

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Draft Summary Notes
Animas Community Center, Animas, New Mexico
Meeting Date: January 22, 1998

Introduction

The meeting was called to order by Terry Johnson, JAGCT Chair, at 9:02 a.m. Everyone introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

A. Opening comments and ground rules (Terry Johnson)

Ground rules were the same as for previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. This allows each person to be heard and keeps the meeting moving through the agenda. When votes are taken, only signatories to the Conservation Agreement may vote. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment, and in fact they are encouraged to comment, on any issues discussed.

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points (Terry Johnson)

No comments were made about the agenda and no additional discussion points were requested.

C. Discussion of summary notes from third JAGCT meeting on October 15 (Terry Johnson)

No comments were made or questions asked about the summary notes.

D. Discussion on proposed amendments to the Conservation Agreement (Terry Johnson)

Terry Johnson described two letters received by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) concerning the proposed amendment; the National Park Service supports the proposed amendment; and Arizona State Land requested some changes in the amendment. A third letter from Hidalgo County Commissioners notified the JAGCT that as of December 9, 1997 Hidalgo County has withdrawn as a signatory to the Conservation Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding but wishes to remain on the mailing list.

Similarity of Appearance

Arizona State Land Department presented written comments about the similarity of appearance statement in the proposed amendment. They believe this section is confusing and suggest deleting it, simplifying the language, or referencing the fact that it is not needed.

Participants discussed whether these changes would affect the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and were told it would not change ESA, only the Conservation Agreement.

A vote was then called on whether to adopt the amendment. All signatories present voted to

adopt the amendment version proposed by the Arizona State Land Department:

To address inadequate penalties for take of a non-listed jaguar in the United States, the Service considered listing the jaguar under the "Similarity of Appearance" provision of the Endangered Species Act. The Service deemed "Similarity of Appearance" inappropriate after considering the ramifications of such designation.

Take

Bruce Palmer, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), explained that the definition of "take" in the Conservation Agreement (CA) does not match the definition in the jaguar listing. The definition in the CA does not address habitat issues and the listing definition does, in accordance with ESA. According to Bruce, USFWS and indeed all federal agencies and all state agencies accepting federal funds must follow the legal definition of "take," and therefore cannot sign the CA unless an amendment recognizing the legal definition is added.

Discussion focused on whether the definition of "take" under ESA must be followed by everyone because it is law, and whether any definition of "take" in the CA could supersede that law. Participants also discussed who could and could not sign the CA if the proposed amendment were not passed. USFWS could not sign without the amendment. Any other federal agency, including the land management agencies, and all state agencies must also comply with federal law (i.e. the listing), so they would also have probably to withdraw if the amendment were not passed. However, all cooperators could choose to continue to participate in activities that were not affected by the "take issue," such as surveys, monitoring, and voluntary actions including some habitat improvements.

Some participants suggested continuing the CA with the current definition of "take" and not have the agencies participate. With no government agencies, the conservation team would truly be a voluntary agreement of private individuals.

Discussions about funding occurred. Participants wanted to know if funding would be reduced if the amendment were not incorporated into the CA. Funding from any federal agency would not be possible, but private donations could be developed.

Additionally, because the definition of "take" in the CA is inconsistent with ESA, environmental groups would likely oppose the CA.

Signatories to the CA then voted on whether to keep the "take" section as proposed in the amendment. Signatories voted in favor of the amendment as proposed:

It is recognized by the members of the Jaguar Conservation Team, that due to the listing of the jaguar as endangered on July 22, 1997 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the working definition for "take" within the Conservation Agreement does not supersede the federal definition as described in the final rule. Any actions regarding "take" must comply with the definition outlined within the final rule.

E. Task Reports:

1. Compilation of Jaguar Bibliography (Mike Pruss)

Mike Pruss, AGFD, handed out a revised list of jaguar publications. Participants were asked to provide Mike with titles of any publications not included in the summary. Steve Pavlik provided a single copy of a draft paper on *Rohonas and spotted lions: The occurrence of the jaguar (Pantera onca) among the native tribes of the American Southwest*, to incorporate.

