



CNIPM Monthly Teleconference Notes

September 2, 2015

Teleconference Leader: Lindsey Flagstad

Call-in number: 1-866-832-7806

Passcode: 1993532

Attendees (check all that apply)

Board Members

- Heather Stewart, Chair (DNR – Plant Materials Center, Palmer)
- Matt Steffy, Vice Chair (- Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District, Homer)
- Brian Maupin (Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, Juneau)
- Genelle Winter (Metlakatla Indian Community)
- Katrina LeMieux (DOTPF – Maintenance & Operations, Fairbanks)
- Lindsey Flagstad (UAA- Alaska Natural Heritage Program, Anchorage)
- Steven Seefeldt (UAF- Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks)

Ex-Officio

- Aliza Segal (BLM – Anchorage Field Office, Anchorage)
- Beth Schultz (USFS – Ecologist, Anchorage)
- Chris Overbaugh (NPS – Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage)
- Vacant

Regular Attendees

- Mary Stensvold (USFS – Botanist, Sitka)
- Patrick Samson (Kuskokwim River Watershed Council, Bethel)
- Louisa Branchflower (Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, Palmer)
- Brianne Blackburn, Chair (DNR – Plant Materials Center, Palmer)
- Aditi Shenoy (Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, Fairbanks)
- Blythe Brown (Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District, Kodiak)
- Brett Nelson (DOTPF – Northern Region, Fairbanks)
- Bruce Bennett (Yukon, Whitehorse)
- Christina Kriedeman (NPS - Kenai Fjords)
- Danielle Verna (Copper River Watershed Project, Cordova)
- Darcy Etcheverry (UAF – Cooperative Extension Service, Fairbanks)
- David Lendrum (UAS – Landscape, Juneau)
- Eric Geisler (BLM – Alaska State Office, Anchorage)
- Gino Graziano (UAF – Cooperative Extension Service, Anchorage)
- John Hudson (FWS – Juneau Field Office, Juneau)
- Maggie Hess (DOTPF – Maintenance & Operations, Fairbanks)
- Miranda Terwilliger (NPS, Wrangell-St. Elias, Glennallen)
- Phil Kaspari (UAF – Cooperative Extension Service, Delta)
- Rob DeVelice (USFS – Chugach National Forest, Anchorage)
- Ruth Gronquist (BLM – Central Yukon Field Office, Fairbanks)
- Trish Wurtz (USFS – Forest Health Protection, Fairbanks)

☒ Tim Stallard (Alien Species Control)

Additional Attendees:

☒ Benjamin Story- DOT southeast region

☒ Jan Trojan

Round Robin (9-10 a.m., in any order)

Southeast

Brian Maupin - SESWCD did little spraying this year due to the difficult permitting process. Brian explained that state employees (specifically, AACD employees) cannot apply pesticides to more than one parcel per project without a permit. Delta received an emergency exemption as they were able to show adverse financial impact; however Kodiak, Homer and Juneau were not able to show the same level of impact and thus did not receive an exemption. Thus the SESWCD was reconciled to addressing historic sites using manual and mechanical control methods. Have finished mapping Mendenhall wetlands as well as a homeowners guide to knotweed. Brian trained an exterminator to treating knotweed on private property. Trish wondering who the exterminator is and what he/she charges. Brian is not sure but for comparison he charged a local power company \$800 for 3 years of treatment of knotweed.

In the AACD arena, seasonal work is finishing up statewide. Brian visited several grant recipients including Genelle in Metlakatla, who runs a very impressive program. Also visited Blythe in Kodiak, who shared his frustration regarding the non-issuance of an emergency exemption to apply herbicide. Brian also worked with the Tyonek Conservation District to map reed canary grass at Alexander Creek.

Also reported public unrest in Juneau following DOT mowing of knotweed, which spreads vegetatively (no seed production). Brian explains that DOT was forced to mow the roadside for safety reasons.

Ben Storey - Point of contact for IVMP. Paid a visit to Blythe in Kodiak this summer to see treated areas. New regulations will allow multiple applications of pesticides - is ready to try again next summer for chemical control of sites.

