

PARC National Steering Committee Meeting

September 27, 2004 - Atlantic City, NJ

1. Primary Action Items

1. **Funding report of Habitat Management Guides:** The NSC requested a report of federal/state HMG contributors that includes all funds donated for both development and printing of the guidebooks, remaining funding gaps and realistic timeline to completion. This report will be used to pursue additional (and final) funding from other sources to complete the project.

2. **HMG production schedule :** NSC requested a final production schedule from the editors. Currently the Forest Service and the FWS are circulating drafts of the NE, SE & SW guides.

3. **Selection of common layout and printing specifications :** The HMG editorial committee will have a conference call to discuss and coordinate layout and printing specifications, as well as discuss the possibility of using a third-party to help coordinate the process and develop the template for the series. This is to occur in mid-October. Need to coordinate with NE's work with NYS DEC.

4. **Formation of National Committee for HMG Implementation and Training:** This group will meet to discuss and strategize how to distribute and train others to use the guidelines. They will develop a template for regional habitat workshops that can be replicated at both the federal, state and local level. Participants: Ernie Garcia (FS), Randy Gray (NRCs), Jeff Holmes (SE), Al Breisch and Scott Smith (NE), Bruce Kingsbury (MW) as well as federal and state coordinators. Still need representatives from SW and NW to complete this committee.

5. **Formation of Working Group to investigate and form a position statement/guidance on "Relocation of Herpetofauna":** This group will describe the pitfalls and restrictions on relocations as well investigate the legal issues associated with this activity (especially a problem in LA County). Participants: Dave Gibbons (FS), Rob Lovich (CA PARC), Bruce Taubert (AZGF) – representing the Invasive Species Advisory Council, and Rick Bennett (USFWS). The group will report to the NSC at the spring meeting.

6. **Provide cost estimates for additional PARC's exhibit boards:** The NSC requested information on purchasing additional exhibit boards from the contractor. Also, requested were cost estimates for additional panel to accompany the display. These can be purchased directly through a5 Inc.

7. **Develop distribution lists for HMGs :** Since the NE and SE working groups have already brainstormed draft target distribution lists, the NSC requested that the PARC coordinators help compile a master list that can be replicated by other regions and states for HMG distribution.

8. **Format/Layout of SE Inventory/Monitoring Guide :** NSC agreed that the format and layout of the SE I/M guide should be of top quality and similar to the HMGs. This first guide will also

be a template for additional I/M guidebooks. Coordinators will work to coordinate this effort (and include Lucas Wilkinson of SREL) with the HMG editorial committee work (see #3).

9. PARC Awards Reception to be held at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference (March 16-19th). Peter Dratch will contact WMI to secure a room for this important event. NSC will have several conference calls over the next 6 months to determine awardees, invitees and details of this reception.

10. Formation of Road Mortality Advisory Committee: This purpose of this committee will be to help assemble experts, bibliographic references, and facilitate discussion on this topic. They will look at ways for PARC can become more engaged in this topic. One possibility is to convene a special symposium at the fall 2005 Wilderness Society's meeting in Madison, WI (see #12). Bill Rudiger, Paul Garrett, Dave Gibbons and Ernie Garcia agreed to lead the committee along with help from the PARC coordinators. First task will be to identify a list of experts, and compile a reference list to be posted on the PARC website.

11. Explore establishing a PARC Foundation – The purpose of this will be have a place to receive funds from donors to support future PARC products, hold funds for PARC conferences and meetings, student scholarships, etc... Stan Austin agreed to talk with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation about a possible partnership.

12. Develop abstract and plan for a symposium/workshop at the 2005 Wildlife Society Meeting: NSC decided that in order to broaden PARC's membership, the next fall NSC meeting will be held in conjunction with TWS meeting on September 24, 2005 in Madison, WI. Randy Gray and Peter Dratch agreed to develop and submit a workshop proposal and help lead a planning committee – along with Jeff Holmes, Bruce Kingsbury and Rick Kearney.

