



NORTHEAST PARTNERS IN AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION

2006 Annual Meeting

Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, Burlington, Connecticut

August 15th – 17th, 2006

2006 MEETING MINUTES

August 15th: Day One

Welcome Messages

Welcome from Connecticut - Ed Parker, Bureau Chief (Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection)

- Discussed State Agencies Comprehensive Wildlife Plans - address all native taxa in the plans
- Opportunities to deal with herps
- Message from Congress, looking for habitat-oriented projects and regional opportunities
- Find a way to convince people to get broad-based habitat projects in order to get public support
- Encourage volunteerism to work to get broad-ranging data

Julie Victoria (CT – DEP)

- Welcomes attendees and gives rundown of agenda and activities
- Announcement of a Silent Auction, the proceeds will be used to reduce registration fees for students to attend future NEPARC meetings and support co-chair travel to national PARC meetings.

Welcome from NEPARC Co-Chairs - Scott Smith (MD-DNR) & Mike Marchand (NH-FGD)

- Introduction of Steering Committee – Scott Smith
 - Al Breisch (New York DEC-Div. of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources)
 - John Kleopfer (Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries)
 - Mary Beth Kolozsvary (New York State Biodiversity Research Institute)
 - Stafford Madison (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
 - Mike Marchand (NEPARC co-chair, New Hampshire Fish & Game)
 - Joe Mitchell (University of Richmond)
 - Scott Smith (NEPARC co-chair, Maryland DNR-Wildlife & Heritage)
 - Joel Snodgrass (Towson University)
 - Valorie Titus (Binghamton University)
 - Julie Victoria (2006 NEPARC Meeting Host, Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection)
 - Linda Weir (USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center)
- What is NEPARC/PARC? – Mike Marchand
 - Structure and goals of NEPARC
 - Went over mission statement:
 - NEPARC's goal is to conserve amphibians, reptiles and their habitats as integral parts of our ecosystem and culture through proactive and coordinated public/private partnerships in the Northeast
 - 13 states and District of Columbia, number of different groups involved
 - 2 co-chairs, meeting host, working groups, webmaster
 - Steering committee, began last year, looking for new members to join in
 - Propose plan for a NEPARC Editorial Board, to review and approve NEPARC products



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- Southeast PARC initiated 2006
- Examples of products
 - Model herp regulations
 - Risk assessment
 - Website
 - Northeast species list
 - NEPARC symposia
 - Conservation Issues for Reptiles and Amphibians Symposium at Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society in 2001
 - Direct and Indirect Effects of Roads on Amphibians and Reptiles at the Northeast Natural History Conference in 2006
 - Box turtle working group's video and factsheet
 - Northeast Habitat Management Guidelines (in press)
- Issue and action focused
- Introductions around the room

National PARC Update – Presentation by Priya Nanjappa Mitchell (PARC State Agencies Coordinator) and Rick Bennett (PARC National Steering Committee)

- Conservation of herpetofauna
- Connect and complement local, regional, and national efforts to conserve amphibians and reptiles
- Who is PARC?
- Organizational structure, five regions
- Flow chart of PARC's Joint National Steering Committee organizational structure
- Mission statement of PARC
 - What does this really mean?
- What makes PARC unique?
 - PARC is inclusive
 - Governmental and private sectors
 - Anyone interested
- Six major challenges
 - Habitat alteration and loss
 - Disease and parasites
 - Pollutants
 - Climate change
 - Unsustainable use
 - Invasive species
 - What are we doing?
 - Habitat Management Guidelines (HMG's)- guidelines to help land managers to make better decisions
 - Peer-reviewed
 - Maximizing compatibility with other land uses
 - Based on sound science
 - Southeast guides are available, Northeast guide is in press with other regions coming soon
 - Inventory and Monitoring Handbook



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- Guidance for biologists and land managers wishing to conduct inventory and monitoring
 - Peer-recommended techniques
 - Forest service funded
 - "rapid" vs. "comprehensive"
 - Model state regs
 - National product, developed from initial Northeast work
 - Example of a regional project becoming a national project
 - Trainings (HMG's)
 - Conservation status summaries
 - Fundraising
 - Infrastructural development
- Other challenges? Other tools?
- Funding
 - Federal funding supports:
 - Federal Agencies coordinator
 - PARC products
 - Infrastructural development
 - State funding supports:
 - State agencies coordinator
 - PARC products
 - About 30 states have donated nearly \$50K
 - Discretionary
 - Donations, products proceeds, and royalties
- Recent and Upcoming Meetings
 - Alignment workshop
 - 8-10 August, see below for more details
 - NEPARC (now)
 - Midwest PARC (Carbondale, IL)
 - 7-9 September
- Alignment meeting
 - Discussing and defining purpose of PARC
 - We're on the right track
 - Bottom up organization
 - Regional working groups
 - Issues? What are we working on?
 - What do we see as concerns?
 - Emphasis on tools and education/training
 - Around 45 people at the meeting
 - Encourage to stay engaged with the national groups, as well as with local groups
 - Top critical things to do over the next few years
 - Develop strategic plan
 - State wildlife plans- letter writing campaigns from SWG's
 - Outreach
 - Funding, establish a 501 (c) 3 status organization in support of PARC, but separate from PARC -- Friends of PARC



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Spatial and Temporal Patterns of Amphibian Disease in Acadia National Park Wetlands - Presentation by Megan Gahl (University of Maine)

