

Meeting Summary Draft
Human Dimensions of Carnivore Conservation
White Oak Plantation, January 12-14, 2010
Prepared by Defenders of Wildlife

Tuesday evening, January 12, 2010

Florida Panthers: Context and Challenges

Darrell Land, Florida Panther Team Leader, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) provided an overview of Florida panther conservation and recovery challenges. The current population is estimated at 100-120 animals.

Chris Belden, Florida Panther Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) summarized the Florida panther reintroduction feasibility studies that began in 1988. With FWC at the time, Chris coordinated the study, which followed the red wolf plan. Five public meetings were held in north Florida and an indemnity sponsor was secured for livestock mortality. FWC soft released radio collared Texas panthers in North Florida and South Georgia (Osceola-Okefenokee). They studies showed that reestablishment is biologically feasible and that there are huge social issues to overcome. The studies were terminated in 1995.

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Elizabeth Fleming and Laurie Macdonald, Defenders of Wildlife, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Introductions around the room (see Appendix for participants list and contact information)

Kipp Frohlich, Imperiled Species Section Team Leader, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and Paul Souza, Supervisor, South Florida Ecological Services Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) stated what they'd like to achieve at this meeting.

Kipp – The meeting is preliminary to determining if reintroduction of panthers is feasible. FWC is an active participant on the Florida panther recovery team. Today we are starting a discussion of how to accomplish (in terms of societal acceptance) reintroduction of panthers. We'd like to hear about lessons learned in other areas.

Paul – We have a robust panther conservation program and recovery team (42 members) and last year released a Florida Panther Recovery Plan that culminated ~15 years of work. It is a challenge to even have a conversation like this. We need to continue to protect animals in south/southwest Florida so we can move forward with reintroduction. I would like to ask you to turn back the clock before you contemplated reintroducing animals and think about those things that you would need now. What are those “lessons learned?” Also, what are the human dimensions aspects to focus on? What is the capacity it took to make that happen – commitment of people, time and financial resources? How did you make it happen, both internally and externally? What are the five actions you had to take before there was an external announcement?

Case Study Presentations

Rick Kahn (teleconference) - Colorado Lynx Restoration Program

Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) initiated planning for a Canada lynx restoration program in 1997 before the lynx was federally listed. It was a state-led effort with no Federal funding so CDOW was not required to undertake a NEPA process.

The program was approved in 1998 by the Colorado Wildlife Commission. Lynx were released in 1999 and the press was very positive. Four out of the original five lynx released starved to death in 11 weeks. The press turned negative and the program came under fire from the Colorado Outfitters Association, Colorado Woolgrowers Association and conservation NGOs. CDOW was sued by NGOs and sportsmen, with one of the contentions being that they needed to go through a NEPA process. CDOW won the suit but it galvanized resistance to the program.

In retrospect, CDOW should have done more outreach with individual groups and emphasized the experimental nature of this reintroduction.

Following the initial release in which the animals starved to death, Colorado refined its release protocols and these resulted in dramatic increases in survival. But the increased survival rates did not totally change public opinion. A new administration that came in placed a moratorium on the program.

In 2000, 55 animals were released. From 2001-2002, there were no releases. The agency spent a lot of time speaking to people, refocusing the message about the experimental nature of the releases, the adaptive nature of the program and most importantly the value of using real data on Colorado lynx to influence local land use decisions. They went through Section 7 consultations as federal listing was imminent so Colorado got out ahead of it. The federal listing occurred in 2000, DOW did not do Section 7 consultations, only the FWS does those. Rather DOW was involved in working with various entities like livestock operators, ski areas and lumber companies and using real data on lynx in Colorado was able to influence ongoing discussions such as Forest Plans and Revisions. In 2003-2006, the public was very supportive. "Everybody loves a winner."

Within the agency, some were for the restoration program, others were against it. The program was not fully funded by the agency, however, the program was primarily funded by the agency, initial funding did come from NGOs and private interests. CDOW prepared a conservation strategy over two years; key partners included FWS, USFS and NPS. They made an error in dealing with the public by misjudging how the public would react- the public via the intense media coverage was very engaged.

CDOW focused a lot on decision makers, legislators, etc. but didn't spend as much time with typical stakeholders that state wildlife agencies deal with, such as hunters who opposed reintroduction because the lynx is a predator. CDOW also spent a lot of time with the press, with good and bad outcomes

The agency had experience with human dimensions but did not utilize that in the initial releases.

Finally, the press began to focus on larger issues rather than the early starvation issue. FWS told CO they would be part of listing process. Because the lynx is now a federally listed species, CDOW needs legislative approval to release animals. The lynx have successfully reproduced and the program enjoys strong positive support from public. CDOW has been able to demonstrate success with real data, which has been important.

