

Northern California and Oregon Fisher Working Group  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office, Yreka, California  
Minutes for Meeting on 20 & 21 September 2006

Attendees:

Sue Livingston – USFWS  
Steve Criss – Criss and Co. Consultants  
Ric Schlexer – Redwood Sciences Lab  
Laura Finley – USFWS  
Carole Jorgensen – BLM  
Rich Klug – Roseburg Resource Company  
Naomi Nichol – High Country Consulting  
Steve Self – Sierra Pacific Industries  
Scott Yaeger – USFWS  
Karen West – USFS  
Linda Hale - BLM  
Keith Slauson – Redwood Sciences Lab  
Steve Burton – CDFG  
Kathy Brown - USFWS  
Nick Dennis – Hearst  
Nick Buckler– Redwood Sciences Lab  
Stu Farber – Timber Products Company  
Tom Franklin – Timber Products Company

On 20 September 2006, we went on a field trip to look at fisher detection areas. Details are below. The next day we met at the Yreka USFWS. The meeting commenced at 8:30 a.m.

1. Additional Comments from Last Meeting

- Discussed pictures from the SPI field trip in June, and whether they had been circulated. Carole said she had some on a CD, and will send out copies
- Steve Self offered to take pictures or video of fisher habitat from a helicopter. Steve updated us on his fisher tracking study. All 9 females are still “on air”, including one juvenile female. Next year they may try to trap new animals, or may just continue tracking the ones they have collars on. They have determined the home ranges of the 9 females, which are generally 300-400 acres for breeding females, with one being 1400 acres. The study has trapped over 4500 acres from three areas on SPI land.
- There was a question about comparing detection methods. Researchers at Hoopa are working on this.
- There was a question about how far east fishers occur in N. California. They are known to occur around McCloud Flats/Deadhorse Summit (roadkill record), east end of the Pit River arm of Shasta Lake, around McCloud. All

these are south of Hwy 89. There is not much info from north of Hwy 89, might be a snow depth issue.

- Update on USFWS Fisher Surveys – Scott Yaeger
  - 56 cells (FIAs) are completed, with 6 trackplates per cell.
  - Goal is to complete 70 cells in order to build a model.
  - The model requires detections at 20% of cells.
  - Money will run out in about 6 weeks, and hope to have 70 cells completed by then.
  - Cells were chosen based on logistics, so biased to roads and highways, especially in winter.
  - Some surveys in areas where fishers have been sighted have failed to detect fisher (north of the Klamath River).
  - Timber Products found fishers north of the Klamath River, but other surveys haven't picked them up.
  - Has this effort been worthwhile? The information is building on Zielinski's information which increases statistical power, and will lead to building a model similar to Carroll et als, but covering a more xeric habitat.
  - Why were surveys based on FIA plots? They weren't specifically, as coordinates of plots aren't shared information.
  - The original purpose was to detect populations, not individuals.
  - Bill Zielinski is building a model based on FIA-type data around rest sites, as an extension of a published paper. Collecting information around individual trees, with half the sites in the S. Sierra, half in Six-Rivers National Forest. Also seeking money for plots on Hoopa. Steve mentioned that SPI would be interested in collaborating on this.

## 2. Discussion of Field Trip

- On 20 September 2006 we took a field trip to the Collins-Baldy fisher study area, in the McKinney Creek Watershed. The field trip was "hosted" by Stu Farber and Tom Franklin of Timber Products Company. They took the group to six sites where fisher detections had occurred, and which represented a range of habitat types. A booklet was put together for the group with a report, historical and current aerial photos of the area, and genetic results from hair-snare devices. A lot of the discussion during the day was about genetic work and techniques, and these topics continued to the meeting the following day. The field trip was an excellent overview of the work Stu and Tom are doing, and was well organized and productive. The group felt it was time well spent.

## 3. Update on Federal Fisher Team - Laura Finley

- The Federal Interagency Team is made up of three parts:
  - Fisher Biologist Team
  - Science Team
  - Steering Committee
- All three groups are working towards a Conservation Assessment and Strategy.

