

GLCI Steering Committee Meeting
Hilton Hotel Lafayette, LA
September 10th, 2011

Attendees: Howard Straub, Pat Pfeil, Bob Lee, Tim Munns, Rod Baumberger, Aggie Helle, Astor Boozer, Ed Burton, Earl Garber, John Peterson, Kristie Maczko, Dennis Thompson, Carlos Suarez, Wedge Barthe, Charles Opitz, Ted Miller, Clifton Vinning III, Don Ashford, Mike Turpin, Johanna Pate, Gene Foster, Anne Blanchet, Stuart Gardner, Gene Fults, Salvador Salinas, Jeff Goodwin, Chad Ellis, Jeff Repp, Duane Hertzler, Keith Bartholomay, Larry Hensley, Rooter Brite, Kim Stine, Bob Drake, and Monti Golla.

Bob Drake welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Bob asked Earl Garber to give us a brief report from NACD. Earl is the 1st Vice President of NACD and was able to attend our tour and meeting.

NACD - Earl Garber

Earl said that NACD has a new CEO, John Larson, who moved from Washington State to D.C. to take the position. NRCS State Conservationist from Louisiana, Kevin Norton, is the NRCS liaison to assist the Senate Ag Committee to work on the next Farm Bill. NACD has a Farm Bill task force consisting of 25 members and Earl the Chairman. He said that two things with the NACD Task Force stand out: 1) there has been a lot of discussion about putting a conservation plan in place before obtaining cost share assistance; 2) discussion of consolidation of the conservation programs.

5th National Conference on Grazing Lands (5NCGL) - John Peterson

The 5NCGL will be held December 9th - 12th, 2012 in Orlando, Florida at the Caribe Royal. The Caribe is an all suites hotel and for the first time we were able to secure a contract with no food or beverage minimum, which is almost unheard of. This is an excellent contract.

Given the economic climate today this NCGL will be decidedly more challenging to put on, considering that we cannot depend upon our Federal partners as we have in the past. However, John said that he has budgeted this conference based on our numbers in Reno (which were our lowest ever, mainly due to the weather), and thinks that even without the Federal assistance we can pull off a successful conference. If we canceled the conference now we would incur over \$40,000 in penalties from the hotel. It was decided at a steering committee teleconference earlier this year that the GLCI will hold the 5th NCGL.

Pat Pfeil said that based on the Sponsorship committee's recommendation the sponsorship levels should remain the same for the 5NCGL. Tim Munns made a motion to keep the sponsorship levels as they have been in the past. Keith Bartholomay seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed. John Peterson asked Pat if she had any Florida contacts for BP. They might be a good company to contact considering they may want some "green" publicity.

John said that today the committee needs to decide on two things:

- 1) A conference slogan - do you want one...we have had one for past conferences
 - The committee had a lot of discussion on the conference slogan and finally a suggestion was made "Grazinglands a Magical Environment." Bob Lee made a motion to accept this as the 5NCGL conference slogan. Howard Straub seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried.
- 2) Committee Assignments:
 - 1) Marketing Committee will be: Aggie Helle, chair, Keith Bartholomay, vice chair, and Dave Forgey
 - 2) Trade show - Bob Lee, chair, Rod Baumberger, vice chair
 - 3) Sponsorship - Pat Pfeil, chair, Tim Munns, vice chair, Dick McElhaney, and Larry Hensley
 - 4) Budget - Rooter Brite and Bob Drake
 - 5) Local Arrangements - need a chair, but most of the committee will consist of Florida locals. Dave Forgey was suggested as a possible chair for this committee.
 - 6) Social Committee - need a chair

Another item for discussion was a conference pin. John said they typically cost about \$1.50 each but are well worth the cost. They really help promote the conference as he and Bob are making their Washington DC rounds. Pat Pfeil made a motion that we make a conference pin for the 5NCGL. Tim Munns seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

The Call for Papers will need to go out in November of this year. The deadline for accepting abstracts will be May 1st of 2012. John will send this out to many different organizations and other sources. The main thing the committee will need to decide upon is who they would like to invite and "invited" speakers. John also mentioned the prior conference limit on invited speaker reimbursements at \$1000. We hope to limit it to that amount once again.