- Background on disease
- Class 1: things we understand (Habitat Loss, introduced species, overexploitation)
- Class 2: things we don't understand as well (disease, contaminants, climate change)
- Chytridiomycosis- linked with decline
- 6 major diseases
- Chytridiomycosis
 - Doesn't affect animal until reaches metamorphosis
 - Zoosporangia- in skin of adult amphibian
 - A keratin seeking fungus
 - Sloughing of skin, thickened skin
 - Mostly fatal
- Saprolegnia spp.
 - Aquatic decomposers
 - Fungus
 - 2 or 3 different species can be found on egg masses
- Ranavirus
 - Red legs is a secondary infection by Aeromonas bacteria (not ranavirus)
 - Affects the liver, therefore, very little outward sign of infection
 - Replicated inside the liver- kills the cells
- Ichthyophonus
 - Mesomycete- infects the muscle of the organism
- Perkinsus-like organism
 - Only been known a few years, not yet named
 - Protozoan
 - Takes over the liver
 - Whitened, enlarged livers
- Acadia National Park, Maine
 - Many larval die-off events
 - Die off events varied in location year after year on the island
 - Most due to ranavirus
 - Affected 4 spp of amphibian (RACAT, RAEL, RASY, PSCR)
 - Not seeing extinctions in the Park--Populations are fluctuating, but not declining
 - Die-offs in 2001 and 2002
- Research objectives
 - Health screenings
 - Historical reports
 - USGS- National Wildlife Health Center
 - Field Health Screenings
 - Activity- major cue
 - Skin
 - Gross physical
 - Other indicators
 - Minimizing disease spread
 - Bleaching solution- 10% medical solution, air-dried
 - Designated equipment for disease sites



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- Disease presence
 - Ranavirus and PLO in some ponds
 - Did find Chytridiomycosis in adult peepers
 - Saprolegnia and Ichthyophonus were widespread
- Landscape-scale stressors
 - Landscape disease
 - Acadia NP, protected and undisturbed
 - Numerous small watersheds at Acadia
 - High slope position- in all 10 of best models
 - Nearest disease wetland- positive correlation- disease sites were not clustered
 - Predicted sites for diseases- overall the model was good at predicting Ranavirus using High Slope Position
- Within-Pond Stressors
 - Site Chemistry
 - No real difference between disease sites and non-disease sites
 - Average water temperature over the summer, all disease sites were warmer by around 2 degrees
 - Total aluminum- high Al counts in areas with die-offs
- What about biology?
 - Die-offs are right before metamorphosis
- Conclusions/ Conservation Implications:
 - Disease containment in all sites important
 - Diseases are widespread
 - Where is the tipping point? Especially for diseases like Chytridiomycosis that are present in mild cases but not causing die-offs yet
 - High slope position breeding ponds are most at risk
 - Large-scale atmospheric deposition and precipitation may increase disease susceptibility
 - Disease events are not clustered
 - Potential seasonal stressors- warmer water temperature
 - Potential acute stressors- elevated Al
 - We cannot ignore the biology (disease events occur at the critical time just before metamorphosis)

Demographic Impacts of Road Salt on Vernal Pool-Breeding Amphibians -

Presentation by Nancy Karraker (SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry)

- By 1940, New Hampshire began using salt across the state
- In Johnson administration the federal transportation declared bare pavement policy
- Road salt- NaCl plus sodium ferrocyanide and other heavy metals
- Top 4 road salt use states
 - MA- 19.9
 - VT- 17.1
 - NH- 16.7
 - NY- 16.6
 - Bottom Idaho- 0.3
- Kaushal et al 2005- White Mountains, NH



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- 30 years in 2 streams- one forested, one by road- show increases in chloride concentrations in the one by the road
- Vernal pools- pools get a heavy load of salt during amphibian breeding seasons
 - Road salt has a high residence time
 - Because of their drying, high spikes of conductivity during breeding and metamorphosis
- Study Area- Huntington Wildlife Forest
 - Low traffic volume- 1100 vehicles per day
- Water quality
 - Conductivity and chloride concentration
 - 46 pools near roads, 36 forest pools (>600m)
- Ranges by roads .4-103 mg/L
- As distance from roads- highest chloride concentration
 - Within 50 m, most of high concentration
 - Still seeing by 315 m from roads
- Embryonic and larval survival
 - Wood frog and spotted salamander
 - 3 chloride levels
 - Control 1 mg/L
 - Medium 18 mg/L
 - High 106 mg/L
 - Survival of wood frogs
 - Not an effect in control or medium, but significant at high level
 - Survival of spotted salamanders
 - Significant effect at medium and survival is really low at the high level
 - Malformations- saw several in the spotted salamanders
- Physiology of egg masses
 - Egg masses are smaller in ponds with higher salinity
 - Collected 21 egg masses total early
 - 7 in each concentration
 - Changes in mass of egg masses seen in the medium and the high amounts of salt
 - Moved masses to control water after 8 days
 - Control wasn't significant
 - Medium- able to take up the water again
 - High- masses not able to take up water again- continue to lose water
- Water quality, survival, malformations, physiology all connected with road salt concentrations
- Green frogs not affected by salts
- Solutions?
 - Some alternative aren't really better options
 - Sand, cinder, chains
 - Other de-icing agents
 - Engineering advance
 - Clarkson U- make more conductive and melt some ice
 - Reduce use in sensitive watersheds
 - Champlain Valley, VT protect agricultural area
 - Holland, Michigan protect blueberry crops



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- Pittsfield, MA reduce salt in drinking water- 1,700 miles of highways designated
- Identify wetlands important for drinking water and with ecological, cultural, and recreational significance
 - These areas could become reduced salt application zones
- What role can we see PARC playing in this issue?
 - Helping to get out information from others and communicating with DOT's
 - Take the lead to get projects going

The Red-eared Slider: The Worlds Most Infamous Turtle - Presentation by J.D. Kleopfer (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)

- Turtle farming- past, present, and future
- 1975 FDA ban
- Conservation concerns
- 1875- primarily Chinese softshell
- 1900's- diamond-backed terrapins- commercially raised in NC and MD
- 1960's Louisiana- 10-15 Million per year for pet trade, most sliders
- 1975 FDA ban on turtles less than 4"- deaths from salmonella
- Today's turtle farming
 - 15 million sliders raised and exported
 - Asian markets- one shipment 250,000 to Hong Kong
 - Chinese turtle farms
 - 5000-10000 metric tons (matches the ones out of the wild)
 - Importing more than 120 tons of turtle at day from Thailand
 - 20.3 RES expected from turtle farms
- Farming
 - 28% protein diet
 - High quality oxygenated water
 - Eggs collected and washed
 - Siebeling Method
 - Dip eggs in Bacquacil solution
 - US turtle industry is the only industry required to produce 100% salmonella-free product
 - China has no regulations
 - Eggs incubated for 60 days
 - Hatchling must be certified salmonella-free
- Reported to have been introduced in over 20 countries
 - Japan, South Korea, Guam, Thailand, Germany, France, Italy, South Africa, Israel, Australia
 - IUCN top 100 worst invaders
- Conservation concern
 - Disease
 - URD- Population of western pond turtles
 - Competition
 - Western pond turtle
 - European pond turtle
 - Predation
 - On native flora and fauna



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- Intergradation
 - Genetic swamping
 - Interbreeding between subspecies
 - Will occur when 2 or more subspecies occupy the same riparian habitat
 - Offspring are viable and fertile
 - Usually results in intermediate patterns in F1 generation
 - Outbreeding depression
 - Shell height comparison
- Who's to blame for the introduction? Pet trade or pet owners
- Can anything be done about RES introductions?

