

NCPARC Research, Inventory, Monitoring, and Management (RIMM)  
Working Group Meeting

January 25, 2006, 1 p.m.

310 Eberhardt Building, UNC-Greensboro

Attendees: Sarah Cross, Lori Williams, Mike Dorcas, John Groves, Alvin Braswell, Jeff Beane, Jeff Hall, Dennis Herman, Jerry Reynolds, Grover Barfield, Ann Somers, Brian Ball, Charles Bryan, Kim Coffey, George Harper, Jennifer Harper, Ed Laurent, Veronica Miller, Steven Price, David Cooper, Zach Orr, Dave Stephan, Leigh Ann Harden, Kristen Cecala, Dave Woodward, Kendrick Weeks

Meeting came to order at 1:10 p.m.

Intro and Welcome: SC: what PARC is, why we are here; inclusive org. yet national, too; industry to academia to researchers to collectors; NC chapter started 2 years ago; website, Mike Dorcas webmaster; ncparc.org; easier URL; find out plans and what we've been doing; also find out about SEPARC and national chapter; RIMM acronym for our working group; what's the point? Get everyone together; researchers, others interesting in these topics; share info, share data, share updates for projects; ideas for grad students; guide for future research, etc. today is the first meeting of RIMM; we will steer the direction of our group; we have a need for a chairman for this group; question of conflict of interest for Sarah? Not as big a problem in this group; Mike Dorcas already nominated; to be voted on later....

MD: we are all in agreement that we will have this working group (unofficial motions made and mock vote taken—all agreed); we all agree that this group is an important thing to do; one thing that is important is information access that is easy to get....research going on, data collected, what's in the literature, etc.; facilitate cooperation among researchers; support research among students; etc. (Mike addressing the list on the agenda) ; so, what else do we need to be thinking of?

AB: identify agencies or organizations who are engaged in research? By doing so, we may ID additional people who should be in this group. Example: Highlands Biological Station.

DH: someone from the Heritage Program, State Parks would be good to have here

MD: so, one goal is to make a database of who's doing herp research in the state...whatever capacity that may be...even amateur herpers who are collecting

EL: comment about having simple forms for researchers to fill out; could be linked to website;

AB: what about out-of-state researchers? This group would still like to know about what is being done; some researchers however don't want much attention to what they are doing until they are more complete

DH: good example of data clearinghouse is with the bog turtle database that the WRC is working on with PBT

MD: I also can envision a bibliography of NC herp literature; even gray literature might be of value; we can remove sensitive info so it won't be published

DH: with D.O.T. files, there are data that WRC do not have

MD: power companies, other industries also have lots of data that would be of value to us

AB: the goals listed are good; enough to keep us busy for a while

MD: overlap with some goals; specific objectives and general objectives; generally, we want to facilitate conservation research in NC

DH: how do these goals compare with SEPARC? Similar?

SC: looked online; no longer on the web; not sure what happened to the goals that were posted on the web

DH: it would be good to mirror their goals

SC: one thing they are doing that is similar is allowing researchers to "register" online as a herp researcher in the SE

MD: comments about SC Herp Conference....periodically having something like that would be a good way for people to network and share ideas and research topics

DH: could go with the annual NCPARC meeting anyway

AB: or the NC Academy of Sciences conference?

MD: maybe a NC Herp Symposium in the future

JG: we need to be considerate of not adding even more meetings....we all go to so many anyway

MD: will NCPARC meetings be annual?

SC: yes; the Herp Society already exists but we want to distinguish and yet mesh with NC Herp Society; we didn't want NCPARC to replicate the workings of the Herp

Society; more of a training or workshop-type meeting for NCPARC, even for folks who have no prior experience with herps

DH: spring Herp Society meeting is general; fall meeting is topic-specific

SC: we want to make sure the NCPARC meeting is not redundant with Herp Society meeting; giving papers, etc; workshop one day, papers given the second.