Today, the status of lynx is not 100% certain for the long term, however the program has met 6 out of 7 short and long term goals and it is viewed positively by both the public and agency.

Concluding remarks: CDOW missed the boat by not reaching out to broader publics early on, the press was instrumental in communicating about the program and when agencies apply good biology and can be adaptive, people can appreciate that.

Q&A

1. What were positive and negative aspects of program?

Lynx den in areas where cattle won't go. No conflicting forest uses with other species. Cattle grazing not an issue as expected. Timber groups were beneficial with management of snowshoe hare. Lynx reintroduction is at top of the list from public as something they would like CDOW to do. Program stressed the public appeal for lynx instead of ecosystem role

Negative – cost. CDOW had to rely on donations to undertake the project. Prior to this CDOW made the decisions; now they need legislative approval to reintroduce federally-listed species. People with authority do not always react quickly.

2. Was the public adequately prepared and were expectations articulated for some possible negative effects up front?

No!! The starvation aspect caught them by surprise. They should have done better job of managing expectations.

3. Were there any direct conflicts?

Yes, but very minor with livestock. Most have been with Section 7 consultations. APHIS Wildlife Services, Federal grazing permits

4. Did the genesis of lynx reintroduction have an effect on outcome?

No. The real issue was that a lot of people weren't involved in the decision making. Decisions were made without including enough external participation.

5. Was there a strategy for compensation of any loss of livestock?

Yes. Defenders of Wildlife offered to pay for losses. Colorado cattlemen didn't fight this but they weren't supportive. The wool growers and Farm Bureau were radically against it and focused more on whether federal grazing permits would be lost.

6. How much time would have been needed to do public outreach?

Public involvement was only 6 months and that was not long enough. Also, they lacked staff to do this initially. After 2-3 years, CDOW added an additional person to the lynx project. They should have had more people on the ground to work on outreach -- just going out and talking to people in a non-confrontational manner. They spent a lot of time with county commissioners in counties where it did work. Public meetings were not efficient and they could have done a better job with environmental groups -- got a lot of collateral damage up front.

Chris Servheen (teleconference) - Grizzly Bear Recovery Program, FWS

Chris has been with FWS for 29 years throughout the entire grizzly bear recovery program. Grizzly was listed in 1975 and the recovery program was initiated in 1981. It was difficult to pull everyone together and so after the program had been initiated the FWS recovery program established an MOU to create the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee that was signed by the four governors of states involved and the Assistant Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. An interagency grizzly bear committee was created 26 years ago and comprised of state director and regional director positions. The committee may be a good model for coordinating efforts to restore the Florida panther (supplied MOU and committee structure). The grizzly bear is considered recovered in some areas while recovery efforts continue in other areas.

They identified four legs of a table that are necessary for successful restoration that should be emphasized equally (supplied journal article):

1. Adequate biological data (this is where most people put their efforts)
2. Agency capability/capacity to do what they are supposed to
3. Build public support -- they increased efforts over the years. Just listen to other people (rather than "educating" or presenting). Lot of opposition stems from people thinking this is being done to them. Agencies should look at concerns and interests rather than positions. It is important to make the public a part of the process.
4. Build political support -- build depth of support so politicians will continue to support you in challenging times. Citizens were engaged in the management committee to make decisions with the agencies. Ranchers are now biggest supporters. It took time. Continue work with the public and politicians. That's where greatest gains are.

A failure of the program is not having been able to reintroduce grizzlies into the Bitterroot Ecosystem (Idaho and Montana, 1999) -- Bush cancelled the program in 2000.

Take home comment: Don't be too critical from a binary perspective for long-lived carnivores if things don't go well periodically. Success will be long-term and adaptive.

Carter Niemeyer - Northern Rockies Gray Wolf Restoration Program

Wolf recovery had been discussed since the 1970s. Restoration was identified in the 1987 recovery plan. The states did not support the restoration program and to this day there is lots of resistance, largely because of hunter/fishermen stakeholders. The states were opposed because they were concerned about the impact of wolves on livestock, pets, deer and elk herds as well as human safety concerns.

FWS developed an EIS after extensive literature review, scoping meetings and public hearings with lots of literature and data that was completed in 1994.

Started planning through that scoping process and talked to ~1/4 million people

It was a mostly resistant environment (Farm Bureau, wool growers, hunters). Hunters feared that wolves would impact big game (even though statistics for game show increasing populations). The states provided information for the EIS but withheld any personnel from taking on day-to-day wolf management resulting in the USFWS retaining management authority along with the help of the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho.

