

GLCI Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Omni Shoreham, Washington, D.C.
February 23rd, 2009

Attendees: Bob Drake, Rooter Brite, Kristie Maczko, Keith Bartholomay, Allen Green, Ed Burton, Aggie Helle, Don Gohmert, Bill Tucker, Tom Sommer, Hezekiah Gibson, Kevin Ogles, Gerald Jaeger, Troy Bishopp, Bob Bolton, Jim Dobrowolski, Ev Byington, Steve Shafer, Jeff Repp, Gene Fults, Reggie Blackwell, Chuck Stanley, Pat Pfeil, Dick McElhaney, Duane Hertzler, Howard Straub, Dave Forgey, John Spain, John Peterson, Kimberli Stine, Monti Golla, Dennis Thompson, Tacy Currey, Dave White, Bryan Weech, Janette Kaiser, and Thelma Riddick.

Bob Drake thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to order.

4th National Conference on Grazing Lands Report:

John Peterson began by handing out our 4NCGL conference pins. The logo was designed by Missouri Public Affairs Specialist, Sharon Small, who did an outstanding job! John said that he ordered 1000 pins from the March Pin Co. and hopes that we have to order more before the conference.

Currently, we have \$20 thousand from the Agriculture Research Service (ARS) and \$5 thousand from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in our coffers. We are hoping to get some more funds from federal agencies, and John and Bob Drake will be making the rounds to all of our partnering Federal agencies while we are here.

John then gave a brief overview of where we stand currently. John has held a meeting with the Society for Range Management (SRM). As most know, Ann (Harris) Mehan is no longer with SRM, so we are now working with Leslie Radtke, Ken Johnson, the new Executive Vice President, and Mary Murphy. One positive aspect of our new relationship with SRM is that John is now much more actively involved in the conference budget process. SRM has and will be signing all the contracts. They have signed the initial contract with the Nugget Hotel and shortly will be signing contracts for the Decorating Company. John said that they are set up to being receiving any sponsorship funds and that checks should be made out to SRM DBA GLCI.

John said that we still hope to provide invited producer presenters with travel reimbursements (up to \$1000). This will depend on whether or not we get sponsorship dollars for this purpose. The Sponsorship committee is still working on this. The producer presenters who will be reimbursed will still need to register. They will be reimbursed up to \$1000 with supporting receipts and that does include registration fees. The main purpose for this is to help keep our books straight in case of an audit, which is always a possibility when you accept Federal funds. As far as any complimentary registrations go, Bob Drake and John Peterson will make the ultimate decision. The plan is to provide few if any complimentary registrations as possible.

John said that he has several bids in from decorating companies, but plans to sign with Freeman Decorating. We hope to have at least 25 commercial exhibits and 30 non-profit or government exhibits at the 4NCGL. We will set up the trade show on Sunday, December 13th beginning at noon, and will

hold an Exhibitors Social that evening. The trade show will remain open until Tuesday, December 15th at noon, after exclusive Trade Show time (in other words there will be no current sessions, so that attendees may visit the Trade Show). All coffee breaks will be held in the exhibit hall. This along with the fact that we hold Trade Show exclusive time seems to be a big selling point with exhibitors).

John said that we will be using the Nugget's own in house AV company. This has already been arranged. We will still have a Media room where the Public Affairs Specialists will be able to produce the Daily Conference Newsletter (DCN) and conduct TV or other interviews with VIPs.

The Marketing Committee has been busy and currently has a Trade Show/ Sponsorship brochure completed (this is located on the GLCI's website at www.glci.org – look for the top button “Grazing Conference”). We will be printing out a number of these in the very near future. Anyone needing copies of these brochures should contact Monti Golla at grazinglands@verizon.net or 979-777-9779. We also have a draft copy of the tri-fold brochure to look at. This is a general brochure that targets potential attendees. It will have registration information on the back side of the tri-fold. This is currently in a draft stage, but we hope to have a final version printed within a couple of weeks. Once this is available it will also be placed on the GLCI's website. Another piece that is being produced is the post card mailer. The purpose of this marketing tool is to let past attendees know that our conference is coming up and to be looking for registration materials in the mail in the next few months. This will be sent out in April of this year. A special thanks to Sharon Small, Public Affairs Specialist from Missouri for producing these Marketing tools!

John has also gotten a couple of bids on our conference program. Insite Group, Monti's local printer has the best bid so far for printing of the conference program booklets at \$2.12 each for color on the cover. Omni Press will assist us once again with the post conference proceedings. They have the best prices available on the CD's and printed copies of the proceedings.

