

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Strategic Plan The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

*Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife
Through Voluntary Conservation*

October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2010





MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present the *Vision Document* of the Strategic Plan for the *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program*.

The first part of this Plan describes our vision of the Program as we see it in today's mix of assets within the Fish and Wildlife Service and, importantly, what we see as its role over the next five years. As Director, I see that role as illustrative of the shifts we are seeing in the organizational culture and operational focus of the Service. To be responsive to evolving national priorities and austere Federal budgets, we must expect change and manage for it. While we can take pride in the Service's past accomplishments, we must be prepared to meet new challenges in natural resource management and new standards of efficiency and accountability in how we operate.

The public we serve has changed and expects that we can accomplish more of our goals through partnerships and voluntary incentives, instead of relying on regulations and land acquisition to protect natural resources. Over the past few years we've also seen greater public demand for government agencies to more stringently account for their accomplishments and to be more efficient. Therefore, we must excel in both resource management and business management in order to put as much of our limited resources into on-the-ground conservation programs as we possibly can.

I believe that we must continue to emphasize working cooperatively with others and expand our use of collaborative approaches to resource conservation. We must also develop a more Service-wide integrated approach to problem solving and share resources to get the job done.

The *Partners for Fish and Wildlife* program resonates with these ideals and is serving as a vanguard for change. As detailed in the second part of this Plan, we are identifying regional geographic areas in which to focus local projects in order to realize the greatest benefit to those fish and wildlife resources most in need. The third part of the Plan is a national summary or overview of priority areas and the expected benefits of our future actions.

Most importantly, the Plan reaffirms the *Partners for Fish and Wildlife* program's commitment to building and strengthening our partnerships for shared stewardship of our fish and wildlife resources. Working together, we can lead change and continue our Nation's proud tradition of conservation leadership.

A Dale Hall



MESSAGE from the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

As the Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, I am pleased to have worked with our many partners and stakeholders in preparing this Strategic Plan for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. This program and its highly skilled, locally-based staff offers a vital link to private landowners by providing assistance for local on-the-ground habitat conservation projects.

These same individuals lend their expertise to other Federal, Tribal, and State agencies as well by providing valuable technical assistance to their programs. In particular, we work closely with bureaus of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in implementing the many conservation programs of the Farm Bill.

Within the Service, the Partners Program is an important tool in achieving our goals for recovery of endangered species and maintaining populations of at-risk species. Service field staff work to control invasive species, remove barriers for fish passage, provide habitat buffers around the boundaries of National Wildlife Refuges, restore habitat for migratory birds, and protect or restore our Nation's valuable wetlands. The Partners Program will also be integral in implementing the National Fish Habitat Initiative along with State agencies and other stakeholders.

As this Strategic Plan's Vision Document describes, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife philosophy is based on shared responsibility, cooperation and collaboration, building partnerships, focusing on priority needs, and delivering on-the-ground habitat conservation. We will build on these strengths and capabilities to achieve new levels of efficiency within the Service and in meeting the needs of our private landowner partners and other stakeholders.

Healthy Fish and Wildlife, Healthy Habitat, Healthy People, and a Healthy Economy

Read on,

Ma Parker

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Vision Document
Part 1 of 3



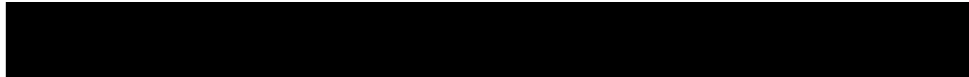


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I. Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan for the *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program* (Program) consists of three parts, each developed cooperatively by 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” describes our Program and five major goals that will guide program operations for the next five years. These five goals are intended to lead to the ultimate end outcome of increasing and maintaining Federal Trust Species populations.

Part 2, the “Regional Step-down Plans” will identify geographic focus areas in each region, provide estimated annual project accomplishment targets and describe anticipated benefits to Federal Trust Species. Part 3, the “National Summary Document” will use regional plans as a base to describe a national

overview of habitat priorities and 5-year performance targets.

The 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 Federal Trust Species.

