

A Strategic Plan for the Midwest Region's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

2007-2011

**Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Ohio**



**Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Wisconsin**

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This Strategic Plan for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners Program) consists of three parts, each developed cooperatively by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) headquarters, regional, and field office staffs and, most importantly, our stakeholders and partners.

Part 1, the “Vision Document”, was completed in 2006 and describes the Partners Program and five major goals that will guide program operations for the next five years. These goals are intended to lead to the ultimate outcome of increasing and maintaining Federal Trust Species populations.

Part 2 is this document, our “Strategic Plan for the Midwest Region’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program”. Other Service regions are developing similar plans for Part 2. This plan will identify geographic focus areas in the region, provide estimated five-year accomplishment targets, and describe anticipated benefits to Federal trust species by linking to established planning and recovery documents.

Part 3 will be a “National Summary Document” which will be developed upon the completion of the Regional strategic plans. This document will use regional plans as a base to describe a national overview of habitat priorities and performance targets.

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is the Service’s vanguard for non-regulatory, voluntary, citizen and community based stewardship efforts for fish and wildlife conservation. It is based on the premise that fish and wildlife conservation is a responsibility shared by citizens and government. We provide willing partners with financial and technical assistance to accomplish stewardship projects that benefit our Federal Trust Species. See our national website at <http://www.fws.gov/partners> for more information.

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(Monarch butterfly courtesy Ted Eischeid)

An Introduction

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in the Midwest Region

The Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) encompasses the western portion of the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi River drainage including portions of the Missouri and Ohio rivers. This diverse landscape provides habitat for hundreds of game and nongame animal species as well as more than 65 species considered endangered, threatened or candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The Service manages 1.2 million acres of land in the Region and includes 54 national wildlife refuges, 12 wetland management districts, 15 fisheries stations, 10 ecological services offices, 18 law enforcement stations, and eight state private lands offices. Landowner assistance through the Partners Program is available at 55 of the Service's offices in the Midwest Region.



This area contains some of the richest farmland in the world and is a national leader in corn and soybean production. It is also an emerging leader in the production of grain-based ethanol. Major population centers include the Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan areas. Major Great Lakes port cities include Chicago, Duluth, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Toledo.

Historically, the wetlands and prairie that spread across the Midwest provided important breeding and rearing habitat for waterfowl and grassland-dependent birds and mammals. The majority of these

wetlands have been drained, and the wetland basins and associated prairie converted to crop production or other uses.¹ Similarly, the clear, cool streams and rivers of this region provided valuable spawning and rearing habitat for a myriad of fish and aquatic species. Nearly all these waterways have become altered, degraded, and impaired.

Per Public Law 109-204, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act, the Midwest Region's Partners program concentrates its work in three areas: wetland restoration, grassland restoration, and stream and riparian restoration. We focus on working cooperatively to enhance privately-owned land for Federal Trust Species, such as migratory birds, interjurisdictional fish, threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, and other species of conservation concern.

Following is an overview of our program, a brief look at our restoration activities, and a review of the five goals which comprise the Midwest Region's Partners For Fish and Wildlife program Strategic Plan:

Goal One - Conserve Habitat

Goal Two - Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships

Goal Three - Improve Information Sharing and Communication

Goal Four - Enhance Our Workforce

Goal Five - Increase Accountability

An Overview of the Midwest Region's Partners For Fish and Wildlife Program

By any measure, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) program has been a tremendous success. In our eight-state Midwest Region, we've worked with thousands of landowners to restore and enhance more than 350,000 acres of wildlife habitat—often just an acre or two at a time.

In keeping with the principles of Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC), Partners field staff have consistently delivered measurable biological results and conservation actions "on the ground". In the process, Partners biologists have leveraged the goodwill generated from our projects to develop and expand essential partnerships and to establish a cooperative framework to address future habitat conservation challenges.

Our partnerships continue to deliver results. Working in targeted focus areas with the

U.S. Department of Agriculture, state conservation agencies and organizations like Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited, we are able to offer landowners low-cost or no-cost options to help them meet their habitat management goals.

In the Midwest Region, our Partners projects fall into three general categories: wetland restoration, upland restoration, and instream and riparian restoration.

Wetland restorations usually involve heavy construction equipment and earth moving. Typical projects include plugging drainage ditches and tile lines or constructing berms and emppoundments to restore degraded wetlands.

