



## **PARTNERS IN AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION**

OFFICE OF THE STATE AGENCIES COORDINATOR

E-MAIL: [PRIYA@PARCPLACE.ORG](mailto:PRIYA@PARCPLACE.ORG)

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### **Midwest PARC Revitalization: Planning Meeting 9 AM – Noon, Tuesday 13 December 2005, Grand Rapids, MI Minutes**

#### **I. Introductions and Opening Comments**

##### **A. Participants**

1. PARC Technical Working Group Chair, Jeff Holmes welcomed participants and led the discussions.
2. The 18 participants who attended the meeting introduced themselves, including PARC Coordinators, Ernie Garcia (Federal Agencies) and Priya Nanjappa Mitchell (State Agencies).
3. See end of PDF file for complete list.

#### **II. Case Study: SE PARC**

##### **A. History**

1. Poor attendance in 2002 and 2003
2. Jeff took Co-chair role in 2004
  - a. since then meeting attendance has been 50+
  - b. meetings have been well-received, productive

##### **B. Successful Meetings in SE PARC: Key elements**

1. All-inclusive meeting themes
  - a. Example: 2005 meeting, "New Partners and New Plans"
    - i. Forest Plans
    - ii. State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation plans
    - iii. TNC ecoregional plans
2. Great speakers assembled to provide theme context
3. Meeting was well-publicized, and well-attended
4. Productive Technical Working Group Breakout Sessions
  - a. SE PARC happens to have active groups in each of the five proposed areas:
    - i. Research
    - ii. Management
    - iii. Policy, Trade, & Regulations
    - iv. Inventory & Monitoring
    - v. Outreach & Education

- (NOTE: NE PARC does not follow this same format. Instead they tend toward project-driven working groups)
  - b. Typical SE PARC breakout sessions



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- i. At registration, all attendees must select one of the above Technical Working Groups in which to participate
  - 1) Each group must come up with 5 action steps for their working group
  - 2) Each group must set 1 or more action steps for each of the *other* working groups
- c. Gain participation from two categories
  - i. Info gathering (research, inventory & monitoring)
  - ii. Implementation (policy, trade & regulations, education & outreach, management, protection)
- d. 2 layers of monitoring:
  - 1) Implementation monitoring (did we do what we said we would do?) and
  - 2) Response monitoring (did the species respond as predicted?)
- e. Encourage existing rivalries between people within these categories in order to encourage discussion
  - i. Must be information exchange
    - 1) Emphasize that it's not enough to 'know things' or discover things
    - 2) Need to apply information towards the inception and implementation of conservation actions
- f. **Encourage COOPERATION**
  - i. Researchers can help management folks to fill knowledge gaps (e.g., how big patch size, how much connectivity, when, where and how often to burn, etc.)
  - ii. Management folks can help provide resources, identify management needs,
  - iii. Education & Outreach folks can reach out to public and provide educational info which can help implement conservation or management actions

### III. Group Discussion

#### A. Keys to the Success of NE and SE PARC? [Christoffel]

1. Cooperation among entities
2. Diversification among attendees
3. Representation from the entities of PARC:
  - a. State Agencies
  - b. Federal Agencies
  - c. Universities
  - d. NGOs
  - e. Industries (e.g., Forest Products, Agriculture, Pet Industry, etc.)

#### B. Perceived Deficiencies



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1. Still need to engage directors/managers (those with the authority to make change)
  - a. perhaps a “bring your boss” event

#### IV. Thoughts about MW PARC

##### A. Partners: Diversify, seek more “unlikely” herp conservation partners

1. Use spreadsheet of contacts developed at 2001 meeting as a starting point [Kingsbury]

##### B. Products: One way to engage people

1. Ideas:
  - a. Regional Species Conservation plans [T. Anton]
    - i. Similar to those in Wisconsin (e.g., Butler’s Garter Snake)
    - ii. Specific Endangered & Threatened species documents to inform land managers facing species conflicts
  - b. Information about effectiveness of habitat management actions [C. Hall]
    - i. Include specific “how to’s”
      - (Note: Much of this will be covered in new editions of HMGs, and I & M handbooks)