Five major goals have been identified as core components of our vision for the Program. First, and foremost, is our goal to **conserve habitat** for the benefit of priority fish and wildlife species. To enhance our mission capabilities we need to **broaden and strengthen partnerships; improve information**

sharing and communication; and, enhance our workforce. To **increase accountability**, we need to measure progress toward Department of the Interior (DOI), Service, and Program strategic goals and ensure that our actions are efficient and effective.

We will continue to work as a partner with other Federal programs, State agencies, Tribal and local governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, industry, land trusts and non-profit groups, along with our private landowner partners. We will also work closely with other Service programs to assist in implementing national conservation plans for Federal Trust Species. Most importantly, the views and involvement of our stakeholders will continue to provide valuable guidance.



Photo by Heather Johnson, USFWS

II. Introduction

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program works toward achieving the mission of the Service, which is “working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

At the heart of the Service’s mission are the conservation and management of the Federal Trust Species: migratory birds; threatened and endangered species; inter-jurisdictional fish; certain marine mammals; and species of international concern. In turn, this is the ultimate objective of the work done by our Program. While the Service works under an array of statutory authorities and resource management programs to meet its mandates, our Program serves as a bridge to the owners and managers of Federal and non-Federal lands to develop partnerships that directly benefit fish and wildlife with a particular focus on Federal Trust Species. Our voluntary, cooperative conservation Program is based on the premise that fish and wildlife conservation is a responsibility shared by citizens and their government. Our approach is to engage willing partners, through non-regulatory incentives, to conserve and protect valuable fish and wildlife habitat on their property and in their communities. We do this by providing the funding support and technical and planning tools needed to make on-the-ground conservation affordable, feasible, and effective.

The Program has grown in size and scope since its beginning in 1987 and has gained national recognition as a vanguard in the new era of cooperative conservation. As a result, the public investment in the Program has increased along with a commensurate requirement for accountability.

The Strategic Plan will address these important issues: how we identify needs and opportunities to serve our mission; how we strive for efficiency



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

and effectiveness in our Program operations; and how we measure and account for our accomplishments. Five major goals have been identified as core components of our vision:

- Conserve Habitat
- Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships
- Improve Information Sharing and Communication
- Enhance Our Workforce
- Increase Accountability

To help achieve these goals, the views of our stakeholders have and will continue to provide valuable guidance. At the outset of the strategic planning process, an outreach effort was conducted throughout the country to provide stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on the internal and external factors impacting the Programs’ current performance and future accomplishments. That input provided valuable direction for the design and content of this document. Of note, the vast majority of the more than 400

stakeholders involved expressed strong support for the Program citing its on-the-ground accomplishments, flexibility, technical expertise, and responsiveness to the needs and values of property owners and local communities as important strengths.

Additionally, in 2002, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) conducted a Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review of the Partners Program. The review outlined

expectations for and means by which the Program can achieve greater efficiencies and higher returns on investments through focused planning.

This external guidance has been coupled with the experience, knowledge, and dedicated foresight of the staff of the Program to produce this Vision Document, which articulates our philosophy, goals, and desired operational outcomes.

“Our responsibility to the Nation is to be more careful stewards of the land; we must be a constant catalyst for positive change.”

– Gifford Pinchot

III. Overview of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

The Partners Program, active in all 50 States and U. S. Territories, provides technical assistance and delivers on-the-ground restoration projects, particularly to our Nation's private landowners, farmers, ranchers, and corporations.

The Program has joined with landowners, other citizens, and many partners nationwide to conserve fish and wildlife habitat in very significant ways. Through our partnerships, we have worked to conserve wetlands, streams and rivers, marshes and estuaries, and upland grasslands and forests from coast to coast. The power of our partnerships is clearly demonstrated by our accomplishments. As of 2005, the Program has:

- Restored over 753,000 acres of wetlands;
- Restored over 1,867,000 acres of prairie, shrub and forest upland habitat;
- Restored over 6,806 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat;
- Implemented over 37,700 landowner and cooperative agreements; and
- Leveraged Federal tax dollars at least 3:1 through partnerships.

