



Photo from <http://www.niu.edu/taft>

2010 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MW PARC held its Annual Meeting at the Lorado Taft Field Campus of Northern Illinois University near Oregon, Illinois, from 13-15 August, 2010. The meeting was attended by 82 participants from across the Midwest, representing a wide range of professions as summarized below.

State	Number	Profession	Number
Illinois	40	Students	18
Wisconsin	9	State and Government Agency	18
Indiana	8	Academic Research	9
Minnesota	7	Federal Government Agency	8
Iowa	6	Zoo and Museum	7
Ohio	5	Private Consultant	6
Michigan	5	Hobbyist/Amateur	4
Missouri	2	Nongovernmental Organization	2
Arizona	1		

This year's meeting focused on **Blanding's Turtle Biology, Conservation, and Management** and featured a keynote address by **Dr. Justin Congdon**, who left his Bar Boot Ranch, with its view of the Swisshelm Mountains, and his meticulously



Photos by Justin Congdon

restored '47 Mercury coupe to present new



information on core area use by Blanding's and other turtle species. Dr. Congdon analysis provides important new guidance for future Blanding's turtle (and other species) management.

Included in the program were 15 invited talks focused on Blanding's turtle management strategies (head starting, predator control), phylogeography, reproductive ecology, monitoring, and recovery efforts. Eleven poster presentations focused on conservation efforts for other Midwestern amphibians and reptiles, including mole salamanders, frogs, newts, copper-bellied

watersnakes, massasauga rattlesnakes, and spotted turtles. Meeting details and abstracts are included in the meeting program booklet.

Sunday morning featured a synthesis of the status of Blanding's turtles in MW PARC states organized by Greg Lipps. This was followed by breakout sessions that resulted in the formation of four task teams addressing Blanding's turtle conservation issues. The **Blanding's Turtle Distribution Mapping Team** will develop current distribution maps with township level resolution. The **Best Blanding's Turtle Populations Team** will identify what each state considers there "best" population(s) of Blanding's turtles. The **Blanding's Turtle Core Areas Team** will develop a white paper focused on Blanding's turtle core area use based on published and unpublished data sources from across the species' range. **The Blanding's Turtle Habitat Management, Survey and Monitoring Team** will develop recommendations for managers and surveyors. Task teams will be developing specific objectives and timetables for completion in the months ahead and invite participation by all who might be interested in contributing - contact information for each team will be available soon. Task team progress will be monitored during monthly advisory board conference calls.

Nearly 30 attendees participated in field trips to Nachusa Grasslands and more than 40 attendees participated in field trips to Richardson Wildlife Foundation.

Nachusa Grasslands is a Nature Conservancy prairie restoration project begun in 1986 which now occupies roughly 3,000 acres. Sandstone knobs precluded row-crop agriculture and preserved a core of prairie-remnant habitat that has served as a seed source for ongoing restoration efforts. It was on one of these knobs that field trip attendees found an ornate box turtle. Participants also witnessed seed-milling operations, visited restoration units of differing ages, and trekked to the 'sand boil' – a spring-fed wetland fed by a perched water-table.



Photos by Carol Hall

Richardson Wildlife Foundation is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation established in 1989 with the goals of Habitat Restoration and Development; Conservation Education; and Research.

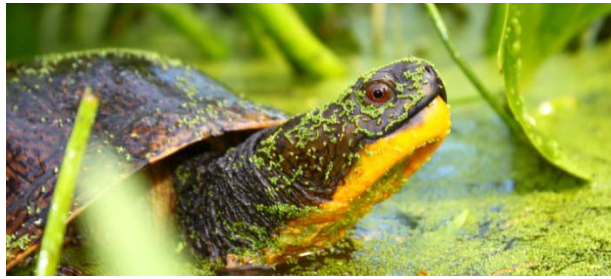


Photo by Jason Ross

Richardson Wildlife Foundation encompasses 1800 acres of native and restored prairie, wetland, and forest. Blanding's turtles and ornate box turtles are both found on the site and four Blanding's turtles were captured in traps set prior to MW PARC field trips – the first records for 2010!

Site managers at Nachusa Grasslands, Richardson Wildlife Foundation, and the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge emphasized opportunities for research (contact information is provided below).

Nachusa Grasslands	Richardson Wildlife Foundation	Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge
Bill Kleiman, Project Director, 815-456-2340, bkleiman@tnc.or	Terry L. Moyer, Manager & Wildlife Biologist, 815-628-3300; Brian Towey, Staff Ecologist, jbtowey@gmail.com	Jeramie Strickland , USFWS Wildlife Biologist, 815-273-2732 jeramie_strickland@fws.gov.

Another meeting highlight was the screening of two films by **Ravenswood Media**, a Chicago-based nature, wildlife, environmental and science video production company, with commentary provided by videographer David McGowan (312-356-9099, mcgowan@ravenswoodmedia.com). The short film 'To Build a Better Ditch' was commissioned by the Nature Conservancy and demonstrates an improved method for agricultural drainage. It can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/7901535>. A longer film, 'Why Frogs Call and Why We Should Listen' is available for purchase at <http://www.midwestfrogs.com/>.

T-shirts featuring art-work donated by Roger Hall (www.inkart.net) sold out rapidly and the silent auction raised \$1,000 for MW PARC!

The formal meeting ended with the announcement of co-chair and advisory board election results. Rich King was elected co-chair, joining Kent Bekker (elected at the 2009 meeting). Bob Brodman, Bill Flanagan, Greg Lipps, Allison Sacerdote, and Kristin Stanford were elected to the advisory board, joining Karen Kinkaid (past co-chair), Jeff Briggler, Gary Casper, Bruce Kingsbury, Steve Mullin, Mike Redmer, and Marcy Sieggren.

<http://www.mwparc.org>

Midwest PARC's goal is to conserve amphibians, reptiles and their habitats as integral parts of our ecosystem and culture through proactive and coordinated public/private partnerships in the Midwest.