

Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Natural Heritage - Annual Tour

Wednesday, June 12, 2019 – Pine Point Forest SNA, Interstate Island & Hemlock Ravine Tour

Draft notes provided by Jan Shaw Wolff, DNR Ecological and Water Resources, Ecosystem Management and Protection Section Manager. Edited by Nancy Braker, CAC Chair

2019 CAC Tour

9:30-11:30 MN Point SNA – <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/detail.html?id=sna02000>
11:30-12:30 Business lunch at Park Point Park
12:30-1:30 Interstate Island discussion – Rice's Point Access (scroll down page to #13)
https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/land_preservation/projects.html#13
1:30-2:30 Travel to Hemlock Ravine SNA
2:30-3:30 Hemlock Ravine SNA - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/detail.html?id=sna01013>

- **Members present:** Alyssa Alness, Nancy Braker, Kevin Brennan, Kathryn Keller-Miller, Jaxson Lane, Sarah Malick-Wahls, John Pearson, John Schladweiler, Angela Smith, Christopher Smith.
- **Members absent:** Kristen Blann, Tom Casey, Robyn Ceurvorst, Peg Furshong, Linda Kingery, Michael Spry, Jeanette Eller Watland
- **DNR Staff members present:** Bruce Carlson, Judy Schulte, Jan Shaw Wolff, Laura Van Riper, AmberBeth VanNingen, Rebecca Holmstrom, Bry Persing, Patricia Fowler
- **Natural Areas Association members present:** Lisa Smith, Amy Wills

Chair Nancy Braker brought the meeting to order.

1. **Approve April 2019 minutes** Reviewed minutes from last meeting. John Schladweiler offered the following correction to the information on fish and game restitution: For the third bullet on page 7 it should read "Approximately \$100,000/year comes in from restitution - Up to the discretion of each Conservation Enforcement Officer as to whether to ask that restitution be applied." Kevin Brennan moved to approve minutes, Jaxson Lane seconded, unanimous approval.
2. **CAC Member Spotlight:** Chris Smith
 - ❖ Bio attachedNext meeting member highlight: Jackson Lane - August 7
3. **CAC Charter**

Mike Spry, Tom Casey, and Nancy Braker are a subcommittee to work on reviewing the charter. Nancy requested one more member to join the subcommittee and John Pearson volunteered. Goal is to have a list of items to discuss in August for approval in October. We are not coming up with a new or greatly revised charter, but tweaking the current charter where needed.

 - Request for members to send any ideas, comments to Mike Spry. Charter is on DNR web site for reference:
https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/destinations/snas/charter_cac.pdf

Changes in Restitution Values for Animal Species Reintroducing topic of restitution (handout at last meeting, but new members may not yet be familiar). John Schladweiler was asked to lead the discussion. John has proposed a letter be sent to DNR Commissioner regarding the current

statutes and rules and ask that they be updated including the values stated. Rule last adopted in 1991, so just inflation alone requires revisiting. Lots of outdated lists of species (on T & E list, e.g.). Monies that are collected for restitution ~\$100K deposited in Game and Fish fund, which are more lenient in terms of what it can be spent on. John sent out an Email about how the migratory bird act is not being enforced by the USFWS. Concerned that things may be falling off radar. Used by DNR Conservation Officers when illegal take but also used by judges in civil take, i.e., if a company allows a take on their property. Judges use this statute to set fines and restitution. Commissioner has the authority to add other species. Threatened and Endangered plants not currently involved in restitution.

Chris Smith pointed out that these values are also used in environmental review to assign values for mitigation. John S: when I was with department in EWR, we wanted to bring this item to the legislature and Steve Hirsch, division director, agreed it needed to be updated, but it took a back seat for other business. Kevin moved to send the letter after John edits it. Katherine seconded. Vote postponed until edited letter has committee review and can be voted on.

Sarah: suggested in the format to add a justification: why is it time to renew, what changes do we propose (relative to migratory bird act, etc.).

- Decision to have John edit the letter and circulate to committee to respond. Nancy has a short window of time to process, John agreed to provide within ~ one week.
- Chris shared that MS 97.A has language for wild birds so be sure to reference that in the letter along with federal migratory bird act.
- John requested that Jan Shaw Wolff follow up with him after having an opportunity to discuss this with Cynthia Osmundson, Nongame Wildlife Supervisor.

4. **Communications** Nancy raised general communication processes and how best to share information, voting, etc.

