

## **The Spring 2000 NE PARC Meeting**

### **NEPARC 2000 Meeting Minutes – Spring Meeting**

**Location:** Trapps Gateway Interpretive Center, Mohonk Preserve in New Paltz, N.Y.

**Day 1: Wednesday, March 8, 2000**

#### **Welcome**

- Gerry Barnhart (Director, NY State DEC?) – Positively encouraged our work, and emphasized cultural importance of herps as symbols and resources used by humans in past
- Al Breisch

#### **Introductions**

Thirty-nine attendees: James Beemer, Betty Boomer, Robert Brooks, Carrie Brown, Helen Czech, Phillip deMaynadier, Carol Drummond, Raymond Farrell, Mark Ferguson, John Fitzpatrick, Suzie Fowle, Ann Guenther, Todd Hunsinger, Paul Huth, Charles Innis, Liz Johnson, Steve Joule, Robin Jung, Michael Kallaji, Ted Kerpez, Sherry Krest, Gideon Lachman, Margaret Liszka, Gylla MacGregor, Stafford Madison, Laura Mazanti, Ed McGowan, J. M. McLaughlin, John Ozard, E. Anne Poole, Chris Raithel, Don Schwab, Scott Smith, Steve Sykes, John Thompson, Julie Victoria, Chris Vitale, Linda Weir, Robert Zappalorti

#### **Progress Reports on NJ Action Items**

##### **1. Meeting Summary - Eric Stiles**

PARC first meeting was held in June 1999

NE PARC was the first Regional Meeting within PARC in October 1999

Attendees included state and federal agency herpetologists, but were missing herpetological club and pet trade people

Priorities set by PARC have been adopted by NFWF (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) for funding priorities (contact: Katie Distler)

##### **2. Communications – Linda Weir and Gideon Lachman**

Web site – Go to PARC site – <http://www.parcplace.org/> and click on NE link

On the Web site, you can join the PARC and NE PARC list servers

On NE PARC web site are listed Problem Statement, Our Mission, Who are the NE PARC?, Summary of NJ Meeting, and links to various other web sites dealing with

herps in the NE region

Listserver for NE PARC – To join, go to the NE PARC Web site or contact Linda Weir ( [naamp@usgs.gov](mailto:naamp@usgs.gov) )

Currently, there are 60 subscribers to the NE PARC listserver

If you have any changes you would like to make to the Web Site, contact Gideon Lachman ( [Frogwatch@usgs.gov](mailto:Frogwatch@usgs.gov) ) or to the Listserver, contact Linda Weir ( [naamp@usgs.gov](mailto:naamp@usgs.gov) )

There was some discussion concerning cross postings on the NE PARC listserver (i.e., that you would receive the same message repeatedly from several listservers). There have been 40 emails so far since October 1999 on the NE PARC listserver, and very few messages have duplicated messages found on other related listservers (e.g., amp, amphibiandecline, etc.), so it doesn't seem to be a big problem now.

### 3. **Avoid Duplication – Eric Stiles**

Within National PARC there are several subgroups, including Inventory and Monitoring, Policy Trade and Regulations, Research, and Education. There are also now Regional PARC groups, including the NE, Midwest, SE, etc.

The first **PARC Education** meeting will be held April 14-15 in St. Paul, MN, organized by Stafford Madison. Todd Hunsinger brought up the issue that TV shows are condoning inappropriate capture of sensitive reptiles such as monitor lizards, and that this should be addressed by PARC.

The **Policy, Trade and Regulations** Subgroup (Allison Haskell) of PARC has been the most active to date. The main project has been to review existing State and Federal Regulations. They are currently drafting a sustainable use policy, policies on invasive species, captive breeding, etc.

**Research and Inventory** and **Monitoring** Subgroups will be meeting at the SSAR/ASIH Meeting in June in La Paz Mexico. Currently, Erin Muths and Steve Bennett received a grant to establish a database for reptiles covering all research and inventory and monitoring efforts on reptiles in the US (?).

The Steering Committee for PARC (10 members) will review the NE PARC progress in late March 2000.

There was concern that PARC would become too fragmented (Partners in Flight was mentioned as an example of splitting leading to ineffectual operation).

