



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call September 21, 2004

Participants

Kathy Parsons, Paul Kluckner, Pat Patterson, Melanie Steinkamp, Eric Carey, Eric Mellink, Gerald Winegrad, Ian Davidson, Bob Milko, Jennifer Wheeler. Unable to participate: Paul Baicich, Paul Schmidt, Ghisselle Alvarado, Jim Kushlan.

Next Call: Thursday, November 18, 2004, 3 p.m. Eastern

PLEASE RSVP

Committee Chairs will be asked to provide write-ups by Monday, November 15.

Discussion and Decisions

Brief working committee progress updates were made available in advance of conference call. All committee chairs were asked to comment briefly on their progress, but most time was dedicated to issues associated with Council structure and operations and the upcoming annual meeting.

❖ Structure and Operations

The Waterbird Conservation Council has been in existence a little over a year (being inaugurated June 2003). Procedures and policies are still being formalized, fully representative membership is still being sought, and committees are still solidifying. However, the Council Chair and Coordinator felt it was important to discuss the effectiveness of current structure and operations.

Decisions

The Council is on the right track with its working committee structure, and importance of the committee chairs is recognized. Executive Committee members reported that they felt positive about the Council and its progress in institutionalizing the initiative, and agreed that a “slow pace” was to be expected since the Council is voluntary. The major challenges are keeping up good communications with committees or constituencies, especially when they are large and geographically separated.

❖ Upcoming Annual Meeting

Our upcoming annual meeting was confirmed for January 10-12, Nassua, Bahamas being the preferred location. It is an important event for the council, as it is an opportunity to get know one another, become familiar with the issues addressed by the committees, review and decide on direction. The Executive Committee discussed format and desired outcomes.



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Decisions

Goals for the meeting include fostering Council energy and momentum for the next year; endorsing the vision and tasks forwarded by committees; and developing stronger relationships between Council members. All Council members and non-Council committee members are encouraged to attend.

In preparation for the meeting, each committee will be asked to review and update their updated Vision and Workplan, and submit this to the Coordinator for the packet of pre-conference review materials.

The individual committees will have half a day on January 10 to meet face to face for committee discussion and work.

The format used last year will be followed for the full Council meeting (January 11 and 12): the agenda will be organized around reviewing and endorsing each committee's Vision and Workplan.

Committees are also encouraged to present on topics of interest and relevance to their work for the edification of the full Council (i.e., showcase some aspect of committee work.)

A field trip will encourage relationship-building, and local guides will be sought for this.

❖ Committee Discussions

See Working Committee Updates (attached below).

Nominations/Membership – Kathy Parsons presented a slate of nominees for Council membership. This included three individuals working in Central America and placeholders for Canada and Mexico. The committee is working on finalizing a statement of principles for Council membership.

Decision

The slate would be presented to the full Council. There were concerns about the ability of nominees to actively engage in the Council, because of limited time or resources. Therefore, upon invitation, these nominees would be provided with detailed information on expectations and benefits of Council membership. The Nominations Committee chair noted that one of the goals underpinning the slate of Central American nominations was ultimately increasing capacity for waterbird conservation the region; the push for increased membership from that region is to focus initiative attention there.

International – Ian Davidson reported on the developments and expected timeline for the “Advancing Waterbirds” Neotrop project. Though funded at \$200,000 and having good support from a wide array of partners, the project is in need of additional funding for coordination. One partner, SalvaNatura, is seeking additional funds from the Netherlands Committee for the IUCN Small Grants for Wetlands Programme for a Central American workshop. Wetlands International will be approaching the Council with interest in membership.



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Waterbird Conservation Council Working Committee Updates

Updates since July 20, 2004, date of last Executive Conference Call

Technical Services Committee

Chair: Melanie Steinkamp

- Melanie and Bruce Peterjohn collaborating on draft objectives for a large-scale waterbird monitoring strategy
- Setting up conference call for early October.

Regional Planning and Implementation Committee

Chair: Paul Schmidt

- Letters of review for USFWS Pacific Coast Draft Seabird Plan and Northern Great Plains JV Implementation Plan submitted; and the Committee's proposed standard review process approved by Executive Committee.
- Committee notes that Canadian Wildlife Service has completed province-based waterbird plans for Pacific/Yukon and Quebec.
- The anticipated timeline for completion of regional plans is not being met, but committee feels that its current approach to supporting regional planning is still sound. Committee will work to strengthen the network of regional liaisons, and communications with regional planners will emphasize achievement of milestones, the positive outcomes of planning, and information needs on the horizon that are particularly relevant to regional planning.
- A critical review of approaches to setting resource objectives is desired (Technical Committee).

Communications Committee

Chair: Paul Baicich

- Paul J. Baicich assumes position of Chair.
- Committee re-formed from previously interested Council members and new recruits.
- More committee members sought.
- Revised draft statement of purpose and activities circulated.
- Some immediate tasks identified.
- Conference-call planned for mid-October leading to plans through January meeting.

Resources Committee

Chair: Pat Patterson

- Conference call with Committee on July 23.
- Some potential sponsors contacted.

International Committee

Co-Chairs: Ian Davidson, Ghisselle Alvarado

- Revised budget and operational documents for the Neotrop project under development.



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- Additional funds for coordination being sought by partners.
- Caribbean elements of the Neotrop project are still unclear and are under discussion.
- Informal promotion of the Project and initiative will take place at El Congreso de la Sociedad Mesoamericana para la Biología y la Conservación meeting in Managua, November 15-19.

Conservation Action Committee

Chair: Gerald Winegrad

- International Albatross and Petrel Conservation meeting (August, Uruguay) offered good networking opportunities with scientists, government and fishery folks from many nations as well as new information (e.g., significant mortality from trawl fishery, difficulty of implementation and enforcement of bycatch national plans of action).
- Input by Council and Committee members result in inclusion of seabirds in U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy Report.
- Litigation filed in Hawaii against National Marine Fisheries Service for re-opening swordfish longline fishery, tied to mortality in Black-footed and Laysan Albatross.
- Work on the bill to allow USDA/Wildlife Services to kill birds without USFWS permits, particularly at aquaculture sites has progressed to finalize language for Congressional funding for research on non-lethal controls for birds in aquaculture.
- Comments have been submitted on the USFWS Draft EIS for Caspian Terns on East Sand Island.
- Predator eradication developments of note: experiments to test approaches on Kiska Island underway; Island Conservation Group launching multi-faceted NMBCA project, also assisting USFWS and State of Hawaii for removal on two Hawaii locations; Wake Atoll project to remove feral cats successfully concluded.
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act funding looks promising: a Conference Committee will eventually decide the amount, but at least we should get \$4 million, a little more than this year, and maybe the \$4.4.

Nominations Committee

Chair: Katharine Parsons

- Have developed a slate of new members endorsement by Council. Includes three individuals from Latin America and placeholders for Mexican and Canadian representatives.
- Gerald McKeating and Scott Yaich stepping down from Waterbird Council

Ad Hoc Committee on Developing Version 2 of NAWCP

Committee met by conference call September 7, and a statement of alternative approaches is being drafted. Committee will meet again in October to discuss and to develop recommendations for the full Council.