John described different categories of activities that have occurred, ranging from general information items (you may want to know about this) vs. more official committee business. One advantage that Nancy offered was that information coming through the Chair can be filtered and deem appropriateness if under the purview of CAC, completely unrelated to CAC, or more of an individual concern. This would help everyone be aware of roles. Is individual writing letters as a citizen or as a member of CAC, for example. Judy asked if it was possible to identify whether official CAC business or not in subject line of Email. Chris Smith suggested that both the Chair and Vice-Chair be copied so that if one of the officers is unable to respond in a timely manner the other could take action. Sarah and Alyssa voiced their opinion that communications should go through Chair and Vice-Chair; there was general agreement on this procedure.

This issue is likely most relevant during legislative session when time is often of the essence for CAC to make comments to DNR Staff or the Commissioner or contact our state officials as private citizens. Tom Casey and Mike Spry are serving in a legislative subcommittee role. Braker will make sure that they know this decision so that between the two officers action can be taken quickly as needed.

5. **Potential Future Presentations to CAC** Nancy and Judy were talking about CAC having a list of items that CAC would like to hear more about. A list was previously generated (last summer, but that was a DNR staff list, not CAC member list).

Jan mentioned the stated interest (from Chris Smith) to have CAC participate in the forest external audit. Emily Peters is willing to come to a future meeting and talk about forest management with a bigger context for the certification audit component.

Bruce will find out more about CAC participation in after-audit sessions with certification groups. Chris stated an interest in having enforcement also come and talk to this group.

Kevin is interested in hearing from a hydrologist/waters resource specialist, specifically regarding the over allocation of water through appropriation permits. There are lots of rare species impacted by water resources. How are water appropriations being managed?

Nancy would also like to hear more about turtles and herps, maybe Chris and Carol Hall.

Judy: have also been doing snake surveys on Prairie Bank properties, could do an update.

- Nancy requested that if CAC members would like to hear about specific topics to let her know.

6. **SNA 50th Anniversary Events** John Pearson complimented several efforts related to honoring the 50th Anniversary of SNA.

- *Handout: "50th Anniversary Events" on one side and "Event Attendance (Jan-May 2019)"*
- *Handout #2: graphics of 50th Anniversary Facebook Metrics*
 - Kudos to David Minor, CCMI specialist, who is adding value to communications.
- *Handout #3: Article from Nature Notes "50 Years of Protecting the Wild Places."*

Thank goodness for the people earlier involved who had the foresight to create this program.

John prompted the group to ask if the present work of this committee reflects the same level of care contributed by earlier members and leaders.

Meeting adjourned at 12:34 p.m. by Nancy.

*Draft notes provided by Jan Shaw Wolff, DNR Ecological and Water Resources,
Ecosystem Management and Protection Section Manager*

Christopher Smith - Bio

Presented as Member Profile 6/12/2019
Commissioner's Advisory Committee Mtg
Duluth, MN

Born in Indiana, but spent childhood in the Houston, Texas area.

Spent childhood fishing, catching snakes, lizards, frogs, insects. I liked the creepy crawlies that most others avoided.

My family moved up to New Ulm, MN just before I entered high school. My mom's side of the family is from the Mankato / St. Peter area.

Maintained interest in animals, especially reptiles.

Wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do after high school, so I attended Minneapolis Community and Tech College to get some generals out of the way.

Looked into becoming a zoo keeper, and in the process discovered the Fisheries and Wildlife program at the UMN.

Volunteered some with the Reptile and Amphibian Discovery Zoo in Owatonna, and quickly realized that I didn't want to just work with animals in captivity.

While an undergraduate student, I volunteered for MNDNR frog and toad calling surveys, bioblitzes, joined the Minnesota Herpetological Society, the MN Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and other professional organizations to network and build experience.

Near the end of undergrad I was hired by DNR Nongame – Central Region as a summer seasonal to complete some rare reptile surveys.

I was fortunate enough to get a partially Master's position at UMN in the Conservation Biology program, and went straight from undergrad into the graduate program. My project was a collaborative project with the Forest Resources Dept. looking at the impacts of coarse woody debris harvest on small mammals and amphibians in aspen dominated forest of NE MN. I also served as the curatorial assistant in the herpetology collection while a grad student.

I also received a Minor in entomology while a graduate student.

While in grad school, while working around the fieldwork necessary for my project, I continued to work for DNR nongame seasonally as time allowed.

After graduate school I was fortunate enough to be hired as a fulltime permanent in the Nongame Wildlife Program in DNR's Central Region.

During that time focused my work on SGCN amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates, but also completed small mammal surveys – including bats. Working for the Nongame Program was a great experience, and I still promote the program whenever possible.