Upland restorations often involve establishing native grasses and wild flowers. Once grassland habitats are established, periodic mowing or

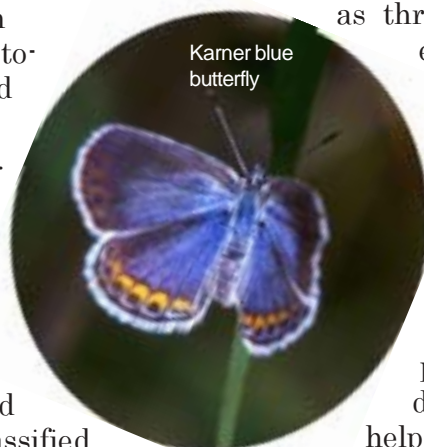
burning is used to control invasive and woody plants and to assist the growth of native prairie plants, which evolved with wildfire.

Instream and riparian restorations involve culvert removal, bank restorations, rock weir construction, woody debris placement and other measures to create fish habitat, reduce erosion and improve water quality. Because they can involve detailed engineering and hydrology work, instream restorations can be expensive. For this reason, many partners and resources are leveraged to accomplish restoration goals.

To gain maximum wildlife benefit, Partners projects often complement existing habitat projects in proximity to National Wildlife Refuges, federal Waterfowl Production Areas and other habitats which support threatened or endangered species.

Helping those species most in need

The Partners Program facilitates habitat restorations on private land designed to benefit Federal Trust Species. These trust species include common animals, like migratory birds and native fish (mourning doves, bluebirds and brook trout for example), and uncommon species classified



(USFWS photo)

as threatened or endangered, such as the Karner blue butterfly and the Niangua darter.

While our projects are designed to help those species

most in need they also help keep our common species common.

In addition to established Partners Program funding, our biologists work with landowners to leverage other state and federal incentive programs to help fund habitat improvements on their land. We also work closely with non-government non-profit groups to restore and protect critical wildlife habitat.

Looking Ahead: Wetland Restoration



Restoring a wetland by constructing a berm



Coordinating with landowner on a project site



The importance of wetlands in the Midwest Region cannot be overstated. Spread across the prairie potholes, the corn belt, and river bottoms throughout the heartland, the wetlands of the central United States provide critical nesting, feeding, resting and migration habitat that waterfowl and other birds need throughout the year.

Wetland drainage and intensive farming practices in the Midwest have resulted in the loss of more than 90 percent of the historical wetlands throughout the region. And while many National Wildlife Refuges, Waterfowl Production Areas and state wildlife areas were established to protect these wetlands, the vast majority remain in private ownership.²

For this reason, wetlands represent a priority habitat of the Midwest Region's Partners Program. Working with willing landowners on a voluntary basis, our biologists bring together the knowledge, equipment and materials needed for successful wetland restorations on private lands.

While many landowners tackle

wetland restorations because they wish to attract wildlife, we know the benefits to the ecosystem are actually far greater.

In addition to their role as contaminant filters, wetlands also serve as important buffers against flooding and major rain events. These qualities in turn help prevent erosion and other property destruction.

As a cornerstone of our Strategic Habitat Conservation approach, the Midwest Region's Partners Program is working with other Service programs and partners such as USGS to quantify these wetland benefits through baseline studies and monitoring.

While ducks, geese and other game animals benefit from wetlands, a host of non-game species also benefit; wetlands provide a smorgasbord of food and nutrients for invertebrates, shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, mammals, raptors, and a long list of reptiles and amphibians. About one-half of our threatened and endangered animal species depend on wetlands during some part of their life cycle.

At left: Partner's biologist overseeing a wetland restoration project
Below: Restored wetland in former farm field (all photos USFWS)



Looking Ahead: Prairie Restoration

While the loss of our wetlands has been dramatic and well-documented, native prairie in the Midwest--especially tallgrass prairie--has nearly disappeared altogether. Because of this, the Midwest Region's Partners Program has made private land prairie restorations one of its top priorities.

Agricultural conversion consumed nearly all of the native prairie that once covered America's midsection. Estimates put the loss of tallgrass prairie somewhere between 95 and 99.9 percent.³ Much of what is left now are small remnants; areas too steep to plow, degraded pastures, scattered patches along railroad grades and old cemeteries, and forgotten sinkholes and ravines.

We know that native prairie--which includes oak savanna, pine barrens, cedar glades and loess hills--can contain a complex mix of 100 or more grass

and forb species.⁴ Because it took many centuries to form, once plowed, native prairie can never be fully restored.

As is the practice on our own Service lands, we encourage landowners to seed their upland areas with a diverse mix of grasses and wildflowers. Research has shown that plantings which include a variety of native plant species provide better nesting cover and a better food source for wildlife than plantings which include only a single (monotypical) plant species.

Partners Program Principles

- All participation is voluntary
- 1:1 funding match available
- Focus on federal trust species
- 10-year agreement on projects
- \$25,000 limit on expenditures

Below: Prescribed fire team members monitor a prescribed fire (USFWS photo)



Managing With Fire

Developing more effective prescribed burning methods and educating landowners about the benefits of prescribed burning continue to be important facets of the Partners Program.