Someone question whether AGFD or another agency would provide copies of publications to interested parties. Terry Johnson responded they could not, due to copyright laws. All they can do is provide copies of materials for which they hold copyrights, or which are not copyrighted, and citations for other materials (as in the bibliography) so people can track them down themselves more easily.

2. Contacting experts for Scientific Advisory Group (report by Terry Johnson)

All experts contacted for the Scientific Advisory Group have accepted a position in the group. They are: Carlos Lopez, Brian Miller, Howard Quigley, Alan Rabinowitz, Mike Tewes, and Raul Valdez. Materials developed by JAGCT will be forwarded to the Advisory Group for critical review.

3. Jaguar occurrence map and updates on AZ-NM sightings (Mike Pruss and Greg Schmitt)

No recent additions have been made to the Arizona Jaguar Occurrence Map. On October 18, hunters sighted and reported by cellular phone a jaguar in the Cerro Colorado Mountains (SW of Tucson), Arizona. A permit was issued to AGFD by USFWS to catch it and put on a radio collar. However, the jaguar evaded its pursuers and was not captured. Also, Robin Silver (Southwest Center for Biological Diversity) has mentioned a recent sighting in the Huachuca Mountains, but details

are not yet available. Mike Pruss will follow up on this.

Greg Schmitt handed out a compilation of sightings in New Mexico. There are no new sightings from New Mexico.

4. Kill verification activities (Warner Glenn)

No recent jaguar kills have occurred in Arizona. Three bighorn sheep were killed recently in New Mexico, but they appear to have been killed by lions.

The Phoenix Zoo and AGFD are sending Jack Childs and Matt Colvin (JAGWG members) to Brazil to learn techniques for determining jaguar kills. Their findings will be incorporated into the JAGCT kill verification protocol.

5. Handling protocol (Mike Pruss)

The handling protocol is final, unless more details are added after Matt and Jack's trip to Brazil. Remote cameras and scat analysis are also ongoing research efforts.

6. Habitat Identification (Mike Pruss)

Habitat literature has been sorted and AGFD is beginning to compile the information. No work has been done on characterizing habitat around historic sightings. Some data may be collected at those sites.

7. Educational material activities (Sue Krentz)

Sue Krentz presented a rough draft education package. She read a letter from a New Mexico State University professor suggesting the packet include information on the complexity of endangered species issues. Sue also mentioned she has not received comment from several education subcommittee members, thus the draft is not as far along as we had hoped it would be by now.

Karen Kay Husted, assisting Sue, suggested that education packets should incorporate critical thinking to be compatible with current curriculums. She suggests this packet, when fully developed, will be suitable for middle school to high school levels, but would need to be adapted for use in K-8.

Terry Johnson asked participants to comment to Sue on the packet within 30 days. Sue can then revise it and bring it to the next meeting. Terry also asked Mike Pruss to ensure that Kerry Baldwin, AGFD Education Chief, be asked to comment on the draft packet.

8. Increasing legal protection in Arizona (report by Terry Johnson)

On behalf of AGFD, Senator Pat Conner has introduced a bill to the Arizona legislature to increase civil penalties for killing, wounding, or possessing a jaguar. This law would come into effect only if the jaguar were removed from the federal endangered species list.

Participants in today's JAGCT meeting were encouraged to express their opinions on the Arizona bill to their legislators.

No comparable legislation is under consideration in New Mexico. This year the New Mexico legislature is focused on budget issues only. Next year they will address changes in law, but we do not yet have a commitment from any state agency to request increased protection for the jaguar.

F. World Wide Web Page (Terry Johnson)

The Arizona jaguar web page (at the AGFD website) is up and running (www.gf.state.az.us). Several JAGWG participants mentioned having checked it out. Final JAGCT meeting notes will be posted on this page in the future.

G. Other Business (Terry Johnson)

Funding continues to be an issue. The federal listing has not resulted in a single additional dollar for jaguar conservation work. AGFD solicited Heritage grant proposals from outside entities for site-specific habitat enhancements in FY98-99, but no proposals were submitted. AGFD also has funds available for habitat protection from a \$2.4 million annual allocation under Heritage. This money can be used for conservation easements or land acquisition for the jaguar. However, the Department does not solicit easements or acquisitions; the contact must be initiated by the landowner. Contact Sue Morgensen at AGFD (602 789-3486) if interested. Arizona State Parks also has Heritage money for conservation easements.

