

Manitoba Chapter, The Wildlife Society – Conservation Affairs Committee

Meeting September 12, 2017, 19h00, MB Hydro Building, 820 Taylor Avenue, Winnipeg

Draft Minutes

- Review agenda- approved
- Review previous minutes- approved
- Reshuffling in the ministers office
 - May have had impact on response to our recent letter on moose and water management. New deputy minister is Rob Olson who has a background in wildlife from MWF
- Action items from last meeting
 - U of M Student Wildlife Term Paper Ideas
 - Sent to BU, UCN, UW and UM in case they wanted some ideas for potential project ideas
 - **Action: Get chapter to post on our website**
 - Feral Cats in Winnipeg
 - Brian Kiss, president of MB Chapter contacted COO from the City of Winnipeg. Notes from the conversation are attached below:

“- It is true that TNR is taking place in Winnipeg, but he stressed that a "miniscule" amount of the grant provided to the Winnipeg Humane Society from the city is being used for this. TNR is happening, but not large scale "round ups".

- The city only permits WHS to release in industrial areas, not residential. I take it that the COO has the authority to make exemptions to the bylaw, which is happening since the WHS is acting as an "owner" and releasing cats, but they've chosen to explicitly not allow releases in residential areas.

- When the city put their current bylaw forward in 2013 it was met with a loud voice from those opposed to euthanizing feral cats and those opposed to leash laws in general. Unfortunately wildlife concerns were not generally expressed.

- He stressed that the city of Winnipeg is trying to walk a fine line between determining and managing and acceptable tolerance of cats to some residents, and listening to the large group that is outright against the euthanasia of any animal. There is also a segment of the population that actually pro-feral cat colony in both industrial and residential areas for rodent control.

- I stressed that we see euthanasia as last resort that will be preceded by other actions.

- He understands our organization's concerns about the impacts to wildlife and encourage us to continue to voice our concerns through this avenue and other public awareness forms such as "letters to the editor".

- The did receive a similar letter from an organization called Cats and Birds (catsandbirds.ca).

- At this time there are no plans to amend the city's bylaw to either strengthen or loosen roaming cat laws, but if anything is ever proposed, he encourages us to comment.

If we'd like any more follow up conversations, he'd be happy to talk again."

- What should our follow up be?

- We could send a letter to suggest monitoring of success and provide some options of how to best monitoring. Suggest no further expansion unless there are some results that show effectiveness in reducing feral cat populations.
 - **Action: CAC members to follow up**
- Moose conservation in Manitoba and meeting with new minister Sustainable Development
 - No response yet, hopefully shortly and will set up meeting
- Manitoba Fisheries Concerns and Letter
 - Member has reached out to Rob Olson, but have not heard back from him as he has moved into deputy minister. Brian Kotak from Model Forest has moved into MWF executive director.
 - **Action: CAC member to follow up with Brian Kotak**
- Wildlife Feeding
 - Sub-committee to meet to discuss now that summer is over.
 - CAC member has been gathering by-laws from across Canada and the US
 - TWS policy statement
 - **Action: Make progress**
- Baiting Owls
 - Sub-committee to meet to discuss now that summer is over.
 - Same sub-committee as wildlife feeding
 - **Action: Make progress**
- Birtle Transmission Project
 - Certain members recuse from conversation
 - Final route to be determined in certain section in community pasture. Route will go through this pasture, but not sure what the quality of habitat is. The surveys were done ~15 years ago to assess presence of bird species at risk. What should be our process? If environmental assessment uncovers bird species at risk, we can enact different protections that exist. Letter should focus on supporting a thorough environmental assessment.
 - Pull from Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission line comment letter from 2014 to help. Species of concern, routing issues, etc.
 - Mitigation could be in the form of subsidies for cattle grazing. I.e. Sprague's pipit like longer grass.
 - Member added- using data from community pastures, could create maps, calendar for construction, mitigations for activities in pastures. Stocking rates, health assessments, monitoring SAR, etc. are dealt with by management committee RINGY (ag and conservation people who manage community pasture) (NCC, MB gov., feds, others). This committee is already providing feedback on this transmission line, could we complement what they are already doing?

- Neonics and effects on grassland birds, insects, etc.- might be opportunities to comment. Recent study between neonics and impacts on productivity of wetlands, etc. Kristy Morrissey's research. BU (with Bayer and CWS) is starting a study on this topic
 - **Action: Add to next agenda**
- Wild at Heart Banquet on Oct. 19
- Adjourned- 20:25