John passed out the conference schedule outline for the committee to review. There was discussion on the poster session. John highly encourages poster presenters, as they pay a conference registration fee. We will accept nearly all posters; reserving the right to refuse any that aren't appropriate.

It was suggested that we might give incentivize people to attend if we encourage producer awards from the State GLCI coalitions.

Bob Lee, the Trade Show chair, asked if we would be able to accommodate heavy equipment at the Caribe. John said yes, that won't be an issue. We are on the first floor. There was some discussion on trade show exhibit fees, but John said it is a bit too early for that yet. Pat highly suggested that we keep the trade show fees in line with what Florida Cattlemen charge, which is \$550. For the 4NCGL the trade show fees were \$620 commercial and \$420 non-profit. Kristie Maczko suggested that in order to

fill the trade show hall as the conference draws closer that the Trade Show committee wave some of the fees. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation does this just to get the hall full.

The committee briefly talked about other high profile speakers they might like to invite, such as Kit Pharo and Temple Grandin. The states and regions have also already been put on alert to being identifying potential producer speakers for the conference. John gave an update on conference co-hosts. Since the February Steering Committee meeting a lot has happened within DC and also with some of our partner organizations. SWCS held their annual meeting in Washington DC this year, but at the last minute the Federal agencies allowed for their employees to attend the meeting on government time but would not cover registration or travel for the meeting. This meant that most government employees did not attend and SWCS was left paying penalties to the hotel for not meeting their room block and obligations. SWCS is understandably cautious with regard to any contracts and liabilities. Prior to all of this happening the SWCS was slated to be our conference partner for the 5NCGL. John is still working with them, but it may be that we have to hold this conference on our own. AFGC is still a possibility but John will check with the Caribe to see if they can grant us a master account, which means that we will have credit with the hotel and do not need to prepay a deposit for the conference. Howard Straub suggested that if we can secure the master account that we should try to pull off this conference on our own. Howard said that liability insurance for conferences is available and very affordable.

State Conservationist Advisory Committee Report - Astor Boozer, Chair

Astor reported that the biggest challenge is the Agency's budget issues. Budgets will be tight in the coming fiscal year. Training and travel have also been severely impacted. Nationally it was decided to reduce the Agency's vehicle fleet to 9000 vehicles. There have been many retirements: Don Gohmert from Texas, Allen Green from Colorado, Larry Yamamoto from the Pacific Region and in October we will lose Dennis Alexander from New Mexico.

The NRCS is also working toward having states prioritize their needs - this is all tied into the budget allocation process and is being called the Conservation Planning in State Resource Assessment. The states will now need to focus on specific targets. (ie: a needs list vs. a wants list).

The Chief also wants to get the agency back to having a higher percentage of staff who work at the field level. Hugh Hammond Bennett, the first chief of the Soil Conservation Service touted that 90% of the Agency's personnel were in the field. The NRCS is currently trying to centralize Admin jobs and staff in order to streamline the individual state NRCS's jobs. Instead of certain jobs being duplicated state by state there would be a central point. This would also help streamline the auditing process. Astor did say that Dave White asked him to voice his continued support of the GLCI.

Astor is unsure of what is going to happen with the Farm Bill.

Break-

The Strategic Plan Action Committee - Howard Straub

The committee worked on edits with Kim Stine. The goal is to have it reprinted as soon as possible.

Rod Baumberger made a motion to condense down the goals and outcomes portion of the Strategic Plan so they will have a handout to pass around. Pat Pfeil seconded the motion. Motion passed. Kim Stine will complete this by October 1st.