II. Additional Minutes and Notes:

Attendees (23)

Bruce Taubert (AZGFD), Rick Bennett (USFWS), Ed Christophers (USFWS), Stan Austin (EPA), Eric Raffini (PARC), Luke Fedewa (PARC), Dale Hall (USFWS), Dave Allen (USFWS), Jeff Holmes (Conservation Southeast), Eric Grant (a5 Inc.), John Harris (a5 Inc.), Bruce Kingsbury (Indiana-Purdue University), Rick Kearney (ARMI), Dave Gibbons (USFS), Lou Waldrig (USFS), Scott Smith (MDNR), Dave Golden (NJDNR), Randy Gray (NRCS), Ernie Garcia (USFS), Ben Wigley (Forest Products), Peter Dratch (NPS), Mike Framping, Carol Pollio (USFWS)

Opening Remarks/Introductions

- NSC Co-chairs, Rick Bennett and Bruce Taubert opened the meeting
- Minutes from the last NSC meeting (Spokane, WA – Feb 2004) were approved
- Both Action items from this meeting were completed:
 - Funding protocol for regional PARC Habitat Management Guidelines – Since funding for each guide is being handled in a different way, the NSC asked for a report on how to contribute funds to support the different guidebooks (completed and distributed on 4/15/04).
 - Revision of PARC's website and outreach materials - Completed and to be presented to NSC at this meeting.

Discussion on Funding Protocols for HMG's

- There were questions as to the current status of HMG funding, as well as how many copies will be available.
- The NE, SE, and SW all have drafts put together and have the majority of printing funds available.
- Members agreed that once these 3 are printed, it will become easier to solicit funds to complete the series (reprint the MW and NW).
- Also, the timing of the HMGs is good since SWIG dollars may be available to help complete the project.
- NSC requested a funding report to help solicit funds (see action item #1 above).

Publishing and Printing

- Discussion on the benefits of using a publisher to complete the guides since collecting money from agencies before a final product is completed is difficult to manage.
- NSC resolved that there may be legal difficulties and decided to select a printer and publish on their own.
- SREL has \$33.5 K for the printing of regional documents throughout the United States and Midwest Forest Service has \$12K for printing of the Midwest Guide

HMG Training and Implementation

- NSC agreed that they need to put together a group to strategize and devise a procedure on how to best teach people to use the guides. Should we partner with larger Herp meetings? Workshops with applied biologists at the state or regional level. This discussion is also occurring within the Regional Working Groups (see action item #4)

- Regional workshops to be associated with the regional documents but a there is a desire to develop a national template to help ensure consistency – that could be uses as a “train the trainers” course.
- Ensure that HMGs are available on a cd, as well as on the website

Federal Coordinator Update (Eric Raffini)

- PARC received a \$22,500 grant from EPA’s Wetland Program Development Grants to complete the new website and outreach products. This was matched with another \$6000 from state funds. The website will also convey the importance of protecting habitats – wetland ecosystems. Since PARC can’t hold funds, the grant was actually awarded to IAFWA.
- Project began in May – various groups had the opportunity to contact
- NPS, USFWS also gave separate funds to support the project
- Met with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society in Houlton, Maine. Potential new partner for PARC – very interested in the guidebooks and becoming involved
- Is active in EPA’s pesticide re-registration process – working to get amphibian testing included
- Will be attending the Land Trust Alliance Rally in Providence, RI to target private landowners and land trusts.
- Will be meeting with The Wildlife Habitat Council and attending their annual meeting in Baltimore. Hope to include habitat guidelines in their “certifying of corporate lands.”

Regional Updates

Midwest - Bruce Kingsbury

- MWPARC will have its first meeting in two years on March 25, 2005 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Gary Casper sent note that he has been involved in several herp inventory and monitoring projects, including nine national parks and Ottawa National Forest.
- Many herp conservation initiatives taking place throughout the region – all states appear to be developing conservation action plans which will include BMPs for herps.
- A CD is being developed to complement the Midwest Ephemeral Wetland brochure.
- The Center for Reptile and Amphibian Conservation and Management has downloadable conservation fact sheets for many Midwestern herps – the PARC website can link to these resources.
- Bruce K. mentioned the challenges to academics to participate in national PARC meetings, given the lack of university funding for nonresearch meetings. If we want to enhance the participation of that group, this will need to be considered.

