

Wildlife Habitat Council
www.wildlifehc.org/migratorybirds

The Corporate Campaign for Migratory Bird Conservation

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts

Vision

Imagine a day when natural areas throughout the Western Hemisphere are linked – crisscrossing the land to form wild corridors for our migratory birds and other creatures.

Mission

The Wildlife Habitat Council's (WHC) Corporate Campaign for Migratory Bird Conservation (CCMBC) is a corporate-led initiative designed to preserve and restore habitat on corporate lands, in cooperation with other public and private landowners, along critical migratory bird routes in the Western Hemisphere.

Introduction

The Wildlife Habitat Council was created in 1988 to enhance the quality of natural areas that occur on corporate lands. Since that time more than 200 corporations have become members of WHC.

The WHC approach emphasizes voluntary stewardship and encourages collaboration with local communities. Over the past 15 years, WHC has assisted with a variety of wildlife conservation projects at over 1,000 corporate facility sites. Of these sites, 334 are listed in the Registry of Certified & Internationally Accredited Corporate Wildlife Habitat Programs. In total, WHC has enhanced or restored over 2 million acres of corporate lands, mostly in the United States but also 15 other countries. Each of these projects was implemented in partnership with local organizations and reaching out to tens of thousands of individuals in local communities. Over the years, strong working relationships have been formed with business and industry and their local partners.

These accomplishments have, almost spontaneously, generated creative new conservation opportunities on corporate lands – for new partnerships within companies, between companies, with communities, as well as with federal, state and local government land owners.

WHC has developed a suite of six programs. Some are designed to serve corporations that are interested in making minimal investments (of time or funding), and at the other end of the spectrum, opportunities to participate in programs that are more complex, require a larger investment, or are international in scope. Additionally, some corporations that are dedicated to land conservation, but have no land holdings, make financial contributions to WHC.

WHC's six program areas are:

1. Wildlife at WorkSM: WHC encourages employees to “Get Wild At Work” by participating in a wildlife management team at their place of employment. The projects can be as simple as installing nest monitoring boxes, or as complex as restoring a wetlands or prairie area.
2. Corporate Habitat Certification/International Accreditation Program: WHC recognizes commendable wildlife habitat management and environmental education programs at individual sites. WHC certification adds value to programs by providing third-party credibility and an objective evaluation of projects. Each year, WHC accredits new projects as well as continues certification to those programs that have maintained WHC's stringent standards.
3. Corporate Lands for LearningSM: The Corporate Lands for Learning (CLL) program demonstrates how corporate land, natural resources and employee skills can provide students at local schools with “hands-on” environmental activities to supplement existing classroom instruction.
4. Brownfields/Remediation: WHC helps corporations optimize Brownfield redevelopment and Superfund/RCRA remediation through the use of natural resource-based approaches and ecological enhancements. Remediation projects, which include wildlife conservation and enhancement, are achieving substantial cost savings as well as improving the social, economic and environmental value of sites.
5. Awards Program: WHC gives awards each year to participating corporations.
 - Corporate Habitat of the Year
 - Rookie of the Year
 - Corporate Lands for Learning of the Year
 - Community Partner of the Year
 - President’s Award
 - Joint awards with other non-profit organizations:
 - NAPPC WHC Pollinator Protection Award
 - Wild Turkey Management Award
6. Corporate Campaign for Migratory Bird Conservation (CCMBC): CCMBC is WHC’s newest program. It is an international initiative designed to link conservation efforts one corporate lands to other public and private lands regionally and globally.

Most WHC conservation projects were designed to achieve modest conservation goals. Time after time though, the conservation results and enthusiasm of participants have exceeded goals and expectations. As momentum and success on-the-ground and in communities has grown, WHC began to ask itself – How can we maximize dollar investments to achieve the greatest conservation result? The answer is the CCMBC.

CCMBC is an international initiative designed to launch new collaborative approaches to conservation on corporate lands.