Partnership Reports -

Dick McElhaney - American Farm Bureau Federation

The Pennsylvania AFBF and the National AFBF have recently filed a lawsuit against the EPA challenging the Chesapeake Bay Model. The AFBF says that the model is flawed and has caused numerous financial hardships and compliance issues for Pennsylvania farmers. He said that the PA GLCI is still promoting field days and going to schools now to educate the younger generation.

Duane Hertzler - Dairy Industry

Duane said that pricing is very unstable and that feed costs have doubled in recent years. There is a lot of transition. For example, Greek yogurts are very up and coming. This product uses a lot of milk. Currently 13% of our milk is exported, mostly in powdered form.

Howard Straub - American Forage and Grasslands Council

The AFGC annual conference is January 8th-10th, 2012 in Louisville, KY.

Aggie Helle - American Sheep Industry

Aggie said that she will be participating in a targeted grazing committee teleconference next week. Rob Rutherford, from Cal Poly is their new chair. They continue to handout books on targeted grazing. She also said that lamb and wool prices are still pretty good. It has shown some weakening in the past month due to the economy and weakening dollar. They are still dealing with predator issues - wolves and grizzly bears. ASI's annual meeting will be held in Scottsdale, AZ at the end of January 2012.

Bob Lee - National Cattlemen's Beef Association

Bob said that trade issues are still a concern. The check off dollars are being used wisely. Their next convention will be in Nashville, TN in Nashville, TN.

Rooter Brite - National Association of Conservation Districts

Rooter said that Earl Garber gave a good NACD report. On a local level the fires have been a huge problem. It only shows mismanagement of our resources. Controlled burns should have been done all along to keep the amount of fuel down. If this had been done then we wouldn't see the uncontrollable blazes like we have in Texas.

Larry Hensley - National Farmer's Union

Larry said that he is now the NFU member on the committee. Gerald Jaeger sold his farm and has officially retired.

Pat Pfeil and Keith Bartholomay - Society for Range Management

The SRM's annual meeting will take place in Spokane, WA, January 29th - February 2nd, 2012. The SRM/GLCI Task Force is now a full committee and is chaired by Jeff Goodwin. Pat said that the full committee status within SRM has strengthened our position and the committee will have the power to recommend the SRM representative who sits on the GLCI committee. As such, there will be a GLCI symposium/forum at the SRM meeting. Jeff Goodwin said that a GLCI Grazing Forum will be held at every SRM meeting from now on. The first one will take place this coming January at the SRM meeting in Spokane, WA.

Pat brought up a white paper that was written by the Conservation Coalition (CC) that was presented to the SRM/GLCI Task Force. In it the CC is pushing for technical assistance to be written into the next farm bill. There was discussion among the committee about writing a letter stating that the SRM/GLCI Task Force would like to listen in and possibly advise the CC on this subject. There was concern with wording the in white paper with regard to the lack of scientific evidence to back up certain phrases. Bob Lee made a motion to table this discussion. Tim Munns seconded the motion. Motion to table carried.

Tim Munns & Rod Baumberger- Soil and Water Conservation Society

Mentioned that Jim Guiliford attended out 4NCGL meeting in Reno, Nevada.

Howard Straub - American Forage & Grasslands Council

Howard said that Bob Hendershot will replace John Spain on the GLCI Steering Committee effective November 1st, 2011. John will be retiring.

The Committee went into Executive Session.

Lunch.

Kristie Maczko - Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable

Kristie mentioned several projects that SRR has been working on.

1. Sustainable Rangelands Issues Forum - working with GLCI on this one. They discuss resource issues such as sage grouse, food security etc.... they hope to have a peer review paper on food security out soon.
2. Climate Change- they are still working on the impacts of climate change on rangelands. This involves a number of interagency groups. The SRR has been using Rooter Brite's ranch as a model to see what he has been doing to combat the effects of climate change.
3. Ranch Sustainability Assessment Project - The SRR did a pilot project on Rooter's ranch and completed a guidebook. The guidebook is online and hardcopies are also available online at <http://sustainable.rangelands.org/ranchassessment/> They also have a blog can be followed at: <http://>

sustainableangelands.blogspot.com/ which provides a chronological account of the process.

