

NSST Meeting Minutes Austin, Texas

December 11, 2006

Attendance:	
NAME	ORGANIZATION
Rob Holbrook	CVJV
Carol Beardmore	Sonoran JV
Mark Petrie	Pacific Coast JV/Ducks Unlimited
Jorge Coppen	USFWS-NAWMP
Jim Dubovsky	USFWS-Region 6
Rick Northrup	Pacific Flyway – Montana DFWP
Greg Balkom	Atlantic Flyway – Georgia DNR
Tim Jones	ACJV
Andre Breault	Canadian Intermountain & Pacific Coast JVs
Steve Cordts	Mississippi Flyway – Minnesota DNR
John Tirpak	LMVJV – USGS
Bill Uhlein	LMVJV
Brian Sullivan	PLJV
Mike Brasher	GCJV
Mike Anderson	PHJV
Joe Fleskes	Pintail Action Group – USGS
Rex Johnson	HAPET
Duane Pool	NGPJV
Pat Devers	BDJV
Mark Gloutney	EHJV
Greg Soulliere	UMRGLJV
Ryan Reker	RBJV
Dale Caswell	AGJV – Canadian Wildlife Service
Ron Reynolds	HAPET – PPJV
Seth Mott	FWS – DBHC
Steve Moran	RWBJV
Jane Fitzgerald	CHJV

Introduction:

Chair Ron Reynolds provided a brief introduction to his tenure as NSST Chair.

Rob Holbrook was appointed to take notes by Chair Reynolds. However, Article IV of the NSST bylaws indicate that *“The NAWMP Coordinator serves in an ongoing capacity and assumes the role of Recording Secretary.”*

Old Business/Status reports from NSST work groups:

Pintail Action Group: Chairman Joe Fleskes gave an overview of the history, accomplishments, and future directions of the PAG.

Action Item: J. Coppen will work with Joe to summarize the salient points of the presentation into a 2-pg. briefing paper for the PC.

Action Item: J. Coppen will address PAG Chair Joe Fleskes' desire for a recommendation to PC regarding PAG Chair's time/travel to NSST meetings.

Scaup Action Team: Mike Anderson (member of the team that drafted the SAT prospectus) led the discussion. The original prospectus was previously reviewed at the 4th NA Duck Symposium in Bismarck, ND during August. Comments had been received and edits to date included fine-tuning of priorities, the additional recommendation of a staff support person, and the mission had been tweaked slightly.

A discussion followed on the role/need for a species Joint Ventures vs. an action group. It was pointed out that the USFWS is not interested in forming new species JVs.

M. Anderson - Track record has been variable but improving.

D. Pool – Does PC have a vision for spp.-specific JVs interacting with habitat JVs? Is there a continuity issue favoring a spp. action team?

R Reynolds – An action team is more action specific vs. JV so is a better fit for specific ties rather than a spp. JV.

M. Anderson – Action team provides a less formal, less long term commitment. PC not interested in more JVs and their assoc. costs. Consider the need for an action team coordinator w/ resources dedicated to action needs.

D. Pool - Significant changeover opportunities given to PC through us here.

M. Anderson – New opportunity for creative ideas related to the Continental Assessment report recommendations; Supporting these kinds of initiatives through NSST - look at this more holistically with perhaps support for a ½ time coordinator.

R. Johnson – The structure needs to be streamlined...in hiring a coordinator you effectively become a spp. JV.

B. Sullivan – Structuring it as an action team vs. JV still leaves lack of operational funding.

D. Caswell - There exist issues of fully funding yet another JV when this creates overlaps with JVs having congruent responsibilities.

M. Anderson – Comparing this to the BDJV, if the slate were clean, we would need to understand the demography of ABDU and the design for BDJV would not have been the same...the model would have appeared better as an action team.

D. Pool - Action teams Identify issues & research them to provide information. JVs have resources to deliver & implement to affect landscapes to address priority issues.

M. Anderson - discussed an action item for formal creation of the SAT with the following options:

1. PC endorse action team as they did the PAG.
2. Table this until we have better idea of funding (but there might be a loss of positive momentum).

B. Uihlein - Dedicated time – action teams flounder without dedicated resources. Do we need a dedicated staff—how do we fund it (“detail” position)? Solves the JV vs. non-JV issue.

J. Fleskes - Funding for research & adaptive mgmt. constitute the main issues- Need to consider effects of devoting funds to a coordinator vs. pooling funds to address research & adaptive mgmt. issues.

M. Petrie - What’s the habitat JVs ability to address priority issues of action teams to make them priorities for existing habitat JVs?

B. Uihlein - JV “partnership”, not JV “office”, should likely address funding issues. Need to embed action team priorities into JV partnership prioritization process.