In order for prairie and grasslands to be truly sustainable, a primary goal of Strategic Habitat Conservation, they need fire. Fire on the prairie breaks down

dead plant material, provides nutrients used by native prairie vegetation, and controls invasive plants.⁵

The Partners Program continues to have begun field testing new fire treatments such as, "patch burning/grazing" methods which mimic the historic impacts of wildfire and grazing animals.



Jerry and Terri Dopp-Paukstat with seeder used on their Karner blue butterfly prairie restoration project near Wild Rose, Wis. (USFWS photo)

Looking Ahead: Stream and Riparian Restoration

A growing segment of the Midwest Region's Partners Program is helping landowners protect and restore small streams and riverbanks on their property. Typically, these projects often involve reshaping and stabilizing stream banks and bottoms and enhancing fish habitat by strategically placing rocks or large woody debris in stream channels to scour out deep pools favored by many fish species.

In addition to supporting healthy fish populations, these projects help reduce run-off and sedimentation and increase water clarity and quality. These stream improvements have helped fish species as diverse as the endangered Topeka shiner in prairie streams to brook trout in northern cold water streams.

Another focus of the Partners Program is providing unimpeded fish passage. Here, the issues center on road culvert removal and replacement and dam removal. Over time culverts become plugged with sediment and debris. Dams, many of which have long outlived their intended purpose, also become silted in and dan-

gerous to recreational users. Both culverts and dams restrict water flow and fish movement.

There are thousands of these old dams and hundreds of thousands of non-functioning culverts scattered across the landscape of the Midwest—each potentially contributing to seasonal flooding, hazardous roadways and waterways, and serving as an impediment to native fishes and other aquatic life.⁶

Working with other Service programs, landowners, and our state, non-government and other private partners, the Partners Program has taken on the challenge of stabilizing stream corridors, restoring natural stream flows, and providing a place for native fish and wildlife to flourish again.



Above: A stream restoration and stabilization project on Wisconsin's Hinkson Creek (USFWS photo)

Dam Removal Project on Michigan's Tannery Creek (USFWS photo)

Before dam removal and creation of riffles

After



By the numbers...

(since 1987 in the Midwest Region's Partners Program)

Stream miles improved
510

Wetland acres restored
123,952

Upland acres restored
207,667

Partners projects completed
35,000

Field offices offering landowner assistance
55

Goal One: Conserve Habitat

The conservation, restoration, and enhancement of terrestrial and aquatic habitats for the benefit of Federal Trust Species is a primary goal of the Partners Program in the Midwest Region. Over the past two centuries these natural habitats have been manipulated, modified, degraded, or destroyed.⁷

These changes to natural communities have occurred incrementally over many years and we recognize the need to restore them in the same manner – one acre and one mile at a time. We also recognize that the Partners Program cannot address all of the habitat restoration needs that confront the conservation community. Therefore we have set a course to focus our efforts towards wetlands, grasslands and streams that offer the greatest potential for successful restoration and benefit to declining Federal Trust Species.

The Partners Program has

engaged our numerous conservation partners, including Federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses and corporations, and private landowners, to help shape and focus our efforts in the habitat restoration arena. We have also sought input internally from other Service programs including Refuges and Wildlife, Fisheries, Endangered Species, and Migratory Birds. Collectively we have identified those geographic areas of greatest conservation need.

These areas have been refined further for purposes of the Partners Program. We have considered these areas pragmatically, taking into account the strengths and limitations of the Partners Program, funding limitations, future partnership opportunities, habitat restorability, and immediate resource threats. We have evaluated our current staffing

and financial assistance capabilities, and have assumed a program budget at the Fiscal Year 2006 level projected into the next five years.

The result of this evaluation has been the identification of 39 focus areas across the eight states of the Midwest Region (see Appendix B: Focus Area sample). Five-year habitat targets have been identified, as well as species to be benefited by our restoration actions. We have linked these focus areas to existing planning documents such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and endangered species recovery plans that support our efforts in these areas. Extensive narrative descriptions also accompany these focus areas.

The Partners Program will expend the majority of our technical and financial assistance in these focus areas over the next five years.



