

Science Committee Notes and Actions
April 12-13, 2011

Science Committee members in attendance: Gaby Chavarria, John Wenburg, Emily Silverman, Alan Fisher, Mike Millard, Gloria Bell, Rick Coleman, Tom Roffe, Joel Reynolds (by phone), Ed Espinoza, Ken Elowe, and Ralph Morgenweck. The Directorate Oversight Committee (Paul Schmidt, Tom Melius, Bryan Arroyo, and Hannibal Bolton) attended the meeting on the afternoon of April 12.

Paul Schmidt, Chair, Directorate Oversight Committee brought the meeting to order and welcomed the Science Committee, Directorate Oversight Committee, and the ARDs for Migratory Birds who were meeting at the same location. Everyone introduced themselves.

Gaby provided opening remarks and read a greeting from Director-designate Dan Ashe. Then she called upon Ed Espinoza who read a message from Pepper Trail describing his pride in being a federal scientist. Gaby recounted the Committee meeting in Ashland, OR and the list of 28 action items that resulted. She led the Committee through an item by item review of each of those actions. Some highlights of the discussion:

1. LUA—John, Al, and Ed discussed what it is, the history of it and potential resolutions of the problems it has caused. Some problems have been resolved and others remain. The group was going to work on developing a means to communicate LUA solutions more widely in FWS. Migratory Bird pilot biologists need help with LUA so Emily was going to follow up with Marcia Pradines (Acting Division Chief).
2. FWS Publication Series—John gave a status report on the journals including the FWS manual chapter and policy that does not require policy review of technical papers being submitted for publication in scientific journals by FWS staff. The authors are responsible for their work and the disclaimer that authors must include states that the work is the author's and may not reflect the FWS position. The FWS journals will also, in the future, occasionally publish proceedings of a meeting or devote an issue to a particular topic. The Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management is getting ready to publish its 3rd edition and the North American Fauna series is open for business as well.
3. Scientific Integrity—Introduced Rick Coleman as the FWS Scientific Integrity Officer and Ralph as the DOI Scientific Integrity Officer. They discussed the policy briefly and some of the issues that have arisen either through allegations or concerns expressed by outside organizations. Policy will undergo a revision in about 6 months so if the science committee has any issues with it, they identify them to Rick.
4. Career Track—Gaby has been working with Peggy Phelps to explore the scientist career tracks of other agencies such as NASA, EPA, and USGS to identify a model for FWS to use for its scientists whereby they can advance without assuming management responsibilities. Peggy will be providing a proposal to the Science Committee in October, 2011.
5. LCCs—With the Migratory Bird ARDs present, this topic sparked a lively discussion regarding the relationship of LCCs and Joint Ventures and how they might work together without actual or perceived duplication. Apparently questions regarding

duplication between LCCs and JVs have been raised by Congressional staff. Many of the ARDs shared their experiences on this topic.

6. Science Vision Statement—Mike Millard presented a series of Powerpoint slides that displayed previous work on the statement and the comments provided by the ARDs for Science Applications. Tom Roffe suggested that the vision statement emphasize “science” first and the FWS after. Thus, the theme of the vision would focus mostly on the science which resides in the FWS. The debate was long and spirited. Eventually, Mike was given several examples of a vision statement and he agreed to work on it and return the last day of the science committee meeting with a recommendation.

7. Science Website—Chris Horsch agreed to continue to be the go-to person for getting materials uploaded to the website. The Committee discussed how to keep the site updated, whether it needed another redesign, and whether we should have more than one site related to science in FWS. The Committee agreed that one website is sufficient because we want FWS staff to be able to go to one website to find what they need. The new title of the website will be “Science in the FWS”. The Committee also discussed the assignment of certain portions of the website to individual Science Committee members who would take the responsibility to keep that portion updated. However, specific assignments were not made. The Committee is to send comments to Gaby regarding the website. Also, Gaby is going to provide a list of names and contact information for OSA, the Science Committee, and the Science Applications ARDs to Chris for uploading to the science website. Ralph will provide science award nominations to Chris for uploading and will also prepare a list of science committee accomplishments for review by the SC prior to having Chris upload it to the website. Ralph will also check with the Science Award Selection Group to inquire if they mind being identified on the science website.

8. Science Awards for 2011—Ed, Emily, and Joel agreed to again represent the SC on the award Screening Group.

Sheila Einsweiler and Kevin Garlick (OLE) joined the SC by phone to discuss arriving at a workable definition of “domesticated” that would work for all FWS programs. They were asking that the SC provide leadership to organize a group of FWS and SOL representatives to establish a scientifically supportable definition. Ed suggested that we use Jared Diamond’s definition of “domesticated” as it appears in “Guns, Germs and Steel” as a starting point for discussion. Tom Roffe cautioned that the USDA definition needs to be considered as well. The agreed-upon approach is that Sheila and Ed will develop a definition and Gaby, Bill Woody, the SOL and Bryan Arroyo will assemble the cross-program group and start the discussion with that definition. If necessary, Strategic Decision Making might be used to arrive at the ultimate definition but that decision will not be made until initial discussions have been held. If SDM is necessary, Soch Lor agreed to work with NCTC on the process. Tom Roffe suggested that the group seek to define “domesticated animals” rather than “domesticated species” because it will function better and without the complications of the many and varied definitions of “species”.

