

**Karner Blue HCP
IOC Meeting
Mirror Lake State Park
October 21, 2010
9:30am to 2:00pm**

MINUTES

Attending: Gary Birch (WDOT and IOC Chair), Brian Loyd (Juneau County Forest), Todd Watson (Plum Creek Timber), Jenni Heaton-Amrhein (WDATCP), Deb Frosch (Alliant-WP&L), Quinn Williams (DNR), Bernie Williams (DNR/recorder), Dave Lentz (DNR)

1. Anti-Trust Statement
Quinn Williams delivered the Anti-Trust Statement to open the meeting.
2. Introductions: Introduce new IOC members (officially took over 9/27/10)
Jennifer Heaton Amrhein is a new IOC member representing the DATCP. Deb Frosch from Alliant-WP&L is a returning member representing the utility partners group.
3. Agenda review/repair – order of agenda items changed
4. 2009 Annual Report and Survey results/problems (*update*)

The 2009 annual report was submitted as a draft due to numerous inconsistencies related to survey data. A final report will be submitted to the Service when these inconsistencies are corrected.

A significant number of the annual reports were submitted late after a lot of coaxing. Unfortunately, when they were all submitted many had errors and missing information. In years past there have been a few late reports and some with missing information, but nothing like the quantity this year. Dave asked, why are the partners getting so sloppy? Is it because the report has gone through so many changes (adaptive management) making reporting confusing? There are many possible causes. Jenni offered that the past year has been trying for people, with the economy, budgets and being short staffed. Dave recognized that partners were very busy with the great deal of work on the renewal of the permit and their conservation agreements in the fall of last year. In all honesty, there may be no quick fix; we just need to stay the course.

Decision: We will plan to address the issue face to face with the partners during the winter meeting this year.

Presently the Service is waiting for the final report and we hope to have it to them shortly once all the inconsistencies between the surveys and reports are clarified.

Bernie has been contacting all the members with incorrect data to fix the reporting errors.

5. Annual report due date changes.

Should the Annual Report due date be moved up OR keep March 1 and insist on punctuality or consequences?

Last year it was suggested that the due date for annual reports be moved up from the March 1st deadline to January 31st in order to assure partners would submit their reports by March 1st. Due to a lack of time and resources to develop the proposal, the due date remained March 1st. The due date was not met by many more partners than in previous years. Should there be consequence put in place to address partners who do not fulfill their obligations on time? What is most important is to work with the partners as a group to understand the causes for these problems and take actions to improve.

Decision: Keep the March 1st deadline for submitting surveys.

Decision: Problem solve the poor 2009 annual report performance at the 2011 winter meeting.

Action Item: Dave will further streamline the annual report form and survey forms and add clarifying instructions where it might help.

6. Karner Blue HCP Partners' Account

Discuss use of current balance

Presently there is \$2,550 in the Karner fund. The funding is an entry and processing fee for a new partner (Dairyland). Bob Hess, the recovery coordinator would like to use it. Bob would like to use the \$2550 for on the ground recovery work and as a match for a challenge grant.

Notably, Meadow Valley wildlife area has a long way to go to achieve the recovery goals. Due to a lack of management, the habitat has changed to advanced stage of natural succession. Karner no longer occupy the site in observable numbers. To achieve recovery the habitat needs to be restored. Dave suggested that this is the best way to help recovery at this point. When asked what else the funds could be used for in the HCP, there were no ideas offered.

Decision: The IOC members moved and approved Bob Hess's request for the \$2550 to be used on Meadow Valley for restoration & recovery.

7. Individual Certificates of Inclusion (CI) under the new ITP-6

Should the DNR issue CI's to each partner?

All current partners are included under the incidental take permit by virtue of being listed as a sub-permittee. The suggestion is to have an official, if not symbolic gesture of presenting partners with an individual certificate of inclusion during at the winter meeting.

Decision: Individual CI's will be handed out to each partner at the winter meeting, along with a paper copy of the signed incidental take permit.

Action Item: Bernie will prepare CI's for each partner to be signed by the DNR and available prior to the winter meeting.

8. HCP Strategic Plan and Goals for 2010-2015 (Replaces the "5-Point Plan")

Dave shared some preliminary thoughts about a new set of goals now that the permit has been renewed. Just like the 5-Point Plan over the last five years, having a goal is something we can all rally around. This is important in order to sustain the HCP program as an active, partner directed conservation program. With goals to commit to and define the partnership, we risk losing the momentum of our accomplishments to this point. This is especially important considering the difficult economic times, and lack of staff and funding available through the DNR. We need to assure the HCP program moves forward in a positive direction regardless of the level of DNR support available to administer the permit.

