

# Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee



**July 29<sup>th</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014**  
**Sheraton Hotel**  
**West Des Moines, Iowa**

**“Living on the Edge: Where the Prairie, Farmlands, and  
Woodlands Meet”**



## Table of Contents

Conference Agenda .....	3
Steering Committee Meeting Agenda .....	5
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes .....	6
Awards .....	9
Committee Reports .....	14
Ag Policy Subcommittee .....	14
Forestry Subcommittee .....	16
Grazing Lands & Grasslands Subcommittee .....	19
Mined Lands Subcommittee .....	21
Outreach Subcommittee .....	21
Research Subcommittee .....	22
Business Meeting Minutes .....	25
Poster Abstracts .....	28
Meeting Attendee List .....	31
Past Meeting Locations and Dates .....	34
Meeting Sponsors 2014 .....	35

## Conference Agenda

### Tuesday, July 29

- 8:00 – 5:00 Steering Committee Meeting
- 11:00 – 8:00 Registration
- 1:00 – 6:00 State Coordinators Meeting
- 3:00 – 3:15 Break
- 6:00 – 8:00 Welcome Reception & Auction
- 7:00 – 8:00 Dinner on Your Own

### Wednesday, July 30

- 6:30 – 8:00 Breakfast Buffet
- 7:30 – 10:30 Registration
- 8:00 – 10:00 Welcome - 2014 Meeting Chair *Todd Bogenschutz*
  - Bobwhite In The Hawkeye State - *Bruce Trautman, Deputy Director, Iowa DNR*
  - Iowa Land Forms and Wildlife History - *Doug Harr, President, Iowa Audubon Society*
  - Iowa's Quail History - *Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Game Biologist, Iowa DNR*
  - Partnership Driven Conservation Delivery - *Elsa Gallagher, Missouri Quail Forever Coordinator*
  - NBCI Update - *Don McKenzie, NBCI Director*
- 10:00 – 10:15 Break & Auction
- 10:15 – 12:00 Committee Meetings (*Research, Forestry, Ag Policy, Grasslands/Grazing Lands, Outreach*) *Note Mined Lands committee did not meet.*
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch Buffet
- 1:00 – 3:00 Committee Meetings (*Continued*)
- 3:00 – 3:15 Break & Silent Auction
- 3:15 – 5:15 Committee Meetings (*Continued*)
- 5:30 – 7:00 Social Reception & Silent Auction
- 6 :30 – 7 :00 Silent Auction Winners Announced
- 7:00 – 8:00 Dinner on Your Own

### Thursday, July 31

6:30 – 8:00 Breakfast Buffet

7:30 – 10:30 Registration

8:00 – 10:30 Committee Meetings (*Continued*)

10:30 - 11:00 Break

11:00 Depart For Fieldtrip - *Tour of South Central Iowa Quail Habitat Efforts*

6:30 – 8:00 Banquet with Awards Presentation – *Ramsey Farms*

9:30 Arrive Back At Hotel

**Friday, August 1**

6:30 – 8:00 Breakfast Buffet

8:00 – 9:00 Committee Reports

9:00 – 10:00 State of The Bobwhite Report Review And Discussion – *Dr. Tom Daily*

10:15 – 11:45 NBTC Business Meeting

11:45 Adjourn

## Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

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### **Tuesday – July 29th**

8:00 – 8:10 – Welcome, Thanks for your service, preparing for transition, new members (Puckett).

8:10 – 8:15 – Treasurer’s report (Chuck).

8:15 – 9:00 – Overview of input from state coordinator’s phone calls and group discussion (All).

9:00 – 9:30 – Current status of NBCI Staff Funding (Don).

9:30 – 10:15 – NBCI new staff hiring process and discussion (Don, Tom and all).

10:15 – 10:30 – Break.

10:30 – 11:00 – Database status (Tom).

11:00 – 11:30 – State coordinator’s meeting – background, goals (John Morgan).

11:30 – 12:00 – Planning for AFWA.

12:00 – 12:45 – Lunch.

1:00 – 6:00 – State Coordinator’s meeting.

7:30 – 9:30 – State Coordinator’s facilitators (Dukes, Puckett, Morgan, Duren), Kowaleski, Figert, Tom, Don (reconvene and assimilate coordinator’s input).

### **Wednesday, July 30th**

During sub-committee meeting – John Morgan presents State Coordinator’s results to research committee and solicits input, prepares input for Steering Committee.

6:00 – 9:00 – Full Steering Committee along with state coordinator’s facilitators reconvene and assess input, begin working on solution, develop answer for Georgia, present at Business meeting Friday.

## Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

### Tuesday – July 29th

**8:00 – 8:10 – Welcome**, Thanks for your service, preparing for transition, introduction of new members (Puckett). After introductions around the table, the Steering Committee presented Don McKenzie with a pair of McKenzie tartan plaid ties as a token of appreciation for his 10 years of service as NBCI's Coordinator.

**8:10 – 8:15 – Treasurer's report (Kowaleski).**

Chuck Kowaleski presented the treasurers report as follows. The NBTC account balance reported at the last Treasurers report at the July meeting in Roanoke, Virginia was \$34,826.46. Since that time we've taken in \$2,610.83 in dues and other funds from the meeting and paid out \$770.02 to cover the cost of the 2013 & 2014 award plaques and gift certificates, \$2,374.45 in travel reimbursements for folks to attend the Outreach Committee meeting as well as covering Tom Dailey's and Mike Black's travel reimbursements when NFWF funding unexpectedly ended, provided \$1,000 in startup costs for the 2014 Iowa meeting and \$2,000 for the 2015 New Jersey meeting's startup costs, as well as another \$899.29 in meeting expenses for the February Steering Committee Meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee and reimbursed John Doty \$210 for SEOPA professional dues. Our current balance is \$30,183.53.

**8:15 – 9:00 – Overview of input from state coordinator's phone calls and group discussion (All).**

Marc Puckett provided the group with an overview of input he received from the state coordinators phone calls that he made. Marc contacted all states except Wisconsin, and in some states contacted more than one person. Some of the main points that state coordinators made during these telephone conversations included: Steering committee should do some strategic 5 and 10 year planning and set goals. Discussion on whether or not we need to develop a strategic plan – setting priorities, - maybe the midterm steering committee meeting could be dedicated to developing priorities?

Maybe have subcommittees consider developing a set of 3 year goal or priorities? Possibly committees discussing after this meeting via emails and teleconferences with the idea of passing them along to steering committee in time for discussion at the midterm steering committee meeting.

**9:00 – 9:30 – Current status of NBCI Staff Funding (McKenzie).**

Don has completed PR training and is working with FWS and States to develop contract agreements and reporting documents acceptable by all. Many states are currently on board with using PR funds to pay for expansion of NBCI staff. Some states still prefer to use state funds instead of P-R and they will continue to have that option. A number of states are not currently planning on providing any additional funding over their current annual \$5,000 to support NBCI staff.

**9:30 – 10:15 – NBCI new staff hiring process and discussion (McKenzie and all).**

Since there appears to be enough additional funds to hire some additional staff, the discussion centered around whether or not to hire data manager and grassland coordinator – general support for hiring new staff with a fair bit of discussion on how much the various states have contributed and options for supporting these positions, who has contributed what.

Discussion on whether Don should pursue additional talks with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) to house an ag policy person in their DC office – the steering committee voted for Don to move forward with these discussions. Jay Stine felt that Park City Quail would be willing to extend their current \$75,000 grant to cover this position.

10:15 – 10:30 – Break.

**10:30 – 11:00 – Database status (Tom Dailey).**

Data Manager discussion – Tom and research committee taking lead in evaluating data base needs – determine structure and home base, find candidate, put out request for proposal (RFP) for home base. James Martin said that subcommittee felt that two-thirds of the positions' time would be spent designing and building a data base that could be filled by the states remotely, one-third of position would be coordinating this effort, needs at least \$40K in operating budget to be effective, person should have wildlife background as well as computer experience. Committee would prefer to do a limited RFP from University of Tennessee (UT) and maybe one or two others to provide the home base for this operation. Discussion on whether UT should be the default. Pat Keyser argued for it as UT is NBCI base and both groups could benefit. But UT is pretty weak on GIS/computing systems right now. Motion to allow research committee to pursue an RFP for home base and support, to report back October 1, executive steering committee has been given the authority to make the decision on moving forward on this contract and hiring staff member.