Livestock losses have been negligible, but people perceive them as greater than they are. Livestock losses between 1987 and 2009 have been 1,300 cattle and 2,854 sheep. That is about 56 cattle and 124 sheep annually. Dogs killed by wolves number 142. In response to livestock depredations, 1,258 wolves were killed and 117 relocated over that period. Livestock industry representatives claim losses that are much higher because of missing livestock they attribute to wolf depredation.

No land use restrictions were imposed.

66 wolves brought in from Canada in 1995 and 1996 and today there are 1,687 wolves, according to the new annual report.

Public perception is that these wolves from Canada were larger, meaner, and a different subspecies than was historically present. Anecdotal stories circulated in the northern Rockies that the original wolves were notably smaller and easier to live with. Carter's opinion is that because wolves were entirely eliminated, people were seeing large coyote tracks and the wolves were easy to get along with because they were all dead!

Defenders of Wildlife compensated for any wolf damage (all reported and verified wolf depredations).

Advice for Florida panther situation

- It will be a social issue, not a biological one. The new buzz word up there is “social carrying capacity” – how many wolves the public will tolerate rather than how many the habitat will accommodate.
- Need social tolerance of people *on the land* (ranchers, farmers, hunters, etc) - There's a difference between urban and rural reactions. The closer you live to them the greater the concern for safety, pets and livestock.

- Make sure law enforcement is engaged and positively supportive.
- Make sure all contracts, permits, jurisdictions, etc. are worked out. Pay attention to details
- #1 Target audience is politicians
#2 is landowners
#3 guides and outfitters
#4 media – be open and honest with them
#5 APHIS (do as much as you can yourselves rather than farming it out to predator control)
- Find an objective spokesperson to interface with/talk to the public about issues. Not a bureaucrat. Could/will be problematic if professional starts talking and has negative bias. Someone unbiased, who is a good listener, non-threatening, and who has authority and the ability to negotiate.
- Remove “bad” animals instead of moving them over and over.
- Don’t impose a bunch of land restrictions on the locals. Encourage people not to kill them.
- Don’t worry about supporters (work with those who will oppose you)
- Convince people to not kill cats (for panthers – mostly private lands.
- Be bold, take risks, persevere and over time fear lessens. Every year that you postpone initiating the effort, this resistance will increase.
- Need to be honest, one on one with opponents. Help them understand the truth and details about the program (e.g. Carter’s interaction with hunters about wolves and not taking all the elk as hunters believe). Politicians, state fish and game agencies and commissions and hunters are getting more militant by the day because of fear mongering about wolves carrying dangerous parasitic worms and lower deer/elk survey numbers coming in from some management zones.
- Consider any potential parasites and disease issues that could be an issue with moving cats from one region of the country to the other. Make sure veterinarians or other specialists consider any treatments for disease and parasites so this argument is not used to stop the program. This has just flared up as an issue - *Echinococcus granulosus* and *multilocularis* tapeworms which have always been around but those who would perpetuate fear are trying to convince everyone they will all die from these worms. We treated the wolves in Canada before they were shipped down.
- There are lots of threats but not much actual killing of wolves. (Since Carter participated at the White Oak meeting, the hunters in Idaho have legally killed over 180 wolves out of 220 - season closed March 31). Montana hunters legally killed 72. These are in addition to those killed because of livestock damage.

Wolf recovery in the northern Rockies has been successful, however, there is fallout beginning on a major scale as a result of outspoken politicians, fish and game commissions and those who wish to spread fear led by sportsmen’s groups using misinformation and anecdotal stories. The other problem is public backlash to the federal government lately - lots of anti-government feelings and the wolf is one of the primary scapegoats. In my opinion, it is payback for when the feds reintroduced the wolf into central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park against the will of the states and now the states are in the driver's seat after delisting. So it isn't all ending up so warm and fuzzy.

Dave Parsons/Bud Fazio - Mexican Wolf Restoration (awaiting edits from Bud Fazio).

The Mexican wolf program has been driven by litigation. The problems are largely socio/political resulting from the human dimensions element. Some groups remain confident they can kill the program.

The 1982 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan planned for captive breeding and reintroduction of Mexican wolves (into Arizona, New Mexico). The White Sands missile range in southern New Mexico, which could support a small but not a viable population, was promoted by the FWS and state wildlife agencies as the reintroduction site because it was Army-owned, livestock free and free of the human contact element (the least politically sensitive site but contained marginal, insufficient wolf habitat). A new commanding general decided not to allow the missile site to be used for reintroduction. This happened because of a new regional FWS policy introduced in the late 1980s that allowed land agencies to opt out of reintroductions of species, so the FWS Regional Director moved toward terminating the program due to the lack of a site.

Conservation organizations initiated litigation against FWS and settled with a commitment from FWS to recovery Mexican wolves by reintroducing them within historical range.

Parsons was hired as the recovery coordinator in October, 1990.