Our mission is to efficiently achieve voluntary habitat restoration on private lands, through financial and technical assistance, for the benefit of Federal Trust Species.

The Partners Program was established in 1987 with a core group of biologists and a small budget for on-the-ground wetland restoration projects on private lands. This successful, results-oriented program has garnered support through the years and has grown into a larger and more diversified habitat restoration program assisting thousands of private landowners across the Nation.

Migratory birds, inter-jurisdictional fish, federally-listed endangered,

threatened or other imperiled or declining species are public resources, which by their migratory nature or declining numbers on a national scale, have been identified as Federal Trust Species.

It is estimated that 73 percent of our Nation's land is privately owned and that the majority of our fish and wildlife resources occur on those lands. Consequently, the conservation lands held by Federal and State agencies and other conservation groups cannot completely provide for fish and wildlife needs. Because the habitat needs of all Trust Species cannot be met solely on public lands, public funds are also expended on private lands to accomplish habitat improvements through cooperative conservation programs such as the Partners Program.

The Program can assist with projects in all habitat types which conserve or restore native vegetation, hydrology, and soils associated with imperiled ecosystems such as longleaf pine, bottomland hardwoods, tropical forests, native prairies, marshes, rivers and

streams, or otherwise provide an important habitat requisite for a rare, declining or protected species.

The Program locally-based field biologists work one-on-one with private landowners and other partners to plan, implement, and monitor their projects. Program field staff help landowners find other sources of funding and help them through the permitting process, as necessary. This personal attention and follow-through is a significant strength of the Program that has led to national recognition and wide support.

A 2004 National Poll of Hunters and Anglers conducted by the National Wildlife Federation reported that 87 percent of those surveyed favored expanding the Partners Program to continue helping private landowners restore and conserve fish and wildlife habitat on their property.



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

The Program is guided by a national policy (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual, section 640 fw1) that has identified these objectives:

- Promote and implement habitat improvement projects that benefit Federal Trust Species;
- Provide conservation leadership and promote partnerships;
- Encourage public understanding and participation; and
- Work with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement conservation programs.

“Without the assistance and attention provided to me by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife biologist, I would not have signed up for any of the existing conservation programs.”

-Harold May, private landowner, MS

In addition, the Program policy has established priority ranking factors to help guide project selection. These priorities are stepped down to the State and local levels as field staff collaborate with our stakeholders to further refine habitat priorities and geographic focus areas, described further in Part 2 of this Strategic Plan.

National priority ranking factors for the Program are used to assign funding priority status to proposed projects that meet these conditions:

- Improve habitat for Federal Trust Species, including migratory birds; threatened and endangered species; inter-jurisdictional fish; marine mammals; and, other declining species;
- Complement activities on National Wildlife Refuge System lands, or contribute to the resolution of problems on refuges that are caused by off-refuge practices;
- Address species and habitat priorities that have been identified through Service planning teams (with our partners), or in collaboration with State fish and wildlife agencies;
- Reduce habitat fragmentation or serve as buffers for other important Federal or State conservation lands; and
- Result in self-sustaining systems that are not dependent on artificial structures.

If other considerations are generally equal, then priority is directed to those projects that link private lands to important Federal lands (such as Refuges), have cooperative agreements of longer duration, multiple partners, cost sharing, and the greatest cost effectiveness. The overall goal of Program projects is to return a site to the ecological condition that likely existed prior to loss or degradation.

“By providing habitat restoration funds to complete restoration projects initiated by the Districts as well as technical assistance to provide restoration experience and expertise to other agencies’ programs, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program puts the Wetland Management Districts in a wonderful position to accomplish a multitude and variety of Trust Species habitat restoration projects over the next ten years.”

*-- Windom, MN
National Wildlife
Refuge Comprehensive
Conservation Plan and
Environmental Assessment*



USFWS photo

IV. Our Conservation Challenge

More than 50 percent of the Nation's wetlands have been destroyed, more than 70 percent of the Nation's riparian habitats have been lost or significantly degraded, and 95 percent of our tall grass prairie and longleaf pine forests have been lost. Further, less than two percent of the Nation's rivers remain free flowing. These are just a few examples of habitat types impacted by human activities as we live, work, and build our economy. Consequences of habitat loss include decreases in wildlife populations and many other natural, social, and economic impacts and, ultimately, a diminished quality of life.