Grassland Coordinator – one person must cover 25 states, subcommittee have been working on putting together a job description. Western states organizing input for range emphasis. This position is currently on the edge of financial viability with P-R funding. Pat Keyser – UT CNGM focus is eastern pastureland/forage position, their focus is on eastern. States will be looking at proof of concept. Chuck Kowaleski– states that are sitting on the fence funding wise will be looking at whether or not this position benefits them. Nick Prough said that he is expecting a lot of discussion during the grassland committee tomorrow.

John Morgan – state coordinators meeting – developed a process to look at modifying or expanding CIP guidelines to allow greater state flexibility. Billy Dukes, M. Puckett, J. Morgan and Duren will facilitate breakout groups within the meeting.

Catherine Rideout – Lifecycle modeling for bird meeting in Virginia Beach in early October. SEPIF/NBCI relationship seems to have weakened due to travel restrictions, loss of personnel, etc – might be opportunity to strengthen that relationship in joint PIF meeting. Maybe good to get together on grassland bird issues (NBTC-PIF folks). Several of the PIF groups such as OPJV are heavily involved in grassland bird issues. Looks like Don McKenzie, Marc Puckett, Larry Heggemann, Nick Prough and Catherine will be there.

December 3, All Bird meeting in Padre Island – Catherine helped get NBCI invited after we were not included in the original round of invitations. Lenny – has NBCI approached the Gulf Coast Prairie LCC to work with them- bobwhites are one of their focal species.

Noon - Initial Steering committee meeting ends, to be resumed the evening of July 30<sup>th</sup> after this afternoons state coordinators facilitated meeting

**1:00 – 6:00 –Facilitated State Coordinator's meeting took place where the coordinators were asked to respond to a 20 question survey.**

**7:30 – 9:30 – State Coordinator's facilitators** (Dukes, Puckett, Morgan, Figert) plus Executive Steering Committee members Kowaleski, Figert, Dailey and McKenzie reconvened and assimilated coordinator's input for tomorrow evenings second full steering committee meeting.

**July 30, 2014**

**7:20 pm – 9:00 pm – Full Steering Committee** along with state coordinator's facilitators reconvene and assess input, begin working on solution, develop answer for Georgia request to allow modification of CIP study parameters, present at Business meeting on Friday.

CIP and CIP+ discussion – John Morgan went over the responses to each of the questions that were asked of the state coordinators. The state coordinators seemed the most upset with Georgia's request to allow supplemental feeding. After a lot of discussion the States seemed okay with a few States having experimental CIP as long as they had at least one focal area that met all of the national standards.

Question Number 13 If a state has at least 1 standardized focal area then it would be okay to include management practices unrelated to habitat on other focal areas. States were very supportive of that but not of question #17 that asked whether or not state would participate in a group that implemented both predator control and supplemental feeding (only 1 yes).

If CIP+ practices are deemed allowable by the NBTC steering committee the NBTC Research committee recommends that all participating CIP states have at minimum one focal area without CIP+ additional practices and a reference area. CIP+ focal areas must meet all requirements of the original CIP guidelines (e.g.>1500 acres) to allow a valid statistical comparison among all areas and allow a valid statistical comparison among all areas and will contribute to an adaptive management approach. Specific monitoring of CIP+ sites, such as trapping data and feeding records, will likely be necessary and will be determined at a later date.

Tom Dailey and John Morgan to wordsmith this effort and bring it back to the steering committee for a vote.

CIP is unprecedented opportunity to implement a uniform multistate habitat management effort while providing additional opportunities to test bobwhite population response to a variety of experimental supplemental treatments.

The Data manager's budget was also discussed in preparation for bringing it up during the Business Meeting on Friday. It was decided that a salary and benefits = \$80k/yr., travel and office = \$10k/yr., Operating budget = \$22k/yr. for a total of \$112k/yr. or \$336k/3 years would be appropriate. This amount covers both the place for housing the database and the data manager.

## Awards

### Bobwhite Community Honors Billy Dukes and James Giocomo with Annual Awards

The authoritative organization of the nation’s bobwhite experts honored the chief of wildlife for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and a bird conservation joint venture for their respective contributions to the restoration of northern bobwhites in their annual meeting here recently.



Dukes, left, with NBTC Past Chair Dan Figert

The National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC) presented its annual Award for Individual Achievement to Billy Dukes, who has spent more than 20 years actively involved in the bobwhite effort. South Carolina’s new chief of wildlife, Dukes began his career as a staff biologist working with the Fur Resources Project and the Small Game Project, eventually becoming supervisor of the Small Game Project, assistant wildlife chief and then wildlife chief in May. Dukes has been an active leader in every annual meeting of the group, served as chair of the group’s steering committee, oversaw the transition of the technical group from a “Southeast-only” effort to the larger range-wide 25-state effort, as well as the growth in capacity of the technical group’s

National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI).

The Group Achievement Award went to the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture (OPJV) in Oklahoma and Texas, represented by Dr. James Giocomo, OPJV coordinator. NBTC cited the joint venture’s priority commitment to integrated habitat conservation for both bobwhites and a suite of associated grassland birds, as well as its active support of the bobwhite technical group.

Among the organization’s many contributions is the creation of its Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (GRIP) that uses NGO, corporate, and state funding to encourage and support private landowner conservation activities through direct financial assistance to supplement Farm Bill programs that may miss important areas due to national and state restrictions. GRIP has already provided support to private landowners for habitat improvement work on over 34,000 acres in the first 7 months since implementation in November 2013. In addition, the OPJV partners are positioned to expand all aspects of conservation planning, population monitoring, and conservation tracking to support private landowners in meeting conservation delivery objectives identified in NBCI 2.0, the range-wide restoration plan for bobwhites.



Dr. James Giocomo, left, NBTC Past Chair Dan Figert, right

## **NBCI Presents First “Fire Bird Conservation” Awards**

The contributions to wild bobwhite restoration by entities and/or individuals in six states claimed the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative’s (NBCI) National Fire Bird Conservation Awards during ceremonies at the annual meeting of the nation’s bobwhite experts in Iowa recently. Award recipients are chosen by the respective NBCI-member state’s quail coordinator for their contributions to that state’s efforts toward habitat-based restoration of wild bobwhite populations.

“We wanted to provide an avenue for states to recognize and thank those making meaningful contributions to their science-based restoration agendas, illustrate the variety of those contributing to the bobwhite restoration cause and perhaps help encourage others to join in,” said NBCI Director Don McKenzie. “We need as many individuals, agencies and organizations as possible actively contributing to this unified 25-state strategy.”

The award’s name symbolizes the historic reliance of bobwhites on fire in much of its range to maintain the landscape in an “early successional” stage, that is, in the native grasses, wildflowers and “weeds” providing bobwhites with suitable habitat. Both wildfires and fires intentionally set by landowners to clear farm fields and woodlots historically resulted in abundant habitat for bobwhites, as well as numerous other wildlife species. The term “fire bird” in relation to bobwhites was first coined by naturalist Herbert Stoddard, who researched bobwhites and worked to restore bobwhite habitat in the early 20th Century.

Today, “prescribed” fire under controlled conditions by trained professionals has become an increasingly important tool for helping create and manage habitat for bobwhites, as well as a suite of songbirds and other wildlife that require early successional habitat to survive.

### **2014 award recipients were:**

GEORGIA: Di-Lane Plantation Wildlife Management Area Team (John Bearden, Henry Williams, Steve Kyles, John Lovett, Haven Barnhill, I.B. Parnell, Vic VanSant, Lee Taylor, Buck Marchinton)

“Despite landscape and site limitations, management has produced an excellent bobwhite population and public land quail hunting,” wrote Reggie Thackston, Georgia quail coordinator. “The success at Di-Lane has been widely acclaimed and is stimulating strong interest and support for bobwhite management on public and private lands; and thereby contributes greatly to the Wildlife Resources Division’s efforts in attaining NBCI goals.”