Arizona stipulated 8-10 conditions for reintroduction. These politically based concessions remained in the EIS and final Section 10(j) rule. (e.g. hard boundary around reintroduction site).

In the 1990's, state approval was required to allow reintroduction. Ranchers are typically on state game commissions out west and opposed restoration efforts.

To allow reintroduction, states stipulated requirements to FWS to:

1. Remove or return wolves that left the designated area
2. Remove wolves that preyed upon livestock

Wolves could be removed under the 10(j) rule – they were classified as non-essential/ experimental

The discussions were political

Problems continued until 2010 with unsustainable removal of wolves that left the designated area or to mitigate conflict (depredation). This was inconsistent with recovery as required by the ESA, including Section 10(j).

The Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area contains good wolf habitat but has a hard boundary

Arizona created an MOU that included: 2 state agencies, 1 tribe, 3 federal agencies (over 5 years) and established an Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC). The MOU required the AMOC to be chaired by a state or tribal representative. The Arizona Game and Fish Department representative chaired the AMOC for its entire duration.

Over this 5 year period of decision making by the AMOC, the wolf population declined largely because of excessive wolf control.

An example of flawed adaptive management was AMOC's adoption of operational procedure 13 which required wolves to be removed after 3 livestock depredations in a year.

Litigation ensued, which was settled just a few months ago. The AMOC's decision authority was rescinded and standard operating procedure 13 was abolished. No wolves were removed in 2009 in response to livestock depredations and the program is moving in a new direction. Bud Fazio has recently become the new recovery coordinator.

Lessons

1. 10(j) non-essential/experimental was the wrong designation/10(j) essential/experimental or fully endangered would have been preferable in retrospect
2. Anti-wolf interests remained empowered to challenge the wolf recovery program legislatively and politically.
3. USFS had no program to conserve the wolf even though they owned land and had 7(a)(1) responsibilities; 10(j) empowered the Forest Service to do nothing even though they control 95% of the designated recovery area
4. Get advanced consensus with partners (in this case that could not have been reached in a way that would meet recovery plan objectives). Today the challenge is to move forward with a more successful management practices that address conflicts in ways that protect wolves in the wild and foster recovery
5. Be careful about making commitments that you might later regret and be careful about creating expectations.
6. Need to be adaptive.

In this case, NEPA was required because of the level of controversy even though species reintroductions can be categorically excluded from NEPA analysis.

We faced a paradox – “get animals on the ground with whatever it takes politically” vs. “don't create a box and don't use 10(j) rule as way to get animals on ground.”

Bud Fazio's perspective –

Bud has been with the Mexican Wolf Program for seven months.

FWS had given up its responsibility for overseeing the recovery program to the states (Arizona). FWS agreeing to take over obligations under ESA Section 10(j).

Need to be careful about making commitments that box us in (recovery area with boundaries; veto authority for any land manager offering the opportunity to voluntary opt in or out of the recovery

program; Administrative Procedures Act (APA) three strikes you are out – standard operating procedure 13).

Bud Fazio - Red Wolf Restoration Program

- People's primary concerns are about safety
- They want assurances
- Need to communicate with people about how to be safe and respect wildlife
- Need rapid response to problems when they occur
- Trap for depredation (most of the time its not a red wolf)
- Coordination is critical especially with County Commissioners. They talk with the public and need to stay informed.
- People who are affected need to participate as much as possible. They want to be involved.
- Keep communications informal if possible
- 10(j) non-essential, experimental offers the most flexibility under ESA. Since 2006, red wolves have been subject to human-induced mortality
- We may need to change to essential experimental status that is similar to threatened status, and that can involve law enforcement also (causes some worry that locals will say the Feds changed their minds)
- Many in this area of North Carolina are against predators and against government regulations (Hyde County)
- Red wolf program did not address concerns widely or earlier enough.
- There was a 30-year cold war between FWS and NC but they are working together now.
- Be prepared for “Perpetual memory” – you will be recalled by the public for what they think you said in the past. This can be complicated by having different coordinators over time. It is a challenge to get past that.
- Spend the greatest amount of time talking to your opponents (Bleiker principle)
- Have biologists talk with people to gain trust and understanding – there are many topics of mutual interest/concern to converse about, not just the species issue
- As much public outreach as can happen is needed before and during reintroduction. Involve a human dimensions specialist.

Comment – 10(j) rule is disingenuous for a species that is not viable and that you are trying to restore

Involving media is double-edged sword. Could result in misinformation as well

Q&A

Why was the Red Wolf program discontinued in the Smoky Mountains?

It was a combination of politics and biology. Parvo and other diseases killed pups and FWS had problems managing that. The remaining wolves were removed and relocated to the Outer Banks of NC.

