

February 28th, 2011
Spring GLCI Steering Committee Meeting
Holiday Inn- Rosslyn

Attendees: Bob Drake, Kim Stine, Pat Pfeil, Rooter Brite, Gerald Jaeger, Jeff Goodwin, Salvador Salinas, Reggie Blackwell, Michael Hall, Jim Dobrowolski, Chuck Stanley, Kristie Maczko, Bob Bolton, Chad Ellis, Aggie Helle, Allen Green, Dick McElhaney, Duane Hertzler, Dave Forgey, Howard Straub, Jon Gustafson, Barry Imler, John Peterson, Dewayne Johnson, Martin Massengale, Mark Boggess, Ev Byington, Homer Wilkes, and Dennis Thompson.

Started at 8:05 AM. Bob welcomed everyone and asked those present to introduce themselves.

GLCI Priorities:

John Peterson outlined GLCI priorities for the Steering Committee member's hill visits. He typed up a couple of points to outline the objectives. John also handed out the Tips to Working with Legislators and gave the Steering Committee some good suggestions. The Steering Committee discussed the two points, and there were several comments about going back to the member organizations to work for GLCI also.

5NCGL Update:

John discussed the 5NCGL hotel change to the Caribe Royale and the hotel contract. Each room will be \$99 per night and is a suite. The hotel also agreed to a 75% attrition rate, and no minimum food and beverage. They also waived the resort and internet fees, and will provide transportation to the Disney resorts for their guests.

John handed out the expense budget for the 5NCGL for discussion. No income budget was prepared at this time. John indicated that a decision needs to be made on who the partner organization is going to be, and he will make that recommendation shortly. The planning Committees will begin to organize between now and the September meeting. Pat Pfeil talked about the need to begin to work now for sponsorship.

The committees will include: Marketing, sponsorship/trade show, local arrangement, program, etc.

The conference dates are December 9 -12, 2012. The committee discussed having 'tours' before or/and after the conference, and we may need to consider having a 'spouse' activity due the number of families that may come. The room costs are extended past the conference schedule to help with vacation plans.

The committee chairs will begin to work before the September Steering Committee meeting in Lafayette. Monti will have a couple of meeting rooms available on Thursday, September 8th.

There will be much discussion on the 5NCGL later today and within the next few months.

SRM still has \$5000 in the bank that came from the Forest Service from the last conference. John is working on getting that money from SRM.

US Forest Service Report:

Barry Imler represented the US Forest Service for Janette Kaiser, who sent her greetings. He thanked the Steering Committee for our support with some grazing issues and the cooperative projects. Barry provided the following for our meeting minutes.

"I am pleased to be here on behalf of our National Director for Rangelands, Janette Kaiser. Janette sends her greetings.

Acknowledgement of GLCI

As a starting point, there are a couple of things for which I want to express our appreciation. Thank you for:

- Your support in dealing with challenging grazing seasons these past few years, particularly when we've had drought, wildland fires, and a few other issues.

- . Your support of cooperative monitoring programs.

The Forest Service appreciates all that you have done, and counts on your help for the future as well.

Program of Work

Rangelands encompass nearly half of the 192 million National Forest System acres. We're actively working to complete required environmental analyses on our grazing allotments. Nation-wide, we have completed over 80 percent of those analyses. At any given moment we are working our way through at least two dozen rangeland related lawsuits.

What You Wanted to Hear About

I know there are several topics you are interested in discussing, including several I won't be addressing in my comments. I'm going to touch on the Planning Rule, Ecological site Descriptions, Agroforestry, Wild Horses and Burros, and Native rangelands.

Planning Rule

On February 10, 2011, the USDA Forest Service unveiled its proposed Forest Planning Rule that would establish a new national framework to develop land management plans that protect water and wildlife and promote vibrant communities. The Forest Service invites public comment on the proposed rule during a 90-day public comment period ending May 16, 2011. Species viability will be an issue receiving a great deal of attention during development of the new rule. There is already tension between those who want a rule allowing greater flexibility in local decisions and those who seek a highly prescriptive rule, limiting local flexibility.

