

## Western Governors' Wildlife Council Meeting

December 1 – 2, 2010

Denver, Colorado

### Meeting Summary and Next Steps

#### **Next Meeting**

- Sharon Kiefer volunteered to host the Council for its next meeting in Boise in late May or early June. A date will be confirmed in the first quarter of 2011.

#### **Federal Coordination**

- WGA staff will organize a follow-up conference call for the Council chair and vice chair and federal representatives in the first week of January. The purpose of the call will be to refine language for a written agreement on how state DSS wildlife information will be used by DOI and other federal initiatives.

#### **Pilot Projects**

- WGWC has asked pilot leads to prepare options for the Council to consider, related to the compatibility of systems, the accessibility of systems to access data from other states, key features of the DSS tool, and requirements for systems in 2013. The pilot leads will work on this at their meeting on January 11 – 13 in Scottsdale, AZ.

#### **Stakeholder Advisory Group**

- At their last meeting, SAG members met and began developing suggested tasks, which they will ask the Council to approve. WGA staff will schedule a follow up call with the SAG to finalize the request. WGA staff will then arrange for a joint call with SAG and Council members to discuss the tasks.

#### **Transportation**

- WGA staff will work with DOT and FHWA staff to explore the possibility of a formal agreement with Western Governors.
- WGA staff will look for opportunities to describe and promote the Council's work, including presentations to the American Association of State Highway Officials and the Western Association of State Highway Officials.

#### **Regional Transmission Planning**

- The WGWC will continue to look for ways to include wildlife information in regional transmission planning efforts. John Harja will continue to participate in relevant Committees.
- WGA staff will keep the Council updated and informed on progress of the RTEP.

## *Presentations*

### Invited Speakers/Presenters:

- [ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition](#)
- [Presentation of Gerald Solomon](#), Director, Federal Highway Administration Office of Project Development and Environmental Review
- Wyoming Department of Transportation and Wyoming Federal Highway Administration on [Wildlife and Transportation Planning](#)
- [Regional Transmission Expansion Planning and Wildlife](#) – Western Electricity Coordinating Council

### State Pilot/DSS Development Presentations:

- Demonstration of [Arizona's Wildlife Decision Support System](#)
- DSS Development for [Wildlife Resources in California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah](#)
- [Montana/Idaho High Divide](#) Pilot
- Development of Crucial Wildlife Habitats and an Integrated Decision Support System for the Arid Lands of Idaho, Oregon and Washington (will be posted soon)
- [Crucial Wildlife Habitats and Corridors Decision Support System for Colorado - New Mexico](#) Border Region
- [Identifying crucial habitats and corridors for resident fish and caribou in Alaska's North Slope](#)
- [Spatial Modeling Tool for Identifying and Prioritizing Lesser Prairie Chicken Habitat](#) in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado and New Mexico
- [Identifying and Prioritizing Crucial Wildlife Habitats and Migratory Corridors](#) in the Northern Great Plains of North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska
- Wyoming [Interagency Spatial Database and Online Management Tools for Wildlife](#)
- [Pilot Challenges and Constructing Regionally Compatible Decision Support Systems](#) – ESRI

## **Meeting Summary**

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Pam Inmann, WGA Executive Director, opened the meeting and introduced Colorado Governor Bill Ritter. Governor Ritter said it is important for the Wildlife Council to identify crucial wildlife habitats in order to support Western tourism and recreation. He noted that the Decision Support Systems will help ensure that energy and other development can proceed with the least possible impact to wildlife.

John Harja, WGWC Chair, reviewed the [meeting agenda](#) and asked all meeting attendees to introduce themselves. (A complete list of meeting attendees is available as Attachment B.)

### **Arizona DSS Demonstration**

Josh Avey, Habitat Chief for Arizona Game and Fish, presented Arizona's wildlife DSS, which will soon be public, and described how the system is being used as the single repository for all of the state's wildlife information.

### **State Wildlife Pilot Presentations**

Throughout the course of the meeting Wildlife Council members and their state agency staff gave presentations on the overall goals, tasks and status of the eight regional pilot projects. The pilot projects were launched in June 2010 with the generous support of the U.S. Department of Energy. They are being used to help identify how Western states can complete DSSs with wildlife information that is compatible across the region. Each pilot will tackle a different component of developing and making publically available landscape-scale wildlife information, including data management, wildlife corridor mapping, system development and the application of common regional definitions of crucial wildlife habitat, per the direction outlined in the Wildlife Council's DSS White Paper.

