might be involved in swift fox reintroduction. Eileen sent regulation surveys out to all Team members, but has had little response. Team members need to return these surveys to Eileen ASAP.

Team members have also all received draft reintroduction guidelines ahead of time which we will be reviewing today. The draft guidelines were only distributed to Team and Committee members in order to control the number of revisions that may end up being distributed. A final document will be submitted to the 1999 annual report and will be available upon request.

Canadian Reintroduction Efforts

Lu - There were no new releases last year in Canada. No further releases are planned in the future. That's not to say that they won't decide later on to continue with releases in Canada, but for now the releasing is completed. Over the 14-year period Canada has released over 900 foxes and established a population of about 300 animals. The important thing is that population has become established and is reproducing. Axel and wife Cynthia did a survey last winter. Another survey is planned to evaluate the population. Swift fox were extirpated from Canada by the 1930s. The population now seems to be doing quite well in the area where it had been extirpated. Maximum number of foxes released at one time never exceeded about 60. Although officially Canada is done with swift fox reintroduction, the recovery team is still in place and meets once a year. And the mechanism is still in place to continue swift fox reintroduction in the future, should it be deemed necessary. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada completed an updated status report on swift fox which down listed the species from extirpated to endangered. This is good news.

Axel - A population assessment was done in February, 1999, and essentially repeated what they did in 1996-97 in a subsampled area to determine whether any intensive management was needed to prevent a population crash. The assessment involved primarily trapping survey, but also incorporated spotlighting and timed track searches. The results from trapping randomized townships from the previous census were encouraging. Slightly more foxes were caught in the same areas with a seemingly lower trapability of foxes, and also, in terms of total distribution of the main subpopulation in Canada (remember there are two subpopulations). This gives an indication of population stability. There is going to be another census of the Canadian and Montana population, looking eventually at the population's viability. The question remains whether the population can sustain itself. Appendix B.

Last year, 1080 poison was authorized for use in Saskatchewan. A no-poison zone was established which encompasses the area where swift fox occurred. Beyond that zone, however, 1080 poison can be used. Conservation Officers administer the poison on behalf of ranchers. A workshop was conducted to determine how to evaluate for swift fox prior to bait placement. The government of Saskatchewan determined to use scent stations over three consecutive nights. If no swift fox sign is observed, the conservation officer can set out the poison. Chicks laced with poison are placed in holes to reduce avian predation. In the workshop, they covered how likely it is to find sign with this type of survey in order to make sure that swift fox aren't in the area.

Based on known information, it was determined that with this method, the likelihood of finding a swift fox whose home range overlapped the transect was about 30%. In Alberta, the issue is coyote snaring. Stopping snares still have the potential to capture swift fox around the middle.

Comment: Marsha: If you set snares correctly and monitor them there should be no reason to catch swift fox.

Response: Axel: The issue in Alberta is kill snares and swift fox being captured. Canada is getting its first Endangered Species Act. How these issues will play into this process is unclear. We are hoping the act will be pro landowner.

Comment: Lu: One should look at the implications of poisoning to the ecosystem. In terms of swift fox, poisoning might actually benefit them; although ethics is questionable.

Comment: Brian: This would work for snares too.

Comment: Lu: Right.

Response: Axel: In his study, there was an intensive coyote kill which resulted in a significant reduction in coyotes. Incidentally, however, they had the highest mortality rate among swift fox during that time, because of increased avian predation on swift fox. One could argue that getting rid of coyotes in Canada might make it easier for eagles to prey upon swift fox because coyote absence makes prey available for migrating eagles which consequently are more likely to settle in the swift fox area. Coyote control does not necessarily benefit swift foxes.

Comment: Lu: The emphasis of the Canadian ESA will be on incentives, but there will be some punitive aspects as well. More likely to be called a Species at Risk Act (SARA).

Turner Properties Swift Fox Reintroduction Program - Kyran Kunkel

Kyran thanked the Team for the meeting invitation and the opportunity to interact with the Team. The Feasibility Study Plan for the Reintroduction of Swift Foxes to Turner Properties in the Great Plains was sent out to Team members and others for review, and the group appreciated the comments they received on the document. Ted Turner is the largest private landowner in the US. And he is interested in doing conservation work in the area where he has properties. The Turner Endangered Species Fund (TESF) is a division of Turner Enterprises, concentrating on the conservation of imperiled species on Turner properties. These properties currently encompass about 2 million acres in the U.S., and continue to increase. The focus for conservation efforts is on private lands. Currently, Turner is concentrating on the grasslands. In South Dakota, Turner owns the Bad River Ranch, on which swift fox restoration is one of the primary projects proposed. TESF doesn't want to go it alone; they want input from the Team and as much expertise as they can round up. For example does it make sense to go ahead with a reintroduction and in the manner in which they are proposing? Currently working to address the comments sent by the Team on the Feasibility Study. The next document TESF will produce will be an actual reintroduction plan. TESF is using the IUCN reintroduction criteria.