**Meeting Date:** December 8, 2020

**Meeting Location:** Microsoft Teams - [**Click here to join the meeting**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MTU0YjYwMDEtNDZjYS00NzhmLWI0ZTktYjMyZmRmZTlkZWQ5%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%220693b5ba-4b18-4d7b-9341-f32f400a5494%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%221b4ad033-41b1-467d-9ac5-93755c7afebf%22%7d)

**Link:**  [Wiki page for Fall 2020 Meeting files](https://fawiki.fws.gov/display/JTF/2020+Fall+Meeting)

**Invitees:**

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **AFWA Representatives** | **WSFR Representatives** | **Guests** | | Jim Douglas (NE) Co-Chair | Paul Rauch (FWS-HQ) Co-Chair | Tammy Brooks (TX) Chair, FACWG | | Bryan Burhans (PA) | Cliff Schleusner (IR6, IR8) | Mike Sawyers (MA) | | Lisa Holt (AK) | Colleen Sculley (IR1) | Scott Knight (WSFR HQ) | | Mark Tisa (MA) (Alt. Co-Chair) | Clint Riley (IR5, IR7) | Christy Vigfusson (WSFR HQ) | | Martha Williams (MT) | Lisa Van Alstyne (HQ) | Dan Hogan (WSFR HQ) | | Ryan Brown (VA) | Bob Curry (HQ) | Tim Smith (WSFR HQ) | | J. D. Strong (OK) | Greg Siekaniec (IR11) | Ryan Oster (WSFR HQ) | | Lane Kisonak (Counsel) | Larry Mellinger (Counsel) | Kathy Hollar (IR9, IR12) | |  | Diana Swan-Pinion (JTF Liaison) |  | |

**Logistics**: Microsoft Teams Meeting

***TUESDAY, December 8, 2020***

| **Start Time** | **Topic** | **Lead(s)** | |
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| 1:00 pm (ET)  *25 mins* | **Meeting Kick-off**   * Introductions, logistics, agenda review * AFWA and WSFR Updates | Paul Rauch  Jim Douglas & Lane Kisonak | |
| 1:25 pm  *5 mins* | **Review Action Items from Spring 2020 JTF Meeting**  *Desired Outcome: Closure on Action Items and agreement on next steps.* | Bob Curry | |
| 1:30 pm  *10 mins* | **Issue ID Protocol**   * Review of 2021 Issue ID request memo * Consider alternate response method   *Desired Outcome: JTF selects preferred ID call response method*  *Action Item:**WSFR prepares 2021 request memo for distribution by 12/31/2020* | Paul Rauch  Jim Douglas | |
| 1:40 pm  *50 mins* | **Policy Development Protocol Update**   * Update from Modernizing PR Implementation Guidance Team * Determining Eligible and Allowable Costs/Activities   *Desired Outcome: Provide update to JTF and answer any questions.* | Christy Vigfusson  Ryan Oster  Lane Kisonak & Larry Mellinger | |
| **2:30 pm**  ***10 mins*** | **Bio Break** | **All** | |
| 2:40 pm  *10 mins* | **WR/HE Advisory Team**   * Update on Team activities and resources   *Desired Outcome: Provide update on Advisory Team &* [*location*](https://fawiki.fws.gov/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=117669889) *of resources.* | Lisa Van Alstyne | |
| 2:50 pm  *45 mins* | **NBCI Audit Issue**   * CAP * Cooperative Conservation Initiatives * Next Steps/Timeline   *Desired Outcome: Provide update to JTF and answer any questions.* | Scott Knight | |
| 3:35 pm  *45 mins* | **TRACS Update**   * Enhancement Roll-Out * SWG Effectiveness Measures * Conservation Viewer   *Desired Outcome: Provide update to JTF and answer any questions.* | Tim Smith  Mark Tisa & Tim Smith | |
| 4:20 pm  *15 mins* | **Wrap up, Review of Action Items and Decision Points** | Paul Rauch  Jim Douglas | |
| 4:35 pm | | **Meeting Adjourned** | All |