(photo courtesy Ted Eischeid)

Each of our 39 focus areas, including complete details on the watersheds and species targeted within each focus area, can be found at:

<https://intranet.fws.gov/Region3/StrategicPlans/>

Goal One: Conserve Habitat

Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures for Goal One:

- Objectives: Restore and enhance habitats for Federal Trust Species to effect population increases.
- Optimize delivery of Partners Program projects to specific areas that will show greatest return on investment of time and resources and yield greatest Federal Trust Species benefit.
- Design all habitat projects to restrict the introduction or spread of invasive species to benefit native habitats.
- Strategies: Establish five-year habitat restoration targets.
- Identify, with input from stakeholders including Federal, state and local governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and internal Service programs, focus areas for the delivery of Partners Program habitat restoration activities.
- Performance: Establish geographic focus areas for the Partners Program and incorporate them into the Region 3 Partners for Fish and Wildlife Strategic Plan.
- Achieve the established five-year habitat restoration targets over the period 2007-2011.
- Document increased Federal Trust Species populations in our focus areas.

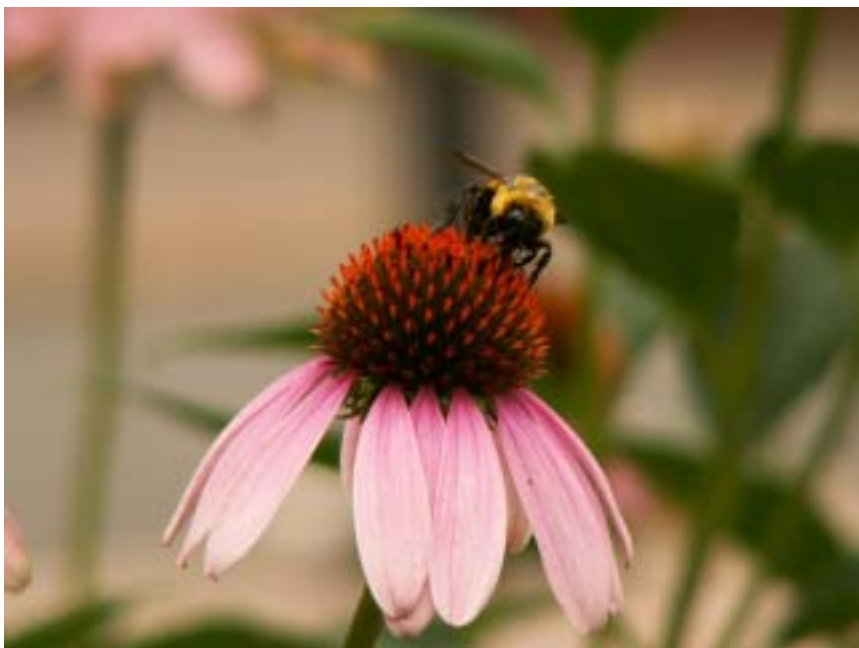
5-year habitat restoration/enhancement targets

Wetland Acres 22,375

Upland Acres 40,200

Riparian Miles 476

Stream Miles 647



(Purple Coneflower - USFWS photo)

Goal Two: Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships

Our partners are the most important component of the Partners Program. Without their cooperation and resources it would have been impossible to deliver the habitat improvements and wildlife benefits we have through our program.

Partnerships are also an essential component of our Strategic Habitat Conservation effort, as we recognize landscape level habitat gains can only be achieved through collaboration, rather than regulation.

With decades of successful projects to its credit, the Partners Program brings hard-won credibility to Service habitat projects. Because of this reputation, our partners have come to expect results on the ground and in the water—and the Partners Program has delivered.

We will continue to seek out similarly capable partners to help us advance our Strategic Habitat Conservation goals. In addition to individual landowners, our partners



Service Regional Director Robyn Thorson reviews joint USFWS/Illinois DNR project. (USFWS photo)

include all levels of government, tribes, non-profit organizations, corporations, foundations and land trusts.

Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures for Goal Two:

Objectives: Maintain and enhance existing partnerships.

Establish new partnerships to increase our project capacity.

Leverage external funding opportunities to increase our habitat restoration activities.

Train Partners program staff on partnership building methodology.

Strategies: Participate in partner organization meetings and organize field visits to jointly implemented projects.

Keep partner organizations updated on status of Partners Program funding opportunities, organizational changes and points of contact.

Conduct outreach with potential partner organizations.

Identify key stakeholders in Partners focus areas and initiate contact with those organizations to explain the Partners program objectives.

Encourage partners to join in collaborative conservation efforts.

Ensure Partners staff has access to seed money to initiate and match funds made available by partnering organizations.

Provide formal or on-the-job training to Partners staff on partnership development.

Performance: Maintain existing partnerships and report partner participation and contributions in HabITS database annually.

Establish a minimum of 10 new Partners Program partnerships in the Region.

Achieve a minimum of 1:1 match of partner cash/in-kind contributions to Partners Program habitat restoration expenditures overall. Leverage partner funding for benefit of Federal Trust resources.

