

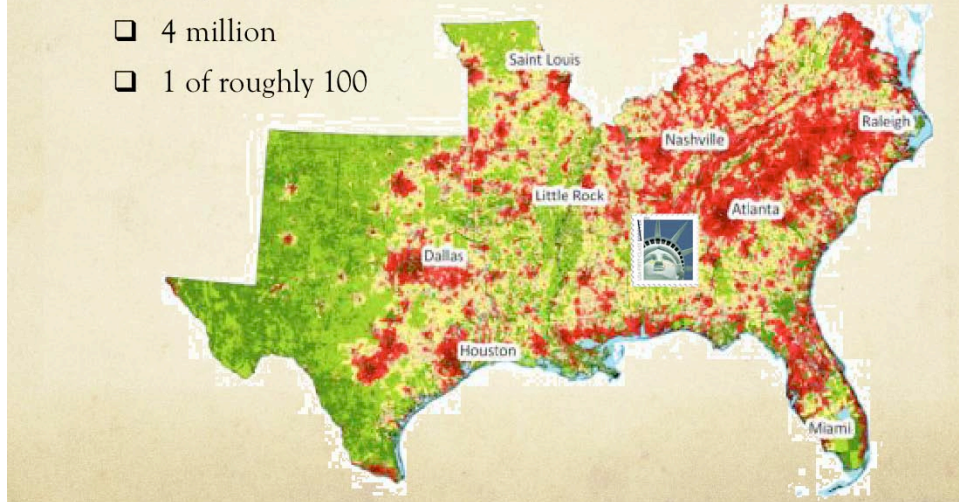


Lots of pieces to a larger puzzle that is our conservation landscape.

Everybody is talking about the success and progress we are making across our Region in a lot of areas – many of which we will be talking about today.

Our space in the region

- ❑ 89 percent
- ❑ 4 million
- ❑ 1 of roughly 100



89 percent of the Southeast Region's land is privately held.

The Service owns and manages 4 million acres. That's a postage stamp on the Region's landscape.

We are one of roughly 100 conservation organizations working on the landscape.

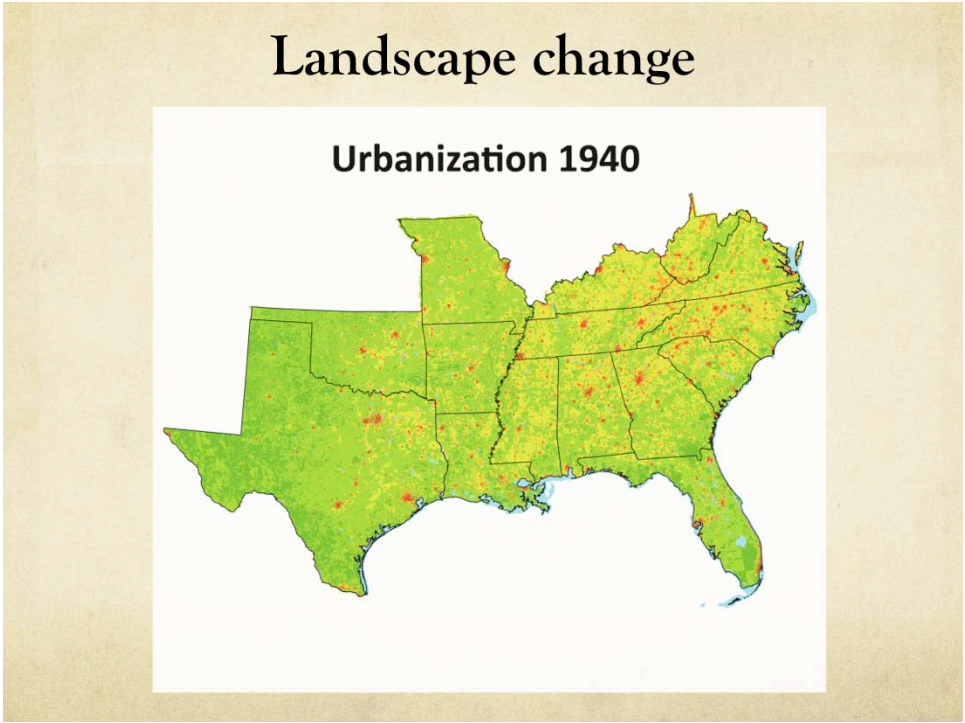
We need everyone. Not just our traditional conservation partners. We need the local Chambers, we need to Southern Company. State Associations' of Counties. The American Planning Association. The American Farm Bureau Federation. We should strategically be working with everyone who has a stake the future of our region from a landscape perspective.