Following all the pilot presentations, Chris Friel of ESRI, who serves as a technical coordinator to WGA for the pilot projects, presented on what the current opportunities and challenges are for states in developing regionally compatible DSSs. Friel discussed how the pilot projects are currently discussing questions related to the final DSS products, which are required to guide the initial stages of system development. Questions include: how seamless state DSSs should be with one another, how accessible data from the DSSs should be to each other, and how sophisticated the functionality of the DSSs should be.

### **Report on Coordination Between the DOI and Wildlife Council**

Michael Bean, Department of the Interior, and John Mankowski, the Vice Chair of the Wildlife Council, provided a summary of the previous day's meeting between the Council and officials from the Departments of Energy, Agriculture and Interior. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by Western Governors and the Secretaries of DOI, DOE and USDA in June 2009 called for these agencies to "endeavor to assist the WGA in the efforts of the Western Governors' Wildlife Council, working in coordination with their member states, to create state-based decision support systems that develop, coordinate, make consistent and integrate quality data about wildlife, corridors, and crucial habitat across landscapes." Western Governors wrote to Secretary Salazar in September seeking to ramp up implementation of the MOU with respect to DOI, increase coordination of DOI landscape scale initiatives with state DSS development, and arrange a meeting of state and federal officials to consider actions.

The goal of the previous day's meeting was to discuss coordination of efforts given state DSS development and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Rapid Ecoregional Assessments and Climate Science Centers. After a thorough discussion of the state DSS and federal landscape-scale initiatives, the state and federal representatives agreed to further explore how state wildlife data could be integrated into federal efforts. They also discussed how state wildlife information would be used and interpreted after it was provided to federal agencies. Providing support to state wildlife agencies to increase their capacity to participate in federal initiatives and to complete their DSSs was also discussed. It was agreed that the state and federal representatives

should convene again as soon as possible to articulate and memorialize agreements on these matters.

### **Stakeholder Advisory Group Report**

The SAG was formed in June 2010 to serve as a sounding board for the Council on policy issues and to ensure DSS development is driven by "customer" needs. For example, the SAG has been asked to review the Montana DSS and provide feedback on it to the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. The Council is also interested in having the SAG assist with outreach on the DSS pilots.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) met with the Wildlife Council prior to the start of the full meeting over lunch. The discussion at the lunch focused in part on how DSSs are intended to be used and how they are not intended to be used. There was also discussion around the need to ensure transparency in how the data is developed and used in the DSSs.

Then, a number of presentations were given on related work from SAG members:

- Keith Aune, WCS, discussed their effort to develop a connectivity assessment and planning guide.
- Denny Behrens, CO Mule Deer Association, was invited by the sportsman community to present on the corridor conservation efforts underway in the Northwest part of Colorado.
- Rob Ament, Western Transportation Institute, on the ARC Wildlife Crossing Competition, and;
- Jen Watkins, Conservation Northwest, on Washington state's habitat connectivity analysis.

The SAG then met privately as a group the following morning to brainstorm what they believe will be useful opportunities to advise the Council. The SAG will be consulting soon with the Council to discuss additional feedback from the 2-day meeting and ideas for future actions.

### **ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition**

Following the close of the meeting on Day 1, Rob Ament, Western Transportation Institute, and Roger Surdahl, Federal Highway Administration, presented on the progress of the ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition. They unveiled models of the crossing designs from each of the five competition finalists, which meeting attendees and invited guests were able to see prior to a public unveiling.

### **Wildlife and Transportation Planning Efforts**

Gerald Solomon, Director of the office of Project Development and Environmental Review at the Federal Highway Administration, presented on reports, policies and programs that consider the ecological aspects of transportation projects that have been completed or are underway within FHWA. Mr. Solomon also highlighted some funding opportunities for wildlife and transportation related work, including wildlife crossings and collision mitigation efforts.

John Eddins, District 3 Engineer at the Wyoming Department of Transportation, and Joe Dailey, Division Administrator for the Wyoming FHWA, teamed up to present examples of how strong communication and cooperation between the FHWA, WYDOT and Wyoming Fish & Game

Department have lead to successful transportation projects that accommodate wildlife needs. In Wyoming, “Best Management Practices” have been generated to inform future projects.