**NOTES**

**Meeting Kick-off/Introductions, logistics, agenda review/AFWA and WSFR Updates (Paul Rauch, Mark Tisa,** **Lane Kisonak)**

Paul acknowledged that while there were no major decision points on the agenda, the meeting serves the purpose of providing updates on the topics. In addition, with determinations and policy actions coming in the spring for TRACS, policy items, the NBCI CAP, etc. this can be a planning meeting for how we will move forward on some of these issues.

WSFR Update: Paul didn’t expound on any of the agenda topics, but briefly described the Administration transition process to date and his expectations for the next several months. He also mentioned that with the rollout of Grant Solutions behind us we are moving ahead with TRACS implementation and are continuing to improve training and audit processes and efforts.

AFWA Update: Mark said Jim did not provide any comments to share. Lane reported that during the last few months he has been actively involved with the proposed match relief for the states, to 90/10. A survey was completed which shows the need and applications, and AFWA is analysing the results and working with states and industries to move forward with the effort. This is part of the continuing need to mitigate effects of COVID. Also, he has continued working on adjustments to the FAIR Act, specifically appraisal and data-share requirements. And, following the 365-day license discussion at the Spring Meeting, the effects on states were analysed and the certification letter was refined to discuss how licenses *can* be counted, so it is cleaner and easier to understand how the rule should be interpreted. Finally, regarding the WR/HE Advisory on Project Wild Lane has been working with Lisa Van Alstyne on addressing the expansion of R3 components into their curriculum. Peripheral to WSFR, he is been working with Dean Smith and staff in PFW, NAWCA, and Migratory Birds on pooling match sources, projects from Partners funds with NAWCA projects.

**Review Action Items from Spring 2020 JTF Meeting (Bob Curry)**

Bob reported that almost all of the Spring Meeting Action Items had been completed, with the exception of three that were ongoing: 1) Oklahoma’s Issue on apportionment delays - WSFR was continuing work on an Apportionment Communication Protocol that would facilitate External Affairs coordination with the Department on apportionment announcements; 2) Oregon’s Issue on program income audit issue - the Training Team was incorporating BMPs into their FY21 workplan; and 3) the Policy Development Protocol - the Modernizing PR Act Guidance Implementation Team was close to completing their recommendations for JTF approval.

**Issue ID Protocol (Paul Rauch)**

*Desired Outcome*: The JTF will decide on the process for topic submissions to use for the 2021 JTF Issue ID Protocol.

*Decision Point***:** The JTF approved the use of use of an online form for the submission of issues.

Paul presented the 2021 Issue ID Protocol memo, and a new submission process using an online form, for the JTF to consider using instead of emailing or mailing issue submissions. Mark, Martha, Lisa Holt, and J.D. expressed approval of the form. Clint and Lisa Holt’s questions about ascertaining Director’s concurrence with any staff submissions led to the consensus that Directors would have confidence that they would be aware of and have approved any topics being submitted, but there was agreement that the form should be revised to include a question to confirm Director approval. Lisa Van Alstyne mentioned that any submitter would be receiving an email acknowledging the submission and topic, and this email could include the Director as well if submitted by staff. Christy mentioned that a separate form would need to be submitted for each topic or issue, and that a copy of the form could be included with the memo so that those entering information have the full set of questions to review before completing the form online.

**Action Item**: WSFR will make the recommended changes to the form and send out a copy for final JTF approval, so the memo is ready to send out by the end of the year.

