

Summer Issue 2010



OFWIM News

President's Message: Jen Carlino

Inside this Issue:

President's Message **1**

OFWIM 2010: Registration Information **2**

Conference Information **3**

Second Call for Papers **4**

Articles from OFWIM Members **5-7**

Announcements from Membership **8-9**

Officers and Committees **10**

Individual Membership Form **11**

Organizational Membership Form **12**

Until Next Time.... **13**

Happy Summer, OFWIM Members! It's hard to believe summer has arrived and our conference is just 3 months away. Hopefully, you have plans to get outdoors and enjoy your parks and recreation areas this summer. Even with busy professional and play schedules, our OFWIM committees continue to work hard and be very active this year. Here are some highlights:

The Executive Committee has been developing a policy related to conference sponsors that will outline different levels of participation and support. Please look for more information as we get into the fall. If you have interested sponsors for the conference, please contact Mark Brunner. The Elections, Nominations, and Awards Committee has been busy soliciting nominations for officer positions. The Training and Education and Data Standards and Technology Trends Committees are exploring a work session regarding ESRI and GoogleEarth licensing experiences across agencies. Also, check out Bruce Schmidt's article on page 5 on "A New Tool for Electronic Data Capture: Write Data Directly to a Spreadsheet Using a Pen." The Communications Committee has been actively producing our newsletter and sending correspondence for special messages. The Membership and Outreach Committee will be reaching out to a broad audience based on the regional areas in the coming months.

The Conference Planning Committee has been hard at work putting together a fantastic experience for you in Kentucky in October. Don't miss a chance to highlight your activities at the meeting - the Call for Papers is on page 4. If travel costs represent a challenge, consider submitting a travel grant application (see page 3) or participating through remote access. For more conference information, see <http://www.ofwim.org> or to register, see <http://www.regonline.com/ofwim2010>.

If you're participating in professional society meetings in the coming months, please consider promoting OFWIM. Many OFWIM Members provide outreach at conferences they attend. If you need a poster for display, or brochures to hand out, please contact me at jcarlino AT usgs.gov.

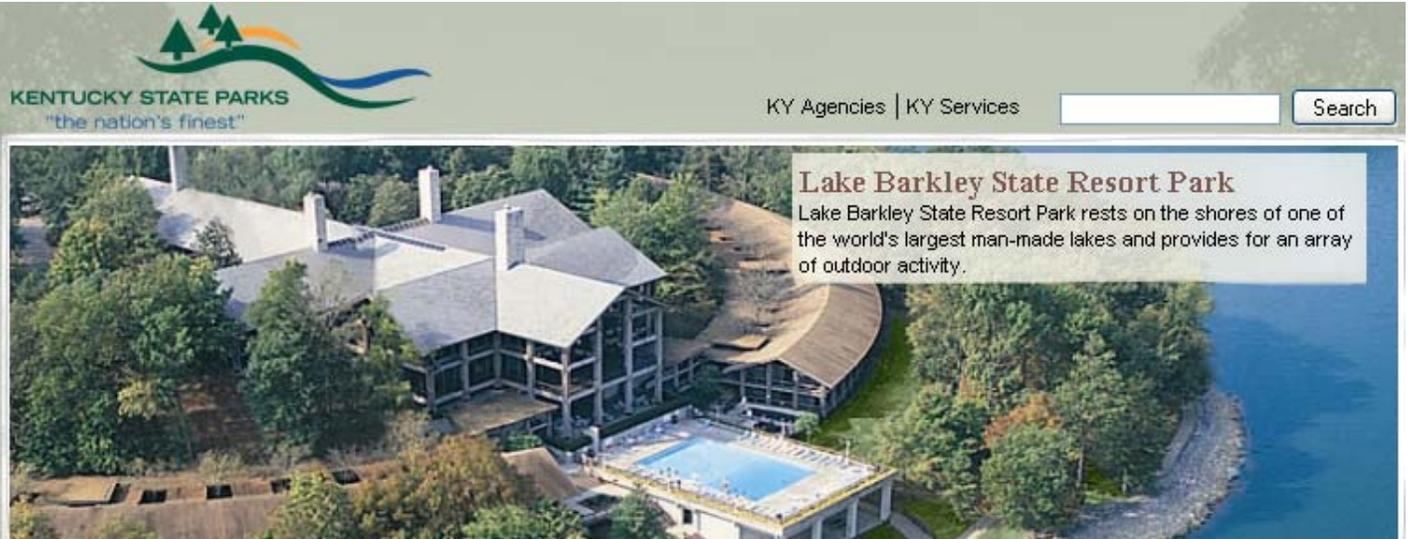
As the annual conference and business meeting near, please remember to submit your abstracts, award nominations, and membership renewals.

