

WGWC Meeting #2
January 8-9, 2009
San Francisco, CA

In Attendance at the Meeting

John Harja, UT
Bob Broscheid, AZ
Holly Michael, OR
Joanna Prukop, NM
John Emmerich, WY
Tom Remington, CO
Kim Titus, AK
Chris Smith, MT
Kevin Hunting, CA
Richard Hatcher, OK
Cal Groen, ID

SUMMARY

Charter

Decision Items:

- Include language allowing WGWC to lobby policies, when consistent with existing WGA policy.
- Include language establishing a WGWC Chair and Vice-chair to be elected by the Council at the first meeting after every WGA Annual Meeting.

Joanna Prukop moved to approve the charter, Bob Broscheid seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with 11 WGWC members present.

John Emerich moved to elect John Harja as the first WGWC Chair, to serve through June 2010. Holly Michael seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with 11 Council members present.

Joanna Prukop move to elect Bob Broscheid as WGWC Vice-chair, to serve through June 2010. John Emerich seconded, and the motion passé unanimously with 11 Council members present.

Workplan

Decision Items:

- Pick clear names for the two standing committees & at end of the document include a list of acronyms.
- Create a separate task for refining the definitions of “wildlife corridors and crucial habitat.” This task will be completed by the State Task Group, which will be expanded with additional experts as necessary.
- Shaun will incorporate grammatical edits provided by Joanna Prukop.

Joanna Prukop moved to adopt the workpan as amended, and in concept. Holly Michael seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with 11 WGWC members present.

Wildlife Data Request

Key discussion items:

- Data Request sent out December 17 to state wildlife agencies, NGOs, others. WGWC will communicate with their State Task Group representative on the status of their response to the data request.
- In the future, WGWC will have to discuss the question of consistency in how states incorporate wildlife data from NGOs.
- Wildlife overlay maps for WREZ should ultimately reflect the wildlife assessment work each state is doing, and the data that they have collected.

Categorization Criteria

Recommendations to STG/E&L:

- Include an “avoid” overlay but don’t exclude them from a REZ in the mapping process.
- From a wildlife perspective, there’s no reason to include “lower sensitive” category, but it could be kept for land-use categorization.
- “Insufficient data” category is appropriate an the current criteria seem appropriate.

Exclude/Avoid List

Decision Items:

- WGA staff will correct BLM typos in exclusion list
- WGA staff will add State NSOs to the avoidance list
- WGA staff will add California State Wildlife Areas to the exclusion list
- Separate out USFS Inventoried Roadless Areas so that those in the 9th Circuit are on the exclude list, and those in the 10th Circuit are on the avoid list

Joanna Prukop moved to approve the WREZ exclude/avoid list, as amended. Chris Smith seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with 11 WGWC members present.

1% for wildlife

Decision Item:

- WGWC Chair and WGA staff will take the following proposal to WGA’s Staff Advisory Council for approval: “During its meeting in San Francisco on January 9, 2009, the Western Governors’ Wildlife Council unanimously adopted a motion requesting that WGA, consistent with the WGA Wildlife Corridors Initiative Report, advocate for a condition in the stimulus package, that 1% of the funding for transportation projects be devoted to safeguard wildlife and improve public safety relevant to wildlife-vehicle collisions. Funds authorized under this “1% for Wildlife” provision would be used to construct wildlife crossings, underpasses,

and other wildlife mitigation measures that facilitate wildlife movement in areas known to be wildlife corridors and crucial habitat.”