Many corporations own multiple facilities in various parts of the Western Hemisphere. Portions of these lands often can (and do) provide wildlife habitat. The goal of the CCMBC is to undertake conservation projects on public and private properties along key migration routes. From a conservation perspective, the primary benefit to corporations is that even modest projects can contribute to improved habitat and increased bird populations in the Western Hemisphere by dovetailing with existing national and international bird conservation strategic plans. These particular WHC projects are uniquely value-added – indeed the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Why focus on migratory birds?

- Migratory birds are everywhere. The subject of birds is a powerful, central organizing principle. Because migratory birds are everywhere they are an effective central organizing principle for achieving many local, regional, national and international conservation goals.
- People love birds. In the United States alone, over 70 million enjoy bird watching as a hobby
- Migratory bird populations are declining at a dramatic rate. Migratory birds are indicator species – a litmus test for overall environmental quality. Healthy bird populations indicate healthy habitats; declining bird populations indicate degraded habitats.
- New opportunities to receive matching funds for private land conservation projects. There are numerous “funding streams” targeted to migratory bird conservation.
- Corporations can maximize conservation investment and exposure. A national and international framework (and infrastructure) is in place. Corporations can maximize their conservation investments by collaborating with and feeding into existing, science-based, strategic hemisphere-wide migratory bird conservation plans.
- Strategic opportunities for corporations to lead in the conservation arena. Corporations are underrepresented in the design and implementation of strategic, hemispheric-wide migratory bird conservation plans

Why is the CCMBC corporate-led?

There are extensive corporate landholdings suitable for habitat enhancement and restoration. Conservationists have generally overlooked these lands. The vast quantities of corporate lands provide a unique opportunity for corporations to become leaders in migratory bird conservation – through voluntary conservation action on their lands.

What is the role of WHC?

As the creator, WHC directs the development of the CCBMC. WHC will *facilitate and coordinate* partnerships between corporations, conservation organizations, government agencies and other organizations.

How does the CCMBC fit into the WHC infrastructure?

The CCMBC is neatly incorporated into the infrastructure of WHC’s current habitat programs.

- In many cases migratory bird conservation projects are underway – CCMBC puts structure to these initiatives. In other cases, migratory bird conservation projects are in demand at individual corporate facilities – evolving as a natural extension of successful, modest habitat enhancement projects.
- CCMBC offers new and existing WHC members the opportunities to enhance habitat for migratory birds – in addition to participating in current WHC programs.
- WHC field staffs integrate migratory bird conservation activities into their existing responsibilities within their specific geographic regions.

How are CCMBC projects distinguished from other WHC projects?

All WHC programs and projects have well defined conservation, environmental education and community outreach goals. WHC projects that improve habitat for migratory birds will be folded into the CCMBC. In some cases, individual WHC projects will be able to achieve multiple goals.

What are the benefits to Corporations?

Maximizes conservation investment by linking corporate site activities to many other local and regional conservation efforts.

- Value added within the context of international migratory bird conservation strategy.
- Use of WHC’s technical expertise and demonstrated ability to foster partnerships.
- Access to additional extensive technical expertise from the conservation community.
- Proves higher degree of scientific validity for projects.
- Strengthens corporate internal relations and external relations.
- Increases strong partnerships with stakeholders and communities.
- New public relations opportunities – local, regional, national and international.
- Integrates conservation activities by linking company properties.
- Expands internationally significant focus for projects.

All projects are voluntary and provide companies with flexible and company controlled levels of involvement. In short, companies can be involved when, where and to the extent they determine.

CCMBC provides corporations with the flexibility to:

- 1) Improve habitat for birds and other wildlife at an individual site – in cooperation with corporate neighbors and/or other landowners and organizations in a particular facility locality;
- 2) Conserve habitat at numerous, internally held, corporate landholding sites in the United States and/or the Western hemisphere; and
- 3) Continue deriving the benefits of other WHC programs.

What are the overall objectives?

- Integrate and increase the impact of corporate conservation efforts.
- Science based migratory bird conservation.
- Expanded partnership opportunities with stakeholders and communities.
- On-the-ground demonstration of how to protect and restore biodiversity.

How is CCMBC currently funded?

