



Report on the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Implementation Workshop

Introduction

The Butterfly Conservation Initiative (BCI) was established in 2001 with two core objectives: (1) to make significant progress toward the recovery of 22 federally listed imperiled butterfly species in the United States; and (2) to increase public awareness of and direct involvement in butterfly conservation efforts. Current partners in this project include the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) and 36 of its member institutions, the National Wildlife Federation, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Xerces Society. BCI is based at the AZA Executive Offices in Silver Spring, MD. Other relevant organizations are being recruited to form a broader regional coalition of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and experts dedicated to butterfly and butterfly habitat conservation.



Karner Blue Butterfly. Photo: M. Magdich

BCI took the first step toward reaching its goals by organizing the first Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Implementation

Workshop from 13-14 June 2002 in Toledo, OH.

The Karner blue butterfly (KBB) is listed as endangered by the USFWS. Its historical range covered nine states and two provinces in the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada. The species is threatened by habitat destruction and alteration, but recent collaborative efforts to recover this species have made it a model program. The Toledo Zoo, an active partner in Karner blue butterfly recovery in the state of Ohio, hosted the meeting.

Workshop Goals

The goals of the workshop were fourfold: (1) to impart essential information on the KBB recovery implementation planning process to new and key players in the recovery effort; (2) to share current progress on KBB recovery on a state-by-state basis; (3) to introduce state and federal agency biologists to non-traditional partners, such as AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, the National Wildlife Federation and the Xerces Society; and (4) to reach consensus on a time line for the completion of state recovery implementation strategies.

Workshop Organizers

The AZA's Conservation and Science Department organized and facilitated the KBB Recovery Implementation Workshop. Director of Conservation and Science/William Conway Chair, Dr. Michael Hutchins served as the primary moderator, with AZA Conservation Biologist, Ruth Allard; USFWS Partnership Coordinator,

Dave Harrelson; and KBB Recovery Plan Coordinator/ USFWS biologist, Cathy Carnes, also playing key roles. Dr. Peter Tolson, Director of Conservation and Research, Mitch Magdich, Curator of Education, Toledo Zoo and YinLan Zhang, National Wildlife Federation (NWF), were closely involved with workshop planning, and were also instrumental in explaining the Ohio model and NWF programs to workshop participants.

Participants

The KBB Workshop was very well attended. Sixty-seven experts participated in the two-day workshop, representing 14 states and two Canadian provinces. Twenty AZA-member institutions were represented, as were federal and state wildlife biologists, state wildlife agencies, The Nature Conservancy, nature museums, private landowners, and university scientists. Some participants were from outside the KBB range, but attended to learn more about how the KBB model might be applied to other endangered or threatened butterfly species.

Meeting Agenda and Structure

The first day of the workshop was focused on information exchange.



Participants listening to presentation. Photo by M. Hutchins

Participants were informed about the Butterfly Conservation Initiative (BFCI), the Ohio KBB recovery effort, and the USFWS KBB Recovery Plan and its relationship to state recovery implementation strategies. This discussion was followed by preliminary reports on the status of recovery efforts in each of the current range states. The importance of partnerships to effective conservation was continuously stressed. Next, workshop participants took a field trip to visit the Toledo Zoo's Greenhouse, where zoo staff raises host plants (lupine) and KBBs for translocation and release. Peter Tolson, Mitch Magdich and other zoo staff were available to answer questions.



Dr. Peter Tolson explains methods of rearing KBBs for release at Toledo Zoo's Greenhouse. Photo by D. Harrelson

Later in the afternoon, the group traveled to The Nature Conservancy's Kitty Todd Preserve to observe where local KBB recovery efforts have been focused. TNC staff explained how the reserve is managed, and the group was able to experience first-hand the oak savannah ecosystem that is the preferred habitat of the KBB in Ohio.



