

Proceedings of the 18th Annual National
Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC)



August 7-10, 2012
MCM Elegante
Abilene, TX



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CONFERENCE AGENDA

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

8:00-5:00 STEERING COMMITTEE
1:00-6:00 REGISTRATION
1:00 – 6:00 COORDINATORS MEETING
3:00 – 3:15 BREAK
5:30 – 9:30 WELCOME RECEPTION

Wednesday, August 8, 2012

6:30 – 8:00 BREAKFAST
7:30 – 12:00 REGISTRATION
8:00 – 3:30 SILENT AUCTION
8:00 – 5:00 POSTER SESSION
8:00-12:00 GENERAL SESSION: QUAIL CONSERVATION IN THE LONE STAR STATE

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dave Morrison, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Game Bird Program Leader

Quails of Texas

Dick Wilberforce, Wildlife Photographer

The Passion of Bobwhite Conservation

Deborah Clark, Landowner

Bobwhite Brigades – 20 Years of Youth Involvement

Faye Price, Bobwhite Brigade Graduate

Helen Holdsworth, Executive Director, Texas Brigades

Bobwhite Happenings in Texas

Tim Connolly, Texas Quail Coalition

Quail, Climate and Weather

Kelly Reyna, UNT- Quail

Farm Bill and Quail in Texas

Chuck Kowaleski, TPWD Farm Bill Coordinator

NBCI Update

Don McKenzie, NBCI Director

12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 – 5:00	COMMITTEE MEETINGS
5:30 – 7:00	MANAGERS RECEPTION
7:00-8:00	CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, August 9, 2012

6:30 – 8:00	BREAKFAST
8:00 – 11:00	POSTER SESSION
8:00 – 11:00	COMMITTEE MEETINGS
11:00 – 6:30	FIELD TRIP TO ROSCOE WIND FARM, ROLLING PLAINS QUAIL RESEARCH RANCH
6:30 – 7:00	REFRESHMENTS AT THE RPQRR PAVILION
7:00 – 8:30	BANQUET & AWARDS AT THE ROBY COMMUNITY CENTER
10:00	ARRIVE BACK AT HOTEL

Friday, August 10, 2012

6:30 – 8:00	BREAKFAST
8:00 – 9:00	COMMITTEE REPORTS
9:00 – 10:00	NBCI Q&A
10:00 – 10:15	BREAK
10:15 – 11:30	NBTC BUSINESS MEETING
11:30 AM	ADJOURN

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

August 7th, 2012 AGENDA

8:00am	Welcome Comments	Dan Figert
	Action item: Approval of Minutes from Spring Meeting	Dan Figert
	Financial and Membership Report	Marc Puckett
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status of Federal Tax ID # for NBTC & NBTC Bank Account	
8:20 am	Update: 2012 Annual Meeting	Chuck Kowaleski
8:30 am	Update: Status of Steering Committee Seats	Billy Dukes
8:40 am	Add all SEQSG/NBTC Proceedings to web site	Billy Dukes
8:50 am	Adding Habitat Management Chapters to NBCI 2.0	Billy Dukes
9:00 am	Update: NBCI Foundation	Don McKenzie
9:15 am	Update: NBCI Funding (Multi State and NFWF Grants)	Don McKenzie
9:30 am	NBCI Staff Updates (Written Reports)	NBCI Staff
9:45 am	Draft Focus Area Monitoring	Morgan/Dailey
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status update and process during Annual Meeting• Actions needed by Steering Committee• Next big tasks: habitat tracking, state monitoring, etc.	
10:30 am	State of the Bobwhite Report (Annual Quail Almanac)	Tom Dailey
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When/how to include NGO habitat accomplishments	
10:45 am	SEOPA and AGLOW opportunities	Doty & McKenzie
11:00 am	NBCI 10 year Gala at AFWA – NBCI Awards	Don McKenzie
11:15 am	Quail Leadership Summit	Don McKenzie
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better collaboration: natl / state / local• Model vision for state NBCI implementation	
11:45 am	Other Items/New Business	Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring meeting location• Location for 2014 Annual meeting	
12:00pm	Adjourn	

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 7th, 2012

Abilene

Present: Craig Alderman, Mike Black, Bridget Collins, Donnie Buckland, John Doty, Dr. Tom Dailey, Billy Dukes, Dan Figert, Mark Gudlin, Dave Howell, Mark Jones, Dr. Pat Keyser, Chuck Kowaleski, Bob Long, Don McKenzie, John Morgan, Jim Pitman, Nick Prough, Marc Puckett, Catherine Rideout, Dr. Theron Terhune

Chair Dan Figert Called the meeting to order 8:07.

Treasurer's report : Submitted by Puckett with all expenditures and income for the year. The report was approved by the Steering Committee. There was some discussion of 501 (c) 3 – Puckett believed after all the research he had time to do, that we were by default a non-profit not having to submit form 1023, the application for official non-profit status. Craig Alderman disagreed and stated he had a lot of experience with this, he had spent 270 hours in the process of officially applying for 501 (c) 3 status and he offered to help us if we indeed wanted to apply for official status as a non-profit. Puckett states he has done all he can at this point, NBTC now has the EIN. It may take further discussion by the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee to decide whether to apply for official 501 (c) 3 status.

NBTC annual meeting report : Chuck Kowaleski - has some revisions to the field trip. 119 registered so far, probably around 140 by the plenary session. Shirts – one mistake – Texas is nowhere on the shirts. First item to have NBCI and new NBTC logos. Any leftovers could be used by subsequent states.

One item Dan forgot...finances for the meeting – will Texas make money? Chuck not sure...we'll see. One major sponsor, Quail Coalition – 10K.

Approval of the spring minutes: Approved with one correction on mined lands, go back and fix (Fixed by Puckett 8-29-2012). It was revised – the minutes suggested the Steering Committee was not in favor of moving forward on a mined lands committee, but in fact, they are, and suggest we continue to try to find a likely chair and get them engaged at the NBTC 2013 meeting.

Discussion of turnover in Steering Committee: Billy rotates off after 6 years, Jim Pitman rotates off after 6 years, Mark Gudlin rotates off, and Kristine Evans rotates off. About 20 ballots have been received so far so far for this election. Chair Figert moves to past-chair, Puckett moves into chair, and chair-elect will be voted in.

Dan welcomes Catherine Rideout to her first steering committee meeting and thanks all the members rotating off for their service, Dave Howell, especially, Dave is the senior SC member.

NBTC SEQSG proceedings: Adding habitat management chapters to the NBCI 2.0 – we intended to include habitat chapters similar to the first one, but this time it has kind of been left behind. Billy – original chapters were very basic, this time we wished to expand those chapters, a fair amount of progress was made, Aaron Jeffries – took a new job, sent Billy a big set of files and Billy has not had a chance to work further on them. Chapters are nearing completion.

Habitat Chapters – the new chair could assign those to respective committees. Puckett – would

“assign” them to committees. These would go on the website. Pat asks what is the purpose? Theron says to make sure the original authors under NBCI 2.0 are engaged. Very similar work going on with Joint Ventures particularly Catherine’s. Pat also says there is some material from NWF. Forestry subcomm is working on new BMPs. Mike says we need to go ahead and get these published. Theron – is there a way to screen habitat recommendations? 2 Two Questions – 1) what is the general website review process, and 2) what do we do with these habitat chapters? **ACTION ITEM – Puckett gets existing habitat chapters from Billy, gets them to the appropriate sub-comms with instructions on getting them in shape for the website, and instructs them to try to engage the original authors in this process. They can be used in NBCI 2.0 and on the website under the BMP section.**

Theron states that there needs to be some review process for website posts concerning habitat management or quail outreach in general. Don – new website has posted a bunch of management recommendations in the Bobwhite Library - Mark Jones suggests charging the committees to review what is on there now. This is for a specific site that would be NBTC/NBCI Best Management Practices for quail. Theron suggests NBCI builds a BMP quail page that would be separate from links. Theron suggests this would not take long, have the chapter authors review what is out there. John Doty creates the site. NBTC Chair’s charge to each subcommittee... create / revise the lists of BMPs related to their habitats. Don is batting around an idea for a process to add a series of white papers. Don suggests hiring a grad student and using some of the money we have available. BMPs and FAQs...BMPs is the priority because this is committee work. **NBTC Chair contacts sub-committees and suggests this be a mid-year charge per above action item.**

Old proceedings on the website- we need to try and get the complete set posted on the website. Most are in hardcopy, they would all need to be scanned . Does John have that ability to scan? Yes. **ACTION ITEM – Billy works with John, find out if they are short any proceedings copies, and works to help John get a complete set. Billy agrees to do this last action item.**

NBCI Foundation Update: Don - Shows the new brochure, applauds Heather Inman and John. Great work!! CNGM is also a core arm of NBCI, Pat and Don have been working closely with Rhodes Logan. Rhodes keeps Don and Pat hopping. They are at the point of using the NBCI MB to help us identify prime prospects. TN, KY, FL, VA - list of names of prime people and Pat and Don will start meeting with these folks asap. Looking for a special kind of prospect...ones that have a big vision for national capacity and not ones who are trying to keep the money in their own area for their own projects. Pat – how will we contact those folks, may have 40 names and then 3 really want to play, etc? Going to be a chore. Lots of dry runs, etc. but no other way to get there. Has smoothed over some problems from last year – now has a verbal commitment for an estate gift and operating cash.

Dave Howell – as this gears up what is the timeline – what is the goal for having a Board formed? Pat says they will go talk to this person in Virginia, the first big ask is to be on the board, but with an understanding that “gifts” along the way are part of the deal. The end goal is a 20 to 25 member board, but initially wants to get a few members in place, etc. Dave – will we build the board with initial donors and then let it grow? Yes. Dan – says state coordinators will be asked to help in many cases by their directors. Pat points out – the names do not have to come from the Director all the time. If a state coordinator has someone in mind, by all means let Pat / Don know. Craig Alderman asks – once this board is formed, who is going to run it and how will we keep the board itself from taking over and running the show? Pat says there are by-laws that should help with this. Some UT oversight, everything done has to be in direct support of NBCI. T. Boone Pickens, for example...if he strokes a several million dollar check, and then he wants something done, that we all recognize it could be a tiger by the tail, but we have to move forward given the jeopardy of

NBCI staff funding. Craig suggests developing job descriptions for board members that they would have to sign along with a confidentiality statements so that if they start straying there are grounds for recourse. Theron suggests rather than asking people directly for money, they approach people and ask them to help find others who could fund things. Board members and donors can be one and the same, but not necessarily. CNGM – this whole process provides some stability. Pat – not meant to be competitors with NGOs – this is long term vision. Mark Jones – these big donors are going to ask, what percentage of these funds is going pay for what? Mark asks how does UT make money? Pat – UT takes a short term slice of the interest, around 4%. This is called the float. But 100% of the money is going into the functionality of the Foundation. 100% of the gift goes to the cause. Bridget asks does Rhodes have a one page cheat sheet that can be used to help recruit. Dan says we are not asking state coordinators to recruit but rather to vouch for folks that this is on the level, when these folks are approached, then they call the state coordinator – the coordinator will know what to say.