65% of the 1.7 million acre experimental reintroduction area is private or Alligator NWR?

Pick core areas where people aren't dependent on livelihood because peer pressure can be huge factor for involving landowners

Idea – carbon sequestration to maintain red wolf habitat incentive to make \$\$ on their land (this is catching on) as is ecotourism so people see the economic benefit of conserving land as wolf habitat.

Dave Mattson - Thinking Outside the Box

Dave's background is in the ecology of large carnivores – grizzly bears and cougars. He has also been involved in Human Dimension's studies since 1992, a period of 18 years.

The nature of conflict over large carnivore conservation

All of the cases presented today have in common the theme of restoring carnivores in a hostile human matrix – rural areas with anti-predator attitudes. In general, there is a difference in attitudes between coastal and interior areas, even at the scale of Florida. Carnivore conservation is loaded with symbolic conflict, for example, conflict over federal versus state control or the primacy of worldviews regarding relations between humans and nature – which is not about the pragmatics of actually keeping panthers alive on the ground. If progress is to be made, we need to reduce the symbolic loading on these cases by making it more about people and solving pragmatic problems. We can do that by giving people control and ownership.

Elements of collaborations

Some key aspects of collaboration include dispositions of power (NEPA, FACA, APA/ESA) and respect. If people are feeling alienated and threatened the best antidote is respect. Authoritative decision-making processes in natural resources management tend to draw down levels of respect, especially if people feel something is being done to them. People have a need to feel important, and one effective way to convey importance – and respect – is through empowerment. Collaborative processes (NEPA, FACA, ESA) can also fail if facilitation is poor (facilitation is key!).

An additional critical factor in collaboration is getting representation right. This means achieving balance among interests and value stakes, as well as ensuring that all key players are present or at least represented. I noticed in the Florida Panther Recovery Plan that few commercial interests were represented and, perhaps as important, those representatives who were part of the Recovery Team were not very active. It is essential to include all key players when engaging people in a collaborative process. Representation is absolutely critical and needs careful thought. Any collaborative effort also needs clear goals and a shared vision (even if it is only about how participants will treat each other in their deliberations).

To be most effective in practice we need at some point to disaggregate stakeholder groups – to think about and deal with individuals. For example, “hunters” are not all alike, and some among them will be much more amenable to collaboration and finding common ground. At the same time, the hostile individual needs to be considered. Their concerns need to be understood and an attempt made to address them. Hostile disruptive people may not have any interest in collaboration, in which

case their destructive effects will need to be managed. And thinking about people with concerns, the immediate impulse is to “educate” them. But often their concerns have little to do with information and much to do with worldviews, in which case “education” can sometimes backfire – it can be considered disrespectful.

Given our current regulatory framework and conventional approaches to decision making, innovation requires someone with authority who is willing to innovate. Almost always this innovation will require sharing power (authority and control) with stakeholders. Sharing of power was critical to the successes with grizzly bear management in Banff National Park.

A note on method

A high quality intelligence-gathering process is critical to designing effective recovery programs, and a key part of good intelligence gathering is integrating information in ways maximally relevant to solving problems. Although the Florida Panther Recovery Plan has identified key stressors, related policies, and related decision-makers, there is no evidence of integration. These different facets of the biophysical and human world need to be put together in a way that maximizes odds of “solving” the Florida panther recovery problem – which is largely about causing people to make decisions that make the world a more hospitable place for panthers. One very helpful tool is called “social process mapping,” which identifies key participants, their worldviews, their value stakes and interests, and the means by which they influence each other in key decision-making processes. This provides a map for how to engage with stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes.

Dan Decker offered some insights into human dimensions:

- Understand – don’t assume – what stakeholder interests are
Geographic scales and temporal scales
- Politics – local, state, fed scales. Different jurisdictions
- Development of expectations with partners and stakeholders
- Prepare grounds for potential conflicts. Anticipate these.
- Perceptions of risk – get those perceptions in line with reality. Social efficacy – people’s faith in institutions
- Avoid language referring to “the other side”
The “us – them” mentality is poor framework to start with. Don’t get into the trap of trying to get “them” to come around to “our” way of thinking (whatever that is). We need to acknowledge our biases!
- We often rely only on science. The public doesn’t care about science as much as dignity, respect, trust, and empowerment.

Key Points (stages of process)

- Are we going to do it
- Getting animals on the ground
- Keeping animals alive

How can you create a process that can transcend politics through the years (i.e. think of Everglades Restoration)?

How can you create “durable outcomes”? (durable recovery)

How can you empower people who don't trust you to begin with (hate the government, etc)?

