



**NGLC Conference Call  
Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008**

**MINUTES**  
Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition  
Conference Call  
Dec. 16, 2008  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST

**Conference Call Information**  
Conference Call: 866-657-8241  
Participant Passcode: 4751659

The meeting was called to order by member Lynn Myers at 10:25 a.m. Present on the call were:

Bob Broweleit  
Twila Phillips  
Jim Luchsinger  
Ross Garwood  
Lynn Myers  
Scott Cotton (joined)  
Sherry Vinton (joined)  
Tamara Choat

*Mitch Stevenson reported he had a final and could not participate. Rod Christian and Michelle Wendell also reported they were not able to be on the call.*

Ross Garwood moved to accept the minutes from the Nov. 10 meeting as sent out by Tamara. Jim Luchsinger seconded. Motion passed.

Tamara Choat provided an update on the joint committee working on the bus tour with South Dakota. Per the Nov. 10 meeting, a committee of Scott Cotton, Dana Larsen and Tamara Choat will be working with the South Dakota delegation, consisting of Judge Jessop, Kyle Schell and Dan Rasmussen, to plan a joint bus tour. The proposed date and location are sometime around July 20, 2009, and the tour will include stops around Yankton, SD as well as northeast Nebraska. South Dakota normally sets a specific topic theme for their tours each year, and this year they have considered grass finished beef operations. The South Dakota delegates have proposed four potential stops, two in Nebraska and two in South Dakota. We are currently still in discussion stages, and will plan to continue the conversation with SD via email then schedule a conference call when Dana is available.

Concerning the tour, Lynn Myers mentioned we should pursue the themed topic, but be sure to portray the fact that as a coalition we are proposing grass-finished operations as an option, not endorsing the practice as the only method.

Tamara reported on the Nov. 10 meeting she and Jim Carr had with Kyle Graham and Jim Van Winkle of the Sandhills Task Force. The STF is interested in the work of NGLC in developing a Sandhills Network, and creating an informal group modeled similar to that in the Southeastern corner (Rod Christian's group).

Jim Luchsinger noted that he and Dana Larsen both serve on the Sandhills Task Force board, and that making this bridge between the organizations is a logical step, as the Task Force has a program in existence for getting young producers back on the ranch, and has also had a mentor team working with producers for several years. There are quite a few people associated with the Task Force who would serve well as mentors. In the past, a group of STF members who are also designated as NGLC Stewards have held informal pasture walks on various ranches. These events have good attendance, and we should pursue the option of working with members of this core group to build on these events in the Sandhills. Tamara made a note to contact these core members to start the development of additional projects.

Scott Cotton joined the call and assumed leadership duties as Vice Chairman.

Concerning the Sandhills RC&D Carbon Credit meetings, Bob Broweleit reported he is working with Bethany Johnson and others to organize the meetings. The plan now is to wait until Feb. and see what direction the carbon credit market is going, pending the new administration. Scott mentioned he has seen interest slowing due to the economy, but there has still been significant acreage in the Panhandle enrolled. Also discussed was the new Supreme Court ruling: EPA has the right and responsibility to manage greenhouse gases. Point and non-point source relating to cattle emissions, and carbon sequestration percentage were also discussed. Consensus was that it is important to wait until new administration is in place.

Although it was not discussed in the meeting but was on the agenda, for the purpose of maintaining records it should be noted that the Tier One credit card applied for, per board approval in July 2008, was approved. Tamara now has an NGLC credit card to be used for budgeted NGLC items and travel.

Minutes and a summary from the Nov. 24 Conference Call of the Membership Policy Committee were emailed to the board earlier from Tamara. Review of this committee meeting was passed over as Jim Carr was not present to discuss.

Tamara reported on the Imperial Drought Meeting held Nov. 19, in conjunction with Nadine Bishop, NRCS District Conservationist. More than 30 people attended. Speakers included: Jerry Volesky, Bruce Troester and Walt Davis.

Tamara discussed the draft design of the new web site home page, which was emailed to the group earlier.

Scott offered to send high res. photos to use on the web site; also mentioned that if we do not purchase any photos used to be sure to get copyright permission. Lynn wondered about status of the [www.CowboyLogic.org](http://www.CowboyLogic.org) web site. Tamara reported that the CowboyLogic.org website URL will remain in existence, but the site will be reformatted to be included within the new NGLC site, but still maintain a separate identity as an individual site on its own.

Scott suggested we add preliminary contact information to the bottom of the home page. Discussion followed about possibly adding other logos to the home page, such as Sandhills RC&D, The Nature Conservancy and other in-kind sponsors.

Tamara said that initial planning of the site has been done with the following audience in mind:

1. Users of the steward network
2. Landowners interested in conservation and stewardship events

Scott mentioned that we should be sure to focus on the mission statement of NGLC to direct the image and impression of the home page, and go back to the premise of why we were created and who we are. With this in mind, perhaps we should save logos for an internal "Partners" page. Other GLCI groups have made a strong effort to make it clear they are producer-led organizations. We should follow our by-laws and be sure to focus on grassland managers as our identity. Give outstanding recognition of sponsors on other pages, but not on home page.

Jim L. noted a lot of the groups who support us do it with the understanding that the focus of our group is landowners and ranchers, not partner groups. He noted that at some level the partners need to be mentioned. He works for a conservation organization, and there is often a lot of misunderstanding among ranchers. The bottom line is the only way we are going to make any meaningful progress it to confront stereotypes and march forward. He added he would be the last to suggest the logo should be front and center. However, as we move forward, we need to confront the issue. Take care of the people who brought you there.

