

Highlights and Action Items

NABCI Federal Subcommittee meeting

May 10, 2001

The NABCI Federal Subcommittee met May 10, 2001 at the Environmental Protection Agency, Ronald Regan Building, Washington, DC. Bob Ford and Jack Capp chaired the meeting. Agenda items included both information topics and action items. The agenda included 1) a review of the Queretaro and US NABCI Committee meetings, 2) US NABCI Committee retreat, 3) Federal budget coordination, 4) Joint Venture and Bird Conservation Region updates 5) Communications update, 6) CEC and international activity, 7) results of Summit of the Americas; 8) international demonstration projects identification, and 9) the role and future of the Federal Agency subcommittee. Action items are provided in bold type below.

Those attending the meeting were: John Meagher (EPA), Stan Austin (EPA), Paul Guggenheim (EPA), Herb Raffaele (USFWS), Heather Johnson (USFWS), Eric Lawton (BLM), Ken Williams (USGS), David Pashley (ABC), Paul Schmidt (USFWS), Mila Plavsic (USFWS), Debbie Pressman (USFS), Roberta Chew (State Dept.), Chris Jauhola (BLM), Jack Capp (USFS), Bob Ford (USFWS). Jim Woehr (WMI) was asked to attend part of the meeting to update the Subcommittee on NGO issues.

Review of the Queretaro and US NABCI Committee meetings. The minutes from both the NABCI meeting in Queretaro and the last US NABCI Committee meeting at the North American conference in Washington DC in March 2001 have been distributed to the Federal Subcommittee (contact Bob Ford if you need another copy). A brief discussion of significant actions from Queretaro ensued. Of primary interest are the International Agreement for Bird Conservation and the development of a NABCI framework for International Demonstration Projects. Herb Raffaele is the primary contact for US interests in both areas. **The Federal subcommittee suggested that John Meagher (EPA), Jim Woehr (WMI), and a representative for states be involved with the drafting team for Demonstration Project framework.**

At the US NABCI Committee meeting at the North American conference, each Committee member was asked to assign a staff person for work on the NABCI action plan and the NABCI infrastructure plan. Val Mezainis, who represents the Federal Agency subcommittee to the US Committee, asked Jack Capp to be that staff. Federal subcommittee members are encouraged to go through usual channels to provide input to the US NABCI Committee, although formal comments regarding the proposed US NABCI Coordinator Work Plan, the US Committee Action Plan should be provided to Jack for Val to convey to the US Committee. **It is critical to convey thoughts, concerns, and recommendations before the July 2-3 retreat of the US NABCI Committee.**

US NABCI Committee retreat. The US NABCI Committee will hold an Executive Session retreat at NCTC July 2-3, 2001. NABCI staff are working on the agenda for the retreat in conjunction with the co-chairs and other committee members. Currently, the themes for

discussion and decisions include 1) the roles and responsibilities of the Committee and the US NABCI Coordinator position, 2) structure of the Committee, subcommittees, and staff, 3) Communications planning; 4) International accord and demonstration projects; and 5) short and long term actions for NABCI in the US and North America. Dave Case will serve as facilitator of the session. **The Federal subcommittee requested a review of the agenda and action plan immediately following the next staff review, especially to generate ideas regarding Committee and Coordinator roles and responsibilities. Those interested may meet in late May to provide input to the process. Bob Ford and David Pashley will call for such a meeting. The infrastructure (or “business plan”) will be part of the discussions, David Pashley will mail the latest version to the Federal Agency subcommittee as soon as possible.**

Federal budget coordination. The USFWS, USGS, and USFS retained some language in budget text that refers to NABCI and interagency coordination for bird conservation; the BLM referenced coordinated efforts around specific projects, especially with USGS and USFS in sage brush habitats. That language will provide a solid backdrop for future discussions with budget staff and OMB officers. The NGO subcommittee and adhoc funding group are interested in continuing conversations with OMB and others to promote coordination among federal agencies. However, **the NGO subcommittee requested each agencies’ most current budget contacts (Jim Woehr). In consideration that FY03 budgets may be tighter than FY02, there is a strong interest to convey the message that NABCI is a well coordinated effort that has to happen as an essential government role and duty for migratory bird conservation to be successful.. There is a need to develop white hat projects over the next year and show real dollars being spent on the ground on coordinated priorities. Increased communication with the IAFWA budget committee was encouraged, and this item may be appropriate for the US NABCI Committee retreat.**

Joint Venture and Bird Conservation Region updates. The US Forest Service has provided seed money to encourage development of technical planning/coordination positions in 12 BCRs to conduct bird conservation planning with local partners. David Pashley and Debbie Pressman provided an update on the status of each of these staff positions. The USFS has sent a letter to each state wildlife and fish agency involved and has requested their opinion, if the states support this effort, and input into the process. In every case, Joint Venture coordinators have been contacted and are part of the process to identify primary duties of those proposed staff.

Communications update. Ken Williams provided an update on the Communications Strategy development. Dave Case and Associates has been hired to develop the strategy. Dave is now conducting interviews and a report is expected by late fall, 2001. **Federal agencies have verbally committed to assist the total funding needed by providing approximately \$5000 each, please contact Ken Williams immediately about the availability of agency money for this project.**

CEC and international activity. John Meagher provided background regarding the relationship with NABCI, the CEC, and EPA. CEC funding provided for NABCI is about spent. EPA would like to start a discussion about the need to continue funding through the CEC. The Federal Subcommittee can develop a funding needs assessment over time, as needs for NABCI and the CEC become more apparent. **David Pashley and Bob Ford will meet with CEC soon, a brief report from that meeting will be provided to the Federal Subcommittee. The Federal Agency Subcommittee will table this item until more information is available and discussion is more appropriate.**

Role and future of the Federal subcommittee. Paul Schmidt requested feedback from an idea he has heard regarding the expanding committee structure of NABCI. Specifically, at the North American conference and other places, there have been conversations that the US NABCI Committee structure is getting too “top heavy”, that the formation and meetings of various subcommittees were burdensome and detracting from the NABCI vision and efforts on the ground in existing structures.. The alternate idea was that the US NABCI Committee not have standing subcommittees and only form ad hoc working groups, when needed, assigned to specific tasks. The Federal Subcommittee discussed this ad hoc committee concept and quickly dismissed it; those present believe that the Federal Subcommittee is the only effective opportunity that provides a forum for Federal agencies to coordinate for bird conservation. Paul will relate that opinion to the US NABCI Committee at their retreat, if the subject arises.

Next meeting date. The committee agreed to meet as needed close to the July 2-3, 2001 US NABCI Committee retreat. At the discretion of Jack Capp/Bob Ford, a meeting of the Federal Subcommittee will be called.

Highlights and Action items were submitted by Bob Ford and Jack Capp, May 23, 2001.