On a personal note, I want to acknowledge the OFWIM members who truly make this organization thrive and I am privileged to work with so many dedicated colleagues.

Safe travels this summer holiday season and see you in Kentucky!

All the best,
Jen Carlino

Join Us for the OFWIM 2010 Conference: October 18-21 in Cadiz, KY!!



Attendees must contact the lodge directly to make reservations.

When you make reservations, mention the group name “Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife” to get the group room rate of \$59.95 per night (rate available for the nights of 17-21 October).

Toll-free: 1.800.325.1708

REGISTRATION is OPEN!!

<https://www.regonline.com/ofwim2010>



Join us Monday, October 18th for a field trip that will highlight cooperative wildlife management efforts in this region by various agencies. The field trip will start with a boat ride from the Lake Barkley State Park Marina to Duck Island, located in Lake Barkley. Duck Island is owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers and managed as a waterfowl refuge by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Department biologists will give an overview of various management practices that are used to maximize the use of this area for waterfowl. We will pick up lunch and head to Clark’s River National Wildlife Refuge to eat and tour the refuge. The field trip will then move to Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, managed by the US Forest Service. We will spend time at the Nature Center and Planetarium with time for short hikes around the Golden Pond Visitor Center. In the late afternoon we will be joined by Steve Bloemer, a wildlife biologist with LBL, as we tour the 700 acre Elk and Bison Prairie. The fee for the field trip is \$15, plus the cost of lunch.

Conference Information

TRAVEL GRANTS:

OFWIM Travel Grants are designed to assist current or retired professionals in attending the 2010 Conference and Annual Meeting at Lake Barkley State Resort Park in Cadiz, Kentucky, October 18-21. The application form is available at http://www.ofwim.org/meetings/2010OFWIMTravelGrant2010_Interactive.pdf

and the application deadline is July 31, 2010. Award recipients will be notified by August 6, 2010. Recipients are expected to present a formal paper or poster at the meeting. Please contact Julie Prior-Magee <jpmagee AT usgs.gov> with questions.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS:

The Student Scholarship Application has been posted on the OFWIM site at <<http://www.ofwim.org/meetings/2010/OFWIMScholarship2010.pdf>>. If you know of an interested student, please feel free to forward the link. The deadline for submission is 31 July 2010. Recipients are expected to present a formal paper or poster at the meeting.

EXPENSES GUIDE:

A handy Estimated Expenses Guide to the 2010 Annual Meeting is posted on the OFWIM site at <http://www.ofwim.org/meetings/2010/2010_GuideToConferenceExpenses.pdf>.

RAFFLE ITEMS:

It's never too early to think about raffle items that you or your agency may be interested in donating to the 2010 OFWIM Raffle, held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. Proceeds from raffle ticket sales support the OFWIM Student Scholarship Fund, which helps underwrite the travel costs of the next generation of fish and wildlife information managers to attend our Annual Meetings.



REGISTRATION

is OPEN!!

<[https://
www.regonline.
com/ofwim2010](https://www.regonline.com/ofwim2010)>





Organization of Fish and Wildlife Information Managers

Second Call for Papers

OFWIM 2010 Conference – October 18-21, 2010

Lake Barkley State Resort Park Cadiz, Kentucky

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION IN PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

- State Wildlife Action Plan Updates
- Climate Change
- Mobile Technology – GPS, GIS, Smart Phones, etc.
- Emerging Technology
- Interagency Cooperation
- Using Technology to Overcome Cutbacks
- Permit Processing

This call is for papers, panel discussions, and poster presentations related to the conference theme or to fish and wildlife information management in general.