Multi state grants and NFWF grants and the funding for Don's position: Don's position annually is totally reliant on states contributions. This year 24 of 25 paid in. All other projects are funded separately.

NFWF – approved for year 3 funding for the grasslands birds initiative, funds Mike, Tom, and John. The Grasslands coordinators position has been applied for 3 years running and has been denied. This is not a statement on the value, but it has been rated as a lower priority and is limited by the pot of money. NFWF grant money is now down to bare bones, even travel money has been reduced. Double edged sword...Don worries funding will decline, and if so – we will be in a bad way. Pat and Don have drafted the first year report and said because of this annual report, the light bulb finally went on and this was the easiest sell of all 3 years. Now they understood, less money but an easier sales job. Bridget – **Dan suggests – we send in a separate grant for the coordinators position, might be easier to do then tie it into one big grant.**

NBCI has been encouraged to submit for certain grants like on the ground habitat projects that are not our ballgame. Dan – if we pass, then try to refer these to other entities that could take advantage of them. **ACTION ITEM - Don and Pat check with Dan Petit on maybe reconfiguring how these grants are applied for.**

Data manager's position grant – was to take over NBCI 2.0 and manage that whole process. Don – not sure what went wrong? Don felt he had the skids greased pretty good, the SEAFWA directors would be strong supporters. So right now the need is still high. It is needed now more than in the future, so we are back to square one. Tom and Don – brain storming. Catherine thinks there is room for cooperation. Lots of overlap in roles. But there may be interest – the inventory and monitoring program focused on refuges, Laurel is the regional coordinator, 4 joint ventures off the top of her head that could partner, John says we take our package, Tom and Don have already talked with one LCC, several folks state JVs may be better, but Catherine says don't write off the LCCs. Gulf Coastal Plain – left it as “we have plan A, but stay tuned.” Chuck – LCCs looking for survival, Don fears LCCs may not have the longevity we need. Has there been any mention of a joint SEPIF / NBTC meeting. SEPIF will not have an annual meeting this year. How about a joint steering committee meeting. Hand pick some JV – LCC and state folks to get together. **ACTION ITEM – Tom and Don and the Steering Committee need to get a game plan for funding these positions.**

Focus area monitoring: John Morgan - Goal of the draft protocol – a balance between science and field applicability. State Quail Coordinator's meeting. – we want to find out how doable is the monitoring? Input from the states. The research sub comm. will follow-up on Wednesday. Hope to

get together Wednesday evening for another facilitated meeting. Time on Wednesday 7:00 o'clock. Need to know that it is not open to all. 5 from the focus groups, 5 from the research subcomm., then will convene Wednesday along with SC.

Potential for the Steering Committee to meet on Thursday to develop a course of action after input from Today and Wednesday. On the overall process, who is missing?

John Morgan – also mentions this is only the half way point, and this was the easiest part. The next step is retreat number 2, this retreat needs to be more inclusive, members from the sub comms, this is the huge task – Forestry and Grazing and Grasslands – each need to give 2 names to participate in this retreat. Travel money may be needed even more. Do NGOs need to be involved, ideal focus areas, and how to track habitat work, how to define habitat, all big questions and tough issues. Don – what is the time frame? John Morgan - have the retreat in the fall to get part 1 finalized and have it before the spring steering committee meeting – wants some states to be able to roll out focus areas this spring (2013).

Mark Jones – how does the existing state monitoring system fit, Billy says, could add this in as a sub-set. Another topic for the research subcomm.

NBCI Staff Reports: By handout only.

Break – 10:20

State of the Bobwhite (SOTB) report: John Doty – New Approach, believes we need to find a wider audience for SOTB, what if we can get a sponsor on an annual basis, glossy perhaps with ads, technical and consumer based. SOTB continues to be the home for the state reports, but also will be adding in more promotional content highlighting successes, etc.

Billy asks a question on the economic impact section how will it be arranged and used? Tom elaborates. – this is the 2nd year of the inventory process. There are 3 separate semi-technical reports, hunting impacts, habitat inventory and the survey of state attitudes concerning monitoring – all cobbled together along with some new data from Quail 7. When we go to SEOPA we will have some data on financial impacts.

Dan – Number 1) - how do we raise our game and get this information out to the public across the bobwhite range, we have it for turkey and pheasants, why not quail? This year it will be free, perhaps in the future we need a sponsor. Should be used for much wider impact. Pat – should we pursue a sponsor? Yes. E.g. – perhaps Cabela's would print enough copies to mail out with all upland catalogs. Pat asks – could we develop an abbreviated version for popular mailings? John says that last year's report had so much negative material, we just need to balance this with positive. Catherine – thinks maybe there could be a short version for the public.

Chuck asks if we do a Cabela's sponsorship – maybe a one page add with links to state sites would work well? Have one paper sheet that leads to more categorized web based section. Bridget – is excited about the new content, and all, but she is struggling with the audience. Suggests how do we develop the grass roots support, but keep this report a SOTB for agency and director personnel? Might be best to have one a bit less technical one for the general public. We need both. Mike Black – analogy of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan – duck hunters knew it existed.

Theron – There are forums for these more popular types of articles, look at the latest on TTRS in Garden and Gun. A new sponsor and new endeavor and a major undertaking. Don – he worries

few people know what NBCI is, does this really matter? Not sure. We need some notoriety, some new way to raise our game. The outreach committee has struggled and now we have an outreach professional John – and we need to listen to him more and be open to ideas and change.

Catherine – how is the committee comprised? Have we reached out to agencies about sending their own PR folks? Dan – we have, but very hard to get them to meetings. John Has mentioned, a lot of these topics will be discussed this week in the outreach sub-comm. meeting.

Craig – the principle of the marketing plan – very tough issues, a lot assets we have to try to activate. One big asset is partners, Theron – TTRS sends an annual report. Take advantage of all existing list serves and avenues for distribution.

SEOPA (Southeastern Outdoor Press Association)– AGLOW (Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers) – John represented NBCI at AGLOW last year. Don and Tom gave a presentation, this year we have more time at SEOPA, Johnson City, talking about NBCI and things states are doing. Silver bullets for quail, questions represent good opportunities for us to communicate with them.

John also says OWAA in Knoxville will either be next year or the one after that. Farmer’s Almanac story hits stands in September. John has instant credibility with such groups because he is one of them. He is past president of SEOPA.

NBCI 10 year gala – AFWA: special events. Based off QU’s awards ceremony. Most recent was last March – NBCI 2.0. No firm plans yet – perhaps give an award to NFWF – a big thank you. State conservationist in Kansas who decided all CRP in Kansas would be native grass. Kinds of awards that bring thanks to partners. Some drink tickets, etc. But Don needs ideas. Dan says awards would be more meaningful if they are not too many but represented noteworthy, multi-year efforts. Mark Jones says –how can we even consider giving FSA an award? We don’t have to poke them in the eye, but we don’t need to give them an award.

What about recognizing NRCS at the national level for all the NRCS partner biologist positions? Someway to highlight a 25 state partnership, beyond flyways, this is major. We have 23 of 25 states at the NBTC meeting. How about also getting state directors with successes to come forward and say a few words. Could be named after this state conservationist. BLOG – Craig suggests right after this meeting – run many one page press releases very soon afterwards .

Quail Leadership summit : Brought to us by one of the directors, sees a big disconnect between states and NGOs – food for thought/action – notion for several years – would there be value to having a really high level meeting / management summit – heads of NGOs, agency directors, others – how do we really bring to bear all our resources? MAFWA recently – hearing the clock tick. We are improving, but quail are not. Don pushes them pretty hard that states have to step up, NGOs have to step up, NBCI can’t do it all for them.

State NBCI model – should NBCI create this? Joe Kramer (Director of Kansas Parks and Wildlife) of Kansas – fired back, felt things were missing. He proposed a retreat of some kind and asked how do we make all this work better? Joe Kramer offers to host the event, he will host it and handle logistics. One of the disconnects Don sees is that the directors are not engaged with the state coordinators. Many state coordinators don’t even know that their directors are engaged.

Mark asks who would we invite? Half a dozen state directors, the CEOs of the Quail NGOs, the major quail research institutes, etc. At first keep it in house – no federal partners yet. Have a unified plan before even more entities are brought in. John Morgan says it could be done in stages, with

directors first, then bring in more. Dan asks how about inviting the 6 top directors and 6 top NGOs ?

How to maintain momentum at the national level – Theron – needs annual events, Don says NBCI MB allows a chance for all, but sees this as a smaller group that can catalyze the ones who are not engaged.

A strategy is suggested: 2 meetings – but the first is the strategy meeting on how to get the others involved.

Second meeting would include all, the first very low profile, low key, not announced widely, but the second meeting would be the big one where we brought folks in. The first meeting should be small – is that the consensus? Chuck suggests announcing at AFWA that we would like to convene such a group, and that way everyone has had a chance, you have been inclusive, then the serious ones will show up.

How do we incorporate the NGOs into that group, or this first meeting? Don was thinking of one small meeting, and to get the most engaged folks involved and come up with these model quail administrative structures. Dan – how did the duck folks do it? How do we move the plan forward? Then bring in the more inclusive group, the comprehensive larger group?

Dan – now is the time...how do we move this forward? **Action Item: New steering committee members should be included in new discussions. After SEOPA and SEAFWA – The Executive Committee works to develop a basic plan to run by the full steering committee before Christmas.**

Open items from the floor – Spring meeting Knoxville is offered up as the location again. Al seem to concur that this will work. Will be in mid February. One full day and one half day. North American is not until March 26th. **Action Item: Chair Puckett will work with Dr. Keyser and UT staff on basic arrangements. Will poll Steering Committee this fall to check on best dates and availability of UT rooms, etc.**

Adjourn 12:15.

AWARDS

The National Bobwhite Technical Committee, representing 25 state wildlife agencies, conservation groups and research institutions, honored two individuals and a group with awards during its annual meeting in Abilene, Texas.

In recognition of the 10th anniversary of the committee's National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, its first-ever **Special Achievement Award** went to Dr. Ralph Dimmick, a retired professor from the University of Tennessee with a prominent career in bobwhite research. Dimmick was the primary author of the original 2002 National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative that concentrated primarily on the 16 states of the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.



Dr. Ralph Dimmick

Describing Dimmick as “the father of the NBCI,” NBCI Director Don McKenzie said that “with his unique combination of academic credentials, big-picture vision and ability to adapt, he catalyzed a determined group of dedicated quail conservationists to launch a ground breaking journey that continues to this day.”