To meet these challenges, we work with a myriad of other Federal and non-Federal partners. In particular, we work closely with USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to help deliver a variety of

conservation programs of the Farm Bill.

We also work closely with other Service programs to help implement national plans such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, North American Landbird Conservation Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, National Fisheries Strategic Plan, National Wildlife Refuge System Strategic Plan, Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans, Partners in Flight, and Endangered Species Habitat Conservation and Recovery plans. Because of these and related experiences, our Program will become increasingly active in integrated Trust Resource conservation planning, such as the National Fish Habitat Initiative, that will provide for Service-wide integrated management strategies for fish and wildlife conservation. Likewise, in this

era of cooperative conservation, we will continue to provide biological and technical expertise to other Federal agencies to complement their habitat initiatives, as well as to States, in implementing State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans.

The success of the Program relies on building trust and credibility with our partners. We achieve this by providing accurate information and being available to assist our partners in a timely manner, by leveraging resources, and by helping implement cost-efficient and effective projects. Our staff is experienced at helping people come together to forge and implement collaborative solutions that meet local and regional needs for fish and wildlife stewardship.



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

V. Getting the Job Done: Our Goals

The Program and our partners operate in a constantly changing natural, economic, social and political environment. In the face of these challenges, we seek to strategically allocate our resources, while remaining flexible to quickly adapt and respond to change. Using the input from our partners and stakeholders, this plan describes where we envision the Program to be in the future using five national-level goals. In Part 2, each region will develop performance measures under each of these goals.

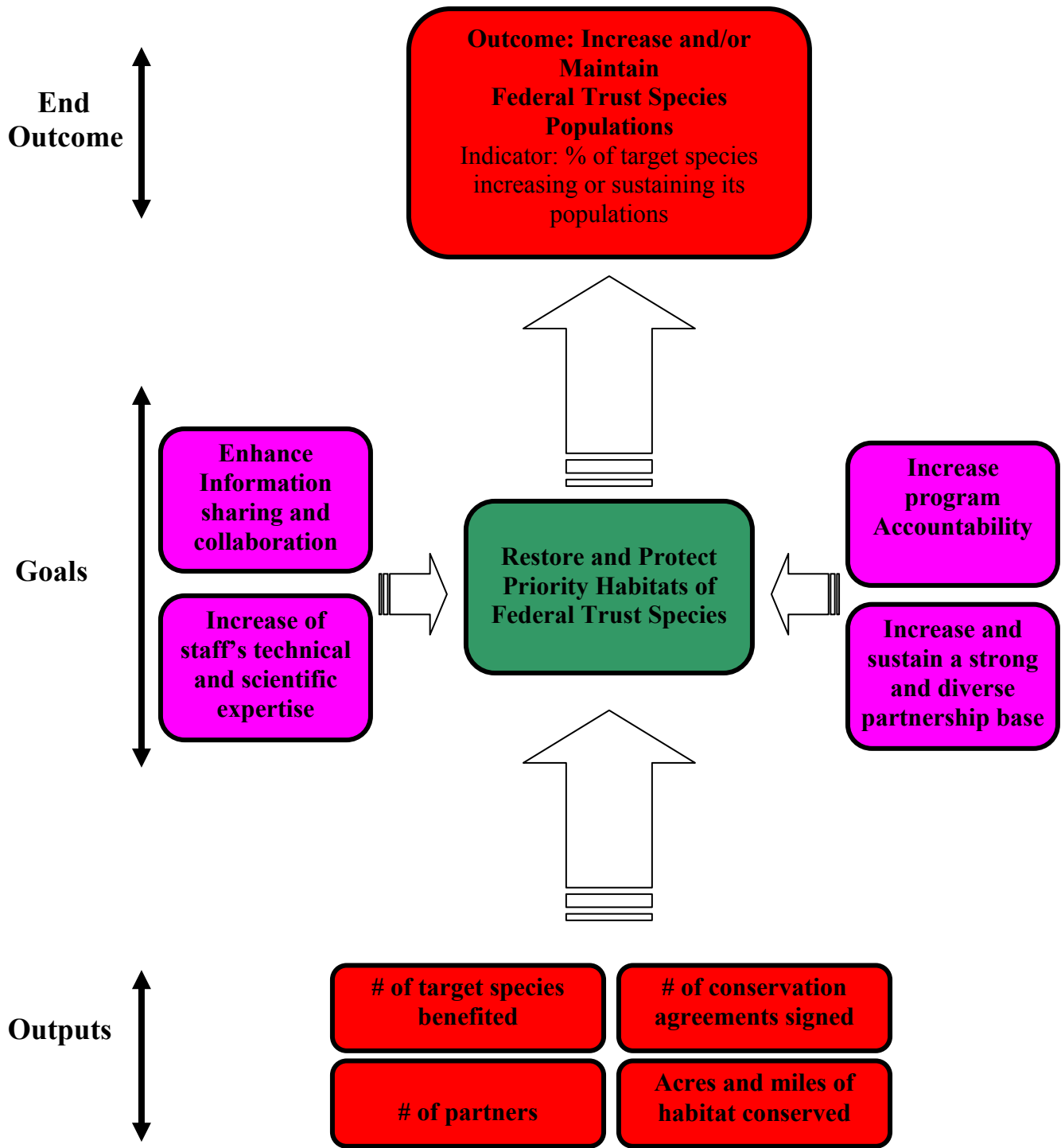
These five goals are designed to support the ultimate outcome of the Program: increasing and/or maintaining Federal Trust Species populations.