Individual papers should be 15 minutes in length to allow time for discussion. Panel Discussions should fit in 1½ hour sessions. This year OFWIM anticipates a limited number of remote access seats will be available for members, so think about joining us virtually and giving a paper from your office!

Submit a poster presentation for the “Hacker’s Ball,” an OFWIM tradition that combines the poster session with live demonstrations of applications.

Deadline for submission of all abstracts (with speaker biography) has been extended to Friday, July 30, 2010.

Submit session topics and abstracts for **papers, panel discussions, and posters** using the form located on the OFWIM website:

<http://www.ofwim.org/meetings/2010/2010%20OFWIM%20Abstract%20Submission%20Form.pdf>

Please email completed forms to:

Mark Brunner, Missouri Department of Conservation

[mark.brunner AT mdc.mo.gov](mailto:mark.brunner@mdc.mo.gov)



**SECOND
CALL FOR
PAPERS!!!**

**A New Tool for Electronic Data Capture
Write Data Directly to a Spreadsheet Using a Pen!**

Bruce Schmidt

StreamNet Program Manager

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

We have known for years that electronic data collection in the field will reduce workload, greatly speed data entry, save time and money, and generally improve the way we handle biological data. Previous attempts to accomplish this goal, however, have met with inconsistent success.

A number of electronic devices have been used to accomplish electronic data capture in the field, including laptop computers, personal digital assistants, tablet computers, and various specialized handheld devices. I've even been involved with sampling projects that set up a generator and ran a tower PC in the field in the days before laptops.

Unfortunately, all of these approaches have various limitations, among them the need to carry additional bulky and often fragile equipment, poor screen visibility in some light conditions, no data backup in case of catastrophic failure, difficulty using onscreen or small physical buttons, a need for custom programming, and the need for training. One of the biggest issues, of course, is the rugged environments we have to sample in (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Typical sampling operation: note the data capture device and all data in the left hand!
(Photo courtesy of CalFish)



Figure 2. Two pens in one: the pen barrel contains a laser scanner along with a ball point pen.

Wouldn't it just be easier and safer to write down the data on a paper form?

New laser scanning technology and character recognition software now enable written data to be captured electronically into an Excel spreadsheet or an ArcGIS file simply by writing on paper. And, since the digital pen also includes a regular ball point pen that even writes on Rite in the Rain paper (Figure 2), there is no concern over losing data.



*Articles
from
OFWIM
Members*

The pen works by capturing the motions of the pen relative to a nearly invisible background pattern of dots, and the character recognition software interprets those motions and converts them into letters, numbers or punctuation marks. When you dock the pen for recharging, the data are inserted into the appropriate form and cell or the appropriate map, since the pattern in each cell or location on a map is unique. Simply print out the field forms or maps on the paper of your choice and the software applies the dot pattern in the background.

Many normal functions of Excel integrate with the digital pen. Each cell can be formatted (text, number, date, time, alphanumeric code, image, etc.) and the character recognition will be constrained to that format, improving accuracy. You can even use drop down lists when there is a finite list of possible entries. Again, the software constrains the input to only those possibilities, greatly improving accuracy. You can even use checkboxes.

The software always captures an image of what was written, making it simple to compare writing with the interpreted data without having to flip through the paper forms. This makes quality assessment easy. The software even provides a list of other possible interpretations to select if the one captured is wrong.

The largest concerns over this technology are durability in the field, accuracy and cost.

Durability: The pen is rugged and water resistant and works well on wet paper, including Rite in the Rain paper. The pen is not completely waterproof, however, and getting soaked will cause the circuitry to fail and the data to be lost. However, the pen has a hole for a lanyard, so it should be safe in all conditions other than complete immersion of the sampler. And, should the pen be completely destroyed, simply trace over the entries with a second digital pen, and all data will be captured.