John then turned over the floor to the 4NCGL committee chairs. Keith Bartholomay, Chair of the Marketing Committee, said that Bob Stobaugh's radio spot is being heard around the country. If you haven't heard it in your local area then please contact your local or state Ag news network and urge them to air it. The GLCI Steering Committee members need to contact their National organizations and urge them to publish a news release on the conference in their national publications. In addition, Keith said he would like to see producer success stories being published or aired in the 5 state area prior to the conference.

Pat Pfeil, Chair of the Sponsorship Committee, said that her committee's goal is to raise \$50 thousand dollars. Gene Fults has compiled a list of companies and organizations which we can potentially contact about sponsorship and exhibiting. The key is to make personal contacts in this economic environment. Pat said that she is finding that companies she has spoken to are looking for something simple and concise for information and that they are only budgeting maybe 3 months out. This means that we are going to have to pursue each company we target consistently and relentlessly, and we may not know anything until the end of summer at the earliest whether or not they will be able to sponsor or exhibit or both. Remember that a certain level of sponsorship automatically gets them an exhibit booth. Another point to push is to remind them that we have 501C3 status and that any donations to us are completely tax deductible.

Pat also reported that she has discussed the possibility of several range clubs attending the conference. She has spoken with 3 plus clubs and they have expressed interest. We would need a student rate for them to attend. She will discuss this with John Peterson (update- John said that there is a student rate and it is \$115 for the early bird registration and \$125 for regular registration). Her idea to get them to attend is to find a sponsor for a poster contest. If we find a sponsor that will donate \$1000 then we could offer a prize structure of \$500, \$300 and \$200 for first, second and third place for example.

Howard Straub, Program Committee Chair, said that his committee is holding a meeting immediately after the GLCI Steering Committee is concluded. Each Steering Committee member needs to get a list of recommended speakers to Kim Stine no later than Monday March 2nd. When you do get your names to Kim, please be sure to designate Producer, Agency or Academia. It would also help if you can give her their full contact information (name, address, phone, fax, ESPECIALLY email) and whether or not they will need funding, and if they attending is dependent on then getting funded. We hope to have enough funding to support 40 invited producer speakers once again.

Howard then talked about the submission of abstracts. The deadline for speakers to get their abstracts in is May 1st. Currently, Monti has been working with our website hosting company, GKG.net, to set us up with a back office for online abstract collection. We will also have FTP capabilities for the final paper submissions. SRM has the contract signed and is sending payment to get work started on this. It should be no later than the end of March, hopefully sooner, before the site is up and running. As soon as the site goes live, Monti will notify everyone via email.

Tacy Currey, Social Committee, reported that the slot tournament idea is still a go. She thinks it would be a nice draw and very doable. Tuesday evening would be the night we would have to hold this event. Dave Stamey is still lined up to be the banquet entertainment for the Monday evening banquet. This would be an extra ticketed event.

John then briefly went over the approved registration fees:

Attendees:

\$260 – early bird before Oct. 1st

\$315 –after Oct 1st

There will be a spouse and student registration:

\$115 – early bird

\$125 – after Oct. 1st

One day registration:

\$115

Natural Resources Conservation Service - Dave White – Acting Chief of NRCS:

Dave said that he has three strategic goals as Chief.

1. Effective implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill. He said that April is the goal for getting the rules out on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), with sign ups coming in May. He said that we cannot implement the '08 Farm Bill with out more technical assistant, in other words, people.
2. NRCS needs to put it's house in order - He said that there are inherent system problems, old policies that need to be revamped. NRCS will be conducting a top to bottom review. His goal is to put more people in the field.
3. Intensify and renew partnerships – NRCS needs to create an environment where partnerships can thrive. We need to work opening with our partners, Congress and Agricultures groups.

The Chief thanked Bob Drake, and was glad to tell the committee that NRCS has pledged \$60 thousand toward the 4NCGL.

Pat Pfeil asked how the agency will be affected by the stimulus package, and if it will take people away from technical assistance. The Chief said that yes, it could potentially take people away from technical assistance, however, some of the provisions will be contracted out. The stimulus includes \$340 Million for NRCS that is non-farm bill related. Of this amount \$50 million is for watershed rehabilitation (ie: fixing dams). Currently we have over 1700 high hazard dams and of these 800 are not up to high hazard standards. The funds will be used to assess the situation. The rest of the \$340 Million (\$290 million) will be used for watershed projects: ie: flood plain easements, and new watershed projects.