### 4. **State Model Herp Regulations – Scott Smith**

Scott handed out “Annotated Outline for Model State Herptile Regulations.”  
Presented 16 points.

Some discussion of TFM used as lampricide killing a thousand mudpuppies in Lake Champlain, NY. In NY, mudpuppy is not T & E, so has no protection per se. Review of Aquatic Nuisance Control Permit by State T & E would be only recourse to prevent similar problems in future.

Some discussion of CARA funds to state nongame agencies.

Discussed need for educating the public about state herp regulations.

#### 5. **Priority List – Chris Raithel**

Chris handed out “Draft Outline for NEPARC Action Plan.” Requested that attendees vote next morning on which three items on the handout should be top priority for 1) PARC objectives and 2) funding. He encouraged attendees to write in other ideas if they were not included in the Action Plan list. His opinion was that PARC should focus on species conservation issues rather than the existing national committee structures, which he thinks fragments the mission.

Stated that herps should not be protected simply for their cultural and resource benefits to humans, but more so for their aesthetics and existence (i.e., because they are cool).

Stated that Pennsylvania considers herps bait.

#### 6. **PARC Information – Al Breisch**

Handed out PARC fact sheets and booklet as well as the NE Herp Species Lists. Was concerned that listing species as “unprotected” might be a problem. Some discussion as to who this information would be shared with and how (web site?). List was compiled by consulting top herpetologists at each state within the NE region, and scientific names conform to the SSAR checklist. He pointed out some problems with state lists (e.g., VA lists *Crotalus horridus* as Cane brake rattle snake). He requested that we start identifying threats to the species.

#### 7. **Herp Directory – Suzie Fowle**

NE Directory currently houses 206 names from over 115 agencies and organizations. States lacking adequate participation include CT (only 2), PA (3), VA (4), and WV (2). Suggestions on how to increase membership included sending an email to all SSAR members to inquire whether they would be interested in joining PARC (or NE PARC). Suzie pointed out that those in charge of managing lands should be a prime target for the Directory.

Suzie and Eric will send out a cover letter to all those who had previously submitted names to the Directory. The letter will explain PARC, describe uses of the Directory (e.g., ask if it is OK if other researchers may contact them for further information), ask for confirmation of names they submitted earlier, and request additional information on which species or genera they work with, etc. The Directory will remain internally exclusive and for the time being will not be placed on the NE PARC web site.

## 8. Discussion of Herp Vulnerabilities

Chris Raithel brought up the point that while T&E species are protected, some species that are not rare, threatened or endangered can be extremely vulnerable to anthropogenic or environmental factors and need protection (i.e., the rarest are not always the most vulnerable). He requested that we work on identifying which herps are the most vulnerable in the NE region. Then, these species should be targeted for monitoring and conservation (e.g., habitat protection) efforts. He brought up the necessity for ecosystem management, but cautioned that no one knows how to do it. We first need a better understanding of habitats used by the species in the NE and how we can protect those habitats (e.g., helping block developers at local level) and help design preserves. He mentioned that viable red-spotted newt populations require at least 12 acres and that to truly protect a vernal pool, you need to protect 1,000 acres. GAP analyses have already been conducted for some states in the NE, which should be utilized. In addition, NE PARC should come up with a spreadsheet listing NE herp species and vulnerability categories based on life history traits, demographic parameters, area sensitivity, habitat specialization, limiting factors, threats, etc. (see below).

## Day 2: Thursday, March 9, 2000

### Introduction

- Al Breisch

### Uses of Species List – Board Categories

- Identifying species as indicators of forestry practices, ecosystem health, stream quality (e.g., riparian width)
- Species distribution, presence/absence, richness, edge of range
- Phillip deMaynadier suggested generating a list of natural history traits
- Chris Raith suggested developing National Habitat Guidelines

## **Vulnerability**

1. Toxicity – contaminants – mosquito control, TFM, rotenone
2. Road mortality
3. Habitat fragmentation - e.g., red-spotted newt
4. Demography issues – long time to reach sexual maturity, low fecundity
5. Habitat specialists – narrow niche breadth
6. Collection pressure for pet trade – e.g., box turtle
7. Collection pressure from harvesting (for food or bait) – e.g., snapping turtle, diamondback terrapin
8. Amount of protected land for particular species
9. Water quality sensitivity
10. Area-sensitivity (species requiring large home ranges and territories)
11. Life history habitat requirements (e.g., need certain sized acre forest for hibernation and vernal pool for breeding)
12. Genetic isolation and metapopulation dynamics – e.g., wood frogs
13. Hybridization
14. Impact of exotics on native species
15. Persecution (e.g., rattlesnakes)
16. Restoration Potential – Risk Assessment Category
17. Diseases and Parasites – e.g., Salmonella (human impacts as well)