John Emerich moved that Shaun will send 1% for wildlife language to SAC and cc WGWC, Chris Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 12 WGWC members present (California had joined the meeting)

Next steps

- Next call – Friday, Jan 30, 11am MST
- Next meeting – March 26-27, Denver

NOTES

Data Request

States are reviewing NGO data, in the future we need to discuss consistency of how states include NGO data

- unless you understand the data it will be difficult to make a call on NGO data
- part of the reason for kicking the analysis of data to states instead of NatureServe
- states and Govs will influence what the maps look like
- maybe

It would be nice to get WREZ maps to tie to what individual states are doing – i.e. each state will have different way they want to categorize/show data and that should be reflected in WREZ maps

Categorization Criteria

Avoid/Exclude

- don't want to have swiss cheese effect in mapping where you always exclude avoids
- KH: avoids should be included in a REZ but should be labeled and recommended as avoid, since it is not legally precluded

Low Sensitive

JE: why don't we eliminate this category? It will be difficult to come up with clear criteria to separate out higher and lower gradation of areas, so have low sensitive be the areas that are left over after exclude, avoid, higher, insufficient data.

SM: that would be that data goes into this category by default

JP: if we drop lower sensitivity, as a catch all for what we can't assign to other categories, then what happens to them?

JE: the areas would be white – not designated

JP: the lower category actually provides information to industry, if we keep it in there it does provide more information. We can direct them to these areas.

TR: from wildlife, it's defined as what isn't in there

Decision: say to WG: we looked at lower sensitive, from wildlife there's no reason to include it but if you want to keep it that's fine

Avoid

JH: avoid should be "avoid if you can" not just "avoid, but there are some higher level of avoid. There are a lot of gradation of avoidance and that is tough to deal with.

HM: some areas are unmitigable, others are, so we can work avoid, min, mitigate language into these criteria.

Insufficient Data:

JP: how does this differ from lower sensitive category?

JE: we can't map everything, there will be areas where you think there is important habitat you just don't have the data to justify it.

Decision: affirmation of this category

HM: what about high risk fire zones? Would this be something of interest to industry to map?

JH: Let's use general definitions and have them expect that the states will interpret those definitions how they choose. Instead of sweating and negotiating these

Kim T: as a non-WREZ state I take a keen interest in how these definitions are being crafted. When you talk about critical habitat under ESA, where they fall becomes laughable for a state like AK. And when you get into application of oil and gas.

HM: don't want to have to reinvent definitions for application to other sectors in WC, transportation, climate change, oil&gas

Avoid:

TR: crucial habitat for species that is endangered, vulnerable, etc.

Charter

Joanna P moved to approve

Bob Brosheid seconded

Unanimously approved

11 members present (all but CA in the room)

Chair nomination: JE nominates Jon Harja, Holly second

Unanimously approved, 11

Serve until first meeting after WGA annual meeting June 2010

Vice-chair nomination: bob brosheid

Joanna move, JE second

Unanimously approved: 11

Work Plan

Two stand alone task groups: STG task group specific on pg 2(WREZ and "DSS committee")., a second task group "Science Committee" will be established to reflect Task 3 (definitions for CH/WC).

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- Shaun will incorporate grammatical edits provided by Joanna Prukop.

Joanna Prukop moved to adopt the workpan as amended, and in concept. Holly Michael seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with 11 WGWC members present.

Exclude/avoid list

Joanna Prukop moved to approve the WREZ exclude/avoid list, as amended. Chris Smith seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously with 11 WGWC members present.

WGA Transition Paper

1% for wildlife

Decision Item:

- WGWC Chair and WGA staff will take the following proposal to WGA's Staff Advisory Council for approval: [insert language from Shaun's e-mail] 1% of any stimulus package for transportation to reduce wildlife/vehicle incidents (safety) and increase permeability for wildlife. Add link to wildlife corridors project.

John Emerich moved that Shaun will send 1% for wildlife language to SAC and cc WGWC, Chris Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 12 WGWC members present (California had joined the meeting)

Shaun send to SAC and cc WGWC

Unanimously; 12 members (CA was back)

JE motions, second Chris smith

- not proposing particular projects in the letter, since that is just CO
- permeability for wildlife while reducing collisions

HM: OR could use the authority to set conservation easements when there is a DOT road proposal in a wildlife corridor.

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- Next call – end of Friday, Jan 30, 11am MST
- Next meeting – March 26-27, Denver