

Santa Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Advisory Committee Minutes

May 28, 2013

Attendees: Mike Quigley, Shalonda Guy, Brian Dolan, Randy Serraglio, Joe Sacco, Martina Fuller (AZGFD Intern), Joe Sheehey, Stan Helin, Robert Fink, Mindi Lehew (CNF), Mark Hart

Note Taker: Joe Sacco

Location: [REDACTED]

Time: 6PM-8PM

Meeting announcements: Next Meeting June 4, 2013 at Tucson Arizona Game and Fish Department Office

Minutes:

Review of Timeline

- Will need to get further information from Department (Ben) regarding milestones for the effort
- Addition of item; contact with Oro Valley, Pima County and City of Tucson Councils; to begin after press release is made public.
 - Brian Dolan will spearhead
- Discussion regarding the Management Focus Area Plan- this is an umbrella plan for Unit 33 and the sheep restoration plans including the Mountain Lion Management plan for the reintroduction effort are a subset of the MFA. This has been submitted for internal review. The purpose of the MFA is to create a tool that will provide the best practicable guidance and information necessary for management.
- The Predator Management Plan has been approved by Executive Staff and forwarded to the Director for final approval.
- There was a question about the source sheep- they will be from Unit 43B in the Trigo Mountains and they are mountain lion savvy.
- MRDG and EA is scheduled to be completed by the end of August 2013.
 - Public scoping notice will be placed in the Federal Register early next week.
 - MRDG has to be signed by the Regional Forester
 - There is a shorter cycle for lawsuits and litigation with USDA than there is for DOI which tend to linger.
 - Would litigation stop the reintroduction effort? No. The reintroduction is a State action and has been determined to not require an EA. Possible litigation would affect our

ability to utilize helicopters in the Wilderness and would impact subsequent management efforts.

- Need to create a white paper for the legislature
 - Joe will draft this

Release sites revisited

- Sabino is not a desirable location – AC recommends against using this location due to concerns about mountain lion predation and the possible fallout. Placing sheep in this environment for the first release could be detrimental.
- Will evaluate Montrose Canyon, Fairfield Road, La Quachi, Finger Rock and Ventana Canyon as possible locations
- Is there a prohibition by the Department to release on Private property?
- If we are to use a location with limited access could we use a crane to transfer the boxes from the ewe hauler to smaller vehicles? Helicopter?
- Ventana may be a good fundraising opportunity. Suggested a mixer release with a sponsorship requirement.

Fund Raisers

- The creation of a domain name would be used for fund raising and some public relations
 - Working on a domain name for donations and also info sharing site
 - Could also be a place to get alerts
 - Mike has experience with domain names
 - It would be a domain name not a 501.3.c but would have to place a link to other organizations possibly
 - Website just for the project similar to the Kofa webpage
 - Department has pursued this however the resources are unavailable.
 - ADBSS website currently has the sponsorship levels listed and able to accept donations
 - Want to go to large donors in person with sponsorship program
 - Trailhead signs and Possibly QR codes for smart phones to advertise sponsors and donation opportunities

- Can the organizations work together to do a grant request? It would be helpful to show the diversity in partnerships. If they went to a nontraditional source it would need to be a source that Advisory Committee members do not use for regular funding; should not be an additive expense to the donors.
- Desire is to open doors with organizations that do not traditionally contribute to wildlife management; encourage project advocates
- There may be opportunities for letters of support from the AC member organizations
- Bonita Gibson is the department grant writer and may be able to assist with grant opportunities.
- Happy hour type reception regarding the release as a fund raiser
- June 8th SCI Banquet, Brian Dolan will be providing a discussion on the Catalina BHS release.
 - SCI will be announcing the effort and donation of funding, \$10,000 for the reintroduction to the banquet attendees
 - Will provide an email to AC about the banquet and press release
 - Also send out the most recent copy of the talking points

Recommendation

- Concern about the mother with spotted kittens is the biggest issue
- Suggest that if a female with spotted kittens is found then no removal would take place.
 - This was vetted with the environmental community and there was concern over the proposed protocol for the spotted kittens
 - Breaking down the barriers within the communities is a high priority; work together to find a remedy
- How would we know if the lion had subsequent kills? Collar? Ear tag?
 - It will be difficult for the houndsman to know if there are spotted kittens with a female.
 - Prey availability and habitat selection may be contributing factors to predation
- Requested a discussion on how many lions being killed within a given time period would cause concerns for Committee members

- If a female with spotted kittens killed two sheep, would that be the green light to remove her? Maybe. Some may consider it ok but it does elicit an emotional response that will be difficult to overcome.
- Suggested a two strike rule for the females and kittens.
- It would be good to have a houndsman, Lisa Haynes, information from other predator studies; Black Mountain and Kofa
- Robert Fink will contact Region 3&4 for further information.

Action Items:

Press release Distribution for Advisory Committee – Mark Hart

Draft Legislature White Paper – Joe Sacco

Revise Contact List – Joe Sacco

Contact Regions 3 &4 for predator/sheep information – Robert Fink

Met with City and County Councils – Brian Dolan

Revise Timeline – Mike Quigley

Schedule houndsmen to attend meeting - Ben

Next Meetings: 6/4, AZGFD; 6/13, AZGFD

Future Agenda Items:

Mountain lions killed discussion – understanding of what would constitute concerns (gut check) i.e. total number removed in a year, number removed in a short time period (how many per month, every 3 months, 6 months etc).

Ratify Recommendation

Scoping press release

Community forum, fundraising, and PSA commercial