## **Habitat Classification for Species**

18. GAP analysis – use Atlas data with GIS soil, slope, vegetation maps
19. Amount of habitat needed - Home range, territory size, dispersal distance

## **Accepted Survey Techniques**

## **Published and Unpublished (Gray literature) References for Amphibian and Reptile Species in the Northeast**

Some discussion that literature must be amassed dealing with each of these issues in relation to each species in the NE. Following this, categories or quantitative assessment of vulnerability should be assigned to each species.

In species list, what does PROTECTED mean? In CT, VT, VA, NY and ME, species of special concern do not have legal protection. These species should probably be listed as W for watch list (special concern but not legally protected) or as RT for regulated take instead with H, F, T license. In Massachusetts, species of special concern are legally protected. Under Federal, be sure to put CITES designations in the Species List Table.

## **Priority List for Funding and National PARC and NE PARC Objectives**

### **1. National**

- C1 got 15 votes – engage public regarding herp conservation issues
- D1 got 14 votes – protect existing habitat
- D2 got 9 votes - develop strategies to prevent/mitigate habitat fragmentation
- A2 got 9 votes - coordinate inventory and monitoring of reptiles and amphibians among states
- Other National Write-ins other than those on Chris' list – One vote each
  - Find, get and distribute \$ to implement state actions
  - Act as a clearinghouse for herp info
  - Work on national and international herp laws
  - Research/assess mitigation and restored wetlands

### **2. Funding**

- D1 got 30 votes – protect existing habitat (management, identifying important lands for herps, facilitating acquisition, promoting additional \$ for land purchases) e.g., CARA could promote and request funding for these issues for PARC
- C1 got 13 votes - engage public regarding herp conservation issues and needs (perhaps F1, F2 should be under this)
- B1 got 11 votes – Conduct risk assessment of species and habitats in NE region – assess characteristics of species which contribute to population vulnerability
- B2 got 5 votes - Identify threats to populations in the NE region

Discussion occurred about A (Developing Baseline Inventories and Monitoring for NE Species). A (A1-A5) as an entire category got 12 votes – inventory and monitoring was identified as an important National Priority but then fell through the cracks in terms of the Funding vote.

Is NE PARC going to go out to get grants?

## **State and Federal Herptile Model Regulations**

Email comments on State Model Herp Regulations handout to Scott Smith (sasmith@dnr.state.md.us)

Scott and others will send Draft up to National PARC Meeting after incorporating comments from NE PARC members – eventually our “State” regulations would be used for a “National” Model for Herp Regulations

## **Potentially Affected Individuals – Carol will organize this effort!**

*Targets (T)*

*Include in Meetings (PARC)*

- Herpetological Societies (e.g., Maryland Herpetological Society) – Invite Presidents/Officers to PARC – Suzie Fowle
- Educators (Environmental Education, Science Education) – T (select a few points of contact for PARC) – Stafford Madison
- National Association of Outdoor Writers – one contact for PARC - Anne Poole
- Pet trade clubs – Herpetoculturalist clubs
- Conservation/Environmental Commissions - T
- Pet Trade Industry Groups – PIJAC (Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council) - T
- Zoo and Aquarium (Association of Zoo and Aquarium)
- Veterinarians – Charles Innis
- Environmental Consultants – all independent – our representative is Herpetological Associates (Bob)
- Permit Administrators – Suzie’s Directory – Invite to when discuss this issue at next meeting - PARC
- Land Use Regulators (e.g., wetland permit reviewers, survey protocols) – Eric Stiles will invite Larry from NJ
- Army Corps of Engineers – wetland permitting process – T e.g., New England District Office – Stafford, Jim
- Legislators and Elected Officials
- Farm Bureau, NRCS – each state biologist for NRCS – Suzie’s Directory - PARC e.g., NJ – Tim Dunn
- Academia – Suzie’s Directory - PARC
- Fisheries Biologists – T – In PA, amphibians are considered to be fish
- Utility Companies – T
- Department of Transportation - T
- Public and Private Foresters – T – Organization for Sustainable Forestry Practices - Suzie’s Directory, Bob Brooks
- (rbrooks@forwild.umass.edu) and Carol Drummond, Society of American Foresters (SAF) – Don Schwab
- Timber Industries
- Park and Refuge Managers (e.g., City and Regional Park Planners) – T – Sherry will contact DC representative
- Rattle snake roundup organizers – T
- Humane Societies
- Society of Wetland Scientists – Chris
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) – Steve Joule
- Environmental Lawyers – T – John Nolan
- Non-governmental organizations (e.g., Audubon – to protect wetlands, etc.). – T - Suzie’s Directory
- Environmental Defense Fund – Scott Smith
- Law Enforcement Associations – T e.g., NE FWS has a law enforcement meeting