Updates on NEPARC Projects:

Northeast Habitat Management Guide - Al Breisch (NY-DEC)

- Done, at printers and should be ready within a month
- Added Kurt Buhlmann as an author
- Copy of text available to look at
- Over 200 photographs
- 14 habitat types
 - Seasonal wetlands
 - Wet meadows/bogs
 - Permanent wetlands
 - Small streams
 - Rivers
 - Estuaries and coastal areas
 - Hardwood forests
 - Spruce fir
 - Xeric
 - Grasslands
 - Rock outcrops
 - Caves/karst
 - Agricultural
 - Urban/residential
- Training module to use to train for use being created

Model Land Use Guidelines - Liz Johnson (American Museum of Natural History)

- Post a call for information to PARC listserv, American Planning Association, Wildlife Society
- Asked for local or regional land-use ordinances to protect herps/biodiversity in general
- Designed projects- conservation development to protect areas from reptile and amphibians and how successful?
- Received only a few responses- from NJ- Pine Barrens protection
- Few ordinances- one in MD
- Many states are looking at vernal pools
- Got information on amphibian road crossing throughout the US
- Pulled together 3 or 4 references with guidelines
- Need to:
 - Where to look?
 - What direction and what level do we want to go?



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Box Turtle Working Group – Chuck Landrey (The Turtle Conservation Project)

- Public service video- 14 seconds long
 - Not getting many people to see the video
 - Didn't know the market
- "Don't take him home" postcard
 - 8,000 cards out to primarily nature centers
 - small, brief take home message
 - Printing costs were expected, but hadn't thought about mailing costs
 - Addition 20,000 may be printed with help of Humane Society grant
 - First need to determine distribution contacts
 - Who gives the final okay?
- PDF flier "Don't take me home"
 - More child oriented
 - Download from website, thus reduces shipping and printing costs for group
- Mowing information PDF
 - Residential
 - How it affects the other animals- larger habitat
- Networking list taking shape
- Continue small projects
- Encourage members to initiate or contribute to small projects

Education Project - Linda Weir (USGS)

- Long-standing project, close to completion
- Originally "Herps for Dummies" now called, "Your Backyard Guide to Helping Amphibians and Reptiles"
- One page brochure, intended for homeowners
- Distribution sites: nature centers and parks and via our website
- Draft will go to Editorial Board for review soon

Forestry Certification Standards - Mary Beth Kolozsvary (New York State Biodiversity Research Institute)

- Formed in 2004
- Bob Brooks did much of the work
- Promote use for the HMG's
- Forest Certification- response to the call of the public to incorporate standards into practice
- Incorporate HMG's into the Forest Certification Programs
- Determine how aligned to the published performance indicators
- Set of matrices threats and recommendations and compared to criteria for certification
- Overall and habitat types
- Done for seasonal wetlands, others still need to be completed
- Draft measures to include into standards
- Bring in representatives from the FSC and SFI in the process



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Herp Regulations by States - Al Breisch (NY-DEC)

1. Have there been any laws or regulations added, repealed or changed in your state pertaining to amphibians and reptiles?

CT: Nothing to Report

DC: They are considering new laws to protect vernal pools and would like recommendations on how to word regulation.

DE: Nothing to Report

MA: Law now requires developers to file with MA ESA if planning a project within rare species polygons. Spotted turtle and Spring Salamander removed from Special Concern list. Forestry Management Plans done for Eastern Box Turtle, Wood Turtle, Spotted Turtle and Blanding's Turtle.

MD: Two have been changed and reside in a new place in the regulatory chapters.

A) The first is an amendment to Section 10-621 Annotated Code of Maryland titled "Criminal Law-Prohibition Against Wild Animals as Pets", and became effective June 1, 2006. The changes are in CAPITOL letters below:

" A person may not import into the state, offer for sale, trade, barter, POSSESS, BREED, or exchange as a household pet a "live":

2)alligator, crocodile, OR CAIMAN;

...

4) ...VENOMOUS REPTILE (previously only referred to snakes in Hydrophidae, Elapidae, Viperidae, and Crotalidae).

There is a grandfathering clause also, for anyone with a pet copperhead, etc.

B) The other change was an emergency regulation that was passed in April under House Bill 860, that currently they are attempting to make a permanent reg associated with commercial harvest of diamond-backed terrapins. The emergency reg was passed to cover the 2006 commercial harvest season and the permanent reg is needed to make the reg stay in place for the future. Initially the bill was proposed as a ban on commercial harvest, but was changed in committee to the following:

a) Possession size limit: 4-7 inches (previously 6 inches or more). Attempt to protect older breeding females.

b) Eggs: no possession, disturbance, or destruction.

c) Seasonal Closure: no harvest from Nov. 1 - July 31 (formerly was May 1 - July 1). An attempt to ensure successful breeding and nesting attempts.

d) Pets - does not apply to current allowance of taking 3 from the wild, regardless of sex, age or size.

e) Permits - requires annual "terrapin" permit from watermen plus detailed record keeping of catch (daily log).



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f) Recreational crab pots - reiterates other existing regs on all recreational crab pots need to have terrapin reduction device.

Regs also require DNR to develop a Terrapin management plan and need to adopt regs consistent with the recommendations of the MD Diamondback Terrapin task Force (18 mgt strategies).

Currently in public comment period for making permanent.

