

WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

November 15, 2024

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

<https://illinois.zoom.us/j/82472131988?pwd=VW1aQTdpOTI1UE85Nnlaa2phYVlmQT09> Meeting ID: 824 7213 1988 Password: 753559 One tap mobile +13126266799,,82472131988# US (Chicago) +16465189805,,82472131988# US (New York)

Resources:

NOTES:

Attendees:

Joy O’Keefe
Michael Eichholtz
Scott Meister
Gary Glowacki

Joy requested if it would be possible to change the Dec. 20th meeting date. Lydia has a conflict. Joy will send out a poll for an alternative day the week of December 16th. It was later confirmed this date is ok but we will send out a poll for changing dates for the January and March meetings.

Joy reported that the nutria paper was sent to John Lough. Mike will be attending the Council’s December meeting and will report back to the Committee with any comments or recommendations. Joy will send out a final copy to everyone and upload it to the drive. She will work with Mike to be sure the final copy of the feral swine paper is also there.

The Committee discussed next steps for outdoor cats. Following were suggestions:

1. It would be important to determine what if any action IDNR would be willing to take.
 - a. What would be expected of IDNR?
 - b. Would the state be willing to focus on outreach and education?
 - c. It is not believed that a policy change would take place.
2. Without regulatory change, behavioral change may be what is needed. Could outcomes be focused on the actions of people, e.g. spay/neuter, not letting their cats out unattended, etc.
3. Education and outreach:
 - a. Help people make informed decisions.
 - b. Educate people so they are less likely to build feral cat populations.
 - c. Make people aware of the impact of outdoor cats. (Determine what type of outreach has already been provided.)
4. Would IDNR be willing to do some type of survey? A survey may be useful to:
 - a. Understand what information is already out there.
 - b. What messaging would be helpful.
 - c. Determine awareness of impacts of outdoor cats.
 - d. Could survey veterinarians to see what they tell people about outdoor cats.

5. Joy and group went over the rating form to determine how outdoor cats would score. They scored as a medium risk, primarily because of concerns about environmental impacts.
6. The benefit of putting a pest proposal would be to consolidate information on the risks and to develop a 2-step plan to encourage IDNR to conduct outreach
7. Joy provided links to two webpages with information on outdoor cats in Illinois:

<https://wildlifeillinois.org/prevent-problems/prevent-wildlife-attacks-on-pets/>
<https://extension.illinois.edu/invasives/feral-cats>

Mike has been in contact with an individual from TNC about the potential to replace him on the committee. Joy reached out to Matt Allender (Illinois VetMed) about potentially serving but was unable to connect at recent conference. Will try again.

Action items:

1. Joy will send out the draft of the pest control rating for cats.
2. Committee members should suggest other individuals/organizations who could participate on the Committee to discuss this topic. The Committee does not want this to be contentious and wants to consider further if other perspectives would be useful here.
3. Committee members please search for examples of prior studies (anywhere) on assessing public “knowledge” of impacts of outdoor cats.
4. Mike is going to go to the council and get feedback on the nutria paper. December 5th 10-2.