

SPRING 2009 WILDLIFE TECH SECTION

MEETING MINUTES

La Crosse Wisconsin

Dick Steinbach and Don Hultman provided an update on the state GP agreements and Refuge Organizational changes resulting from their retirements.

Eileen Kirsch provided two power point programs, one on spring migration of songbirds and one on spring migration and breeding of songbirds in Pool 3 and Upper Pool 4. (ppt. programs will be provided for the web)

Scott Yess provided the coordinators report.

Lisa Reid provided an update on the Upper Miss Refuge including surveys on Eagles, Great Blue Herons, and waterfowl. Spring migration Eagle numbers have been good over the past three years with an average of 2,950. Great Blue Heron production was low in 2008. Waterfowl numbers have been steadily increasing over the last several years. Additional information was provided on the anticipated impacts of the stimulus package and also on property acquisition.

Yao Yin and Mike Griffin provided information on veg sampling for 2008 and the planned sampling for 2009 on pools 11 and 12. Mike Griffin will be the new veg. ad hoc chair. Things of note from the Veg ad hoc meeting included a summary of major findings based on data analysis provided by Yao for non LTRMP pools from 2005 to 2007. Findings included; data were useful for quantifying the frequency of occurrence of common species, quality of data varied considerably based on the amount of training crews received, compared with LTRMP data the amount of errors were very high, future sampling should devote more time on crew training and pre-sampling GPS setup for consistency, and electronic data entry is highly desirable. Eighteen folks attended the veg ad hoc meeting.

Brief agency updates were provided but only one was sent in written form (Mark Anderson, attached below).

I don't remember if you asked us to send our reports for the tech section meeting in advance, but sometimes chairpeople have in the past. So, here are my notes.

Deer, the 4 letter word of Wi. Wildlife Management, continue to dominate the WDNR. Chronic Wasting Disease monitoring was greatly reduced by our legislature, although about 14,000 deer were still sampled. No sharpshooting will be conducted. It appears CWD has not spread beyond the area of 3 years ago. It still pops up on a different deer or elk farm each year (800+ deer farms in Wi.), though. Herd status meetings are held every year. Every 3 yrs. overwinter population goals and deer management unit boundaries are revisited. The DNR is proposing to combine units (we have 140). We have proposed that off and on for 40 yrs. or so. The customers often want to subdivide units. State legislators usually show up to complicate the mix. Total deer kill = 451,00. Good weather. Few accidents. Many unhappy deer hunters.

Avian Influenza sampling found several AI strains, but no highly virulent types.

Small, late summer botulism die-offs on Black River in La Crosse have ceased, for the present, after many successive years.

Long term mallard nesting study on select pool 7 and pool 8 islands continued. Nesting attempts and nest success plummeted, likely due to the abundant avian and mammalian predators maintained by large numbers of waterfowl carcasses in spring and fall. The carcasses resulted from the trematodiasis die-offs each year.

Pool 6 drawdown is scheduled for 2009 & 2010, if the river and the locals cooperate. This will be the 3rd attempt, due to problems with one or the other. In 2008 too much sand needed to be dredged from the main channel after high spring flows. The dredging would not have been completed in time for an adequate drawdown.

Banded 1000 Canada geese, 300 wood ducks, 250 mallards and 300 green-winged teal.

Pool 8, phase 3, stage 2 + 3, step?, EMP project is progressing well. Only a few glitches have occurred.

Budget status: Billions of \$ in the hole. 300+ vacancies in DNR (2660 positions). 3,000+ vacancies in state government. New vacancies, due to retirement or whatever, will not be filled for 2 yrs. or more. This applies to Gretchen Benjamin's former job. More vehicles are being lost. Our Service Center concept will die. No customer service or clerical people will be present in stations like La Crosse (50 other positions), except for reduced numbers in 6 regional offices statewide.