



State Wildlife Action Plan and Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan Workshops

05-281

Background:

In January 2006, the Department of Defense, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that required the three parties to work more collaboratively to conserve wildlife while protecting the military mission. State wildlife agencies are responsible for managing and conserving all resident fish and wildlife species, and to meet these goals are required to develop State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs). Similarly, military installations are required to manage fish and wildlife on their lands, by drafting and implementing Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMPs). Installations are required to have the state fish and wildlife agency and the US FWS approve their INRMPs through a process of collaboration and coordination.

Objective:

The purpose of this effort is to bring together natural resource managers from military installations, state wildlife agency personnel, and US FWS personnel to integrate SWAPs and INRMPs by identifying issues and goals that they had in common. During the workshops, participants were encouraged to consider pilot projects that they could embark on together, working collaboratively, to effectively accomplish common goals.

Summary of Approach:

Two regional workshops have been held in the Southeast (May 2006, Atlanta, GA) and Southwest (December 2006, Phoenix, AZ) and another is scheduled for the states of CO, NM, OK, and TX (May 2007, Albuquerque, NM). So far, over 120 participants have attended a workshop. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss communications barriers & possible solutions, common conservation goals, and ways to integrate SWAPs and INRMPs.

The workshops focused on encouraging the participants to break into groups (either by state, common species or habitat interest – their choosing), and consider potential projects that they could embark on together to help conserve wildlife and preserve the military mission.

Benefit:

These workshops produce a variety of benefits to both the conservation participants and the military installations. Some benefits include: updating plans and integrating them with a more streamlined approach – allowing more continuity between INRMPs and SWAPs; working on similar projects together, exchanging ideas and information, thereby increasing efficiency; and developing partnerships and discovering ways to fund conservation projects. Installations receive a particular benefit by having the opportunity to meet their counterparts from the US FWS and state agency, who are required to approve the installation's INRMP.

Accomplishments:

These workshops have enabled DoD, US FWS and the state wildlife agencies to work on planning and implementation efforts, to prioritize how conservation dollars are spent, to implement projects that are mutually beneficial, and to begin information and data sharing.

Several pilot projects have been developed from these workshops and are currently underway. Project topics range from examining Species at Risk to conducting partnership workshops to restoring key habitats for Species of Conservation Priority. Each group determined a way forward for their project and initial action items were discussed during the workshops. There will be a follow-up meeting held where the project leads can meet and discuss the different approaches they have used to try and integrate SWAPs and INRMPs.

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