ME: "Significant Wildlife Habitat" is eligible for protection from development activity. "Significant Vernal Pools" are protected from impacts to the depression and 250 feet of surrounding critical terrestrial habitat. (maybe be strongest state protection for vernal pools nationally)

NH: Nothing to Report

NJ: Nothing to Report

NY: Now has authority to regulate take of all native amphibians and reptiles. Limited harvest allowed for few common species, such as Snapping Turtle which now has an open season from July 1 to September 30 and a bag limit of 5 per day, 30 per season. Legislature designated Snapping Turtle as "State Reptile," Governor signed law on August 18 (the day after the NEPARC meeting).

PA: Overhauled/re-written herp regs, passed in July 2006 to go into effect January 1, 2007. See:

http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/rulemakings/179nprp.htm

and

http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/rulemakings/184nprp.htm

RI: Nothing to Report

VT: Nothing to Report

VA: Banned collection of Spotted Turtles, Diamond-back Terrapins, and Hellbenders for personal use.

WV: Nothing to Report

2. Have there been any significant court decisions affecting herps in your state?

CT: Nothing to Report

DC: Nothing to Report

DE: Nothing to Report

MA: Nothing to Report

MD: Nothing to Report

ME: Nothing to Report

NH: Nothing to Report



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NJ: The Pinelands Commission (which is the regulatory agency that controls development in the Pinelands National Reserve) approved a permit for a 650-unit subdivision that will ultimately result in the movement of >100 northern pine snakes to an offsite location. The approval of this permit was partially influenced by the need to cap a "leaky" landfill that exists on the site; the construction of the subdivision is funding the \$31 million needed to cap the landfill.

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is now involved in this project and will be carrying out the short distance movement of these snakes. As partial settlement for the potential impact the loss of habitat and movement of snakes will have on this species, the developer has agreed to purchase and permanently preserve 500 acres of suitable pine snake habitat in the area. Additionally, the developer is funding an intensive 7-year monitoring program to assess whether or not the 100+ pine snakes will successfully reestablish in their new location. The release site will be roughly 2,500' from the development.

NY: Several appeals filed challenging DEC for withholding sensitive species information (Hellbenders and Tiger Salamanders) under Freedom of Information Act.

PA: Nothing to Report

RI: Nothing to Report

VT: Nothing to Report

VA: Nothing to Report

WV: Nothing to Report

3. Have there been any arrests/convictions for cases involving illegal possession of herps?

CT: Nothing to Report

DC: Nothing to Report

DE: Yes, for selling hatchling red-eared sliders. \$100 fine.

MA: Nothing to Report

MD: YES. Busted one of the good guys for breeding his wood turtles, which he had a permit from DNR to keep. A few years ago Md Health Dept. changed regs to allow turtle breeding, but no sale of under 4 inch turtles. DNR promised to follow suit but did not change regs. This individual thought we had (as promised) so got busted during annual inspection. This forced DNR to finally update Herp regs. The updated herp regs are currently being reviewed by DNR Biodiversity Advisory Committee, before submission to legislature.

ME: Nothing to Report

NH: Nothing to Report



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NJ: This week our conservation officers convicted a NJ man with the illegal possession of 79 turtles; the species included diamondback terrapin, musk, mud, painted, and eastern box. The officers issued the base \$500 fine for each turtle in the man's possession, for a total fine of \$39,500 in fines.

NY: One Timber Rattlesnake conviction. Diamond-back terrapins confiscated from a food market in Albany, returned to Maryland. Woman ticketed for possession of Painted Turtles after being reported by a relative.

PA: Some arrests/convictions for Timber Rattlesnake violations.

RI: Nothing to Report

VT: Nothing to Report

VA: Four pet stores cited or received written warnings about sale of native wildlife.

WV: Nothing to Report

4. Have there been any acquisitions to protect herp habitats?

CT: Nothing to Report

DC: Nothing to Report

DE: There have been acquisitions but not specifically for herps.

MA: Sixteen sites totaling 1240 acres, protect habitat for Jefferson Salamander, Wood Turtle, Eastern Box Turtle, Blanding's Turtle, Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Ratsnake.

MD: Program Open Space has about \$15 million to spend this year, first time any \$ in 5 years, and some important herp habitats are slated for potential acquisition

ME: 92 acres of oak-pine habitat abutting Kennebunk Plains WMA, believed to host largest population of Black Racers (endangered) in Maine.

NH: New Landowner Incentive Program targeting some herp species, especially turtles.

NJ: The NJ Green Acres continues to purchase land throughout the state with an Annual acquisition budget of over \$100 million. One notable purchase over the past year occurred in February 2006 when Green Acres purchase the 253-acre Ponderlodge Golf Course (located on along the Delaware Bayshore of the Cape May Peninsula) for \$8.45 million. NJ Fish and Wildlife has secured an additional \$750,000 in funding to conduct a full habitat restoration of this 18-hole golf course. The restoration project will include wetland restoration, vernal pool creation and a great deal of upland habitat enhance. The focus of the project is on restoring habitats for T&E amphibians and for migratory bird species.

NY: Open Space Institute purchased 700 plus acres which protects Timber rattlesnake habitat and den. Land to be transferred to State Parks. A 400 acre portion of Westchester County Park dedicated as the John L. Behler Memorial Biodiversity Preserve Area. This area protects population of Spotted Turtles that John studied for 15 years.



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PA: Nothing to Report

RI: Nothing to Report

VT: Nothing to Report

VA: Acquired 3,800 acres in Chesapeake (Cavalier WMA), protects state endangered Canebrake Rattlesnake.