Southcentral

Matt Steffy - is conducting survey work in Nanwalek and cannot make the meeting. His update follows: The Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area Field Crew has been busy conducting field surveys, weed pulls, and cutting back bird vetch across the peninsula. Controls this month included bird vetch, common tansy, reed canary grass, and white sweetclover. The crew will be conducting more work in Whittier and Harriman Fjord in the coming week before being loaned out to the Kenai Watershed Forum to conduct some reed canary grass work with Edgar Orejuela. The DOT process has continued to evolve and various central district partners look forward to a post-season meeting to talk about how the process will continue to develop in coming seasons. The CMWA has filed an amendment with DEC to allow for an additional application of fluridone to Daniels Lake before ice-in this year. This request is based on the FASTest samples taken so far that indicate that the concentrations in Daniels appear to be decreasing faster than anticipated. There will be another supplemental FASTest sampling before

application to determine if additional product is needed or not. In the event that it is, we have requested that amendment. This is in public notice right now. Aside from that, additional weed pulls have been conducted around the Homer area for common tansy, scentless false mayweed, hempnettle, and various spot pulls around town.

Christina Kriedeman - We have been completing the last of our field work over the last month.

- We had an SCA crew working with us during the week of August 3 controlling invasive plants on the Harding Icefield Trail, around the developed areas at Exit Glacier, and at our maintenance facility. It was great to have the extra hands.
- We spent a day traveling by boat and surveying beaches in Resurrection Bay out of Seward for invasive plants. We didn't find any weeds, but we did see impacts from human use out there.
- We have been busy collecting native seeds to use to revegeate disturbed areas after a road construction project is completed next summer in the Exit Glacier area.
- We completed photo monitoring of restorations sites that we have completed over the last few years. It is great to see plants growing from some of the seeds we collected!
- We will be working on our final report for all the invasive plant work we completed this summer throughout September.

Southwest

Blythe Brown - is at the Alitak cannery to deal with some creeping buttercup and confirm that the orange hawkweed has been eradicated. She is not able to make the call but provided this update:

- We confirmed the identification and location of a Canada thistle infestation at old Afognak village. We also found a few oxeye daisies and hempnettle. This was a thriving community until the tsunami destroyed it in '64, there were gardens and livestock, we assume the thistle was brought in with the livestock or their feed and has been spread by winter storm surges moving material up and down the beach. The total area stretches for about a half mile in the beach wild rye zone and along an ATV trail just above that zone - it will be a challenge to deal with.
- The KSWCD seasonal field crew returned to school and the USFWS volunteer crew both found paying jobs off island.
- KSWCD received visits from AACD (Brian Maupin), USFWS (John Hudson) and Alaska DOT (Ben Storey)... we looked at lots of invasive plants and discussed options. Orange hawkweed, Reed canarygrass, Bohemian knotweed, Canada thistle and oxeye daisy were the species of most interest. Unfortunately, due to the re-interpretation of the AK state regulations we did not have any recent control projects for the show-and-tell tours.
- Stephen is working on our GIS mapping and preparing the survey data for AKEPIC.
- I downloaded the Android version of the AK Weeds ID app but have not tested it other than doing some casual exploring and looking at the species list.
- KSWCD staffed a display booth at the Kodiak State Fair and Rodeo this last weekend. I had lots of invasive species information, coloring pages, stickers, booklets, brushes, etc. Despite fire, rain and wind... the fair did go on!

Anchorage/Palmer

Gino Graziano

- The mobile application is out for both IOS and Android devices. Of course there are some things that somehow got missed, pictures etc. Let me know if you catch anything.
- I visited spotted knapweed sites on Turnagain arm. We only found one plant at Beluga point, and no plants at the other locations. I am going to look into how long it needs to be absent before we can declare a site eradicated.
- Worked with Stellar middle school, Tim and others to pull bird cherry along Chester creek nature trail. Also worked with Tyonek Tribal Conservation District weed mapping, most importantly orange hawkweed on the airstrip in Beluga.
- I have been writing quizzes and editing text for online training for Best Management Practices for management and prevention of weeds during ROW vegetation management. This should be done and available at the beginning of October.
- I did an earthworm presentation last weekend at the Eagle River Nature Center, and will be trying to work with some schools to do basic earthworm survey this month.