Additional information is available at the Forest Service website (www.fs.fed.us/). Our goal is to complete a final planning rule in a collaborative way by the end of 2011.

Ecological Site Descriptions

The Forest Service is working with NRCS, BLM, and others toward Ecological Site Description development as an interagency priority. It is my understanding that an Interagency Manual has been approved and work is progressing on an Interagency Handbook that will guide our field personnel in cohesive application of ESD protocols.

Agroforestry

In January 2010, an Interagency Agroforestry Team was established by the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a national strategic framework for agroforestry. The new team includes members from five USDA agencies (USFS, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and two key partners (National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)).

The DRAFT Strategic Framework includes three goals:

- (1) Increase use of agroforestry;
- (2) Advance the understanding and tools necessary for applying agroforestry; and
- (3) Integrate agroforestry into an all-lands approach to conservation and economic development.

The Forest Service has been focusing on Silvopasture. Silvopasture is a form of agroforestry defined by the intentional integration of a system of symbiotic, planned interactions that produces wood, forage and livestock products while simultaneously creating sustainable environmental benefits and ecosystem services. The most common type of silvopasture in North America is integrated forest grazing, which utilizes livestock to manage native forest vegetation as a part of a larger forest ecosystem management plan. It is this intensive management and careful planning of interactions between components that sets silvopasture apart from other practices such as forest range grazing. A final document is expected to be completed by May 1, 2011.

Wild Horses and Burros

The Forest Service is the other agency with responsibility for these animals. The Forest Service continues to work closely with the BLM on all aspects of managing wild horses and burros. We recently filled a multi-region

wild horse and burro specialist position that had been vacant for five (5) years. The duty location for the position will be in Reno, Nevada at the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor's Office.

The Human Society of the United States (HSUS) has proposed conducting a 3-5 year study of a remotely delivered one-treatment porcine zona pellucid (PZP) immunocontraceptive vaccine at Jarita Mesa Wild Horse Territory on the Carson National Forest in New Mexico. The proposal is being reviewed by the Forest Service Research and Development branch. It is also being reviewed at the Regional and National levels to determine potential impacts to program management.

Native Rangelands

The society for Range Management sponsored a session in Billings earlier this month regarding management of rangelands within Native American communities. The Forest Service participated in that session and is working with Native communities to provide assistance, where requested.

Where To From Here?

On August 14, 2009 in Seattle, Washington, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack outlined his vision for the future of our nation's forests and grasslands. He began by reminding us our national forests and grasslands are a national treasure, requiring all of us to protect and preserve them for future generations.

He went on to say American forests are important because they:

- Supply communities with clean and abundant water.
- Shelter wildlife.
- Help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Help generate rural wealth through recreation and tourism, through the creation of green jobs and through the production of wood products and energy.

His goal for all of us, the Agency and the public, is to protect and maintain all of America's forests and rangelands including state and private lands by taking on an all-lands approach.

Realizing the Vision

So, how do we work together to bring about a commitment to forest and rangeland resiliency with an "all-lands" approach? For the Forest Service: Our number one priority will continue to be range analysis on active allotments that have no previous analysis and have been identified on the Rescission schedule. We will continue to work with the Dept. of Justice and Office of General Counsel on litigated cases. We will look for opportunities to use vacant allotments as forage reserves. And - we will continue to work diligently with permittees, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and NOAA Fisheries on ESA consultation issues to protect threatened and endangered species **and** allow for appropriate livestock grazing.

How can you – our partners – help?

Continue to support permittee monitoring programs and training sessions that keep producers in touch with rangeland science and agency practices. Work closely in a collaborative fashion with local range management specialists. Work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service in developing partnerships and designing coordinated resource management plans. Demonstrate how grazing is compatible with other resources. Demonstrate innovative grazing practices (i.e., how livestock can be trained with behavioral principles to keep them from adversely impacting sensitive riparian areas).

Conclusion

The Forest Service supports grazing, which is a strong component of our multiple-use mission, and we recognize livestock grazing can be used to enhance other resources. The future of grazing looks good, but there will be challenges ahead. Thank you – I've enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you."