WV: Nothing to Report

[End of NEPARC project updates]

State Wildlife Action Plans & Herp Conservation Opportunities -

Presentation by Alison Whitlock (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

- State Wildlife Plans (WAP) Originally called Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (CWCS)
 - USFWS
 - Several different grant programs
 - 1937- wildlife restoration
 - Traditionally game species
 - Endangered species grant program 1973
 - State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program
 - \$= 1/3 x % land+ 2/3 x % state population
 - Eligible projects to benefit wildlife and habitats
 - Planning grants: 25% state match to match fed 75%; Implementation is a 50% match
 - 2 year annual appropriation
 - Grant money is tied to the plans, plans due 10/1/05
 - All plans must be approved by NAAT
 - All future grant proposals must be tied to plans
- State Wildlife Action Plans
 - Eight elements in order to get approved
 - Dictates where SWG money goes
 - States w/partners have to implement the plans
 - States used existing lists and experts (staff and taxonomic teams) to generate list of Species of Greatest Conservation Concern (SGCN)
 - FWS pulled all the plan SGCN lists into one big list for the northeast
 - Handout on the northeast SGCN herp list
- NEPARC list 85 amphibians, 70 reptiles; list 74 amphibians, 64 reptiles
- Several species listed by greater than 10 NE Plans
- EX: PA- huge amounts of money to herps
- Herp conservation Opportunities
- All plans available on the web
- If there is a species not on the list- state has to justify why it needs to be studied
- Can count volunteer hours for match funds
- New opportunities
 - Other federal grant programs
 - Ex: LIP



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- Multi-state projects
- NGO initiatives
 - Doris Duke foundation
 - Wildlife Conservation Society
 - PARC
 - NEPARC
- Process different for each state

Poster Session

Dinner & Social (Catered Barbecue at Sessions Woods)

August 16th: Day Two

PIJAC's Habitattitude Program – Presentation by Marshall Meyers (Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council)

- Chart of invasive species analysis
- Aquariums and outdoor water gardens
 - Outdoor water gardens - fastest growing aspect of landscaping industry
- 63% of households have one or more pet animals in USA
- Since 1970- pet industry preparing for increased regulation and developed codes of conduct
- Habitattitude- an innovative education and public outreach initiative
- PIJAC, USFWS, NOAA's sea grant program
- Change traditional thinking...
 - Easier to ban than educate
 - Avoid increased regulations virtually impossible to enforce
 - Unify government, academia, and industry to address issue
- Designed to:
 - Help pet owners find alternatives to the release of their pets
 - Ensure that pets are well cared for
 - Protect the natural environment from the impact of unwanted pets
- National education campaign, multimedia, proactive with consistent message, puts protect the environment first
- Large target audience
- Components
 - Brand guidelines
 - Website
 - Campaign partnership packets
 - Participation
 - Magazine ads
 - Ins store messages
- Public survey found people think:
 - 89%- release is preventable; 60% owner's responsibility
 - 91%- unethical to release



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- Industry commitment
 - Newspaper inserts
 - Campaign packets
 - Starter kits
 - In store signage
 - Fish bags (20 million) and boxes (4+ million)
 - Product labeling
 - Industry newsletter
 - Trade and consumer shows
 - PIJAC's pet store employee handbook
 - Door decals
 - Static cling stickers
- Fairly large list of those involved
- PARC can play a significant role in helping educate people about not releasing animals
 - Python issue in the everglades
- Proactive
- Change in traditional thinking
- Help determine where to go when expand to cover terrestrials
- Florida- amnesty day- turn in illegal and unwanted herps, fish (not mammals)

Local Land Use Planning and Herpetofaunal Conservation - Presentation by Mike Klemens (Wildlife Conservation Society)

- Region of diversity in the northeast
 - Coastal Plain
 - Lowlands and inter-montane valleys
 - Highlands and uplands
 - Marine and costal
- Tri-state area has a globally-significant populations of turtles
 - About 20% in USA
- Amphibians in peril- animals are tied to particular habitats and immigration/emigration very minimal
- Reptiles in peril- many species listed in several states
- Loss of habitat due to fragmentation
- Loss of ecological connectivity and resiliency
- Direct and indirect mortality from roads
- Direct mortality from infrastructure
- Severance of upland-wetland relationships
 - Farmland vs. housing developments
- Landscape mosaics and inter-wetland
 - Annual different uses of habitats for species
 - Protecting the system in pieces
 - Create conservation clusters
 - 75% habitat protected and where it lines up with the next habitat
- Amphibian and reptile conservation through better land use planning
- Combating sprawl
 - Requires leadership and action at all levels of government
 - Recognizes the majority of land use decision occur at the very local level



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August 15th – 17th, 2006

- Requires an informed and engaged citizenry
- Provides economically viable and socially acceptable alternatives
- Challenges to effective conservation decision-making
 - Regulation
 - Focus on endangered and threatened species
 - Inadequate standards for biological surveys
 - Over-reliance on regulations
 - Mitigation instead of avoidance
 - Fear of “takings”
 - Mandates at cross purposes
 - Planning
 - Gap between information providers and users
 - Planning vs. ecosystem scales
 - Biological complexity vs. “cookbook” public policy
 - Incomplete biological information
 - Non-ecological planning
 - Incentives and disincentives
 - Zoning and procedures
- Figure out what do we need to protect the core areas
- Implementation strategies combining habitat preservation with municipal action
 - Inter-municipal councils/ inter-municipal agreements
 - Master/comprehensive/open space/POCD
 - Biodiversity based land use planning tools
 - Conservation area overlay district
 - Preserve key habitats and inter-habitat connections
 - Encourage TND/avoid large-lot upzoning unless accompanied by mandatory cluster provision
 - Generic environmental impact statement
 - Adopt wildlife survey standards for development proposals
 - Strengthen and enforce existing environmental ordinances
 - Provide incentives for eco-appropriate development
 - Revise density-yield calculations and formulas

Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project - Presentation by Hank Gruner (Connecticut Science Center)

- 2000/2001 grassroots effort to get 7 towns together
- Metropolitan conservation alliance and those towns
- Work in progress
- Addresses a number of things
- 350% population growth since 1950
- 102% in amount in developed land even with a small total population growth
- High diversity in flora, fauna, and geography
- Towns needed to understand their resources
 - Elevated town views of what they have and what they can do
- Characterized the landscape
 - Followed NJ model on habitat types
 - Focused on forests, shrub-scrub, and grassland
 - Overlaid roads- how broken up was the landscape



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- Saw significant levels of fragmentation
- Incorporated existing biological data- guideline
- Integrated wetlands, topo maps
- Stratification for primary, secondary, and tertiary areas
 - Primary- fit all requirements, contains species of concerns
 - Secondary- met all area requirements, but no recorded species of concern
 - Tertiary- area of a concern, but not large acreage
- Looked at endangered/threatened, as well as focal species
- Bird surveys, herp surveys, botanical surveys (mapping of additional communities), fish databases, invertebrate data (not included), vernal pool surveys
- Used stratification to create biotic corridor
- Use mapping for town's conservation areas and their action plans for those areas
- Can use maps to prioritize parcels
- Phase Two
 - Development and Implementation of Town Biodiversity Conservation Plans