The committee's **Annual Recognition Award** to an individual went to Dr. Theron Terhune, the outreach & education coordinator at Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy, who was the primary architect of the new web-based NBCI 2.0. The massive revision of the original paper-based plan incorporates web mapping applications, conservation planning tools and a Biologist Rating Index, which categorizes 600 million acres of land for bobwhite habitat management suitability. Terhune has also been a longstanding member of the NBTC research subcommittee member and immediate past chair, leading a new collective effort to standardize and coordinate bobwhite monitoring efforts across the range.



Dr. Theron Terhune

Citing its enduring track record advancing bobwhite management through long-term research, public involvement, collaborative work, and an array of both scientific and lay publications, the committee presented its **Group Achievement Award** to the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI) at Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Texas, with Drs. Fred Bryant, Leonard A. Brennan and Fidel Hernandez leading the quail efforts.



Dr. Fidel Hernandez (right) with immediate past chair of the NBTC steering committee, Dan Figert, Kentucky

Since 2000, CKWRI has graduated five PhD and 12 MS quail students with another seven students working toward those degrees now, and launched the Quail Associates program, a network of 20 “citizen scientist ranch owners” who donate dollars and data to help understand annual changes in quail productivity across south Texas. CKWRI publications include *Texas Bobwhites: A Guide to Their Food and Habitat Management*, and *Texas Quails: Ecology and Management*. The institute also publishes an electronic newsletter and hosts a number of YouTube videos and quail “webisodes” covering various quail management topics.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

AGRICULTURAL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

Outgoing Chair: Chuck Kowaleski

Incoming Chair: James Tomberlin

Incoming Vice-Chair: Lisa Potter

NBTC 2012 Ag Policy Subcommittee meeting minutes

Led by Chuck Kowaleski, James Tomberlin and Bridget Collins

Notes taken by Mark Gudlin

Ag Policy Subcommittee Attendees

Bridget Collins (NBCI), Travis Dinsdale (MO), Mark Gudlin (TN), Justin Harbit (KS), Chuck Kowaleski (TX), Russell Martin (TX), Lisa Potter (MO), Mike Sams (OK), James Tomberlin (GA), Jim Wooley (QF), Dave Howell (QU)

Wednesday, August 8th

Chairman's Charges

- Keep plugging on 2012 Farm Bill
- Keep pushing the "Natives First" general initiative and within drought assistance
- Habitat Monitoring – Need to develop standard habitat monitoring techniques for NBCI Focus Areas
 1. Key management actions needed, desired habitat conditions, terminology (i.e. what is usable space?)
 2. Getting thoughts and notes together on how to approach habitat tracking for Cropland/CRP.
 3. Nominate one or two delegates to be on ad hoc habitat tracking committee, possibly to attend the monitoring retreat that will occur before Christmas.
 - a. Mark Gudlin (TN) and Mike Sams (OK) volunteered

Leadership transition

Chuck stepping down as Committee Chair, James Tomberlin assumes Chair. Lisa Potter was nominated vice-chair and voted by acclamation.

Overview of Farm Bill (FB) developments

- Senate passed full version on June 21; House version passed out of committee on July 11, stalled on floor. Senate version more wildlife friendly (included sodsaver and conservation compliance).

- If no FB approved by Sept. 30, all CCRP enrollments stopped. If contract has not been approved, it will not be accepted. Does not have to be active, simply approved.
- Several paths forward on FB:
 1. As legislators go back to their districts and gets lots of complaints, they come back during 8 days in Sept. and pass a full FB.
 2. Full FB could be tacked on to a continuing resolution to keep a government shutdown from happening; could also tack on a one-year extension of current FB (most likely) and separate disaster programs extension.
 3. Could pass a full FB in lame duck session.

Policy changes: Up to 1.5 million of CRP grassland acres could be enrolled w/o meeting regular erosion eligibility requirements (result of GRP being eliminated). As long as CRP remains in original planted cover, retains eligibility for CRP. Does not apply if in trees or in unfarmable condition. People leasing still collect DCC payments.

Bridget is now on FSA regulations committee. She is able to provide input on behalf of NBTC/NBCI. She will be able to help write the first draft. Mention of forest mgmt wording regarding thinning, but issue with payments. Only \$10M (was \$100M), and if funded, would be under PAYGO.

Haying/Grazing frequencies. Still need to continue pushing to close loophole of Haying/Grazing that can happen every year if drought conditions.

SAFE Update

USDA made 400K acres eligible. A total of 48 project requests were made comprising 1,340,000 acres requested. Seven new SAFE project proposals were submitted with the remainder being for increased acreage allocations with existing SAFE projects. FSA has not set up a ranking system yet. Internally, preference for SAFE proposals – T&E spp., some bias against states that already have a lot of SAFE acres.

SAFE and CCRP Initiative allocations – draft of letter sent in July to FSA Juan Garcia regarding suggestions in CCRP allocation process (handout). If anyone has other suggestions for improvement, please contact Bridget.

WHIP/EQIP

WHIP will be assimilated into EQIP; as long as Sen. Roberts is there, EQIP eligibility won't change. Key factor will be how 5% of money to "wildlife" will be counted (i.e. what is considered wildlife habitat). How will forestry and water quality practices be addressed? They need to be counted as separate from "wildlife" funds. Wanting to codify Chief White's concept of Working Lands for Wildlife into several programs (except for CRP), and target towards leveraging conservation partner support; will depend on how rules come out.

VPA/HIP

Program still there, but cut to \$40M. Bridget will investigate if VPA is in any of the FB extension versions

Easements

Issue: in the new easement program, now will require a 3rd party cash match of 25% for GRP and WRP that wasn't required before (was for FRPP).

SodSaver & Compliance

- Provision in Senate bill; not everything we want, but does reduce subsidy coverage by half. TX, OK, KS, CO have the most native prairie left – SodSaver more important issue.
- Conservation Compliance – passed in Senate, tied to crop insurance. Various conservation groups working on one of the two issues (e.g. DU on SodSaver) – relevance for bobwhites.
- Group discussion on which issue most impactful for bobwhite and where NBTC/NBCI should put our weight/support. Talked about pushing on both fronts but Bridget advised us to pick one issue to push. Discussion to continue.

We (NBTC Ag Policy Comm) reviewed and supported NBTC sign-on for about 11 letters to administrators, legislators and key staffers.

Bridget's Staff Report

FSA – lots of change in staff. She mentioned the possibility of moving to NRCS offices. It might be best if Bridget is not in the NRCS office while Natives First policy is being pushed.

Alternatives to Natives First – in drought relief, push the native forages with foregone income payment; less c/s on introduced forages; Bridget will investigate as to how this could be incorporated into the \$16M allocated per today's news on drought relief approved. At the state level, differential c/s can be provided on different practices, although likely not done often.

NRCS payment schedules are being regionalized within the next several months.

Discussion on low input/high diversity practices. Tying in with Natives push, are there groups other than Pollinator groups that we need to look at partnering with? The group decided to pick this discussion back up with grazing/grasslands subcommittee on 8/9.

Chuck suggested for Bridget to start assembling info on benefits of native forages. Contact Pat Keyser (CNGM), Charlie Rewa (CEAP), Terrell Erickson.

Habitat Monitoring

We began discussion on how to determine “usable space” for purposes of the ad hoc habitat monitoring effort. Chuck suggested Mark and Mike start assembling matrix of what habitats are usable or not.

CP33 – extra SIP (now \$150/acre) not really making a difference in CP33 enrollment. However, it could if/when direct payments go away (depends on FB developments). Are there any things we can do collectively (economic analyses?) to assist? Revisit allowing center-pivot corners (right now, only do if have connecting border strip).

Thursday, August 9th

Working Lands for Wildlife

- Frustration with WHIP money being pulled after DCs and biologists had worked half a year developing contracts. Indiana bat issue negatively affecting GWW Initiative in TN.
- Mike Sams – lesser prairie chicken a hard sell – most people afraid to have it on their lands because of status – afraid the Feds will come after them if they have LPC on their lands.
- Suggestion it would be better if it was titled by the habitat, but resistance because of what NRCS is trying to accomplish with the money.
- Russell Martin and Mike Sams said landowners are more accepting if the focus is on other species or the habitat, and then approach the Safe Harbor agreement or CCA issue – offer it during discussions at a protection for them, then landowner makes the choice.
- WLFW was patterned after Sage Grouse Initiative. While that was successful, it is on a landscape more dominated by federal lands on which the landowners are leasing grazing rights; private lands are often inholdings surrounded by public lands. Much different landowner

pattern and response in the other areas of the country where WLFW initiatives are being implemented.

Natives First

Chief wasn't very receptive the first visit. However, he asked if there was a way to work bobwhite quail benefits into WLFW and other initiatives. Bridget asked for help in reviewing conservation practice standards within the Lesser Prairie Chicken, Gopher Tortoise, and Bog Turtle Initiatives to provide NRCS with a review of how to make them for quail friendly – Russell and James volunteered.

Mid Contract Management Summary/Issues

- FSA had asked Bridget to compile a summary of MCM practices approved by the states (see handout).
- There are quite a few states that have practices viewed as not sufficient, e.g. only requiring a firebreak to be installed; things such as mowing and spot spraying, tree tube removal, etc. that are normal maintenance practices anyway.
- FSA deficiencies: Problem with very minimal spot checking of contracts and insufficient enforcement.
- Chuck would like to see MCM grazing allowed with reduced penalty or no penalty if there was no benefit to the producer, on some practices. Right now, in TX they are penalizing landowners for doing the best management practice.

Ag Policy and Grasslands Committee joint meeting, 10 am James Tomberlin and Bridget Collins leading (20 in attendance)

Purpose – how to strategize on promoting the “Naturally Drought-Resistant Pastures” push/Natives First proposal. A lot of discussion.

Nick Prough provided summary of grasslands committees' discussion from previous day relative to Natives First Initiative and action items.

Discussed differential cost share rates. Also need to have the native plantings rank very high in ranking process.

Some states (e.g. MS) still have NRCS wildlife practices that include non-native species. Bob Glennon suggested that in standards – as he does – he identifies plants as native/nonnative, perennial/annual, warm season/cool season, as many people working with the programs are not knowledgeable of this.

Suggested Step : Have Chief White promote a “Do Not Plant List” on the wildlife practices.

Some states (MO, TN, KY) have gotten fescue and Bermuda grass taken out of new CPI plantings. Other states are not there. Would be too much kickback to try and push the Do Not Plant on all NRCS practices.

Chuck K: Could we get some grant money to CNGM to do clinics with USDA & especially Extension in various states on drought-proofing pastures. Low hanging fruit is in the fescue belt.

Mark: Good CIG opportunity.

Linda (TX): The ag economist can be our best friend in this effort. It's important to identify all the cost factors.

Pat Keyser and others have put together a draft white paper on documenting soil and water benefits of natives on buffers, etc. Pat said it is on CNGM website.

Action Items:

1. Request written response from Chief White on why Natives First Initiative isn't currently workable
2. Provide higher cost share and ranking points for natives on non-wildlife practices and incorporate our previous "Do Not Plant List" into wildlife practices.
3. Continue to build a broader coalition: conservation groups, JV's, Forage Groups, Grazing groups, Production groups, etc.

