

## MEETING MINUTES

### Coordinating Committee Meeting Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

Thursday, June 11, 2020

1:00 PM

Held via video conference

1. **Attendees:** Michael Tome, USGS; Timothy Schaeffer, PFBC; Andrew Shiels, PFBC; Matthew Schnupp, PGC; David Eissenstat, PSU; representatives from USFWS and WMI absent
2. **Minutes from July 11, 2019 meeting approved**
3. **Completed Projects (Summaries in Appendix A)**
  - 3.1. Wagner
    - 3.1.1. Spatio-temporal drivers of fish growth
  - 3.2. Walter
    - 3.2.1. Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) ecology, population estimation, and health
    - 3.2.2. Assessment of fence-line interactions at the captive-wild deer interface
4. **New & Continuing Projects (\* Requires approval by Committee; See Appendix B)**
  - 4.1. Diefenbach
    - 4.1.1. Harvest and survival rates of hen wild turkeys in Pennsylvania
    - 4.1.2. Genetics of an insular population of bobcats and coyotes
    - 4.1.3. Deer abundance and its relationship to factors that affect forest vegetation conditions
    - 4.1.4. Distribution of predators and their relation to fawn survival
    - 4.1.5. \*Monitoring movements and habitat use of snowshoe hare
    - 4.1.6. \*Changes in forest composition through time due to charcoal production for the iron industry, tree harvest, and deer browse
  - 4.2. Wagner
    - 4.2.1. An investigation into the role of groundwater as a point source of emerging contaminants to smallmouth bass in the Susquehanna River
    - 4.2.2. Spatial and temporal analysis of endocrine disrupting compounds in surface waters of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
    - 4.2.3. A macrosystems ecology framework for continental-scale prediction and understanding of lakes
    - 4.2.4. Fish habitat restoration to promote adaptation: resilience of sport fish in lakes of the Upper Midwest
    - 4.2.5. \* Determining the consequences of land management actions on primary drivers influencing smallmouth bass populations
    - 4.2.6. \* Changes in stream fish distribution and occurrence in seven National Park Service units of the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network

- 4.2.7. \* Diet composition of invasive flathead catfish in the Susquehanna River Basin: quantifying impacts on native and migratory fishes and recreational fisheries
- 4.2.8. \* Quantifying the roles of changing watershed conditions and biotic interactions in structuring Pennsylvania stream fish communities
- 4.2.9. \* Forecasting aquatic invasions in rivers: using riverscapes genetics to inform invasive fish species management at regional scales

#### 4.3. Walter

- 4.3.1. The effects of targeted removal of deer groups on the epidemiology of chronic wasting disease in wild white-tailed deer in Pennsylvania
- 4.3.2. Epidemiology of West Nile virus in ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)
- 4.3.3. Phase II: Genetic assignment of white-tailed deer to population of origin
- 4.3.4. \*Optimizing CWD Surveillance: Regional Synthesis of Demographic, Spatial, and Transmission-Risk Factors
- 4.3.5. \*Parturition timing and calf survival in Pennsylvania elk
- 4.3.6. \*Minnesota white-tailed deer genetics within chronic wasting disease areas
- 4.3.7. \*Linking Genetics to Movements of White-tailed deer to Assist Surveillance for Chronic Wasting Disease

### 5. **Proposed Budget – (provided at meeting)**

### 6. **Roster of Current Graduate Students and Post-Doctoral Researchers**

#### 6.1. Diefenbach

- 6.1.1. Asia Murphy, PhD Ecology
- 6.1.2. Amanda Van Buskirk, MS Ecology

#### 6.2. Wagner

- 6.2.1. Shannon White, Postdoc
- 6.2.2. Catherine McClure, MS Ecology
- 6.2.3. Danielle Massie, MS WFS
- 6.2.4. Tyler Thompson, MS Wildlife and Fisheries

#### 6.3. Walter

- 6.3.1. Diego Montecino-Latorre, Postdoc
- 6.3.2. Avery Corondi, MS WFS
- 6.3.3. Joe Moran, PhD Ecology

### 7. **Service on Graduate Committees (other than advisees)**

#### 7.1. Diefenbach

- 7.1.1. Laken Gano, MS Wildlife and Fisheries
- 7.1.2. Danielle Massey, MS WFS
- 7.1.3. Arun Regmi, PhD Forest Science
- 7.1.4. Michael Perkins, MS Forest Science
- 7.1.5. Samuel Bayuzick, MS Soils

#### 7.2. Wagner

- 7.2.1. Courtney Davis, PhD Ecology

- 7.2.2. Nathan Wikel, PhD Statistics
- 7.2.3. Amanda Van Buskirk, MS Ecology
- 7.3. Walter
  - 7.3.1. Ellen Brandell, PhD Ecology
  - 7.3.2. Walter Espindola, PhD Ecology

## **8. Courses and Workshops Taught by Unit Staff**

- 8.1. Diefenbach
  - 8.1.1. Population Estimation and Modeling, spring 2020
- 8.2. Wagner
  - 8.2.1. Quantitative Methods in Ecology, spring 2019
- 8.3. Walter
  - 8.3.1. Applied Spatial Ecology in R (workshop), March 2020

## **9. Comments from Cooperators**

- 9.1. **USGS** – This year Congress increased the CRU appropriation by \$5.6 million in support of filling scientist vacancies. Hiring is slow and it takes 4-6 months to get lists of candidates once a position has been advertised. Consequently, this FY there were substantial funds to support research. The Chief of CRU position has remained unfilled for the past year, although a decision is to be announced soon.
- 9.2. **PSU** – Faculty hires now require approval at the Provost’s level, but the several endowed chair positions in ESM will be filled. One hire will be someone with wildlife habitat management expertise.
- 9.3. **PGC** – The PGC has hired a number of new biologists, such as a bear biologist when Mark Ternent accepted a promotion to the Regional Office. Matt Lovallo will be promoted so they will be seeking to fill a furbearer biologist position. The Wildlife Futures program has hired a liaison position and are working on 2 other positions. Six disease surveillance technicians will be hired to assist each region with collection of specimens.
- 9.4. **PFBC** – The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed trout season but the agency was able to complete trout stocking this spring. License sales are up 17% over last year. The agency is filling several positions (outreach, habitat management, and water allocation). An Aquatic Invasive Species coordinator is a new position for the agency. The trout management plan is out for public comment and Pennsylvania is hosting the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference in 2021 in Hershey (25-27 April). Fieldwork is occurring as counties are elevated to “green” under the governor’s pandemic guidelines. The state record for flathead catfish was caught in the Delaware River – previous record was caught in the Susquehanna River. Snakeheads have breached the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River and the agency is trying to eradicate.

## **10. Adjourn**

## **11. An Executive Session of the Coordinating Committee was held immediately after adjournment**

- 11.1. **New Projects were approved and project approval forms signed via email**

## **Appendix A – Abstracts of Completed Projects**

Appendix B – Summaries of New and Continuing Projects

Appendix C – Awards, Publications, and Presentations