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session 1: Land Use Planning - Facilitated by Liz Johnson

- Looking into finding regulations and/or bylaws for towns to protect individual species
- Maybe focus on broader issues
 - Come up with NEPARC approved reference list for existing manuals
 - List of people to serve as state by state contacts for questions about regulations
- Proposed Future Products
 - Critique current ordinances
 - Similar effort to IBA for herps
 - Tie into state wildlife action plans
 - BMP's- guidelines and examples (site specific)
 - Open space examples of individual subdivision in a wildlife friendly way
 - Post references to the NEPARC site
- Action items:
 - Reference list for ordinances- Liz Jan '07
 - List of contacts for area regulations- John H. Jan '07
 - Construction BMP's manual list & critique thereof for herps- John H. status update Feb '07
 - Wonderful subdivision designs- Jenny

Session 2: Box Turtle Working Group - Facilitated by Chuck Landrey

- Identify client lists
- Identify what we need to do
 - Series of fact sheets
 - Mowing
 - Key threats
 - Backyard habitat
 - Traveling information poster/booth to fairs, herp shows, etc...



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- Developing a client list
- Monitoring and surveying protocols for SWG's
- Action Items
 - Mowing Fact Sheet- Chuck- 6 months
 - Backyard Habitat Fact Sheet- Chuck/Val- draft 6 months
 - Ghost population Fact Sheet- Holly- draft 6 months
 - Traveling Demo Poster
 - Education Packet- monitoring protocols J.D. draft next meeting
 - Teacher contacts- Alison next meeting
 - Client list CT- Linda draft 6 months

Session 3: Road Salt Working Group - Facilitated by Nancy Karraker

- Action items: Request Nancy added as speaker to transportation meeting in Maine
- Prepare a white paper on the effects of road salt
 - Human health and safety issue
 - Water quality, drinking water issue
 - Wildlife issue
 - Seek partners for writing and reviewing the white paper
 - Industry representatives - Salt Institute
 - State and Federal DOT
 - Environment Canada – already has worked on this issue
 - Draft by Thanksgiving
 - Power Point presentation for information
- Action Items
 - Acquire partners to co-author paper- group September 10
 - Position paper on road salt usage (includes partners)- Nancy- Draft end November
 - Conference presentation in Maine- Nancy September 11-14
 - Powerpoint to go with paper- Nancy November 30

Maine's Forestry Habitat Management Guidelines for Vernal Pool Wildlife -

Presentation by Phillip deMaynadier (Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife)

- Currently revising previous HMGs (Calhoun and deMaynadier 2004) for an upcoming book on vernal pool conservation due out next year
- Current HMGs are being implemented in Maine by small and large landowners
- What is a vernal pool?
 - Took long time to define
 - Fish absent
 - Indicators in ME: wood frog, spotted salamander, blue-spotted salamander, fairy shrimp
 - Size up to 2 acres
 - Seasonal, isolated
 - Natural
- Many different types of vernal pools
 - Isolated upland forest depression
 - Hardwood floodplain scour pool



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- Forested Swamp Depression
- Shrub Swamp Basin
- Many endangered and threatened species are closely associated with northeastern vernal pools
- The spotted salamander is suggested as a good indicator species for designing forest management zones and guidelines around because a) it's widespread in forests of the Northeast, b) it's migratory movements are better understood than most pool-breeding species, and c) it's relatively sensitive to upland habitat disturbances..
- Three management zones: Breeding pool, Pool protection zone (0-100 ft), Amphibian Life Zone (100-400 ft)
- There have been several studies conducted on forestry and vernal pools and/or forest habitat relationships of pool-breeding species
- Median ratio of pool-breeding amphibian taxa characteristic of the northeast captured from mature vs. clear-cut forests suggests that pool-breeding species are equally, or more, sensitive to intensive canopy removal than amphibian taxa generally
- What little work exists on partial harvesting and pool-breeding species canopy closure thresholds suggests populations decline when more than 50% of the canopy is removed.
- Other vernal pool amphibian microhabitat relationships are reviewed for northeastern taxa lending further support to the forestry HMGs.

Forestry Certification & Herps - Presentation by Mark Danaher (International Paper)

- Cancelled

Chesapeake Forest: An Experiment in Sustainable Forestry - Presentation by Scott Smith (MD-DNR)

- History of the Forest in 1999 purchased 58000 acres from the Chesapeake Forest Products Corp, a paper products operation
 - 50 % MD DNR, 50% gift
 - Not a contiguous unit, but scattered holdings on Eastern Shore
- Lower Coastal Plain, sandy soils, low topography, wet
- Climate and culture similar to deep south
- Some of these units were adjacent to existing protected lands
- Several wildlife management areas (some owned by TNC)
- Young pine plantations
- NHA, RTE, Significant natural communities
- Listed animals (federally)
- Significant natural communities- Delmarva (Carolina bays)
 - Post-Pleistocene sand ridges
- Delmarva Fox squirrels
- Core and High Quality FIDS Habitat
- Ecologically significant Areas (ESA's)
- ESA Management zones
 - 1: Sensitive areas +100-foot buffer
 - 2: Delmarva Bays only
 - 3: rest of ESA longer rotations or pulp wood



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- Green Certification
- Development management for these areas
- Site model
 - With moth 100-foot buffers and 500-foot
- Need to develop workable stands
- Conversion from pulpwood to hardwood
- Monitoring plan
 - 200 permanent study plays: bird & vegetation studies

NEPARC Forest Certification Standards Project - Presentation by Robert Brooks (U. of Massachusetts/U.S. Forest Service)