Offer selected partners the opportunity to receive formal Service partnership training.

Goal Three: Improve Information Sharing and Communication

Effective communication is the key to engaging, recruiting, and enlisting the many stakeholders and decision-makers needed for successful habitat conservation in the Midwest. Fortunately, promoting the Partners Program through our network of Service offices has been very successful.

Our challenge now is to focus our efforts, as well as those of our partners, using the principals and framework of Strategic Habitat Conservation.

To that end we will develop a variety of information products and delivery methods to reach as many landowners and potential cooperators as possible. This will include the development of state-specific information materials, an interactive website, and our continued attendance at regional and national venues to deliver the Partners message.

In addition to advancing our established relationships, we will also develop new partner-



Partners Program staff meet with landowners at National Pheasant Fest (USFWS photo)

ships with other stakeholders who share our vision of conservation stewardship.

Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures for Goal Three:

Objectives: Share with our partners and the public the Vision of the Partners Program.

Share with our partners and the public accomplishments of the Partners Program achieved through collaborative conservation efforts.

Enlist the support of our partners and the public to promote stewardship of our fish and wildlife resources and improved populations of our Federal Trust Species.

Strategies: Develop an interactive web page for the Midwest Region Partners Program.

Develop state-specific Partners Program brochures.

Ensure Partners Program representation on USDA Technical Committees.

Attend partner and stakeholder functions as appropriate.

Invite partners and stakeholder to annual state Partners program meetings.

Performance: Complete development of Partners Program web page.

Develop state specific Partners Program brochures.

Enter complete Partner project accomplishment reports into HabITS database by September 15th of each year.

Each Partners Program biologist will provide not less than two reports annually for the Accomplishment Reporting System (ARS).

Partners Program State Coordinators will be regular participants in USDA State Technical Committee meetings.

Produce report of Midwest Region Partners Program accomplishments annually for distribution to partners and stakeholders.

Goal Four: Enhance Our Workforce

Successful implementation of the Partners Program requires a diverse, highly-skilled and motivated workforce. Employee understanding and support are also critical to implementing our vision of Strategic Habitat Conservation.

The Partners Program is committed to developing employees who are results focused, act with integrity, and seek creative solutions to the challenges of private land habitat restoration.

Our employees will have access to the technical and financial tools necessary to meet the demands of the program. We will also provide training to ensure our staff are able to provide the most timely management information and optimal conservation benefits to our landowner customers.

These actions will ensure that the Partners Program is positioned to address evolving resource priorities, maintain excellent customer service, and



Minnesota Partners Program coordination meeting (USFWS photo)

deliver a diverse array of habitat conservation projects.

Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures for Goal Four:

Objectives: Partners Program biologists will be skilled in state-of-the-art habitat restoration techniques which benefit Federal Trust Species.

Ensure institutional knowledge is passed to new Partners biologists.

Develop a diverse Partners Program workforce to address changing demographics of our customer base.

Target new Partners positions to focus areas with greatest potential for habitat restoration success.

Strategies: Provide access to training opportunities to ensure Partners Program biologists receive the latest information on emerging habitat restoration techniques.

Assign new Partners Program biologists an established mentor during their first two years in the program. Utilize student intern and Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) recruitment opportunities to identify high caliber recruits for the Partners Program.

Evaluate focus area needs when placing new Partners Program biologists.

Performance: Annually report number of Partners Program biologists who have received both formal and informal training in habitat restoration techniques.

Annually report number of Partners Program biologists engaged in mentoring opportunities.

Sponsor two student interns annually and at least one SCEP student biennially.

Reevaluate regional staffing needs annually based on workload; adjust geographic staffing as necessary.

Add one new Partners Program biologist for each \$500,000 increment in Partners Program base funding for the Midwest region.

Goal Five: Increase Accountability

Since its inception, the Midwest Region's Partners Program has been both extremely cost-effective and transparent; dollars spent have resulted in direct habitat gains on the ground and in the water.

Historically, as is the case with other Service programs, Partners has reported annually on the number of wetland and upland acres restored and the miles of riparian lands and streams restored or enhanced.

We also report on fish barriers removed and acres treated for invasive species.

Additionally, Partners reports the number and type of partners and the value of contributions leveraged from non-Service sources to support each project.

As we move toward increasingly strategic projects and greater fiscal oversight and expectations, the Midwest Region's Partners Program remains very



Project review with landowner (USFWS photo)

confident of our demonstrated program effectiveness and efficiencies.

Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures for Goal Five:

Objectives: Achieve Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals identified for the Midwest Region Partners Program.

Improve management and oversight of Partners Program activities.

Address quality control of accomplishment data.

Increase visual resources incorporated into HabITS database.