Accuracy: Handwriting matters (Figure 3). But, even with bad handwriting, the pen proved surprisingly accurate. Full text has the greatest frequency of errors, so formatting cells to numeric, where possible, improves accuracy. Surprisingly, cursive is interpreted more accurately than printing. And, a little bit of practice really helps. The pen ‘sees’ through stains. A quality review is always needed, but the software displays the input side by side with an image of what was written for easy comparison.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Date	Task Time	Case Type	Client Name	Purpose / Details of Task
2	4/20/2009	08:01:00	Bog	BOB Newhart	Test on write-in
3	1/20/2010	19:54:00	Now	Jim Jones	the rain paper.
4	2/15/2010	11:43:00	Case	Ty Cobb	paper is smooth.
5	3/19/2010	06:52:00	Damp	Paper has	been splashed, wiped.
6	5/14/2006	04:21:00	wet	Paper has	water droplets on it.
7	6/12/2011	09:17:00	TOOT	wor	white hat sauce smeared on, wiped off
8	5/2/2004	03:19:00	Damp	tea	tea was splashed on them, wiped off
9	3/6/2009	07:11:00	Blood	hum	smeared, dried.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Date	Task Time	Case Type	Client Name	Purpose / Details of Task
2	4/20/09	8:01	Bog	Bob Newhart	Test on write-in
3	1/20/10	19:54	Now	Jim Jones	the rain paper.
4	2/15/10	11:43	Case	Ty Cobb	paper is smooth.
5	3/19/10	6:52	Damp	Paper has	been splashed, wiped.
6	5/14/06	4:21	wet	Paper has	water droplets on it.
7	6/12/11	9:17	TOOT	wor	white hat sauce smeared on, wiped off
8	5/2/04	3:19	Damp	tea	tea was splashed on them, wiped off
9	3/6/09	7:11	Blood	hum	smeared, dried.

Figure 3. Interpreted data (top) with image of written input (bottom) (Courtesy of Dayv Lowry, WDFW). This facetious input illustrates that errors do occur. Quality checks are required, but practice helps! Numeric input is usually better than text, and cursive is better than printed text.



Cost: The pen and software are not cheap, but they compare favorably with most electronic data entry devices, and this technology eliminates the time and cost of data entry. The government cost for a pen with full software is about \$1,400. A pen alone is about \$600, and multiple pens can be used with one copy of the software, which includes the character recognition and integration with either Excel or ArcGIS. A package that works with SharePoint (a 'cloud' information management service that includes Excel functionality) is cheaper for using multiple pens. The vendor will negotiate discounts for larger orders.

This technology has the potential to revolutionize how we collect data and convert it into electronic form. A number of fisheries projects in the Pacific Northwest, including with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; StreamNet; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and the Columbia River InterTribal Fish Commission are using the digital pens in field operations this summer, and we look forward to being able to evaluate their effectiveness based on real-world sampling. For more information, and to see an online demonstration of the pen in action, go to <<http://www.adapx.com>>. You can send questions to me at bruce_schmidt AT psmfc.org.

Addendum:

Work is currently underway this summer using the digital pen, and reports from the field so far are promising. Further looking into use of the pen with the Sharepoint option has revealed that this version offers significantly reduced costs for operations using more than 5 pens. However, a colleague in Alaska reports that there is another option to the digital pen: direct scanning of spreadsheet field forms into character recognition software. This approach costs more per page than the digital pen, but eliminates the upfront equipment costs and concerns over pen durability. But, wrinkled or soiled forms coming in from the field is an issue.

The conclusion from this initial work is that there are several promising technological solutions to capturing field data in electronic format that could revolutionize how we collect data. Now all we need to do is gain enough experience to be able to figure out the most efficient and cost effective approaches for our particular sampling needs. For more information on each of these technologies, check out the digital pen, Capturx, at <<http://www.adapx.com>> and the scanning approach, Flexicapture, at <http://www.abbyy.com/data_capture_software/>. And, let's keep looking for other approaches and vendors!

*Elections are
coming!*

Look for
information
about our 2011
candidates for
office, as well as
instructions for
voting online,
in the September
OFWIM
Newsletter.

We will be elect-
ing a new
President-Elect,
Treasurer,
Secretary, and
Member-at-
Large.

OFWIM Committee Announcements



Biological Data Standards Online!