John Kiseda, of the El Paso Zoo, mentioned the American Zoo Association has a program to promote species survival and has money for species survival plans and for education. Terry Johnson offered to attend an AZA meeting to apprise them of what the JAGCT is doing, and identify possible areas of cooperation.

Raul Valdez discussed two research projects on jaguars in Southern Mexico. He knows of no actual jaguar conservation or habitat management programs in Mexico. One research project is being coordinated by Brian Miller of the Denver Zoo, and conducted by Mexican nationals. Raul will initiate field work in northeast Sonora this March. This work will be

mainly questionnaires.

Terry Johnson will discuss jaguar management with the Mexican government at a March 9-12 meeting of the Trilateral Commission.

USFWS is working on an outline for a Jaguar Recovery Plan. Once an outline is completed, it will be made available externally. USFWS is using the JAG CA as a template for the Recovery Plan, so the two efforts can move forward together.

USFWS Consultations: One consultation, the BLM Safford grazing plan, is completed. Another consultation, USDA Forest Service grazing, is underway. A third consultation, with Wildlife Services (which used to be named "Animal Damage Control"), should be completed in about three weeks. Someone questioned whether state game agencies are required to consult on big game permit numbers. Bruce Palmer replied that because USFWS permits the state agencies to work with endangered species, it would be considered an internal (informal) consultation. Terry Johnson reaffirmed the previously stated position that even in a recovery mode, jaguar take of big game prey would be so small as to be immeasurable. It could not and would not be considered in setting big game permit numbers. Thus, there is no consultation issue here.

Someone asked how the habitat information generated by JAGCT will be tied to the Recovery Plan. Bruce Palmer explained that USFWS will accept any information from anyone about jaguars. The habitat information is important and will be useful to USFWS, but USFWS must take all information and make its best decision.

The next JAGCT meeting will be April 23 in Douglas, Arizona.

Terry Johnson asked whether the sign-in sheet is still necessary. Some participants said they like to have the list. The list will therefore be continued. Terry Johnson agreed to send out the names on the entire mailing list (absent addresses) with the final meeting notes, so people could see how many folks are interested in this effort.

The January 22, 1998 JAGCT meeting adjourned at ca. 11:45 am.

Attendance Roster

Greg Schmitt	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Bruce Palmer	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Merhege	Bureau of Land Management-New Mexico
Jack Childs	Depredation Subcommittee
Matt Colvin	Depredation Subcommittee
Gabriel Paz	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Mike Pruss	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Gary Helbing	U.S. Forest Service
Warner Glenn	Rancher/Hunter/Malpai Borderlands Group
Larry Allen	U.S. Forest Service
Terry Frederick	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Don Cullum	Rancher
Larry Rutherford	Bootheel Heritage Association
Jeff Williamson	The Phoenix Zoo
Sue Krentz	Rancher/AZ State Cowbelles
Judy Keeler	Bootheel Association
Walt Saenyer	Chiricahua National Monument
Diego Villalba	New Mexico State Land Office
Chas Erickson	Arizona Cattle Growers
Lee A. Benson	National Park Service
Paul W. Pirtle	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Mira Gault	Rancher
Ron Bemis	NRCS Douglas
Bill Grossi	Bureau of land Management
Bill Moore	New Mexico Department
Ted Hagen	New Mexico Cattle Growers
Stephen Williams	Arizona State Land Department
Karen Kay Husted	Rancher/educator
Brandon Jong	Hidalgo County Wildlife Services
Peggy Boss	Rancher
Dan Fischer	Citizen
Keith Brust	Film Maker
Keel Price	Wildlife Services
Todd Schuke	Southwest Center for Biological Diversity
Karen Schedler	AZ Assoc. for learning in and about the environment
Dick George	The Phoenix Zoo
Celia Zoe Hackl	Student-UofA
Octavio Rosas	Biologist-Mexico
Steve Pavlik	Native American Historical Researcher
Raul Valdez	Jaguar Scientific Advisory Group

And various others who did not sign the sheet. Total attendance: ca. 80.

:bvp