Workshop participants at TNC's Kitty Todd Preserve.
Photo by M. Hutchins

The second day of the conference began with presentations on funding opportunities for endangered butterflies and habitat restoration and acquisition. The first presentation focused on non-governmental sources of funds, including corporate sponsorships and foundations, while the second focused on U.S. governmental sources of funding for endangered species recovery and habitat acquisition. Following this, the participants broke up into working groups by state. The groups were given specific goals, including identifying current programmatic needs, potential for new partnerships to support recovery, and developing consensus on a time line for completion of state recovery implementation strategies. Following these four-hour long working sessions, the entire group was brought together for a plenary session, during which each group reported on its findings and decisions.

Outcomes

The KBB Recovery Implementation Workshop accomplished all of its stated goals:

- Important information was provided to all participants on the USFWS KBB Recovery Plan and its relationship to state-based recovery implementation strategies.



Working group in session. Photo by M. Hutchins

More specifically, working groups learned about what kinds of information needs to be included in state recovery implementation strategies.

- Participants learned about what non-traditional partners can bring to the recovery implementation process, and also had a chance to meet and interact with potential colleagues from their own state. Some partnerships formed on the spot and others are being formed as the result of post-workshop communications.

- The KBB Recovery Plan Coordinator was updated on the status of recovery initiatives on a state-by-state basis and also learned about each states' specific programmatic needs.

- The state working groups began preliminary discussions on current and future needs of their programs, and produced brief reports outlining these needs.

- The state working groups were able to agree on a time line for completion of their recovery implementation strategies. Although each working group is at a different stage of program development, all agreed that their implementation strategies could be completed within a year. They also agreed to meet again upon completion of their plans.



USFWS KBB Recovery Plan Coordinator, Cathy Carnes, explains the draft Recovery Plan. Photo by M. Hutchins

Communication

For this recovery implementation effort to be successful, BFCI must communicate the workshop results and related information to workshop participants and other key decision-makers.

To accomplish this goal, Dave Harrelson of the USFWS assembled relevant materials on a CD-ROM and has developed a draft Web site for participant review. This information can currently be accessed at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/aza/kbbweb/start1.htm>. Participant contact information was also collected in order to place them on the BFCI general list serv for future communications.

In addition, new CD-ROMS containing copies of all PowerPoint presentations, relevant reports and supporting information (e.g., the draft USFWS Recovery Plan) will be mailed to meeting participants and other

interested parties. This is providing rapid dissemination of information to potential users in a cost effective manner.

Public Relations

The AZA's Public Affairs Department issued a press release announcing the KBB workshop and creation of the BFCI. The release featured quotes from Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton and AZA Executive Director, Syd Butler. Press release templates were also sent to BFCI members to be used as a tool to advertise their participation in local media venues. An Associated Press reporter attended the meeting on the first day, and an AP photographer documented the group's visit to the Toledo Zoo's Greenhouse.

Participant Feedback

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to provide an informal evaluation, indicating whether or not the exercise was useful, and in what way. The comments submitted were overwhelmingly positive. The following is a representative sample:

Dr. Thomas C. Emmel, University of Florida, McGuire Center for Lepidoptera Research

"This workshop was extremely valuable in a wide range of ways. The direct information on the Karner Blue Recovery Plan efforts in 7 states, techniques for rearing it in captive propagation, the organizations and individuals involved, the funding sources, etc., was all very exciting and helpful. But the indirect ways we all benefited – the contacts and informal plans and discussions that took place continuously in the workshop sessions and on the field trips and at meals – were at least equally worthwhile.

Pat Lederle, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

"This was an excellent gathering. Primary strength was the diverse group brought

together for a common goal. USFWS does not usually implement recovery plans using this diverse-stakeholder model.

Emphasis on partnering is key-- was an excellent approach and one that gave the Michigan group a broader perspective than we had before.”