Assure Partners Program funding fidelity.

Strategies: Ensure GPRA goals are reasonable based on resources available.

Conduct program reviews of activities at Partners Program offices.

Ensure Partners biologists are familiar with HabITS data entry protocol.

Provide project photos for projects entered into HabITS database.

Utilize project codes to identify purpose of Partners Program funds.

Performance: Annually report, by September 15, habitat restoration accomplishments into HabITS database in support of established GPRA goals.

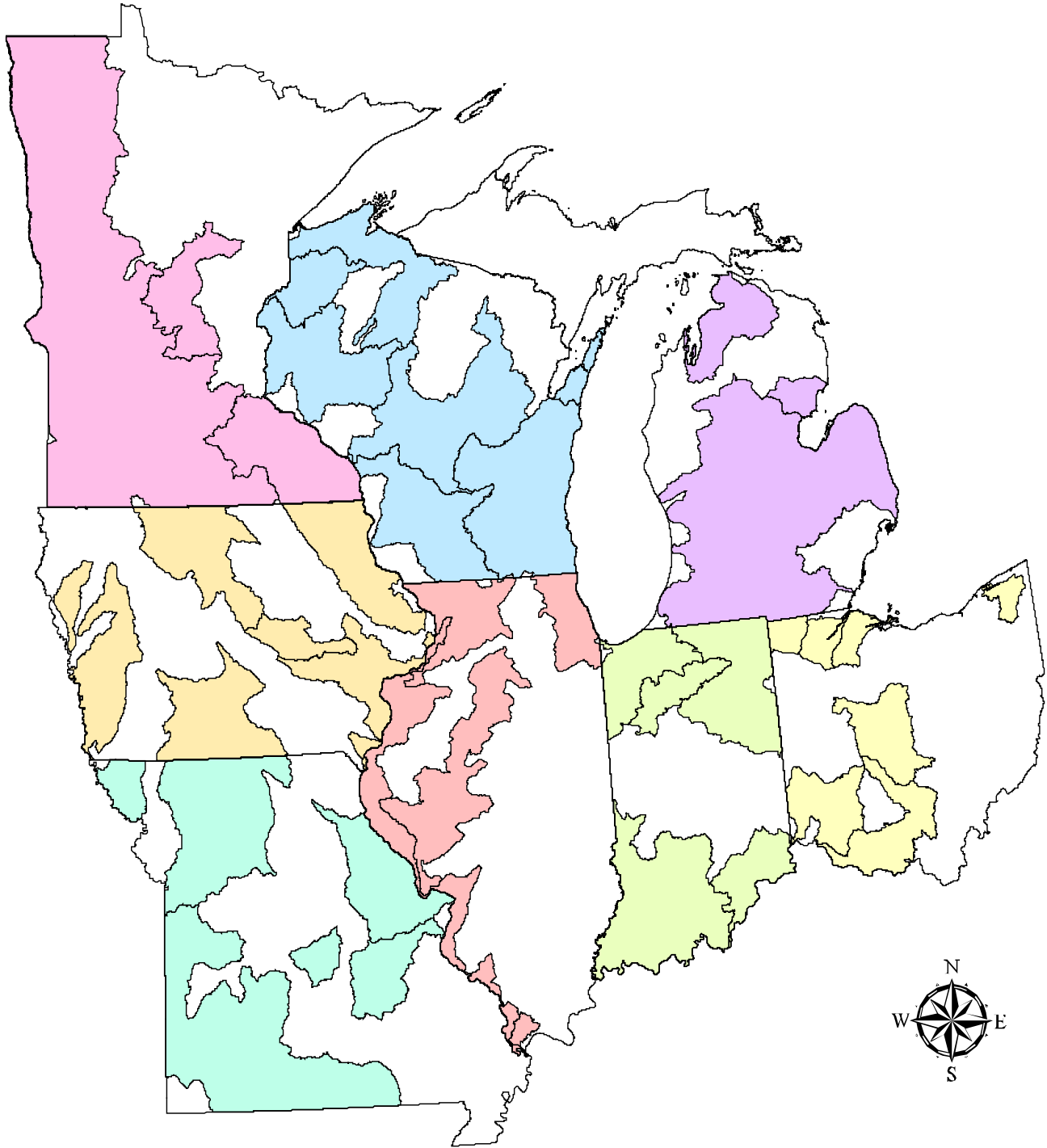
Conduct reviews of two State Partners Program and five local Partners Program offices and operations annually.

Provide Regional Office certification of accuracy of HabITS data entries.

Ensure that not less than 75% of project accomplishments entered into HabITS are supported by electronic photos.

Track Partners Program funds to ensure that they are used for their intended purposes of habitat restoration and technical assistance with a focus on Federal Trust resources.