Northeast - Scott Smith and Dave Golden

- New Jersey Vernal Pool Regulations - Rolling back of general vernal pool protection, still have protection for species and habitats
- NE Meeting Priorities:
 - Municipality Land Use Issues – Recommendations – request to begin assembling model land use guidelines for herps
 - Green Certification - Reviewing standards for forest industry green certification
 - How should National PARC interact with Regions?
 - Moving forward with species matrix – and looking at the best way to get it out on the web
 - Getting the USGS Frog Quiz website up and running

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- Habitat Management Guidelines - Joe Mitchell
 - Waiting for Comments from the Forest Service
 - Waiting for format issues that are coming out of the Southeast
 - Substantive comments still coming in but 90+% complete
 - Working with NY State DEC for layout and printing

Southeast - Jeff Holmes

- Next annual meeting to occur in late February, 2005
- Prepared inclusive list to target individuals/organizations that will use the Habitat Management Guidelines
 - Include Bob Herrington as the Southeastern co-chair on the website
 - Question from the Region to NSC: How do we boost student involvement in PARC?
 - Funding for student and academic travel?
 - Student Chapters of PARC?

Southwest - Roy Averill-Murray

- Education and Outreach working group is most active. Working to develop activities for teachers, and kids in AZ that correspond with national education standards. New products:
 - "Living with Gila Monsters and Rattlesnakes" informational brochures
 - Herp Atlas Project for all of Arizona getting off the ground
 - "Life as a Lizard" Educational Project now available for SW educators and soon to be available for other regions
- State meetings: Colorado PARC to meet in November 18, 2004; California PARC to meet this winter for the first time. AZ had a working group meeting in May to and talked about developing a structure that corresponds to the national level working groups.

Federal Agency Updates

Forest Service - Ernie Garcia

- \$60 K solicited from FS Regions across the country, has worked to find a "Herp Coordinator" at each region
- large effort on getting ready for the I/M Training to be held Nov. 15th -19th, 2004 in the SE. Whit Gibbons is leading this effort with help from Kurt Buhlmann.
- FS has some funds set aside for a PARC Strategic planning meeting – sometime after April, 2005
- Small grant program is still going strong \$12K available to support herp research.
- Conservation Status Papers to cover 300 species across the country - still a project in progress
- Dave Gibbons commented on the problem with transporting or relocating herps in the Pacific Southwest Regions (see action item #5)

PARC Website, Brochure and Display – John Harris a5 Inc.

- John Harris introduced the NSC to the new website and outreach products and answered questions about how the new national website will operate:

Q -Who will manage the regional websites?

A- For now, the federal coordinator will manage the entire site. We are encouraging regional working groups to use the national site to house their regional information. Eric will work with the regional point person to help make this happen. If this task becomes too time consuming –

Regions will be given access to their own pages. The site was developed to be modified using Macromedia Contribute – a cheap, and easy-to-learn software program

- Logo issues – NSC asked that a few changes be made to the PARC logo – specifically that the PARC logo be colored, and that the text, “Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation” be removed from inside the emblem.
- FS and NPS also should be on the list of major contributors to PARC

Next meeting: North American in Arlington, VA – “The Big Roll Out”

- Cocktail reception/Awards Ceremony for high level agency heads including state and federal agency directors and directors of large NGOs
- Need list of invitees and invitations far in advance; follow-up invitations closer to meeting
- Awards to large contributors and important agencies
- Schedule (1 hr.) –to occur mid-week during the middle of the conference:
 - afternoon or evening reception
 - Cocktail hour or half-hour
 - 30 minutes of drinking
 - 10-minute presentation and award ceremony
 - 20-minutes of closure
 - Needs: PARC Products and Displays, Awards (USFWS has some generic awards), CD to distribute the whole of the PARC product repertoire, find a sponsor for the reception
 - Set up a Conference Call for November

Fall 2005 NSC Meeting

- To be held in conjunction with the 2005 Wildlife Society Meeting instead of with IAFWA
- September 24, 2005 in Madison, WI
- Two major parts of the meeting will include a normal, NSC business meeting and special herp workshop/symposium developed around the new HMGs
- Will help to greatly broaden PARC’s membership