FORESTRY SUBCOMMITTEE

Outgoing Chair: Chuck McKelvy

Incoming Chair: Mark Jones

Incoming Vice-Chair: Billy Dukes

Chairman Mark Jones (NC) opened the meeting and distributed minutes from the subcommittee's meeting in Tallahassee in 2011. Twelve individuals representing six states, three NGOs, two joint ventures, and one federal agency in addition to NBCI Forestry Coordinator Mike Black were in attendance (attendee list attached). NBCI Director Don McKenzie and NBCI/FSA Liaison Bridget Collins also provided updates over the course of the meeting.

As the first order of business, an election was held for the position of subcommittee Vice-chairman. Billy Dukes (SC) was elected to serve as Vice-chair and assume chairmanship following the conclusion of Jones' term.

It was noted that Reggie Thackston (GA) and Jones currently serve on the AFWA Forestry Working Group of the Agricultural Conservation Committee. Thackston is chair of the Forestry WG. It was also noted that the Forestry Subcommittees recommendations for the 2012 Farm Bill were not incorporated directly into the Farm Bill under consideration, but these recommendations still have the potential to be used as sideboards in the rule making process.

NBCI Forestry Coordinator Mike Black distributed a summary of accomplishments since 2011 and a work plan for 2012-2013. Mike is heavily involved with the Southern Group of State Foresters and is focusing his attention in the forestry arena more so than the wildlife arena.

Mike asked for the assistance of the subcommittee in prioritizing his activities and meetings, and the group agreed to address that task during the meeting.

Mike then gave an update on the status of the Longleaf Partnership Council (LPC) and his role with that group. The [LPC](#) oversees the implementation of the "America's Longleaf" plan which is the rangewide planning effort for longleaf restoration. Mike serves as a NGO representative on the LPC and is currently running for Chair of the Council. Subcommittee member Catherine Rideout also serves on the LPC. Mike will send proceedings/minutes/notes from the LPC to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forestry subcommittee for distribution as appropriate.

Mike noted that much of his time is now spent on prescribed fire issues and that he is serving as the *de facto* NBCI/NBTC liaison to prescribed fire groups including state prescribed fire councils and regional fire consortiums. Fire consortiums are science- and delivery-based organizations spanning large geographies and are overseen by the [Joint Fire Science Program](#). Mike has an advisory board appointment on the [Oak Woodlands and Forests Fire Consortium](#).

Mike next gave an update on the National Shortleaf Initiative. The [first national meeting](#) was held in Huntsville, Alabama in September 2011, and the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 2013, likely in Missouri or Arkansas. Mike is serving as Director of the group, and they have secured \$113,000 for development of a national shortleaf plan. This work will likely be conducted by a post-doc stationed at the University of Tennessee. Mike's intention is to step down from the Director position after the 2013 meeting.

Mike and Mark briefed the group on the Subcommittee's role in developing the forest management recommendations for a training program on CRP Mid-contract Management for technical service providers. We are under a short time-line for comments, and the NBTC should be getting paid for providing this service.

Reggie asked if state forestry agency personnel were being trained as TSPs, and that appears to vary on a state-by-state basis.

Bridget gave an update on the 2012 Farm Bill. No farm bill has been passed to date, but an extension of the current farm bill is possible. If there is no extension, continuous sign-up will cease on October 1. In current versions of the Farm Bill, there is \$10 million for tree thinning incentives to be used for "proper thinning and other practices necessary to improve resource conditions." Establishing these conditions will be paramount to success of such a program. Based on information and guidance supplied by Bridget, the subcommittee decided on a three-pronged approach to improving forestry in the Farm Bill.

1. Continue promoting our "Southern Pines" proposal from last year for the 2017 Farm Bill.
2. Continue to work on favorable changes to the EBI.
3. Work on a \$10M Pilot Thinning Project for the 2012 Farm Bill.

The first two objectives are long-term, but the third will entail immediate action. We need to make sure that the language as currently written remains in the final version of the bill, be actively engaged in the regulations/rulemaking process, and find additional partners and supporters for this effort.

Action Item: With advice from Bridget, Reggie will lead the effort to provide incentives for thinning and frequent prescribed fire in the Farm Bill.

Pat Fowler (USFS, Land Between the Lakes) gave an update on an early successional habitat initiative at LBL. They propose to re-introduce fire into a system which has not had significant fire in more than 80 years. The managed area on LBL is approximately 14,000 acres. This is distinct and separate from a private corridor connecting Land Between the Lakes and Fort Campbell where work is planned in the future under cooperative agreements. It was decided that NBTC should offer a letter of support for the project during the scoping process.

The subcommittee then went through a process of prioritizing issues and organizations to identify priorities on where Mike Black will spend his time and effort to advance NBTC/NBCI forest management and prescribed fire goals. Results from that process are attached.

Don McKenzie made the point that the NBTC needs to develop a reservoir of knowledge of USFS forest lands policy and USFWS refuge lands policy so we can be more engaged and more effective in the process.

The NBTC *Ad hoc* Monitoring Subcommittee requested the appointment of two members from the Forestry Subcommittee to serve on a Habitat Assessment Subcommittee. Volunteers were solicited and the following individuals agreed to serve as delegates or alternates:

Reggie Thackston/James Tomberlin – Primary. Billy Dukes – Alternate.

Larry Heggemann – Primary. Bill White – Alternate.

Reggie provided an update on two projects which he has been involved with in Georgia. The first project was initiated by the Southern Group of State Foresters and was designed as a pilot project to increase collaboration between state wildlife agencies and state forestry agencies. The top project picked in Georgia was a project to assess longleaf pine plantings planted under farm bill programs. Project would entail sampling 1000 stands at an estimated cost of \$160,000. Funding is currently being sought to carry out the project.

Reggie was also involved in a project to develop a ranking process for longleaf pine proposals submitted to NFWF. In summary, criteria for successful projects will include plantings in priority landscapes, projects which address priority species, and projects which include monitoring of priority species. NFWF has a goal of providing \$25 million for longleaf pine projects over 5 years.

Reggie Thackston and Larry Heggemann agreed to serve on the Ad Hoc Prescribed Fire Committee.

There being no further business, Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m. on August 9.

GRASSLANDS/GRAZING LANDS SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair: Nick Prough

Vice-Chair: Robert Perez

We had 17 attendees at our Grasslands Subcommittee over the 3 days of NBTC meetings in Abilene Tx representing 11 different states.

1. Grasslands Subcommittee was charged as was several other resource committees with starting to look at developing standard habitat monitoring techniques for focal areas for our respective resource concerns for both habitat accomplishments and bird responses.
 - A. We had lengthy discussions on these topics and came up with 5 Land Use Categories for Grassland Habitats within Focal Areas.
 1. Native Planted Grasslands
 2. Exotic Grasslands
 3. Range/Native Prairie Lands
 4. Idle Grasslands
 5. Grazed Woodlands
 - B. Additionally a map of quail habitat within those focal areas will need to be made to start off the process and also a “change in that quail habitat” after 3 years and additional further time periods after that to be determined by committees.
 - C. Then we will have to track acres of those specific land type categories, while also completing the following,
 1. Run those acres thru Fragstats in those focal areas.
 2. Then finally categorize them as useable quail habitat, non-usable quail habitat or intermediate quail habitat as a qualitative assessment using multiple location points for those areas selected.
 - D. We also selected our 2 delegates as requested by chairman and steering committee to represent our Grasslands/Grazing Lands subcommittee on the Ad Hoc Habitat Monitoring Group at a retreat later this fall and those delegates will be turned into the steering committee and chairman as follows. Jon Hays of TPWD representing Rangelands Western area and Bob Glennon of VA Tech representing Eastern grasslands.

With these categories mentioned above we have a couple assumptions for the grassland/grazing lands subcommittee to continue to follow throughout the year. We are considering all our categories to be “working grasslands” so that any land areas or issues of discussions such as any planted Buffers or CRP plantings will be passed along to Ag Policy Subcommittee as we have in past years. This keeps the distinction of grazing and grasslands separate from CRP grasses.

2. Additionally we discussed that USDA Standards and Specs should be followed and tweaked where needed and when possible in habitat tracking of practices that are discussed in future category break downs or levels of habitat tracking. By this usage, we are not recreating the

wheel in some areas of further discussion by the various resource groups.

3. Additionally we continued further discussion and met in a joint meeting with Ag Policy subcommittee to discuss next steps on the Natives First Proposal that was recently rejected by NRCS Leadership.
 - A. We discussed pursuing a significantly higher cost share rate for native versus non native grasses in cost share rates or in the new USDA Regional Cost share scenarios being developed in the regions currently.
 - B. Additionally it was suggested to provide extra or additional higher points for rankings and applications for natives compared to non natives as well as some Foregone Income payment for lost income during establishment for producers.
 - C. Also it was discussed to create a State Tech Committee (STC) list of BMP's of high priority or focal areas ideas and talking points for various STC to follow in their respective states that are from Grasslands Subcommittee of NBTC. Further work will be done on this by committee and NBCI staff in the coming months.
 - D. In our Joint meeting with Ag Policy we also discussed making a list of "problem practices" from the states that need to be compiled that are currently out there and then those be hashed out and worked on in future, as well as a Do NOT PLANT LIST specifically for Wildlife Practices that are being used.
4. We also continued further discussion about the NBCI Grassland Grazing Land Coordinator since our subcommittee continues to not have a NBCI staff person to assist the subcommittee with issues and programs throughout the year.
 - A. As several committee members and staff have spent a significant amount of time on this continued issue for the past several years, the Grazing/Grasslands subcommittee as well as Don M., the NBCI staff and NBTC Steering committee continue to make this a high priority in the future. Since position was not funded or accepted in any current grants for a 3rd year in a row, we discussed several new options to look at other new funding sources or a separate grant application for funding this position all by itself rather than combining it with other current positions or current grants.
 - B. Also some further discussion was made to look for maybe 5 possible outside groups or NGO's/entities to partner on a position for 3-5 years for a Grassland/Grazing Lands coordinator.
 - C. The subcommittee will continue to work with steering committee and NBCI staff on this issue to resolve it hopefully in the near future as we think everyone in NBTC/NBCI sees what can be accomplished with other NBCI staff positions in their respective subcommittees, especially in between NBTC Annual meetings.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Chair: Mark Smith

Vice-chair: Ben Robinson

Attendees: Mark Smith, Subcommittee Chair (Auburn University), Ben Robinson, Subcommittee Vice-Chair (KY Dept. of Fish and Wildlife), Craig Alderman (QUWF), Andrew Burnett (NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife), Jena Donnell (OK Dept of Wildlife), John Doty (NBCI), Rick Hamrick (MS Dept of Wildlife), Dallas Ingram (GA DNR), Clifton Jackson (AR Game and Fish), Tim Kavan (MO Dept of Cons.), Ted Zawislak (AR Game and Fish)

NBTC Steering Committee Chairman Figert provided the Outreach Subcommittee Chair and Vice-Chair a list of 4 charges (outlined below) via email on 12 July. These charges were then forwarded to the Outreach Subcommittee to stimulate discussion and solicit input from subcommittee members prior to the annual meeting, and to also provide those who could not attend the meeting an opportunity for input. Most subcommittee members provided significant input which was very helpful to the Subcommittee. Draft copies of a NBCI Communications Plan (provided by Doty) and NBCI Marketing Strategy and Outreach Subcommittee Objectives (circa 1996; provided by Robinson thru Figert) were also circulated via email among subcommittee members.