Beth Schulz - Not much to report – other than I spotted a volunteer scots pine at C and Klatt Rd – under the planted forest.

Aliza Segal - is in the field and unable to join the call. Her update from the BLM-Anchorage Field Office follows:

- We had two students in ANSEP (Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program) at UAA intern with our office this summer at Campbell Tract. They mostly pulled bird vetch, white sweet clover, and ox-eye daisy along roads, trails, and buildings. They also helped collect seed for a mini re-vegetation project along a trail that got a new bridge.
- The FONSI (Finding of no significant impact) and Decision Record to approve the use of three herbicides for treatment in administrative areas on Campbell Tract was approved by the field office manager. Additionally, the Pesticide Use Proposal for these areas was also approved. Treatment will begin early next summer.

Chris Overbaugh - Parks have had a productive year and are presently finishing up manual removal efforts; some of the parks are moving to restoration and native seed collection

- Katmai NP & Pres. interns created a draft Elodea awareness brochure that will become part of their park's CUA (Commercial –Use Authorization) handbook, which will be important for floatplane operators and other recreational users
- A handful of lake surveys (for Elodea) in Katmai and Wrangell-St. Elias NP & Pres. were conducted this year with no plants found
- June through August-I worked in 7 park units; the work involved herbicide applications, weed-pull events, restoration and native seed collection
 - KATM to spray various invasive plants; survey previous years bird vetch infestation sites - interns created Elodea pamphlet
 - KEFJ to spray dandelions on roadsides (sprayed close to 100 gallons of mix)
 - Juneau (details below)
 - WRST to assist with Glennallen weed pull

- KLGO to spray reed canary grass and spread a mix of native seeds 13 miles in on the Chilkoot Trail (native seeds included: Red Fescue; Blue Joint Grass; Polargrass; Hairgrass and Annual Rye) - boot brush to be installed
- GLBA (details below)
- DENA to spray flixweed in their soil site used for restoration & collect native seeds
- Highlights of short-term successes where herbicide was applied are as follows:
 - Glacier Bay NP & Pres. has 2 priority sites that I have sprayed the last 3 years:
 - *Sonchus arvensis* (perennial sowthistle) on Strawberry Island has shown a 90% reduction since my first application in 2013; The infested area was originally 0.6 acres and now is .058 acres
 - *Phalaris arundinacea* (reed canary grass) on a hillside at the maintenance yard has shown a 97% reduction since my first application in 2013; The infested area was originally 1.03 acres and now is 0.025 acres
 - No restoration has been necessary at either of these sites as native plants have been and continue to move into the void on their own
 - Juneau NPS Office site was sprayed for the 1st time in 2014; *Hieracium aurantiacum* (orange hawkweed) was the primary target with *Ranunculus repens* (creeping buttercup) and *Leucanthemum vulgare* (oxeye daisy) present as well; in 1 year this infestation has been reduced by over 96%; I believe the key to this preliminary success is due to the timing of the application (rosette to bud stage)
- I am now focusing on data management and end-of-year report writing

Lindsey Flagstad - AKEPIC has been transitioned to a Linux-based server in a brand new cluster. This culminates a three year project that required re-scripting the SQL data transformation services. Transition to Linux allows improved service of large datasets whereas residence on the new server ensures regular maintenance and backup. Completed and funded by AKNHP. In addition to the slew of annual taxonomy updates, we've finished uploading the approximately 7,000 records received after the yearend deadline. I will be sending out confirmation letters this or early next week to those with recently-posted data. Also in the process of updating the data entry excel form - please download the most recent version from the web when submitting your data this coming fall (<http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/botany/akepic/>). As always we are in need of funding, please contact me if your organization is able to help. Trish wondering where to send Elodea data - Lindsey and Heather agree that data should be sent to both AKNHP and PMC/DNR for the time being.