Agriculture Research Service – Steve Shafer:

Steve said that the outlook for ARS is good under the new Administration. The agency's mission will not change. It will still be research driven and problem solving.

Steve said that he foresees these priorities in the coming years:

1. Enhancement and protection of the food supply.
2. Good nutrition.
3. Agriculture fuel in America.
4. Sustainable production agriculture.

He also noted that ARS is unaffected by the Farm Bill. They will not have any restructuring.

Bureau of Land Management – Bob Bolton, Senior Rangeland Management Specialist:

Bob said that recently a video on the values of public lands grazing was produced...he mentioned it in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in September. They have produced an 8 minute video that is a teaser video aimed for the general public. The idea is to get more partners involved and then do a 28 minute documentary. Bob Drake asked Bob Bolton if he would be kind enough to send copies of the DVD to Monti Golla so that she can distribute them to the Steering Committee. Bob said that he would.

Bob said that the Ecological Site Manual is completed. This is the collaborative product from the NRCS, BLM the Forest Service. The official release will be in a couple of months. They also have a handbook produced.

As far as the economic stimulus package goes, the BLM will receive \$320 million in project work. \$125 million will be in watershed projects, \$180 million will be in construction and \$15 million will be in hazardous field work. The range improvement fund has been restored through 2010. Bob also gave the committee a head's up on a house bill currently being considered. It is HB 1018 and is the Wild Horse and Burro Bill. This bill proposed to increase horse and burro numbers on public lands. It will open up the whole public lands system and will have the effect of cutting livestock grazing.

The US Forest Service – Janette Kaiser, Director, Range Management:

Janette said that the Stimulus bill includes \$1.5 billion for the Forest Service. She said that the funds are very targeted and not much will be applied to range. The majority of the funding will go to watershed restoration, infrasture projects (roads, bridges, trails...). The Forest Service will contract most of these out. They will also be focusing on areas that are economically challenged. Janette said if anyone wants to learn more about the American Restoration and Recovery Act (aka the Stimulus bill) they should visit www.recovery.gov

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – Bryan Weech, Director of Livestock:

Bryan thanked the committee for allowing him to come and talk to them today. He said that he personally came from industry and was approached by the World Wildlife Fund to become their Director of Livestock. He said that that one of the WWF's objectives is to pull together experts in commodities and determine how we feed people and protect the environment. He said that if we figure out a way to feed our populations first then they can then focus on the environment, because starving people will not be concerned about the environment. He said that WWF determined that livestock agriculture has a big impact on people and the environment and he puts together strategies to work with organizations to address these issues. Bryan said that he has found that there are good producers and then there are better producers. They are working to get the good producers educated on the Best Management Practices (BMP's). He said that the WWF's view on regulations is that the Ag industry will only produce to the minimum standards set by the regulation. If we partner with the Ag industry then there are those who will perform well above this level.

Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) – Thelma Riddick, Education Director

The focus of the WHC is to develop wildlife management plans on private land. They help landowners manage property for wildlife. Thelma said that the WHC is considering coming to the 4NCGL with a poster and possibly a booth. She said they would like to make inroads with more farmers and ranchers. She reported that the WHC is a supporter of the National American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC). Rangelands are pollinator habitat. She spoke more on the NAPPC and said that more information can be found at www.pollinator.com

Regional GLCI Reports:

Jeff Repp reported for the West Region. Jeff said that he has been doing more interdisciplinary work with biologists, fisheries biologist, pollinator specialists etc.... The number of requests for range and pasture is way up this past year.

Kevin Ogles reported for the East Region. Kevin said that Michael Hall is now on active duty again, so Kevin is the only Specialist in the East Region at this time. Michael should be back for in time for the 4th National Conference on Grazing Lands. Kevin said that he has seen a revival or continued revival of the East Region GLCI groups. Many new officers have recently been elected. He said that the Ohio and Tennessee GLCI groups have supported on sponsored some grazing conferences.

Chuck Stanley reported for the Central Region. Chuck said that the Central Region held over 272 demonstration projects and well over 1,000 presentations or workshops on grazing lands. In addition, over 171 television or radio programs reached well over 6 million people.

State Conservationists Advisory Committee Report – Don Gohmert, Chair:

Don said that he is assisting with locating potential producer speakers and how to get them to the conference. He said that many of the objectives today can be accomplished with good grazing lands management, for example, carbon sequestration and habitat for pollinators. Graziers can benefit from “market-based ecosystem services” (the buying and selling of carbon credits). He said it all starts with a good conservation plan.