Speakers described the utility of state DSS information in future transportation planning processes at the state and federal level and showed an interest in expanding engagement with the Wildlife Council. In discussions with the speakers, Wildlife Council members agreed to take steps to build a stronger relationship with transportation agencies in the state and federal government. WGA staff will look for opportunities to make presentations on the Wildlife Council’s work to the American Association of State Highway Officials, as well as to the Western Association of State Highway Officials. Additionally, the Wildlife Council will discuss the opportunity for an MOU with the Department of Transportation or FHWA in order to strengthen the utilization of state wildlife DSS information in future transmission planning efforts.

### **Regional Transmission Planning and Wildlife**

Brad Nickell, Western Electricity Coordinating Council, with Gary Graham, Western Resource Advocates, presented on the transmission planning effort they are involved in and how information from the wildlife DSSs can be a valuable resource. Both the WECC and WGA are leaders in the U.S. DOE’s Regional Transmission Expansion planning project for the purpose of identifying future infrastructure needs and future transmission capacity needs given expected future load reliability; public policy directives (like Renewable Portfolio Standards), and in a way that minimizes cost and environmental impact. John Harja represents the Wildlife Council on a couple related committees in this effort, which is trying to determine a process for incorporating GIS data for environmental and cultural resources into future transmission planning decisions. The group is already hoping to look at information from Montana and Arizona’s DSS to inform discussions about how the state DSSs can be incorporated into transmission planning.

### **Wildlife Council Business Meeting – Wrap Up**

At the close of the meeting the Wildlife Council took the opportunity to discuss information from the presenters and identified action items from the meeting. Spencer Kimball, Western Energy Alliance, provided a report from the Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting. All of the Council’s agreed upon next steps are listed at the top of this summary document.

## ATTACHMENT A: AGENDA

**WESTERN GOVERNORS' WILDLIFE COUNCIL MEETING  
DECEMBER 1-2, 2010  
The Curtis Hotel -1405 Curtis Street  
Denver, Colorado  
303-571-0300**

### Meeting Objectives:

- 1) Inform the Council and the public on the details and intended outcomes of the Council's eight pilot projects;
- 2) Ensure the pilots help support the development of regionally compatible state wildlife Decision Support Systems that work to conserve corridors and crucial habitat in Western states;
- 3) Engage federal officials to seek integration of federal landscape scale mapping initiatives with Council's DSS efforts;
- 4) Expand Council relations with Stakeholder Advisory Group and the public.
- 5) Review Wildlife Council progress and consider additional action items for Wildlife Council attention.

### **Wednesday, December 1**

- 1:00 p.m.      **Welcoming Remarks from Governor Bill Ritter (Confirmed)**
- 1:15            **Introductions, Agenda Review and Pilot Projects Overview**  
John Harja, WGWC Chair, Office of Governor Herbert  
John Mankowski, WGWC Vice-Chair, Office of Governor Gregoire
- 1:30            **Demonstration of Arizona's Wildlife Decision Support System**  
Bob Broschied and Josh Avey, Arizona Fish and Game
- 2:00            **Pilot Presentation - DSS Development for Wildlife Resources in California, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah (the Southwest)** – Carmen Bailey, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (10-15 mins. plus questions)
- 2:30            Break
- 3:00            **Report on Coordination Between DOI and Wildlife Council Initiatives**  
State and DOI representatives will speak to progress made to integrate their initiatives.
- 3:45            **Wildlife Council Pilot Project Presentations Cont'd**
- 3:45            *Identifying and Prioritizing Crucial Wildlife Habitats and Migratory Corridors in the Northern Great Plains* – Tom Kirschenmann, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

- 4:15 *Spatial Modeling Tool for Identifying and Prioritizing Lesser Prairie Chicken Habitat* – Richard Hatcher, Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation/Keith Sexson, Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks
- 4:45 *Crucial Wildlife Habitats and Corridors Decision Support System for the Colorado-New Mexico Border Region* – Tod Stevenson, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
- 5:15 **Public Q&A**
- 5:25 **Introduction of Reception Exhibits**  
Wildlife Council Stakeholder Advisory Group member Monique DiGiorgio (Western Environmental Law Center/ARC Colorado Liaison) will preview the ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition models that are displayed for the first time at the reception.
- 5:45 **Adjourn**
- 5:45 Light Reception and Cash Bar  
**Presentation of ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition Models**

