

WHSRN-USA Committee Teleconference Notes – 3 April 2019 (DRAFT)

Present: Brad Andres (note-taker), Joe Buchanan, Laura Chamberlin, Glen Hensley, Stephanie Koch, Robert Penner, Khara Strum, Darrin Welchert, Alex Wilke (note-taker)

Absent: Monica Iglecia

WHSRN-USA Implementation Plan

The final *The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network in the USA – The WHSRN-USA Committee Implementation Plan* is posted at: <https://www.shorebirdplan.org/shorebird-habitat-management/whsrn-us-committee/>. The shorebird plan website also has all teleconference notes and letters sent to support nominations. We can use the Google Drive for working documents and other materials (site contacts). (Completed Action)

Conservation Goal

Review Biological Criteria. Alex and Brad have compiled information on regionally important coastal sites, or greater, for American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover and Snowy Plover.

Action 2. For a subset of sites on the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastlines identified in the spreadsheet uploaded onto the Google Drive, undertake identified tasks needed to evaluate and pursue potential WHSRN nominations (Alex, Brad, Darrin; 31 July 2019).

Action 3. Continue to monitor Audubon's efforts for saline lakes in the Intermountain West and provided information and technical assistance as needed (Brad).

Nomination Reviews. The following nomination review letters were sent to the WHSRN Executive Office between December 2018 and March 2019.

Modification of Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge to support an upgrade to a site of International Importance, which was based on the number of breeding Snowy Plovers.

Modification of Humboldt Bay to support an upgrade to a site of Hemispheric Importance, due primarily to high migration counts of Western Sandpipers.

Technical Assistance to WHSRN Sites

Water in the West. The Pacific Flyway (PFC) Nongame and Waterfowl Technical Committees were interested in holding a joint meeting to scope the for water management, addressing priority species and reviewing wetland connectivity in the western U.S. However, the meeting was postponed due to the partial federal government shutdown in January 2019. Other scoping options are being discussed, including a portion of a regular (every 3 years) meeting the PFC Technical Committees hold with partners during winter 2019-2020. Another option is the normal Technical Committee meeting in the spring of 2020. Besides the biological elements, there are policy and practical considerations. Need to figure this out with the scoping session. AFWA's National Conservation Need might be an avenue for funding. Water management and issues have implication for vitality of current WHSRN sites and nomination of future sites.

Patrick Donnelly, Spatial Ecologist with the Intermountain West Joint Venture (patrick_donnelly@fws.gov) has been working on a *Water 4 Initiative*, which addresses wet meadow habitats. In California's Central Valley, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon California, Point Blue and other partners have developed BirdReturns to provide incentives for rice farmers to provide water for wildlife (<http://birdreturns.org/>).

Action 4. Provide update on PFC scoping meeting and other efforts to address western water issues (Joe; next call).

The Standards for Monitoring Nonbreeding Shorebirds in the Western Hemisphere was distributed to all USA WHSRN site partners and a webinar was held for the Bird Team of the National Wildlife Refuge's Inventory and Monitoring program (Completed Action).

Action 5. Assess potential for an additional webinar with a larger suite of partners, including US WHSRN site partners (Brad; 30 April 2019).

Lahontan Valley. WHSRN Executive Office met with Lahontan Valley partners to discuss planning efforts surrounding the transfer of Carson Lake and Pasture from the Bureau of Reclamation to the State of Nevada. The decision was made to wait to undertake a landscape planning effort after the transfer is completed (2020-2021). Laura will

inform the committee when there is any movement on conservation planning in the Lahontan Valley.

Site Contact List and Dedication Anniversaries. Laura provided a current list of US WHSRN site contacts on the Google Drive (Completed Action). Milestone anniversaries in 2019 are listed below.

WHSRN Site	Yrs	WHSRN Site	Yrs
San Francisco Bay, CA	30	Monomoy NWR, MA	20
Benton Lake NWR, MT	25	South San Diego Bay, CA	20
Quivira NWR, KS	25	Swan Lake NWR, MO	20
Salt Plains NWR, OK	25	Columbia River Estuary, OR/WA	10
Altamaha River Delta, GA	20	Rainwater Basin, NE	10

Communications Goal

Electronic Forum. WHSRN website and electronic forum will be launching on Friday, 5 April 2019. We will need the WHSRN-USA Committee to sign up for forums and help stimulate conversations and provide answers to questions, particularly if there is a lull in responses. Inquiries and responses can be posted in any language. WHSRN-USA Committee members provided feedback on initial structure and most bugs have been worked out. WHSRN-USA Committee members to forward announcement to organization and collaborative networks and to create static links on their websites, where possible.

Action 6. Distribute forum announcement to WHSRN-USA sites partners (Robert; 8 April 2019).

Action 7. Create Google Drive sheet to track announcement distribution and static link creation (Brad; 4 April 2019).

Questionnaire Results and WHSRN-USA Role. Laura has completed the initial analysis of the questionnaire to US WHSRN sites on the value of WHSRN and will provide a more in-depth analysis of specific site needs in the future. The following were broad-scale patterns in the responses (had >50% of respondents indicating indicated the item was very important or important). Details can be found in the report Laura distributed (and is on the Google Drive). WHSRN designation was valuable for 1) international recognition, 2) having their site profile posted on the WHSRN website, and 3) accessing expertise from the WHSRN Executive Office or the WHSRN-USA Committee. For providing support, most respondents wanted 1) information about shorebirds, their threats and conservation actions; 2) opportunities to connect with other shorebird sites; and 3) conservation advocacy support.

Top training and capacity building needs included 1) obtaining current information about shorebird numbers, declines and conservation actions; 2) monitoring shorebirds; and 3) managing habitat for shorebirds.

Action 8. Use general recommendations and site-specific responses to identify appropriate actions for the WHSRN-USA Committee (Laura, Robert; 31 July 2019).

WHSRN Newsletter. WHSRN-USA Committee members agree to assist the Executive Office in developing stories for the newsletter. Articles will either be topic-based, such as a general threat, or site profiles, and length should be 600-700 words. Send any potential ideas to Laura.

Action 9. Glen has developed content for a News Alert on the upgrade of Salt Plains NWR and for their 25th anniversary (Glen, Laura and Maina to complete; 30 April 2019).

Site Dedications. Khara and Laura have been working with partners at Humboldt Bay for celebration of the upgrade in status, which will occur during Godwit Bays in Arcata, CA, 17-23 April 2019.

Capacity Building

WHSRN Hemispheric Council. Drafted letter to WHSRN Executive Office indicating Robert as USSCP representative on the USSCP Hemispheric Council (Completed Action).

WHSRN Hemispheric Council Committees. A task force is being convened to address revisions to biological and land owner criteria, in which the WHSRN-USA will participate. Formation of this committee is still underway.

Action 10. Report on task force progress and seek WHSRN-US Committee input on recommendations (Joe, Brad; 31 July 2019).

Next Call – August 2019