If I am Bo Sloan at White River National Wildlife Refuge, the best way to protect White River is to recognize where it fits within the larger issues across the landscape that are or could affect

Partnerships, conservation coalitions, and politically viable big picture solutions are the only way we can make the big ideas we have a reality.

Identifying the desired future landscape we want in the face of what we know about development, accelerating climate change and the changes we expect across the landscape is crucial. We must think bigger.

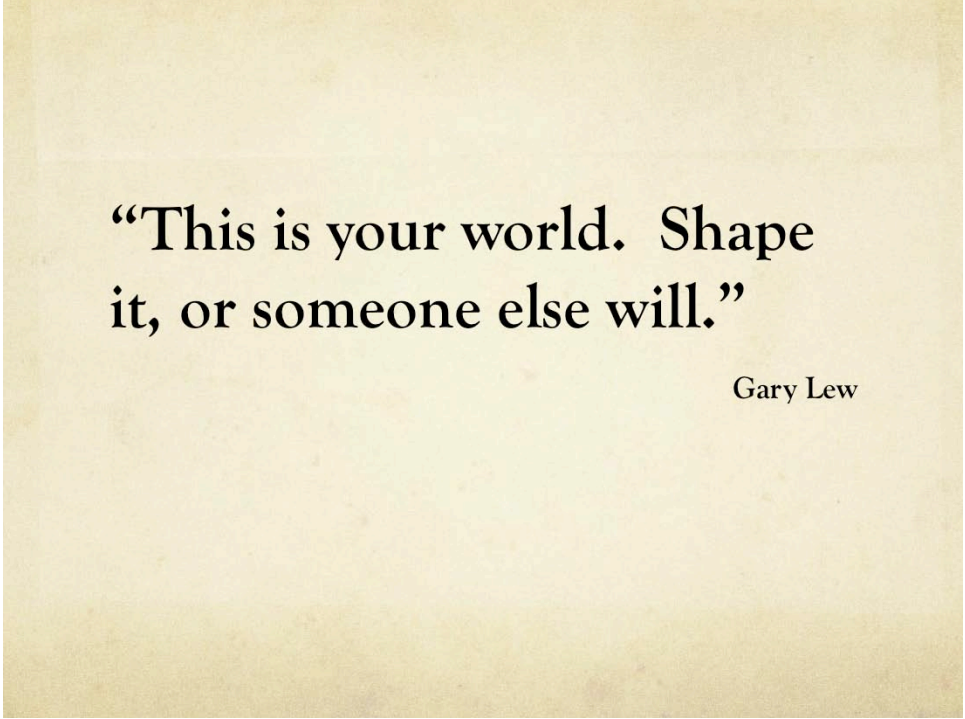
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You can see here the changes we expect in terms of urbanization across the Region's landscape.

Changes to habitats, water quality and quantity and other demographics are and will continue to influence our work.

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“This is your world. Shape it, or someone else will.”

Gary Lew

We’ve inherited this landscape. What will we leave for the next generation?

- Urbanization
- Energy / Wind development
- Transportation
- Other demographic trends like this: Since 1999 world population has grown from 6 billion to 7 billion. For the fourth time in the past half century, 1 billion people were added to the planet in 14 years or less.

Anecdotal story -- 1998 Charles Baxter engaged.

It helps us think about population objectives in a different way. If you had a dollar, where would you spend it to get the best results.

One of the most powerful moments for personally at a Directorate meeting earlier this year was hearing from our past Directors talk about the state of our field and offer their perspective on where we are.

