

# Minutes for the Western Bat Working Group Board Members Conference Call October 18, 2007

## Attending:

Pat Ormsbee – President  
Toni Piaggio – Vice President  
Michelle Caviness – Secretary  
Cori Lausen – Member at large  
Pat Brown – Member at large  
Jason Williams – Member at large  
Angie McIntire-AZ  
Tim Snow - AZ  
Erinn Shirley-NM/webmaster  
Kristen Philbrook - CO  
Derek Hall-NV  
Rita Dixon - ID  
Dan Taylor – BCI  
Ed Arnett – BCI  
Dave Walden – BCI  
Trish Griffin – NM  
Lisa Wilkinson- Alberta  
Deb Crough – CA  
Purnima Govindarajulu - BC  
Marylou Schnoes – OR  
Martin Grenier – WY  
George Oliver - UT

## Agenda Items:

Welcome new Texas Rep, Nyta Hensley  
2009 conference – Ed Arnett  
BCI update – Dave Walden  
Mining Letters, Hard Rock Mining Laws Response – Pat O., Kristen P.  
Newsletter – Cori  
Wind Energy Response – Cori  
Tri-lateral, AFWA, NABCP – Angie, Tim  
Action Plan/Financial Report – Pat O.  
Education and Marking Committees updates – Pat O.

**BCI Update:** BCI is going through a reorganization process and creating two new positions. One position will deal with the Indiana Bat and the other will be a coordinator for a new program called the Southwest Sub-terrain Project. This position is a “spin-off” of the AML program that Faith Watkins ran. The geographic region for the position includes west Texas, southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, most of Nevada, Utah

and Colorado. The focus species are Lesser Long-nosed bats, California Leaf-nosed bats and Townsend's Big-eared bats. The standard AML program that BCI has ran in the past is still in effect. They will still participate with states and provinces not in the new program area and assist with the needs of other species other than the three targeted for the new program.

The idea behind this new program is for BCI to be proactive instead of reactive in helping with mining issues in the southwest. This will be a programmatic effort to do on the ground conservation, research and environmental education outreach. The geographic restriction is inclusive of the geographic range of California Leaf-nosed and Lesser long-nosed bats. The program will integrate with the boarder area and Mexico to address species needs not just geographic needs. In the future BCI would like to create an Intermountain west program and Pacific Northwest program to deal with subterranean habitat in those areas. The problem with having one program that deals with mining issues throughout the US is that when you do one project here and there, then it is harder to deal with issues in particular regions. This program will incrementally go through and address bat conservation and public safety in the southwest region. It will be a more collaborative and intense effort to achieve measurable progress in this region. The program will include outreach to federal, private, industry and state lands. Efforts will respect individual issues and partnerships will be developed to help meet each group's conservation issues.

This position will be filled within the month. Applications are being reviewed now. If anyone knows of a qualified applicant that might be interested please contact Dave. He is still accepting applications. The individual may be stationed in Austin, AZ, NM or another place within the geographical focus area making it easier to travel and get on the ground.

WBWG may end up with a mine/subterranean ground committee and would be good to interface with that person.

## 2009 Conference:

The conference will be held within the first two weeks in April. Ed has initiated solicitation to a conference service to get proposals and competitive bids from hotels. He will try to get something downtown, but it may not be possible because most hotels downtown will not honor the government rate of \$97. If hotels do not respond and honor this rate then we may need to have the conference farther away from the downtown area. Ed will put together and submit proposals to the board after he receives responses from hotels. Ed is also going to try and get conference rates for weekends.

The group discussed having the banquet at Bracken Cave with a BBQ catered dinner. The awards ceremony that is typically held at the banquet would have to be done at lunch instead. This is similar to what we did in Tucson. The other option would be to have a traditional banquet and to have a field trip to Bracken Cave. We plan to do the auction again. An evening banquet would be good for the auction.

*We need a conference organizing committee.* Ed and BCI will make the arrangements with the hotel and put a list together of places to visit and possible field trips. WBWG will have a liaison to work with Ed.

## **Mining Letters and Hard Rock Review:**

### **Hard Rock Mine and Reclamation Act 2007 (The Mining Act) Review**

Kristen Philbrook corresponded with **Dale Sparks and he encouraged individuals to provide input on the importance of mines as bat habitat and The Mining Act directly to him.** Kristen will provide his contact information. Pat Brown sent a response and will send a copy of her response to the group. Kirk Navo is taking the lead and Pat Brown and Pat O. will review and edit a formal response for WBWG that will then go to the Reps for review before it is submitted. **In the meantime, Please send your individual responses to Dale Sparks.**

Rita and others suggest we make sure to contact TWS, Conservation Biology, Center of Biological Diversity and AFWA. We will make sure this happens.

Pat Brown suggests also contacting Earthworks, a non-profit mineral policy center, and she will provide contact information for them.