**Policy Development Protocol Update**

*Desired Outcome: Provide update to JTF and answer any questions.*

• Update from Modernizing PR Implementation Guidance Team (Ryan Oster)

Ryan gave a brief review of the history of the Modernizing PR Act Guidance Implementation Team, their progress to date, and the remaining tasks and expected timeline for their guidance recommendations, prior to the review cycles and submission to the JTF. He was optimistic that the Team was approximately 95% complete in being ready to submit the draft document to the Policy and Programs Division Manager, the first step in the review cycles. J.D. commented that the review cycles part of the final stage of the SOP seemed very lengthy and asked if they were required? There were extensive discussions by the JTF on the approach needed for review of proposed policies, with the current processes being incorporated into the SOP. But there will be opportunities for the Team and JTF to comment on the process, and ultimately for the JTF to revise the SOP if they see fit.

• Determining Eligible and Allowable Costs/Activities (Lane Kisonak and Larry Mellinger)

The WR/HE Advisory Team reached out to the SOLs regarding an Advisory they had drafted on “legal authorities/eligible vs. allowable” for Solicitor review and input. Lane felt the Advisory was a useful tool and he wanted to share it with the JTF, pursuant to being published and publicly available.

**WR/HE Advisory Team (Lisa Van Alstyne)**

*Desired Outcome:* Provide update on Advisory Team and the [location](https://fawiki.fws.gov/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=117669889) of these and other resources.

Lisa reviewed the purpose of Advisory Team, a list of published and pending Advisories (25 total, to date) and the Wiki page which explains how to submit an Advisory question, houses the published Advisories, and provides additional resources other than the Advisories for WSFR and state staff. Colleen encouraged WSFR to share the information, saying that it stimulates thinking as well as providing useful resources. Lisa Holt agreed and said there was some uncertainty in Alaska about the when/how/what of the Advisories and asked if they could go through the communication protocol. Paul wondered if perhaps they could be linked to on the AFWA site? Martha seconded Paul’s idea about a link to AFWA and suggested including it in Ron Regan’s “Director’s Line”.

**Action Item**: Paul will reach out to Ron Regan about including the Advisory link in the Director’s Line.

**NBCI Audit Issue** (Scott Knight)

*Desired Outcome: Provide an update for the JTF and answer any questions.*

Scott provided an update on the WSFR response to the four recommendations made in the OIG’s NBCI Management Advisory. Included in WSFR’s response: work with the States and NBCI to develop and implement policies and procedures that comply with Federal regulations; identify other similar programs or grantees receiving WSFR funds that may have the issues outlined in the advisory and take corrective action; and develop a proposed change of regulation to implement a new process for State agencies to cooperatively plan and enter into Service-approved initiatives. J.D. expressed support for WSFR’s efforts; he is on the NBCI board and fully aware of the complications and importance of finding a solution, and feels these initiatives are very important for the states and their conservation goals.

**TRACS (Tim Smith and Mark Tisa)**

*Desired Outcome:*  *Provide update to JTF and answer any questions.*

Tim gave an update on the TRACS world, including a brief history of TRACS and status since the June release date, SWG Effectiveness Measures history and timeline, and the TRACS Conservation Viewer. For the Conservation Viewer the MA example came from JTF-approved reporting questions in TRACS. Tim was asked if he could speak to the big picture on where the SWG Effectiveness Measures module fit into the overall grant flow and what the work needs would be once it goes live. Tim said as requested by Wildlife Diversity Program Managers grants would already exist in TRACS when the Effectiveness Measures were enacted.

**Wrap up, Review of Action Items and Decision Points (Bob Curry and Paul Rauch)**

Wrap-Up: Paul and Mark felt it was a good meeting to have had virtually but were look forward to meeting again in person and really digging into some substantive issues. However, the Spring 2021 meeting will likely be another virtual meeting, and WSFR staff will begin planning that in the new year.

Review of Action Items and Decision Points: Bob reviewed the Action Items for two topics, and the one Decision Point on the Issue ID Protocol submission. He added Action Items for the Spring 2021 meeting planning, including WSFR’s goal of having the first draft agenda to the JTF 60 days or more prior to the meeting date, and the read-ahead materials sent out 30 days or more before the meeting.