Tim Stallard -

- European bird cherry treatments continue. Anticipating that Sue Salmons and I will treat over 30 acres of bird cherry this year.
- I spoke last fall at CNIPM about basal bark treatments with Garlon 4 Ultra. It turns out that EBC is very hard to kill. Earlier this summer, it didn't appear that our treatments were working, but it ended up taking over three months for some of the trees to die. So Sue spoke to several reps and technical advisors at Dow and we increased the Garlon4 concentration from 20 to 25% and added 2% Milestone. That combo acts much faster

and seems to have a much higher success rate. Steve mentioned that Garlon-3A is typically recommended for cut stump, Tim explained that 4 is recommended for basal bark treatment. Glyphosate with direct (to the cambium) treatments like cut stump or frilling – is very effective

- Foliar with glyphosate or Milestone also very effective.
- Multiple approaches and multiple visits needed for each site.
- I'd like to see the sale of this tree restricted as the ongoing sale undermines public support for control efforts – Suggestion for CNIPM board to consider acting upon. Tim will be encouraging citizens, groups, and legislators to contact DNR to request a noxious listing or quarantine.
- Canada thistle. The thistle sites that we treated last year with Milestone have not returned this year.
- Reed canarygrass – sites that Sue and I treated last fall – including a large ten acre site – we got approximately 90% control with 1% glyphosate (Aquamaster). However, some of that area came back very thick with hempnettle. Met recently with Phil Czapla and Gino for suggestions on reveg to prevent return of RCG or other invasives moving in.
- Conducted a test project to control bird vetch with Milestone – in a Muni Park that borders the ANC Coastal Wildlife Refuge – appears to have very effective control. I was able to treat the vetch climbing up willows and alder with almost no damage – thus far- to those species.
- Working with a large number of volunteers this summer including a successful Smackdown. Upcoming events – United Way Day of Caring / BP group and Girls Scouts.
- Have been working way too much and have burned through funding, so I'm going to have to significantly slow down, but we've completed most of our priority fieldwork for the year.
- Tim's Contracting work – Alien Species Control, LLC:
- Girdwood – took over small contract from AACD to manage invasive plants in Girdwood. Everyone assumed that herbicides would be a no go in Girdwood. So Betty Charnon, Kari Anderson (my Girdwood employee), and myself asked the community. We went to four public meetings – presented at their Land Use Committee and Girdwood Board of Supervisors and attended the follow up meetings. Without any expressed opposition, they approved our proposed treatment of reed canarygrass around their soccer field. There was a lot of interest from community members at the meeting about controlling bird vetch and orange hawkweed on their properties.
- Tim has adopted “Chester” a red-eared slider turtle (considered among the top 100 invasive species in the world) pulled out of Chester Creek. He'll soon be spending a week at the Girl Scouts' Anchorage office – to spread the message of not releasing pets, fish, nor plants into the wild. Note that *Elodea* is among Chester's favorite foods.
<http://www.adn.com/article/20150806/turtles-turning-anchorage-are-they-surviving-alaska-winter>

Heather Stewart -

- Missed last month's meeting as she and Tim were completing fluridone application (liquid and pellet) in Sand, Delong and Little Campbell Lakes. The current morphology

of Elodea (translucent and brittle) indicates fluridone is working. Follow-up application scheduled before ice-in in September. Additional sampling planned after ice-out in spring 2016. Diquat application was completed for Lake Hood on July 24th; this treatment will be followed with fluridone application (liquid and pellet). Heather would like to develop long-term plan with airport management (beyond this summer's emergency application) for treating Elodea and managing plant growth hazardous to floatplane safety in Lake Hood. Regarding Canada thistle treatments - All are learning to work within the DOT IVMP, just finished site visits yesterday. Decided to reapply to sites covered by current TCP instead of applying for new TCP as there is uncertainty regarding the length of time the new permitting process requires. Five of 15 sites treated with Milestone show local extirpation. Manual control is continued at sites where pesticide application is prohibited.

- Spotted Knapweed at Jonesville Mine - have not found any this year
- Working with FSWCD to permit the treatment of Elodea in Chena Lake, Chena River, Chena Slough, the Tanana River and Totchaket Slough at ice-out in 2016.
- Working with JBER to create an eDNA marker for Alaska Elodea populations collections include those from remote areas.