Lynn Greenwalt, John Turner, Jamie Clark, and Steve Williams, were there. One point they all emphasized strongly was that this landscape level approach to the way we work is absolutely the right way to go. In fact, they told us they expressed the perspective that they wished they had implemented this change themselves.

Imagine what the landscape might look like had our leaders begun this 20 or 30 years ago. Would we be dealing with the same kinds of issues we are today?

You and we collectively need to be part of the bigger process.

Our way of working – the foundation



That is likely not new to any of us. We know big change is coming our way recognizing demographic and urbanization trends, impacts from accelerating climate change and the like.

This is our organization's response as One Service to meet the conservation challenges confronting us. And it is evolving.

It's our way of working and builds on an extraordinary legacy. Strategic Habitat Conservation is the way we do our work. It's our business model – not just for conservation work. It's the foundation for how we develop, execute and evaluate our work and whether we are achieving the results we need.

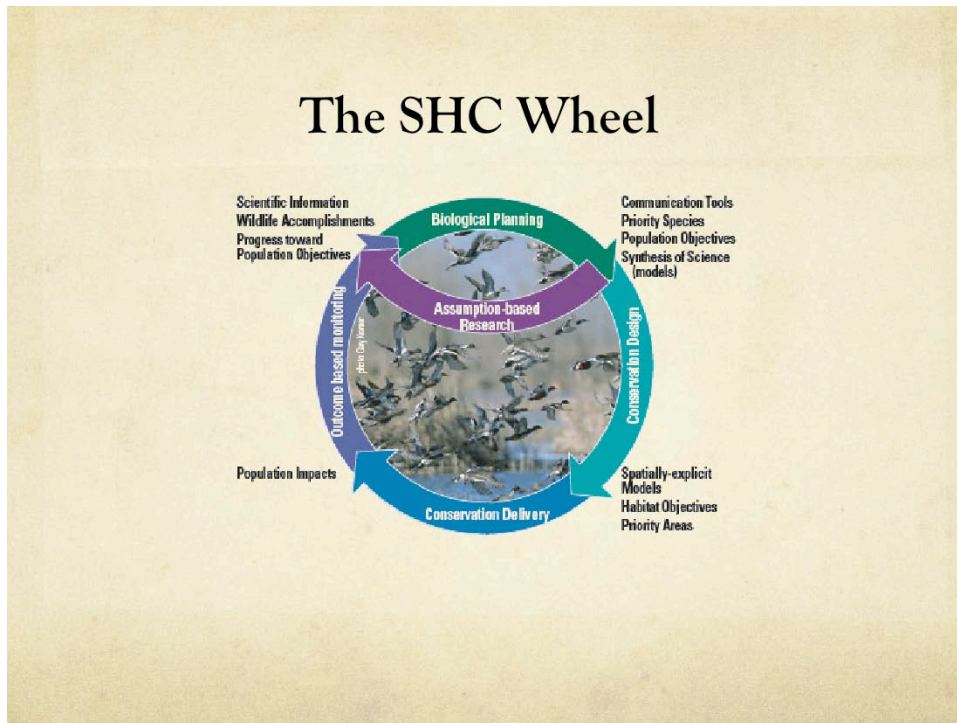
Population objectives and biological outcomes are driving the paradigm shift in the way we work.

This is only possible because of the legacy and conservation work of people with names like Roosevelt, Pinchot, Audubon, Darling, and Murie among others. We can no longer work in silos and these conservationists embody that.

If all you have is a dollar, where do you spend it. How much, how much more, and where? It's about putting the right conservation in the right places to benefit populations of fish and wildlife.

Check out fws.gov/southeast/SHC/ for information about SHC in our region, and fws.gov/landscape-conservation/shc.html for some national perspective.

The SHC Wheel



“If not us, who? If not now, when?” What is it we want our grandchildren to inherit?

It’s not going away. Two Administrations and four Directors. It is here to stay. Gary Lew’s admonition is on point.

We don’t have all the answers. We don’t even know all the questions. 40 years ago we had no real sense of the impacts we are seeing today from accelerating climate change. What are we waiting for?