In Abilene, Smith provided subcommittee attendees/members a hard copy of the charges and draft NBCI Communications Plan and with the assistance of Robinson moderated/stimulated discussion of the subcommittee. This report should *not* be considered as the minutes of the meeting, but rather the subcommittee's input/guidance regarding each subcommittee charge. As such, a significant amount to discussion has been omitted from this report. After the conclusion of the meeting, Smith assembled and organized input provided during the meeting and then submitted a draft report to the Subcommittee for review prior to submission to the NBTC Steering Committee Chair. Smith then incorporated suggested edits from Subcommittee members provided via email.

Charge #1---revisit and redefine the basic mission and functions of the Outreach Subcommittee and the subcommittee's role in assisting NBCI/NBTC growth

It was somewhat surprising to learn the Outreach Subcommittee has no formal mission statement although it has been a SEQSG/NBTC Subcommittee since 1996. However, the subcommittee did have, albeit old (circa 1996), list of "operating" objectives originating from the formation of the Southeast Quail Study Group. During post-meeting email exchanges, one member questioned whether or not our efforts were "reinventing the wheel" given the by-laws provide a generalized mission statement for subcommittees. As such, within the context of the overarching mission, goals, and objectives of the NBCI/NBTC, the Outreach Subcommittee suggests its mission statement should be:

The mission of the Outreach/Communications Subcommittee is to support, advance, and build awareness of the goals and objectives of the NBCI and NBTC by the strategic use of communications tools, techniques, and partner assets to address challenges and opportunities

among core audiences.

Inherent to the above mission statement, the Outreach Committee feels strongly that a formal NBCI Communications Plan should be developed. Although Doty has begun developing this document, it is far from complete and will require the combined knowledge, expertise, guidance, and experience of other communication professionals, marketing professionals, and NBTC staff and select membership. A formal communications plan will not only provide a “roadmap” for the communication specialist (Doty) and Outreach Subcommittee, but also optimize the use of limited NBCI/NBTC financial, personnel, and partner resources. As such, the Outreach Subcommittee suggests the following action items of the NBTC Steering Committee:

Action Item #1---Provide support to the Outreach Subcommittee to conduct a 2-3 day retreat, similar to the recent Research Subcommittee retreat, to develop a comprehensive NBCI/NBTC Communications Plan

Action Item #2---Change the name of the Outreach Subcommittee to Communications Subcommittee to better reflect the role and activities of the Subcommittee.

Charge #2---define our vision for the composition of the Outreach Subcommittee membership and determine membership expertise required to accomplish our mission

Whereas the Outreach Subcommittee would appreciate the involvement of more NBTC members and additional outside support (e.g., consultants), we understand fully and acknowledge the realities of this request (e.g., interest, expertise, time, financial, etc). Given these constraints, the Subcommittee suggests we place a greater emphasis on the use of NGO communication/marketing specialists because they have 1) substantial experience and expertise working with many of the same core constituents (e.g., policy makers, landowners/hunters/quail enthusiasts), 2) significant membership that the NBTC/NBCI does not currently, or effectively, reach (i.e., landowner/hunter), 3) well established print and electronic media to disseminate information, and 4) have a vested interest in quail (e.g., greater understanding of, or the capability to understand quickly, the issues regarding quail restoration), and 5) a verbalized interest in the success of NBCI. ***NGOs will provide the most cost-effective and practical means for NBTC/NBCI to reach and engage the landowner/hunter core constituency group.*** Whereas this request will require a commitment (both financial and time) from NGOs, the Subcommittee believes the attendance of NGO communication/marketing specialists would significantly enhance the ability of the Subcommittee to further its mission. It may be prudent for NBTC/NBCI, and palatable to the NGOs, to only request NGO communication/marketing attendance/assistance for a defined time period, perhaps for the next 3 years, concurrent with the development of a Communications Plan (Action Item #1).

Action Item #3---Formally request, and highly encourage, NGO partners to send their respective communications/marketing specialists to the NBTC Annual Meeting, and more importantly, to have them attend and participate in Outreach Subcommittee meetings

Action Item #4---Provide support for University of Tennessee-Knoxville communication/marketing staff to attend and participate in Outreach Subcommittee meetings

Charge #3---define the role of the NBCI staff person (John Doty) in working with the

Outreach Subcommittee to accomplish its mission

Currently the NBCI staff person (John Doty) is operating under the direction of the NBCI Coordinator and NBTC Steering Committee with the Outreach Subcommittee serving as a “sounding board.” Whereas this approach is currently functional, it is likely not the most efficient or effective means to accomplish our mission within the confines of available resources. As the NBCI and NBTC has grown immensely over the past 10 and 2 years, respectively, so too has the demands on communications. Some of these demands we’ve identified and addressed, but we see additional demands evolving in the near future and we will likely uncover more demands as we progress. Given these growing demands, the Subcommittee believes it is very important the NBTC/NBCI, with leadership from the Outreach Committee, develop a comprehensive Communications Plan to, among a myriad of other things (e.g., level of assistance to state coordinators, meeting with Directors and Commissioners), identify communication priorities which will ultimately define Doty’s and the Outreach Committee’s role. By necessity, the Communications Plan will be a “living” document, subject to periodic revision as objectives are met and/or communication demands change. See Action Item #1. This Communications Plan will also aid in determining if additional communications staff will be needed to meet current and future demands.

Charge #4---determine a more appropriate (catchy) name for the NBTC Annual Award and explore ideas for additional awards

After much discussion, the Outreach Subcommittee suggests the NBTC Annual Award be re-named to either of the following (member votes): NBTC Firebird Award (5 votes) or the H. Stoddard Fire Bird Award (2 votes). The use of “Firebird” in the award name will facilitate the linkage to a habitat message for outside audiences. However, one subcommittee member suggested this may become more of a hindrance rather than benefit and suggested the Subcommittee consider additional award names. Some other potential names, provided via email correspondence after the meeting include: Answer the Call Award, Assembly Call Award, Quail Lifetime Achievement Award, Covey Rise Award, Take One for the Covey Award.

The Outreach Subcommittee explored the pros and cons of several other potential awards, including state level awards, administered by state coordinators on behalf of NBTC/NBCI to recognize the accomplishments of individuals/groups in moving quail management forward in their respective states. Whereas this type of award appears reasonable, there are many hidden issues (e.g., competition among member-based NGOs, potential favoritism, award being used to manage politics rather than accomplishments, etc.) that warrant further discussion and input from state coordinators, NGOs, the Steering Committee, and to some extent the membership. More simply, would an award administered by state coordinators (the most logical administrator) on behalf of NBTC/NBCI cause more headaches and heartburn at the within state level than what the NBTC/NBCI could potentially gain in terms of name recognition and awareness? Likewise, there are many “politics,” both good and bad, of another potential award discussed by the Outreach Committee, an award to recognize the accomplishment of state coordinators. Therefore, the Outreach Committee suggests the Steering Committee seek the input of the state coordinators and representatives of member-based NGOs regarding the pros and cons of a state award (1 per state) to recognize quail management accomplishments of an individual or group within their state. The

guidelines/sideboards for this award will be developed at a later date. The intent of this initial solicitation should focus on the “politics” of the award. The Steering Committee should also solicit the input of state coordinators regarding an award to recognize outstanding achievements of a state coordinator. Given state coordinators are on the “front lines” for putting habitat on the ground, coupled with the fact that the NBTC Award has gone mostly to either previous Steering Committee members or administrators, it is important the NBTC consider recognizing state coordinators. Suggested names for this award include: Bringing Back Bobwhite Award, Edge of Habitat Award, Habitat Improvement Award, Flushing the Roost Award. This input for each respective award should be weighed heavily as to whether or not these awards should be developed and their potential ramifications (both good and bad) prior to further action.

Action Item #5—Select either NBTC Firebird Award or H. Stoddard Firebird Award or some other variant of the above two while including “Firebird” in the award name as the new name for the NBTC Annual Award.

Action Item #6—Solicit the input of state coordinators and representatives of member-based NGOs regarding the pros and cons of a state-level award to recognize the accomplishments of an individual or group within their respective state.

Action Item #7—Solicit the input of state coordinators regarding their desire for an award to recognize the accomplishments of a fellow state coordinator in furthering the goals and objectives of NBTC/NBCI within their state.

RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE

Outgoing Chair: Theron Terhune

Incoming Chair: James Martin

Incoming Vice-Chair: Jay Howell

1. **Meeting-accomplished task: Critically evaluated and critiqued the draft monitoring plan,** specifically with respect to the 3 important topics:
 - a. Defining the Focus Area and associated criteria
 - b. Assessing the utility of reference areas
 - c. Evaluating the scientific validity of the monitoring protocol

2. **Meeting-accomplished task: Identify and Prioritize research needs relative to the focus area monitoring program**
 - a. Need to better understand factors affecting call count precision (especially as related to detection rate and calling rate)
 - b. Can playbacks improve detection and potentially serve as a means to increase precision?
 - c. Test the efficacy of the currently defined Managed Densities.
 - d. Evaluate the tenet that habitat quality equals (=) more birds.
 - e. Determine whether the minimum size of a focus area (1,500 acres) as well as whether 25% usable space is required. For example, should habitat context and/or region lax those criteria.
 - f. Better define what usable space by quail is and how does spatial arrangement factor in to successful implementation of habitat management.
 - g. Assess the supposition that habitat cores (aka anchor sites, habitat epicenter, habitat cooperatives) and/or public cores increase the long-term population viability.

Also, do public lands or plantation-type properties “weaken” one’s ability to apply knowledge gained from these focal areas to the broader landscape?

- h. Evaluate the proposed distance between points for monitoring. Can there be overlap?
- i. Study and report on the relative cost (economics) associated with restoring bobwhites to Managed Densities? What are landowners “willing” to pay? Or, what should they expect to pay?

- j. Better understand the impact of the “new ground effect” on long-term population viability.
- k. Evaluate time removal and distance sampling and determine whether a hybrid approach can increase the power while decreasing the logistical manpower (resources).
- l. Compare the methods of conducting roadside versus simple random (non-roadside) sampling for bobwhites

3. **Data Collection & Centralized Database Management**

- a. We discussed the needs for a database and what that database “should” look like.
- b. We kicked around the various options for organizing, storing, and maintaining both monitoring and inventory data? Some options include:
 - i. Avian Knowledge Network
 - ii. Databasin
 - iii. LCC and JV models and database networks
 - iv. Tall Timbers GIS server and database

The general consensus was to try and keep both the habitat inventory and monitoring data in one centralized place AND the database should ideally be spatially-based.