We are pleased to announce the beta version of the Biological Data Standards blog is available online. The blog will provide a clearinghouse for data standards (data content standards, field protocols, thesauri, data exchange formats and the like) that pertain to biological information. All standards are searchable, and anyone can submit a standard for posting by following these directions. Please check it out and send any comments or suggestions for improvement to <ofwimds@gmail.com>!

~ *Data Standards/Technology Trends Committee*

Webinar Opportunities for OFWIM Members

This is a reminder to our OFWIM Membership that a Discussion Thread has been set up under the Training and Education Committee (TEC) Project area of the OFWIM Community, in the NBII Portal titled, "External Webinars of Interest." The intent of this discussion thread is that any current OFWIM member can use it to submit information on open webinars (external to the OFWIM TEC efforts) that they are aware of, that other OFWIM members might be interested in participating in.

For example, information on the USGS webinar on "Modeling Patterns and Dynamics of Species Occurrence" to be held over five days, this coming August (2010), has been posted to this "External Webinars of Interest" area. Information is also available on page 9 of this newsletter.

If you are a current OFWIM member and do not yet have access to the OFWIM Community in the My.NBII portal, please contact Lisa Zolly <lisa.zolly AT usgs.gov> for more information.

~ *Training and Education Committee*

Join an OFWIM Committee!

OFWIM has a number of active committees dedicated to a variety of issues of interest to membership. Members are welcome to join committees at any time during the member year. For more information, visit <<http://www.ofwim.org/org/committees.html>> to learn about committee goals and objectives, and to obtain contact information for committee chairs.

Don't forget to
sign up for
OFWIM
Committees –
and even
volunteer to
become a
committee chair
– at this year's
Annual
Meeting!

OFWIM Committee Announcements

Free USGS Webinar Being Offered

Subject: Webinar Course on Modeling Patterns and Dynamics of Species Occurrence

Webinar Course on Modeling Patterns and Dynamics of Species Occurrence

Daily from: Aug 23, 2010 to Aug 27, 2010 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM EDT

Presenters: Darryl MacKenzie and James Nichols **Organizer:** Paul Geissler

The US Geological Survey and Proteus Wildlife Research Consultants are offering a free introductory workshop, which is open to all who are interested. The course will be presented by live web broadcasts and is open to all who are interested. Please forward this message to those who may be interested.

The presence or absence of a species across a set of landscape units is a fundamental concept used widely in ecology (e.g., species range or distribution, epidemiology, habitat modeling, resource selection probability functions, as a monitoring metric, metapopulation studies, biodiversity and species co-occurrence). An important sampling issue, however, is that a species may not always be detected when present at a landscape unit. This will result in "false absences" causing parameter estimates to be biased if unaccounted for, possibly leading to misleading results and conclusions, even with moderate levels of imperfect detection.

This introductory workshop will cover many of the latest methods for modeling patterns and dynamics of species occurrence in a landscape while accounting for the imperfect detection of the species. Participants will be introduced to the basic methods of analysis with worked examples and a strong emphasis on study design issues. Due to limited time there will be no software demonstrations or class exercises. While primarily aimed at the beginner and intermediate level, more experienced researchers will also benefit from attending.

Because of travel restrictions, we will need to conduct the short course over the web. You will be able to view PowerPoints and demonstrations on your computer screen. You can listen either using your computer speakers or by calling a phone bridge long distance. Power point presentations, lecture notes, background information, and recordings of the sessions will be posted on the web. If you use the telephone or have a headset or microphone, you can ask questions orally. Otherwise, you can type in your questions.

Certificates of participation are available to those who participate. US Department of the Interior employees can receive credit through DOI Learn.