Bruce Rosenlund joined the SC by phone to discuss the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units. He provided a powerpoint and identified the CESU website (www.cesu.org). There are 17 units and FWS is a member of 16 of the units. Currently, the OSA is

working to join the 17th unit (Desert SW) on behalf of the FWS. The CESUs include universities, federal agencies, nongovernmental agencies among others. The overhead rate is very reasonable (17.5%) and the local financial assistance agreements can be set up to last 1-5 years. The CESU website is being revamped but provides a lot of important information about them and how to use them.

Mike Millard brought a shortened science vision to the SC for review. After some discussion and editing, the vision statement was accepted by the SC and provided to Gaby for sharing with the Directorate Oversight Committee. Mike and Ralph are to develop roles and responsibility statements for the SC using some of the previous verbiage that had been developed and shared among the SC.

John Wenburg raised the issue of requiring contractors to provide raw data to FWS when they collect it for us. Tom Roffe raised a similar issue regarding the collection of tissue/blood samples by a contractor for FWS and where those samples are archived. Ed suggested that the forensics lab in Ashland would like genetic samples to use as references and would be willing to archive them. Ralph had contacted Contracting regarding this issue and was told via email (shared with the SC) that the FWS can and should require the raw data and samples from our contractors. The requirement must be put into the contract including the format of the raw data and where the data should be sent. Similarly, contractors must be required to provide the tissue samples they collect and told specifically in the contract how the samples should be treated and where they should be sent. The SC discussed developing standard language to be used in contracts that require collection of raw data and tissue sample, however, a specific assignment was not made.

Emily Silverman and Joel Reynolds provided a document regarding a potential data release policy for FWS that would clarify our responsibilities for quality control and when such data would be released. This was also discussed in light of the data sharing responsibilities that LCCs have to share data with non federal partners. Emily and Joel called for review of their document by the SC and asked that members provide comments and suggestions. SC discussed the potential for a FWS policy on data and specimen collection.

Ralph Morgenweck made a tediously long presentation on FOIA and the impact of the new Attorney General guidelines on DOI agencies as they are advised by the Solicitor to release more documents to the public. He discussed potential litigation risks of releases of draft scientific papers. More information will be provided to the SC as the FWS gains more experience with the new guidelines.

Pat Heglund made a presentation regarding the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the formation of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees to review uses of animals in research. The Act does not apply to “management activities”. However, the line between the two activities is sometimes blurred. Tom Roffe suggested that a “good practices” manual for managers be developed for management activities and then follow the IACUC for research activities. John Martin (Region 7, by phone), Tom Roffe and Pat

Heglund were given the responsibility to develop an approach to FWS compliance with AWA.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Al Fisher is to develop a means to communicate the LUA resolutions more widely in FWS.
2. Help pilot biologists with LUA—Al Fisher, Emily Silverman, and Marcia Pradines
3. Review DOI Scientific Integrity Policy—All (provide comments to Rick Coleman)
4. Peggy Phelps will present a proposal on a career track for scientists to the SC in October, 2011.
5. Provide new “science vision” to the Directorate Oversight Committee—Gaby Chavarria
6. Develop roles and responsibilities of SC using existing materials prepared by SC and Science Applications ARDs—Mike Millard and Ralph Morgenweck
7. Post science award winners and nominations of all on science website—Ralph Morgenweck
8. Provide list of and contact information for OSA, SC, and SA-ARDs to be uploaded on science website—Gaby Chavarria
9. Send comments on science website to Gaby—All
10. Put names of science awards Selection Group on science website, if the Group agrees—Ralph Morgenweck
11. Put Ed, Emily, Gaby, and Joel’s names (plus the DOC name) on science website as members of the screening group for 2011—Ralph Morgenweck
12. Ralph Morgenweck draft SC accomplishments list, send to SC for review, and after completion, have it uploaded on science website.
13. Develop definition of “domesticated animals”—Sheila Einsweiler and Ed Espinoza will develop a working definition as a starting point for discussion by the cross program group to be assembled by OLE, OSA, FHC, and ESA.
14. OSA (Seth Mott) will join the Desert SW CESU on behalf of FWS.
15. Develop approach to FWS compliance with AWA—John Martin, Tom Roffe, and Pat Heglund
16. Upload Scientific Integrity powerpoint to science website—Ralph Morgenweck
17. Seth Mott will work with Bruce Rosenlund to describe contracting practices to access CESUs and share that with all of FWS.
18. Emily Silverman and Joel Reynolds will assemble a group to look at data, data release, issues of data management and archiving, and recommend how to proceed to the SC at the next meeting.
19. Conference call of SC to be held after 1 pm EDT in last 2 weeks of June—Gaby Chavarria
20. Next meeting will be held in Ashland, OR in October, 2011. Al Fisher will send out a Doodle poll to identify tentative dates.