- c. **ACTION ITEM:** Developed a Database Management Ad hoc Committee

Nominated Members include: John Hayes, James Martin, Theron Terhune, Tom Dailey; Dave Dahlgren; and John Morgan. Potential chair: James Martin

Charge: to evaluate the various options and platforms available to store and maintain NBCI’s monitoring and habitat inventory as well as define the needs of states (in the form of tools) potentially using a survey. Ultimately, this process would help to determine the best course of action moving forward to selecting a system/framework to store, use and maintain NBCI’s data.

- d. Discussion was also heavily geared discovering how LCCs, JVs, and PIF efforts could be coordinated and linked in with PIF efforts.
4. An update on Quail VII. Quail VII is well on the way with a projected completed date of December 2012. Tom Dailey recognized the efforts of multiple groups providing financial support for publication of the proceedings. Theron recognized the exceptional efforts of Clait Braun (Proceedings Editor-in-Chief) in organizing and leading the review and editing of the proceedings.
 5. **Meeting-accomplished task:** nominated and voted for new Research Subcommittee co-chair. Jay Howell was unanimously voted as the new co-chair.

BUSINESS MEETING

August 10, 2012

8:15 am – Called meeting to order. Subcommittee reports were the first item of business.

Chairman Figert welcomed new Steering Committee members including Chair-elect/Secretary/Treasurer Chuck Kowaleski, Academic Representative Lenny Brennan, Member-at-Large Larry Heggemann, Mid-West Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies representative Nathan Stricker, NGO Representative Craig Alderman and SEPIF representative Catherine Rideout. He thanked all those willing to run for election. And he thanked those leaving the Steering Committee for their many years of valuable service. Those include: Billy Dukes, Mark Gudlin, Kristine Evans, Dave Howell and Laurel Barnhill - their years of service and commitment to quail conservation is admirable. Dan also thanked the Texas organizing crew for a fantastic job with hosting the meeting.

Subcommittee Reports:

Note: full subcommittee reports were presented prior to the business meeting and are included in their entirety previously in these proceedings and won't be repeated here. Below are a few additional comments and highlights.

Ag Policy Subcommittee – reported by James Tomberlin, Vice-chair

House and Senate are currently working on new farm bill. The Senate has passed a farm bill but the House version has only passed the House Ag Committee and is still waiting on a floor vote. WHIP funding is set at least 5% of EQIP funding in both versions. Overall, conservation programs have been cut by \$6.5 billion dollars in the Senate and \$6.1 billion in the House as compared to previous farm bill funding levels. The Senate version included a Sod Saver provision but the House did not.

Also discussed were Bridget Collin's efforts with NRCS to promote the agency concept of a Natives First Initiative. While NRCS has not accepted that concept they did provide additional ranking points and practices beneficial for native grass and quail in current Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative areas that are within quail range.

Forestry Subcommittee – reported by Mark Jones, Chair

Mike Black provided a written summary of NBCI's role in developing the forest management recommendations for a training program on CRP Mid-contract Management for technical service providers. We are under a short time-line for comments. The FSA offered to pay NBTC members who worked on this project. Was not clear exactly how the payment would occur (subsequent to this meeting, FSA has contacted Forestry Committee Chair Mark Jones about payment. Don McKenzie had worked with Mike Linsenbigler on an MOU for repayment).

Action Item: NBTC is working out the details with how we will be paid for the time invested in the mid-contract TSP project.

Minutes of the 2010 Meeting in Wichita were revisited, some of the personnel had changed but the committee charges were still valid.

Reggie mentioned that the notes from Wichita could be pulled together and suggested there was the possibility that a Conservation Innovation Grant proposal could stem from them.

Grassland/Grazing Lands Subcommittee – reported by Nick Prough, Chair

The subcommittee developed five land use categories for grassland habitats: Native Planted Grasslands, Exotic Grasslands, Range/Native Prairie Lands, Idle Grasslands, Grazed Woodlands. Data will have to be collected and analyzed to be able to categorize them as either useable quail habitat, non-useable quail habitat or intermediate quail habitat. All grazing issues will be based on working lands.

The committee suggests working with NRCS to develop significantly higher payments for Natives versus Non-Natives. These payments should include foregone income and states should work with NRCS state technical committees to develop Best Management Practice list and targeted focus areas.

The need for a grassland coordinator position was also discussed. It was suggested that we look outside of current NFWF grants at possibly a separate grant with matching money coming from outside partners.

Action Item: The need for a Prescribed Fire Task Force was discussed. It needs to include 2 members from the Forestry, Grazing/Grasslands, Research and Ag Policy Committees to serve with Mike Black on developing a prescribed fire *ad hoc* committee.

Outreach Subcommittee – reported by Mark Smith, Chair

Committee had 4 charges and 7 action items.

Committee charges: Redefine 1) NBTC subcommittee role and 2) define subcommittees mission and vision 3) define NBCI's staff members role, 4) develop a more appropriate name for the NBTC annual award and consider developing other awards.

Action Items:

- 1) Provide support to the Outreach Subcommittee to conduct a 2-3 day retreat, similar to the recent Research Subcommittee retreat, to develop a comprehensive NBCI/NBTC Communications Plan
- 2) Change the name of the Outreach Subcommittee to Communications Subcommittee to better reflect the role and activities of the Subcommittee.
- 3) Formally request, and highly encourage, NGO partners to send their respective communications/marketing specialists to the NBTC Annual Meeting, and more importantly, to have them attend and participate in Outreach Subcommittee meetings.
- 4) Provide support for University of Tennessee-Knoxville communication/marketing staff to attend and participate in Outreach Subcommittee meetings.

5) Select either NBTC Firebird Award or H. Stoddard Firebird Award or some other variant of the above two while including “Firebird” in the award name as the new name for the NBTC Annual Award.

6) Solicit the input of state coordinators and representatives of member-based NGOs regarding the pros and cons of a state-level award to recognize the accomplishments of an individual or group within their respective state.

7) Solicit the input of state coordinators regarding their desire for an award to recognize the accomplishments of a fellow state coordinator in furthering the goals and objectives of NBTC/NBCI within their state.

Research Committee – reported by Theron Terhune, Chair

The committee discussed the use of Covey IQ software that logs hunting records and allows evaluation of hunter success. The committee also discussed assessing the reliability of reference areas and identifying priority research needs with regards to focus areas and the creation of a new Data Management *Ad hoc* committee.

Proceedings from Quail 7 should be completed and available by December 2012.

Newly formed Ad-hoc Committees and their Membership

Habitat Assessment Ad hoc Committee:

Ag Policy: Mark Gudlin and Mike Sams

Forestry: Reggie Thackston, James Tomberlin, Larry Heggemann with Billy Dukes and Bill White as alternates.

Grassland/Grazing Land: Jon Hays and Bob Glennon

Other participants: Jim Giacomo, Theron Terhune, John Morgan and Tom Dailey

Prescribed burning Ad hoc Committee: Reggie Thackston and Larry Heggemann so far

Database Management Ad hoc Committee: John Hayes, James Martin, Theron Terhune, Tom Dailey; Dave Dahlgren; and John Morgan. Potential chair: James Martin

NBCI Questions and Answers:

What are the Ad hoc committee’s needs from the NBCI Management Board in the next month?

- Support travel to retreats
- Emphasize the need for monitoring
- Encourage top down support from 25 states to allow high levels of participation
- Know how well it went

Don will need help from the Ad hoc committees in the form of a 1 page summary to help convince the NBCI Management Board that such an effort is worthwhile.

Reggie's Focal Landscape Concept

- Focal Landscapes are large areas within a targeted region that receive higher ranking points when deciding where bobwhite habitat work will be done.
- Highest priority goes to those Focal Landscapes that include a monitoring component
- Generally these areas will be too large to use latest NBCI model
- Focal Landscapes could be sanctioned by NBCI
- Focal Landscapes would include core population areas - relying on NBCI 2.0

Don's questions

- So this would consist of a 3 tiered system of Region, Landscape and Focus Area?
- Basically a step down plan.
- Such sanctioning would require the establishment and input of another *Ad hoc* group.

Action Item: Develop a process for NBCI sanctioning of Focal Landscapes. The Steering Committee, along with help from other committees, or ad hoc committees, will continue to discuss this matter and develop a plan for moving it forward.

Nathan Stricker mentions that he feels NBCI 2.0 already endorses, or sanctions focal landscapes by identifying areas on the landscape within all 25 NBCI states where conditions for recovery of quail are most likely. The NBCI 2.0 could be used for granting purposes and prioritizing/focusing cost-share funds.

Closing Remarks

New NBTC Chair Marc Puckett thanked everyone for a successful meeting including committee chairs and especially Dan Figert and Billy Dukes as well as Texas for hosting the meeting and said we should be proud of all that we've managed to accomplish.

Marc also formally invited everyone to attend next year's meeting in Roanoke, Virginia and wished folks Safe Travels for their journey home. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30.

POSTER ABSTRACTS

THE EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL FEED ON THE SURVIVAL OF NORTHERN BOBWHITE CHICK PRODUCTION AND SURVIVAL IN THE TEXAS ROLLING PLAINS

ALICIA K. ANDES, Department of Natural Resources Management, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409, USA.

C. BRAD DABBERT, Department of Natural Resources Management, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409, USA.

There is a current paucity of scientific literature to adequately describe the first few months of the northern bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*) life cycle and virtually no research to determine possible effects that management practices designed for adult quail inflict on chick demography. We postulated an increase in chick survival in response to the introduction of broadcasted supplemental feed as long as invertebrates did not limit the population. Hens were trapped, collared, released, tracked from October 2010 to March 2011 and monitored throughout the reproductive season. Chick survival checks were conducted with a thermal imaging camera at 4-5, 8-9 and 12-13 days old. Once fledging age was reached, night-netting was employed to catch the chicks and 1.2 g transmitters were applied to further determine survival. There were 18 broods consisting of 158 chicks within experimental supplemental feed areas compared to only 27 chicks within 3 broods located in control areas without feed. There was no difference in the survival functions between experimental and control chicks ≤ 13 days old (control=14.8%, experimental=13.3%, $z=0.222081$, $p=0.4129$); however, survival rates for > 13 days old chicks were immeasurable due to low survival, futile capture techniques and diminutive weights. The difference in the number of chicks produced between areas supplemented with and without feed suggested that this method increased chick production but not survival.