- Six “Charter Members” are funding the launch of CCMBC. All are WHC members and/or long time partners and supporters. The pilot phase is well underway and major announcements about the program will be released that will expand the circle of supporters for the initiative.

How will CCMBC be funded long term?

The CCMBC will be funded in several ways:

- Sustaining memberships, including existing and future WHC members who donate funds for basic program development and operations.
- Fee based site work as is the case with other WHC projects
- Matching grant funds from governments and other sources
- Other funding vehicles will be announced in final phase of the pilot program.

CCMBC Program Status Report

The CCMBC was conceived by WHC in response to seeing the need and opportunity for WHC corporate members. CCMBC was launched as a pilot program in early 2002. CCMBC has gathered momentum and traction. A Technical Committee and an executive-level Steering Committee were formed. Flagship model projects are underway at four localities. In April 2003, WHC’s CCMBC was featured in *Bird Conservation* – the magazine of the American Bird Conservancy. WHC staff is engaged, confident and enthused.

Model Project Update

Four model projects have been initiated to launch the CCMBC. Each project is in the early stage – partnerships are formed and the goals and actions defined.

The overarching goal of each project is to enhance migratory bird habitat on corporate lands by fostering public-private partnerships to engage in collaborative habitat work in surrounding landscapes. These projects – and all future CCMBC projects are landscape scale efforts. They will operate within the framework of recognized international migratory bird conservation plans. The CCMBC will bring corporate lands to the table, for integration into these broad based plans where appropriate.

1) Tennessee River Corridor

In cooperation with 11 partners, CCMBC will restore a 7-mile corridor along the Tennessee River. Following to the west, between the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and City of Decatur, Alabama, and to the east, the Mallard Fox Wildlife Management Area.

The project will play a vital role in improving habitat on a landscape scale along a critical migratory bird corridor. The first phase of the work includes conversion of approximately 250 acres of fescue and weed fields to native warm-season grass-forbs mixture on 3M and Nucor lands adjacent to provide habitat for grassland birds such as dickcissel and grasshopper sparrow. Tree thinning and a prescribed burn on the land next to neighbor, Vulcan Materials Company, to

provide habitat for prairie warblers and other grass-shrubland birds. Restoring six acres of habitat on 3M and BP sites.

These habitats will link to sites that the public can visit along the northern Alabama birding trail, which is being developed and promoted by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Corporate Partners

- 3M
- The Boeing Company
- BP
- Nucor Corporation
- Vulcan Materials Company

Non-Profit Partners

- American Bird Conservancy
- Morgan County Environmental Education Foundation

Government Partners

- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- City of Decatur
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge)
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

2) Piceance Basin and Associated Riparian Corridor

In cooperation with seven partners, CCMBC will enhance migratory bird habitat in the Piceance Basin and along the White and Colorado Rivers in Northwest Colorado. This habitat improvement project will be lead by Shell Exploration & Production Company on at least three of their properties in this area. These include: a 426-acre tract known as the Valley Property located on the Colorado River just south of De Beque, Colorado; the Ivory Ranch, a 960 acres tract along the White River; and the Violet Springs Unit in the heart of the Piceance Basin.

At the first two sites the focus will be on reestablishing healthy stands of cottonwood and willow along these riparian systems. The focus at the third site involves restoration of wetlands and breeding marshes. Species of concern that will benefit from the restoration of the cottonwood-willow complexes include, but not be limited to, yellow warblers, yellow-rumped warblers, Wilson's warblers, warbling vireos, western kingbirds, northern flickers, spotted towhee, and many more. The wetlands along these corridors of life support populations of white pelicans, Franklin's gulls, great blue and black-crowned night herons, Wilson's phalaropes, spotted sandpipers, peregrine falcons, bald eagle, and osprey along with waterfowl such as cinnamon teal, mallard and pintail.

Corporate Partners

- Shell Exploration & Production Company

Non-Profit Partners

- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Intermountain West Joint Venture
- National Audubon Society
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Government Partners

- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

3) Gulf Coast Migration Linkage Project

The Gulf Coast Migration Linkage Project currently has 12 partners. This initiative is still in the formative stages, but several sites have been defined on corporate lands. Others companies are expected to become engaged in this effort in the near future.

The Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion is invariably listed as one of the highest priority areas in the hemisphere for providing habitat for migratory birds of all types. Not surprisingly, the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, which encompasses over 2,000 miles of sites for bird watching, is often called the “great granddaddy of birding trails.” Over 300 species are seen along this nature route.

One of the smaller, but most exciting migratory bird sites involves Exxon-Mobil restoration project on St. Mary’s Island, located in the Houston Ship Channel, and its noteworthy colony of black skimmers. Exxon-Mobil not only preserved the small acreage that remained of the island but restored the island by adding over eight acres of new habitat. In addition to the skimmers that capture the excitement of every birder that has the privilege of viewing them, the island supports the Forster’s tern, gull-billed tern and least tern. ExxonMobil’s Baytown Complex will join with St. Mary’s Island to anchor their contribution to this critical effort to link migratory habitat within the Gulf Coast ecosystem and beyond.

Coupled with ExxonMobil’s sites within the Gulf Coast linkage Project will be sites owned by The Dow Chemical Company located near Freeport along the Brazos River, in Texas City on Galveston Bay and possibly a unit on their Seadrift, Texas site. These sites will provide critical habitat that range from open water to live oak stands. Species that rely on this timbered habitat, which is becoming increasingly limited, include the yellow-rumped warbler, yellow-throated warbler, black-and-white warbler, orange-crowned warbler, white-eyed vireo and northern parula. Open water feeders include the anhingas, great blue heron, tricolored heron, green heron, black-crowned night heron, yellow-crowned night heron, little blue heron, great egret and snowy egret.

BP is expected to bring into the program a substantial portion of their 2,500-acre Chocolate Bayou Works site near Alvin, Texas. In addition to the waterbirds previously mentioned, this site will provide excellent habitat for red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, white-tailed kite, osprey and a variety of waterfowl.

ConocoPhillips will dedicate a portion of their Sweeney Refinery along the Gulf Coast. Much work has already been done to improve the health of this site's wetlands and vegetation. The Gulf Coast Migration Linkage Project will continue and expand the ongoing commitment to migratory birds.

Corporate Partners

- BP
- ConocoPhillips
- ExxonMobil
- The Dow Chemical Company

Non-Profit Partners

- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
- National Audubon Society
- The Nature Conservancy

Government Partners

- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

4) Appalachian Mountains and Atlantic Coast Joint Venture

WHC's Three Rivers Habitat Partnership, a regional *Waterways for Wildlife* project, plans to initiate a 2,200 + acre corridor between the Alcoa Technical Center and Pennsylvania State University's New Kensington Campus. The Alcoa Technical Center project currently has seven partners.

The Alcoa Technical Center/Penn State corridor is located in one of the diverse temperate areas in the mid-Atlantic region, and is a critical breeding ground for neotropical migratory songbirds such as wood warblers, vireos and thrushes. The region of southwestern Pennsylvania where the project is located has also experienced high rates of habitat degradation and fragmentation. The Alcoa/Penn State corridor serves as both a demonstration, and an excellent opportunity to preserve and enhance corridors in this highly fragmented region, especially since multi-landowner strategies urgently need to be developed.

WHC will work with partners to manage the forest through deer management, improving structural diversity, invasive plant control, and other forest management strategies as appropriate for the improvement of breeding songbirds. The project will target numerous migratory species, including the cerulean and other warblers, wood thrush, sharp-shinned hawk and others. Efforts

will be made to convert open tracts of over 20 acres to warm-season grasses to provide for ground-nesting for species such as the bobolink, eastern meadowlark and grasshopper sparrow. In addition, these open areas adjacent to the forest edge will provide singing grounds for the woodcock, which has been declining in the region due to its preference for early successional habitat. Neighboring landowners will also be sought to partner as well. Penn State University students and Alcoa Inc. employees will be trained to participate, including monitoring species, plan development, implementation, and outreach.