AB: even a workshop on how to give a paper, for students, would be beneficial

DH: plan to rotate the NCPARC meeting around the state?

SC: yes, that's our plan; Bob Flook also suggested that one year we have a NCPARC meeting in conjunction with Herp Day at the museum

MD: we've been addressing the meeting and WG goals; we've been discussing #1 and #2....are there other ideas in terms of facilitating herp conservation research in the state?

KW: mitigation projects; monitoring sites? Opportunities for research with EEP or any other groups who contract for them; wetland monitoring.....lots of chances for herp work

DH: most consultants know very little about how to monitor herps, how to do the work, etc.; many don't know what they are looking at; workshops to train EEP and other consultants would be very beneficial

AS and MD: and others....agree that would be a great idea. Wetland restoration sites...more benefits than just looking at water or water quality, etc.

DS: we have a member in the Herp Society who is a consultant who can do herp surveys in mitigation work; he may be one to talk to...name is Steve Stokes; works for KCI; could help organize a workshop

SC: umbrella org. or website for consultants?

DH: I could find out who D.O.T. uses; probably an organization they all belong to; very few have herp people; good botanists

AB: many are out-of-state who work in state; many don't want to leave their desk, but some do want to get out and do herp stuff

KW: National Association of Environmental Professionals is the organization that most consultants belong to

JH: we've offered workshops at Cool Springs where many consultants were interested in this kind of thing

MD: herp surveys are more fun than just measuring water quality! Most of these folks would agree

AB: wetland, ephemeral pond workshop coming up in October; restoration and mitigation type people would go to that; another group who deals with management

BB: it will come down to money with these management folks; if they don't have to look at herps, they may not want to spend the money to do it

AB: getting them informed would be a big step, however

MD: any other ideas?

SC: literature, bibliography.....Herp Society newsletter...how does that work?

JB: stuff in the major journals...NC related work or what might be interesting to NC folks; just citations, not the articles in hard copies, at least not most of them

Group agrees that this would be very useful to have....even gray lit that doesn't make it in database searches....NC bib would be huge

DH: I could do the bog turtle one....

MD: there are some starting points that could help...compilations already existing

GB: isn't Keith Farmer doing this within the Herp Society?

DH: he is doing the archives

AB: what about grad student who is doing a species specific project?

JG: if we could get it online, people could add into the list as things were found or things came up

AS: so we are looking for all literature about NC species?

AB: no, just articles about work done in NC on NC species

AS: it would make sense to provide access to it all...

AB: we should structure it as a general list, keep groupings together; a project that will never be complete, but that's OK

MD: should we form a small group of folks to work on this

AB: what about where this will be housed? Longevity? Consistency?

MD: I think we are talking about a web-based system not a file system for hard copies

AB: we need to ID where reprints are, too

MD: we could put sources for the info on the web, so people could contact them for a copy

MD: other things? One thing I've been talking about...a herp atlas program...other states have done it or are doing it...better understand distribution within the state and to get people involved...keep it simple...with web tech we have, we can facilitate a lot of this stuff so it's easy for people to participate...online..digital cameras...GPS coordinates..etc.; we are hoping to get that up and running; should be a NCPARC initiative; talk of making it a Carolina atlas; we don't know much about SC distribution at all; this website is one thing we are working on at Davidson; we hope people will be able to log in and view data; rudimentary online GIS; could look up species specific info;

DH: what about sensitive species?

MD: you would only be able to look at your data; would have to submit a request for specifics; also would be rough scale, county level distribution info

BB: would a photo be required?

MD: we'd accept records without photos, especially from folks in this room; validity in question? More valuable records would be those with photos

AB, DH: comments about quality control; questioning records, evaluating person who submitted it...sometimes a problem at the museum

AB: level of validity? Catalog number, specimen number, actual voucher, etc.; to qualify the record

MD: we don't want to ask for too much info from the public...don't ask public for "location" rather directions to the spot; but, we don't want to ask too much; inverse relationship between complexity and participation; Google maps, all the satellite tech we have now, we can get location info easily; the programmer doing this work for us has a link to a database...weather database...4-D weather views...can type in location and automatically the weather conditions would be entered...type in address, and the map would zoom in to location

Group discussion about sensitive info, protecting sites, species.....