Kristen updated us about the effort in Colorado to withdraw mineral rights for mines that are being used by bats, specifically three mines that are maternity sites for Townsend's big-eared bats. Townsend's is a BLM special status species. Unfortunately, in this case, the Mining Act of 1872 is conflicting with Bureau policy on the protection of the species. BLM is just starting the NEPA to protect these sites. Kirk has requested a letter from WBWG showing support to get these sites withdrawn from active mining. Kirk is working on a letter from CO State that we can use as a reference for our letter. WBWG will complete this letter. Toni will work on getting genetic info on Townsend's into the letter. Tim suggests we remind them of the WAFLA Townsend's agreement signed in Idaho. **Michelle will help Toni and Kirk with the letter, the Reps will review and then WBWG will send the letter out.**

Dave would like to help with the letter expressing BCI's support.

Rita looked up Colorado's state wildlife strategies and found that Colorado specifically includes re-opening old mines a threat to Townsend's.

Several Reps have asked for guidance on prioritizing which mines to survey and how intense those surveys should be. **It is likely we will look at pulling together a committee to decide how to prioritize and which mine sites to survey. Anybody Interested?**

## **Mining Letters**

Per our last call, Kirk Navo, Pat Brown and Pat O. have drafted a letter reminding folks about the importance of mines as wildlife habitat and the need to do bat surveys and bat-friendly closures. Pat O. sent a letter out yesterday asking for contact information for each state and input from the Reps. If state/provincial reps have not sent contact information to Michelle yet, please do so.

We will send the letter to BLM, USFS, State wildlife and mining reps, AFWA, state lands depts. and Parks & Recreation. We will make sure State reps can pass the letter on electronically to more people. Pat O. and Michelle C. will work on getting the letter out.

Rita is requesting information on how bats have responded to culvert gates. She worked with the BLM to install several culvert gates last year and surveys this year show that bats are not using the sites after gating. She would like to know if other states are monitoring and what they are finding after installing gates. Pat Brown found that bats generally don't respond well to culvert gates, but mentioned that Rick Sherwin is finding the opposite. Pat B. suggests Rita contact Rick to ask about regional or species differences. Pat O. used culvert gates in the Northwest with success and suggests that the small size of the culverts Rita put in might be the issue. Pat B. mentioned that type of use makes a difference to how the bats respond. Bats typically accept smaller gates in hibernacula sites than in other types of sites.

## **Newsletter:**

Cory is still looking for submissions. She needs them by Thursday. The feature section will be on mining. Cory has small submissions from states and would like to get longer articles. Some states still need to submit abstracts. Angie offered to help Cory write the feature article. The article will address the scope of the problem and the state abstracts will address how they handle the issues in their states.

Dan and BCI might be able to help with the feature article. Pat B. offered to help edit and she has some articles that can be used to help write the feature article. The office of surface mining has links on its website to workshops and articles that might be of some help.

Michelle will write a summary of the International NASBR meeting. Pat Brown will help.

The website forum will be announced in the Spring newsletter if Erinn is able to get it set up as soon as Christmas or the beginning of January. Pat O. is reviewing the proposal Erinn submitted on the forum. She and Erinn are working to get that information out to the group.

## **Wind Energy Response:**

Pat O. sent an email to the wind energy sub-committee regarding the USDA Forest Service proposed directives for wind energy. They are open for review now. WBWG will send a response before the due date of November 23.

**Cory drafted a response for WBWG and she will send her comments to the board with a link to the directives so they can provide input. We need to look at Chapters 70 and 80 and provide feedback to Cory by the deadline she establishes.**

## **Tri-lateral, AFWA, NABCP:**

Pat O. sent an email with a summary from Angie and Tim.

For a summary of the Tri-lateral, AFWA, and NABCP history and status, see the website. A surrogate for NABCP is needed as it has dissolved. The organization was set up to provide leadership to regional groups who disseminate information to the states. Rodrigo promoted this at the Trilateral meetings (Canada, US and Mexico). An NABCP surrogate is needed to make sure that bats are on the agendas of these larger organization's meetings. In January, the Tri-lateral effort will be presented to WAFWA. Before then they need to organize themselves and have specific needs outlined. The new NABCP would like to conduct workshops and would like to fund a leadership position for its organization. This has been done for other special interest groups dealing with birds, reptiles, etc. NABCP needs to be organized enough to ask for a bat position. In the past the effort to get a position funded was not coordinated and broad-based enough.

Reps need to review the document that was sent out. Look at the "where do bats belong" section that was added in.

## **Action Plan/Financial Report:**

Pat O. is working on the Action Plan and will discuss during the officers conference call in a couple of weeks. Right now we have more actions than we have people. Pat will focus on this issue in her letter in the Newsletter, encouraging people to step forward and work on key issues.

Brad submitted a financial report outlining WBWG bank balances. There is \$588.70 in the checking account and \$14,186.63 in the high yield savings account.

## **Education and Marking Committees Update:**

The Education Committee will have a conference call on either November 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> to prioritize work and engage the committee to move forward. If you are interested in joining let Pat O. know.

**Next Conference Call is on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00AM, PST.**