We got into this work because we want a world where healthy populations of fish and wildlife are a given.

The evolution of the way we work incorporates all the things we know are critical into one business model:

Biological planning,
Conservation design,
Conservation delivery,
Outcome-based monitoring
Assumption-based research
Adaptive management based on what we learn from the process working with all of our partners.

Accelerating climate change



This trail marker at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge used to be on land. Sea level rise and erosion now have the trail marker in open water on the coast. It's an important example of the change Raye Nilius, Sarah Dawsey, and the rest of us face particularly when working in dynamic systems.

Raye and Sarah need to make decisions every day!

Craig Sasser manages Waccamaw NWR, which was established for migratory birds, ducks and geese. Over the past 15 years, he tells us, he is seeing fewer and fewer ducks, and more and more roseate spoonbills. Why? He's not sure but he wants to understand more about the change that is occurring.

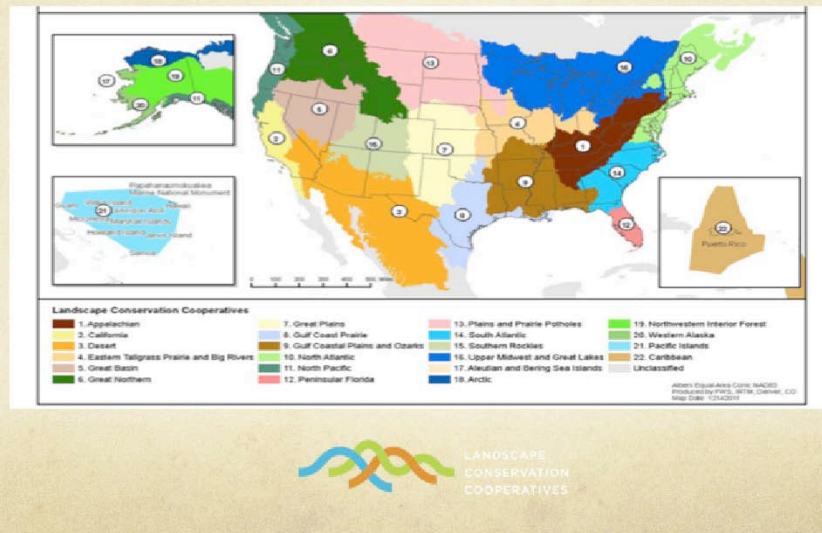
Our effort in 2007 and 2008 to build a Service strategy to address the impacts of accelerating climate change. We then used that to pull together a bigger partnership and put together the National fish, wildlife and plants climate adaptation strategy.

This led to the development of LCCs because we recognized we needed the kind of science capacity in our community that we could only get through a collaborative partnership. This is the science capacity that will help Craig and Raye learn more.

For more information about our climate strategy and the broader approach, you can visit these two web sites: fws.gov/home/climatechange/ or wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov.

Technical Capacity

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Inventory and Monitoring & Climate Science-related funding



We needed shared capacity to help us with biological planning, conservation design, assumption-driven research and outcome-based monitoring. LCCs are the partner-driven response to fill these needs.

The Georgia – Florida lawsuit. Interpreting data differently and losing.

Our LCCs are completing projects related to water quality and quantity, conservation design of our landscape of the future, species vulnerability assessments, and the vulnerability of coastal habitats to sea level rise. They are looking at urban growth trends related to high priority conservation lands.

They developed and released a Conservation Planning Atlas – an interactive tool that provides you with information about existing conservation lands, vegetation and habitat trends, and information that helps managers make decisions at a local scale.

Our refuge system here is leading the way nationally staffing an **Inventory and Monitoring program** that serves our agency and also feeds into this research. Our Fisheries program has a **watershed prioritization tool** it's folks are using to work with partners to decide which conservation actions to implement and where to achieve biological outcomes.

We are just getting started!

All of this fits under the assumption-driven research and outcome based monitoring pieces of SHC.

Check out fws.gov/southeast/LCC/ to learn more about LCCs in our region and fws.gov/landscape-conservation/lcc.html nationally.

