

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Final Summary Notes
Animas Community Center, Animas, New Mexico
July 20, 2000

Introduction

Meeting was called to order by Chair Terry Johnson, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) at 9:00 a.m. MST.

A. Opening comments and ground rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion, with one person speaking at a time and no side conversations. This allows each person to be heard and keeps the meeting moving through the agenda. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment and are encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed in the meeting.

Available handouts included:

DRAFT Report on the Jaguar Conservation Agreement Activities from July 1998 to June 2000. 2000 AGFD Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program Technical Report 168.

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

One addition to the agenda was suggested:

The need to draft a letter to the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation requesting assistance in jaguar conservation, which may entice higher funding prioritization for jaguars with this organization (C. Miller, Defenders of Wildlife)

C. Discussion of summary notes from JAGCT meeting on January 19, 2000

No additional comments on the January 19, 2000 summary notes were provided. Action items were not reviewed and remain assigned. These included: **Having a map of Sonora, Mexico available at future meetings** (B. Van Pelt, AGFD); and **Distribution of USFWS Applicant Status Criteria** (B. Van Pelt).

D. Task Reports:

1. Update on AZ-NM sightings - C. Hayes and B. Van Pelt

New Mexico - Two new "sightings" have been reported since the January 2000 meeting:

1) A hunter in the Florida Mountains near Deming reported that a large cat roared at him for about 15 minutes while he was in his tent at night. The next morning, the hunter could not find any tracks, except for a large one that appeared to have been stepped on. The report was 4th or 5th hand and submitted 3 months after the incident. The report was not pursued any further. 2) Report of a deer and javelina hung over a limb in the Black Range. Investigation questioned the reliability of the sighting. No further investigative effort was made.

NMDGF did not formally use the rating protocol identified in the Conservation Agreement because a *sighting* of an animal was never established in either case. In both cases, the parties were not convinced that a jaguar was involved. NMDGF felt if the rating protocol were applied, the value of these sightings might be inflated and would not accurately reflect the credibility of the occurrence.

Arizona – One sighting was reported since the last meeting: A man and his daughter were on a fishing trip in the White Mountains near Alpine. A large cat crossed the road in front of their vehicle. Their first impression was that the cat was a cheetah. The event happened on a Friday, during Memorial Day Weekend, and was reported to AGFD on Tuesday, after the weekend. The man asked investigators to meet him at the site, but marked an area ca. 5 miles from the reported occurrence. Additional follow-up occurred, this time at the actual site, but by this time no evidence was found.

Sightings Brochure: At the January 2000 meeting, JAGCT members recommended that we establish a sightings protocol and possibly a brochure to distribute to various agencies that may receive reports of jaguar sightings. Today, Craig Miller and Rod Mondt distributed a draft brochure entitled *Jaguar Sightings along the Arizona – New Mexico Borderlands*. **Action Item: Meeting participants were asked to review the draft brochure and return any comments to Tim Snow. Comments are to be sent in with your meeting note comments by August 21. Comments can be sent via fax (520 628-5080), e-mail (tsnow@gf.state.az.us), or postal mail to Tim Snow, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Tucson, Arizona 85745-3612.**

2. Kill Verification Activities (Section 5.H.2.) – Jack Childs

Bill Van Pelt announced that Warner Glenn has resigned as Chair of the Depredation Committee. Warner asked that Jack Childs be appointed the new Chair. No objections being heard from those present, Jack Childs was appointed Chair of the Depredation Committee.

One report was investigated since the last meeting: A rancher near Sasabe, Arizona reported losing 19 head of cattle, and was convinced a jaguar was the cause. The investigation found the deaths were the result of a large mountain lion.

3. Habitat Identification (Section 5.A.) – Bill Van Pelt

At the request of the JAGCT Chair, Bill Van Pelt has replaced Mike Pruss as Chair of the Habitat Subcommittee. Mike recently departed Arizona for a job in another state. The subcommittee met in June to review its intended role and the 8 habitat tasks identified in the Conservation Agreement. Basically, the literature search is complete, but we are experiencing delays in printing the list. Habitat Suitability Criteria were drafted in June 1998 and presented to the Scientific Advisory Group. The SAG recommended dropping elevation and including available surface water. Finalization of the Habitat Suitability Criteria has not occurred. These two items represent Task 1. Because all other Tasks hinge on completion of Task 1, we cannot move forward until the Habitat Suitability Criteria are established.