I left DNR in early 2016 and accepted a position with the MnDOT as the Protected Species Program Coordinator. This position was a promotion, but I primarily took the position to try to change some of MnDOT practices within... habitat connectivity and turtle-road related conservation issues have always been a focus on mine.

Over the last few years at MnDOT I have been able to change various policies to improve natural resource protection, and continue to push the envelope – it's worth noting that in a few cases MnDOT beating out DNR in some of its best practices (e.g., tree clearing timing, erosion control materials, E&T plants, ...).

I've also been successful at getting MnDOT to support natural resource related research, including projects related to bumble bee communities and roadsides, turtles and roads, wildlife habitat connectivity, and bats and bridges.

MnDOT has also been a major player in the Monarch Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), and I've served as a Co-chair on the DOT Sector Team for this nationwide public-private collaboration.

In addition to my day-job, I am involved in many other organizations and misc. projects.

Owner – Wildlife Research & Consulting Services, LLC

Co-creator and Director of Public Affairs – HerpMapper

Creator, Coordinator – Amphibian and Reptile Survey of Minnesota (collab. with Bell Museum)

Conservation Committee Chair for MHS, former President and Board Member

Board Member – Center for North American Herpetology

Member – Forest Issues Committee, MN TWS

Advisory Committee Member – Friends of the MN SNAs

Chair – City of Lake St. Croix Beach Environmental Advisory Commission

Asst. City Forester – City of Lake St. Croix Beach

Creator / Admin – MN Naturalist – FB group 7.5K members

50 Years of Protecting the Wild Places

The Minnesota Legislature authorized the creation of Scientific and Natural Areas on May 16, 1969.

By David Minor, SNA Web and Social Media Specialist

Fifty years ago today, the Minnesota Legislature authorized Scientific and Natural Areas. Now, we celebrate these lands and the people who made them possible half a century ago.

"It is high time we set aside more such areas in Minnesota and had a program for preserving and maintaining them — if the youngsters of tomorrow are to know the living reality — and the richness of experience— which comes from knowing the natural area."
— *John B. Moyle, Department of Conservation, Division of Game and Fish, 1966*

Scientific and Natural Areas protect Minnesota's important natural features. The primary goal is to prevent these features from being lost in any ecological region of the state.

That is why in 1966, the department commissioner, Clarence Prout organized a team of 15 citizens, conservationists, and scientists who advised on the creation of natural areas. This group, the Advisory Committee to the Commissioner of Conservation on Scientific and Natural Areas, was the driving force behind the 1969 legislation. It shaped how the program works today.

"Today, you and I are responsible for the preservation of natural habitats and their wise use. We need to meet this responsibility lest future generations charge to us the same overall neglect as surely as the writings of Eckert indict an 1844 generation."
— *L.D. Frenzel Jr, founding member of Commissioner's Advisory Committee (CAC), 1966.*

Scientific and Natural Areas protect some of the state's best natural features, including geological formations, fossil evidence, undisturbed native plant communities, successional processes, rare species, relict flora or fauna, and seasonal wildlife concentrations.

"Preserving an example of only one of these areas does not preserve examples of others. All types are needed for valid comparisons. We also need the first prop airplane and the first space capsule for future comparison because they represent almost completely different adaptations for vastly different environments."
— *Max Patch, founding member of CAC, 1966*

The first Scientific and Natural Area was Rush Lake Island, in Chisago County. It was established in 1974 to preserve a heron rookery. There are now 168 Scientific and Natural Areas in Minnesota, with over 192,000 acres of land protected and open to the public.

It is not just about SNAs anymore either! The program has expanded to protect land in other ways. Native Prairie Tax Exemptions exempts qualified lands with native prairie from property taxes. The Natural Areas Registry identifies other public lands with important natural features. Native Prairie Bank conservation easements permanently protect and allow the DNR to help manage prairie on privately owned land.

There are 141 Native Prairie Bank Easements protecting over 12,800 acres. Many prairies are protected by Tax Exemption and nearly 50 sites are listed on the Natural Areas Registry. They influence protection of a further 20,000 acres. All these different protection strategies serve the main mission of the SNA Program.

"Man's very survival, his ambitions for a richer and more meaningful future, is dependent on a keener sense of stewardship for his environment, as well as the preservation of significant portions of that environment — unchanged"

– U.W. Hella, *Founding member of CAC*, 1966

These areas are also "outdoor labs" where researchers and students can go to study. SNAs are places where people can go to volunteer or attend interpretive events, and anyone may explore on their own to learn more about the natural world around them.