##### C. Participation

1. Keep people included; avoid the “they” phenomenon [G. Lipps]
  - a. Perhaps “Putting the ‘You’ in MW PARC” as a meeting theme [Christoffel]
2. “Us, Product, Everybody” [T. Anton]
  - a. We [MW PARC] are an ‘*us*’
  - b. We will develop a *product*
  - c. It will be used by *everybody*
3. Need to incite peoples’ passions, get people engaged

##### D. Co-chairs

1. Need to solicit co-chairs at the official MW PARC meeting in Fall
  - a. Must:
    - i. Be willing,
    - ii. Be eager/motivated; able to mobilize and inspire others to action
    - iii. Have the ability (and supervisory support) to lead

#### V. Most Important Issues in Midwest

##### A. Brainstormed list (in rough order of importance)

1. Habitat loss and fragmentation
  - a. Urban/suburban sprawl
  - b. Agriculture
  - c. Road density



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2. Invasives:
    - a. plants: phragmites, garlic mustard, buckthorn
    - b. aquatic animals: zebra mussels, crayfish
    - c. subsidized predators
    - d. bullfrogs
    - e. etc.
  3. Disease/pathogens/agricultural chemical effects
  4. Harvest/poaching
  5. Incompatible land management practices
  6. Inadequate understanding and sensitivity to the issues by:
    - a. General public
    - b. Management personnel in conservation organizations
  7. Poor restoration or mitigation design of 'conservation' lands (ties back to #1 and #5)
  8. Incomplete understanding of fire management tools/natural disturbance regime
  9. Our own knowledge/data gaps
    - a. Declines AND successes
    - b. Need to provide supporting research (vs. only anecdotal info) for management decisions and species status assessments
      - i. Prevent states that list species without any supporting data
    - c. Need for validation of *current* species status
    - d. Climate change impacts
  10. Need more outreach/education
    - a. BioBlitz as a outreach and education activity,
      - i. news coverage,
      - ii. capitalizing on enthusiasm of kids
      - iii. get zoos involved for outreach
    - b. Outdoor Writers Association
      - i. better ways to portray herps in press
  11. Human Dimensions of conservation
    - a. Need more work to change the public perception of herpetofaunal species
- VI. MW PARC meeting**
- A. Develop list of Invitees**
    1. build on existing lists
    2. Brainstormed list of important entities:
      - a. State and Federal Wildlife and Natural Resource Management agencies
      - b. State Natural Heritage agencies



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- c. NGOs: TNC, Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Nature Serve, etc.
- d. Zoos/museums,
- e. Veterinarians with herpetofaunal expertise
- f. Academicians and students
- g. Pet Trade
- h. Forest Products industry
- i. Agricultural industry

### B. Scheduling

1. Provide minimum of 6 months advance notice
2. Shoot for late Fall 2006 date
3. Fri-Sat meeting, Sunday field trip
  - a. Tentative format:
    - i. Thurs. night social
    - ii. Friday talks all day, lunch on site,
    - iii. Friday night cookout/social/BEER!
    - iv. Sat morning special topic  
- elections and business
    - v. Sat. afternoon break-out groups,
    - vi. Sat. dinner on own or on site
    - vii. Sunday 2-3 three field trip options led by locals
    - viii. Sunday afternoon for travel

### C. Speakers

1. Using the issues in part **V.(A.)** above, find *stellar* speakers to provide context

### D. Venue Suggestions (must be sexy, cheap or free, and fun)

1. Detroit Zoo [B. Flanagan]
  - a. sexy
  - b. cheap or free educational center facilities
2. Field museum of Natural History [T. Anton]
3. Madison, Wisconsin
  - a. Nice facilities
  - b. Centrally-located
4. Rice Biological station (outside of Steelville, MO) ,
  - a. Shawnee National forest field trip possibility
    - i. snake migration with gated facilities –
5. St. Louis Zoo
  - a. hellbender fieldtrip may be possible
  - b. Touch of Nature Environmental Center nearby as well