How do we even begin to have conversations with people across Caloosahatchee River to allow for success? Figure out who those people are before you approach them. Let people in the community send you to the key people. It will be different in different places because it will depend on the people. Need good intelligence process to find the kinds of info you need and most of that info needed is about the people. Suggestion to go back and incorporate other states in former range of panther into discussions of reintroduction.

Group Discussion of Next steps – Florida Panther Restoration

If the goal is to expand the breeding population to south/central Florida, how do we create an effective dialogue with all appropriate groups and people to determine whether it is feasible within 5 years?

Susan Jacobsen referenced a 2007 study comparing attitudes about panthers in south/central with residents of where panthers are right now in southwest Florida

- people supportive of panthers.
- people support moving them into their own county.
- people want to see natural lands protected.

She found little difference between attitudes from those where panthers are now and in south-central Florida.

The group discussed doing a “Q analysis,” to identify who the participants are and then ask them for their perspective. Participants define a statement for themselves. Then you can see which groups are pro and against and then small clusters of individuals that have common ground (like-minded). The analysis takes time – Mike Gibeau can provide a PDF of a graduate student's work to the group.

The group also discussed Bleiker techniques, which identify who the stakeholders are as well as social mapping. The group recommended pairing both techniques to begin a dialogue and identify those publics and stakeholders that Florida agencies need to talk to the most.

Start with generating stakeholder lists for these tools (Q analysis and Bleiker) – identify people, values and perspectives. It is best for a third party to do this as FWS/FWC are stakeholders in that they can't give up the responsibility for panther recovery but we *will need to give up the power* OR share leadership with other agencies/partners as champions for the effort

Power comes with four constituent elements: authority, control, accountability and responsibility.

Sequence of events –

Step 1: Social analysis (Q analysis, Bleiker, etc.)

Mid step: Cultivation of partners

Later step: Sharing of power

Also consider “round table” approach with stakeholders to have them become empowered to develop guiding principles. Intelligence phase needs to be ongoing and multidimensional -- “Joint Fact Finding” so that people own the information that comes out of the process and are invested. Have a sunset timeline for group.

Perhaps a citizen’s advisory group could assist with gathering of information for the analysis procedures. Seek opinions from people, a broad array of backgrounds, etc. – will ultimately see the blending of personalities.

A citizen’s advisory group could contract for someone to do the social analysis. Have to determine what a Citizen’s Advisory Group would do (joint fact finding, review info, etc.), need purpose and objective for the group, start with question so group can define its purpose. The process can just be improved relations among the group.

A wolf round table developed “guiding principles” for wolf reintroduction in New York. The head of DNR was the ultimate decision maker that took the product from the group (which ended up being a decision not to reintroduce wolves there).

*Start with a question, such as we already have panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River. What do we do? Let’s talk about that. Where do stakeholders want to go with that? What are issues you are living with? How is this affecting you?

Make the 1 question limited to citizens group. Can this group help us?

Or back up further and depending on the group formed – then figure out what questions to ask. How complex or simple depends on the nature of the group.

People that you invite can lead you to other stakeholders. Or start first with interviews. Realize a stakeholder group is needed but a small part.

Any effort will need internal buy-in from Commissioners/Governor. Stakeholders could derail.

Some stakeholder perspectives that need to be considered include the following: many people believe there are already females breeding north of the Caloosahatchee; spoilers in south Florida could influence people north of the river and beyond; some conservationists may oppose restoration efforts north of the river as the habitat is fragmented and lacks crossings; others see efforts to move animals northward as FWS abandoning conservation efforts south of the river; development permitting decisions north of the river are not being influenced by current and future occupation by panthers; climate change effects will make northward expansion necessary.

Need to carefully articulate our legal mandate for panther conservation and recovery

The Arizona Program has a “12 step” process that includes going back and reporting to the Commission every step along the way. Wolf, condor, ferret and prairie dog programs are all done this way. Make a series of small decisions before a large decision is made.

The group discussed how to begin the dialogue and explored aspects about the various steps:

- Internal agency training for social science inquiry
- Techniques for social inquiry
- Analysis – use to learn more about external partners
- Bleiker – internal training for public participation
- Seek and inform consent from particularly informed interests

Florida requests assistance in deciding which techniques are best to use.

Evaluation takes *immersion* into the problem. Context-specific knowledge is required.

Need refinement of a research question. This is a social science research problem. Social-science derived methods will be useful toward solving this problem. Need an intelligence process – orienting to the problem. We have started that at this meeting. Who are the key participants and what are their profiles?

Thursday, January 14, 2010

Themes

The following themes were addressed in the second day, however, the discussions merged into one another:

1. Legal requirements and practical considerations
2. Managing internal agency dynamics
3. Stakeholder identification and outreach
4. Use of communication and media
5. Handling spoilers

1. Legal Requirements

Obviously an EIS is needed. Moving animals across the river shouldn't need 10(j) at all since the population is extant north of the river. Maybe we would consider 10(j) experimental essential for restoration to another state.