- Draft Comments for the Assessment were due September 22, 2006, and then they were to go to the Steering Committee.
- Funds are needed to move forward on the Conservation Strategy.
- Moving forward with threats analysis if funding comes through.
- There was a question about how much input private landowners and working groups will have in the process, prior to the public input in June. The working groups will have more input in the strategy part of the process. There was a comment about how important private landowners are in fisher conservation, particularly in California. Private land is not addressed in these documents.
- These documents only involve public land, and include guidance, not recommendations.
- A comment was made that information about managed lands should come from information on private land, and that information could be inferred to public lands
- Group is hoping to have the Assessment and Strategy completed by June 2007.
- Carole mentioned that maybe BLM needs to coordinate its WOPR program with the strategy formation.

#### USFWS Scat Dogs Status

- Report due to the USFWS in March. The genetic analysis on samples collected by dogs is ongoing.
- Carole is interested in using dogs for low-density fisher areas, as it may be less costly and faster than other detection methods.
- Robert Long just did PhD in Vermont comparing techniques for detecting fishers, and scat dogs were included. Scott has emailed PDF of the dissertation to the group.

#### 4. Presentation of Fisher Database - Ric Schlexer

- Ric gave an overview of Keith Aubry's database and the logic behind it.
- Ric is starting to enter California information, and put out a call for data, whether it be in a shoebox or in a database. The more raw the data the better.
- Positive detections simply need a detection, but negative survey results MUST come from protocol surveys.
- Only verifiable data entered (for positive detections). No sightings without a photo.
- Marten detections are being included from west of I-5 only. They are a more common species E. of I-5 in OR and WA.
- The website will be available to anyone.
- Data will be shown in 4 mi<sup>2</sup> blocks only, no point locations will be shown.
- Comments will be included with records where locations of quads are different from the database grid.
- Information on den and rest sites won't be used, unless there was a verifiable fisher detection.
- Question about telemetry information, as there is no verifiable evidence but the signal is known to come from a fisher. Ric will talk to Keith Aubry about

this issue. Will also talk to Keith about trapping for collaring, when no photo was taken.

5. Mendocino Survey Update - Keith Slauson

- Keith and Nick have spent the summer in Mendocino National Forest.
- Surveying for Marten, primarily, but also Fisher.
- Found no marten in the forest, but detected fisher throughout the center “spine” of the forest.

Detection Probability Project – Keith Slauson

- Starting in October, will gather empirical data to statistically evaluate detection probability for fishers
- Looking at seasonal, geographic, habitat type patterns
- Looking to identify the minimal survey effort required to detect fishers using a range of techniques.
- This will result in an increased confidence in comparing surveys that used different techniques, so past efforts can be evaluated for probability of detection.

6. Update on California Fisher Assessment - Naomi Nichol

- A draft should be ready by late October/early November for the working groups to look at.
- Assessment will be given to CDFG, and it will be their decision whether to launch a Conservation Strategy.
- There is a lot of discussion about translocation in California. This may hinge on a feasibility study.

7. Update on Threats Analysis – Laura Finley

- Laura showed a printout of the threats matrix, which is huge.
- Explained how threats were broken down and ranked by magnitude, and weight of evidence (ranging from peer review to professional opinion).
- Threats were broken down further by geographic region, and how each threat applies to each region.
- This matrix is a segue between the Assessment and the Strategy, it is the information on which the strategy will be based.

8. Anything Else?

- Steve Self spoke of his frustration in developing a density index in order to coordinate various survey efforts. We need to apply consistent area survey to efforts so as to develop an index where people that used the same protocol can compare results. A density index could tell us where fisher are more dense in different areas.
  - We don't have areas associated with trackplates or cameras. Protocols address this to a degree, and Keith's work will refine it. Need to define “effective area surveyed”.
  - Proposed small group get together to agree on areas associated with these techniques.
  - Steve has emailed the working group about this, and those interested should respond so he can move forward with this.

9. Next Meeting

- The next meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2006 in Yreka. It is scheduled to be from 9-4.
- Keith Slauson is contacting Karen Stone at SOU to come to the meeting and talk to us about genetics analysis.