There was a motion to endorse the SAT prospectus in concept, without the acceptance of providing staff funding, and for the SAT to: (1) operate as a sub-committee of the NSST and (2) to facilitate the transfer of information between the SAT, NSST, PC, and the habitat JVs. The motion passed unanimously.

T. Jones – Advised we address habitat JVs with biological foundations needs and resource needs to address issues informally, but not tell habitat JVs they have to fund action teams.

M. Petrie - Initial question to address is “How do you fund priorities of this action team?”

R. Reker – Consider a subcommittee to address this issue to develop recommendations for PC. Look for mechanisms for resources for action teams.

M. Anderson proposed a motion for the Executive Committee of the NSST to appoint a committee tasked with reviewing the resource needs of the PAG, SAT, and any such

future teams, and to provide recommendation to the PC in 2007 as to how to provide resources to these action teams. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Item: The NSST Executive Committee will appoint a committee to debate the issues and identify needs for structure & funding for PAG, SAT and any such future teams. They will clarify recommendations to the PC subsequent to discussions with Flyways.

NSST Officer Rotation Schedule:

B. Sullivan - NSST rotation schedule was advocated but no agreement was made. Perhaps could have Executive Committee appoint new incumbents into rotations annually.

J Coppen - Proposed that in rotations, we can pass up any non-participants scheduled on the rotation & the next incumbent in line takes the position.. Executive committee can consider hardships and revise schedule as needed.

There was a motion to accept the NSST officer rotation schedule. After much discussion the motion passed with one dissention.

NSST Flyway Working Groups:

A discussion started on the role “NSST Flyway working groups” could play in tightening the linkage between NAWMP and the Flyway Councils, as was recommended in the draft NAWMP Continental Assessment. Idea is to improve communication, interaction and networking opportunities to pool ideas to develop research initiatives, etc. (i.e., CF JVs meeting concurrently with CF Habitat Committee).

Ryan Reker informed the group of the Central Flyway Habitat Committee that has been developed.

S. Moran – North-South CF approach has more in common than east-west JV pooling in terms of addressing Nat’l issues on meeting NAWMP objectives.

B. Uihlein – Perceived that it is more of a time-crunch than geographical issue

Bill Uihlein posed the question “*Why do we need to be more involved with flyways?*” That discussion was tabled because Mike Johnson, Central Flyway NSST representative, was not present for the discussion. Let the NSST grapple with what is envisioned for NSST Flyway Working Groups.

J. Dubovsky - Needs to be a grass roots approach.

Action Item: Steve Moran will give a report on the CF Habitat Committee initiative at the next NSST meeting.

JV Implementation Plan Review Committee:

Committee members include: Brian Sullivan [Chair], Rick Northrup, Bill Uihlein, Mike Brasher and Greg Soulliere. Brian Sullivan provided two handouts and initiated a discussion on the elements that were developed to provide standards for NSST/PC acceptance of JV implementation plans. There was quite a bit of discussion on the role of the PC/DBHC in the review of JV implementation plans and whether the term “standards” was too strong.

T. Jones - expressed concern re: “who” reviews IPs. Where’s the direction? Made the case that the PC declined review of ACJV IP.

R. Reynolds - Need to stay away from “standards.” Emphasize the left hand column in handout for new JVs and rephrase as “desired characteristics” rather than standards that are required.

R. Reynolds – Many changes to IP criteria have occurred since first distribution, so we need to review w/ broad distribution for comment to JVs. Need direction from PC on how to deal with this before moving forward.

M. Anderson - Need to develop as part of a greater accountability framework.

A motion was made to adopt IP elements & criteria as interim guidelines, as edited (change “standard” to “desired characteristics”, with third column as minimal content and right column as comprehensive content), for how NSST will response for a request to review IP Plan...and incorporate this as how we strengthen the overall accountability framework of the Plan. The motion passed with one dissention.

R. Reynolds – Proposed that NSST members would have a 60-day comment period to fine tune interim guidelines.

Bill Uihlein – Need to develop a time frame for comments, feedback, editing...for interim guidelines.

M. Anderson - Internal NSST review time line only.

R. Johnson - Document should be circulated within bird conservation community after NSST editing.

Action Item: Circulate document (still considered draft) after NSST editing.

Presentation Opportunities for Other Tentatively Established Committees

Population Objective Committee

No report.

A discussion was started by R. Johnson and J. Coppen concerning an upcoming course on using models as exploratory tools. In this course, groups will focus on the ability of areas to sustain ducks on sanctuary versus hunted lands. This has implications for how we apportion ducks across the continent during migration.

Action Item: R. Johnson will give briefing on this course/workshop at the next NSST meeting.

NAWMP 2009 Update:

An update committee was formed by the Plan Committee co-chairs about two years in advance of the Plan Update. The next update committee should be formed this winter or spring for the 2009 update.