The next SRR meeting will be in Las Vegas, Nevada at the end of November, early December.

Bob Bolton - Bureau of Land Management

Bob was unable to attend, but he did provide a report which is included here.

[Bob Bolton, Senior Rangeland Management Specialist, BLM, Washington D.C, expresses his appreciation for the continued work the GLCI Steering Committee is doing to help inform all sectors about the importance of sustainable grazing management. More than ever before, with projected budget constraints, are we realizing government will never have sufficient financial resources to solve many of our resource issues; however, the grazing animal managed sustainably by our public land stewards (ranchers) can efficiently address many of our resource issues and improve land health and wildlife habitat.]

Below is a brief update on a few topics that may be of interest to the GLCI Steering Committee:

1. **'ESD (Ecological Site Description) Handbook for Rangelands' update** (Dennis T. may provide a more detailed update): Progress has been good - the handbook team will have a copy ready for tech review on Sept 9th. The interagency handbook between NRCS, FS and BLM is the 'how to' part of implementing the ES Manual that was approved over a year ago. As with the ES Manual development, this has been challenging getting all three agencies to agree on the correct direction. However, we are pleased with the progress and content of the document to have a consistent 'look' on how we describe, define and map ecological sites. This new 'Interagency ESD Handbook for Rangelands' should be available for distribution around the first of the calendar year 2012.
2. **The Landscape Monitoring Project:** The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have agreed to work together, in cooperation with other partners, on collaborative approaches to monitoring in the Western United States landscapes with mixed land ownerships and administrative responsibilities. This agreement recognizes the importance of a national approach to monitoring rangeland resources by expanding the existing National Resources Inventory (NRI) program to include all BLM non-forested lands and use of a core set of indicators and protocols implemented through the NRI Program through the Landscape Monitoring Project.

The Landscape monitoring project program is a valuable tool that helps direct rangeland conservation efforts by helping to better understand the condition and trend of natural resources. Some of the things to be estimating from the sample data are the amount and kind of vegetation, its condition, and type of conservation practices installed on those lands.

The study locations were randomly selected across BLM Lands in the West. It takes approximately one day to collect the information at each site. The data collected for the study are not identified by name or allotment and will be published in a summary report for the entire nation. For the 2011 season, data collection began in July and continues through September and October. NRCS and BLM appreciate the opportunity to conduct this grazing land field study on public and private lands to be able to provide a more complete national report on the condition of US rangelands. Visit <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/nri/index.html> for more information about the indicators and protocols used in National Resources Inventory.

3. **“Hope on the Range - A Frontier Legacy Finds its Place in the New West. “**

On behalf of the Society for Range Management (SRM), in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, Division of Rangeland Resources, it gives us great pleasure to introduce our newly released 28-minute production, “Hope on the Range – A Frontier Legacy Finds its Place in the New West.” This documentary examines the variety of pressures that threaten the health of western rangelands, including population growth and development and the interrelated effects of climate change, wildfires, and invasive species. The program takes viewers to locations around the West where ranchers, conservationists, and public land managers are turning to a legacy of the frontier -- livestock grazing -- to help conserve the rangeland ecosystems.

This production is now available to national PBS stations through an ACCESS satellite uplink that became effective Saturday June 18, 2011 for a period of three years. This is being made possible through support of the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA).

DVD copies of this production are also available for educational purposes and opportunities. For inquiries, please contact Linda Coates-Markle, at 202-306-3282 or lcmarkle@blm.gov.

4. **Noxious weeds - Invasive species update**

The BLM is continuing to treat an average of 325,000 acres of invasive and noxious weeds per year. Inventory and monitoring areas for invasions average 9-10 million acres annually.

