

**SOUTHWEST SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
GEOSPATIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Purpose of the Terms of Reference

The purpose of the *Terms of Reference* document is to establish the composition and mode of operation for the Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society Geospatial Advisory Committee that will help ensure a consistent approach is taken when providing information and comments on emerging and ongoing geospatial technology and information opportunities and issues that may impact wildlife management and conservation issues in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and, when appropriate, Costa Rica and Mexico. This document is intended to ensure the continued contribution of unbiased and accurate information to government or other responsible organizations to help inform decision making and policy development, consistent with the goals and objectives of the Southwest Section and The Wildlife Society.

Background on the Need

Geospatial technologies and information are becoming increasingly important to wildlife management at all levels. Important decisions are often based upon such technologies, be it game species management, threatened and endangered species recovery, or managing wildlife while addressing concerns with global climate change. Increasingly, Section members have a need to learn more about geospatial technology, available resources and training, employment trends and geospatial certifications, best practices, and new ways in which the technology is being employed. Such technologies would include but not be limited to Geographic Information Systems (or GIS), remote sensing, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), web mapping, decision support systems, and spatial analyses and modeling. The Southwest Section Executive Committee committed to establish a Southwest Section Geospatial Advisory Committee (GAC) to coordinate the development and dissemination of information required to inform Section members, managers, policy makers, and the public concerning these issues. The GAC will also collaborate with the Southwest Section Conservation Affairs Committee as needed.

The following goals and objectives are based on the need recognized by the Executive Committee and the CAC to ensure the use and integration of sound science and the best available information regarding geospatial technology into the decision making process.

Objectives of the Geospatial Advisory Committee

- 1) Provide information regarding relevant applications of geospatial technology to the Southwest Section membership, as well as wildlife managers, policy makers, and the general public. This includes providing information on potential issues and best practices.
- 2) Provide a forum for the exchange of information regarding on-going projects in the hope that it would promote collaboration and reduce duplication of effort.

Deliverables of the Geospatial Advisory Committee

- 1) Organize webinars that describe different projects that involve, and address issues regarding, the application of geospatial technology to wildlife conservation and management.
- 2) Disseminate information on upcoming trainings, RFPs, and webinars, as well as current news articles, regarding geospatial technology as applied to wildlife issues via either separate GAC announcements or the SW Section Newsletter.
- 3) Develop either an on-line forum or hold a series of meetings or conference calls that allow for the exchange of information regarding on-going projects and promote collaboration, data sharing, and a reduction in redundancies of effort.

Roles and Responsibilities

Geospatial Advisory Committee

The GAC will be responsible for:

- To Be Determined

Committee Members

New members of the GAC will be appointed by the Chair of the GAC based on their professional qualifications and interest in applying geospatial technologies and information toward wildlife conservation issues in the Southwest Section. Consideration will be given to a potential member's geographic location and area of expertise. Existing GAC members will review appointments and approve them by consensus. It is expected that Members of the Geospatial Advisory Committee will not serve as representatives of their employers but rather as individual professionals working to advance the goals and mandate of the Southwest Section.

GAC Chair

As per the Southwest Section bylaws, the Chair of the GAC is appointed on an annual basis by the incoming President of the Southwest Section. The primary role of the GAC Chair is to convene and coordinate the activities of the GAC.

Relationship with Southwest Section Executive Committee

The GAC will maintain a close relationship with the Southwest Section Executive Committee to allow the efficient flow of information.

Relationship with Southwest Section Conservation Affairs Committee

The GAC will maintain a close working relationship with Southwest Section Conservation Affairs Committee to allow the efficient flow of information and cross collaboration on key issues of interest to that committee. A liaison will be appointed to communicate between the Geospatial Advisory Committee and the Conservation Affairs Committee.

Operations of the Conservation Affairs Committee

Decision Making

- 1) The GAC shall make decisions based on consensus, where consensus is defined as no substantive disagreement and may include agreement on a document that describes different perspectives on an issue.
- 2) When consensus cannot be reached the Chair of the GAC will inform the President of the Southwest Section.
- 3) Should there be a need to revisit a decision previously taken by the GAC, the person/group will do this in a timely way, along with an explanation as to why this is needed.
- 4) Final decisions or recommendations of the Committee will not be made by majority votes in committee. If a consensus cannot be reached, that will mean that the deliberations of the committee on this topic are finished.

- 5) All information related to information and commentary generated by the GAC will be made public.
- 6) The Southwest Section will maintain final approval authority on communications, commentary and information issued on behalf of the Section.

Meetings

The GAC will work toward a goal of meeting monthly by phone, and once annually at the Southwest Section annual meeting.

The GAC will host at least one public forum for the Southwest Section membership at the annual meeting.

The Chair of the GAC or appointed liaison will regularly interact via conference call or e-mail with Southwest Section Conservation Affairs Committee Chair. Additional meetings to enhance coordination may be needed.