

# Results for the 2007 Conference Evaluations

**Summary:** Overall attendees enjoyed the conference based on the evaluations. There is never enough time to satisfy all the topics people want to hear about, but we got great feedback on what to include in future conferences and things to work on throughout the year which can improve monitoring efforts. A frequent comment people made was to hear more about volunteers – how to recruit them, keep them, and how to grow a program to be a long lasting success. Continuing from last years conference theme people also want to see their program efforts linked to Wisconsin management decisions and to other related projects. There appears to be an even split between breakout sessions and one presenter at a time, so next year the conference will alternate presentation style to incorporate breakout sessions. Everyone enjoyed the location of the conference which provided a perfect setting for the two days.

## **1. What topics or themes would you like to see covered in next year's conference?**

- A variety of topics is always good
- Biotic Index Seminars
- River water monitoring phase II, III
- Hands-on sessions
- Long term plant community monitoring/abundance data linked to phenology
- Like to hear how groups make their particular program work
- Wetland evaluation
- Workshops and updates on CBM partnerships
- More hands-on using PDAs and web site data management
- Presentation on the Pine Marten project in Iron County
- More on specific monitoring programs on or in the water
- More on use of volunteers, not so much on specific of a study!
- How to write grants/fund projects
- How to prepare press releases/get the word out about what the data shows
- How to keep track of volunteers year after year
- Recruiting volunteers. Maintaining volunteers.
- Controversial topics to certain parts of the state
- New monitoring opportunities
- Clean Boats, Clean Waters. Aquatic invasive species, stream and lake monitoring.
- Another SWIMS update
- GPS/Orienteering training
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology person to highlight all their citizen science projects
- Have volunteers talk
- Why is citizen monitoring data important? How is it used?
- Critters we don't hear much about such as freshwater mussels
- Results of Wisconsin bat survey
- More on climate change and how it is affecting wildlife, plants, ecosystems, etc
- State level monitoring priorities and how volunteers tie into it

- Discussion on watersheds or subwatersheds; look at data collected, what it means and what should be done in the future
- Breakout session that is geared toward K-12 education
- Not just stuff about programs, but how they work and the pros and cons of the system
- Ways organizations train volunteers and see examples (handouts, CDs, websites)

**2. Do you prefer to have breakout sessions or one presentation at a time similar to this year?**

- Breakout sessions (15)
- One presentation at a time (17)
- Morning plenary and afternoon breakouts (4)
- Both ways are good (4)
- Like the one at a time...presentations I might not have attended ended up being very beneficial to what I am working on. (2)
- Sessions with topics that focus on common themes across different types of monitoring (funding, RA/QC, status of WI Wildlife)
- One presentation at a time with shorter time limits to allow more talks
- Those who went over in speaking time cut into other presenters time

**3. How could the annual conference better help you in your monitoring efforts?**

- A session on how to motivate and attract participants
- Identify funding sources (4)
- Workshop on grant writing
- Better understanding of other monitoring efforts
- Continue to provide access to DNR resources
- Need more time for networking
- Talk about how to get volunteers
- Talk about steps that need to be taken to start up a program in my community
- Have discussion topic tables during meals
- Have more handouts to bring back for the rest of our organization members
- Have breakout sessions that involve working in small groups to brainstorm solutions to common issues in citizen science monitoring
- How do we connect the data we collect with someone who can use it?
- Have panel discussions so we can discuss issues with experts and network with folks who are doing similar work
- More on how to link related projects and data
- Ask speakers to point out the level of support given to volunteers in each program and grants available to these interested in each type of monitoring
- Share how the results volunteers have collected has been used. For example, WAV and SWIMS.
- More time on actually learning how to do the monitoring. Eg. hands-on sessions like those on Saturday

**4. Do you prefer to have the conference on a Thursday/Friday or Friday/Saturday?**

- Thursday/Friday (15)
- Friday/Saturday (28)
- Friday/Saturday good for volunteers and accommodates teachers better.

**5. Did you have any comments concerning the location, food or lodging?**

- Beautiful location
- Wonderful food
- Didn't like room accommodations
- Easy to find
- Great if conference could be in northwestern part of state
- Move conference further north or to central Wisconsin
- Enjoyed visiting Devil's Lake State Park
- Reasonable room cost
- Nice facility
- Not enough coffee cups
- Lots of noise from adjacent room making it hard to hear presenters
- Temperature in room too cold

**6. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding this year's conference?**

- Ask Native American Nations that are large land owners to take part
- Use minute count down cards for speakers to keep sessions on time
- Everything went well, time control was difficult though
- Offer workshops/info on how volunteers can communicate the relevance of their data to the communities via outreach/education, nature centers, agency officials
- I like the breakout of the stream monitoring symposium on Saturday
- Overall great conference
- Day was a little too full
- Too much sitting
- This was my first conference and I really enjoyed the talks, the format, and the chance to meet other people passionate about the environment
- Enjoyed hearing Matthew Frank speak
- All the speakers were great and worth the long day
- How does this conference reach the public that might want to be the citizen scientist?
- Need to get word out better about awards
- I am grateful to be with others who are nature lovers each fall. These conferences are an inspiration to all of us.
- Consider regional, shorter conferences with one or two topics