AB: in order to protect a site or species, a little disclosure is necessary

MD: right, and for the vast majority of the species in NC, this in not an issue

JG: what about Freedom of Information requirements?

AB: not count here; public trust; in public's best interest NOT to publish sensitive info

DH: people who know what they are doing, if they want to find a sensitive species, they will; example with bogs on Heritage website

AB: part of the risk we need to take

MD: (refocus our direction) what else? Current initiatives?

SC: frog call project....gen. info...NAAMP protocol....national program..USGS...structured like BBS routes....bugs worked out...database system...random routes that NAAMP has chosen...can go online and report data...we are in the first sampling window right now...we are beginning this project now...good for filling in gaps of distribution, getting gen. public involved and increase awareness...this first year is mostly herp community folks running routes, second year we will recruit from gen. public...online quizzes, data entry, etc....quality control by quiz scores

AB: will create opportunities for people to go back out and verify weird records...could be new distributional records....ex. with wood frogs on coastal plain

SC: weird data will be flagged, and a notice goes out to coordinator; at the upcoming NCPARC meeting, there will be a frog workshop (Steve Price to lead it)

SP: workshop is for the general public just learning about frogs and calls; not for professional herper; will use NAAMP website and info; intro the NC survey; why frogs are good for educational purposes; maybe go out in the field to look at various techniques for detecting frogs

SC: at the annual meeting, 2-day meeting, March 15-16<sup>th</sup>, Wed. and Thurs., at the Summit in Brown Summit, NC; nice place with lodging and various habitats; appeal to the pro and the novice herper or just people who are interested in herps; Larissa Bailey from NCSU who works with ARMI, data specialist; train people on experimental design, stats, analysis, etc.; great application for all of us; that is the second workshop (Steve's is the first); Kurt Buhlman will do a workshop (from Savannah River Ecol. Lab); Kurt will do a workshop about land management for private folks, etc.; enhancing herp habitat on private land, all levels of enhancement; explain those guidelines

AB: are workshops concurrent?

SC: yes, but no; workshops will be done 3x; group will rotate among each workshop, so nobody will miss anything; we'll also do working group updates, general NCPARC updates, lots of networking! Bonfire and S'mores and a keg! If allowed...

AB: give the keg an acronym!

JH: another resource out there....frogs of Georgia...3-minute sound clips...really good

MD: registration fee for NCPARC meeting?

SC: whole meeting is \$97 if sharing room; \$117 without a roommate; partial charges for partial participation

AS: it would be nice to start a species list for that site

Group agreement and discussion about herping at the Summit....

SC: Zach will now talk about his snake project...

ZO: never found an eastern diamondback in NC....most stories turn out to be canebrakes....I'd like to have a meeting and get people interested in conserving this species; a few locations of interest already; we just don't know much about NC diamondbacks; March 4<sup>th</sup> is the date for the meeting

MD: John, will you talk about the box turtle meeting coming up?

JG: NC Zoo will be hosting an E. box turtle conservation workshop; 1<sup>st</sup> one was in Maryland; moving across the country; emphasis on Eastern box turtles now; lots of issues with turtles; causes of declines throughout range; this meeting will focus on developing working groups on specific topics—research, rehab, outreach/education—we hope to get people interested in these topics to work on these issues; half day of talks and half day of working groups; \$35 registration fee; social at night; zoo tour next day; resident box turtles will be underground at this time unfortunately; info on NCPARC website; contact him if have questions; March 24-25<sup>th</sup> at the Zoo; Mike Dorcas will be keynote speaker; glimpse of zoo population; dogs tracking turtles....

DH: contract Jim Petranka or Reed Rossell about ranovirus in box turtles at Talula?