Natural Resources Conservation Service Report

Dr. Homer Wilkes represented Chief White, NRCS. Dr. Wilkes said that the NRCS will continue to work with GLCI and that our partnership is long standing and he thanked the committee for that. He gave an overview of where NRCS is regarding the technical assistance budget. Currently it is still the same, and we may see a 5%

increase. The NRCS looks to be a continued supporter for the 5NCGL. However, discretionary funding will see about a 11% reduction. This will impact the technical assistance portion of some programs.

Dr. Wilkes feels that NRCS technical assistance is being provided as requested and NRCS will continue to support it. Program dollars (EQIP, etc) will see some increase in the 2012 budget.

From his position he sees that a State Conservationist would view the GLCI as a wonderful way to demonstrate technology that supports programs and initiatives.

Dr. Wilkes then answered some questions on budget allocation from Congress. NRCS still will keep the 60% of EQIP monies targeted to livestock operations. There are several National resource initiatives that have been developed across the country. Grazing lands are a major resource involved in many of the initiatives that with proper management provides the success of the projects. The Committee is interested in: How are initiatives started, local needs, and GLCI would like to be more involved in the established initiatives.

Bureau of Land Management

Bob Bolton, representing BLM, gave the committee an update. Bob thanked the GLCI for what we do, and for being a voice for grazing lands. He also applauded the GLCI for our grazing conferences and said we have support from Director Abby.

Highlights from Bureau of Land Management – Secretary Salazar has introduced and the President signed an executive order 3310 for “Wildlands.” Grazing is still a valid multiple-use and is included in the possible descriptions of land use. There are concerns about how certain activities will be treated. Certain projects and construction projects in a “wildland” area may be limited. Draft manuals (now final) are on the BLM webpage. [Since the date of the meeting the 2011 Final Appropriation stated that “Section 1769 directs the BLM to refrain from spending funds to implement, administer or enforce Secretarial Order No. 3310. BLM offices or employees should not engage in any activity that could be construed as implementing Secretarial Order 3310”].

Hope on the Range DVD is out and finished. PBS is working on maybe scheduling for showing the DVD on PBS. Until PBS decides to show the DVD viewing is limited internally to BLM, or for educational purposes. [since the meeting PBS has decided to air the DVD]

The Ecological Site Descriptions manual is complete and they are working on the final review of the handbook. A multi-agency workshop was held and was well received. Two to three more workshops are scheduled for this next year for more field training.

The BLM continues to work with NRCS on the Sage Grouse issue, and they are very complementary of the partnership between the two agencies. Part of the management plan is using grazing as a tool for the management of the habitat. The BLM is also working with NRCS for using the protocols for the NRI (National Rangelands Inventory) process. They are working with the Forest Service on Bighorn Sheep and domestic sheep/goat policy with the issue of disease transmission. BLM is also heavily involved on the Wild Horse issue. Litigation issues still take more time and are keeping their field people away from monitoring. The BLM is highly supportive of monitoring training and using NRI to strengthen their information.

Bob also said that wildland fire management, invasive species, and the sage grouse issues are priority topics currently.

Agriculture Research Service

Evert Byington and Mark Boggess represented ARS. They are in the early stages of their five year project planning process. A Customer Workshop will be held in Denver on March 14th to identify research needs in rangeland, pasture and forages. If interested in attending let Ev know. ARS is concerned about sustainability including economical viability – looking at ‘value added’ and new marketing and reducing inputs. They are also concerned about environmental sustainability including grazing lands CEAP, risk management and mitigation for climate change. Bio-energy issues involving using perennial grasses are also important with strong industry interest in the southeast part of the country.

Ev handed out the Presidents' budget for ARS. ARS will see an overall decrease, but there are a couple of areas like climate change and bioenergy that may see an increase. Included in the budget is a proposal to close 10 ARS research locations with four of them working on pasture grazing systems in the eastern US. These four locations were going to be involved in the Pastureland CEAP project.

