

**Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT)**  
**Summary Notes for Meeting of September 25, 2008**

Meeting Location: Lordsburg, New Mexico

Final: October 6, 2008

JAGCT Chair Terry B. Johnson, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. local time.

1. 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. Only one person is allowed to speak at a time, and side conversations must be kept to a minimum. This allows each person to be heard and keeps the meeting moving through the agenda. Also, attendees should turn cellular telephones and beepers off or set them to vibrate. In the event of a call, please leave the room before conversing with the caller.

Anyone attending today's meeting may comment on any agenda item and all are encouraged to do so.

2. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

Copies of the agenda, meeting notes from the previous meeting, and past action items were not available for this meeting.

Past Action Items include:

- a. Post a copy of the Society of Mammalogists resolution regarding increased efforts for jaguar conservation in North America.
- b. Post revised MOU and list of signatories on the web-site.
- c. Re-post the Framework on the web-site.
- d. If interested in chairing, co-chairing, or participating on one of the committees, please submit a written response to Terry Johnson. The committees and chairs will be announced at the next JAGCT meeting. (*This Action Item* has been extended, as described in today's notes.)
- e. Invite Department of Homeland Security, Arizona Sector to participate in a future JAGCT to provide an Arizona perspective of border issues/plans.
- f. Re-post the jaguar habitat report for NM (specifically the Center for Biological Diversity report) on the web-site.

No additional items were added to the Agenda at this time.

Hidalgo County Soil and Water Conservation District expressed concern regarding meeting announcements and distribution of JAGCT documents. As has been explained before, information regarding jaguar conservation in the Southwest may be obtained on the JAGCT webpage at [http://www.azgfd.gov/w\\_c/es/jaguar\\_management.shtml](http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/es/jaguar_management.shtml). **To receive JAGCT's electronically distributed updates, including public notices of JAGCT meetings, please**

visit <http://www.azgfd.gov/signup> and subscribe to the newsletter, *Endangered Species Updates*. Email correspondence to the JAGCT should be addressed to the Chair ([teebeej@azgfd.gov](mailto:teebeej@azgfd.gov)) or to [jaguar@azgfd.gov](mailto:jaguar@azgfd.gov).

3. Update on draft final AGFD-NMDGF Jaguar Conservation Assessment

Terry Johnson reviewed the adjusted timeline for the Conservation Assessment. Comments are currently being reviewed and edits should be made by the end of October. The NMDGF will review the new draft Conservation Agreement by mid-November. Once comments have been incorporated, a new draft will be distributed one last time for JAGCT review. The JAGCT will have a 30-day review period.

4. Discussion of any ESA petitions, legal challenges, etc. pertaining to borderlands jaguars (e.g. critical habitat, recovery planning)

Terry reported that USFWS was in the process of conducting their 5-year assessment on the Endangered Species listing of the jaguar. Terry has not seen any results from this review. Terry will coordinate with Sherry Barrett to see when completion of the review is expected.

5. Reconstitution of JAGCT Committees and appointment of Chairs and Co-Chairs: Depredation, Education, Habitat, Monitoring, Outreach, Research

At this time, we are looking for people to chair committees, not just to participate on the committee. **ACTION ITEM:** Anyone interested in chairing one of these committees must notify Terry Johnson, in writing, before the January JAGCT meeting.

6. Updates on jaguar monitoring and reported sightings

New Mexico – No Class I or II sightings have been reported. Received 2 Class III (unverifiable) reports since last meeting. Both were second-hand accounts that have not been substantiated by the first-hand parties. One was a report of a black cat in Gila (may be the same report investigated by Emil McCain). Follow-up is still being conducted on the other account.

Arizona – No Class I or II sightings have been reported. Received 8 Class III (unverifiable) reports since the last meeting:

- April – from Colorado (confirmed mountain lion that was hit by a car)
- May – from Colorado (black animal about 50 lbs; also reported a jaguar/panther shot in Missouri)
- June - NW Tucson (description not likely to be jaguar)
- July – Tucson Mountains (black, report received week later)
- July – Catalina foothills, Tucson (3<sup>rd</sup> party report of a black animal 2 months after event, primary observer did not report)
- August – Anthem (photos sent in were of a bobcat)

- August - Parker Canyon Lake (black cat observed in the early 80's, prior to report of the one shot near Willcox)
- Sept – Dragoons (follow-up by Emil McCain; likely to be canine)

Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project – No new photographs since July 2007. Warner Glenn inquired about the border fence in the area where Macho B was last seen. Jack Childs reported that 7 miles of pedestrian fencing, combined with additional camera and vehicle barriers, occur throughout the area. The border fence may or may not be the cause of Macho B's disappearance (remember that his age is likely to be over 15 years old).

