



GLRC Habitat/Species Work Group Charter and Work Plan

Background

The [Great Lakes Habitat Initiative](#) (GLHI) was a 2-year effort that developed products to advance the goals and recommendations of the Habitat/Species Chapter of the [Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes](#) developed by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC). The Habitat Initiative was directed and implemented by a Steering Committee formed for this project with representatives from federal, state, tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations. The GLHI project has been essentially completed with a final report which outlines the next steps to sustain the products created by the GLHI. It was the consensus of the GLHI Steering Committee to endorse the “path forward” outlined in the final GLHI report which included the transition from the GLHI Steering Committee to a Habitat/Species Work Group under the GLRC. Below is the Charter for the new Habitat/Species Work Group and its initial Work Plan.

Habitat/Species Work Group Charter

It is proposed that the Habitat/Species Work Group be created with the following charter:

- a) That the Habitat/Species Work Group support state agencies, tribal and local governments, and existing regional or sub-regional organizations that are directly engaged with site-specific habitat conservation and restoration by providing tools, technical support, networking, and other services, as directed by the GLRC Executive Committee;
- b) That the membership of the Work Group start with the same members of the GLHI Steering Committee and consider new members on an ongoing basis; T
- c) That the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will initially chair the Work Group and provide administrative support and that the Work Group may consider rotating the chair position by consensus at a later time;
- d) That the Work Group oversee the maintenance and updating of the databases created under the GLHI and facilitate training and outreach on their utilization;
- e) That the Work Group develop recommendations on how to accelerate implementation of the Habitat/Species chapter of the Strategy developed by the GLRC. Pursuant to direction of the GLRC Executive Committee, the Work Group may take on additional tasks related to these recommendations; and,
- f) That the Work Group charter and work plan (below) of the Work Group be presented to the GLRC Executive Committee for review and approval.

Habitat/Species Work Group Work Plan

Task 1 Coordination with State, Regional, Tribal, and Local Agencies/Organizations

The Habitat/Species Work Group operates strategically at the Basinwide scale. Most individual habitat and species conservation and restoration actions are implemented by agencies and organizations that operate at a state- or sub-regional level. These include state fish and wildlife agencies, tribal and local governments, nongovernmental organizations that implement habitat/species projects (e.g., Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy), and regional or sub-regional groups that either implement or facilitate the implementation of

habitat/species projects (e.g., Lake Committees, Joint Ventures, RAP groups, watershed associations, etc.). It is proposed that the Habitat/Species Work Group systematically contact existing state resource agencies, regional or sub-regional organizations, and, where appropriate, tribal and local governments and organizations dealing with habitat/species conservation and restoration for the following purposes: a) solicit feedback from the agencies and organizations about the obstacles they face in implementing habitat and species restoration and conservation activities and the types of resources, support, assistance, and tools they would find most valuable in overcoming these obstacles; b) develop recommendations on how to accelerate implementation of the Habitat/Species chapter of the Strategy developed by the GLRC, and; c) serve as a resource to help communicate progress and success stories about habitat/species restoration and conservation provided by these agencies and organizations.

The Work Group will communicate with these agencies and regional or sub-regional organizations through the existing relationships of Work Group members or through new contacts developed by one or more Work Group members.

Task 2 Sustaining and Enhancing GLHI Products

In order to continue the benefits to the region from the availability and use of the GLHI products, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to seek the baseline resources necessary to maintain and periodically update these tools. It is proposed that the Habitat/Species Work Group conduct the following activities to support the maintenance and updating of the funding program and project databases created by the GLHI and enhance their usefulness to the states and other stakeholders:

- a) Promote the entry of new habitat projects onto the database by member agencies and organizations and updating of existing project information;
- b) Facilitate updating of information on funding programs by member agencies and organizations;
- c) Solicit and review feedback from states, regional organizations and stakeholders on their current utilization of the tools, benefits they received, and potential enhancements to the databases that might increase their utility;
- d) Seek additional resources required for making significant enhancements to the tools, and;
- e) Facilitate activities to increase utilization of the tools to increase habitat restoration in the region.

Task 3 Support to State, Regional, Tribal, and Local Agencies/Organizations

As stated in Task 1b, the Work Group will develop recommendations on how to accelerate implementation of the Habitat/Species chapter of the Strategy developed by the GLRC. Examples of potential recommendations include:

- a) Identification of needed funding and expected outcomes;
- b) Revised cost-share requirements and funding application procedures;
- c) Improved interagency coordination including enhanced communications and exchange of information between agencies and organizations;
- d) Resolution of policy issues raised by agencies and organizations in cooperation with the federal [Great Lakes Interagency Task Force](#) (IATF), and;
- e) Workshops or other tools to address technical issues identified by agencies and organizations.

Task 4 Report Progress towards GLRC Habitat Goals

It is proposed that the Habitat/Species Work Group conduct the following activities related to the reporting of habitat and species conservation and restoration progress to the GLRC Executive Committee, the IATF, partner agencies and organizations, and stakeholders:

- a) Coordinate with the Regional Working Group, Wetlands Subcommittee of the IATF, and others to identify options for tracking progress towards GLRC habitat/species goals;
- b) Coordinate with the Regional Working Group, Wetlands Subcommittee of the IATF, and others in the implementation of progress tracking methods determined to be feasible and mutually agreeable;
- c) Provide periodic updates to the GLRC Executive Committee on all activities of the Habitat/Species Work Group; and,
- d) Pursuant to guidance from the GLRC Executive Committee, provide information on the activities of the Habitat/Species Work Group and progress towards habitat/species goals to the public.

Approved by the GLRC Executive Committee on January 9, 2009