**Thursday, December 2**

- 7:00 a.m. Hot Breakfast Buffet for Hotel Guests - The Corner Office Restaurant
- 8:25 **Welcome and Reconvene Meeting**
- 8:30 **Wildlife and Transportation Planning Efforts**  
Gerald Solomon, Director, Office of Project Development and Environmental Review, Federal Highway Administration &  
John Eddins, District 3 Engineer, WYDOT with Joe Dailey, Division Administrator, FHWA Wyoming
- 9:30 **Wildlife Council Pilot Project Presentations Cont'd**
- 9:30 *Identifying Crucial Habitats and Corridors for Resident Fish and Caribou in Alaska's North Slope* – Kim Titus, Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- 10:00 *Montana – Idaho High Divide* – Sharon Kiefer, Idaho Fish & Game Department
- 10:30 Break

- 11:00      **Wildlife Council Pilot Project Presentations, Cont'd**
- 11:00      *Development of Crucial Wildlife Habitats and Integrated Decision Support System for the Arid Lands of Idaho, Oregon and Washington* – John Mankowski, Washington Governor's Office
- 11:30      *Wyoming Interagency Spatial Database & Online Management Tools for Wildlife* – John Emmerich, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- 12:00 p.m.      All Attendees Lunch Presentation and Discussion  
**Pilot Challenges and Constructing Regionally Compatible DSSs** – Chris Friel, ESRI
- 2:00      **Regional Transmission Expansion Planning and Wildlife**  
Brad Nickell, Western Electricity Coordinating Council and Gary Graham, Western Resource Advocates
- 2:30      **Wildlife Council Business Meeting** - Discussion Topics and Action Items
- 3:00      **Public Q & A**
- 3:15      **Council Approve Action Items and Next Steps**
- 3:30      **Adjourn**



**ATTACHMENT B: ATTENDEES LIST****WESTERN GOVERNORS' WILDLIFE COUNCIL MEETING  
DECEMBER 1-2, 2010**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Company</b>
Rob	Ament	Senior Conservationist	Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Keith	Aune	Senior Conservation Scientist	Wildlife Conservation Society
Douglas	Austen	National Coordinator	Landscape Conservation Cooperatives
Josh	Avey	Habitat Branch Chief	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Carmen	Bailey	Impact Analysis Coordinator	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Caitlin	Balch-Burnett	Colorado Outreach Representative	Defenders of Wildlife
Michael	Bean	Counselor to the Assistant Secretary	U.S. Department of the Interior
Denny	Behrens	Field Representative	Colorado Mule Deer Association
Steven	Belinda	Energy Program Director	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Reggie	Benz	CFO/VP	API Fence, Inc.
Ryan Demmy	Bidwell	Executive Director	Colorado Wild
Bob	Broscheid	Assistant Director	Wildlife Management Div., AZ Game & Fish Dept.
David	Brown	Contract Regulatory Lead	BP
Lew	Carpenter	Regional Representative	National Wildlife Federation
Michael	Carrier	North Pacific LCC Coordinator	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Reg. 1, Science Applications Office
Gabriela	Chavarria	FWS Science Advisor	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Alexandra	Christy	Executive Director	Woodcock Foundation
Joel	Clement	Program Officer	Wilburforce Foundation
Barbara	Cooksley	Cattle Rancher	
Patrick	Crist		NatureServe
Joe	Dailey	Division Administrator	Wyoming Division, Federal Highway Administration
Tom	Darin		White House Council on Environmental Quality
Warren	Day	Science Advisor	US Geological Survey
Monique	DiGiorgio	Conservation Strategist	Western Environmental Law Center
John	Eddins	District Engineer	Wyoming Department of Transportation