Progress towards this outcome will be measured by an outcome indicator that is the percentage of sustained or increasing target species populations. This indicator is derived from information assessed by the Program as well as other Service species-oriented programs and/or by our partners.



Photo by Heather Johnson, USFWS

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Conceptual Strategic Model



Goal One: Conserve Habitat

Restore and Protect Priority Habitats to Increase and Maintain Federal Trust Species Populations

Over the past two centuries, many of the natural communities upon which our Trust Species depend have been lost or degraded. Because these lands were degraded incrementally over many years, we need to restore them in the same manner—one acre at a time. In addition, we need to protect key remaining natural habitats and the areas we restore. Protection can be achieved through tools such as landowner agreements, conservation easements, and acquisition. These on-going conservation measures require strategic planning and investment of labor and funding. Whether implementing on-the-ground projects ourselves, or providing assistance to others, we deliver the Program to protect and restore priority habitats. Cumulatively, these acres contribute significantly to the sustainability of Federal Trust Species.

Regional habitat priorities will be developed by the Program in coordination with our partners and stakeholders through a region-by-region assessment of needs and opportunities and will determine what we deem most critical to benefit the fish and wildlife species we are entrusted to conserve. We will step down these priorities to on-the-ground project planning and implementation, and use a series of national, regional and local filters to help focus our efforts to

ensure that Program funds are spent wisely.

To achieve results at the local level, we conduct community education and outreach, establish habitat-based partnerships, and provide technical and financial assistance to implement projects. Our technical assistance to individual landowners includes habitat assessment, project design, consultation and coordination throughout project implementation, identification of additional potential project partners, grant writing and assistance with permits, as necessary. Our technical assistance to agencies and organizations often results in policy and decision-making that have positive ecological and economic effects on tens of thousands of acres.

Goal Two: Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships

Accomplish our work through voluntary partnerships

This goal supports an important component of the Service's mission "to work with others" by engaging external partners and other Service programs in stewardship activities that restore, enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitats. A shared interest in habitat conservation is the foundation of our partnerships.

Our partners include Federal, Tribal, State and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private corporations, foundations, land trusts, and individual landowners. The



Photo by Heather Johnson, USFWS

Program develops partnerships taking into consideration the priorities and opportunities in their geographic areas. Partnerships may be established using formal mechanisms such as cooperative and landowner agreements, or less formal approaches. The technical assistance provided by our Program is integral to both formal and informal partnerships.