Danielle Verna - finished knotweed revegetation projects in cooperation with PMC and they are looking good! Some knotweed is returning - plans to wipe application of glyphosate this afternoon. Worked in the Copper River Basin on white sweetclover monitoring and control in mid-August; we surveyed gravel pits from Mentasta to Glennallen, an ATV trail in Chitina, and the Brenwick-Craig Road near Copper Center. A few new plants were found in Mentasta where our upriver Coordinator, Don, plans to do follow-up control work later in fall. In Cordova Danielle has been spraying reed canary grass along roads, and one small population on the delta. A public meeting on Elodea is scheduled for September 9th at 6pm; Heather Stewart (ADNR), Kate Mohatt (USFS), Mark Sytsma (Portland State), and Andrew Skibo (SePro) will be presenting.

Fairbanks/Interior

Steve Seefeldt - has been busiest giving control recommendations to folks, which is good! Visited Adak earlier in the summer to check out an orange hawkweed population originally established at the old trailer park and is now present on public and private lands; FWS has a map. No other non-native species excluding dandelion observed. Gino and others sprayed the orange hawkweed population approximately 10 years ago.

Trish Wurtz - gave update on the statewide spotted knapweed eradication effort. Only one of the five spotted knapweed sites on Prince of Wales Island was found to have plants in 2015; Brad Kriekhaus went there in July and pulled them all. Gino found a single plant on Turnagain Arm, and Heather found none at the Jonesville Mine. Trish is waiting to hear from Brian Maupin about the spotted knapweed infestations in Haines. Tom Heutte conducted a survey of the Juneau seaplane base, which was found to be clean with respect to Elodea. However, Elodea was found by foresters with the Tanana Chiefs Conference in a slough of the Tanana River downstream from Nenana (Totchaket Slough). This is unfortunate evidence that Elodea has spread from

upstream infestations. People involved with the Fairbanks-Area Elodea Steering Committee are hoping to do additional sampling in similar downstream habitats before freeze-up.

Delia Vargas Kretsinger - Regarding the discovery of Elodea in Totchaket Slough (downstream of Nenana), TCC initially discovered the infestation. Currently, Amy Larsen, aquatic ecologist for the National Park Service, is coordinating the survey effort of the Tanana River and its side sloughs. It will be an extensive survey which will focus on priority areas identified by flights Amy has flown from Fairbanks towards Tanana. Sloughs that are similar to Totchaket (including potential for flooding from Tanana and low water flow) will be prioritized for surveying. Additional infested waterbodies found on the survey may be considered for the Chena Slough DEC permit currently being drafted. Two crews Amy and Heidi C. (NPS) and Andy Baltensberger (NPS), Delia (FWS), and Aditi (FSWCD) will conduct surveys over the next couple of weeks. Jeff Adams from the FWS Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Office has offered to cover survey costs (boat fuel, etc).

Katrina LeMieux - IVMP work is going well in Northern Region. We are having great success working with Salcha Delta SWCD who are doing applications along the Richardson Highway and around Delta Junction. Maggie went down this past month to inspect sites they plan to treat in 2016. Hoping one more site will get to be sprayed on the Tok Cutoff yet this season by CRWP/NPS.

Internal DOT statewide meeting planned to discuss how IVMP was implemented this past season and how it can be improved based, in part, on cooperator feedback. Continually making improvements through process. Also important for cooperators to understand the IVMP process and its requirements before initiating work. The regional DOT contacts are available to help plan and answer questions.

Maggie has taken a new job with UAF.

Bruce Bennett - is continuing treatment of problem infestations. No introductions of new species to report. It appears that the leafy spurge population in (?) has been extirpated. Bruce solicited feedback on the potential for Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) to establish in the Yukon. Most on the call agreed that this species would not thrive in the interior due to climatic incompatibility.

Board Meeting (10-11 a.m.)

Board Members in Attendance:

- Heather Stewart, Chair (DNR – Plant Materials Center, Palmer)
- Matt Steffy, Vice Chair (Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District, Homer)
- Brian Maupin (Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, Juneau)
- Genelle Winter (Metlakatla Indian Community)
- Katrina LeMieux (DOTPF – Maintenance & Operations, Fairbanks)
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Ex-Officio

- Aliza Segal (BLM – Anchorage Field Office, Anchorage)
- Beth Schultz (USFS – Ecologist, Anchorage)
- Chris Overbaugh (NPS – Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage)
- Tim Stallard
- Gino Graziano

