



Volume 1 / Number 3 – September 2005

Mike's message from the I&M World

Greetings – please welcome *The Weather Vane*, the latest reincarnation of our newsletter. The new masthead and format is one of several recommendations from our cooperators in developing effective tools to communicate the value of the I&M program to a diverse constituency. You will find in the newsletter descriptions of additional products from our work with Colorado State University to better interpret monitoring results to park managers, decision makers and the general public. We've also expanded the mailing list for *The Weather Vane* – if you prefer not to receive our newsletter in the future, please let me know (HTLN staff are exempt from this offer and must endure reading this rag).

The focus of this edition is the Heartland Network annual meeting. We covered a lot of ground in two days. One notable accomplishment of the meeting was approval of a network staffing plan to make our program fully operational (see back for details). Thank you everyone who participated. Feedback is welcomed, especially thoughts on how the next meeting could be even better. Collectively we're working to create an excellent monitoring program that will benefit everyone.

Mike DeBacker

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HTLN Annual Meeting – Better Than Ever

Representatives from network parks and partners from Colorado State University and the Eppley Institute attended the annual meeting hosted by Hopewell Cultural NHP. The meeting brought the Technical Committee (TC) of natural resource managers and Board of Directors (BOD), representing all 15 park superintendents, together to review last year's accomplishments and provide guidance for next year's activities.

Tuesday morning integrated updates on monitoring projects and short presentations on data management, sample design, and statistical power analysis. Tuesday afternoon had the TC and BOD sailing into uncharted waters for I&M networks. It began with looking at how the network can fit into Resource Stewardship Planning. We found significant connection between the process steps and network expertise, which can provide status and trend information for adaptive management to achieve desired condition. Additionally, network scientists can assist in developing comprehensive strategic plans.

Sara Melena and Tawnya Ernst of Colorado State University updated us on the communication / interpretation plan. We viewed several products in rough draft, including a video clip and a slide show about the I&M program and the network, examples of posters, and visual identity concepts. Sara and Tawnya will use the feedback from the group during the final phase of the project. As part of the project Beth Barrie of the Eppley Institute offered interpretive techniques training to close the day.

After early morning birding at Hopeton Earthworks, the group settled into the network business on Wednesday. At mid-day, participants received a tour of Hopewell Culture NHP. The BOD met while the TC members attended workshops. Minutes of the BOD meeting have been distributed and will be available on our website soon.

Steve Miller and the Board of Directors wrapped up the meeting with their thanks to the hosts, and to the superintendents going off of the BOD.

Almost Newsworthy Lost-N-Found

Network supported monitoring of endangered hellbenders in OZAR found a number of individuals that had never been captured. The species population is so low that the new individuals are a truly significant find.

Partnering

A network funded project to determine the source of fecal contaminants will provide crucial information for OZAR's legal action against the source of contamination. The park managers recognized the problem and the best approach for resolving it and brought the network in to help.

Breaking Records

Network monitoring found a record number of prairie fringed orchids at PIPE. This makes three years of record high numbers, suggesting successful conservation of the species at PIPE.

When will the HTLN be at your park?

September 6 - 9	Vegetation community monitoring at GWCA (crew: Karola Mlekush and Pam Lucas) Invasive, non native plant pilot monitoring project at GWCA (crew: Craig Young)
September 12 - 17	Vegetation community monitoring at EFMO and HEHO (crew: Alicia Sasseen, Craig Young, Karola Mlekush and Pam Lucas)
September 19 - 22	Fish community monitoring at PIPE (crew: David Peitz crew and Hope Dodd)
October 3 - 9	Vegetation community monitoring at TAPR (crew: Alicia Sasseen, Karola Mlekush, Craig Young and Pam Lucas) Fish community monitoring at TAPR (crew: Dave Peitz crew, Hope Dodd and David Bowles)
October 12 - 14	Fish community monitoring at BUFF (crew: David Bowles, Hope Dodd, Jan Hinsey and Shawn Hodges)
October 17 - 18	Measuring fire fuels at WICR (crew: Karola Mlekush and Pam Lucas)
October 18 - 20	Fish community monitoring at BUFF (crew: Hope Dodd, Jan Hinsey and Shawn Hodges) Spring invertebrate monitoring at OZAR (crew: David Bowles and Jessica Luraas)
October 25 - 27	Fish community monitoring at BUFF (crew: Hope Dodd, David Bowles, Jan Hinsey and Shawn Hodges)
November 2 - 4	Fish community monitoring at BUFF (crew: David Bowles, Hope Dodd, Jan Hinsey and Shawn Hodges)
November 15 - 18	Fish community monitoring at OZAR (crew: David Bowles, Hope Dodd and Jessica Luraas)
November 21 - 22	Fish community monitoring at OZAR (crew: David Bowles, Hope Dodd and Jessica Luraas)
November 29 - 30	Fish community monitoring at OZAR (crew: David Bowles, Hope Dodd and Jessica Luraas)



Final Thoughts

The BOD acted on the recommendation of the TC and approved a staffing plan for the network. The new plan restructures the network to provide more field level staff to accomplish data collection and processing, while providing greater flexibility to adapt to a dynamic fiscal environment. The new staffing plan meets the 'fixed costs' standards of the Midwest Region. Through further deliberation of the staffing plan, the BOD also chose to retain the term data manager position to provide support for development of database management systems for newly implemented monitoring projects.