- 2004 established at the meeting in Berkshire CC
- How well do standards of sustainable forest certification address the HMG's?
- HMG's- use the best science to produce habitat management and conservation guidelines
- Discuss the seven conservation challenges in sustainable forestry
- "Maximizing compatibility"
- Forest certification programs
 - Sustainable forestry initiative (SFI) of the American forest and paper association
 - Composed of objectives, performance measures, and indicators that address six principles of sustainable forestry
 - Included both core indicators
 - Establishes criteria to monitor and evaluate the commitment to practice sustainable forestry
 - Protect water quality
 - Forest stewardship council (FSC)
 - Nine regional standards
 - NE is for New England and New York
 - "Forest Management shall conserve biological diversity, water sources, etc..."
 - American Tree farm System (ATFS) of the American Forestry Foundation
- Identified HMG and certification elements that have the same conservation intent
- Overall, most HMG's have been addressed by both the FSC and SFI Standards
- Blanket indicators to protect "non-forested wetlands...vernal pools"
- Do not seem to include
 - Timing of activities
 - Constructing of replacement wetlands

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session 1: Forest Certification – Facilitated by Mary Beth Kolozsvary and Robert Brooks

- Try to get moving forward with limited people
- Vision from 2 years ago is changing



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- Original intention and take HMG's and compare to the match with FSC & SFI
- Prioritize overall HMG habitat
 - o Seasonal wetlands
 - o Headwater seeps and streams
 - o Rivers and streams
- Recommendations will be consistent with HMGs, but will use current research to make much more specific guidelines
- Update the matrix based on final HMG
- Identify the major gaps in the certifications
 - o I.e. need to address timing of activities
- Need NEPARC co-chairs to interact with national PARC and advise them of these efforts and to get contacts
- Goal: by next year, draft recommendations ready to send to forest certification representatives
- Action Items
 - o Update matrix based on final HMG-Bob
 - o See if student help can be obtained for all habitat types
 - o Draft recommendations to improve criteria for herps- Marybeth and Bob

Session 2: State Wildlife Action Plans – Facilitated by Mike Marchand

- Summarize priority research CA's in the WAP's for the region (1)
- Make sure herps listed in WAP's are having \$ spent on them (0)
- Highlight unique CA's states are implementing on core herps
- Take the top list of GCN herps in region and develop ways to address thru NEPARC (spp shared by greatest number of states) (2)
 - o Should not preclude working at landscape level to approach biodiversity conservation
- Should not preclude working at landscape level to approach biodiversity conservation
- Use risk assessment working group's efforts as a starting point for a regional list of important species especially those for which the region has a global responsibility (4)
- Identify northeast species of responsibility
- Participate in development of regional monitoring framework grant (Jon Kart- VT leader of the project) (3)
- Proposal to get some of the work done into place like USFWS
- Develop NEPARC proposal to get some of the above work done e.g., USFWS
- Actions discussed:
 - o Use risk assessment working group's efforts as a starting point for a regional list of important species especially those for which the region has a global responsibility
 - Step 1: Alison's list
 - Revisit the info gathered by risk assessment
 - Narrowed by ones on Alison's list and occur in multiple states
 - Maybe ones that are identified as having knowledge gaps
 - o Participate in development of regional grants
 - Mapping
 - M. Marchand will make initial contact
 - JD Kleopfer, Sandy Mattfeldt



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- Monitoring framework
 - M. Marchand will make initial contact
 - JD Kleopfer, Sandy Mattfeldt, Al Breisch, Bob Cook
- Take the top list of GCN herps in region and develop ways to address thru NEPARC Pick 3-5 priority herps and frame out conservation steps
 - Look for student help
- Actions items:
 - Groups assigned- distribution of different taxonomic groups
 - By Thanksgiving
 - List of animals not on the lists
 - Al Breisch
 - Contact leaders of some of the SWP working groups

*Banquet at Marinelli's Supper Club
with evening presentation*

***"Herping with the Taliban: the pre-9/11 experiences
of a lizard researcher in Afghanistan"***

by

Ted Papenfuss (UCLA – Berkeley)

August 17th: Day Three

Management of a Suburban Population of Timber Rattlesnakes in Central Connecticut - Presentation by Doug Fraser (Siena College)

- Connecticut in 1950's- roughly 7 square mile area- undeveloped forest
 - very rural
 - area had never been grazed or completely cut over
- when houses come in, built in to important summer habitat
- 1866-2004; 172 sightings
- CT- 2 color phases; yellow and dark
- Many roadkills- slow at crossing roads
- Males do a lot of moving around looking for females
- Number snakes killed related to Number of sightings
 - one in four killed
- back-adding to reconstruct minimum number in each age class
 - using size/age distribution
- females don't start reproducing until around 6 or 7 years old
 - will mature between 6 and 10 years old
- comparison of NY vs. CT in 1991
 - possible that young may not even get into the population
 - possibly due to poaching on females
 - females reproduce triannual cycle
 - numbers of gravid females are cyclic



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- need at least 2 reproductions to replace themselves
- many females never reproduce more than one time
- captured some that have reproduced 3-4 times
- snakes are right on the edge
- black racer is a predator on juvenile rattlesnakes
- have to save the habitat
- since 1985 more land has been acquired to protect the snakes

A Regional Blanding's Turtle Action Plan - Presentation by Brad Compton (U. of Massachusetts - Amherst)

- low nest and juvenile survival
- delayed maturity (15+ yrs)
- high adult survival (96%)
 - severe declines if less survival
- move long distances
 - one female- home range varied each year
- high road mortality
- live in areas with high human population sprawls
- average of .01 migrants per generation
 - supports separate listings
- 2004- Blanding's turtle working group- State agencies, federal agencies, universities, private companies
- USGS, USFWS grant
- Status Assessment
 - Integrate and summarize regional EO data and GIS data
 - Review regional and range-wide literature and reports
 - Status assessment- federal listing?
- Conservation Plan
 - Regional management plan
- Regional Modeling
- Records in the NE
 - Eastern New England and Hudson Valley, NY
- Major threats
 - Direct Mortality
 - Habitat loss and modification
 - Reproduction and recruitment failure
- Blanding's hot spot model
 - Goal: identify complexes of high-quality wetland habitat with low expected road mortality
 - Model elements:
 - Home range
 - Habitat selection
 - Road mortality
 - GIS data: Wetlands and road coverages with traffic rates
 - Representing home range
 - Landscape resistance
 - Wetland 1, upland 5
 - "resistant kernel" represents probability of use across home range



