harbor meeting)	First Draft December 31	Chris Raitel, Scott Melvin, and Bob Zappalarti
Communication - How will the group share information and	Email	Sam Droege's

distribute ideas between states, regions and national PARC? Need National Link, Web Site, etc	Communication - October 31	Crew; aka Gideon the marathon racer and Linda Weir
Northeast Species List - Checklist for the region with status information, including whether species is exotic or native; Use information from Northeast Wildlife Diversity and Endangered Species Technical Committee document	States must submit information to AI by October 31; AI will prepare draft document by January 1, 2000	AI Breisch
Herp Directory - state listing of important contacts and related on-going herp research, monitoring, and status review efforts	Status Update Next Meeting	Suzi Fowle and Sam Droege