

Northern Great Plains Network

Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

June 2002

Herp Inventory: Dr. Brian Smith and his crew have made their second visit to parks in need of herpetological inventories. Although the crew is putting in long days the drought conditions have limited the number of species they have found. After assessing the effectiveness of the various methods, Brian and I have agreed to modify the scope-of-work to decrease the effort directed to the nighttime Time-Area-Constrained-Searches (a.k.a. visual encounter surveys) and to redirect those hours to additional daytime searching. As always, I encourage parks to collect and freeze any roadkills and other specimens (of all vertebrates) they come across (assuming they're still recognizable of course!).

Bird Inventory: Arvind Panjabi and/or his field crew have completed the bird transects and the specialized searches at all parks. Arvind and I agreed to eliminate the bird transect in the unburned ponderosa pine habitat at Jewel Cave NM (simply wasn't enough habitat) and to add a transect to Fort Union Trading Post NHS (not much habitat, but enough to squeeze in the transect). After getting feedback from the WASO office it appears that we should complete park research and collection permits for the bird inventories as well. I will initiate that process and coordinate with the parks having bird inventories.

Mammal Inventory: Dr. Cheryl Schmidt has been in contact with all parks scheduled to get mammal inventories this summer. Due to delays in getting equipment, she has delayed her field work until July 15.

NPSpecies: Jon Dagleish and I visited Wind Cave NP for a day and discussed the status of NPSpecies with park staff. This was an excellent meeting and a very productive way to summarize all the species records and supporting evidence for a park. Rather than have Jon work on numerous parks at once (which would greatly complicate his life), I'm having him focus on one park at a time (with WICA being first). But having said that, I still encourage parks to send to Jon any hardcopy datasets that need to be entered into digital format (e.g., wildlife observation cards).

Vouchers: As decided by the Voucher Subcommittee, I have sent a letter soliciting bids for preparation and curation of voucher specimens to the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, the University of Kansas, and the Bell Museum at the University of Minnesota. All three institutions have expressed interest in doing the work and are putting together bids.

Budget: Due to Dawn's resignation we have some additional funds available for use this fiscal year. In addition, I would like to postpone the voucher repository agreement (see above), of which \$15k was budgeted, until next fiscal year. Last, I would like to postpone the \$7.5k we had committed to a museum search for plant vouchers until completion of the similar search for vertebrate vouchers (and an assessment of it's value).

Therefore, I have met with the Network Steering Committee to determine how to best spend these dollars. Based on input from the Steering Committee, I will obligate an additional \$30k to our multi-year herp inventories (leaving approximately \$3k left to obligate for the project). I will also fund 2.5 months of a computer technicians time (see below). Last, I will continue to work with BADL and THRO to reconcile some expenses. If you would like to see a copy of the budget let me know.

Synthesis: The Network will be funding 2.5 months of Will Powers time to install and configure Synthesis at Wind Cave NP, Jewel Cave NM, and Mount Rushmore NMEM (time permitting). Will is a term employee at WICA and comes highly recommended. My objectives are to test the effectiveness of Synthesis, specifically in regards to making I&M data user-friendly and available to decision makers. I choose those parks because Will is currently stationed at WICA, and those three parks work together on information transfer/computer issues.