Steve	Ellenbecker	Energy and Transmission Advisor	Western Interstate Energy Board
John	Emmerich	Deputy Director	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Lori	Faeth	Director for Intergov't Affairs, Natural Resources & Environment	U.S. Department of the Interior
Kit	Fischer		National Wildlife Federation
Cheri	Ford	Colorado Capitol City Coordinator	USFS, Rocky Mountain Region
Chris	Friel	Senior Account Executive	ESRI
John	Gale	Regional Representative	National Wildlife Federation
Gary	Graham	Transmission Project Director	Western Resource Advocates
Bethany	Gravell	Executive Director	Center for Native Ecosystems
Joseph	Grennan	Director of Permitting	Renewable Energy Systems Americas
Jeremy	Guth	Trustee	Woodcock Foundation
John	Harja	Director, Public Lands Policy	Office of the Governor
Richard	Hatcher	Director	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
Marc	Heilesen	Western Regional Representative	Sierra Club
Robert	Henke	Sr. Vice President	ICF International
Jay	Hestbeck	Deputy Regional Executive-Rocky Mtn Area	U.S. Geological Survey
Don	Hover	Okanogan County Commissioner	Okanogan County
Pam	Inmann	Executive Director	Western Governors' Association
Chris	Iverson		USDA
Richard	Kearney	Asst. Regional Director	USFWS Pacific Southwest Region
Sharon	Kiefer	Assistant Director - Policy	Idaho Fish and Game
Spencer	Kimball	Manager of Government Affairs	Western Energy Alliance (formerly IPAMS)
Julia	Kintsch		Freedom to Roam
Tom	Kirschenmann		SD GFP
Catherine	Liller	National Transportation Liaison	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Harvey	Locke	Vice President for Conservation	The WILD Foundation

		Strategy	
Emily	Loose	Director of Communications	The WILD Foundation
Sharon	Mader	Senior Program Manager	National Parks Conservation Association
Timothy	Male	Vice President, Conservation Policy	Defenders of Wildlife
John	Mankowski	Policy Advisor, Natural Resources	Washington Governor's Office
Vance	Martin		The WILD Foundation
Bart	Melton		National Parks Conservation Association
Holly	Michael	Conservation Policy Coordinator	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dewayne	Miller	Corporate Environmental Affairs Specialist	Chesapeake Energy
Doug	Miyamoto	NRCS Liaison to WGA	USDA-NRCS
Tim	Modde		US Fish and Wildlife Service
Robert	Model		Boone and Crockett Club
Kit	Muller	BLM Strategic Planner	BLM
Tom	Murray	Solution Engineer	ESRI
Brad	Nickell	Director of Transmission Planning	Western Electricity Coordinating Council
Elizabeth	Nysson	Climate Change Coordinator	Oregon Natural Desert Association
Suzanne	O'Neill	Executive Director	Colorado Wildlife Federation
Paul	Orbuch	Consultant	Orbuch Consulting, LLC
John	Pierce	Science Division Program Manager	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Josh	Pollock	Conservation Director	Center for Native Ecosystems
Brad	Powell		Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development/TU
Dick	Ray	President	Colorado Outfitters Association
Laura	Richards	Division Chief, Wildlife Diversity	Nevada Department of Wildlife
Michael	Rivera	CO/NM Ranch Manager	ABV Ranch
Kirk	Robinson	Executive Director	Western Wildlife Conservancy
Brian	Rutledge	Executive Director	Audubon Wyoming
Kristin	Salamack	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Habitat Council
Keith	Sexson	Assistant Secretary for Operations	KS Wildlife and Parks
Melissa	Simpson	VP Policy &	PAC/WEST

		Regulatory Affairs	
Paige	Singer	Staff Biologist/GIS Specialist	Center for Native Ecosystems
Jessica	Singh	Solar Developer	Iberdrola Renewables
Gerald	Solomon	Director, Office of Project Development and Environmental Review	Federal Highway Administration
Tod	Stevenson	Director	Department of Game and Fish
Gary	Tabor		Center for Large Landscape Conservation
David	Theobald	Research Scientist	Colorado State University
Kim	Titus	Chief Wildlife Scientist	Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
Gideon	Tolman	WGA Mickelson Fellow	State of Idaho Office of the Governor
Suzanne	Van Drunick	Associate Director for Science	CIRES, University of CO, Boulder
Richard	Van Gytenbeek	Executive Director	American Wildlands
Gary	Vecellio	Staff Biologist	Idaho Fish and Game
Jeff	Ver Steeg	Assistant Director	Colorado Division of Wildlife
Matt	Wagner		Freedom to Roam
Joe	Walsh	Senior Associate	ICF International
Joni	Ward	Science Director - North America Region	The Nature Conservancy
Jennifer	Watkins	Conservation Associate	Conservation Northwest
Greg	Watson	Chief, Office of Landscape Conservation	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Madeleine	West	Program Manager	Western Governors' Association
Wesley	Westphal II	Natural/Cultural Resources Media Expert	Air Force Western Regional Environmental Office
Byron	Woertz	Senior Project Manager	WECC
Jennifer	Zahratka		Ecosphere Environmental Services
Anne	Zimmermann	Director	US Forest Service - WFWARP Staff