Mark talked about the area of Food Animal Production (everything but health issues). Have 35 projects at 15 locations. They will hold customer workshops on March 29th and 30th in Baltimore at the airport Marriott. If you are interested in attending, contact Mark. ARS continues to work on their five year plan and they are looking at bringing more partnership opportunities into the plan. Their goal is to have more long term projects that are funded and include people with expertise.

Evert announced that he is retiring from full-time employment; however, Mark will serve as the ARS representative for GLCI. Ev will be working part-time until they fill his position.

When visiting ARS, he suggested that we come prepared with what ARS can do for us. A one page document will help them with directing their research needs.

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

Dr. Jim Dobrowolski represented Dr. Roger Beachy from NIFA. NIFA's challenge areas are being worked on versus discipline areas. Will help with team issues for coordination within NIFA. The AFRI funding area is one of the largest in NIFA's budget. Budget numbers are available on the NIFA webpage. AFRI is looking at an budget increase, but the discretionary part of NIFA's budget is looking at a 10% decrease.

Congress has focused project funding to cross-disciplinary groups with measurable outcomes with impact on 'people's lives. The funding awards are reviewed each year and the outcomes are evaluated. Areas of funding include: Climate change, bio-energy, foundations program (water, air and soil and then also at thresholds tied to Ecological Site Descriptions and Management of agriculture issues).

Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable

Kristie Maczko spoke on several projects. The Sustainable Ranch Management Assessment guidebook is complete. A workshop was held at the SRM meeting in Billings, MT. Another workshop is scheduled during the SWCS meeting in July. Producer level training is also being considered due to Pat Pfeil's suggestion. A pilot project focusing on Rooter Brite's ranch is being contemplated. It would focus on the business planning process, monitoring, and economics. The project would be a partnership project with the Noble Foundation.

Partnership Reports

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) – Richard McElhaney

AFBF's biggest issue is the law suit between EPA and the Pennsylvania AFBF regarding the Chesapeake Bay.

American Forage & Grasslands Council (AFGC) – Howard Straub

AFGC is working on their upcoming conference. The dates are June 12 – 15th in French Lick, IN.

American Sheep Industry (ASI) – Aggie

The ASI convention was very successful due to land and wool prices being high. 2+2+2 Project was approved by the ASI Board of Directors. It is focused on lambing twins to help get production up with demand. The marketing of lamb is really improving prices.

Dairy Industry – Duane Hertzler

The Dairy Industry has been very volatile over the last several years. Dairy is exporting more over the last two years. Right now their focus is on the farm bill and price and legislative issues.

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) – Rooter

NACD is currently without an executive director. The conference was just completed, and NACD is actively promoting technical assistance and its importance in an effort to shore up Technical Assistance program dollars. John Peterson indicated that NACD is part of the task force group that is working on the Farm Bill. The question was asked, "Does GLCI want to be part of that Task Force?"

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) – Bob Drake

Rooter Brite was a Regional winner of the NCBA's Stewardship Award. NCBA is some internal issues that are challenging. They will work on getting some grassland issues address soon.

National Farmer's Union (NFU) – Gerald Jaeger

Their convention is coming up in San Antonio in March. NFU firmly believes in the benefits of conservation practices for small farmers and ranchers. Larry Hensley will be the new NFU alternative to GLCI.

Society for Range Management (SRM) – Pat Pfeil

The SRM conference is complete, and had over 1500 people in attendance. GLCI now has a Committee versus a Task Force with SRM. Jeff Goodwin is the new chair of that Committee and is working on bringing producers to SRM. The GLCI Committee in SRM is going to work on supporting a ½ symposium with landowners. The technical assistance (adult education) is so very important to support programs.

Karen Launchbaugh wanted to thank the GLCI Steering Committee for their support in keeping their Range Program.

Soil & Water Conservation Society (SWCS) – Dwayne Johnson

The summer meetings prove to be a good location for a workshop. He would like Tim and Rod to be more involved on the policy committee to bring GLCI into the mix, and he would like to work with Jeff for a 'repeat' symposium of GLCI speakers. Several workshop/symposiums are scheduled this next year.