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) – Dr. Jim Dobrowolski

Jim said that the CSREES will shortly become the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Coleen Heffran is the acting director now but the new director will be a political appointee. They will have a new funding line, called AFRI – the Ag Food Research Initiative. The funding will mostly go to universities. Another change for them is the fact that the 2008 Farm Bill now allows them to complete research projects over a 10 year period rather than a 5 year period. Older funding lines include the Rangeland Research Program which is a partnership with the Forest Service, the Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP), which is a partnership with NRCS, and the SARE grants opportunities (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education). The 2008 Farm Bill also provided CSREES with new funding in the form of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program. They will receive \$18 million in 2009, and \$19 million in 2010 through 2012. For more information see:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/bfrdp.html>

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report – Tom Sommer:

Tom reported on the status of the GLCI funding. In 2005, GLCI received \$22.3 million in line-item funding; in 2006, we received \$21.9 million in line-item funding; in 2007, GLCI received \$25.8 million as an agency initiative; again in 2008 we received \$25.8 million as an agency initiative. For

FY 2009, we are operating under a continuing resolution and have received \$11.1 million to date. Tom also went over the state funding formula briefly.

NRCS -Dennis Thompson:

Dennis said that they agency is currently focusing on three main objectives.

1. Interagency work – ie: Ecological Site Descriptions is an example of their interagency work with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.
2. 2008 Farm Bill (implementation)- includes activity and conservation plans
3. Internal Training for NRCS employees – additional training for range personnel.

Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable – Kristie Maczko:

Kristie said that they have completed their book, the Sustainable Rangelands Ecosystem Goods and Services Manual. This book is the culmination of several workshops in 2006. She passed out one book to each attendee. In the pilot process is a Ranch Assessment Project. They are also working on a white paper for Rangeland Fragmentation issues. It should be out in the summer.

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition – Troy Bishopp:

Troy said that he is working with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, which is a “network of county Soil and Water Conservation Districts whose mission is to protect and improve water quality and natural resources in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. They implement projects to address water quality issues within the watershed.” The USC is basically about buffers, watersheds and sustainable agriculture. For more information please visit www.u-s-c.org

Environmental Benefits of Rotational Grazing Must Be Defended – Bill Tucker, President of AFGC:

Bill gave a brief report on the benefits of rotational grazing and how decisions by individuals in important positions can undermine these benefits if they redirect funding to other programs. He urged forage leaders to get involved when policy decisions about cost-share programs are being made. He said we must be involved in not only the local, but state and federal levels as well.

Rangeland/Pastureland Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) – Dr. Leonard Jolley:

Leonard said that they are now focusing on cropland CEAP. For the first time they have a new model – the Rangeland Hydrology Erosion Model. They are also working on a couple of books with partnering organizations. The Rangeland Synthesis will be published by Society for Range Management and the Pastureland Synthesis will be published by American Forage and Grasslands Council.

GLCI Executive Session:

John Peterson discussed the GLCI's FY 2009 priorities, and a handout was passed around for committee members to take with them on their visits to the hill. The priorities include:

1. Continue to support and make the \$26 Million line-item appropriation to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) account a high priority.
2. Since the stimulus bill is intended to put people to work, improve the environment and promote the use of bio-fuels and bio-energy, an excellent way to accomplish this would be to fund the hiring of additional conservation specialists to plan and help install green best management practices. These specialists could be employed by soil and water conservation districts, local and state governments and the private sector.

Pat Pfeil went over the Strategic Plan and asked the committee for their input. Monti will send the committee the latest version via email.

Meeting Adjourned.

Action Items:

1. GLCI Steering Committee Members need to contact their National organizations and urge them to publish a news release about the 4NCGL.
2. Each Steering Committee member needs to get a list of recommended speakers to Kim Stine no later than Monday March 2nd. When you do get your names to Kim, please be sure to designate Producer, Agency or Academia. It would also help if you can give her their full contact information (name, address, phone, fax, ESPECIALLY email) and whether or not they will need funding, and if their attending is dependent on then getting funded.
3. Bob Bolton will send Monti Golla copies of the "Video on Values" DVD. Monti will then distribute them to the committee.
4. Monti will distribute to the committee information from Dr. Jim Dobrowolski sends to her.
5. Monti will send the committee the latest version of the GLCI's Strategic Plan.
6. The Steering Committee needs to review the GLCI's Strategic Plan and provide input to Kim Stine, Pat Pfeil and Rod Baumberger.