Jack and/or Emil McCain investigated 4 sighting reports since the last meeting. One turned out to be a dog in Cochise Stronghold; one was in the Sierrita Mountains with no jaguar evidence found during the field investigation; one of a black cat in NM, which turned out to be a house cat; and another sighting that turned out to be a canine. Jack also reported that the BJDP is still losing cameras due to increased human activity and vandalism along the border.

A question was raised as to whether a formal protocol exists for when a jaguar is spotted on private land and if the landowner is notified. There are 3 very similar, yet separate, protocols or actions routinely used for these purposes: Jaguar Handling Protocol, Jaguar Capture Guidelines, and Jaguar Ranking Criteria. The Jaguar Ranking Criteria is the only document that has been formally finalized. The others have been in existence since 1996, but have not been formally adopted by the JAGCT. Each document describes the criteria used to classify the event and how to move forward based on that assessment. The current draft Handling Protocol states:

*For Class I observations (those with physical evidence or deemed as high probability of an actual jaguar) every measure should be taken to maintain confidentiality of the site. At the same time, notification of affected landowners and persons conducting legal trapping activities in the immediate vicinity of the sighting should occur as deemed appropriate by the JAGCT state wildlife agency representative.*

Note: "Affected landowners" includes livestock permittees on public lands, as well as the land management agency.

Finalizing the Jaguar Handling Protocol and the Jaguar Capture Guidelines are action items for the Habitat and Depredation committees. This is why it is important to establish formal chairpersons for these committees, so that we can begin to move forward with these sorts of efforts. **Action Item:** Continue this discussion at the next JAGCT meeting.

Additionally, a discussion ensued regarding the reliability of sightings and how most of the reports appear to be unreliable (Class II and III) observations. While this is undoubtedly the case, JAGCT protocols are to report all Class I (verifiable) reports at JAGCT meetings.

Although Class II and Class III reports do not have to be reported at meetings, many of these are included in our reports to indicate that the proper protocols are being followed. The state wildlife agencies agree that these should not be construed to mean anything other than the classification assessed at the time of the report.

7. Discussion of tentative dates and locations for the next JAGCT meetings: January 22, 2009; May 21, 2009; September 24, 2009.

The January meeting will occur near the Altar Valley, AZ. The May meeting will be in Lordsburg, NM. The September meeting will be in Douglas, AZ. Specific locations will be announced prior to each meeting.

8. Other Business

#### Mexico Activities

Sky Island Alliance activities – Sergio Avila reported on their camera efforts south of the international border. They continue to work closely with private landowners in the region. The project has signed MOUs with a number of landowners, adding up to approximately 40,000 acres of land believed to be a corridor for jaguar movements to the U.S. They have 25 photos of 3 individual ocelots, at least one male, within 30 miles of the border. The project has documented 20 mammal species. No jaguars have been photographed, but tracks have been identified. The project has 21 cameras deployed. Although they have not lost any cameras to vandalism, 6 were lost due to floods.

Sergio also announced that the Sierra Club has produced a documentary, *Wild vs Wall*, regarding the jaguar and border issues. If you would like a copy, please e-mail Sergio at [sergio@skyislandalliance.org](mailto:sergio@skyislandalliance.org).

Northern Jaguar Project – Additional lands have been purchased. In addition, it was reported that jaguars have been confirmed on these new lands. Also, the group announced that they have been coordinating with Mexican radio stations regarding use of spot-advertisements for promoting jaguar conservation across northern Mexico. The radio stations have expressed an interest and are willing to run these spot ads as long as they do not infer any negative connotations toward ranchers in Northern Mexico. The group would like to work with the JAGCT to produce these ads.

Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project, publication – A great deal of concern was raised regarding comments in recent publications indicating potential for “resident jaguars in Arizona.” The intent of the comments was not to indicate that there is a resident population of jaguars; only that the evidence (such as sent-marking and long-time occurrence of Macho B in the state) increases potential for other jaguars to be in the area. Additionally, it was explained that Jack and Emil would have liked to have coordinated project findings better than what may have occurred, but there were additional pressures to get the publications out because of the border-fence issues.

At this time, the group began discussion on the border-fence issue, specifically Dr. Alan Rabinowitz's comments that the border fence had little to no effect on the jaguar and that sample sizes from the Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project were too small to indicate resident jaguar populations. Terry explained that any comment from Dr. Rabinowitz should have been made directly to the authors (giving them a chance to rebut before further distribution) or to the Journal of Mammalogy as a review of the McCain and Childs publication.

13. Close Meeting

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm.