

## WHSRN-US Committee Teleconference Notes – 18 Sep 2018

Present: Brad Andres, Joe Buchanan, Laura Chamberlin, Rob Clay, Glen Hensley, Monica Iglecia, Stephanie Koch, Rob Penner, Khara Strum, Darrin Welchert, Alex Wilke.

**1. Update on WHSRN Criteria (Rob Clay).** The WHSRN-US Committee sent the WHSRN Executive Office (EO) a letter in November 2017, recommending some changes to the biological criterion for 1% of a biogeographic population and landowner commitment criteria, which was discussed at the Hemispheric Council (Council) held the first week of September 2018. Beyond our concerns, the WHSRN EO has been addressing ownership issues with the First Nations of Canada and the potential integration of WHSRN criteria with the development of a global standard for the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), which includes a criterion for demographic aggregations. The Hemispheric Council created a task force to address these and other issues regarding the nomination criteria, including the dropping of sites if degradation is irreversible and the site can no longer support shorebirds at designated threshold levels. Brad was appointed to the task force at the Council meeting and Joe's standing offer to participate was acknowledged. The task force, working with the EO, will communicate via calls and email. The goal is to have a set of recommendations sent to the Council by their planned meeting in May 2019. The WHSRN website is being re-vamped and our questions about web page structure will be addressed.

**Action 1.** Joe and Brad will report on task force progress and seek WHSRN-US Committee input on recommendations (31 May 2018).

**2. WHSRN Executive Office Activities in the USA.** As noted previously, Laura Chamberlin's position includes responsibility for USA WHSRN sites, which include: 1) participating in the WHSRN-US Committee; 2) maintaining communication with USA sites, including anniversary reminders that can often lead to more communication and activities; 3) facilitating site assessment workshops, habitat management, monitoring, upgrades to sites and community engagement; 4) providing outreach and communication tools, such as WHSRN signs, interpretive signs, outreach and education materials, dedication ceremony support and generating funding proposals; and 5) developing site exchanges to work together on specific projects and share ideas and conservation approaches. Current funding from the Commission on Environmental Cooperation has provided for exchanges among Canadian, Mexican and USA sites.

Laura reported on the responses to the questionnaire sent to USA sites. So far, 15 site managers have responded, and three have been partially completed (of 49 sites in the USA). This matches the response rate from the rest of the hemisphere. Due date is end of September, and some extensions have been given. There is a need to track down contacts for some sites, particularly at National Wildlife Refuges. Information will help to better understand the status of sites, assist in linking sites and encourage collaboration. Natural resource questions will help EO understand threats at sites and assess what economic uses are occurring at sites. The questions on the value of WHSRN were optional if sites participated in the previous survey. EO is still discussing how to analyze data and present results, and the WHSRN-US Committee will help the EO decide on what and how to present information to site managers/owners.

**Action 2:** Laura to send list of sites without good contact information to WHSRN-US members for help with identifying current contacts (21 Sep 2018).

**Action 3.** The WHSRN-US Committee to work with Laura EO to discuss questionnaire data summary and presentation (31 Dec 2018).

**Action 4.** EO to work with WHSRN-US Committee to have WHSRN representation at site dedications or celebrations (ongoing).

**Action 5.** EO to work with WHSRN-US Committee to develop joint work plan (Rob C., Laura, Robert P., Brad; 20 Oct 2018)

**3. New Site Identification and Engagement.** Saline lake sites that meet the WHSRN thresholds for the percent of the Snowy Plover population or total shorebird use have been identified, and a letter has been sent to National Audubon's Saline Lakes Coordinator, Marcelle Shoop, expressing interest in working collaboratively to support site nominations and management of sites already in the network. Building on the sites identified by Alex for American Oystercatcher, there is a need to look for overlap of these sites with important areas for nesting Wilson's and coastal Snowy Plovers. Other interior breeding Snowy Plover should be identified. Once these sites are identified, site managers should be contacted about the possibility of joining WHSRN.

**Action 6.** Produce list of sites for Wilson's Plover and coastal Snowy Plover and look for overlaps with American Oystercatcher (Brad, Alex, Darrin; 31 Oct 2018).

**Action 7.** Assess midcontinent sites for importance to breeding Snowy Plovers (Brad, Glen; 31 Oct 2018).

**Action 8.** Identify priority sites and draft letter to site managers regarding joining WHSRN (Brad, Alex, Stephanie, Darrin; 30 Nov 2018).

**4. Communication Forum and Management Manual.** As previously discussed, the WHSRN website will host an shorebird forum, which will cover management, conservation, monitoring and other topics. Laura and Monica will be looking for input from the WHSRN-US Committee once the website is up. The target audience will be broader than WHSRN sites and will include participants in Manomet's shorebird management workshops and others throughout the hemisphere. Questions and comments can be submitted in any language, and some minimal translation may be provided by Manomet. Participants will need to create an account to submit questions and comments. Monica and other Manomet staff are revising the shorebird management manual, which is about 75% completed. The manual is organized by habitat and includes a series of case studies, such as rice field management in California and upland management in the Central Flyway, and will be available online as a pdf file and translated into Spanish.

**Action 9.** Send Monica and ideas for management case studies to include in the revision (Committee; 30 Sep 2018).

**Action 10.** Review electronic forum structure (Committee; 31 Dec 2018).

## **5. Completed Past Actions**

- Sent letter regarding WHSRN-US interest in saline lake sites to Marcelle Shoop, National Audubon.
- Provided input into WHSRN site questionnaire development.
- Participants accepted onto WHSRN Task Force to examine criteria questions.
- Supported modification to include City of Tybee Island in Georgia Barrier Islands site designation.
- Sent letter to National Resource Conservation Service regarding wetland designation at Cheyenne Bottoms.
- Worked with Owens Lake submitters on shorebird use and reviewed nomination package.
- Assisted Blanca Wetlands, CO, assess shorebird numbers at potential WHSRN site.