Over the last 10 years, the most of the original staff of partners associated with implementing the HCP has changed. Economic circumstances for many, including the DNR have worsened. During the next 10 years there will no doubt continue to be attrition of staff through retirement; the economy and DNR budgets will not likely improve and may get worse. Therefore, a strong point in the HCP's strategic direction must include improvements in the training and orientation of partners and the delivery systems for the same. Another necessary objective must be to reduce data entry errors and rework. To this end, it is prudent that we develop automated data entry systems for the submission of annual reports, land transfers and surveys.

We definitely need to have a set of goals to guide partners and sustain the commitment to the HCP program in the future, just like the 5-Point Plan has lead the partners to the outstanding success currently realized. Dave handed out a rough draft of his strategic thoughts and possible goals and objectives. He asked the IOC to review it and provide their feedback.

Action Item: All IOC members to provide comments, recommendations, and edits back to Dave (cc: all IOC members) no later then Wednesday November 24th (earlier if possible).

Action Item: Bernie will send reminder to IOC for their comments the first week of November.

Action Item: Bernie will send out an email list for all the IOC members.

It was suggested to reinstate an "HCP calendar" that lays out important dates for such things as first flights, and survey and annual report due dates. This would be extremely helpful for all the partners and staff that work on the HCP.

Action Item: Bernie will find an outlook application that can be sent to all members outlining HCP dates.

9. Plan winter HCP Team meeting

Dave suggested that unlike the last two years where winter meetings were in March and April that we should plan the 2011 winter meeting for early February. For some it may be an inconvenience, but getting partners together to meet one another, learn how to implement the HCP and discuss issues is important for everyone. This face-to-face interaction has been a very significant reason for the HCP's success and national recognition.

Dave commented that he wondered how many of the people attending the winter meetings are the ones that do the work on the ground. It was suggested that perhaps providing a quick side meeting for the people who do the surveys and annual reports should be an option. Those folks would not have to stay for the whole meeting. Providing training to everyone is equally important. Learning how to do things is very valuable option for both those who represent their organization on the HCP Team and others who perform the on-the-ground work. Maybe we want to think about a one time training fits all style of approach? A Kbb boot camp for example. Like monitoring training, maintaining a level of knowledge would require that partners would need to do this once every 5 years. This broad training, available annually would provide an opportunity for new staff who otherwise, might have to learn as they go.

It is important for partners to be aware of what's going on in the Kbb recovery effort. It is very important that we highlight recovery and explain what might happen if we don't pursue it.

Gary suggested a Kbb webpage tour would be invaluable during the winter meeting. Also, the tour should be early in the agenda. An updated KBB HCP webpage is expected to be ready before the winter meeting.

It was agreed the agenda item to present a new strategic proposal for the HCP would acknowledge that the 5-Point Plan is no longer needed and present a simpler set of goals and objectives that can better serve the partners in moving forward.

It was agreed to provide a tutorial on filling out and submitting the Annual Report and an update on compliance audits, which will restart for some in 2011. In line with the DNR's wish to automate the reporting system, there should be a presentation and discussion about creating a data base approach to entering HCP reports and surveys using "Share Point". Share Point is software that will allow partners to access the data base on the DNR's web with a password, and then enter information directly. Summary reports will then be tabulated without additional data entry by DNR staff.

Dave suggested that there be a significant Kbb Recovery presentation and discussion at the winter meeting. The recovery program has learned much in the last year and is making progress. Kbb numbers are good to very good on many recovery properties, but struggling on two. To support the greatly unfunded recovery program, a volunteer, Tracey Lee Karner has been developing a volunteer network to support numerous recovery activities. Bob Hess, the recovery coordinator suggested to Dave that volunteers may even be able to help HCP partners. One possible idea would be

to have volunteers do pre-management surveys instead of using paid contractors, or existing staff that have other things to do. In turn, partners could apply these cost savings toward recovery property restorations to hasten the achievement of recovery goals and benefit from additional regulatory relief. Bob Hess and Tracy Lee have already agreed to present at the meeting.

Dave also invited Greg Hamilton to attend the meeting and make a short presentation. Greg is the new FWS Private Lands biologist who has taken over Karner work from Mike Engel. Greg could tell partners what his plans are for Kbb on private lands. Greg is focused on restoration and is very interested in Karner recovery. He has the ability to put seed on the ground in a week - he just needs to find private landowners willing to do proactive restoration. Connecting Greg with private landowners in BRZs is another way partners can support recovery.

Dave commented that these ideas are not final or approved. Any plan that describes HCP Partners' role in supporting recovery should be agreed to by all partners. It was agreed that incentives for partners who support recovery could be discussed at the winter meeting when all partners and the FWS are present.

Decision: Include a ceremony on the agenda to handout CI's and permits.

