



United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Ecological Services
Montana Field Office
585 Shepard Way, Suite 1
Helena, Montana 59601-6287
Phone: (406) 449-5225 Fax: (406) 449-5339



September 18, 2015

Dear Panelist:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is conducting a species status assessment (SSA) for the contiguous United States distinct population segment (DPS) of the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), which is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As part of the SSA, we have partnered with state and other federal agencies in the range of the lynx DPS to convene a facilitated expert elicitation workshop. The objective of the workshop is to assess the current status of and threats to the various DPS populations and to evaluate the DPS's viability under a range of future threat, habitat condition, and climate scenarios.

We lack adequate empirical data on many aspects of lynx population dynamics in the DPS range (e.g., historic numbers and distributions; current sizes and trends of most DPS populations; landscape-level snowshoe hare [*Lepus americanus*] densities needed to support lynx across the range; periodicity, rates, and importance of immigration of lynx from Canadian populations; etc.). Therefore, we will seek in the workshop to elicit and distill the knowledge, professional judgments, and opinions of experts most familiar with each of the DPS populations to inform our understanding of lynx status, the nature and magnitude of potential threats, and the likelihood of their future persistence.

We have determined that you would provide expertise critical to these discussions and we invite you to participate as an expert panelist in this workshop.

The workshop will be held October 13-15, 2015 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to expert panelists, we have invited participation from other experts (boreal forest ecology, hare population dynamics, climate modeling and projections, and the regulatory environment as it pertains to lynx) who will present information for consideration by the expert panel. A small number of federal and state wildlife managers also will be present to observe the process. Our facilitators may reach out to you before the workshop; please feel free to ask them any questions that you might have regarding the process and your role.

Your participation is vitally important, therefore, if needed, the Service will provide funding to cover travel, lodging, and per diem expenses. In order for the Service to provide this, we will need you to complete the highlighted sections of the attached form (Attachment 1 - FBMS Vendor Request Form) and fax it (406-449-5339) to Sharon Hooley or Kaimy Marks,

Administrative staff. Please submit this form as quickly as possible. If you prefer you may call Sharon or Kaimy at (406) 449-5225, ext. 203 (Sharon) or 207 (Kaimy) and provide the information over the phone. Please feel free to call either if you have any additional questions about travel.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Crowne Plaza Hotel near the Minneapolis Airport (See Attachment 2 for additional hotel information). The workshop will be held in a conference room at the hotel. We will start at 1pm on Tuesday, October 13 and finish up no later than 5pm on Thursday, October 15. The block of rooms, at the government rate of \$140/night, is being held until September 30. Please call the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 952-854-9000 and reference the USFWS to reserve your room. Please note that the cancellation policy for this hotel is 24 hours prior to check-in.

Please let us know if you are unable to attend. Having a strong scientific basis to inform the lynx SSA is essential, and your input would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Jim Zelenak (jim_zelenak@fws.gov, 406-449-5225 x220, or Jodi Bush (Jodi_bush@fws.gov, 406-449-5225) if you have questions or need any further information.

Sincerely,



Jodi L. Bush
Field Supervisor

Attachments (2)