KENTUCKY: Team Leaders, “Road to Recovery: The Blueprint for Restoring the Northern Bobwhite in Kentucky” (Tom Edwards—Bluegrass Army Depot Focal Area; Nathan Gregory—Clay WMA Focal Area; Philip Sharp-- Livingston County Focal Area; and Eric Williams—Peabody WMA Focal Area)

“As a group, they have put KY’s bobwhite restoration effort on the national map,” wrote Kentucky’s quail coordinator, John Morgan. Kentucky reported a 57% increase in bobwhites observed in its annual statewide mail carrier surveys between 2012 and 2013, the Peabody WMA has demonstrated a 91% increase in its fall bobwhite population over five years, the

Shaker Village project is holding steady with 50 coveys of bobwhites, and the Hart County Quail Focus area has demonstrated a 771% increase in bobwhites from 2008-2012, while the Bluegrass Army Depot Focus Area registered a 57% increase during the same period.

LOUISIANA: U.S. Forest Service, Kisatchie National Forest, Jason Nolde, U.S. Forest Service.

The U.S. Forest Service recently approved the creation of a new Bobwhite Emphasis Area in the Vernon Unit of the Calcasieu Ranger District of Kisatchie National Forest. Explained Louisiana's quail coordinator, Jimmy Stafford, "The U. S. Forest Service manages some 604,000 acres in Louisiana known as the Kisatchie National Forest. Most of Kisatchie N.F. is upland pine habitat ranging from shortleaf pine in the north to longleaf pine in the south. The primary management on these lands is timber harvests and prescribed fire. Approximately, 121,000 acres are prescribed burned each year. The Forest Service has demonstrated its commitment to maximize early successional habitats through widespread prescribed fire ... and have also eagerly joined with state quail biologists to identify ways to further improve habitats for bobwhites."



Jason Nolde, U.S. Forest Service, left, accepts Fire Bird award on behalf of Kisatchie NF. Jimmy Sloan, Louisiana's state quail coordinator is on right.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Mark Coleman, Spartanburg - According to South Carolina's quail coordinator, Willie Simmons: "As a private citizen, Mark Coleman has been a cooperater in SCDNR's Quail Hunter Survey for over 15 years. During that time, he has maintained constant contact with the Small Game Project Supervisor offering assistance with projects and initiatives.

"Mark is a staunch supporter of SCDNR and of scientific wildlife management in general. Following publication of the NBCI 2.0 (in 2011), Mark was one of the few quail hunters, if not the only one in South Carolina, to embrace the new planning paradigm, openly and wholehearted supporting the plan in conversations with other bird hunters and in various public forums. "Through conversations with the SCDNR Small Game Project Supervisor and with NBCI Director Don McKenzie, Mark heeded the call to action from the initial State of the Bobwhite report and immediately engaged policy makers in South Carolina. He personally appeared before the SCDNR Board to request and promote wild bobwhite management in South Carolina. "Although he is far too modest to accept any credit or praise, he was directly responsible for renewed emphasis and urgency on completion of South Carolina's statewide quail restoration plan. He continues to this day to offer financial and logistic support for establishment of a statewide quail council, the next step in implementation of the South Carolina plan."

TENNESSEE: Bill Smith, TWRA Fire Bird Award Winner.

From Tennessee’s quail coordinator, Dr. Roger Applegate: “Bill manages Kyker Bottoms Refuge and Foothills Wildlife Management Area in eastern Tennessee. Kyker Bottoms is 525 acres of true early-successional habitat that likely produces the best bobwhite population in Tennessee. Bill manages this habitat as old field and is a one-man show. He also permits a very conservative hunting opportunity on a quality bobwhite resource. Bill is an example to other land managers in Tennessee and other states by providing the habitat that bobwhite evolved in.”



TWRA Fire Bird Award Winner Bill Smith, left, with Tennessee quail coordinator Dr. Roger Applegate, right

VIRGINIA: The Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Tech

Wrote bobwhite coordinators Marc Puckett and Jay Howell: “They are two legs of the 3-legged stool that supports our private lands quail recovery program... While we have many valued partners, without which our quail plan would be much less effective, the two recognized in this nomination are the backbone of the program.” Cited was the comprehensive support of the two organizations in the recruiting, hiring, paying and administratively supporting the state’s team of private lands biologists working to restore bobwhites on private lands in Virginia.

### South Texas First 'Legacy Landscape' for Bobwhite Conservation



Dr. Lenny Brennan, left, and NBCI Director Don McKenzie

A decades-long tradition of good land stewardship and aggressive bobwhite management and research across roughly 20 million acres of native rangeland was recognized here last week as South Texas became the nation’s first “Legacy Landscape for Northern Bobwhite Conservation.”

The National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) and its technical body, the National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC), announced the designation during the annual meeting of the nation’s bobwhite experts. Dr. Leonard Brennan, with the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas

A&M in Kingsville, accepted on behalf of the legion of “dedicated, responsible landowners, resource managers, researchers, and quail hunters” who earned the designation.

“The national bobwhite community recognizes and encourages efforts to conserve vast areas of bobwhite habitat, whether through management practices or other decisions, that provide long-term viability of not only wild bobwhite populations but also many other associated species,” said NBCI Director Don McKenzie. “South Texas is a longstanding national model for such efforts and tradition, and we commend the region and its people for this enviable status.”

Clayton Wolf, wildlife division director with Texas Parks & Wildlife, reacted to the designation saying, “Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) congratulates all the landowners, land managers and hunters of South Texas for receiving this prestigious designation recognizing their efforts to conserve this iconic game bird. TPWD, universities, conservation organizations and other agencies have a long history of working with private landowners and hunters in South Texas to address the conservation, research, and management needs of the northern bobwhite. Through these efforts, decisions on the best management approaches have resulted in bobwhite populations that continue to thrive even in the face of near record drought over the last several years.

“The support that TPWD provides in this partnership, and much of the support from others, would not be possible without the contributions of hunters, and specifically quail hunters that purchase Upland Game Bird Stamps. Above all, the persistence and abundance of the bobwhite on the landscape in South Texas result from a land stewardship ethic that is clearly the foundation for the success of this species and many others.”

Said Henry Hamman of Houston, Texas: “As a representative of south Texas landowners and also in my role as Chair of the Advisory Board of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, we are honored by this designation. It will go a long way to highlighting the importance of this region to wild quail.”

Fred Bryant, Exec Director of CKWRI, said: “What an honor and affirmation by the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative. This recognition sets us apart as a bastion of wild quail habitat in a region we have coined as the ‘Last Great Habitat’. The stamp of approval is heart-warming to all of the conservation and hunting community we represent.”

Primary criteria for the Legacy Landscape designation includes an extensive area of ecologically “contiguous” habitat that has for decades supported high densities of wild northern bobwhites, a long-term tradition of purposefully implementing or maintaining land use practices that support bobwhite habitat conservation, and landowners, hunters and other stakeholders who have demonstrated strong support for quail hunting, management and/or quail research over multiple decades.

## Committee Reports

### Ag Policy Subcommittee

**Chair:** James Tomberlin (GA), **Vice Chair:** Lisa Potter (MO)

**Attendees:** James Tomberlin (GA), Lisa Potter (MO), Cody Cedotal (LA), Brian Hickman (IA), Mark McConnell (MSU), John Laux (NE), Levi Horrell (AR), Casey Bergthold (QF-MO), Scott James (QF-MO), Lorien Huemoeller (VA USDA), Katherine Miller (TX A&M), David Hoover (MO), Jake Holt (NE), Dan Figert (KY), Andy Kellner (IA), Don McKenzie (NBCI), Angie Bruce (IA), Chuck Kowaleski (TX), Todd Bogenschutz (IA)

#### Wednesday July 30, 2014

##### Review of subcommittee charge and structure

- No charges assigned to Ag Policy Committee

##### Nomination and Election of Vice Chair

- Cody Cedotal with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries was elected to serve as the Vice Chair by the attendees present at the Ag Policy meeting.

##### NBCI Ag Policy Position Status

- Don McKenzie provided an update to the group on the status of refilling the Ag Policy Position. Don indicated there were currently two organizations (American Bird Conservancy and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP)) that have shown interest or potential in housing the position.
- Current discussions are focused on evaluating three primary options for the future of the position.
  1. Hire a representative from the DC area with experience and existing contacts in an effort to provide a smooth transition away from housing the position from within USDA offices.
  2. Hire a new NBTC staff person to be located in potential partners' DC offices
  3. Representative from one of the potential partners would represent NBTC goals and objectives while maintaining their position within their own organization.

-Current position funding: There is still \$70,000 provided by Park Cities Quail. LA has offered 3 years of state funds, West Virginia and Kansas have offered 1 year of state funds.

- This may be sufficient to fund the position with half state funds and half PR funds.