SECAS – the big picture

What is our desired future landscape – 2060 and what we want our world in the Southeast to look like.

A new vision for conservation into the future.

The Southeastern Conservation Adaptation Strategy

In 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with the support of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA), the Southeast Natural Resources Leadership Group (SENLG), Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) across the Southeast Region, and existing regional partnerships, began an effort to develop a coordinated regional conservation adaptation strategy.

Working closely with the Southeastern Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS) LCC and other regional conservation partners, we are developing a coordinated regional conservation adaptation strategy. This strategy will be used to guide conservation efforts in the Southeast Region and will be implemented through a series of regional conservation adaptation plans.

Key components of an adaptive strategy:
 - Identify gaps in knowledge and research.
 - Develop a research plan to address these gaps.
 - Implement the research plan.
 - Monitor and evaluate the results.
 - Adapt the strategy as needed.

Key partners:
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA)
 - Southeast Natural Resources Leadership Group (SENLG)
 - Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC)
 - State and local conservation organizations

You can begin to see the pieces of information that are and will inform our planning and design. SHC is the way we are working and it's the real backing for the puzzle we are piecing together.

Then we have the LCCs with a smaller umbrella under which we are working through broad partnerships to identify the gaps in science and research we have and fill them. We can't do that by ourselves.

Then we have SECAS – a Southeastern Conservation Adaptation Strategy.

A collaborative effort with 15 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Southeast Natural Resources Leadership Group representing regional federal natural resource agencies, and others interested in what our conservation landscape of the future looks like. That is the picture we are seeking.

Between now and 2050, more than half the nation's population growth and an estimated 65 percent of its economic growth will occur in 10 mega-regions across the country, according to projections laid out by Georgia Tech's Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development.

The Atlantic Piedmont Mega-Region is monstrous. It stretches south from north central Tennessee and Nashville to Birmingham and then northeast from central Alabama to include Atlanta, a big chunk of central Georgia, a corridor taking in Greenville-Columbia- Spartanburg in South Carolina to Charlotte, North Carolina, and the research triangle of Raleigh. It's tied together by existing and future transportation and communications networks and takes into account recent and future population settlement trends.

We want to have the first version of the strategy developed by October 2016. No

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Budget constraints. We are not flush with cash and are not likely to be anytime soon. Even if we were, we need to think a little differently.

We cannot nor can our partners look at single species and habitat types. We need to look at habitat types and groups of species that we believe will represent what a larger group of species need to not only survive, but thrive!

Our surrogate species work fits squarely within SHC's biological planning related to setting biological objectives.

Check out fws.gov/southeast/SHC/surrogates.html for more information about this work as well as fws.gov/landscape-conservation/shc.html for national perspective.

What it's all about

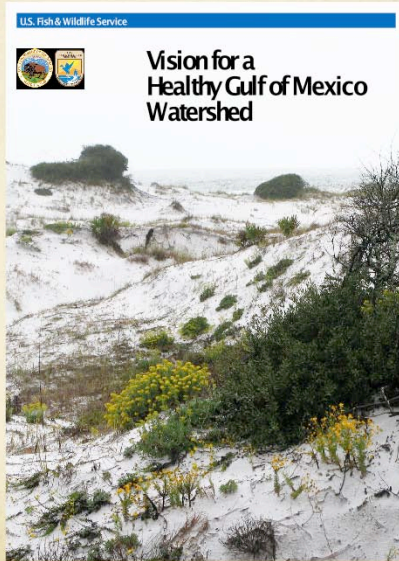
- ❑ BIOLOGICAL PLANNING - Developing population objectives and designing the desired conservation landscape of the future
- ❑ CONSERVATION DESIGN - Establish spatially explicit models and common biological objectives for landscape sustainability
- ❑ DELIVERY - Align and focus our work to achieve those objectives
- ❑ OUTCOME-BASED MONITORING - Measure progress and success
- ❑ ASSUMPTION-DRIVEN RESEARCH - Adaptively manage to meet outcomes

Planning and design are inter-related and connected.

