

20060508 SCB meeting
Led by VP Katie McHugh

- 1) Preparation for Int'l SCB meeting at the end of June 24 – 28th in San Jose, CA
 - a. Volunteers? Need a complete list this week. Need as many people as possible. Volunteers will answer questions about chapters, sell tickets to a chapter social gathering at local pub with live music. Tickets are \$5 each.
 - i. Evan, Mariah, Becky, Elizabeth, Barbara?
 - b. Local pub – chapter's night Monday night the 26th organized by DC chapter Real Sippin' Whiskeys performing. Drink tickets and a buffet of appetizers. Know of anywhere funds could be raised for the night? If so contact Ingrid (ibhogle@mindspring.com).
 - c. Chapters workshop is on the 24th 1-4pm Representatives from chapters all over the world will be presenting (including our own president Rodd)
 - d. Rodd needs help from volunteers to get materials ready for the chapter booth (photo mosaic, binder of mini posters, etc). He needs a few people to help him organize materials for an hour here or there (not necessarily conference attendees) email Rodd if interested trkelsey@ucdavis.edu. This material will be viewed by an international audience!
- 2) Update: SCB Int'l has matched our grant for our Sister Chapter in Bolivia for Conference attendees. This is the last year, though. Matched gift of \$750.
- 3) Officer nominations:
 - a. President: Pete
 - b. VP: Christiana
 - c. Treasurer: Becky
 - d. Secretary: April
 - e. Voting will be between now and our next meeting. Send any further nominations along to Rodd. There might be more not mentioned here. If you're an SCB member look for the email about voting. Officers have to be members of the Int'l society, but it only costs \$10.

Presentation from Marianne Owens from FWS in Sacramento, works on San Joaquin valley ESA consultations, primarily section 7 with Fed. Section 10 with private Kit fox is one of the many species she works on

Marianne contacted Rodd because she was looking for someone to review San Joaquin kit fox conservation strategy.

This species is endemic to the central valley, ranges as far north as Contra Costa co., south as far as Kern Co. Her project deals with the northern range. Not representing FWS opinions here.

This is a desert species that has now been pushed up to the margins of its historic range. San Joaquin valley is mostly converted to agriculture. The kit fox has been pushed up into the foothills. Observation indicates population are declining
Western Merced pinch point – want to maintain foxes to the north and south
Stanislaus is a location that is unknown.

HCP in Western Merced area, approved in Fed FWS office, State office didn't like because it didn't meet basic CEQA criteria. Defenders of wildlife have been investigation that Section 10 consultation

Marianne looking at section 7 consultation – there will need to be a strong basis for the recommendations made. Current status is informal consultation.

Recovery plan published in 1998, created in 1996. 152 is a major freeway – obstacle even prior to development. Idea might be to use canals as pas through for kit foxes, but now that area is being developed.

Developers have talked Bureau of Reclamation into serving as the federal nexus for their projects. Odd situation because developers want take protection, but irrigation district is also watching.

In the section 10 consultation, 100 feet off canal is an acceptable corridor. Developers are agreeing to put in 3-5 acre protected areas as “escape areas”. Developers would like to use a dam mitigation area for preserve, but the area in question contains many red fox, which are a kit fox predator.

Contra Costa and alameda have also been developing – some consider it to be a kit fox sink.

Recovery plan is 10 years old now.

Central Valley Project improvement act – gives funding for kit fox surveys. Kit fox were not observed moving through the corridors in the bottleneck.

The last genetic work done indicated that the foxes are breeding between the northern and southern populations (work ~yr2000).

Bakersfield populations prefer disturbance areas (i.e. construction). But Kit foxes haven't been spotted in those areas in the bottleneck area.

One suggestion is to take the population to the west of the dam, but this would be more likely in a drought year.

One concern is that the development will attract coyotes, which are a kit fox predator.

Juveniles disperse at least 10 miles (more in the south). Might depend on natal density. Kit fox mortality is 60-80%. The problem is where do kit foxes disperse?

The Section 10 consolation is 183 acres. Merced Co. is not involved in habitat conservation planning.

Other species listed? Blunt nosed leopard lizard, Swainson's hawk, Burrowing owl, Red-legged frog and tiger salamander.

How important is the northern population?

Protection has generally been focused on the west side. There is a dispersal corridor for the east side through the developments, but this is the area with the most kit fox observations. The land is also more economically valuable, though. Some discussion of only partial development.

There've never been jeopardy opinions written for the kit fox. Because of their high dispersal the argument has always been that they could go somewhere else.

Concern about who holds the conservation easements. Is it harder to challenge private entity or the state?

Developers have to have compensation done up front, so bureau of reclamation will likely maintain the lead on the project.

Is it worth fighting this fight when larger areas could be protected in the south?

Scat dogs were used years ago in the Tracy area and nothing was detected.

At this point the surveys that were done funded by Bureau of Reclamation are the only planned surveys, and those have been completed.

Plan would be handed to conservation biologists and in addition take input on the plan that they're coming up with.

Keep in touch with Maryanne if interested Maryanne_owens@fws.gov.