##### Action Items:

- 1) Change title of the Ag Policy position to "Agriculture Liaison"
- 2) Fill the Agriculture Liaison position by the end of 2014.
- 3) Don will continue discussions with potential partners and report back to the Committee.
- 4) Committee will finalize the high priority goals for the position and deliver to Don.

##### Tentative list of "High priority goals/issues" for Agriculture Liaison:

- CP33 pivot corners
- Native's First
- CRP modernization - emphasis on enrolling High quality CRP acres and focusing these acres in bobwhite quail range when possible
- Pine Management - work with Forestry subcommittee

- Data Sharing Agreement (NBCI wide agreement)
- Ag Extension – Pasture management with Natives
- Communication with States
- Working Lands for Wildlife – using bobwhite as a companion species/habitat
- Follow new farm bill and find new avenues that benefit quail

#### CP33 Policy - Pivot corners

- We have not received a response from FSA on our request regarding the requested policy change to allow the enrollment of stand-alone pivot corners in the CP33.
- If the opportunity arises, it may be worth evaluating/submitted a national/regional SAFE practice that allowed pivot corner enrollment.

#### **Action Item:**

- Approach FSA again in Spring 2015. The consensus was that FSA is preoccupied with the current workload/focus on implementing the 2014 Farm Bill changes and would not have time to adequately address our request at this time.
- Coordinate this Action Item with AFWA CRP Working Group.

#### Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- States that submitted pre-proposals that involved bobwhite quail: TX, IA, MO, KS, NE, GA
  - At the time of the meeting it was unknown which projects had been selected to submit full proposals

#### CRP Modernization

- FSA released a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (SPEIS) on CRP for the 2014 Farm Bill. The SPEIS focuses on Targeted Enrollment, Managed Haying and Routine Grazing Frequencies, and Emergency Haying and Grazing.
- Targeted Enrollment:
  - FSA is proposing a ‘reverse auction’ bidding style sign-up process in the effort to focus CRP enrollment with limited acres. This process would be in addition to the existing Continuous and General sign-up options.
    - The following should be considered within the reverse-auction sign-up development:
      - Native grass plantings only/benefit to native wildlife
      - Restrict by practices/location
      - Preference new enrollments and upgrades that improve existing cover
      - CPs to prioritize– CP33, 36, 38, 25, 23, 37, 42, 4D, 22, 31, 29, 37, 32
      - Flexibility of grazing windows – state flexibility on practices
      - Allow/incentivize grazing for MCM
      - MCM – require 2 rounds/multiple practices (consider frequency needs on regional basis)
      - Prioritize Prescribed fire

## **Thursday July 31, 2014**

### **Natives First**

- Concern was mentioned over Natives First Initiative being threatened by current USDA Soil Health Initiative/ Cover crop promotions.
- In some states, Cover Crops are competing with other best management practices for upland species. (Example: Nebraska's program encouraging producers to leave tall stubble for pheasant is losing out to cover crops in some areas)
- How/can we use the emphasis on the Soil Health Initiative as a way to promote Natives First and/or use of NWSG in pasture management?

### **Action Item:**

- Recirculate studies/information on benefits of NWSG including nutrition and economic studies to group.

### **EQIP**

- The majority of states have not yet established separate wildlife funding pools. Within the group present, only LA and MO have active wildlife fund pools.

### **CSP**

- LA had the opportunity to submit new wildlife enhancements to state NRCS for consideration of adoption in CSP. LA submitted enhancements on SWA management, fallow discing, and feral hog control.
- None of the other states present were aware of this opportunity.
- It was suggested to look into the development and likelihood of submitting new enhancements focused on idling land/set aside and/or early succession habitat requiring low cost inputs.

## **Forestry Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Billy Dukes (SC), **Vice Chair:** Willie Simmons (SC)

**Attendees:** Billy Dukes (SC), Jimmy Stafford (LA), Dave Godwin (MS), Jason Nolde (USFS), Catherine Rideout (SEPIF), Mark Sasser (AL), Reggie Thackston (GA), Trevor Mills (AR), Greg Hagan (FL), John Burk (NWTF), Donnie Buckland (NWTF), Chuck Kowaleski (TX), Lorien Huemoeller (NRCS), Larry Heggermann (CHJV), Mary Crowell (QF), Jimmy Sloan (NJ), Monika Burchette (CKWRI), Carter Crouch (CKWRI), Andy Rosenberger (VA), Clifton Jackson (AR), Mark Puckett (VA), Terry Haindfield (IA), Gary Calkins (TX), Mike Pruss (PA)

## **Wednesday, July 30, 2014**

### **Update provided by NBTC Forestry Coordinator Mike Black.**

- Mike provided a written report of accomplishments to the group.
- Mike described his engagement with the Southern Group of State Foresters and his focus on developing relationships with foresters in the southeast.
- Mike expressed the importance of having biologist attend and have input into the various forestry initiatives and groups (Longleaf Partnership Council, Shortleaf Pine Initiative, etc.)
- America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative local implementation teams – one action might be to better tie high BRI ranking areas to the SGAs. (In some states the BRI and the SGAs do not overlap)
- Currently there are 18 Longleaf Initiative Teams (LIT) and there are 2 seats available on the Longleaf Council; it is important that we be involved with those teams. Currently there is good representation on

the council at the higher level (Reggie Thackston representing SEAFWA and Mike Black as current Chair). However, good to insure that state agencies with a quail focus are involved in the local implementation team.

- Mike also covered his involvement in the development of the Shortleaf Pine Working Group.
- Range-wide Shortleaf pine draft plan should be coming out this September and there has been an announcement for a full time Director.
- It is important for the biologist to be involved in the Shortleaf workshops
- Emphasis will be on internal training to ensure that the wildlife community has a good understanding of site suitability and management issues.
- Work with the US Forest Service on their 10 year plans and stay involved to help achieve desired basal areas on Public lands. (Remember to revisit the NEPA for each area)

### **Reggie Thackston – Economics of Pine Management for Quail and CRP Pine Savanna Management Incentive (7-30-2014)**

- Reggie presented a synopsis of some research conducted with Dr. Barry Shiver on the economics of pine savanna in CRP. Direct costs included burning and controlling invasive plants and opportunity costs included heavy thinning and rotations beyond optimum economics. What does the landowner give up in economics in order to make ‘trade-offs’ to optimize wildlife benefits?

Discussion with Bridget Collins on CRP Pine Savanna Management Proposal. Joined by NBTC Ag Policy Subcommittee. Purpose of discussion was to answer several questions raised by FSA related to the proposal.

1. Recommend 50% up front and 50% after the second burn and 10\$/acre for each other burn.
2. Sounds like with the limit and payments, most parcels about 300 acres would be eligible and this should cover 90% enrollments.
3. Thin and burn after thinning within 4 years. Require that 75% of land is blackened by fire.
4. LA may add their names to the list – Cody Cedatol will check with administrators and be in touch with Bridget
5. Landowners should be able to sell their timber even if it is at a lower price. General feedback is that this would not be much of a concern.
6. Use Rx fire as a tool whenever possible; if Rx fire is not an option then let them use discing or herbicide.
7. Stay with re-enrolling landowner, because they will be in the program 15 years.
8. Already somewhat of a reverse auction because you can bid your EBI up. Group thinks \$200/acre total incentive is appropriate.
9. South Carolina – compliance yes, but response monitoring no. Same for MS – TSP, technical assistance and spot checks...yes, but not on response monitoring. Same for Louisiana. All in all – some yes and some no.
10. Can states be an administrator of a block FSA Grant? (Mix bag of response, some said yes and others said no.)

Following discussion on CRP proposal, Mike presented a draft video for forest landowners entitled “Sunlight, Fire, and Quail” developed by Mike and John Doty. Group offered significant feedback on first cut of the video. Plan is to develop a companion video for professional foresters.

#### **Thursday, July 31, 2014**

- Chairman called for a nomination and vote to fill position of Vice-Chair.
- Willie Simmons elected as Vice-Chair for the Forestry Committee. Willie will take over as Chair of the Subcommittee following the 2015 NBTC meeting in New Jersey.

Mike Black lead discussion of additional subcommittee priorities and changes related to PR funding.