This CCMBC project will link directly to WHC's *Wings of Wonder* program, which links corporate habitat projects with local schools to help students and communities learn about the conservation of migratory species.

Wings of Wonder will then utilize the Alcoa/Penn State corridor to offer unique, inquiry-based learning opportunities for students, while also serving as a demonstration to other sites across the country about the importance of bio-regionally specific curriculum and multiple landowner corridors. Once a management plan is in place, the partners will link with other corporate sites and schools along a migratory route. They will study the migration and wintering grounds of key species at other Alcoa facilities throughout the United States as well as facilities in Mexico, Central America and South America.

Corporate Partners

- Alcoa Inc.
- ASSET, Inc.
- others to be determined

Non-Profit Partners

- Atlantic Coast Joint Venture
- Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania State University
- Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club
- others to be determined

Government Partners

- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- others to be determined

5) Boreal Hardwoods; Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes and Eastern Habitat Joint Ventures

Lafarge Corporation has developed partnerships with a wide range of agencies and non-profit groups to address migratory bird habitat issues on three of their sites in Michigan and Ontario, Canada. Specifically, the pilot sites are: Alpena Plant and Presque Isle Quarry located in Upper Michigan, and Manitoulin Quarry in Meldrum Bay, Ontario.

The Alpena Plant offers a variety of migratory bird habitat, which includes open water within a 600-acre quarry adjacent to approximately 200 acres of mixed hardwood stands, largely red oaks, with a lush understory of herbaceous vegetation. An abundance of common loons and

variety of other shore and wading birds, along with bald eagles, frequent the open water. The hardwood stands envelop some grasslands and support breeding populations of numerous species of wood warblers as well as interesting species like the barred owl accompanied by colorful species such as the cedar waxwing, indigo bunting and eastern bluebird.

The Presque Isle Quarry consists of more than 5,000 acres of bays, estuaries and isolated wetlands surrounded by mixed hardwoods and grasslands. Bell Bay is one example of prime wetland habitat that serves the needs of numerous species of waterfowl and their wading and shore-loving cousins. Scores of species depend on this wide range of habitat types. With a focus on improvements on these existing habitat areas, coupled with a team approach to reclaiming the quarries, the site will provide even better nesting and resting habitat for migrating birds.

The Manitoulin Quarry, located on the extreme west end of Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron, represents WHC's first CCMBC project beyond the borders of the United States. This site consists of almost 5,000 acres (owned or leased by Lafarge) of strategically located migratory bird habitat. According to the reports presented from the Wildlife Habitat Canada and Nature Conservancy Canada representatives at a site meeting, there are numerous species of "concern" that use Manitoulin Island for nesting and cover. Mixed hardwoods and grassland/shrublands currently dominate the acreage on-site. The site provides critical habitat for species such as the common loon, scoters, oldsquaw, red-necked grebes, least tern and a variety of other open-water, edge-loving waders and shorebirds. When the quarries (one viewed consisted of 250 acres) are reclaimed over the next few decades, the resulting habitat will pay tribute to the partners that are currently focusing attention on the value of such planning and teamwork.

Corporate Partners

- Lafarge Corporation

Non-Profits Partners

- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Michigan Audubon Society
- The Nature Conservancy
- Nature Conservancy Canada
- Ontario Wetland Habitat Fund

Government Partners

- Canadian Wildlife Service (Eastern Habitat Joint Venture)
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture)

What are the next steps?

The following actions were initiated and scheduled to be completed or well underway by December 2003:

Complete initial phase of flagship model projects at four localities

- Refine scientific requirements and metrics
- Define site characteristics
- Refine long term management strategies

Refine plans for program governance and fiscal sustainability

- Refine funding and membership rewards structure
- Develop the marketing materials
- Refine metrics of achievement for participation
- Identify primary migratory bird corridors within the Western hemisphere that overlap with corporate land holdings

Within identified corridors, WHC will facilitate conservation and restoration activities on corporate lands in the United States and abroad, engaging and coordinating the involvement of project partners, collaborators and other stakeholder – utilizing existing national and international migratory bird conservation frameworks.