JG: that topic was addressed at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Maryland; lots of issues; workshop limited to 50 people; still have openings

(break) 2:43 p.m.

MD: before we go to the next issue...in terms of prioritizing things for what folks are going to do...Ed will talk about the GAP program...

EL: GAP program is within USGS...map terrestrial vertebrates in SE; assembled database of habitat associations and range maps; we need expert review of ranges of species, either for state or whole region; we also need to know if we are missing any

habitat associations; land cover maps, presence/absence of species within ranges; contact person is Matt Rubino at NCSU; workshops in the future once we get feedback and reviews; contact Ed at NCSU, too;

SC: documents or digital files?

EL: we'll hold workshops for people who know different species; we'll travel around; data review form to go over, too

AB: any interplay with Wildlife Action Plan?

EL: yes, we worked closely with the WAP; Alexa McKerrow at NCSU is the contact and met with Salinda a lot with regards to the WAP and GAP

MD: now, we'll move toward talking about priorities for this group; who might be interested in working on various topics; topics for next meeting, etc.; bibliography?

DH: yes, for single species

AB: yes, museum interested in this, too

LW: yes, for green salamanders for starters;

MD: so, LW, DH, AB to start with on the bibliography project; for the next meeting, we should discuss ways to compile info on who's doing what in the state; everyone agree?

AB: that could be a whole day's agenda

MD: so, before next meeting, we'll have homework; lists of people and projects within the state; all herp work we know about; also at next meeting, we'll talk about specific objectives and other goals; look at all stuff from first NCPARC meeting that might spark ideas

DH: mechanism on NCPARC website now for people to submit info? On research, etc.?

SC: send to me...link to e-mail on the website

AB: would be good to have an information request form...with all pertinent info needed so we can meet their request

LW, DH, AB, MD: discussion about using EndNote for publishing the bibliography on the website; we need to discuss separation of gray lit, peer reviewed lit, unpublished reports...

EL: site license? Lots of people will want this info...(bib. References)

MD: keeper of the bibliography can use EndNote...but online searching of Access database is easy to set up, too; good to allow people to do searches by author, species, subject, etc.

MD: any other things? Next 2 things, #5 and #6, schedule the next meeting? Also we need to decide how we will make decisions, vote? Wednesdays OK?

DH: private sector will have to take day off of work....

JH: possibility of meeting at the NCPARC group? Working group meetings?

SC: they will meet, but more of intro and not actual work done in groups

DH: April 5<sup>th</sup>?

MD: who could make it on the 5<sup>th</sup>? Most of us can...(Ann will check on room) we'll confirm our next meeting is on April 5<sup>th</sup>...in terms of voting, how is it handled in the Ed/O working group?

JH: probably not matter in any group except for Policy group...if you're here, you can vote

SC: nothing with this group to be controversial or contentious as is the potential with the policy group

MD: so, we'll say that if there is anything to vote on, if you're here, you can vote

SC: minutes and any agenda items and any resulting votes will be posted on the website

MD: other things? Officially nominate a chair?

SC: nominate Mike Dorcas...(many seconds)...AB: motion to close nominations...(many seconds); Mike is the chair (all showed hands—unanimous)

MD: anything else we should discuss?

JR: this will be the working group that will deal with specific conservation issues?

MD: yes, but all 3 groups will overlap on certain issues to some degree

JR: there is an issue with the sea turtle gill net issue; not sure which group should tackle it

LW: discussion about NCPARC endorsing the document that Ann et al. drafted about the impacts of the gill net issue....similar to endorsement of NC Herp Society

AB: political activism? We have to be careful...potential to be a “sticky wicket”..we need to research national PARC’s guidelines on where to draw the line with “activism”

MD: since NCPARC isn’t run on a state computer, we could post the document, too

AS: dates for the next meeting, the 5<sup>th</sup> looks good; 1 or 1:30 pm TBD later

SC: before we leave, please be sure to fill out the volunteer forms

Meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.