Tying it all together – SHC, the LCCs, Inventory and Monitoring, surrogate species and SECAS feed into the planning and design that will shape our conservation landscape.

Now I want to talk with you about some of the tools we will use to deliver that planning and design moving forward.

Gulf Restoration



All of this is underway and then in April 2010 the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, killed 11 people and significantly altered our path in this Region. Gulf restoration and the Deepwater Horizon NRDAR engulfed us.

More than half of the continental United States (31 states) drains into the Gulf of Mexico. In the last century, climate change, sea level rise, habitat conversion and fragmentation, decreasing water quality and quantity, and invasive species have diminished the resiliency of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. Natural disasters like hurricanes and manmade disasters like oil spills exacerbate these impacts. As a result, native fish and wildlife populations and their habitats are in decline, imperiling the very fabric that supports the Gulf Coast's vibrant economy.

To achieve a healthy Gulf of Mexico, the Service recognizes that a large-scale watershed approach to conservation must take place. A national investment toward a sustainable Gulf will be at risk if we restore the coastal region and fail to address the causes of the water pollution, dead zones, invasive species, and fragmented wildlife habitat that threatens it.

Because there is money – big money – coming to the Gulf, there is urgency and good progress towards laying the initial foundation for what we believe is important in the Gulf. Last summer, we released the Gulf Vision, a science-based document that identifies conservation strategies and focal areas in the larger Gulf watershed. The Vision is based on the very tenets of SHC and serves as the foundation for our future work.

Early this year, Director Ashe and the Service's leadership decided to dedicate funds to expand our capacity with more staff to engage in this broad and complex effort. Over the next several months, we will be expanding our existing Gulf Restoration Program by adding on-the-ground expertise to the people we already have focused

Joint Ventures & Fish Habitat Partnerships

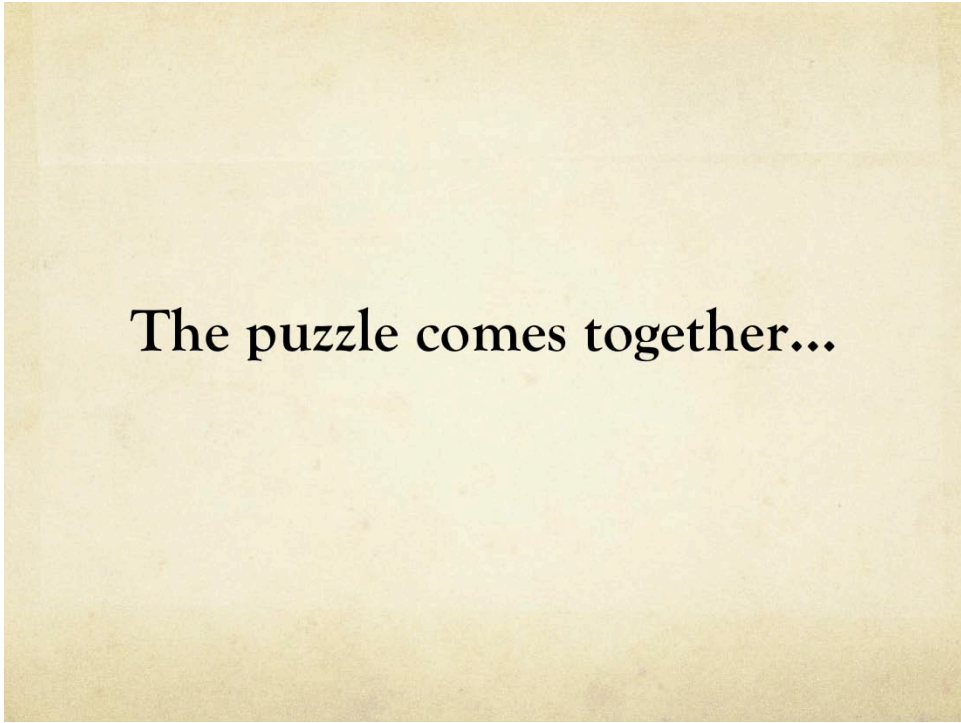


The largest regional fisheries habitat partnership in the nation and leading migratory bird joint ventures with strong, committed partners.