- PR funds working for the states as a part of a 25 state initiative. PR fund impacts on Forestry Coordinator position.
- Opportunities: 1. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) 2. National Tree Farm Association 3. Rx Fire Councils (What would be the best use of Mike’s time?)
- NACD is very responsive and very active in state affairs such as EQUIP and getting funds on the ground for the states.
- Joint Ventures. Mike serves on the Management Board of the EGCP Joint Venture.
- States expressed a pressing need to finalize MOU with USFS which includes implicit support of the establishment of NBCI Focal Areas.
- Similar MOU needs to be developed with USFWS.
- How do we establish a working relationship between some states and the USFS? Somehow we need to address the issue of poor working relationship between states and federal agencies. The priority for this relationship needs to come from the top of the federal agencies.
- It is important for the state to review forest management plans. Mike cannot spend a great deal of his time reviewing these plans. NBCI could serve as a liaison or facilitator for this process.
- Need to complete MOU between NBCI and Southern Group of State Foresters. Document needs to include tangible outcomes for both parties.
  - Support Focal Area concept on state lands and private lands.
  - Promote Rx fire at the appropriate frequency for priority wildlife species.
  - Timber and Rx fire management support contiguous early successional habitat.
  - Open pine and hardwood types.
  - Make creation and maintenance of habitat for bobwhite and other grassland species a priority.

#### **Action Items**

- Chairman’s goal for the coming year is to increase and improve communication among members of the subcommittee. Propose having periodic (quarterly?) conference calls as a way to keep everyone updated. Forestry Coordinator will coordinate and announce conference call which will be limited to 1 hour.
- Reggie suggested copying chair(s) of AFWA and SEAFWA forestry working groups for inclusion in conference calls.
- Subcommittee should seek through Steering Committee to complete NBCI habitat management chapters related to forest habitat management.

- Mike Black will get a copy of draft MOA between NBCI and the Southern Group of State Foresters sent to Billy Dukes, Reggie Thackston, Greg Hagen and Willie Simmons for review and comment.
- Need to make sure that Fred Kimmel's pine management document is linked on NBCI website

## Grazing Lands & Grasslands Subcommittee

**Chair:** Nick Prough (QUWF), **Vice Chair:** Robert Perez (TX)

**Attendees:** We had over 23 representatives at our Subcommittee meeting representing over 11 different states over the 2 days of subcommittee meetings.

Grasslands/Grazing Lands Subcommittee was asked to hold discussions about the upcoming Grassland/Grazing Lands NBCI New Position that the committee and entire NBTC/NBCI has been long awaiting for about 4 or 5 years now. The Subcommittee has increased its participation from last year from 8 to 23 so a 3x increase in participation and that definitely shows a large renewed excitement surrounding the recent development of a Grassland/Grazing Lands Position finally becoming reality this year with PR Funding.

- A. We had good discussions on many of the deliverables that the subcommittee member's states are looking for as well as some discussion on timelines on the deliverables and if those deliverables are 1 or 3 year goal deliverables as we were asked by NBCI Leadership to work on from both eastern and western regions of the bobwhite range and associated states. Some of the western states also held a conf call a few weeks ago to discuss the topic as well and those discussions were synthesized into the subcommittee's comments and discussions this week and below.
1. Strong coordination and development of many crucial partnerships amongst the Livestock industry, cattle associations, forage/range groups, SRM, Native Range Fed Beef groups, and others. This was a very high priority and a 1 and 3 year ongoing deliverable.
  2. Emphasize the benefits to producers of native grass and native rangeland on the landscape for many environmental benefits as well as the direct financial benefit to the producer. This again was a very high priority and a year 1 ongoing deliverable.
  3. Close Cooperation with the Ag Liaison and Forestry NBCI Staff Positions on various multi resource issues and assist with those issues for states across state lines. This was a high priority and a year 1 ongoing deliverable.
  4. Share more success stories related to grassland/grazing lands regarding the use of natives in forage systems as well as success related to quail restoration efforts. This was also a high priority and a year 1 deliverable.
  5. Link Priorities of the position to existing NBCI Focal Areas first wherever possible. This was also a year 1 deliverable.
  6. Consolidate existing information on native grassland/grazing lands from many existing sources and states, understanding regional differences but have this info in one location for other groups, committees, states to have access to. This was a longer term year 3 deliverable.
  7. Promote consistency of grassland/grazing land tech info across state lines where possible especially for NRCS/FSA. This was a year 3 deliverable.
  8. Work with other NBCI staff and subcommittees to involve and expose a larger audience to the NBCI Message including getting the message out better to sportsmen groups and hunters who are

now directly effecting funding of the NBCI thru their PR purchases. This was high priority and a year 1 and ongoing deliverable.

9. Better Link the use of Native Grasslands/Rangelands to improved water quality and other environmental benefits important to the public. This was a year 3 deliverable.
  10. Get better Buy In from Land Grant Universities and extension agencies by including them as part of the discussion up front so that the message is also partly their idea and coming from them. This was a year 1 and ongoing deliverable.
  11. Better Flesh out alternatives to conversions from cool season grasses to NWSG with other available practice alternatives such as “High Intensity Grazing”, Patch Burn Grazing, and others. This was considered a year 3 deliverable.
  12. Promote Prescribed Burning and Burn Associations where possible to be more efficient and effective. This was considered a 1 year deliverable especially to western rangeland management.
- B. We also categorized 3 groupings for the How To Get above deliverables accomplished.
1. Partner Interaction: Ag Groups, State Agencies, Universities, NRCS/FSA, Commodity Groups, NGO’s/sportsmen groups, SWCD, Professional Societies,
  2. Outreach and Education- Tech Transfer to most influential groups/ “Proof of Concept in a Focused Approach” to Wash DC, States, other grassland/grazing groups.
  3. Program Coordination: Provide Support and input into existing state/federal programs as well as private programs that promote native grasslands/rangelands.
- C. Additionally we discussed other topics during our subcommittee meetings including wrap up and follow up of topics from last year in Virginia and any of those that needed to still be carried into this years tasks.
- D. We discussed using “Goto Meeting or other Skype technology for a online web meeting with the new Grassland/Grazing Lands Coordinator about 1 month after the person is on board and up and running so in order to start to get acquainted with the subcommittee and staff person well before the NJ 2015 Aug Meeting.
- E. Continue our Joint Meeting session with Ag Policy Subcommittee and both NBCI staff positions in 2015 NJ Meeting again as we have for the past 2 years prior to this one when both had packed full agendas and NBCI Position development tasks.
- F. We had a discussion and asking Steering Committee to revisit the issue of timing of the Host State Habitat Tour and if it should be held on the last day of the meeting for staff time efficiency and support for travel to meeting from their leaderships
- G. We also continued our discussion on the Natives First Concept that we and the Ag Policy Subcommittee have been working on for past year +. We talked about next steps in the process since our last detailed discussions and the latest update on the status. With Current vacancy in Ag Policy Position many felt we are at 1<sup>st</sup> base with the issue but we need to now head towards 2<sup>nd</sup> and eventually try to work towards home plate. We felt like it could be addressed by both incoming staff positions once filled and both subcommittees’ in future upcoming discussions on Natives First Concept. AFWA Also working on issue from AFWA end which is a very positive step as well.
- H. Finally we had a discussion of several of the topic bullet points from Steering Committee Chair phone call discussions to every State Coordinator as related to Grasslands/Grazing.

## Mined Lands Subcommittee – Did not meet

## Outreach Subcommittee

**Chair:** Ben Robinson (KY), **Vice Chair:** Tim Kavan (MO)

**Attendees:** 15 individuals, 8 existing members with active participation in previous years.

John Doty provided highlights of Outreach Committee since Roanoke meeting last summer.

- Accomplishments include creation of National Communications Plan and approval by Steering Committee, launch of the Fire Bird Conservation Awards including the state awards and SEOPA Outdoor Communicator of the Year. Established BlogTalk Radio account for the Wild Bobwhite Radio Network among many others.

Discussion on the development of a national Outreach/Marketing campaign

- Lots of discussion on pursuing a National Documentary to tell our story. Many individuals outside of the quail community are unaware of NBCI and the plight of quail and grasslands. Do we need to start an awareness campaign?
- Doty has made contact with a documentary producer in Hollywood who is very interested in telling our story. He has direct ties with PBS. Discussions revolved around whether PBS is the right audience.
- Majority of project would be funded using a Crowd Funding Campaign similar to Kickstarter.
- Committee then began more detailed discussions involving targeted market research to determine audience and need along with an overall end goal: increased funding, awareness?
- How will this benefit the states? Perhaps run it like the “Take a kid fishing” campaign or the “Recreation Boating Campaign”? Where we provide states with materials, logos, etc as a follow-up.
- Ultimately decided to pursue more local marketing firms. Solicit bids for total project cost. Then run the campaign like the Leopold Green Fire Documentary where showings are purchased and scheduled around the country.