"Natural areas constitute an irreplaceable resource, as important to mankind as the earth's economic products. They are the living museums that exemplify the past for the benefit of the future. These undisturbed areas are requisite to our way of life, for it is to nature that man frequently turns for inspiration; also, these areas provide the only true background against which to measure the changes that civilization has wrought in our environment. They often help us to understand and tolerate such changes."

– John Humke, *the Nature Conservancy*, 1966

The Scientific and Natural Areas Program is now 50 years old. The mission that started when the legislation passed in 1969 continues today. Every natural area volunteer, advocate, conservationist, scientist, visitor, employee, and you, reading this right now, help that mission.

Some of the founding members of the Citizens Advisory Committee wrote about natural areas in a 1966 issue of the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer. Members of the committee Dr. L.B. Frenzel Jr, Dr. Max Partch, and U.W. "Judge" Hella all wrote in support of natural areas, and Dr. Walter Breckenridge submitted art. Dr. John Moyle from the Division of Game and Fish, and John Humke from the Nature Conservancy contributed as well.

The Commissioner's Advisory Committee continues its role advising the Scientific and Natural Areas Program today.

SNA Programs 50th Anniversary Event Attendance (Jan - May 2019)

Event Name	Location	Event Date(s)	Event Type	Volunteer Hours Worked	Volunteer Event Attendance	Interpretive Attendance
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Burn Brush, Invasive Removal	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	1/26/19	Volunteer	16	4	
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Buckthorn Removal	Chamberlain Woods SNA	2/9/19	Volunteer	0	0	
Presentation to H.E.P. membership	Hasting MN	2/23/19	Interpretive			15
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Burn Brush, Invasive Removal	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	2/23/19	Volunteer	16	4	
Snowshoe in the Bog	Lost Lake Peatland SNA	2/23/19	Interpretive			0
Presentation for Cannon River Valley Master Naturalists	Carleton College	3/21/19	Interpretive			30
MN Native Plant Society Symposium 50th Info booth	MN Landscape Arboretum	3/23/19	Interpretive			200
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Clear Brush	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	3/23/19	Volunteer	32	7	
Beavers vs. Glaciers at Mille Lacs Moraine SNA	Mille Lacs Moraine SNA	3/29/19	Interpretive			14
Astronomy Night	Sugarloaf Point SNA	4/13/19	Interpretive			18
The Weird and Wonderful World of Galls	Eveleth Public Library	4/16/19	Interpretive			5
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Clear Brush	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	4/20/19	Volunteer	28.5	8	
Earth Day Hike!	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	4/22/19	Interpretive			TBD
Amphibian Hike at Mille Lacs Moraine SNA	Mille Lacs Moraine SNA	4/26/19	Interpretive			11
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Garlic mustard pull	Pine Bend Bluffs SNA	5/1/19	Volunteer	40	20	
Flowers of Spring	Bluestem Prairie SNA	5/3/19	Interpretive			TBD
Frog Walk	Wolfstead Woods SNA	5/3/19	Interpretive			TBD
First Friday Art Walk	Downtown Grand Rapids, MN	5/3/19	Interpretive			TBD
Big Watch Birding Event	Grey Cloud Dunes SNA	5/4/19	Interpretive			TBD
Wetland Tour at Savage Fen	Savage Fen SNA	5/7/19	Interpretive			30
BioBlitz/species list development - spring ephemerals	Wood-Rill SNA	5/9/19	Volunteer		10	
Wildflower Hike	Moose Mountain SNA	5/9/19	Interpretive			20
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Brush Removal work day #1	Helen Allison Savanna SNA	5/11/19	Volunteer		3	
Warbler Walk	Wolfstead Woods SNA	5/11/19	Interpretive			TBD
Spring Wildflower Walk	Wolfstead Woods SNA	5/12/19	Interpretive			TBD
St. Louis River Quest	Duluth Entertainment Convention Ctr	5/13/14	Interpretive			800
Gathering Partners Conference	Willmar Conference Center, MN	5/17/19	Interpretive			155
Friday Night Hikes	Bluestem Prairie SNA	5/17/19	Interpretive			16
DI Birding Festival: Field Trip	Bluestem Prairie SNA	5/18/19	Interpretive			20
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Garlic Mustard	Wood-Rill SNA	5/21/19	Volunteer		0	
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Invasive Removal (cow vetch)	Grey Cloud Dunes SNA	5/21/19	Volunteer			TBD
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Invasive Removal (bittercress)	Grey Cloud Dunes SNA	5/22/19	Volunteer			TBD
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Invasive Removal	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	5/25/19	Volunteer			TBD
Volunteer Stewardship Project: Garlic Mustard	Wolfstead Woods SNA	5/30/19	Volunteer		13	