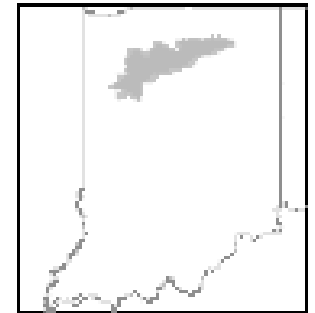
Region 3 Partners for Fish and Wildlife Focus Areas



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 3 NWRS
Division of Conservation Planning
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111
January, 2007

Sample of HabITs Focus Area Report

Focus Area Name Tippecanoe River
Program Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Point of Contact Jeff Kiefer
FWS Region Region 3
State Indiana
USGS Sub Basins
 • (05120106) TIPPECANOE



<u>Habitat Type</u>	<u>5-Year Targets</u>	<u>Listed Species Benefited</u>	<u>Unlisted Species Benefited</u>
WETLANDS	Restoration 50.0 acres	Fanshell, <i>Cyprogenia stegaria</i>	Wood Duck, <i>Aix sponsa</i>
	Enhancement 20.0 acres	Bald eagle, <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> Clubshell, <i>Pleurobema clava</i>	Blue-winged Teal, <i>Anas discors</i> Mallard, <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> Willow Flycatcher, <i>Empidonax traillii</i> Greater Yellowlegs, <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>

Supporting Plan Documenting Biological Response

- #1: Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Joint Venture Waterfowl Habitat Conservation Plan, Draft 2006
- #2: Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes Region Shorebird Conservation Plan, 2000 — <http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdpplan/RegionalShorebird/RegionalPlans.htm>
- #3: Indiana Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife,

<u>Habitat Type</u>	<u>5-Year Targets</u>	<u>Listed Species Benefited</u>	<u>Unlisted Species Benefited</u>
UPLANDS	Restoration: 75.0 acres	Fanshell, <i>Cyprogenia stegaria</i>	Mallard, <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
	Enhancement: 25.0 acres	Clubshell, <i>Pleurobema clava</i>	Bobolink, <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> Dickcissel, <i>Spiza americana</i>

Supporting Plan Documenting Biological Response

- #1: Partners In Flight Bird Conservation Plan, The Upper Great Lakes Plain, 2001 — <http://www.partnersinflight.org>
- #2: Fish and Wildlife Resource Conservation Priorities, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Region 3, 2002

Sample of HabITs Focus Area Report (continued)

<u>Habitat Type</u>	<u>5-Year Targets</u>	<u>Listed Species Benefited</u>	<u>Unlisted Species Benefited</u>
RIVERS/ STREAMS/ SHORELINE RIPARIAN CORRIDOR	Restoration: 1.0 miles	Fanshell, <i>Cyprogenia stegaria</i> Indiana bat, <i>Myotis sodalis</i> Clubshell, <i>Pleurobema clava</i>	Wood Duck, <i>Aix sponsa</i> Acadian Flycatcher, <i>E. virescens</i>

Supporting Plan Documenting Biological Response

#1: Indiana Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 2005 — <http://www.djcase.com/incws/indianacws.htm>

#2: Indiana Bat Recovery Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1983 — http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba_recplan.pdf

#3: Fish and Wildlife Resource Conservation Priorities, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Region 3, 2002

Focus Area Description

The aquatic biota that depend on freshwater habitats contain the highest percentage of imperiled species among all groups of animals and plants in the U.S. In particular, freshwater mussels have been especially impacted by degraded aquatic habitat, with more than two-thirds of mussel species designated as species of conservation concern. The Tippecanoe River is one of the most biologically diverse streams in the nation, supporting 49 of its original 57 species of freshwater mussels, including the federally endangered Clubshell, Fanshell, and Northern Riffleshell. The Clubshell population in the Tippecanoe is reported to be the largest remaining population of this species in existence. The overall species diversity of the Tippecanoe rivals some of the highest quality streams in America, and The Nature Conservancy has identified it as one of the top 10 rivers in the nation to preserve.

The Tippecanoe meanders for more than 225 miles across north central Indiana with a watershed that encompasses 1.25 million acres across portions of 14 counties, and is confined mainly to the Northern Lakes Natural Region and the Kankakee Sands Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Region. The landscape is predominantly agricultural, with more than 70% of the land base in crops, but also contains scattered woodlots, wetlands, and in some areas a significant riparian corridor along the Tippecanoe River. Due in part to the presence of more than 85 natural lakes and numerous wetlands that feed the river through its tributaries, water quality is still fairly good, although nonpoint source pollution through sedimentation and nutrient runoff is considered a threat to water quality.

