

# MINUTES

## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS INVENTORY & MONITORING NETWORK TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### Conference Call

9:00-10:00am MT, March 22, 2004

#### Members Participating

Dan Licht (lead) – Network I&M Coordinator  
Ruthann Knudson – Agate Fossil Beds NM  
Eddie Childers (for Brian Kenner) – Badlands NP  
Jim Cheatham – Devils Tower NM  
Andy Banta – Fort Union Trading Post NHS  
Ted Benson – Fort Laramie NHS  
Wayne Werkmeister – Missouri NRR  
Carmen Blausey – Niobrara NSR  
Bob Manasek – Scotts Bluff NM  
Dan Roddy – Wind Cave NP

#### Members Absent

Phyllis Adams – Regional I&M Coordinator  
John Moeykens - Knife River Indian Villages NHS  
Todd Suess – Jewel Cave NM  
Eric Nelson – Mt. Rushmore NMEM  
Penny Knuckles – Theodore Roosevelt NP

#### Also in Attendance

Joel Brumm – Network I&M Data Manager  
Marcia Wilson – Network I&M Technician

#### Call Purpose and Background

The purpose of the call was to update the I&M Technical Committee on developments in the I&M Program. Emails were sent out in regards to the call on 3/11, 3/15, and 3/22. Moeykens notified Licht he could not make the call due to schedule conflicts.

#### Call Minutes

Licht updated everyone on current activities with the I&M Program staff. He stated that he was working on Phase I of the Vital Signs Plan. Although the document is not due till the fall of 2005, it is his goal to submit it sometime this fall.

Licht said that Wilson is working on NPSpecies and database certification. He described how the certification process was required by WASO and that it essentially consisted of an expert approving the park's species list. He stated that the Network would have Brian Smith do the herp certification for all parks (including those he did not inventory), Arvind Panjabi do the bird certification for all parks, Cheryl Schmidt do the mammal certification, and Bob White do some of the fish certification. For the plants they would likely have several people do the certification including Hollis Marriott for Black Hills parks, Steve Rolfsmeier for Nebraska parks, and Bonnie Heidel for FOLA. This left BADL and the North Dakota parks. He encouraged those parks to submit names of any botanists they'd like to do the certification.

Licht stated that Brumm is acquiring and consolidating spatial data from the GIS Clearinghouse and elsewhere. In the near term he will be providing maps and data for the Vital Signs Plan. Licht stated that Joel is available to assist parks as needed.

Licht stated that Erin Handberg - the I&M Program STEP Computer Assistant - is starting to get content on the Network I&M web page. (The URL for the page is <http://www1.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ngpn/index.htm>.)

Licht discussed the acquisition of IKONOS software for Network parks. He stated that the Technical Committee tentatively agreed to the purchase at their January meeting, contingent on a reduction in the buffer to 3-miles around each park. Licht stated that the revised cost with a 3-mile buffer is approximately \$33,000. This would get 1-meter panchromatic and 4-meter multi-spectral imagery for DETO, FOLA, FOUS, JECA, KNRI, and MORU. No objections were made to the purchase. Licht will process the paperwork as soon as possible.

Licht discussed the acquisition of a plotter for the I&M Program. He stated that Brumm had coordinated with Network parks with active GIS programs and they thought it would be good for the Network to have a large format scanner. Licht stated that a scanner capability would raise the cost of the unit from about \$10,000 to \$20,000. He recommended that the I&M Program make such a purchase. Although there were some comments about the price, no one in the group disagreed with the purchase.

Licht stated that he will be hiring at least one summer technician as a shared position with Amy Symstad. He stated that the announcement just closed for the position, and it was advertised in such a way that he could hire a second person. He said he had plenty of work and needed more people for scanning documents, inputting data into NPSpecies, plant preservation, and other work. He stated that another possibility was for the I&M Program to pay for park staff to help I&M Program. He said his preference was for someone with a biological background, but he would consider others. He asked if any parks had anyone available. No one did.

Licht stated that the original Network inventory study plan did not call for a plant inventory at MNRR; however, upon further assessment it was determined that an inventory was needed. He stated that he and Werkmeister were working with Jim

Stubbendieck at the U. of Nebraska-Lincoln on a scope of work. Licht stated that the project would cost around \$9,000.

Licht updated everyone on the status of the mammal inventory. He explained how approximately \$34,000 had been de-obligated by the MWRO at the end of FY03 due to confusion about whether the funds were 1-year funds or could be carried over. He stated that both agencies were partly responsible, and that in discussions with the Forest Service it was agreed that both agencies would contribute equally to the restoration of the funds so that the project could be completed as originally written. He stated that this meant the I&M Program would add another \$15-17k to the project. As part of the agreement with the Forest Service it was decided that the NPS would try and find another investigator for the MNRR work so Cheryl Schmidt could focus on completing the work at the other parks.

Licht stated that he had advised Nels Troelstrup that he would have to apply for permits to conduct the aquatic bioassessments this summer. He asked if anyone had received a notification and no one said they had. Licht said he would remind Troelstrup to apply for the permit.

Licht described upcoming field work/park visits this year. He stated that a Vital Signs scoping workshop was still needed at THRO and that he would try and do it this spring. He stated that as part of the mammal inventories he would be putting out motion-sensing cameras at FOUS, KNRI, and MNRR. He stated that Cheryl Schmidt would be visiting AGFO, SCBL, MORU, and WICA for bat inventories. He stated that Schmidt or someone else would be doing the complete mammal inventory at MNRR. He stated that the bird inventories would continue at the same parks and using the same methods as in prior years. He stated that plant inventories would be continued at FOUS and FOLA, and initiated at MNRR. He stated that although not funded by the I&M Program, the exotic plant study would continue at JECA and the old growth study would start at MORU. He stated that the herp field work was all done except for NIOB and MNRR. He stated that the Dr. Nels Troelstrup and staff would be visiting all parks for scoping meetings and field bioassessments this year.

Licht asked if Cody Wienk of the Fire Effects Program and Chad Prosser of the Exotic Plant Management Team should be routinely invited to the conference calls. He stated that the Technical Committee had previously decided they should not be formal members of the Committee, but they should be actively involved in I&M efforts. The group decided it was good to routinely invite them to the conference calls. Knudson requested that Mike DeBacker of the Prairie Cluster LTEM be invited to all calls that discussed vegetation monitoring. Licht said he would.

Manasek asked about the relationship of the I&M Program to the Prairie Cluster LTEM. Licht stated that the LTEM program would continue collecting data at SCBL and AGFO until the I&M Program was ready to take over, perhaps in 2008 or 2009. Licht stated that the protocols ultimately used by the I&M Program would be determined over the next few years, and that Amy Symstad's draft recommendation closely followed the LTEM

protocols. Knudson asked if she could get a copy of Symstad's draft report and Licht said he would check.

### **Followup**

Licht contacted Nels Troelstrup on 3/22/2004 and reminded him to apply online for park research permits. Nels responded that they had not forgotten, but were waiting to complete their scoping visits to all 13 parks.

Licht checked on the availability of disseminating Amy Symstad's draft vegetation report. She was willing to share parts of the document (e.g., those discussing background information), but was reluctant to distribute the entire document until it went through internal agency review.

**Drafted by:** Dan Licht

**Drafted on:** 3/22/2004

**Finalized by:** Dan Licht

**Finalized on:** 5/3/2004