50th Anniversary Events

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snap/snap50.html>

6/12/19	Frenchman's Bluff SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
6/14/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
6/19/19	Sandpiper Prairie SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
6/20/19	Seminary Fen SNA	50th Anniversary Plant BioBlitz!
6/21/19	Kasota Prairie SNA	Reptile and Amphibian Walk
6/21/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
6/22/19	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	Volunteer Stewardship Project: Invasive Removal, Seed Collection
6/26/19	Twin Valley Prairie SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
6/27/19	Hastings Sand Coulee SNA	Tend the rare prairie at the Hastings Sand Coulee SNA
6/28/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
6/29/19	Iron Horse Prairie SNA	50th Anniversary BioBlitz!
7/10/19	Felton Prairie SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
7/12/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
7/13/19	Iron Horse Prairie SNA	Volunteer Stewardship Project: Wild Parsnip Removal
7/17/19	Blanket Flower Prairie SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
7/19/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
7/20/19	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	Volunteer Stewardship Project: Invasive Removal, Seed Collection
7/24/19	Richard M. & Mathilde R. Elliot SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
7/26/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
7/27/19	Townsend Woods SNA	Mushroom Walk
7/31/19	Western Prairie SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
8/2/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
8/3/19	River Warren Outcrops SNA	Dragonfly and Damselfly Walk
8/3/19	Felton Prairie SNA	WaterColors: En Plein Art on the Prairie Series
8/4/19	Yellow Bank Hills SNA	Dragonfly and Damselfly Walk
8/7/19	Prairie Smoke Dunes SNA	Wednesdays in the Wild
8/9/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
8/16/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
8/23/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
8/24/19	Wolsfeld Woods SNA	Warbler Walk
8/24/19	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	Volunteer Stewardship Project: Invasive Removal, Seed Collection
8/24/19	Blanket Flower Prairie SNA	WaterColors: En Plein Art on the Prairie Series
8/30/19	Bluestem Prairie SNA	Friday Night Hikes
9/7/19	Wolsfeld Woods SNA	Mushroom Walk
9/18/19	Pine Bend Bluffs SNA	Seed Collecting at Pine Bend Bluffs SNA
9/21/19	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	Volunteer Project on Nat'l Public Lands Day: Seed Collection
9/24/19	Grey Cloud Dunes SNA	Seed Collecting at Grey Cloud Dunes SNA
9/28/19	Grey Cloud Dunes SNA	50th Anniversary Volunteer Stewardship Project: Seed Collection
10/26/19	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	Volunteer Stewardship Project: Seed Collection
11/9/19	Grey Cloud Dunes SNA	50th Anniversary Volunteer Stewardship Project: Seed Collection
11/23/19	Lost Valley Prairie SNA	Volunteer Project: Invasive Removal and Seed Collection

2019 50th Anniversary Facebook Metrics

#MNSNAP50

Average Post Reach

1,432

Total number of times #MNSNAP content was seen on Facebook: 48,583

Post reach: the number of people who interacted with or viewed #SNAP50 posts

#MNSNAP50 is the official hashtag of the 50th anniversary used in all SNA 50th anniversary Facebook posts.

Engagement

The number of people who clicked on, liked, commented or shared any SNA content.

#MNSNAP50: 1,731

Website Traffic

The number of times the 50th anniversary webpage (mndnr.gov/snap50) was viewed and the source of visitors.

Facebook	Newsletter	Google search
95 pageviews	171 pageviews	839 Page views

Total: 1,353 pageviews



5,826

PAGE LIKES

Twenty-five #MNSNAP50 posts have been shared so far on Facebook.

Most Successful Posts for #MNSNAP50



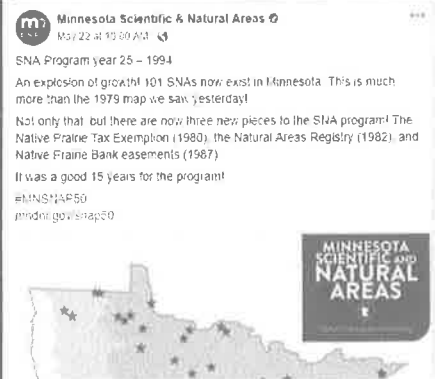
141 Engagements

3,090 People Reached



404 engagements

3,063 People Reached



214 engagements

2,301 People Reached



ENVIRONMENT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES
TRUST FUND

Reported on 06/05/2019