Minutes for March 23, 2015 Working Group Conference Call:

In attendance: 11 people! – Rachel Williams, Tracy Rosenberg, Jessie Birckhead, Paul Santavy, Jason Hill, Joseph Bauer, Matt Bahm, Ben Wishnek, Marson Nance, Ronald Lindbolm, Gordon Long

# Action Items

* Jessie will send out financial report (or post to Google Docs)
* Rachel will send Workshop confirmation to Ben
* All older board members need to send a short bio and photo to Rachel or post on our Google Drive.
* Rachel will send email to the board to get a head count for the national meeting in Winnipeg.
* Rachel and Paul will talk on the side about chair-elect duties.
* Jason will lead the efforts to update the action plan and charter.
* Rachel will share the old action plan and charter with the group on Google.
* Rachel will share member roster with the board.
* Rachel will send member spotlight questions to Ben (now on Google)
* Rachel will send out Doodle pole in April for our next meeting in late May.

# Introductions

Rachel Williams (Chair): The Board and membership has expressed desire for more activity in general, and especially more workshops and/or webinars.

Tracy Rosenberg: Lives in South Dakota (owns 1000 ac of native prairie): brings a fresh perspective as a land owner. Conducts bird walks and restoration demonstrations on her property.

Jessie Birckhead (Sec-Tres): Durhan, NC. Works for the Nature Conservancy.

Paul Santavy : Chair-elect, Lewistown, MT, USFWS: stream habitat restoration, and a little bison restoration; solid project manager skills

Jason Hill: Quantitative biologist, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Norwich, VT: grassland restoration experience, landowner outreach and involvement

Joseph (Mark) Bauer: Prefers to go by his middle name (Mark). Southwest Representative, Lives in the Texas Panhandle. Works with Pheasants Forever and Texas Parks, would like to see the working groups be really active; experience with upland bird biology mostly through NRCS.

Matt Bahm: Corvalis, OR: works for NPO; grassland restoration experience;

Ben Wishnek: Fish and Wildlife Service; Stream restoration work, marsh work; mainly wetlands

Marson Nance: Orlando, FL: Works for a biological consulting firm, working on telecom industry projects mostly. Previous restoration experience includes Outer Banks, climate change, storm surge, lots of non-profit experience, writing, organizing experience.

Ronald Lindblom: Location? 40 acres of restored ecosystem that he has managed; he does quite a bit of workshop organization.

Gordon Long: wildlife applied science company, working to improve conditions for game species; Colorado land owners to increase game populations.

# Report from Jessie on Budget:

Jessie: TWS members pay $5 to become a member of our working group. We generally have $1,500-1,800 in reserve, but currently we have $3757. We’re in good shape to put on a few events over the next couple of years. In the past, we have financially supported travel scholarships to the TWS meeting, social events at the TWS meeting, a pollinator symposium at the TWS conference, and a one-day salmon habitat restoration workshop in Portland, Oregon at the TWS conference (attended by ~30 people, very successful).

Paul: I’m looking forward to getting to know the finances better.

Jessie: Declaration to all on the phone call--just ask me any questions folks.

# Update from Ben about the Restoration Workshop:

Ben [the driving force behind the workshop]: We recently had our restoration workshop proposal accepted by TWS. This will be a one-day workshop held at the Winnipeg TWS meeting in 2015. Last year we did an online survey of members and non-members that use our Facebook (~300 subscribers) and LinkedIn (~2,200 subscribers) sites. We asked folks if they were interested in us hosting workshops, and wetland restoration was a really popular topic. This workshop will likely focus on identifying wetland soils, plants, hydrology, and invertebrates. Expected fee for attending this workshop is $25 per professional or student. Adana Henry (sp?) (private consultant, does a lot of workshops for wetland restoration and consulting) will lead the workshop.

Tracy: Will they talk about Fens?

Ben: We’re not sure yet.

Rachel: Do we want some kind of sub-committee to help you?

Ben: Let’s wait until I’ve spoken with Adana about what she wants to teach in the workshop.

# Other comments about the upcoming 2015 TWS meeting.

Jessie: It’s about time that we have a business meeting at the annual meeting. Jessie is willing to organize this if we have enough members attending.

* So far Tracy and Ron are attending.

# Website update

Rachel: TWS is moving to a new website style, and we have to wait for TWS to build the site. We won’t have the ability to directly edit the website--we have to send them our edits.

Jessie: This is a good thing, because editing the website was painful. Our website needs some TLC.

Rachel: A suggestion that we put up our bios on the website is a good idea. Rachel has bios from the new group members (from their elections), but she needs a one paragraph bio + photo from all of the senior members. Please email them to Rachel.

# 5-year Action Plan and Charter:

Rachel: We need to update our 5-year action plan and charter. Jason is interested in helping to edit that. We can put that on Google docs for everyone to edit. Rachel will send me what she has and Jason will put it up on the website and begin the editing of it.

Rachel: We have some folks that unsuccessfully ran for positions in our working group, but they would still like to be involved. Maybe they can host a local webinar or record a workshop or presentation to put online. How can we get these people involved? Encourage them to post on Facebook? Physical workshops would be great, but she worries about getting enough people since we only have 300 or so members.

Jessie: we can also support existing restoration workshops in a local area. Can we do that? For example, give them money, resources, or ‘expertise’ from our members.

Rachel: Did we ever start some kind of worksheet about that?

Matt: we started a worksheet about rules for funding stuff. Matt will send to Rachel.  
Tracy: Do we advertise at non TWS-events?

Jessie: Not really. We’ve never had a stand-a-lone brochure to promote ourselves.

Ronald: Do you have to be a paid member to join?

Joseph: How have we promoted ourselves in the past?

Jessie: We used to have a listerv, but we’ve moved away from that to LinkedIn and Facebook. We usually have a social or a reception at the national meetings. That’s the extent of our promotion.

Joseph: we need to be able to say “our number one focus is blank and we do X”. Do we have something that we do really well, and that’s why someone would want to join our working group?

Jessie/Jason: That’s a great idea.

Ronald: How can we contact people?

Rachel: We have a group email address for all of our paid group members.

Ben: Let’s share these documents via Google.

Rachel: we can do that.

Ronald: Our website says we’re focused on sharing information, but we could blow through our money in one day if we start funding local stuff. Maybe we should focus on just sharing information.

Rachel: We talked about a discussion board, and we’re trying to encourage that on our FB page. Honestly, though, we haven’t been very successful in encouraging folks to post on FB or Linked.

Joseph: Something cheap to do—set ourselves up to be a go-to source for ‘how do I find someone who is an expert in a particular restoration area’. We could do a conference call workshop or a webinar.

Rachel: we could put links on our website for good links to particular restoration techniques and websites.

Ronald: we could put people’s contact information on the website.

# Member spotlight

Rachel: Last year we started doing a “member spotlight” where we interview a working group member and post their Q&A session with a photo on our Facebook page. The member spotlight could be members or non-members.

Ben: I could do another Member spotlight for April.

Ronald: I know some awesome restoration people, but not sure if they are members of the working group. I could do one for April, but I’d like to see the list first.

Ben: Log onto TWS and you can see the roster of the working group.

Rachel: I’ll send out the roster to everyone as well.

Gordon joins the call: Sorry everyone-just got stuck out in the field.

Next conference call:

Rachel will send out a Doodle poll for the next conference that will take place in approximately two months.

Ben will send out more info about the workshop at the end of April, prior to our next conference call.