LUNCH

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report

Dennis Thompson gave the NRCS National Report. Terrell sends her regards about missing the meeting. She is the new Director of the Ecological Sciences Division. Dennis provided several handouts – Tele-commuting, Rangeland NRI (National Resource Inventory), regional reports, Pasture NRI, Rangeland and Pasture CEAP (Conservation Effects and Assessment Program), Ecological Site Descriptions, Conservation Streamlining Initiative and GLCI allocation of funds.

GLCI Strategic Plan

Pat Pfeil plans on updating the plan with current numbers and with wording. We will work by e-mail until the next meeting to complete what is necessary. The rest will be handled in Executive Session.

Regional GLCI Specialist Reports

Handouts were given to all Steering Committee members for all the regions. Chad gave highlights for the West and East. Chad and Chuck covered the highlights for the Central. Gerald mentioned his Wisconsin handout and the potential loss of the progress being made due to budgets on the federal level. Jeff Goodwin talked about the Prescribed Burn versus wildfire issues in Texas. Pat talked about Florida's project on putting together all the research that has been completed in Florida on grazing lands. Dick mentioned that PA is hosting a grazing conference where Temple Graundin is speaking.

State Conservationist Reports

Jon Gustafson reported for Ed Burton. California has a new Governor, and two new area range management specialists. CA NRCS is working on replacing Kendra Moseley, and they have hired two Ecological Site people.

Southern California still is an area that does not have a specialist to service the producers. They just completed the CA grazing conference with the coalitions, and are working on the Sage Grouse issues.

Allen Green provided insight to the Committee on:

- The need to remind ourselves on how much progress we have made over the past years.
- There are more groups that are supporting grazing management and grazing animals
- Being concerned about supporting what we have and helping keep technical assistance

Salvador Salinas added:

- TX has added 4 new regional GLCI coordinators within the state
- There is a concern that Texas Tech is losing their Range program
- Concerns about technical assistance dealing with Urban sprawl (rural life producers), as well as retirements and estate ownership of ranches and farms
- The “bang for the buck” benefit of technical assistance needs to be realized more than is currently acknowledged

The meeting adjourned into Executive Session:

Congressional Message

Covered in the earlier conversation.

Strategic Plan

The Committee worked on the guidelines for setting up state GLCI coalitions. The consensus was that the guidelines need more work. This will be addressed in future Strategic Action Plan committee meetings.

Additional Discussions

During Associate Chief Homer Wilkes' talk he discussed NRCS's special emphasis initiatives which address current conservation priorities. Pat Pfeil suggested that we draft letter for Bob to give to Chief White asking the Chief to consider having a GLCI representative on this advisory group. If Chief White is amiable to this, then the Steering Committee members would need to be ready to act. The GLCI could potentially participate in nine initiatives. It was suggested that we target state GLCI groups for volunteers to sit on these committees, and we could use the Regional GLCI Specialists to help identify people to serve. The letter will be prepared and delivered by Bob Drake when he visits Washington, D.C. in March. Howard Straub moved to have letter hand delivered by Bob to the Chief of NRCS; Rooter Brite seconded the motion. A vote was taken; the motion passed.

The NRI data sheet that Dennis provided is available. Please contact Dennis Thompson for a copy.

5th National Conference on Grazing Lands (5NCGL)

Sponsorship help will be given from Texas NRCS early on with printed materials. This will help Pat with sponsorship contacts this summer. Pat will have everything reviewed by the committee before she begins the official contacts.

Byron Sleuth is a good contact with Dow.

John will work with Tina for equal information and then will make a recommendation for the partner organization for the Orlando Conference.

GLCI Website Update

There was some concern with the look of the grass....more like a wheat field. Also the size of the logo fitting on the top of the letter. If the grass was not so prominent....maybe off to the side. The committee thought the blade of grass was too big for the horizon of sun size. They did like the rising sun. (Side note from Monti - the logo was not meant for the letter head. I planned on using the same letterhead and this was developed solely for the website.)