Review Working Plan (priority issues/straw man)

A copy of the draft 24-month working plan outline was distributed and discussion ensued re: The need and responsibility of JVs to develop systems to track landscape changes; The lack of utility of the status and trends report just released by NWI (not detailed enough to provide meaningful information to JVs); The need to review the action items in the draft work plan and prioritize - then develop scoping documents.

B. Uihlein remarked that many of the action items provided by the ASC & JTG Report Review Committee put the onus back on the JVs and that the ASC had already compiled that information in their JV interviews.

R. Holbrook and J. Coppen expressed doubt that the ASC data from JV interviews had that much detail.

Action Item: J. Coppen will investigate the level of detail available from responses to Assessment questions.

Following these discussions, the group voted on the top two priorities. Then two committees were formed to develop a scoping document that states the issue(s) and lists a series of alternatives (with pros and cons) to address the issue(s). This report will be submitted in time for the next meeting.

Results were:

1. Development of a clearer and more robust accountability framework for the achievement of NAWMP biological objectives involving all organizational levels in the Plan Community. A decision was made to include the original six needs identified in the NAWMP Continental Assessment rather than the three that were prioritized by the working plan committee. Committee members for this issue are: R. Holbrook, J. Coppen, R. Johnson, M. Gloutney, M. Petrie, J. Dubovsky, and R. Reynolds (for sub-element “d”).

Action Item: The committee will develop a scoping document that states the issue(s) and lists a series of alternatives (with pros and cons) to address the issue(s).

2. Plan progress requires a fundamental commitment to support critical monitoring and evaluation activities within and among JVs and through the NSST. Steve Cordts and Pat Devers volunteered to serve on this M & E committee. Executive Committee will work with Chairman Reynolds to potentially appoint other members to the committee.

Action Item: The committee will develop a scoping document that states the issue(s) and lists a series of alternatives (with pros and cons) to address the issue(s).

Communication for JV Coordinator/Supervisory Support

There was discussion on the need for a letter to JV Coordinators (and others) in support of NSST continued support. Pros and cons of such a letter were discussed as well as who the letter should come from.

The letter was originally envisioned as coming from the Plan Committee. The letter should serve as a reaffirmation of commitment from PC to entities having representatives on the NSST but let JV Mgmt. Boards decide how to address commitments.

Letter needs to be watered down to just the “commitment” theme minus the original bulleted recommendations. Reiterate the value of participation grounded with recommendations and NSST charter & bylaws and to find ways to support agency commitment to allow NSST to be productive. Recommendation for a need for action sent to PC with commitment by JV mgmt. boards to participate in developing any recommendations.

Action Item: J. Coppen will revise & “water down” the letter to frame it in a non-threatening way.

SMA Proposals - NSST Opportunities

J. Coppen reviewed Survey, Monitor, Assessment (SMA) Proposals – NSST opportunities to address research needs for Focal Species next FY.

S. Mott answered questions with regard to USFWS priority species and changes made at the last ARD Meeting to the process.

Western Boreal Forest Issue:

M. Gloutney - Given rep. set up in PHJV Terms of Reference, there's opportunity to expand to a rep. from PHJV with additional support for representation on NSST. Mark commenced a discussion within DUC concerning the potential for representation from our Western Boreal forest program on the NSST. Greater consideration of boreal forest issues was one of the recommendations from the NAWMP Continental Assessment. Mark discussed the opportunity for boreal forest representation on the NSST and to ask for approval to pursue finding a boreal forest representative. This approval would strengthen our ability to make the case to our managers. An added benefit would also be increased Canadian participation on the NSST.

Action Item: Chairman Reynolds will invite an additional person from the PHJV to represent the western boreal forest. Mike Anderson offered that we need someone that knows the birds, habitats and issues in the boreal forest region and he will make recommendations to Chairman Reynolds. The Chairman will then make the invitation.

Discussion of NWI data needs / NSST Recommendations

R. Reker – Discussed NWI data needs for the RWBJV. NWI for RWBJV as it existed was deemed undesirable. A grant was put in for resources for having it redone for RWBJV.

Nowadays they are contracting out NWI updates when resources are available. NWI is now a “you want it – you pay for it” operation. Budget cuts over the years are such that technical mapping is now contracted out.

States are likely to develop their own NWI data needs that would not be in a format useful at the NAWMP continental level. Need line item budget add-on item in lieu of a Service request to DOI.

R. Johnson made a motion that the NSST recommend to the Plan Committee that they work with the AFWA and other pertinent entities to: (1) Identify priority areas for re-mapping and (2) increase funding to update NWI.

B. Sullivan also pointed out that some education needs to be done within the PC, NSST, and bird conservation in general on NWI problems and potential; he suggested a briefing by an NWI staffer at a future joint meeting of the PC and NSST..

Action Item: R. Johnson & R. Reker work on that communication effort.

Adjourn