- once a year
- National Association of Law Enforcement Conservation Officers – one person – John Fitzpatrick
  - Animal Control Officers – T – Chris Raith
  - Agricultural Associations (e.g., cranberry bogs – Ocean Spray) – T - Organic farms - Ed
  - Land Trust Associations – Land Trust Alliance – T – different people know individuals at local levels
  - Lake and River and Watershed and Wetland Associations and Organizations – T
  - Water Quality Specialist - T
  - State Tributary Teams, Stream Teams
  - Landscape Architects - T
  - Wildlife Rehabilitators – National Organization - Mick
  - Media

Result-oriented application

More grass roots action

NE PARC State outreach

### **Organizational Structure**

No dues, officials, no official membership - Open to anyone

Committees – 1-2 representatives to focus on specific topics between meetings

Invite speakers to address certain topics at meetings (e.g., pet trade focus, cranberry bog operations, state regs, how to best protect vernal pools from development or do restored or created wetlands really substitute for real wetlands?)

e.g., Law Enforcement for ½ day, Habitat Requirements for ½ day

OR split out into workshops or breakout groups (and report back)

### **Wrap Up and Action Plan**

Future Meetings

Day 1 – Start at Noon

## Day 3 – End at Noon

- Group needs an Annual Chair – Host of Meeting should be the annual chair
- Host Meeting
- Ensuring Continuity on Action Plans between Meetings (friendly reminders)
- Previous host individuals help current hosts in setting up meeting (carry-over)
- Official Contact with National PARC – Update web site with announcements, meetings, communication (Eric)

### **Target Actions**

1. Directory – Send List to sources with cover letter describing how directory will be used. Recipients must confirm information (Timeline – send-out end of March – due early August) – Suzie and Eric
2. Meeting Notes will be sent out by listserver to NE PARC members on 3/9/2000. Comments on the minutes are due back 24 March! After incorporating edits/comments, we will post the minutes on the Web - Robin
3. Action Plan – who's responsible for what and when it's due – also to be completed by 24 March - Linda
4. Participants (PAIs) to Target or include in PARC – send out PARC glossy handout to those targeted – Due date by next meeting - Carol
5. Ideas for Education Projects and Tasks – send ideas to Stafford Madison (Madison.Stafford@epa.gov) by 27 March - Stafford
6. Regulations – Allison Haskell needs information by 28 March prior to Policy Subgroup Meeting – Comments due to Scott Smith (sasmith@dnr.state.md.us) by 20 March 2000.
7. Species List Continued Work – Al Breisch
8. Survey and compile links to all on-line bibliography sources on amphibians and reptiles on the web already available – put brief description of what the bibliography is about and link to it – determine missing topics covered by bibliography lists - Send information to Gideon Lachman (frogwatch@usgs.gov) to link on the NE PARC web
9. Charles mentioned that pet trade is increasing – Herp Regs should be a priority for next meeting

## **Next Meeting**

- USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
- Six Months or One Year? Vote – Six months won – October probably the best month
- Two or three day meeting?
- Weekend or week day or hybrid? Weekend wins
- Hybrid – Friday afternoon wrap-up start, real meeting starts Saturday, ends Sunday afternoon
- One meeting a year is a weekend meeting, one meeting a year is during the week