TWO -YEAR SURVEY OF *OXYSPURRA PETROWI* IN NORTHERN BOBWHITES FROM THE ROLLING PLAINS OF TEXAS AND WESTERN OKLAHOMA

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DALE ROLLINS, Texas AgriLIFE Research, Texas A&M University, San Angelo, TX 76901 USA

Oxyspirura petrowi is an indirect lifecycle nematode found under the nictitating membrane of gallinaceous birds. *Oxyspirura petrowi* has been reported in northern bobwhites (*Colinus*

virginianus) and scaled quail (*Callipepla squamata*) in the Trans Pecos ecoregion and Montezuma quail (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) in the High Plains ecoregion. Recent research at the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch (RPQRR) has found *O. petrowi* to be a common parasite in bobwhites. Researchers speculate that the vision of bobwhites may be impaired by *O. petrowi*. Our objective was to determine prevalence, intensity, and abundance of *O. petrowi* in bobwhites using samples collected from the RPQRR during August 2010 ($n = 51$) and the Rolling Plains of Texas and western Oklahoma during August and October 2011 ($n = 42$). Bobwhites sampled during 2011 are a part of an ongoing three-year project to survey bobwhite parasites in the Rolling Plains. Overall, 40% of bobwhites were infected with 252 *O. petrowi*. Overall mean intensity of *O. petrowi* was 6.6 ± 10.2 (SD) (range: 1–46) and mean abundance of *O. petrowi* was 2.7 ± 7.2 (SD). Findings from this study will provide additional information about *O. petrowi* in bobwhites from the Rolling Plains of Texas and western Oklahoma.

EFFECTS OF SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING ON SURVIVAL, DISTRIBUTION, AND NEST SUCCESS OF NORTHERN BOBWHITE

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In Texas, northern bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*) abundance declined by 4.2% from 1980-2006. We hypothesized that broadcasting supplemental feed into vegetation adjacent to roads would increase survival, decrease home-range size, and increase nesting success of bobwhites. Our study site was divided into 8 (404 hectares) units which were randomly designated as treatment (fed) and control (unfed). Fed units received ~70kg/km of milo (*Sorghum bicolor*) twice a month. We captured and radio-marked 121 female bobwhites during the winter of 2010. Hens were monitored for locations, survival, and nesting activity by homing to <50 meters from the birds. Kaplan-Meier survival estimates from October 2010 – October 2011 revealed bobwhites on treatment units had higher survival (35%) than those on control units (17%) ($P < 0.001$). Nest attempts were higher on treatment units ($n=31$; including 5 renest attempts) compared to control units ($n=4$; 0 renest attempts). We found that 78% of available hens nested on fed units as opposed to 15% on control units. We found that the overall home-range size for treatment (25.49 hectares) and control (25.89 hectares) units were similar. Preliminary results indicate broadcasting supplemental feed into vegetation for bobwhite quail has a positive influence on survival and nesting while distribution remains unaffected.

USING BOBWHITE QUAIL AS A TEACHING TOOL IN FORMAL EDUCATION

KOY COFFER, Texas Wildlife Association, San Antonio, Texas, 78218, USA

HELEN HOLDSWORTH, Texas Wildlife Association, San Antonio, Texas, 78218, USA

The Texas Wildlife Association believes that today's children are tomorrow's decision makers and have thus made it our mission to create an awareness of the outdoors, wildlife, and wildlife related

issues among Texas youth. Learning Across New Dimensions in Science (L.A.N.D.S.) Youth Stewardship Initiative is an intensive phase of TWA's educational outreach efforts which strives to facilitate natural resource literacy within schools by creating tangible relationships between the outdoors and essential academic skills. Classroom curricula, teacher trainings, special presentations, field investigation days, and necropsies, are readily available to teachers and students across Texas. Bobwhite quail are utilized as the species to focus on because of their role in the ecosystem and because of the ease in bringing them to a classroom. The L.A.N.D.S program currently works with 21 schools (7th-12th grade) with over 3,600 students. The TEKS-aligned curriculum is designed to assist teachers in preparing their students for the required standardized Science tests.

VIRGINIA QUAIL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FACILITATING DIVERSE HABITAT DEVELOPMENT

ROBERT GLENNON, Conservation Management Institute, Virginia Tech, Smithfield, VA 23430, USA

Conservation partners in Virginia are assisting landowners with wildlife habitat development through the Commonwealth's Quail Management Assistance Program (QMAP). The Commonwealth initiated the QMAP to provide technical assistance to participants in implementing the Virginia Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Wildlife and the USDA Farm Bill Programs. The BMPs provide incentives to landowners to establish field borders, leave fields idle, and convert non-native forages to native grasses and forbs. The BMPs are targeted in selected soil and water conservation districts (SWCD) throughout the state where the greatest potential exists to create early successional habitat. Five biologists, funded by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service and employed by Virginia Tech University, assist landowners develop and implement habitat management plans. The biologists also assist with Farm Bill implementation. The QMAP was responsible for habitat development and management on 81,972 acres in 2011. QMAP contributes to the citizens of the Commonwealth by restoring early successional habitat for those declining species of wildlife that depend on it. The conservation partnership that implements QMAP is unique in that it takes advantage of existing administrative strengths in the SWCDs and Virginia Tech to administer the BMP program and employ the biologists without creating new bureaucratic infrastructure. The technical practices that are the BMPs develop critically needed early successional habitat without the extensive paperwork of USDA programs or costly seedings or plantings. The poster will illustrate how the QMAP program implements the BMPs and assists landowners.

OAKS AND PRAIRIES JOINT VENTURE HABITAT OBJECTIVES AND COST ESTIMATES FOR GRASSLAND BIRD RESTORATION IN TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA FOCUS AREAS

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The Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture (OPJV) is a regional, self-directed partnership of government and non-governmental organizations, and individuals, working to implement science-based

landscape-scale strategic conservation in the Edwards Plateau and the Oaks and Prairies Bird Conservation Regions of Texas and Oklahoma to ensure sustainable populations of priority bird species. Grassland Bird Focus areas in TX and OK were identified using National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) Biologist Ranking Information maps, partner interest, bird distribution information and available GIS habitat data. Focus Areas were selected to target partner efforts to maximize results of management actions. Regional population and habitat objectives for priority grassland bird species based on national bird conservation plans (NBCI and Partners in Flight Landbird Population Estimates Database) were stepped-down to Focus Areas. Although our selected focus areas occupy one third of the area, we assumed Focus Areas could contribute 50% of our habitat and population objectives. Focus area habitat restoration cost estimates were calculated using Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) practice payment estimates and OPJV habitat objectives. Cost estimates were calculated under three different scenarios that vary by percentage of work occurring in three different land cover types: grasslands, woodlands, and invasive shrublands. Percentage of each of these land cover types under each scenario were calculated using Texas Ecosystem Database GIS layers. These cost estimates will be used to assist partners in management decisions and allocation of resources.

USING SUCCESSFUL YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP AND NATURAL RESOURCE LITERACY IN TEXAS: *THE TEXAS BRIGADES MODEL*

HELEN HOLDSWORTH, Texas Brigades, San Antonio, TX, 78218, USA

The Texas Brigades' mission is to empower high school youth with the necessary skills and knowledge in wildlife and fisheries, habitat conservation, land and water stewardship, team-building, communication, and leadership to become ambassadors for conservation in order to ensure a sustained wildlife and fisheries legacy for future generations. The Texas Brigades is a combination of four educational programs: Bobwhite Brigade (quail), Buckskin Brigade (deer), Bass Brigade, and Waterfowl Brigade. An understanding of the importance of this program is represented by its cooperating partners, including Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas Wildlife Association, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and the Texas Wildlife Association Foundation. The Texas Brigades program is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by many businesses, foundations, NGOs, and individuals. Each camp is 4 ½ days of intense, interactive, fun learning from some of the top wildlife and natural resource professionals in Texas. Subjects covered include everything from biology, habitat management, watersheds, population dynamics, ecology, and botany, to photography, journalism, firearm safety, fishing, communication, critical-thinking, team building, and leadership. To date, the program has graduated just over 2,000 leaders, who have conducted over 4,000 educational programs resulting in over 231,500 direct contacts. The Brigades have also trained 450 adult leaders and called on over 300 volunteers, over the last 20 years, to organize and lead 78 Brigade camps.

THE EFFECTS OF MECHANICAL AND NATURAL DISTURBANCES ON THE ARTHROPOD POPULATION OF NORTHERN BOBWHITE BROODING AND FORAGING HABITAT IN SOUTH TEXAS

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When it comes to promoting or establishing a stable northern bobwhite quail (*Colinus Virginianus*) population in South Texas, a great deal of knowledge of what the habitat requirements are and how mechanical and natural disturbances affect the bobwhite breeding habitat is crucial. By evaluating which disturbances are beneficial to the brooding and foraging areas that will further promote suitable conditions for breeding hens and chick survival is essential. At the Laborcitas Creek Ranch, in Brooks County, Texas we measured the arthropod populations of burned, untreated control, aeration, and combined burn-aeration plots after the growing seasons of 2009 and 2010. During 2009, the area received 24.43cm of precipitation and in 2010 it received 52.53cm of precipitation. We collected arthropod samples using sweep nets, pitfalls, and sticky traps in order to gather a better representation of the arthropod population within each treatment. Species diversity and abundance was analyzed for each disturbance treatment plot. In 2009, 210 arthropod samples were collected and so were 360 arthropod samples in 2010.

APPLICATION OF STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING TO DELIVER GRASSLAND BIRD CONSERVATION THROUGHOUT EASTERN AND CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA

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DONNA BREWER, National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV, 25443, USA

MIKE RUNGE, USGS, Patuxent Research Center, Laurel, MD, 20708, USA

Grassland birds are among the fastest and most consistently declining birds in North America. Many reasons for declines have been suggested, including loss of perennial grassland habitats, but the problem is complex. To address this issue, 11 individuals representing federal, state and non-governmental agencies and academia convened at the National Conservation Training Center in September 2011 to apply a structured decision making process to this issue. The fundamental objective is to restore and sustain grassland bird populations breeding east of the Rocky Mountains, including Canada, across the annual cycle. We determined that a structured framework can help managers, scientists, and decision-makers integrate management with human dimensions to deliver effective conservation at multiple scales. This framework should transcend administrative boundaries and allow us to identify where birds are most limited, which actions are most effective, and where partners could focus efforts for the greatest bird responses. A preliminary decision analysis indicated that land use policies compensating landowners for ecosystem services can dramatically influence grassland bird population dynamics. The structured decision making framework may allow us to develop grassland conservation targets to support stable populations of grassland birds throughout their annual life cycle. The framework has many pieces (i.e. life cycle modeling, monitoring, land-owner choice, land-use change, and habitat management), and different partners will need to focus on these respective pieces. We outline a strategy to for evaluating this conservation issue and suggest there is an opportunity to link existing and emerging research and modeling efforts in an adaptive management framework.

