

Executive Committee Meeting
May 18, 2012

Executive Board Attendance: Mary Thoman, Mark Sattleberg, Steve Talbott, Doug Miyamoto, Randy Updike, Cheryl Chatham, John Linn, Don Simpson

The agenda was approved.

Old Business

2012 Science Workshop – Approximately 200 people attended that workshop. There was a wide variety of topics and presentations. Information was shared and attendees were able to connect with the presenters and gain personal information for further sharing.

Evening socials were made available thanks to a grant from the Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism. USGS provided for the morning coffee and afternoon breaks. FWS Service contributed funds to assist with various needs during the workshop.

Thanks you's will be sent out for contributions made during the workshop.

A timeline will need to be produced for future workshops. This will enable workshop leads to plan and schedule the workshop in a timely manner.

A questionnaire type document will be sent out to gather comments to help improve the workshop in the future.

Due to restrictions with some entities, not all of the presentations will be available for reference. After reviews are complete, the presentations will be posted on the workshop website.

It will be the CT responsibility to identify topic and focus for small workshops.

Partner Recognition – The CT has been tasked to produce a process to formally recognize WLCI partners in the meantime, thank you notes will be sent out.

MOU – With minor changes, *John Lin* moved to adapt the MOU. The motion was seconded by *Randy Updike*. The motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Action Plan – Large-scale geographic priority areas have been sent to the LPDT. Once comments are received, a final version will be drafted. The draft should be available by the next EC meeting.

New Business

Annual Change in Chair – *Don Simpson* moved to adapt the change in the MOU to allow Mary Thoman to retain the chair for a second year. *Randy Updike* seconded the motion and was approved unanimously.

NRCS addition to EC – Paul Shelton attended the meeting as a representative for Astrid Martinez, State Conservationist. If NRCS were to be included in WLCI, they would be able to help with private lands and landowners. They could provide monetary assistance with qualified projects and may be able to include NRCS on WLCI committees. While the NRCS is interested in the work of WLCI, they are not yet prepared to accept a seat on the Executive Board.

Update on 2012 funding – 2012 funds are in the process of being obligated. It is likely that the 2013 budget will fall under continuing resolution, which makes obligations difficult. The EC requested a funding update be added to every EC meeting agenda. Mary Thoman requested a thank you go out to the congressional staff for their continued support of WLCI.

Changes in Project Ranking Criteria – Due to the CAP and clarifications requested by the LPDTs, the CT requested permission to make minor adjustments to the Project ranking criteria. These changes will be brought before the EC for approval prior to implementing the criteria.

Partnership Commitments – The Conservation District and the County Commissions will continue to support WLCI, they cannot however, offer financial support. The Conservation District will continue to house and distribute funds as needed. The County Commissions can at times offer in-kind services on some projects. Federal and State agencies will continue to support WLCI with staff and project support.

Team Reports

Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative (GNLCC) – Project proposals were submitted and projects were selected for this year's funding. Agencies will be notified when the next request for proposal cycle will begin. WGFD received funding for the WISDOM database, which will house information across the western states. All data will be available for public viewing, as it does not contain personal identifiable information. Database managers are starting to collect BLM data to show range and wildlife habitat values.

The GNLCC hold regular webinars to communicate with the partners throughout this large landscape area. Zack Bowen, USGS, gave a presentation about WLCI as their first webinar presentation. This presentation can be viewed on the GNLCC website greatnortherlcc.org

Portions of Canada are included in this LCC. It has taken some time to work through international channels but they are now participating with the GNLCC.

Ruby Focus Group – Two projects were funded last year. The springs and reservoir mapping and inventory project is being used to prioritize riparian projects in the focus area. Data has been received from the Raven/sage-grouse project. A paper is currently being written and will be given to WLCI upon completion. Six projects were brought forward for funding this year. The focus group will meet on May 21 to prioritize these projects. Estimated fund for these projects will be ~\$700,000.

Executive Committee Round Robin

Randy Urdike, USGS – Randy appreciated the work and effort to stage the Science Workshop. He is seeing more cohesiveness and maturity within the organization. He believes that outreach to industry and other organizations will benefit WLCI and help to meet the goals of WLCI.

As with all federal agencies, USGS is experiencing financial instability and expect a reduction of budget. USGS will continue to participate and support WLCI. He also expressed his support for monitoring efforts stating that without monitoring wrong conclusions may be drawn.

Mark Sattleberg, FWS – Fish and Wildlife Services is committed to WLCI and will refill the position left open from the departure of Dan Blake. FWS is also expecting a cut in budget and regulatory work is the highest priority within the agency.

Doug Miyamoto, WDA (alternate for Jason Fearneyhough) – The Department of Agriculture received funding from the legislature for the rangeland assessment program and for Agriculture research. Requests for proposals will go and these projects will be quick turnaround projects that can garner on the ground information to further agriculture research. Funding will be available after July 1, 2012.

The Governor's natural Resource division is looking at large-scale plans to inventory and map cheatgrass and focus on the prevention of the spread of this invasive species.

Scott Talbott, WGFD – Wyoming Game and Fish Department will be bringing all interested parties together in the Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative. The partnership will create a plan to improve the habitat and increase the number of Mule Deer in this important area with this initiative a new habitat biologist has been positioned in Saratoga.

Don Simpson, BLM – There is little snow pack this year and with it brings drought conditions. BLM is expecting a high fire year and he suggests that drought management should be included in agency programs and decisions.

Land use plans are being revised as part of the Sage-grouse initiative. He suggests workshops should be planned for sage-grouse and mule deer.

Cheryl Chatham, USFS – New Forest Service supervisors are being place within the WLCI. Cheryl will provide contact information for the CT to include in WLCI emails, Etc.

Final Comments

BLM has approved a term position for a Biological Technician to help back fill behind Justin. The positions will be posted as soon as it goes through all the administrative channels.

The issue of administrative fee cap has come up and will be included on the next EC agenda. It may be advisable to make an official statement so that Ruby Funds are used prudently.

Next Meeting

A doodle poll will be sent out to determine the next meeting date. Two half days will be needed to accommodate a tour and meeting. The targeted location is Kemmerer area.