We are more effective as a partner when we can contribute to shared conservation goals. One of our primary contributions is "state-of-art" species and habitat information that we use to promote conservation and stewardship. In our partnership role, we can also use funding and/or technical assistance to influence the design and scope of plans and projects. The Service's biological expertise and field presence help ensure that projects are cost-effective and targeted to benefit important fish and wildlife resources.

Goal Three: Improve Information Sharing and Communication

Collaborate and share information and concerns with our partners, stakeholders, potential future partners, decision-makers, and others to protect, restore, and enhance Trust Resources

Effective communication is key to engaging, recruiting, and enlisting the many stakeholders and decision makers required for successful conservation. Therefore, achieving this goal is essential to meeting our



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

expectations for Goal Two. Likewise, improving information sharing is essential to Goals One and Five.

We must promote and increase awareness and understanding of the Programs' stewardship vision to encourage voluntary participation and expand community support for the Program and habitat conservation. It is important to reach out and establish trusting relationships with partners that will foster the shared sense of stewardship necessary for successful collaboration. We use many opportunities to communicate including: (1) one-on-one communication with partners; public meetings; media exposure; brochures and other written material; and, an Internet presence via the world wide web. In addition, we foster intra- and interagency exchange of information to enhance the success of projects.

On a national level, the Program will actively participate in Service efforts to give the general public access to information on Service priorities and strategies for habitat conservation. The Program will work with current Service initiatives to increase overall Service effectiveness and customer service. The Program will also work with inter-agency and State agency efforts to assess and describe the biological response that is occurring as a result of our habitat restoration and protection activities. In particular, the Program will work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other DOI bureaus to quantify the benefits derived from various incentive-based approaches to habitat conservation.

Goal Four: Enhance Our Workforce

The staff of our Program is our most important resource. Maintaining and supporting this staff is the key to success in achieving on the ground results for Federal Trust Species.

Successful implementation of the Program requires a diverse, highly skilled, and motivated workforce. The Service is committed to developing highly capable employees who are results-focused, act with integrity, and seek creative solutions in the conservation of Trust Species habitat. Within budgetary constraints, the

Service will strive to provide adequate staffing to address national, State, regional and local resource priorities, and to meet the needs of the public.

Employees will also have access to the technical and financial tools necessary to meet the demands of the Program. The Service will also ensure adequate training to field and support staff in a variety of habitat conservation tools and team building techniques necessary to address the resource priorities, maintain excellent customer service, and deliver a diverse array of habitat conservation projects. Team building includes the Service, our partners and other stakeholders.

Goal Five: Increase Accountability

Measure, assess, and report on the effectiveness, efficiency and fiscal integrity of our habitat conservation programs and activities

Accountability is an important responsibility of all government programs. Historically, our Program reports acres and miles of wetlands, uplands, riparian lands and streams, either restored or protected, as annual actual or projected accomplishments. In addition, the Program reports the number and type of partners engaged in on-the-ground projects and the amount of cost-share, including in-kind contributions, leveraged from non-Service sources to support each

project. We also report on numbers of fish barriers removed and acres treated for invasive species. These accomplishments are recorded by project managers in our Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) database which is the most reliable and important tool for meeting accountability requirements.

However, new and expanded accountability standards are emerging from OMB and the DOI that are reflected in the vision for this goal. While acres and miles of habitat restored or protected remain central to measuring program accomplishments, we now will be responsible for describing the value of the acres and miles to Trust Species. In other words, we will be accountable for ensuring that our level of effort is producing measurable contributions to the Federal Trust Species we work with. Initially, we will describe the value or contribution of our projects to the quantitative goals of existing, peer-reviewed conservation plans that have already identified expected benefits from conservation actions in specific geographical areas. Linking our efforts to these existing plans will assist in measuring anticipated biological responses to or benefits of our actions.

