

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

PLENARY SESSION

Thursday, February 2, 9:00 am – 12 noon

Location: Lecture Hall

THEME OVERVIEW

Don Reed, Southeastern WI Regional Planning Commission
Jim Meeker, Northland College

The conference will open with an introduction to our theme, *Wisconsin's Wetlands: Biodiversity and Threats*. Don and Jim will outline wetland biodiversity and threats to wetlands by community types and by geographic regions in Wisconsin.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS: USING REMOTE SENSING AND GIS TO PROACTIVELY INVIGORATE WETLANDS REGULATION ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Charles Costello, Section Chief of the Wetlands Mapping Program of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Charles and colleagues at the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection have developed a project to detect changes in wetland acreage using remote sensing, image processing and GIS. This project has produced a new successful initiative to detect illegal wetland fills and to enforce wetland protection regulations in Massachusetts. Charles will give an overview of the project and will discuss how other states, governmental entities and environmental groups can benefit from adopting all or portions of the MA system. He will also preview new technologies on the horizon that will further enhance wetlands protection.

About the Keynote Speaker

Charles Costello has been the Section Chief of the Wetlands Mapping Program of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for fifteen years. In this position he has developed a large-scale digital mapping database of the state's wetland resources. During the last few years, Charlie has developed a project to detect wetland changes using remote sensing, image processing and GIS. This project has produced a new successful initiative to enforce wetland protection regulations in Massachusetts. Several states have expressed interest in developing a similar remote sensing strategy. Charlie also heads a summer project to accurately map and monitor the coastal underwater submerged aquatic vegetation resources for the state. He has been the recipient of the USEPA Environmental Merit Award for his work in wetlands mapping and enforcement. In his leisure time, Charlie likes to frequent wetlands and stream areas to flyfish for trout and salmon and hunt grouse with his pointing dogs (no gun). He is a lifelong student of natural history and is a committed conservationist.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BANQUET PRESENTATION

Thursday, February 2, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Location: Ballroom AB

IN SEARCH OF THE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

Jim Fitzpatrick, Executive Director
Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center

The magnificent Ivory-billed Woodpecker has become a symbol of the bottomland forest wilderness that once extended across the southern United States. The largest woodpecker north of Mexico and the third largest in the world, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker inhabits mature swampy forests, roaming large areas in search of dead and dying trees infested with beetle larvae, its primary food. Ivory-billed Woodpeckers were probably never common, but by the 1930s, nearly all of their habitat had been destroyed. Last formally documented in 1944, most current field guides and ornithologists refer to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as extinct. In April of 2005 the announcement was made that there were indeed sightings and a video of the bird in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas. Various reports of the bird through the subsequent years were almost universally shrugged off as Pileated Woodpeckers until a sighting in Louisiana in 1999. This triggered several unsuccessful but intensive searches over the next several years. A report from central Arkansas in February 2004 began a renewed search and resulted in the formation of a large coalition of partners into The Big Woods Conservation Partnership. Mr. Fitzpatrick is one of seven people with confirmed sightings described by a team of authors in the April 19, 2005 issue of the Journal of Science. While no recent film or digital pictures of the bird yet exist, documentation of the search areas, processes and sighting spots and a grainy video of the bird will highlight the reason for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's recent declaration that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is alive in the Arkansas delta.

Thank you to our banquet presentation sponsor:

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Photos courtesy of Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



About the Banquet Speaker

For twenty-five years, Jim Fitzpatrick has provided leadership as Executive Director of the Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center in Hastings, Minnesota. Jim is a dedicated conservationist and bird enthusiast with a diverse background including extensive volunteer and public service. Jim served for four years as a Volunteer Woodpecker Researcher for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology where he is an invited field biologist, ornithologist and field researcher. A licensed bird bander since 1973, he has served as banding coordinator for the Midwest Peregrine Falcon recovery partnership. Jim has completed five years of naturalist work with the Minnesota Zoo and Dodge Nature Center in West St. Paul, MN, was elected to five three-year terms on the Township Board of supervisors 1991 to 2006 and served as a Board Member for Minnesota Environmental Partnership from 2003-2005. Jim holds a B.S. in Biology from the University of Minnesota and did graduate studies at the University of St. Thomas and University of Minnesota School of Education.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WORKING GROUPS

Friday, February 3, 10:40 am – 12:20 pm

Concurrent Working Group 1

Location: Hall of Ideas E

Developing a Strategic Approach to Wetland Conservation in Wisconsin Through an Analysis of Threats

Facilitated by Katie Beilfuss and Becky Abel, Wisconsin Wetlands Association

In 2005, Wisconsin Wetlands Association launched a statewide analysis of threats to wetlands with the goal of identifying strategic approaches to guide our work. Our results from this analysis will provide powerful tools for us and our partners to use in the fight for wetland conservation, focusing our efforts toward those that are most strategic for long-term wetland conservation in Wisconsin. These efforts will include outreach, policy, and program work.

In this working group, we will present our process and approach for the threats analysis as well as the geographic regions and wetland community types we will use in the analysis. Participants will have the opportunity to:

1. provide feedback on our approach,
2. review and contribute to our list of categories of threats,
3. provide suggestions for participants to include in the process (both within and beyond the scientific and management community) so that we are sure to include both ecological and non-ecological threats,
4. provide feedback on how to most efficiently involve others in the assessment process,
5. volunteer to participate in assessment for particular wetland community types and/or geographic regions of the state.