The Service will work with partners to focus on habitat restoration activities within the watershed that benefit water quality, including wetland restoration, riparian reforestation, and native prairie establishment. These practices will help reduce sedimentation, which is a primary nonpoint source pollution threat to mussels in the river, and also will help to assimilate excess nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, thereby improving surface water quality. Wetland restoration projects will also benefit migratory bird species such as Mallard and Willow Flycatcher, and enhancing the floodplain corridor through reforestation will benefit species with riparian forest affinities in the watershed, such as Acadian Flycatcher and the federally endangered Indiana Bat. Grassland restoration, especially in larger blocks or in association with other grassland habitats, will benefit species such as Bobolink and Dickcissel. Overall emphasis will be on projects that enhance habitat complexes and enlarge existing blocks of habitat, particularly along the Tippecanoe River corridor.

The Service has partnered with The Nature Conservancy through the PFW Program to jointly focus on habitat restoration within the Tippecanoe watershed, and will continue to work in partnership with TNC to identify key private lands projects in the future. Opportunities also exist to complement USDA programs in the watershed, such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The Tippecanoe River watershed was established as Indiana's first CREP project, and interest is growing among landowners to take advantage of the incentives provided through the CREP. The PFW Program will focus on opportunities where USDA programs cannot provide assistance to landowners, thereby expanding the tools available to put conservation projects on the ground in the watershed. Other partners in the focus area include Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, NICHES Land Trust, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and private landowners.

Stakeholders Providing Input into the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Strategic Planning Process

APH Kidd Lake – Illinois
 Chisago County Soil and Water Conservation District – Minnesota
 Cinergy Corporation – Indiana
 Clinton County Drain Commission – Michigan
 Conservation Districts of Iowa
 Ducks Unlimited – Illinois
 Ducks Unlimited – Indiana
 Ducks Unlimited – Michigan
 Ducks Unlimited – Minnesota
 Ducks Unlimited – Missouri
 Environmental Defense – Wisconsin
 Friends of the White River – Indiana
 Huron Potawatomi Tribe
 Illinois DNR
 Illinois Stewardship Alliance
 Indiana DNR – Division of Fish and Wildlife
 Indiana DNR – Division of Forestry
 Indiana DNR – Division of Soil Conservation
 Iowa DNR – Division of Fisheries
 Iowa DNR – Division of Soil Conservation
 Iowa DNR – Division of Wildlife
 Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
 McCormick Farms – Indiana
 Michigan Association of Conservation Districts
 Michigan Chapter – Soil and Water Conservation Society
 Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
 Michigan DNR – Wildlife Division
 Michigan Farm Bureau
 Michigan State University – Department of Fisheries and Wildlife
 Michigan State University – Integrated Pest Management Program
 Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources
 Minnesota DNR – Fisheries
 Minnesota DNR – Waters
 Minnesota DNR – Wildlife
 Minnesota Waterfowl Association
 Missouri Department of Conservation – Fisheries
 Missouri Department of Conservation – Private Lands
 Missouri Department of Conservation – Wildlife
 Missouri Prairie Foundation
 National Audubon Society – Missouri
 National Wild Turkey Federation – Indiana
 Natural Land Institute – Illinois
 Office of Senator Tom Harkin – Iowa
 Ohio DNR – Division of Forestry
 Ohio DNR – Division of Wildlife
(continued on next page)

Stakeholders Providing Input into the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Strategic Planning Process (continued)

Pheasants Forever – Indiana
 Pheasants Forever – Michigan
 Pheasants Forever – Minnesota
 Pheasants Forever – Ohio
 Presnell Plantation, LLC – Indiana
 Purdue University - Department of Forestry and Natural Resources
 Quail Unlimited – Indiana
 Richardson Wildlife Foundation – Illinois
 Rush Lake Improvement Association – Minnesota
 Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Ohio
 Southwest Illinois Resource Conservation and Development Council
 The Nature Conservancy – Indiana
 The Nature Conservancy – Iowa
 The Nature Conservancy – Michigan
 The Nature Conservancy – Minnesota
 The Nature Conservancy – Missouri
 The Nature Conservancy – Ohio
 The Nature Conservancy – Wisconsin
 USDA – Farm Service Agency – Indiana
 USDA – Farm Service Agency – Michigan
 USDA – Farm Service Agency – Minnesota
 USDA – Farm Service Agency – Ohio
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Illinois
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Indiana
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Iowa
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Michigan
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Minnesota
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Missouri
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Ohio
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service – Wisconsin
 USFWS – Ecological Services – Region 3
 USFWS – Fisheries – Region 3
 USFWS – Migratory Birds – Region 3
 USFWS – Refuges and Wildlife – Region 3
 Wisconsin DNR
 Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

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