Any expansion would need to have 10(j) "essential" status because of the low population number. Maybe we could create an essential rule with the same type of flexibility as a non-essential rule. We need ways to engage private landowners.

NEPA is the minimum that is needed. Is there a way of getting acceptance of stakeholders through this process? If it is done correctly it will include public outreach – doesn't go into the detail of social science analysis.

We would need to do a formal EIS because repercussions of a decision to move cats north of the river will be great. Cats will move into Georgia, etc.

Looking for a steering committee – public scoping through NEPA process.

Also consider *cost*. This is a \$1 million effort. Lot of work needs to be done before we can talk about NEPA compliance.

Social science techniques will inform Florida about what needs to be done and it will help inform the NEPA process considerably. No matter which social science technique Florida uses – do it up front so the NEPA process will go much more smoothly.

Goal Clarification: Improve long term viability of Florida panther by expanding the breeding range north of the river in a socially-acceptable manner. Desired future condition: breeding population of panthers north of the river in secure habitat with some connectivity below the river.

Need to work through the goal internally to know what everyone is thinking about. How to achieve that goal. Need to improve way we engage with people – that would be a second goal.

Step 1

Instead of *consulting* with people we need to *collaborate* with people (engage everyone internally and externally).

Step 2

Recognize that we need to do something different – both internally and externally

1. Networking with community (preliminary analysis of attitudes/concerns social mapping technique)
2. Formalizing that with community citizens advisory group
3. Framing that with PR; focus group
4. Generating positive press
5. NEPA process – EIS

NEPA considerations – take a lot of time and money.

How many goals of Recovery Plan can be coalesced together so you don't have to do more NEPA processes. NEPA process for wolves and grizzlies were litigated.

Think about options more broadly. If we cultivate relationships with the people then may not need to take bad cats out as readily. Every conflict is opportunity to build a relationship then that will build tolerance when adverse things occur. It gives us the forgiveness factor- people will be more apt to forgive you if they trust/like your commitment to solving problems fairly.

Also want to train people in the field to know exactly what is happening with depredation complaints – may not be a cat that took the goat – could have been a dog or may have been poor husbandry practices that resulted in a cat taking the goat.

2. Internal Agency Dynamics

FWC will need the capacity to handle all of the issues associated with the expansion of the panther issue. There is not much flexibility in the budget within FWC. Will need to increase budget – also

will have benefit if train stakeholders up front to triage some of the simple circumstances in the field. Need to work on consistent response from within the agency – internal communication, buy-in, and support.

What are kinds of internal discussion we should go through to avoid dramatic political oscillations?

This issue will be political.

How can we build a political base of support that is non-partisan?

There is no panacea. This is going to be far more difficult than wolves and grizzlies.

3. Stakeholder identification and outreach/spoilers

If we have broad base of support from the people reporting to the commission that will work

- Need respectful negotiation.

- Collaborative negotiation

- Build those one-on-one relationships

- Bring spoilers in so they can be heard

- Need to build *effective* collaborations

“Buy in” vs. “invested - prefer the word invested because we are looking for a long-term investment in the process.

If want a collaborative process need to bring in all the right people at the front end.

How do you get the not so overly passionate people to the table along with the very passionate people – sometimes the very passionate people can intimidate other partners at the table in a group setting.

Use Bleiker technique – bring spoilers to the table and talk with them one on one.

Spoiler – not invested in the collaborative process and can be ready to derail it. These are people that are not invested in the collaborative process. They often are the least empowered, so they feel they won't be part of the process. Once they are empowered, they can turn around.

Spoilers want to maintain their autonomy and their power base. They don't want to come to the table because they believe that whatever is decided through the collaborative process that they will have the clout to kill it.

To prevent end runs – have government put them off and defer to collaborative process.

Committee Establishment

Round table 18 people, 22 people for wolf and grizzly efforts

Groups that work the best are politically appointed – not by FWC- use lists that we have, key stakeholders and have timeframe for completion established with reporting requirements.

- The group is not the final decision makers but they have guiding principles
- This commitment is an engagement facilitated by 3rd party

Gathering Process

Start with core group of invitees. Ask a question of the group – “Have we missed someone?”

Can take several weeks to consolidate group into a core group that will be established

Would we need a FACA committee – might just want to do that and have joint collaboration around the table

Could convene as Recovery Implementation Team and be FACA exempt

Could be group separate from FWS ownership but need conflict resolution process/mechanism integrated into process.

FACA committee can empower the group
 Constituted – how you put group together
 Governance – how you run the group

Need to be concerned about putting group together and then being able to keep them together.

