

## USSCP Council Teleconference

Thursday, 6 August 2015

Present: Brad Andres, Joel Jorgensen, Catherine Hickey, Matt Reiter, Judith Scarl, Sara Schweitzer, Susan Skagen, Brian Smith, Bill Vermillion

### 1. National Coordinator Organizational Change.

In a recent re-organization within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program, Brad and the future landbird and waterbird coordinators will be housed in the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, Branch of Science and Planning. The Joint Ventures are part of this Division, and the re-alignment was suggested at the Texas partnership meeting. However, there are concerns about base funding levels migrating with the positions.

**Action:** Brian will send a letter to Jerome Ford (Assistant Director), Brad Bortner (old Division Chief), Sarah Mott (new Division Chief), and Dave Gordon (new Branch chief) urging that past funding levels for the national coordinators be maintained. A copy of the USSCP strategic plan, with the breakdown of the USFWS Migratory Bird Program contribution, will be included.

### 2. Upcoming Meetings

The *Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies* will be 12-17 September in Tucson. Sara is getting the agenda together, and we need to submit any ideas. From subsequent discussions, she is planning to organize the agenda around topics that are shared have interests/concerns by waterbird, shorebird, and PIF folks, such as data management and the AKN, monitoring, and specific threats such as cats.

**Action:** Send Sara any ideas for the agenda; a draft agenda will follow soon.

The *Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group* will be meeting between 11 and 18 September at Wallops Island, Virginia. Meetings are packed in, but we are hoping to have the USSCP Council get together for a lunch or dinner before Wednesday (between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>).

**Action:** Brad will suggest a time after reviewing the agenda.

The *Tri-Initiative Science Team* and the National Science Support Team will meet between 14 and 16 October in Fort Collins. The intent, again based on ideas from the January 2015 Bird Partnership meeting, is to perhaps form a national science team that integrates the nongame group, through TriST, and waterfowl through the NSST. Other groups, such as resident gamebirds, would be asked to join. Bill and Brad are intending to attend.

**Action:** Brad to distribute agenda and get comments. Attached.

*The Joint Venture/Natural Resource Conservation Service* meeting has been re-scheduled for September to discuss ways to better collaborate on implementing Farm Bill programs.

**Action:** Brad to re-send Keith McKnight and Barry Wilson our comments.

The *North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)* has a new coordinator, Judith Scarl, who joined the call. The NABCI meeting will be held 27-28 August in Washington, D.C. Catherine is planning to attend.

**Action:** Review distributed agenda and provide any comments to Catherine.

**Action:** Review subcommittee membership lists distributed by Judith and recommend/solicit participation where shorebird representation might be lacking. Susan will re-engage with the monitoring subcommittee. Attached.

The *Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network* will be meeting in Washington, D.C., prior to Wallops Island. Catherine will be attending.

**Action:** Use the results of the U.S. site interviews to develop a WHSRN-US work plan. Need follow-up on this.

### 3. Shorebird Technical Capacity and Perspective in Joint Ventures

In preparation for the January Bird Plan Partnership/Joint Venture meeting, the habitat Joint Ventures assessed their progress relative to delivering shorebird conservation. From this exercise, we would like to identify some JVs where capacity may be lacking and we can provide some assistance. There may also be a need to engage management boards in some manner. Below is a quick assessment of JVs most important to shorebirds and their levels of capacity. In general, the USSCP can mainly assist JVs with Biological Planning, Conservation Design, Monitoring, and Research, although USSCP members have also assisted in habitat delivery.

*Alaska* (as a whole). Has long-term, active working group and good capacity. Perhaps greater communication to other parts of the country is warranted. There is a link to the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership.

*Pacific Coast*. Currently undergoing a revamp. Overall evaluation was low. Perhaps a priority JV to target increasing capacity. Involvement in the Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy would be a good link.

*San Francisco Bay*. Has a low evaluation score and has recently lost some science capacity. Need to check in. Focus has been on tidal marsh restoration.

*Central Valley*. Has good capacity and taps private funding to help deliver NRCS programs.

*Sonoran*. Some local capacity in California, overall evaluation score is one of the lowest. Pacific Plan need help tie in JV activities.

*Intermountain West.* Did not complete exercise but has recent shorebird implementation plan and capacity on science team. Stalled a bit due to Sage Grouse.

*Prairie Pothole.* Did not complete exercise but is updating shorebird implementation plan and has capacity. Need to check in.

*Playa Lakes.* Has one of the highest evaluation scores. Perhaps inquire how they achieved this level of capacity.

*Rainwater Basin.* Has new implementation plan and some capacity. Inquire for additional needs.

*Gulf Coast.* Has capacity but would like some harmonization in monitoring efforts. Delivery is always challenging but goes beyond purview of USSCP.

*Lower Miss.* Some capacity and is interested in revisiting shorebirds objectives. Manomet working on management workshop with JV staff.

*Atlantic Coast.* Has made shorebirds a priority. After the Waterbird Society meeting, Brad talked with Mitch Hartley about the need to integrate protection and management activities in the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative with approaches of the JV (e.g., overlap with JV focus areas). Interest in South Carolina to influence impoundment management for shorebirds is underway.

**Action:** Brad to discuss approaches to assess capacity and find solutions with JV Coordinators on next JVC call, including outreach to management boards.

#### 4. Flyway Council Nongame Technical Committees

There is growing interest within the nongame technical committees of the flyway councils to address issues beyond permits and regulations. State nongame staff participation is variable and there is a need to continued engagement by the states. The NG Tech Committees could provide an effective forum to involvement states in the implementation of the flyway plans.

**Action.** Joel and Brad to draft a brief strategy on engagement of the NG Tech Committees. For the Central Flyway, there will be an opportunity in Colorado for Brad to attend in March 2016.

#### 5. USSCP Plan Update

There was consensus that we should produce and progress/status document for the USSCP. Not a revision of the plan, but more of an evaluation of what we have done and where we are heading.

**Action.** Brad to develop outline and distribute for comments. Target to finish by the end of calendar year.