For more information and to download course material, see the course website <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/brdscience/SpeciesOccurrence.htm> or contact Paul Geissler, <Paul_Geissler@usgs.gov>, 970-226-9482



*Mark
Your
Calendar!*

OFWIM 2010 Officers and Committees

Officers:

President: Jen Carlino	jcarlino AT usgs.gov
President-Elect: Mark Brunner	mark.brunner AT mdc.mo.gov
Secretary: Lisa Zolly	lisa.zolly AT usgs.gov
Treasurer: Kristin Rogers	kristin.rogers AT MyFWC.com
Member-at-Large: Yan Hong	yan.hong AT mdc.mo.gov
Past-President: Robin Carlson	rcarlson AT dfg.ca.gov

Committees:

Meeting Planning Committee

Chair - Mark Brunner	Mark.Brunner AT mdc.mo.gov
Vice Chair - Keith Wethington	keith.wethington AT ky.gov

Communications Committee

Chair - Viv Hutchison	vhutchison AT usgs.gov
Vice Chair - Lisa Zolly	lisa.zolly AT usgs.gov

Elections, Nominations and Awards Committee

Chair - Beth Stys	beth.stys AT MyFWC.com
Vice Chair - Jen Carlino	jcarlino AT usgs.gov

Data Standards and Technology Trends Committee

Chair - Scott Anderson	scott.anderson AT ncwildlife.org
Co-Chair - Lisa Zolly	lisa.zolly AT usgs.gov
Vice Chair - Yan Hong	yan.hong AT mdc.mo.gov

Membership and Outreach Committee

Chair - Julie Prior-Magee	jpgmagee AT usgs.gov
Vice Chair - Kristin Rogers	kristin.rogers AT MyFWC.com

Training and Education Committee

Chair - Don Schrupp	hqwris AT lamar.colostate.edu
Vice Chair - Robin Carlson	rcarlson AT dfg.ca.gov

Vision and Goals Committee (Ad-Hoc)

Chair - Mark Brunner	mark.brunner AT mdc.mo.gov
Vice Chair - vacant	—



**Join an OFWIM
Committee!**

**Help keep
OFWIM going
strong!**

2010 Individual Membership Form

Use the form below to join OFWIM as a new member or to renew your membership for 2010. Individual Members are entitled to vote in the annual election and hold office. Current members are notified of new newsletters and have access to special OFWIM web content. Current members also receive a discount on 2010 conference registration.

If you work for an organization with 4 or more individuals interested in OFWIM membership, you may benefit from obtaining an Organizational Membership. Information about Organizational Membership can be found at: <http://www.ofwim.org/org/membership.html>

The 2010 OFWIM annual membership period is January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010. To become a new member of OFWIM or renew your current membership, please complete and mail the form below with a check or money order for \$30 (in U.S. dollars!) payable to **OFWIM**, to:

Kristin Rogers, OFWIM Treasurer
 c/o FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
 7922 NW 71st Street
 Gainesville, FL 32653
 (352) 955-3211 x101

OFWIM 2010 Membership Form

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone:(_____) _____ Fax:(_____) _____

Email: _____



<http://www.ofwim.org/>

Your agency is invited to join!

Become an Organizational Member of OFWIM

The Organization of Fish and Wildlife Information Managers (OFWIM) is a non-profit professional organization whose goal is to promote the management and conservation of natural resources by facilitating technology and information exchange among fish and wildlife information professionals. An affiliate of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), OFWIM was formally established in 1993. In achieving its mission, OFWIM emphasizes coordination, outreach, technical assistance, and continuing education. Members of OFWIM include GIS specialists, database managers, biologists, web developers, programmers, researchers, and others who manage information and technology related to fish and wildlife resources.

Benefits include:

- ✦ Quarterly Newsletter
- ✦ Discount on registration for the OFWIM Annual Conference
- ✦ Access to the OFWIM content management system, an internet resource for sharing information and facilitating discussion among fish and wildlife information managers
- ✦ Access to informative, members-only e-mail communications

Networking and professional development opportunities for fish and wildlife information management professionals

Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other groups whose mission involves management of fish and wildlife populations or habitat, are encouraged to become OFWIM Organizational Members. Each Organizational Membership costs \$150 and entitles the organization to 5 OFWIM Individual Memberships, with full member privileges. Individual Memberships are also available at the cost \$30 per year. An Organizational Membership form is now available on the website.

<http://www.ofwim.org/org/membership.html>

**ORGANIZATION OF FISH AND
WILDLIFE INFORMATION
MANAGERS**

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**Thank you to all who submitted
information and articles to this issue
of the OFWIM news!**



San Juan Island, Washington. Photo: Viv Hutchison