Agenda

1. Strategic Plan (the majority of the newly formatted Strategic Plan sections were attached in an email to the board) - Kim Allen will be finishing the formatting of all the sections by the beginning of next week; Heather will send out the latest version. Things to discuss:

- a. New Format - general positive consensus
- b. Missing Coordination section - Matt spearheading, Heather will ask Aliza and Genelle if they are interested as both had volunteer to review the strategic plan and help prepare for the conference.
- c. Introduction needs editing (this is still the old one) Heather will take an initial look and then circulate to the board.
- d. Updated Photos to fill in large blanks - Heather requested that we send photos to her. AKNHP photo library was sent to Kim Allen approximately one year ago.
- e. Can we get a draft/final Strategic Plan in place in time for the meeting? Gino supports circulating a draft at the meeting. The board decided to send out a draft in pdf format over the listserv a few days before the conference to solicit comments. It was suggested that we frame the solicitation as “what did we miss” to keep the feedback broad and constructive. Heather will send the document to the board for review before the next teleconference to be held on October 7.

2. Conference

- a. Gino: update on logistics - we need to flesh out the agenda and then contact specific speakers. Regarding sponsorships, Gino has heard from NPS only. PMC plans to sponsor and DOT could sponsor if an official request letter is received. Once agenda is set Gino will release press.
- b. Heather: update on draft agenda - Potential themes include: 1. Marine Invasives (potential speakers include: Danielle Verna re new work, DEC ballast water effort out of Seward, *D. vex* habitat assessment, Linda Shaw regarding *D. vex* control trials); 2. Risk Assessment (potential speakers include: Tom Heutte, GIS based risk assessment for Elodea, Lindsey regarding identification of rapid expanders, Toby Schwoerer regarding float plane pilots); 3. New Occurrences/Rapid Response (Heather Summary of success stories to kick session off e.g. Lake Hood, Josh Ream regarding turtles and other freshwater invasive animals, Blythe regarding crayfish, representative from Mat-Su or National Fish Habitat Partnership). The board also considered dropping the regional updates - it was decided to hold this if there was time at the end of a day or a gap in the schedule.
- c. Workshops: ideas 1. Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas: introduction of the different CWMA's and discussion among the groups as to what is effective 2. Citizen Science Education: Katie Spellman, Catie Bursch how to run an effective citizen science

program 3. Data Collection: Gino and Lindsey/Justin Fulkerson: how to effectively collect data 4. Invasive Species Management: Steve - overview of two herbicides and their application 5. Media training and outreach - Katrina will contact the DOT employee who has previously trained their environmental group to see if he is available to hold a workshop.

d. Speakers/Abstracts: One abstract has been submitted so far... do we need more advertising? Where will Tim Miller (WSU Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center) and Jennifer Grenz, (Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver) be scheduled? Waiting on abstract from both invited speakers.

e. Schedule:

Monday Night: John Hudson to speak on conference theme in some public forum; location to be determined by Brian and John.

Tuesday: Conference introduction will address CNIPM Strategic Plan; Jenifer will provide kick-off talk; poster session Tuesday night

Wednesday: talks, board meeting in the evening, time and location to be determined.

Thursday: workshops

f. Advertising: Public Radio PSA, outreach to various locations (e.g. valley, Douglas Island, Auke Bay), outreach to various demographics (e.g. general public, legislature, media)

g. Action Items

- Heather will draft agenda, workshop ideas, follow up with various speakers, revise Introduction section of the Strategic Plan, contact Aliza and Genelle to see if they are interested in revising the Coordination section, when these sections are drafted she will circulate the Strategic Plan to the board for review, send formal request for meeting sponsorship to DOT
- Brian will confirm with John Hudson regarding his availability for a Monday night public talk. Both Brian and John will work on securing a venue for the talk.
- Gino will follow up with Tim Miller regarding his talks will also renew efforts to gain sponsorship

3. Other business

Tim Stallard proposed to the CNIPM board a discussion and eventual action in the form of requesting the Alaska Division of Agriculture restrict the sale (quarantine or noxious listing) of *Prunus padus* (European bird cherry) and other unlisted priority invasive plants (bird vetch?). Such a request could take the form of an official letter from the board to the DNR Commissioner. The board ran out of time to give full attention to this item but decided to organize a subcommittee; Heather recused herself from direct involvement.