The Habitat Subcommittee is drafting a letter to the SAG requesting additional guidance on their definition of suitable habitat, and whether any occurs in the United States. We are asking for the SAG to respond as a whole, and not to send individual responses.

4. Education (Section 6.B.) – Sue Krentz

The Education Subcommittee met in Willcox on February 12-13. It has completed drafting an education plan, calendar, and a 5-week lesson plan tiered for grades 4-8. The subcommittee is now testing the lesson plan, which will be evaluated during the coming school year. Publication of the plan will occur at the end of the evaluation period, maybe as early as January. The plan will be available in English and Spanish.

In addition, the Education Subcommittee would like to recognize Karen Schedler, AGFD, for her efforts in facilitating the Subcommittee Workshops. **Action Item: Sue Krentz will send a draft a letter to Terry Johnson for finalization.**

5. End of the Year Report (Section 8.A.) – Bill Van Pelt

Copies of the end-of-year report, *DRAFT Report on the Jaguar Conservation Agreement Activities from July 1998 to June 2000*, were distributed to participants. Note that the reporting period was actually 2 years. No report was constructed in 1999. This report includes 1999 activities and puts the JAGCT back on their original reporting schedule. **Action Item: Please provide any comments on the year-end report with your meeting note comments (Due August 29). Please include any constructive criticism or shortcomings of the JAGCT effort and any suggestions for improvement on these issues.**

E. Other Business

1. Mexico Update – Bill Van Pelt

Raul Valdez and Carlos Lopez are continuing their efforts in the area identified as the northern most population of breeding jaguars in Mexico.

In October 1999, the JAGCT was invited by the Mexican equivalent of the USFWS to assist them in initiating development of their own Conservation Agreement strategies. Three meetings, which included participation by the local community, were held in Sonora, Mexico. A draft agreement has been produced, but it has not been finalized at this time.

Publication of the 1999 Monterey Mexico Meetings Proceedings has not been finalized because of a labor strike in the Mexican universities. New completion date is December 2000. The report on the web-site, <www.savethejaguar.com>, is a summary and not the final proceedings.

2. North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation letter (Craig Miller)

One of the difficulties in conducting jaguar research is a shortage of funds. The NACEC funds conservation-based projects, including some in the border region. However, the jaguar continues to be low on their priority list of species or projects. Therefore, Craig recommends that the JAGCT draft a letter expressing the importance of jaguar research in the border region. The letter will be drafted without identifying specific researchers or projects, only the need for conservation efforts within this region. **Action Item: Craig and Bill will draft a letter from JAGCT to the NACEC.**

F. Close Meeting

The next meeting will be in Douglas, Arizona, on Thursday, January 18, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. MST. Meeting place to be announced.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. MST.

Attendance Roster

Tim Snow	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Terry Johnson	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Chuck Hayes	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Don Cullum	Rancher/New Mexico Cattle Growers
Steve Fairaizl	USDA Wildlife Services
Gary Helbing	U.S. Forest Service
Pat Mathis	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Sue Krentz	Rancher/Education Subcommittee Chair
Judy Keeler	Boothel Heritage Association
Bill Van Pelt	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Ron Olding	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Sarah Rinkevich	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Karen Kay Husted	Rancher/Educator
Nina King	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Craig Miller	Defenders of Wildlife
Wally Murphy	U.S. Forest Service
Alan May	USDA Wildlife Services
Jack Barnitz	Bureau of Land Management
Matt Colvin	Private citizen
Brandon Jones	Grant Co. Wildlife Services
Jack Childs	Depredation Committee
Tony Povilitis	Cochise Conservation Center
Lee Benson	National Park Service
Shelly Ryan	Student/ UC Extension
Adam Polley	AZ/NM Coalition of Counties
Larry Rutherford	PLAC
Bill Grossi	Bureau of Land Management
Alex Thal	Student/ WNMU
Josh Miller	Student/ UC Extension
Dave Rios	Student/ UC Extension
Dominic DiPaolo	Student/ UC Extension
Tom Witzgall	Student/ UC Extension
Carrie Johnson	Student/ UC Extension
Adrienne McCrumb	Student/ UC Extension
Laura Browning	U.S. Forest Service
Ralph Pope	U.S. Forest Service
Louis Pope	U.S. Forest Service
Steve Bless	Keeping Track, Inc
Sheril (Sam) Huselton	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Karen Schedler	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Ben Brown	Animas Foundation/Malpai Borderlands Group
Paul W. Pirtle	Depredation Committee
Chris Ortega	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Charles Jones	USDA Wildlife Services