



Meeting: Southwest PARC Meeting

Date: September 28-29, 2002

Location: University of Arizona - Tucson, AZ

Proceedings

FINAL Minutes

The general purpose of the meeting was to develop a plan for organizing the Southwestern Regional Working Group of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (**SW PARC**). Roy Averill-Murray and Matt Goode, volunteer co-chairs, invited a small group of people from each of the southwest regional states to participate in this organizational meeting. Representatives from 6 of the 8 states were present, including Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah (see attached list). Kansas is identified as being in the southwest region on **PARC**'s web site, but group consensus was that it fit better in the Midwest region, as reflected by its inclusion in the *Habitat Management Guidelines for Amphibians and Reptiles of the Midwest*.

The meeting began with introductions and an overview of **PARC**'s origin, background, and structure, including description of the Joint Steering Committee, Technical Working Groups, and Regional Working Groups. As clarified at the September 17 **PARC** Joint Steering Committee meeting in Big Sky, Montana, the Committee includes representatives from several "stakeholder" groups/national steering committees (federal agencies, state agencies, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and industry), 5 technical working groups (education/outreach, policy/regulation/trade, inventory/monitoring, management, and research), and 5 regional working groups (southwest, southeast, northeast, midwest, and northwest). **PARC** was formed in June 1999, but after an initial surge of interest and enthusiasm activity has been inconsistent, especially in the southwest. However, several federal agencies recently pooled funding to hire a Federal Coordinator (Alison Haskell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, MA), and numerous states are investigating possibilities for creating a National **PARC** coordinator position.

The group spent considerable time discussing challenges in coordinating a regional working group effort, including whether we should pursue non-profit status and/or means of hiring a paid **SW** Coordinator, possibly through membership dues and donations. Eventually, logistical difficulties in identifying how money would be managed, how institutional support for a coordinator position would be created, and whether the Joint Steering Committee would be supportive of such direction led to these issues being tabled, at least for the time being.

We did agree on a basic structure for **SW PARC**, as follows. **SW PARC** is a working group organized for the purpose of implementing the **PARC** mission within the southwestern U.S., including Arizona, California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. **SW PARC** is composed of individual state working groups. Each of these state groups implement projects within the scope of the Technical Working Groups listed above, depending on local priorities. One representative from each state will sit on a Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) to facilitate regional coordination.

Regional representatives will also participate on the Technical Working Groups to emphasize regional priorities and to facilitate information transfer between those groups and the region. **SW PARC's** RCC is facilitated by 2 co-chairs, each serving a staggered, 2-year term. The co-chairs serve as an information link between the region and the national Joint Steering Committee and help to ensure that state working groups make progress on tasks between RCC meetings (to be held annually). According to **PARC's** mission, each state working group will be composed of a diverse membership, including state and federal agencies, universities, NGOs, tribes, private landowners, and various industries, to the greatest extent possible. Communication between members in the region will be handled primarily via e-mail, possibly including the use of **PARC's** list server (with "**SW PARC**" clearly identified in the subject header).

Finally, we brainstormed on projects that we could initiate to get **SW PARC** off the ground and to establish visibility. Current or proposed **SW PARC** projects include an interactive, geo-referenced herp database; southwestern deserts habitat management guidelines; an internship program; and a regional herpetologist database. We planned to develop **SW PARC** website, through a link from the national **PARC** website.

We left the meeting with the following action items:

- 1) Produce a 1-page flyer describing **SW PARC** to use in advertising the working group and recruiting new participants. **Laurie** will produce a graphic representation of the structure on the front page and will include descriptive text on the back. **Matt** and **Roy** will provide text for the back. **Laurie** will then distribute a draft for **ALL** to review before final printing.
- 2) Initiate development of the interactive, geo-referenced herp database for the region, including links to species accounts with photos. **Dick** will coordinate the development of the website. **Laurie** will produce a template for the species accounts. **Laurie and Andy Price** will coordinate production of lizard species accounts, **Jan** will coordinate production of amphibian accounts, **Charlie** will coordinate development of turtle and alligator accounts, and **Andy Holycross** will coordinate development of snake accounts. **Dick** will coordinate the accumulation of representative photos (400-600K in size), beginning with those supplied by **Charlie**. **Dick** will send a list of species for which photos are still needed to each state.
- 3) **Roy and/or Matt** will obtain 40-50 **PARC** brochures for distribution to each state.
- 4) **Roy and Matt** will contact people in California and Colorado to find someone to coordinate working groups in those states.
- 5) **ALL** will solicit participation in their respective states (using the **SW PARC** flyer and **PARC** brochures) and will organize state working groups. **Roy and Matt** will coordinate and assist with these efforts. Each state will organize and select a coordinator (RCC representative) according to their own prerogatives.
- 6) **Roy and Matt** will coordinate the development of the Southwestern Deserts Habitat Management Guidelines with Randy Gray, NRCS, and will solicit input from the region.
- 7) **ALL** will communicate via e-mail (or phone, if necessary) and strive to make progress on all of the above. The next **PARC** Joint Steering Committee meeting will be held at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Winston-Salem, NC, between March 26-30, so we want to be able to report significant progress by then.

8) Unresolved: Scheduling a regional meeting. Of course, this depends on how well we accomplish the tasks listed above and what each state will have to bring to the meeting.

SW PARC Contact List

Tucson Organizational Meeting, September 27-28

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