Check out southeastaquatics.net for more information about SARP.

One important point about At-Risk, Gulf Restoration, SARP. The success of these efforts rely on each requirement of SHC with a big emphasis on delivery.

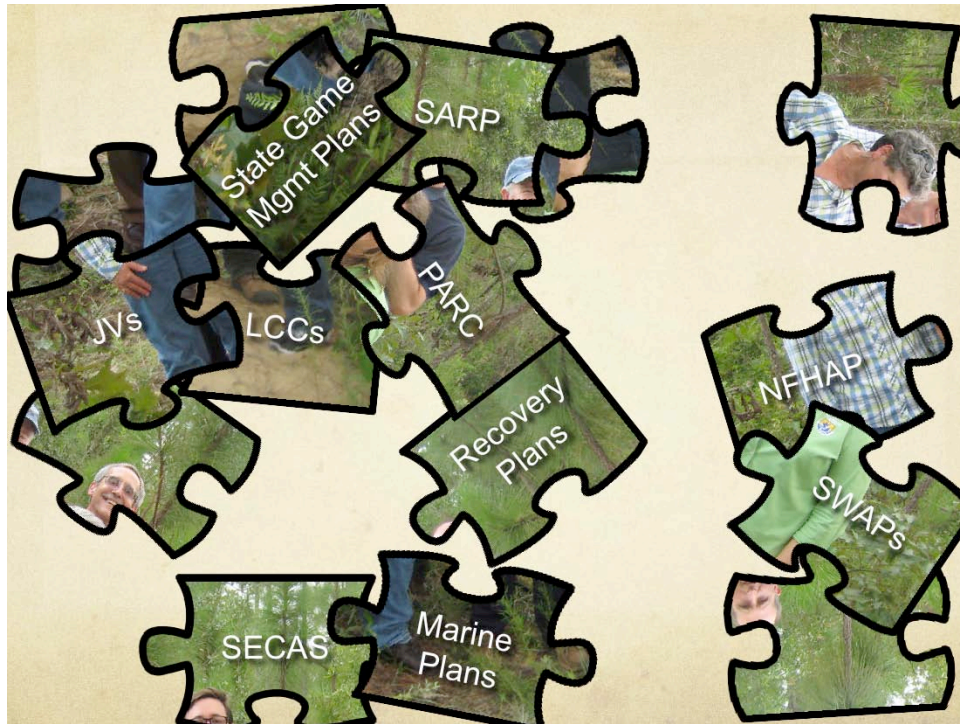
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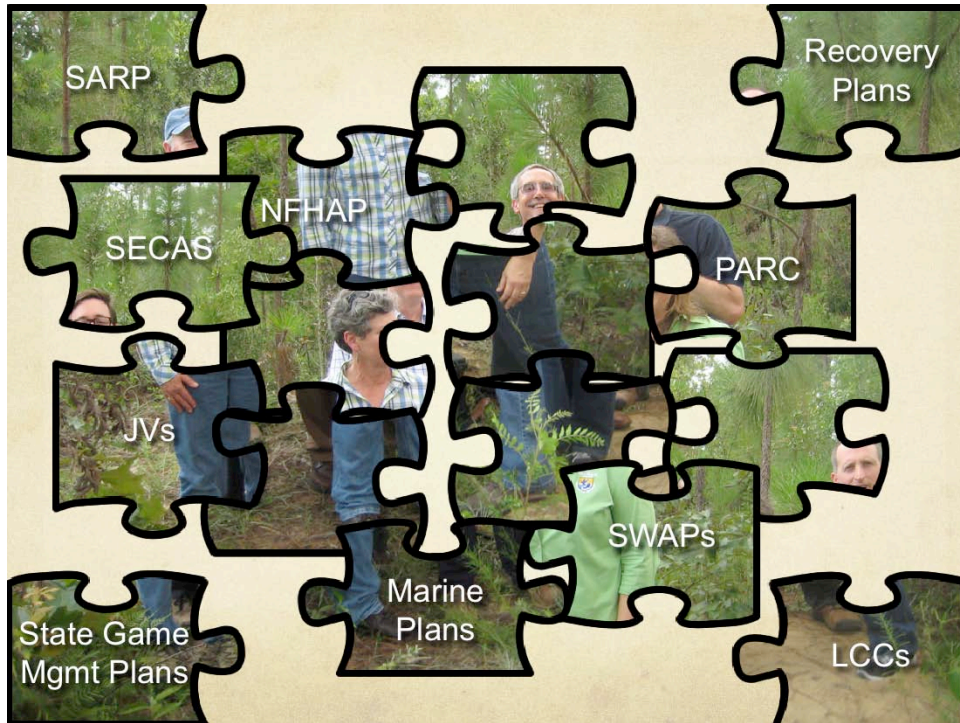
The pieces fit together like a puzzle...



