

**Rice and Waterbirds Working Group
Steering Committee Conference Call**
29 March 2007, 2 pm (US) EST

Next Call: Thursday, 31 May, 2007, 2pm US Eastern Time on
Please send agenda items to Chris.

Participants on Call: Garry Donaldson, Charles Duncan, Chris Elphick, Catherine Hickey, Sammy King, Jennifer Wheeler. (Apologies from others.)

1. Communications

Jennifer reported that the rice waterbirds list-serve has been launched and people can join it from the RWWG web site. Chris and Jennifer both have lists of people interested in being on the list, and they will consolidate those two lists so that Jennifer can send everyone an invitation to join.

With the establishment of this larger working group, the original group (participating in the conference calls to date) will consider themselves the "Steering Committee."

In the invitation, or in a subsequent announcement on the list, we should encourage people to write in their native languages if that helps to bring in a wider range of participants.

We also discussed the benefits of seeking help from members of the group to produce foreign-language versions of the web site. Spanish would be the initial priority, but Portuguese, French, and other languages might be helpful eventually.

2. Rice review publication

Chris reported that we have authors confirmed for 12 major chapters, plus the 4 short overview chapters. Authors still need to be confirmed for 7 chapters, 2 of which are optional and could easily be dropped, and 1-2 of which could be merged with other topics.

Garry reported that the editor of *Waterbirds* is enthusiastic about the outline that we have provided, and that he will move forward to seek formal approval from the Waterbird Society to publish the volume as a special edition of *Waterbirds*. [Addendum: This approval was granted by Francie Cuthbert on 1 May]

Garry also has submitted a request for partial funding to the CWS and will also ask about additional funding options at the forthcoming trilateral meeting. [Addendum: Kathy, who was not on the call, subsequently reported that she has approached several other funding sources, and is preparing a prospectus for use seeking additional funds.]

3. Barcelona symposium

Chris has a list of potential speakers for the Barcelona symposium, based on correspondence with authors for the review publication. He will organize this list to identify a set of priority topics for inclusion and report back to the group so that we can send out invitations soon.

The group also needs to contact Xavier Ruíz to confirm how much time we will have for the meeting, and which day it will be held on. [Addendum: Kathy volunteered to do this.]

Catherine suggested that we also organize a discussion session to be held in conjunction with the symposium. She and Jennifer will organize this session.

Funding for speakers (prioritizing those from developing countries) will be sought in combination with funding requests associated with the proceedings publication. Kathy is taking the lead on this, with help from Garry.

4. Workshops

Catherine reported that she is working on putting together a workshop to develop Voluntary Conservation Practices (a term preferable to Best Management Practices, which can have implied regulatory ramifications). The plan is to involve the California Rice Commission to bring together farmers and researchers to identify practices that benefit wildlife while being compatible with productive agriculture and also to identify ways to help compensate farmers for providing valuable wildlife habitat. The current targeted timeframe is late July or August.

Sammy commented that these issues resonate in Louisiana, and that it would be good to involve people from the South in the workshop to determine if there are ways that the regions can work together to identify solutions. Sammy will try to find out why rice is not higher on the Farm Bill agenda.

Charles reported that he and Daniel have obtained NFWF funding (through WHSRN) to hold a workshop for people in Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina later in 2007, and that they are seeking funds for another workshop in northern South America during 2008.

5. Venezuela meeting

Charles reported that no specific rice related meetings are planned at this meeting.

6. Developing links to industry

Discussion of this topic was deferred until our next call, when Paul will be able to participate.