



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

Youth Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee Natural Resources Advisory Board

Wednesday, September 9, 2009
Rock Island County Farm Bureau
1601 52nd Ave, Suite 3
Moline, Illinois
1:00 PM

Minutes

Call to Order and Roll Call

Michael Howard, Fuller Community Development, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Roll Call

Kent Adams, National Wild Turkey Federation; Elizabeth Hagen-Mueller, Environmental Education Association of Illinois; Michael Howard, Fuller Park Community Development; and Aaron Kuehl, Pheasant Forever.

Approval of Minutes

Howard moved to approve the minutes from the August 24 meeting, Kuehl seconded. Minutes passed unanimously. Minutes are posted at <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/nrab/children.htm>.

Youth Programs in Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever – Aaron Kuehl, Pheasants Forever

Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail Forever (QF) youth programs are focused on sparking interest in outdoors and sharing the skills necessary and providing access, opportunity, and the experience to recruit youth and to train good hunters and conservationists for tomorrow. Youth spend half as much time in the outdoors as their parents did, 6.5 hours a day using electronics, after school. This is a huge challenge for getting kids outdoors. The benefits of outdoor activities include lower obesity rates, healthfulness, and bonding experiences between parents and children. As our population is growing more urban, our children have less of a connection with land.

The umbrella program of PF and QF is called No Child Left Indoors and is focused on addressing the issue of kids spending more time inside. The program is comprehensive, working with local chapters and members as well as communities and organizations who want to enhance and build on our programs and provide more opportunities for kids and their families.

50% of children want to do outdoor activities but don't have the access but parents must bring their children and participate in the offered activities. Nationally, PF has hosted 500 youth events, impacting

about 2500 kids over the last few years. Illinois has about 30-40 events reaching about 3000-5000 kids every year.

Hunter safety courses are run by the DNR, but some chapters operate them for the DNR locally. Some courses are ladies only, to encourage participation by women and mothers. Women are the only hunting contingent that is growing. Once youth participate in a hunting safety course, it is essential to get them involved in the activity as soon as possible.

Our Youth Mentor Hunt program is growing quickly in the nation. The program is scattered throughout the State, but a more cohesive effort should be made to implement the program statewide. In other states like Minnesota, programs are in effect that opens private lands for youth hunts. This provides a continued opportunity for youth to get involved and participate in more frequent hunts. Consistent access to land for outdoor activities is a continual barrier to these activities.

PF and QF offer many more activities and programs targeted at youth. Youth Conservation Day offers kids an opportunity to try various conservation activities including mock hunts, boating, fishing, photography, and more. Most chapters provide a youth membership. Conservation Camps in other states are partnerships between the DNR and PF that offer mentors for two day activities and kids learn the same things offered in the Conservation Days and get a chance to hunt in the field. Illinois PF now has a Youth Programs Coordinator in Chicago to provide assistance to our chapters for youth events and promotions. The Illinois Youth Leadership Council was established this month. The council will consist of 6-8 kids ages 10-18 and they will be involved in the decision-making process of PF. The Aldo Leopold Education Project is a teaching teachers program. Workshops for teachers give them tools to teach the Leopold land ethic in classrooms. The Youth Village at Pheasant Fest offers youth opportunities to learn about hunting and conservation practices. A partnership with FFA offers the chapters funds for kids to identify and build conservation areas in their communities, including school yards.

Youth Programs for National Wild Turkey Federation – Kent Adams, National Wild Turkey Federation

Nationally, hunters are being lost faster than replacing them. But, chapters determine their own focus, so some are more involved than others in youth programs and activities. The main youth program is JAKES, Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics, and Sportsmanship. The program is about getting involved and engaged in natural resource management. Extreme JAKES is targeted towards older teenagers. JAKES events are a round robin type schedule, where kids are exposed to several activities in a day. For more information about JAKES visit <http://www.nwtf.org/jakes/>.

Mentored youth hunts take kids out to private lands for hunting opportunities. Learn to hunt events take the entire weekend to educate kids on the hunter safety and ends in an actual hunting opportunity. Other conservation opportunities include stream clean ups and partnerships with Boy Scouts and FFA. Programs for youth don't need to change. Inviting interested youth is the key. Reaching out to interested parties and informing them of the activities will get more youth involved.

National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) offers several other programs for youth. A scholarship program offers \$5-6k for post high school education for students interested in natural resource education. NWTF partnered with DNR for National Archery in the Schools Program to get equipment for participating schools. A conservation education curriculum is offered in turkey transport box for teachers. Additional education resources are offered for science classes, and they meet national education standards. Many resources and training events are offered for educators. A national award is given each year for the conservation educator of the year.

Other Business

The next meeting will be at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe at 3 PM, on September 29.

Public Comment Period

Funds, staff, and volunteers are needed throughout the state to meet the demand for conservation education and activities. Many schools and teachers want to educate children on outdoor activities, but resources and staff are needed to assist them.

Providing information in school newsletters can get the message out to more families and students about educational and conservation activities.

DNR and NGOs should attend teacher conferences to get the word out to educators about programs.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.