New P-R funding has created a need to demonstrate short-run tangibles that are beneficial to the state on top of big picture, long-term goals like the national documentary. Committee is in the process of creating an annual operating budget to help prioritize needs and available money for the coming year based on goals in the Communications Plan. Our budget indicates that we will need approximately \$75k annually to meet committee objectives:

- NBCI brochure
- Media guide (contacts for Doty)
- Awards programs
- State of the Bobwhite
- Website Revisions
- Travel/off-site meeting?
- Documentary or other campaigns from other committees

Discussions on how to involve state Information & Education (I&E) Directors/staff in our Outreach efforts. How can we/Doty be value-added to their efforts?

- General consensus is state I&E divisions are not as organized as we once thought. They do not meet to discuss annual work plans etc. Instead, they see themselves as support arms for state wildlife divisions.

- Decided that may be best to work with state coordinators to determine the need. Some states have great relationships with I& E and do not need help while others need assistance.
- Lots of materials are already in place in each state. Why create new ones when they could possibly be shared across state lines.
- We will contact state coordinators to determine the need via an online survey. Information collected will be put into a database available to coordinators showing what is available, format, who to contact for copyright info etc.

#### Revisited the Firebird Conservation Awards

- Created as a tool for state coordinators to recognize an individual or entity that has helped the State Coordinator to push their NBCI mission.
- Should we create an overall National Winner from the pool of candidates?
- Should we continue to invite the winners to the meeting?
- Was decided that the important thing is how the state coordinator presents it to the person back home....
- Let's just keep it as is for now – no changes made.

#### Website Revisions

- Website has not been updated since its inception.
- Time for a facelift and some new organization.
- Doty will begin work on this project soon.

#### Discussions over determining our Committee's identity.

- Are we a support arm for other committees?
- Should we be telling the big picture story/broad messaging?
- Probably all of the above, but difficult to handle all tasks and do a good job with them.
- Also, challenging for us to set goals and prioritize at the meeting when we will likely get tasked with other support projects for committees post-meeting. Marc Puckett visited with us on Day 2 and attempted to shed light on how to proceed.

#### Native Grass Fed Beef Concept

- Change of direction in the afternoon of day 1 when this concept was presented to us from the Grassland Committee via Don McKenzie.
- Ultimately decided that we need to recognize that this could be a goal of the Grasslands Committee and we may be asked to support it.
- No further action at this time.

## Research Subcommittee

**Chair:** James Martin, **Vice Chair:** Jay Howell

**Attendees:** no list provided.

- I. Nomination and Election of Vice Chair: Beth Emmerich and Budd Veverka were nominated as candidates for the Research Subcommittee Vice Chair.
- II. Tom gave a rundown of the projects that he is working on: Quail 8, CIP, Database Manager, State Coordinators meeting.
- III. John Morgan lead a discussion of the CIP and the results from the coordinator's meeting.

1. Covey per hour: despite some ambiguity on the question, 1.99 coveys per hour was the mean. There was a relatively close distribution. Discussed the necessary covey per hour to retain vs growing the hunter population.
2. Is including predator control worth the tradeoff: a majority of the states disagreed
3. Is including supplemental feeding worth the tradeoff: a majority of the states disagreed
4. Allowing wild quail relocation worth the tradeoff: the states were split
5. Allowing Parent reared release: a majority of states disagreed
6. Allowing people to have experimental CIPs: a majority of states agreed
7. Pooling and such: Split or disagree
8. It's only a tradeoff if areas would not be lost by disallowing these practices
9. Reference Area -> CIP -> CIP+

Recommendation: Research Subcommittee favored approach from 9. Tom will transmit recommendations to the steering committee

- IV. Tom Dailey: Gave the committee an update on the progress on Quail 8. TWRA is now a major partner in this conference.

Discussion: should we have a combined meeting Quail 8 and NBTC.

- CIP could be a feature at Quail 8
- Encourage those with case histories of quail management (positive and negative) to present
  - Reviewers of case studies should be aware that the standard should not be the same for case studies
- Need to reach out to western Quail researchers
- TWS model for Quail 8
- Joint meeting may allow cross pollination between managers and researchers
  - Sessions should not be concurrent
- Joint meeting would be many times longer and could lead to critical exhaustion

Recommendation: Joint meeting is ok, make sure to try to alleviate length concerns and avoid watering down both meetings.

- V. James Martin presented issues revolving around population goals for the CIP
- BRI doesn't match completely with focus areas
  - Managed densities may not be huntable populations

Discussion: Population Goals for the CIP

- Managed densities can serve as an ultimate goal, but may not be appropriate for determining success
  - Need to be updated
- States should determine their goals in terms of huntable and use that to determine success.
- CIP should focus on biological success: "a population large enough to sustain itself while being hunted at safe harvest levels (20%)"

Recommendation: Three goals based on these levels (biological the minimum)

Discussion: Suggested changes to the Monitoring Protocol for CIP

- Change maximum number of species surveyed for
- Statement added allowing multiple CIP+ for one CIP area
  - Must meet criteria similar to that defined in the focus area/ reference area relationship.
  - Acknowledge that increased treatment areas without subsequent increases in reference areas will reduce ability to make statistical inference.

## VI . Presentations

- John Morgan gave a talk on his research with Bird Dog field trials.
- Theron Terhune gave a talk on manipulating habitat to improve the odds of finding coveys.
- James Martin gave a talk on his research on regulating factors for bobwhite populations and an Adaptive Resource Management approach to determining safe harvest.
- Tom Daily gave an update on the data management, CIP coordinator position.

Discussion: Translocation of bobwhites.

- Ad hoc committee was formed to develop guidance/white paper on translocation of bobwhites: Roger Applegate, Beth Emmerich, Bud Veverka, Jay Howell, James Martin, Theron Terhune

Discussion: Research Needs at an NBCI level

- Effects of cover crops on brood rearing
- Soybean microtoxins
- GMO effects on bobwhites
- Human dimensions work on hunting and liberated bird release/accuracy of harvest data
- Colonization rates/metapopulation dynamics
- Density dependence on male calling rates, effect of listening for multiple species on detection
- Regional differences in many parameters of interest
- Density dependence of harvest rates
- Tactics, Effectiveness of hunter recruitment for small game
- Indirect effects of hunting on bobwhites
- Effects of monitoring techniques on survival
- Response of bobwhites to disturbance (other species hunters, etc)
- Effects of forestry site preparation(Graham Marsh Et al, JWM, 2012)
- Charge the outreach committee with an education campaign on what is habitat, emphasis perhaps on how it looks outside of the hunting season.
- Ag policy should work on maintaining relationships with federal groups to influence Seeding rates and policy for CRP
- NBCI intern program

Discussion: Developing a policy for determining/enforcing CIP compliance

- Visits from NBCI staff to help with compliance
- Evaluate at the 10 year interval for compliance
- Yearly progress reports to foster peer pressure

## Business Meeting Minutes

**Thursday, August 1st**

### **8:00- 9:00 – Committee Reports**

Ag Policy Subcommittee – Lisa Potter Chair – Cody Cedotal elected new Vice-chair – 17 folks participated, discussed rehiring ag policy position, goal to have new Ag Liaison person hired by end of the year, change name to Ag Liaison, (P-R funds can't be used for policy or lobbying). Position would be partially state funded, looking at where to house the position – possibly TRCP, hire person or if not possibly hire TRCP to lobby for us. Lisa discussed progress of discussions with FSA allowing enrollment of Pivot corner in CP33 bobwhite buffers. NBCI Ag Committee first submitted request to FSA in Sept 2013, haven't had a response, will try again in the Spring after FSA has a chance to deal with the new farm bill changes. There was some discussion on FSA's programmatic environmental impact statement for CRP especially enrollment procedures, managed haying and grazing, improvement in contract selection to increase wildlife benefits.

