

Draft Meeting Notes (Revised)
LCR MSCP Steering Committee Conference Call November 18, 2013

Attending Via Conference Call

Perri Benemelis	Scott Byron	Linda Carbone
Chuck Cullom	Evelyn Erlandsen	Gregg Garnett
Chris Harris	Chris Hayes	Bill Lamb
Tina Mozelewski	Terry Murphy	Judi Nielsen
Steve Olson	Sara Price	Larry Purcell
John Swett	Carrie Ronning	Dana Sedig
Ed Smith	Jon Sjoberg	Jason Thiriot
Tanja Trujillo	Ruth Valencia	Mark Van Vlack
Joe Vanderhorst	Laura Vecerina	David Vigil
Doyle Wilson		

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Note: Not all Steering Committee members were able to participate in this meeting due to lack of sufficient conference call lines.

Introductions

The meeting convened at 9:36 a.m. by Chairperson Chris Harris. There were self-introductions of all attending. John Swett introduced the new fisheries and wildlife group managers. Gregg Garnett is the new Fisheries manager. He was in the LCR MSCP Restoration group and worked on projects such as Hart Mine Marsh. Carrie Ronning is the new Wildlife Group Manager. She comes from the BLM.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Public Comments

There were no public comments

Approve June 26, 2013 Meeting Notes

The April 24, 2013 meeting notes were approved. (Moved by Bill Lamb, seconded by Perri Benemelis, and approved by consensus.)

2. WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

FY14 Program

John Swett said that the concurrence letter from the FWS on the *Final Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2014 Work Plan and Budget, FY12 Accomplishment Report* was received and is included in the meeting material.

John noted that we do not know what the federal budget for FY14 will be. Right now the government is on a continuing resolution through January 15th. He noted that we could have up to a 10% cut in federal appropriations due to the sequester this year. Last year we were able to absorb most of the sequester cuts because the Habitat Maintenance Fund had been budgeted to receive \$1.8 million above what was required. He noted that a financial work group meeting is scheduled for February 20th. He is hoping more will be known about the Federal budget then.

John said that all 1st quarter non-federal contributions have been received. He noted that the San Diego County Water Authority is using their credits for their contribution. The Metropolitan Water District used their remaining credits last year.

3. PROCESS UPDATES

Minor Modifications – Action April SC Meeting

John Swett noted that he had planned on presenting three minor modifications for conservation measures for Steering Committee action at the scheduled October 2013 Steering Committee meeting. Since the meeting was postponed due to the government shutdown, this action will be moved to the spring Steering Committee meeting. John noted that draft motions and background will be presented at the march Work Group meeting. John indicated that this information will be reviewed by the FWS before it is presented. A question was asked if this information would also be reviewed by CDFW for compliance with the CESA permit. John indicated that it would be.

4. STEERING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Laura Vecerina reviewed the Steering Committee schedule for spring, which was included in the meeting material. The tentative Work Group meeting, scheduled for March 12 and 13th, has been confirmed and will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, Pivot Point in Yuma, AZ. She noted that a block of rooms has not been reserved and encouraged everyone to book early as Yuma is fairly busy in spring. She indicated that the Work Group meeting would take place the afternoon of March 12th and then a tour of the Laguna Division Conservation Area would occur the morning of the 13th. Also noted were the Colorado River Aquatic Biologists (CRAB) meeting scheduled for January 8-9, 2014 in Laughlin, NV and the Colorado River Terrestrial and Riparian (CRTR) meeting scheduled for January 28-30, 2014, also in Laughlin NV.

5. GENERAL INFORMATION

Yellow-billed Cuckoo Proposed Listing

John Swett noted that the Federal Register Notice for the listing of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo as threatened has been published. It is being listed as a distinct population segment. John indicated that in July the LCR MSCP provided the FWS updated information on the results of our system wide surveys and our monitoring data at the conservation area sites. Included in the Steering Committee meeting materials is a draft comment letter that the LCR MSCP program will be sending to the FWS. Although the notice does not include the listing of critical habitat at this time, John noted that he addressed this issue in the LCR MSCP comment letter, recommending exclusion of the LCR MSCP planning area from any critical habitat designation. John said to provide him any comments on the draft letter and said that others should also provide comments.

Northern Mexican Gartersnake Proposed Listing and Critical Habitat Designation

John noted that the Bureau of Reclamation (Lower Colorado Region) comment letter on the Critical Habitat Designation and Proposed Listing for the Northern Mexican Gartersnake was included in the Steering Committee materials. This letter was sent to FWS on September 6, 2013. John said that the LCR MSCP comments were included with the Reclamation comments as the gartersnake is not a LCR MSCP covered species. John noted that critical habitat was proposed for the Bill Williams River from the confluence with Lake Havasu to Alamo Dam. The LCR MSCP provided comments recommending that the Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge be excluded from critical habitat designation as the lower portion of the refuge did not have the necessary habitat components. Lesley noted that the critical habitat boundary is upstream of the full pool elevation of Lake Havasu so it is outside of the MSCP regulatory area. John noted that the listing would affect the Planet Ranch acquisition if that were to occur and consultation would be required with the FWS. A question was asked if impacts to the gartersnake could be minimized during conservation area development. John indicated that it could be. John also noted that at the last Steering Committee conference call there had been some discussion by the non-federal members about the use of a safe harbor agreement for Planet Ranch. He noted that there needed to be additional discussion by the non-federal parties about the need for this. It was noted that the FWS would be having a second comment period when the economic analysis was released.

Updated Voting List

Laura Vecerina noted that she will be emailing the voting/alternate member information to each of the Steering Committee members. She would like to have an email concurrence that this information is correct or provide updated information if needed.

6. SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS

The Steering Committee took action on one item, the meeting notes from the June Steering Committee conference call. Laura will be sending out the voting list for updating.

7. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 a.m.