Tamara requested confirmation of the group, and received approval, that the home page should follow the following guidelines:

1. Focus home page on original mission statement.
2. Strengthen Partnership page. Possibly add additional menu tab specifically for Partners.
3. Provide deadline for feedback on all items for approval.

Draft designs of business cards were emailed earlier to the group. Ross moved to accept the business cards. Lynn seconded. Motion passed. Tamara will order a supply of 50-100/per member and mail them to each board member. Stationary costs were discussed; Tamara will send out a cost estimate for letterhead and envelopes to the board. NGLC note cards for correspondence and thank yous and promotional cards were discussed. Tamara will also send out an estimate on these items to the board, although the order has already been placed under an assumed NGLC promotional material expense.

Nominations for the 4<sup>th</sup> National Grazing Conference were discussed. Scott will send Tamara the RFP information; she will review the information and determine the best course of action based on the list of potential nominees approved at the Nov. 10 meeting.

Tamara reported she is waiting for feedback on bids for an Annual Report design.

Tamara reported she sent a document providing an overview of several Nebraska conservation award programs to the board. Discussion of the ESAP award program followed, as the deadline for that award is Feb. 25. It was decided to add discussion of our own award to a future agenda and possibly give two awards – grazing management award and mentor award. Need partnership to support award financially. Discussion followed on whether an applicant should be nominated or complete their own application for the ESAP award. Jim Luchsinger moved to put a nomination forward. Ross seconded. Motion passed. Tamara will send out email to board, stewards and list serv asking for nominees for the ESAP award.

Scott reported on the Prairie Dog ESA comments, as Sherry Vinton was not on the call yet. A group is moving forward to get prairie dogs listed as endangered. Should we format a group of comments to present to the ESA? Jim L. noted that NGLC is a collaboration of organizations, which will likely have varying viewpoints on the subject. Perhaps treat it as an informational issue, encourage our partners to treat it as such. Take a stance toward the side of creating partnerships, working forward to address issues. Make it a little more generic than direct feedback and what stance we should take. Encourage people to address this on an individual basis and not take a defined stance one way or another.

Additional comments were that this is a grazing issue, however, we need to promote this from an individual basis. Also, tie everything back to mission statement and protect against internal strife. If we take a stance one way or another we'll alienate some of the key people within NGLC. It's a problem, but it depends on which side of the coin you're on, and we're trying to represent more than one point of view within the organization. Our voice should be that a solution should be a win-win.

Jim L. made a motion: NGLC recognizes that putting prairie dogs on the Endangered Species list is a topic of importance and we encourage our partners to take a stand as they wish, but the NGLC will not take a formal position on the issue. Discussion followed. Sherry Vinton joined the call, and provided information on the petitioner, Wild Earth Guardians and said the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is requesting feedback and comments regarding the black-tailed prairie dog; deadline for comments is Feb. 2, 2009. Sherry promoted taking a side on the issue one way or another and stated it is a grazing issue, as Wild Earth Guardians state on their web site that livestock production is the number one detriment to prairie dogs. Discussion followed concerning the pros and cons of a collaborative group such as the NGLC taking a stance. Lynn moved to table the issue until the next meeting. Sherry seconded the motion. Motion passed, effectively removing the active motion from the floor.

A press release from the FWS explaining the issue is available at:

<http://www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=F9488563-E86C-8E4C-17FD5B1D03BFE57E>

Tamara presented the initial idea for a Monitoring Methods Comparison workshop idea brought forward by Jim Carr. The idea is to have a one-day workshop comparing three or four different methods of pasture monitoring, possibly including:

- UNL Extension (Beth and Cindy)
- UNL Extension (Scott)
- NRCS (Dana)
- Charley Orchard

Scott mentioned a challenge would be it is difficult to get through *one* method in an afternoon, much less three or four different methods in one day. Lynn and Scott commented on the need for methods to be cowboy friendly. The topic was tabled until the next meeting, pending additional information from Jim C.

Tamara reported that a second drought meeting has been scheduled in Arthur for Jan. 29, in conjunction with Norma Van Nostrand, NRCS Conservationist out of Arthur. The proposed program will run from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; NGLC will cover the cost of one or two speakers, as well as lunch. This workshop will qualify as one of our network meetings.

Tamara requested feedback on attending the Cattlemen's Classic Show in Kearney to satisfy VAA grant requirements. Suggestions for other shows included the Buffalo Bill Farm & Ranch Expo in North Platte Feb. 4-5 in North Platte and also the Gudmunsen Ranch Tour on Jan. 27. It was determined that the Cattlemen's Classic will likely reach the same audience as the NE Cattlemen's convention just attended. Scott mentioned we should still consider the option of attending the ICON 2009 convention as well. Tamara will look into both the Buffalo Bill and the Gudmunsen options to fill our grant requirements as soon as possible, and we will get information on the next ICON when the time is closer.

Twila provided the Treasurer's Report; the ending balance on Dec. 10 was \$9,938. Two large grants came in the first part of December and a lot of bills were paid. In future we need to make sure all board members get a copy of the Treasurers Report. Tamara will be responsible for this.

Lynn moved to adjourn at 12:45 p.m. CST. Sherry seconded. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.

**A January meeting time/place was not determined. Agenda items for the meeting include:**

- NGLC Award Program
- Prairie dog comments
- NGLC "Who We Are" Summary
- 2009 Plan of Action
- Summary of Nov. 24 Membership Policy conference call

Respectfully submitted,  
Tamara Choat  
NGLC Coordinator  
December 16, 2008