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- how big is a home range? N=59 turtles
- Habitat selection
 - resource selection function is estimate from radiotelemetry data and wetland maps. A measure of use vs. availability, they can predict the probability of use of each wetland type at arbitrary sites
- Traffic rate- adult mortality (Gibbs and Shriver 2002)
- Example using spotted turtle models
 - Areas where the hot spot should be
- Results represent a working hypothesis of BT “hot spots” where habitat connectivity is high, and road mortality is low
 - Direct surveys
 - Help inform conservation action
 - Improve future modeling

NEPARC Business

Nomination and election of new co-chair

- Co-chairs represent NEPARC at PARC meetings, conference calls. Some travel involved. Helps organize the annual NEPARC meeting and facilitates monthly NEPARC steering committee conference calls.
- Nominees were:
 - Holly Niederriter – who graciously accepted her nomination

NEPARC Steering Committee

- Membership should include:
 - 2 co-chairs (2 yr terms with staggered terms)
 - Host of upcoming NEPARC meeting
 - Looking to find 2 or 3 additional members to represent diverse membership (state/federal/academic/other)
 - Add Alison Whitlock (US FWS)
 - Add Hank Gruner (Connecticut Children’s Museum)
 - Add Meredith Whitney (The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore)
 - Members at Large (i.e. long term NEPARC members)

NEPARC Editorial Board

- New organizational group to help NEPARC fully review projects and speed up review process.
- Valorie Titus – Chair
- Joel Snodgrass
- Bob Cook

Future NEPARC Meetings

- 2007 Virginia
- Topic suggestions:
 - PR, outreach, and marketing speaker
 - Amphibian disease
 - Roads



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- Management actions and protection of local herpetofauna
- Likes sub-themes, but not all the same topic for the whole meeting (like this year's agenda)
- Examples of successful SWG projects (combine local herps)
- Add update of SWG projects
- Effects of global warming on herps
- Regional planning successes
- Developer/land use organization
- 2008 Maine

Likes and Dislikes of the NEPARC 2006 Meeting

- Time of year- approve
- Meeting length- good
- Maybe for Maine and VA, 2 full days to allow for travel
- Weekday or weekend? (preferred weekday)
- Put up on TWS meetings board to avoid conflicts with other meetings
- Field trips setup (before or after meeting)
- Prefer venue with cheap lodging
- Add to registration form a way to donate towards student registration costs
- Smaller size of breakout groups
- AM breakout groups, rather than afternoons
- Attendees List should include: names, affiliations, and research interests
- Ice breaker in the social the first night
- Topic lunch (mixers, etc for networking)

NEPARC Action Items

- Land Use Planning
 - Reference list for resources for ordinances/environmental planning
 - Need volunteers for list of contact people for questions about local regulations
 - By January for website
 - Look into some existing construction related BMP manuals
 - Examples for an existing BMP that may have disadvantages for herps
 - Update working group within 6 months
 - Identify environmentally friendly subdivisions
 - Similar effort to IBA (important bird areas) focusing on herps (new working group)
- Box Turtles
 - Mowing PDF
 - Backyard habitat PDF
 - Other PDF
 - Within the next 6 months
 - Add to PARC traveling booth
 - JD- draft of educational package for monitoring and surveying by next NEPARC meeting
- Road Salt
 - Draft a position paper on road salt
 - Address effects in NE
 - Human health impacts



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- Alternatives to salt
 - Dispelling myths
 - Goal Thanksgiving time
 - Recruit partners to participate
 - Salt institute
 - DOT from each state if possible
 - Goal September 10th
 - Conference in Maine
 - NE regional meeting for transportation
 - Talk on September 12th
 - Traveling PowerPoint presentation
 - Geared toward non-scientific audience
 - Goal November 12th
- Forest Certification
 - Consider recruiting U MD Conservation Biology's graduate program to help with matrices, as part of their "problem-solving" course.
 - Reformat matrices to go with new HMG's within next 2 months
 - Send to working group
 - Apply matrix to some other habitat types
 - Identify gaps
 - Areas where guidelines aren't specific enough
 - Next year's meeting- draft letter with recommendations
 - Next National PARC meeting to get contacts
- State Wildlife Action Plans
 - Groups assigned- distribution of different taxonomic groups
 - By Thanksgiving
 - List of animals not on the lists
 - AI
 - Contact leaders of some of the SWP working groups
- Get training module completed for the Northeast with the rollout of HMG's
 - Scott will make some edits to current ppt
 - M. Marchand will get Kurt's .ppt at the September JNSC meeting and pass on to Scott Smith.

Habitat Management Guidelines: Training module - Presentation by Kurt Buhlmann (Savannah River Ecology Lab)

- Concept of Habitat Management Guidelines (HMG's)
- Get PARC involved and train people to use the guides
- How do we get people interested protecting the environment?
- Focuses on habitat- 6 threats
- How do we address them in the future?
- Losing habitat
- Shows the ecoregions from the areas (in Southeast)
- Ecoregions in Northeast
- Some habitats are endemic to ecoregions
- Not Best Management Practices (BMP's) as BMP's are often regulatory and the HMG's are not regulations
- Recommendations from herpetologists and ecologists



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- Easily understood and applied on the group by landowners
- 2 sections
 - maximizing compatibility
 - conservation, while still using the land
 - ideal
 - benefits herps as a primary objective
- if everyone does just a little
- general concepts
 - landscape
 - corridors
 - metapopulations
 - big picture viewpoints
- if the habitat is there, with the proper management, other animals besides herps will thrive, as well

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:30 PM

Thanks - NEPARC would like to acknowledge the efforts involved in assembling the 2006 meeting minutes. Valorie Titus took minutes during the meeting. Revisions to the draft minutes were completed by members of the steering committee and invited speakers.

Silent Auction

Participants were invited to contribute items for a silent auction to raise money to allow NEPARC to reduce registration fees for students at future meetings and to support travel for NEPARC co-chairs to represent the region at national PARC meetings. Auction items included herp t-shirts, posters, books, beverages, and other items. The auction raised \$533.00. Thank you to all who contributed items!