Need to create a shared vision about how they want to govern themselves.

Ensure appropriate venue – where mtg takes place and the food.
 Perhaps talk about everything but the subject at hand during mealtime.

Choice between finite timeline vs. adaptive mgmt process

Committee can be really large if consider agencies and at least 6 counties and NGOs. So who should be invited?

“Hybrid approach”

Group appointed by Governor or Interior of ~ 8 people. Key large landowner, 1 person who represents landowners, etc. That group is advisory and can facilitate the larger mtgs – counties, NGOs, publics

They would represent the larger group
 Product of the group would be the smaller group

Need to go back to the purpose and make sure the group is a representative entity. What is small group going to inform others about? You need to decide what is required?

Form follows function

Also need to consider scale. N of River vs. State of FL stakeholders
Scale is hugely important. Don't take on too much. Keep it small, less threatening.
Need arena for dialogue across the river for long time.
A cross section of opinion leaders, respected person in that area (brain surgeon, teachers, etc.)

2060 plan may already have a group formed in that area – need to check into that

Important to think about how interests are represented. Scale is hugely important as geographic area and scale increases then must increase level of participation.

Who were challenging partners to your efforts that we didn't expect? Spoilers that came as a surprise?

Our own law enforcement (due to attitudes on hunting)
Large landowners

Recovery Implementation Process – empower the stakeholders and let FWS take all the responsibility

Workshop Process- breakout group exercise

Workshop participants divided into four groups to identify first steps toward obtaining the goal (thought experiment)

Group 1

Goal: Improve the long-term viability of the Florida panther by expanding its breeding range and population size north of the river while sustaining necessary social acceptance of their presence.

1. Discuss up front how the agencies will message the issue and message the next steps, both internally and externally and discuss the best strategy on how information is distributed.
2. Identify resources needed for next steps.
3. Intelligence gathering (internal and external) of who, what are their values and issues, determine the strongest opponents, who has influence.
4. Based on intelligence establish a team of collaborators that can assist with networking internally and within the community
5. Collaborators develop strategies and help address HD challenges
6. Collaborators assist in development of plan (release sites, numbers, etc.)
7. Identify resources needed to address both human dimension and biological strategies
8. Conduct HD strategies (engage groups, etc.)

9. Reaffirm political support for proposed plan.
10. NEPA

Group 2

1. Confirm internal agency commitment within FWS and FWC
2. Develop internal communication/commission with others than may be impacted (PR, land managers, etc.)
3. Identify stakeholders in the reintroduction area/create stakeholder team to further refine issues
4. Consolidate everything into a plan
5. Human dimensions inquiries to decide whether or not to move forward
6. Plan by agencies and stakeholders to identify resources to implement the plan (full monty vs. half monty)
7. Need communications strategy to publicize collaborative plan
8. Implementation of plan

Group 3

1. Agency debrief between FWS and FWC (Manager's Model)
2. Develop HD strategic advisory team to negotiate complex HD expertise issues over time/process (perhaps orient to manager's model). Bring internal HD person on staff to work with agencies and HD advisory team
3. Begin social science inquiry – third party (post-doc, etc).
 - a) Develop internal engagement strategy within agency/field staff and conduct training in HD especially conflict resolution and communications (get them on board early)
 - b) Coordinate/tap into existing HD outreach and inter-agency panther outreach
4. Integrate panthers in local government zoning and planning (panthers are already there).
5. Strategic Engagement across river (north and south of the river) in dispersal zone

Group 4

1. Internal conversation – Identify spoilers and human dimension technique

2. External process for human dimensions (Q analysis) to reach out to key people on the ground
3. Tap into key players that already have panthers issues to get their reaction to expanding population (informal conversation with large landowners)
4. Internal capacity evaluation (how much will it cost, how many people)
5. Broader level of engagement (public, press, community, political leaders)
6. Stakeholder group to guide process forward (Committee, FACA, etc.)
 - a) Identification of goals and timelines
 - b) Recommendations to FWS/FWC
7. NEPA process – EIS, scoping – Record of Decision
8. New discussion of capacity
9. Create stakeholder oversight committee
10. Open the crate
11. Continue collaboration and oversight

Discussion after Next Steps Thought Experiment

Participants offered a few final pieces of advice:

1. Be sure to consolidate political support at high levels (Governor, FWS Director, FWC Chair). Do not surprise anyone.
2. Try to consolidate processes as much as possible (NEPA process- track rule-making with NEPA document).

Kipp and Paul thanked the experts for attending the meeting and sharing their knowledge and experience. FWC and FWS plan to debrief about this workshop and next steps. Meeting participants stated their willingness to field questions from Florida and assist with ideas for panther conservation and recovery as needed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.