The Program will direct its efforts to geographic focus areas (identified in Part 2, "Regional Step-down Plans") and prioritize projects based



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

on the level of contribution to the conservation of Federal Trust Species. Consideration will also be given to State species of concern and related habitat needs as identified in the most recent “State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.”

[Note: The ability of the Program to meet targeted levels of performance is influenced by several key factors over which the agency has no control, such as unpredictable adverse weather conditions that preclude completion of projects, contract or labor disputes, availability of non-Service cost-share requirements, etc. Each regional step-down plan in Part 2 will identify external factors which might influence the achievement of targeted performance goals.]



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

VI. Next Steps: From Vision to Results

In this Vision Document we have described our vision of what is expected of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. The remainder of the Strategic Plan will describe how and where we will operate to meet these expectations. Part 2, “Regional Step-down Plans” identifies geographic focus areas, estimated performance targets and a description of anticipated benefits to Federal Trust Species, as developed by our regional and field offices, through collaboration with stakeholders. Part 3, is a compilation of regional priorities into a “National Summary Document” identifying overall habitat priorities and performance targets for FY2006 through FY2010.

“All acts of government...are of slight importance to conservation except as they affect the acts and thoughts of citizens.”

— Aldo Leopold



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

To learn more about our Program and how to find a local contact go to our web site:

Partners Program: <http://www.fws.gov/partners/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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VII. Defining the Terms We Use: Glossary

Biological Response: The reaction of fish, wildlife, plants and other living indicators to a project or series of projects.

Conservation: Any single or group of actions or decisions that are made to support the fish and wildlife values of a habitat. For the purposes of this document, it is intended to be an all-inclusive term including (but not limited to) restoration, enhancement, establishment, maintenance, protection, preservation, monitoring, assessment, outreach, and education for fish and wildlife habitat values.

Enhancement: The manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of existing habitat to improve specific functions.

Establishment: The manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a habitat to create and maintain habitat that did not previously exist.

Federal Trust Species: The group of species including migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, inter-jurisdictional fish, marine mammals, and species of international concern, for which the Service has a specific legal mandate.

Federal Trust Resources: The trusteeship responsibilities of the Department of the Interior include Trust Species; federally-owned minerals; National Wildlife Refuges; National Fish Hatcheries; National Parks and Monuments; and, Tribal resources, in cases where the U.S. acts on behalf of the Indian Tribe.

Habitat Improvement: Any habitat restoration, enhancement, or establishment intended to increase the suitability of an area for a species or community.

Incentive-based: The provision of goods or services, such as financial or technical assistance, for the purpose

of motivating the entity to make a favorable decision that might not be made otherwise.

Maintenance: The periodic additional work involving the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics present that is critical for the continuing success of a restoration process.

Monitoring: The collection and assessment of repeated observations or measurements over time to evaluate the effectiveness of actions. The following types of monitoring are recognized:

Baseline: Characterizes existing conditions before an action begins. Establishes a benchmark against which the success of the activity or project can be measured.

Implementation or Compliance: Assesses whether the activity or project was carried out in accordance to the contract, plan, or guidance.

Effectiveness: Determines whether the activity or project has had the desired effect on selected indicators or performance criteria.

Validation: Establishes a cause and effect relationship between the project or activity and one or more selected biological indicators (e.g. the population size of the targeted species the project was intended to benefit.)

Partnership: A group of people and/or organizations that have formed a relationship to promote an activity or idea.

Protection: A long-term action to safeguard habitats of significant importance to fish and wildlife species.

Restoration: The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning the natural functions to lost or degraded landscapes.

Science-based: Founded in

information that has been subject to the application of an objective scientific methodology, generally assumed to include rules for concept formation, observation, experimentation, and the validation of hypotheses, and enhanced by review of peers with expertise in the subject matter.

Stakeholder: An individual, group of people, and/or organization that have an interest in an activity or idea.

Target Species: An individual or group of Federal Trust Species for which we expect to directly benefit when developing and implementing our projects.

Technical Assistance: Collaboration, facilitation, or consultation that relates to a habitat conservation, restoration, or enhancement initiative.

**U.S. Department of the Interior
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