Joan Stasica, Racine Zoo

“I attended this conference in order to find out how my employer, the Racine Zoo, could become involved in butterfly conservation. I found the conference very informative and helpful. I have amassed a great deal of information and goals, which I can share with the rest of the Racine Zoo. I am not sure yet how and to what extent we will become involved, but we certainly have a lot of new ideas and possibilities to work with now.”

Jeff Wyatt, Seneca Park Zoo, Rochester, NY

“The KBB Recovery Implementation Planning Workshop gave me (and all AZA attendees) the opportunity to present the role zoos can and want to play in local (e.g. KBB) conservation efforts to state and federal wildlife agencies. The ‘disconnect’ between zoos and state/federal agencies is now much less of a barrier because of this workshop. We (at the New York state level) now have a team approach bringing our own institutional (zoos, DEC, USFWS) strengths working TOGETHER now for a common goal – saving the Karner blue butterfly and habitat. Thanks to AZA and Toledo Zoo!”

Mike DeCapita, USFWS, Michigan

“Meeting was valuable; it (1) Introduced the idea that AZA can help through BFCI, etc. (Very important and appreciated!); (2) Gave Michigan working group impetus to think about a state implementation plan and sublevel implementation plans for recovery units and various management partners; and (3) Initiated a discussion about

involving more partners. Thanks to AZA for this valuable meeting!”

David Walker, Oklahoma City Zoo

“This has been a very inspiring workshop. It is nice to see those who have great influence on natural resource conservation – understand that it takes teams of individuals with varied expertise to make things happen. It’s also wonderful to see natural resource professionals concerned with saving habitats rather than single species. Great workshop! I plan to take this info back and attempt to apply it to other species of concern in Oklahoma.”

Kathy O’Brien, New York Department of Environmental Conservation

“Good to hear from NWF and Wildlife Habitat Council on their programs. I hope we can use them.

Good to kick start us on the Recovery Plan for NY. It was lagging for a while.

Good to be thinking about zoos being able to get info out - just had been thinking of them as potential for captive rearing only.

Field trip was very good - glad I got to see the oak savanna we might be trying to create in Saratoga.”

Joe Kelly, US Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forest, MI

“The KBB Workshop:

(1) Gave me exposure and an awareness about AZA and BFCI

(2) Great job was done by AZA & BFCI to bring the various organizations together who are interested in recovery of KBB and the oak savanna ecosystem - exposure to different partners.

(3) Great opportunity to bring each of the state’s working groups together and “new” partners, outlining what needs to be done in recovery of KBB, and to develop some time frame.

(4) Exciting to be exposed to other potential partners in how they can help other organizations achieve KBB recovery goals.

Challenges us in working together for a common goal.

(5) Very good session! A good start in working together and meeting new partners.”

Dr. Peter Tolson, Toledo Zoo

“Although our KBB program has been in development for some time, the workshop was quite valuable for us.

We were able to recruit new partners for the KBB restoration effort in Ohio.

We were able to reinforce our partnerships with our MDNR and FWS colleagues whom we had never met personally.

We were exposed to innovative approaches to KBB management and habitat restoration used in other states.

Seeing progress in other states energized us and is an encouragement to “keep our eyes on the prize.”

It was a wonderful opportunity and we thank you for it.”

Dr. Kristen E. Lukas, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

“Thanks for all you are doing to get this BFCI up and running. It’s a wonderful initiative and I’m proud and pleased to be a part of this group.

The KBB model is exemplary and will provide a standard to which other butterfly/habitat recovery plans can aspire.

We have some really good, talented, enthusiastic people in Ohio and I’m looking forward to supporting the regional KBB plan.

I am bringing home with me many new ideas and will start by creating a Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Butterfly Conservation Focus Group to develop and implement some of the initiatives discussed by our working group.

Acknowledgements

Many organizations and individuals deserve appreciation for supporting this workshop and the initial development of BFCI.

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Report prepared by M. Hutchins, R. Allard, and D. Harrelson, 6/27/02.