Continuing the tradition from previous Wetland Science Forum, we will also use this working group session to compile a list of **research needs** relating to threats to wetlands in Wisconsin.

We encourage people who want to participate in this working group session to also attend our presentation at 4:30 pm on Thursday, February 2, during the “Tools for Protection, Management & Monitoring Wetland Biodiversity and Threats” session of the conference.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WORKING GROUPS

Friday, February 3, 10:40 am – 12:20 pm

Concurrent Working Group 2

Location: Hall of Ideas F

Responding to Wetland Regulatory Concerns: Problem Solving & Proactive Communications

Facilitated by Erin O'Brien, Wisconsin Wetlands Association

December brought chilly news to the wetland community with two separate legislative inquiries launched in response to tensions over the extent and administration of Wisconsin's wetland protection laws. In addition to raising some legitimate concerns over the difficulties some landowners experience while trying to navigate the wetland regulatory process, the dialogue surrounding these legislative inquiries pointed to an urgent need to improve public understanding of wetland ecology and wetland laws. Also apparent was a need to build public confidence in the professional and regulatory communities' ability to accurately identify wetland boundaries, functions and values. With the possibility of legislative proposals to reform or streamline the state's wetland regulations ever-looming, immediate work is needed to better understand and resolve the root causes of the gamut of wetland regulatory tensions.

This workgroup seeks input from wetland professionals and wetland landowners to help Wisconsin Wetlands Association understand and address these issues. Participants will be asked to:

1. Share their perspectives on known problems with existing wetland regulatory programs, (including those that exacerbate regulatory tensions as well as those that lead to gaps in wetland protections).
2. Identify common misunderstandings and misconceptions that feed wetland regulatory tensions.
3. Develop recommendations to address known problems and common misconceptions.
4. Discuss communications strategies for increasing public understanding of complex wetland concepts (e.g., the presence of water is not a reliable year-round wetland indicator, mitigation has limitations as a tool to offset wetland losses, etc.) as a means to decrease perceptions of inconsistencies and inaccuracies in wetland identification techniques.

Results from this workgroup will help inform Wisconsin Wetlands Association's positions and recommendations for how to address present and future concerns with Wisconsin's wetland regulatory program. Your words and ideas will also be referred to in the development of Wisconsin Wetlands Association's public outreach and education programs this year and beyond.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WETLAND FIELD TRIPS: Friday, February 3, 1:30 – 4:30 pm

Please dress warmly and wear sturdy shoes. Wingra trip will meet in Hall of Ideas E at 1:30. Other trips will leave by bus at 1:30 pm and will board outside the main (4th) level.

Lake Wingra Wetlands: Invasive Species Management Planning and Control *Co-hosted with Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin and Friends of Lake Wingra* **Leaders: Jim Lorman, Steve Glass, Katy Wallace, Dick Lathrop, and Kelly Kearns**

Lake Wingra is a spectacular urban lake in the heart of Madison yet invasions of aggressive, non-native species into the lake and adjacent wetlands have reduced the ecological health of Wingra's native communities. Friends of Lake Wingra (FOLW) have developed a comprehensive *Invasive Species Management Plan* for the lake and the watershed and are implementing site-specific control efforts. This trip will include several stops along the Wingra shoreline to learn about FOLW's projects. We will also visit a macrophyte restoration experiment (WDNR, FOLW and partners) in which invasive carp have been excluded from 2.5 acres of the lake and a length of shoreline along the Edgewood Marsh.



Pheasant Branch Conservancy: A Case Study of Wetland Threats *Co-hosted with Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin and Friends of Pheasant Branch* **Leaders: Tom Bernthal, Pat Trochlell, and Randy Hunt**

Pheasant Branch Creek meanders through this 500+ acre Conservancy, which contains a marsh with open water, natural springs and seeps, sedge meadows, restored prairies and savanna, lowland forests and wooded hills. However, urban development that surrounds the property on three sides and agricultural runoff are sources of threats to the hydrology, biodiversity, and overall health of the Conservancy's wetland habitats. Trip leaders will present the site as a case study of wetland threats and will discuss management, restoration, and research efforts that have been conducted by the City of Middleton, Dane County, U.S. Geological Survey and Friends of Pheasant Branch.



Mitigation and Restoration: A Tale of Two Cherokee Marsh Projects *Co-hosted with Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin* **Leaders: Russ Hefty, Cathy Bleser, and Quentin Carpenter**

This trip will highlight two wetland projects that are close in proximity but different in terms of historical impacts, hydrology, ecology, regulatory issues and restoration approaches. Participants will view restoration efforts at Cherokee Marsh, which provides a unique habitat for a diversity of species. This project is using innovative structures to restore some of the 600+ acres of "floating mat" shoreline wetlands lost in the past 150 years due to artificially high lake water levels. Participants will also visit a nearby wetland mitigation project that was constructed to offset impacts on Cherokee Marsh from expansion of the Dane County Regional airport. This project has involved filling two miles of ditches to restore wetland hydrology as well as invasive species management.