Grazing and Grasslands Subcommittee – Nick Prough Chair, Robert Perez Vice-chair, 23 participants, discussion on new grassland position, lots of discussion on deliverables – set up as 1 or 3 year deliverables, western states had a conference call that was used as a basis of defining the deliverables and job description, 1) strong coordination and development of partnership with other grassland and producer organizations 2) emphasize the benefits to the producer of native grassland, 3) close cooperation with ag liaison and forestry staff members 4) share more success stories on grazing and forage system with the public and partners especially those related to quail, 5) link priorities of position to NBCI focal areas where possible, 6) consolidate info on native range and grasslands into one source of info – (web based? Database?), 7) promote consistency of grassland and grazing lands rules across state lines with NRCS and FSA, 8) work with NBCI staff to expose a larger audience to the NBCI message – landowners, sportsman groups and hunters, 9) better link of native grasslands and rangelands to water quality, 10) get better buy in from land grant universities on the promotion of native grass 11) flesh out alternatives of conversion of intro grass 12) promote prescribed burning and Prescribed Burn Associations to, be more effective through three means – better coordination with ag organizations, outreach and tech transfer working with Outreach & Communications committee, program coordination to provide support and info into existing programs. Committee wants to have more interaction with staff person – possibly through Go to Meeting webinar - soon after they are hired. The grass and grazing land committee combined meetings with other committees. One committee suggestion was to have the Steering Committee rethink putting field trip at end of meeting. Discussion on reinvigorating “Native First” initiative.

Forestry Subcommittee - Billy Dukes- Chair – Willie Simmons South Carolina elected new Vice chair, 23 people attended. Mike Black brought us up to date on 2 MOU's with Southern Group of Foresters and State Foresters group, working on wording of MOU hope to have finished by Spring of 2015. Mike discussed his work with the Longleaf and Short Leaf Pine Initiatives. Mike and John Doty have been working on sunlight and quail video and showed version, committee provided comments, 2<sup>nd</sup> video in the works. The committee reviewed Mikes work plan for 2014-2015 and provided input to Mike and Don, spent a lot of time on CRP pine thinning proposal, worked on response to FSA's proposal. NBCI once envisioned habitat chapters being created, committee will work to get them posted on website.

Outreach/ Communication Subcommittee – Ben Robinson Chair –elected Tim Kavan from Missouri as vice chair, 15 members attended, John Doty provided overview of accomplishments, national communications plan, firebird award initiated, outdoor communicator of the year award for outdoor writer group, Hollywood producer interested in doing documentary for PBS, discussed market research, with new PR funding talked about increasing deliverables, drafted operating budget and prioritized projects, progress on State of the

Bobwhite, website overhaul, documentary, trying to involve state communications folks, find out what materials produced by the states are currently available.

Research Subcommittee – Beth Emmerich elected new Vice chair 28 participants – 10 topics, 1) discussed results from CIP survey (CIP+), recommendation was that a state that implemented CIP+ would also have to have regular CIP area, NBCI needs to help states come up with resources to do the extra monitoring, 2) Quail VIII – 2017, Roger Applegate and Tennessee WRA will host the meeting, joint meeting of NBTC with Q VIII ½ to 1 day of Q VIII will focus on success stories, 3) Beth Emmerich elected new vice chair, 4) population goals for CIP – based on managed densities on BRI but won't necessarily determine success, need to update BRI – states should decide what are huntable populations – subcommittee came up with 2 coveys/half day hunt 5) adaptation to CIP modeling, allow states that want to monitor more species, 6) recent research discussion 7) hiring new data manager/site , RFP completed by the end of today with the draft going out next week, came up with budget for maximum allowed, 8) translocation document – ad hoc committee created to research the state of the art on this, 9) research needs at NBCI level – rangewide – came up with 10-15 topics that they will prioritize, identified things that they need help with from other committees such as outreach to educate public on what quail habitat is, research on appropriate CRP seeding rates 10) policy for determining CIP compliance – take carrot approach – science coordinator make visits to each state and discuss how NBTC can help the state reach CIP goals.

#### **9:00 – 10:00 – State of the Bobwhite Report – Tom Dailey**

Quail Tracks –new section – features state updates, awards, 11 states reports, habitat accomplishment reporting – public lands, private lands and farm bill, partners efforts, highlights – quail increasing in many places especially Georgia (300% increase in wild bird hunting) and Kentucky, southern Great Plains still dry and numbers down, habitat management inventory. Andrew Burnett – asked if cumulative habitat totals were printed elsewhere. Time line - Printed version in time for AFWA meeting in St Louis in mid-September of this year.

#### **10:15 – 11:30 – Official Business meeting**

**10:15 – 10:25 – Treasurer's report** (Chuck Kowaleski) Chuck gave same treasurer report as at Steering Committee meeting on July 29

#### **10:25 – 11:00 – Old Business**

Marc Puckett – approval of minutes waived as has been our custom, Marc named this the “year on the brink” – Don produced historic account of the SEQSG/NBTC that is available to anyone who would like a copy, PR funding successful and provides stable funding over the next 3 years, annual meetings successful, CIP design completed and implementation begun, legacy landscapes award initiative, outreach committees national communications plans, new awards – firebird instituted, center pivot work on hold, Bobwhite Foundation in limbo – need to get that effort going again – maybe reduce goals from the \$30-\$40 M hoped for to even \$3-\$4 M, progressing on translocation protocol – Research Committee gathering basic information currently available on translocation, short leaf pine initiative gaining momentum, hiring grassland grazing position, database person, refill DC liaison person, new NBCI management board chair with Bob Duncan coming in to replace John Gasset.

#### **11:00 – 11:30 – New business**

New Business – CIP – steering committee agreed that states participating in CIP have to have at least one focal area that conforms to current CIP protocol.

Don McKenzie request to membership– really need folks to send us success stories of wild quail population increases. Need to come up with a way to let folks know about these areas even though there might be concerns of overutilization by an eager public. Discussion followed on ways to control hunting pressure and

expectations. Maybe a charge to the Outreach Committee to contact states seeking success stories as well as horror stories on overharvested sites). Research Committee and states will be working on defining success.

**Next year “Year of Hope”**

- Nathan Stricker reminded us that in our Steering committee discussions with Tennessee last year that we emphasized that harvest regulation was the states responsibilities.
- Marc Puckett thanked all of the committee chairs and outgoing steering committee.
- Election results – John Morgan – Chair elect (unopposed)
- Todd Bogenschutz – MAFWA representative
- James Martin - Academic Representative
- Bill White – Member-at-Large
- Recognition of Don McKenzie’s 10 years as NBCI Coordinator and all of the growth that had taken place during that period.

## Poster Abstracts

### **Native warm season grasses have a place in Missouri haying and grazing systems.**

**Diener, Ryan W., Chris A. McLeland, and Jason T. Sykes. Quail Forever, Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office, Union, MO 63084 USA (RWD); Missouri Department of Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Office, Columbia, MO 65202 USA (CAM); Missouri Department of Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service Area 2 Office, Palmyra, MO 63461 USA (JTS)( 573) 876-9365 Chris.McLeland@mdc.mo.gov**

Native warm-season grasses and forbs were once plentiful across Missouri's landscape. During European settlement, over 15 million acres of lush prairie grew abundantly across the state. Early pioneers realized the benefits of native grasses for hay production and forage for livestock; however, Missouri's native prairies quickly became stressed due to over utilization. They were soon replaced with non-native cool-season grasses, such as tall fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*), thought to provide better forage value and longer grazing seasons. Today, less than 1% of Missouri's native prairies remain, although the value of re-incorporating native warm-season grasses back into livestock operations is gaining momentum. Native grass species such as big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), indiagrass (*Surghestrum nutans*), switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), and eastern gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*) are five species commonly selected for warm-season native grass plantings. The drought tolerance of warm-season grass species was very evident during the summer of 2012, when the majority of the state was categorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as experiencing extreme drought. During this extreme drought, warm-season grasses were called upon to assist cattle producers in providing additional forage for livestock when stressed cool-season pastures dominated by fescue failed to provide adequate production. Efforts have been made by state and federal agencies to increase education while providing technical assistance and cost share opportunities for producers interested in developing grazing and haying systems that incorporate native grasses. This poster will discuss both monetary and environmental benefits of natives for producers and the landscape.