## VII. Next Steps

### A. Future conference calls or meetings

1. Next conference call in early February (date TBD)

### B. Appoint Meeting Coordinator to assist Interim Chairs in creating agendas and coordinating a MW PARC meeting



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1. B. Kingsbury offered logistic support from Herp Center
  2. R. Christoffel offered help from students in Madison, WI Herp Society
- C. Assign 'traveling preacher' to introduce and sell PARC in each state
1. Appoint state reps who already have their network in place to spread the word
  2. Local herp clubs/societies to identify 'gate-keepers' to infiltrate from the inside
    - a. Maybe traveling PARC advertisement/seminar
- D. **ACTION ITEMS** (in order of importance):
- **ACTION ITEM:** DETERMINE VENUE ASAP and BOOK Before end of January if possible
    - SEND INVITATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS by Mid-Feb.
    - Venue Analysis Committee:
      - Bill Flanagan (with help from Edie Sonntag) will explore possibilities at Detroit Zoo and St. Louis Zoo
      - Rebecca Christoffel will contact University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as Shawnee National Forest, and Touch of Nature Environmental Center
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Begin soliciting volunteers for INTERIM MEETING COORDINATORS TO HELP INTERIM CHAIRS COORDINATE A MW PARC MEETING
    - Interim Meeting Coordinator(s) will assist Interim Co-Chairs (G. Casper and B. Kingsbury) and PARC Coordinators (E.Garcia and P. Nanjappa Mitchell) to plan MW PARC meeting
    - Ideally, at least one Meeting Coordinator should be local to the meeting location (once determined)
    - Volunteers should contact Priya ([priya@parcplace.org](mailto:priya@parcplace.org)) and Ernie ([ernest\\_garcia@fws.gov](mailto:ernest_garcia@fws.gov)) as soon as possible.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Begin soliciting nominations for new **Co-Chairs** (TO BE ELECTED AT THE MW PARC MEETING in Fall 2006)
    - **Note:** See attached description of duties, "[PARC RWG co chairs duties FINAL.doc](#)"
    - Please submit nominations to Priya ([priya@parcplace.org](mailto:priya@parcplace.org)) and Ernie ([ernest\\_garcia@fws.gov](mailto:ernest_garcia@fws.gov)) -- submissions will be accepted until one month prior to the Fall meeting (TBD).
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Ernie and Priya start a compilation list of names/entities and circulate
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Priya will explore possibility of a traveling PARC advertisement/seminar with help of state agency folks



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- **ACTION ITEM:** When MW PARC meeting date has been set, Co-chairs and meeting coordinator will put announcement over PARC listserv and others (such as North Central Chapter of The American fisheries Society, North Central Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Herp Digest, CNAH, etc.)

### VIII. Miscellaneous

- A. Prairie Biotic Research, Inc. is offering small grants of up to \$1000 for individuals doing grassland or prairie research on herpetofaunal taxa. Contact Rebecca Christoffel ([chris317@msu.edu](mailto:chris317@msu.edu)) for more details.

### IX. Adjournment

- A. Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM

### List of Attendees:

| <b>NAME</b>                | <b>AFFILIATION</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Gregg Lipps                | Independent  |
| Tom Anton                  | Field Museum of Natural History/ Independent   |
| Bill Peterman              | University of Missouri - Columbia  |
| Carol Hall                 | Minnesota DNR  |
| Bill Flanagan              | National Amphibian Conservation Center, Detroit Zoo                                      |
| David Mifsud               | Herpetological Resource and Management   |
| Mike Dreslik               | Illinois Natural History Survey  |
| Kent Bekker                | Toledo Zoo, Herpetology Department   |
| Rich King                  | Northern Illinois University   |
| Whitney Banning            | University of Illinois   |
| Gary Casper                | Independent  |
| David Mauger               | Forest Preserve District, Will County  |
| Bruce Kingsbury            | Indiana-Purdue University  |
| Rebecca Christoffel        | Michigan State University  |
| Edythe Sonntag             | Detroit Zoo/ Michigan State University<br>SE PARC Co-Chair/ PARC Technical Working Group |
| Jeff Holmes                | Chair  |
| Ernie Garcia               | PARC Federal Agencies Coordinator, USFWS   |
| Priya Nanjappa<br>Mitchell | PARC State Agencies Coordinator  |