BLM has been conducting human health and ecological risk assessments for three proposed new herbicides: Aminopyralid, Fluroxypyr, and Rimsulfuron.

BLM is also updating risk assessments for 2, 4-D and clopyralid. The risk assessments are to evaluate the human health and ecological risk assessments to humans and fish and wildlife from the use of these new herbicides. 2, 4-D and clopyralid were evaluated in the Preliminary EIS based on analyses done by the Forest Service, and were approved for use by the BLM in the Record Of Decision. However, the BLM would like to reevaluate the risks of these herbicides using BLM risk assessment methodologies, which provide greater consideration of the risk to species of concern, particularly aquatic species, than the Forest Service risk assessments. A Biological Assessment and Supplemental EIS will be started in FY12 once the risk assessments have been completed.

BLM continues to participate in over 75 Coordinated Weed Management Areas in the Western US, including Alaska, Florida, Virginia and Wisconsin. BLM is increasing its coordinated efforts across the US border with Mexico and Canada to reduce introduction and spread, but to also coordinate with their respective agencies efforts on treatments, inventory and monitoring.

5. **Using livestock as a tool to solve issues:** The BLM Range Program is continuing to education, inform and remind staff and the public about the ability of the permittees to be our stewards and use livestock as a tool for sustainable management that will improve public lands. With the inevitable reduced budgets and increasing risks of invasive species invasion and wildfire, BLM will never have enough financial resources to get ahead of these issues. The permittee can help serve as the steward of public lands to manage livestock to reduce weeds and invasives, to reduce fuels to minimize wildfire, and to properly manage vegetation for long-term sustainability for watershed health and wildlife habitat improvement.

6. **Bighorn Sheep/Domestic sheep policy status:** BLM is in the process of developing a Manual that will help guide management of domestic sheep in areas with bighorn sheep. The Range program is heavily involved with review and input into the policy with an objective to promote healthy and

sustainable wild sheep populations, while providing for permitted, authorized, and recreational domestic livestock (sheep and goats) on BLM administered lands. We continue to coordinate with the FS. There are many issues we are dealing with that will need time for resolution.

7. **Sage Grouse management:** As the American West has become increasingly urban over the last century greater sage-grouse populations have declined due to the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of the sagebrush habitats essential for their survival. Today, greater sage-grouse live in 11 Western states and occupy only 56 percent their historic habitat. In July, BLM released a new strategy for managing sage-grouse populations on public lands that emphasizes a cooperative approach to management and provides a framework to advance efforts to implement timely conservation measures for sage-grouse and its habitat.

As part of the strategy, the BLM will incorporate science-based conservation measures into Resource Management Plans across regions where the greater sage-grouse is found. It will address principal threats to the sage-grouse identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within different portions of the range and work closely with Western state fish and wildlife agencies and BLM will then implement on-the-ground actions that will benefit the species.

Within the grazing program, BLM is working to eliminate threats by evaluating grazing practices and vegetation management through the permit renewal process and its associated NEPA compliance.

Regional GLCI Specialist Reports

Kevin Ogles - East Region

Chad Ellis reported for Kevin, whose father in law recently passed away. The Georgia GLCI conducted two landowner workshops which drew approximately 160 livestock managers. The GA GLCI was also the recipient of the 2011 Merit Award from the Georgia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society for their role in providing grazing land managers with information on sustainable farming practices for grazing land conservation and grazing land ecosystem health to promote quality forage and livestock production. Mississippi conducted 4 field days and workshops. Attendance at each was over 150 managers. Tennessee Grazing Coalition publishes an e-newsletter weekly with a multi-state circulation. Tennessee also has a grazing conference scheduled for October 7th.