### **Microhabitat selection and survival of northern bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*) during winter in Ohio**

**Randall T. Knapik\*, Graduate Associate, Ohio State University, knapik.10@osu.edu**

**Coree A. Brooks, Graduate Associate, Ohio State University, brooks.729@osu.edu**

**Robert J. Gates, Associate Professor, Ohio State University, gates.77@osu.edu**

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Northern bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*) have been disappearing from formerly occupied areas of their range since the early 1900s. Ohio has experienced a 9.3% annual rate of decline during 1984-2004. Recent research in Ohio has shown that population growth is limited by low non-breeding survival of bobwhites resulting from a low availability of early successional protective cover. A multi-partner research project was established on 4 private-land study sites in southwest Ohio to document effects of land-use change, microhabitat characteristics, and winter weather on non-breeding covey density and survival. Radio-telemetry was used to measure microhabitat use and cause-specific mortality during 1 October - 31 March 2012-2014. Horizontal cover, vertical cover, ground composition, and shrub density were quantified at use sites of radio-marked coveys 3 times weekly. Mean daily snow depth and condition was recorded for each of the 4 research areas throughout the study period. Results indicated that bobwhite coveys utilized a wide range of habitat structures throughout the non-breeding season. Microhabitat selection shifted to areas with high woody stem densities during periods of increased snow depth. The available niche space for bobwhites is reduced during winter as herbaceous and agricultural habitats become less suitable. The accessibility of woody cover near food during periods with snow

cover may limit overall population growth rates through non-breeding survival which is highly variable and among the lowest nationally ( $\hat{S}$  2012-2013= 0.29, 95% CI=0.15-0.48,  $\hat{S}$ 2013-2014= 0.04, 95% CI=0.02-0.10). Habitat management strategies aimed to create early successional woody vegetation near food can retain functional niche space for bobwhites during adverse winter weather conditions. Findings from this study are being used to inform and test habitat management strategies (e.g. edge-feathering) for bobwhites on public and private lands at the northern edge of their range.

## **Factors Influencing Detection of Bobwhite Coveys**

**Diana McGrath, Theron M. Terhune, and James Martin**

On average, about 50% of coveys are not detected, or are simply missed, during the course of a hunt. The escape behavior of bobwhite coveys may vary depending on habitat type. While studies have documented escape behavior of bobwhite coveys, and the daily and seasonal probability of finding coveys, no studies have focused on the influence of vegetation characteristics and the dynamics of scenting ability of bird dogs. This project is designed to better understand bobwhite evasive strategies in the context of vegetation structure and composition. Selection for hiding in thick cover, versus running or flushing, may further reduce the probability of finding a covey when hunting. And, covey selection for escape behavior can be “fixed” in a population in only a few generations. Understanding evasive strategies exhibited by bobwhites will help guide on-the-ground management and improve overall hunting success. In addition, knowing why coveys are more difficult to find in certain cover types is important because sites with similar covey densities may provide significantly different rates of finding coveys which influences the quality of the hunting experience. We are investigating factors influencing covey detection and a dogs ability to detect bobwhite coveys in varying habitat cover types.

## **Conservation Program Successes Using Partnerships in the Missouri Delta**

**James, Scott D. and Joe N. Tousignant**

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In 2008, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) approved a specific Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) project in portions of Southeast Missouri called the Sand Grassland Restoration SAFE. CRP is a 10-15 year program which provides landowners cost-share and annual payments to create and manage habitat on cropland they retire from production. Because of unique local farming practices and habitat opportunity, the Missouri Dept. of Conservation (MDC) closely partnered with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) for this project. MDC and USDA creatively worked to recruit farmers to the program and to provide landowner technical assistance with so much success that nearly all of the allocated program acres were used. In 2012, MDC requested additional acres for the Sand Grassland SAFE and proposed a new CRP project be created for Southeast Missouri. MDC wrote the new CRP proposal with assistance from multiple partners including a new Quail Forever (QF) biologist. The proposal was created to replace thousands of habitat acres presumed to disappear once contracts in the Conservation Security Program (CSP) expired in 2013 and 2014. The project was titled the Delta Stewardship SAFE and was approved by FSA. MDC and QF recently partnered with agencies to enroll landowners in the Delta Stewardship SAFE upon expiration of CSP. Furthermore, MDC, QF, and partners provide technical assistance so landowners successfully create and manage habitat for both CRP SAFEs. The partnership implemented the original Sand Grassland SAFE and handles both existing SAFEs. Effective partnerships thinking creatively ensure that land stewardship and resource conservation prevail.

## **Evaluating the Effect of Edge and Cover on Northern Bobwhite Survival in relation to the Hunter-Covey Interface**

**Seth Wood, Theron M. Terhune, and James Martin**

Grid-blocking via mowing or chopping (drum chopper) is a common management technique used on intensively managed plantations to accomplish multiple objectives such as reduction of heavy brush or overgrown thickets, manage vegetation succession, increase hunter accessibility, and provide travel lanes for pointing dogs, to name a few. On average, properties grid block at 30'x30' widths which translates into approximately 35% of cover flat-mowed or chopped during early Fall. This loss of cover is exponentiated following frosts where cover is known to decline toward the end of the hunting season, and this timing also coincides with the typical raptor migration commonly resulting mortality blips during late winter. In addition to the amount of cover reduction the amount of edge increases dramatically. This is important to quail survival because ecological theory suggests that mortality increases with amount of edge. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the potential impacts of cover reduction using grid-blocking on bobwhite survival and hunting success. We developed 2 treatments (30'x30' and 90'x90' grid-blocks) and a control (no grid-blocking) on Tall Timbers to examine how these different densities of edge impact covey behavior and survival.

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## Past Meeting Locations and Dates

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>City, State</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Annual Award Recipient</b>
SEQSG (1 <sup>st</sup> )	Webb Wildlife Center	Garnett, SC	8/15 – 18/1995	None
SEQSG (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Ramada Inn, Tall Timbers	Tallahassee, FL	9/3 – 6/1996	Breck Carmichael
SEQSG (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Sheldon's Motel	Keysville, VA	9/15 – 18/1997	Don McKenzie
SEQSG (4 <sup>th</sup> )	Ames Plantation	Grand Junction, TN	9/14 – 17/1998	Dr. Ralph Dimmick
SEQSG (5 <sup>th</sup> )	Mississippi State Univ.	Starkville, MS	9/27 – 30/1999	Reggie Thackston
SEQSG (6 <sup>th</sup> )	Camp Kanuga	Hendersonville, NC	10/2 – 5/2000	Rocky Evans
SEQSG (7 <sup>th</sup> ) (with Quail V)	Omni Bayfront Hotel	Corpus Christi, TX	1/23/2002	Stephen Capel
SEQSG (8 <sup>th</sup> )	Augusta Technical College	Waynesboro, GA	8/26 – 29/2002	Mark Gudlin
SEQSG (9 <sup>th</sup> )	YMCA of the Ozarks	Potosi, MO	8/25 – 28/2003	Terry Sharpe
SEQSG (10 <sup>th</sup> )	Winrock International	Morrilton, AR	8/2 – 5/2004	Dr. Pete Bromley
SEQSG (11 <sup>th</sup> )	Dam Village State Resort	Gilbertsville, KY	8/14 – 17/2005	Dr. Wes Burger
SEQSG (12 <sup>th</sup> )	Auburn University Hotel	Auburn, AL	8/6 – 8/2006	Stephen Demaso
SEQSG (13 <sup>th</sup> )	Quartz Mountain Resort	Lone Wolf, OK	8/6 – 9/2007	Clay Sisson
SEQSG (14 <sup>th</sup> )	Hilton Lafayette	Lafayette, LA	7/15 – 18/2008	Dave Howell
SEQSG (15 <sup>th</sup> )	Columbia Marriot	Columbia, SC	3/24 – 26/2009	Stan Stewart
NBTC (16 <sup>th</sup> ) (First as the National Bobwhite Technical Committee)	Hyatt Regency	Wichita, KS	8/3 – 6/2010	Dr. Bill Palmer
NBTC (17 <sup>th</sup> )	Doubletree Hotel	Tallahassee, FL	8/9 – 12/2011	Dave Godwin
NBTC (18 <sup>th</sup> )	MCM Elegante	Abilene, TX	8/7 – 10/ 2012	Dr. Theron Terhune
NBTC (19 <sup>th</sup> )	Hotel Roanoke	Roanoke, VA	7/23 – 26/2013	Dr. Tom Dailey
NBTC (20 <sup>th</sup> )	Sheraton Hotel	West Des Moines, IA	7/29 – 8/1/2014	Billy Dukes

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