NORTHERN BOBWHITE POPULATION STRUCTURES AND DIVERSITY IN TEXAS AND THE GREAT PLAINS

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X. BEN WU, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 77843, USA

Throughout its range, many northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) populations have been experiencing severe declines. Fragmented habitats may impact northern bobwhite genetic structure. Our goal is to assess whether landscape affects the population structure and diversity for northern bobwhite in Texas and the Great Plains. We extracted DNA from hunter-harvested northern bobwhites for 20 sites in south Texas from 2004-2010, and analyzed 7 microsatellites. We used F_{ST} to measure genetic structure and AMOVA for genetic variation. In order to compare the genetic structure to the landscape, we used matrices built from geographic distances (km), barriers (large water bodies and highways), and the Biologist Ranking Information from the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative. These matrices were compared to the genetic structure

(pairwise F_{ST}), using Mantel tests (Mantel 1967) with 10,000 permutations. We used partial Mantel tests to test the correlation of pairwise F_{ST} to combinations of distance and barriers, distance and habitat, and barriers and habitat. Overall F_{ST} was < 0.01 , suggesting low levels of population differentiation. The AMOVA revealed that most variation was within individuals. Mantel tests all showed a positive correlation with genetic differentiation; however, barriers appear to be an important factor for the observed genetic patterns. We are presenting preliminary results using a portion of the data from our ongoing research in northern bobwhite population structure. This research will be expanded throughout Texas and into the Great Plains to determine the effect that landscape has on northern bobwhite populations, and how we manage for the species.

OPERATION IDIOPATHIC DECLINE: ROLE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN ROLLING PLAINS QUAIL DECLINE

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KELLY REYNA, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, 76203, USA

REBEKAH RUZICKA, Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch, Rotan, TX, 79546, USA

Operation Idiopathic Decline (OID) is a three year, large-scale, collaborative effort to determine the role of infectious diseases in the decline of quails in the Rolling Plains ecoregion. Designed to encompass all types of disease agents (e.g. viruses, bacteria, protozoan, parasites, and toxicants), OID is the most comprehensive quail disease study since the 1920's. In total, the Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation (RPQRF) has committed \$2 million to fund 8 research projects at 4 different institutions. In the first year of collection (2011), trapping teams were able to take blood, tracheal swab, and cloacal swab samples from 592 bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*) from 30 different locations across the Rolling Plains of Texas and southwestern Oklahoma. Additionally, 189 birds of these birds were sacrificed and submitted for full necropsies. Preliminary results suggest a high level of nematode parasitism occurs across a large portion of the Rolling Plains. Of 43 bobwhites examined for parasites, half (49%) harbored eyeworms (*Oxyuris petrowii*) with an average of 5 eyeworms per bird (Figure 3). Virtually all of the birds were also infected with cecal worms (*Aulonocephalus lindquisti*). Three percent and 7% of samples tested for avian influenza virus (n=88) and avian adenovirus (n=132), respectively, were positive. *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (17%; n=52) was identified in the trachea of bobwhites. *Escherichia coli* (31%; n= 52), *Clostridium sordellii* (3.8%; n=52), and *Neisseria* spp. (13.5%; n=52) were identified in the gastrointestinal tract of bobwhites. Goals for the next phase of OID include identifying the intermediate arthropod host involved in the transmission of eyeworms and testing treatment options for eyeworm infections.

MONITORING BOBWHITE RECOLONIZATION FOLLOWING LARGE-SCALE WILDFIRES IN WEST TEXAS

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KEN CEARLEY, Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center, Amarillo, Tx, 79106, USA

During the spring and summer of 2011 severe wildfires consumed over 405,000 ha of prime quail habitat in west Texas. We conducted call counts in adjacent burned and non-burned habitats in 10 different west Texas counties to gain a greater understanding of bobwhite re-colonization following large-scale wildfire. We established transects of 11 to 16 km with listening stations every 1.5 km that ran perpendicular to the fire line and covered approximately an equal amount of burned and non-burned land. We counted the number of bobwhite calls heard at each listening station during a 5-min interval 3 times for each site between 1 June and 29 July 2011. In the first summer post-burn, burned areas supported twice as many bobwhites (1.5 quail per listening post) as either non-burned habitats (0.75 quail per listening post) or edge habitats (0.75 quail per listening post). Nearly half (47%) of the quail counted were counted within 1.5 km of the fire line and abundance appeared to decline as listening stations progressed deeper into burned or non-burned territory. We surmise that quail displaced by the fire settled in the nearest suitable habitat. Call count numbers were likely depressed at all the sites because of record drought and high temperatures observed during 2011. We will continue to conduct call counts for the next 2 years and, beginning in 2012 will incorporate habitat monitoring to link occurrence and rate of recolonization with habitat quality and soil type.

FOOD HABITS OF COYOTES ON THE ROLLING PLAINS QUAIL RESEARCH RANCH, TEXAS.

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LLOYD LACOSTE, Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch, Roby, Texas 79543, USA

Mammalian predation is a common cause of adult mortality and nest failure for northern bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*). Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are one of the most common mesocarnivores in Texas and have typically been presented as important predators of quail. Limited data exists regarding the importance of bobwhites as a food for coyotes in the Rolling Plains of Texas. Incidences of predation by coyotes on quail can be difficult to assess because little evidence of the predation event is left behind. The purpose of our study is to describe the seasonal and annual diets of coyotes on the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch, Fisher County, Texas. We collected a total

of 1080 coyote scats along 2, 18-km transects from December 2008 to December 2011. We analyzed scats macroscopically to identify food remains; the percent of the scat made up of each food item was then estimated. Rodents were the most commonly eaten food, occurring in 44.1 percent of scats. Mast from 7 unique plant species accounted for 55.6 percent of scats. Documented predators of quail were found in 13.4 percent of scats, while quail occurred in less than 1 percent of scats. Our results suggest that mast consistently played an important role in the diets of coyotes and that coyotes consumed more known predators of quail than quail themselves. Managers may need to recognize the importance of mast-producing shrubs and limit their removal; their importance to quail may far outweigh their potentially negative impacts to forage plants for livestock.

PHYLOGEOGRAPHY OF THE NORTHERN-YUCATÁN BOBWHITE COMPLEX

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RODNEY L. HONEYCUTT, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA 90263, USA

The northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) and the Yucatán bobwhite (*C. nigrogularis*) are a widely distributed species complex that occurs from the eastern United States to Nicaragua. Extensive variation of male plumage coloration within the northern-Yucatán bobwhite complex has resulted in the description of ≥ 20 subspecies. Disagreement also exists as to whether the Yucatán bobwhite represents a distinct species or a subspecies of the northern bobwhite. We used mitochondrial DNA control region sequences obtained from museum study skins to investigate interspecific and intraspecific relationships of the northern-Yucatán bobwhite complex and assess the geographic distribution of genetic variation within the complex. Our results showed that the northern and Yucatán bobwhites represent 2 closely related, but genetically distinct taxa. The northern-Yucatán bobwhite complex displayed shallow phylogeographic structure with genetic breaks that occurred across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and between the Yucatán Peninsula and Nicaragua. Subspecies of the complex were poorly differentiated as most subspecies examined shared ≥ 2 haplotypes. Most (68%) of the genetic variation within the complex was due to the 3 haplogroups and 2 phylogeographic breaks identified within the complex. Several lines evidence provided clear evidence of past demographic-range expansion most likely due to climate-driven changes in the availability of suitable habitat. High levels of genetic diversity in southern Mexico suggest that the complex probably evolved there, and expanded northward to Texas and southward to Yucatán and Nicaragua as early as the Middle Pleistocene. Most bobwhite populations in the United States are the result of Late Pleistocene-Holocene colonization.

SURVIVAL OF PEN-REARED NORTHERN BOBWHITE RELEASED INTO THE WILD

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The decline of Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) in North America has been well documented, and estimated to be 3% annually, since 1966. Some managers have started using a practice of releasing pen-reared birds to augment their quail population for hunting needs with the hope of long-term survival and population carryover. Unfortunately, the majority of these release efforts result in total loss. Often this loss occurs within a few weeks of release. Most scientists suggest the failure is caused by the birds' inability to adapt to their new environment upon release to the wild and do not consider the release of pen-raised birds to be a viable option for the purpose of long term restocking efforts. Given the potential positive outcomes from successful releases and current reports of landowner success, we initiated a study on George Allen's Circle A Ranch designed to estimate the survival and home range size of pen-raised Northern Bobwhites released into the wild. Fifty birds equipped with radio-transmitters were released in both 2010 and 2011. The survival rates results for 2010 were very encouraging, stating higher survival rates than previous literature while the results from 2011 were still promising but lower than 2010.

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PAST MEETING LOCATIONS AND DATES

Organization	Venue	City, State	Dates	Annual Award Recipients
Southeast Quail Study Group	Webb Wildlife Center	Garnett, SC	Aug. 15-18, 1995	None
Southeast Quail Study Group	Ramada Inn/Tall Timbers	Tallahassee, FL	Sept. 3-6, 1996	Breck Carmichael
Southeast Quail Study Group	Sheldon's Restaurant and Motel	Keysville, VA	Sept. 15-18, 1997	Don McKenzie
Southeast Quail Study Group	Ames Plantation	Grand Junction, TN	Sept. 14-17, 1998	Dr. Ralph Dimmick
Southeast Quail Study Group	Mississippi State University	Starkville, MS	Sept. 27-30, 1999	Reggie Thackston
Southeast Quail Study Group	Camp Kanuga	Hendersonville, NC	Oct. 2-5, 2000	Rocky Evans
Southeast Quail Study Group (w Quail V)	Omni Bayfront Hotel	Corpus Christi, TX	Jan. 23, 2002	Stephen W. Capel
Southeast Quail Study Group	Augusta Technical College	Waynesboro, GA	Aug. 26-29, 2003	Terry Sharpe
Southeast Quail Study Group	Winrock International	Morrilton, AR	Aug. 2-5, 2004	Dr. Pete Bromley
Southeast Quail Study Group	Kentucky Dam Village State Resort	Gilbertsville, KY	Aug. 14-17, 2005	Dr. Wes Burger
Southeast Quail Study Group	The Hotel at Auburn University	Auburn, AL	Aug. 6-9, 2006	Stephen J. DeMaso
Southeast Quail Study Group	Quartz Mountain Resort	Lone Wolf, OK	Aug. 6-9, 2007	D. Clay Sisson
Southeast Quail Study Group (w SEPIF)	Hilton Lafayette	Lafayette, LA	July 15-18, 2008	Dave Howell
National Bobwhite Technical Committee	Columbia Marriott	Columbia, SC	March 24-26, 2009	Stan Steward
National Bobwhite Technical Committee	Hyatt Regency Wichita	Wichita, KS	Aug. 3-6, 2010	Dr. Bill Palmer
National Bobwhite Technical Committee	Doubletree Hotel Tallahassee	Tallahassee, FL	Aug. 9-12, 2011	Dave Godwin
National Bobwhite Technical Committee	MCM Elegante	Abilene, TX	Aug. 7-10, 2012	Dr. Theron Terhune

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The Wildlife Society allows a maximum of 26 contact hours in Category I of the Certified Wildlife Biologist Renewal/Professional Development Certificate Program for participation in the 2012 National Bobwhite Technical Committee Meeting.