Chad Ellis - Central Region

Chad briefed the committee on the status of the GLCI Coalitions in the Central region, and also provided a handout. Indiana is supporting two major grazing conferences per year. Illinois continues to host events such as pasture walks and supports the Heart of America Grazing Conference. Texas recently coordinated a Bi-state Grazing Management Training hosted by the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. Oklahoma recently hosted its 10th annual Dollars and Sense conference. Nebraska developed the Rangeland Monitoring Program to provide on-site assistance for landowners who are ready to implement a pasture monitoring system. Arkansas will hold a Grasslands Convention November 1-2nd, 2011, in Little Rock. This will be a joint venture with the Arkansas Forage and Grasslands Council. Minnesota sponsored 35 grazing workshops that had over 2100 in attendance. Louisiana hosted a Soil Health/Ultra High Density

Grazing Workshop in the spring. North Dakota has established a grassroots based network on North Dakota grazing land managers who have agreed to provide advice to interested ranchers and agency personnel on grassland management. South Dakota is considering development of a project that would help offset the cost of an automated weather station. The weather station would provide reliable information that could be used in the SD Drought Tool. Kansas has been working on smoke management issues. Wisconsin has sponsored a Pasture Walk Video that is available on youtube. Iowa conducted a grazing conference in West Des Moines. Michigan sponsored several workshops and the Forage Technology Conference held in March of this year. (Excerpts from the Central GLCI report).

Gene Fults and Jeff Repp – West Region

Gene and Jeff handed out a report on the West Region. There are a number of resource concerns in the West Region. Resource concerns on grazing lands in the West Region states address diverse issues of water, erosion, wildlife, livestock, riparian, food safety, and invasive plants. It often takes 4 years of work with a landowner to achieve a reportable level of quality. (Excerpt from the West Region report). Jeff Repp also announced that he is retiring and that this will be his last GLCI meeting.

Dennis Thompson – GLCI Budget & Report

GLCI is in the Agency's budget (NRCS). It is at the same level as last year percent-wise, but we don't yet know the total amount of the agency's budget. Grazinglands is a part of many of the agency's initiatives. It certainly meets the resource needs. Dr. Ken Spathe in Ft. Worth, TX, is filling in for Leonard Jolley since he has retired. Later this year Pastureland CEAP will come out. Dr. Jolley's position will be filled. An additional 30 range/forestry professionals have been hired to continue work on Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD's). The Bureau of Land Management has signed an interagency agreement with NRCS to collect data on rangelands landscapes.

GLCI Talking Points

The committee worked up talking points to be used when educating others about the GLCI and our goals. They are provided below:

Mission Statement

To promote ecologically and economically sound management of all private grazing lands for all their adapted uses and multiple benefits to the environment and society.

GLCI is very aware of the difficult budget situation our country faces. There are national priorities regardless of our nation's financial situation, that are critical to sustaining the U.S. food source, maintain our economic edge and conserving our nation's valuable renewable resource - its grazinglands.

• Technical Assistance:

To continue full funding of NRCS Conservation Operations. This is necessary to provide science based NRCS technical assistance on the ground to guide land

managers in being sustainable, while providing environmental benefits. Conservation programs are carried out by farmers and ranchers.

- Research & Education

To maintain America's sustainability and competitive edge in providing food for the world while meeting the challenges of climate change and the support of rural communities; therefore applied, interdisciplinary research is needed to integrate knowledge into effective management systems.

The spring GLCI meeting date will be February 27th in Washington DC. The next Fall GLCI Steering Committee meeting will be held in Orlando, FL, September 6th – 9th, 2012.

Meeting Adjourned.

Action Items:

- 1) Have Program Committee review possibility of having State GLCI Coalitions give producer awards to encourage additional producer participation.
- 2) Monti will contact Conference Direct and begin work on securing a contract with the Caribe for the Fall of 2012 GLCI meeting.
- 3) Monti will email out the potential sponsorship/trade show list to the Trade show and Sponsorship committees.
- 4) Kim Stine will condense the goals and outcomes portion of the Strategic Plan and have it completed by October 1st, 2011.
- 5) Monti will combine the previous list of potential Trade show participants or sponsors and the Florida Cattle Association.