Action Item: All IOC members are to send any other winter meeting agenda items or suggestions to Dave ASAP.

Action Item: Dave will send a more fleshed out draft agenda to IOC members for review.

Action Item: Bernie will send a survey out to the HCP Directory with a range of dates for the winter meeting to see when most people can attend.

Recommendation: Winter meeting - anytime in February, but not the 15th and not Tuesdays or Fridays. Try for a WEDNESDAY - as early as possible in February. Location – Stevens Point Holiday Inn (same as last 2 years).

10. HCP review issues for October 28th meeting with FWS

Dave handed out the proposed agenda for the HCP Review meeting for IOC input and suggestions on the following issues:

- Alternative mitigation for short-term take on Recovery properties; to assist with significant and strategic recovery activities when other funding is not available.

Exploratory discussion item

Dave had the idea that partners could support recovery efforts by financially supporting recovery restoration projects critical to achieving recovery goals. The partner would receive an exemption from, for example pre-management surveys. Of course, there are many details that would have to be worked out. Dave asked if the IOC members think any partners would be interested in this sort of mitigation and if Dave should pursue this with the FWS.

Todd said that he thinks some partners with higher costs to implement the HCP would be interested.

Decision: It was agreed that the DNR should discuss this up with the Service.

- What constitutes a "significant removal of land from HCP that would trigger a major amendment"? *Consider ways to gauge "what is significant"*.

When updating the HCP for permit renewal, Dave realized that the phrase above was very vague and did not give any guidance. He asked the Service if they could discuss this. The Service felt it was premature and unnecessary to do this at this time. Does the group want Dave to discuss this with the Service?

Decision: The IOC agreed with the Service, that this topic is not ready for discussion.

- Small Business exemption (and beyond), like the "voluntary landowner" exemption. What is the potential downside of including small businesses in the voluntary category? *See attachment sm bus emails.doc*
Discuss the possibility of moving small businesses to the voluntary category.

There are potentially many thousands of small businesses that may be impacted by the listing of the KBB. Currently, there are no small businesses among the HCP partners. Dave and Quinn have suggested to the Service to include small businesses in the voluntary category like the Ag community. Quinn explained the DNR's thinking on the idea.

A small commercial business owner would have to join the HCP, mitigate, or get an individual permit from the FWS. It generally ends up that they are a regulated entity. Small commercial business - are they going to have any effect on the risk assessment? Do they really have any positive or negative effect on the outcome of the species? Not likely.

What are the problems and benefits if they remain a part of the regulated group? Dave said the problem is mostly an administrative chore for the DNR (him) and the FWS (Cathy Carnes). Having said this, the DNR and FWS have not been made aware of very many small businesses in need of Kbb permit authority.

When the HCP was developed, it was difficult to get buy-in to the voluntary category. The Ag community had an organized voice to lobby for them -- the small businesses did not. Pursuing buy-in could draw negative attention to the partnership. Getting buy-in may be difficult and not worth the effort.

Many small businesses may not be able to afford the mitigation or the HCP entry fee. Todd suggested a tiered approach to mitigation costs, including possible waiver or reduction of the \$2550 entry fee for some.

The benefits would be potential mitigation fees and/or conservation activities that could support the species and/or recovery, which could hasten the path to additional regulatory relief for HCP partners and/or possibly support recovery populations.

Do we continue to pursue this with the FWS?

Decision: Talk it over with the FWS. Suggest a tier level of payment. Mildly advocate this and let the FWS decide.

Decision: If the FWS is interested in pursuing the idea, discuss it with the entire partnership at the winter meeting.

11. Recovery monitoring update

Dave shared a multi-year recovery report. The discussion focused on the recovery monitoring summary. Dave explained the difference between a VP (minimum viable population) and a LP (large viable population). Todd commented that when you compare the data for Meadow Valley WA (which has no KBB) and nearby Sandhill WA (which has more than enough Kbb for a LP), it appears that Meadow Valley (LP) needs to be changed to a small viable population (VP). Maybe the expectation of the recovery planning folks was too high.

Decision: IOC members recommend suggesting to the FWS that Meadow Valley should be reduced from a LP to VP to make achieving recovery more feasible.

12. Barrens restoration DVD and possibly other products: collaboration with FWS private lands (Greg Hamilton, the new Mike Engel)

Information at this time

The FWS with the help of the DNR is developing a DVD on barrens restoration and management to share with private landowners. This is an outreach and education tool that we have never had before. Greg expects to complete the project by the end of next summer.

Closing:

- Bernie summarized decisions, action items and assignments
- Schedule next IOC meeting – A next meeting was not scheduled. An IOC meeting will be scheduled if and when needed to work on the winter meeting.