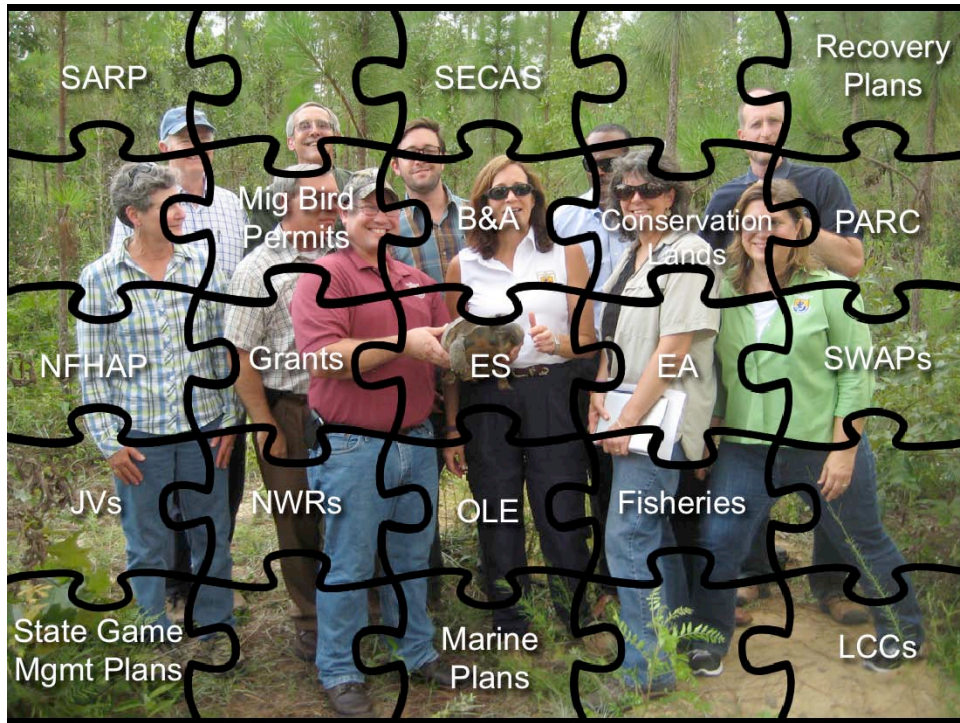
Separating tools and planning – clearing the board so we can start with planning



Finding corners



Building the edges – start with planning



Add tools where they fit

At Risk – Working with others



Here's a recent example of the kind of results we can expect on a broader scale – meeting our mission!

Recently, we held a celebration at the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Midtown Atlanta with a bunch of organizations to sign a Candidate Conservation Agreement.

What was remarkable about it had less to do with the CCA than who was in the room with a pen. We had Georgia Power. We had the Georgia Department of Transportation I think for the first time. We the had the Forest Service and the Park Service, Clemson University and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

This summer we will announce a decision to preclude the need to list the Georgia Aster. These kinds of partnerships have allowed us to preclude the need to list or decline to take action to list nearly 40 species. We've got a lot more work to do, and we are moving in the right direction.

Check out [fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation](https://www.fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation) for more information about our Region's At-Risk work.

Do we have the right people to
put these pieces together?

Yes!



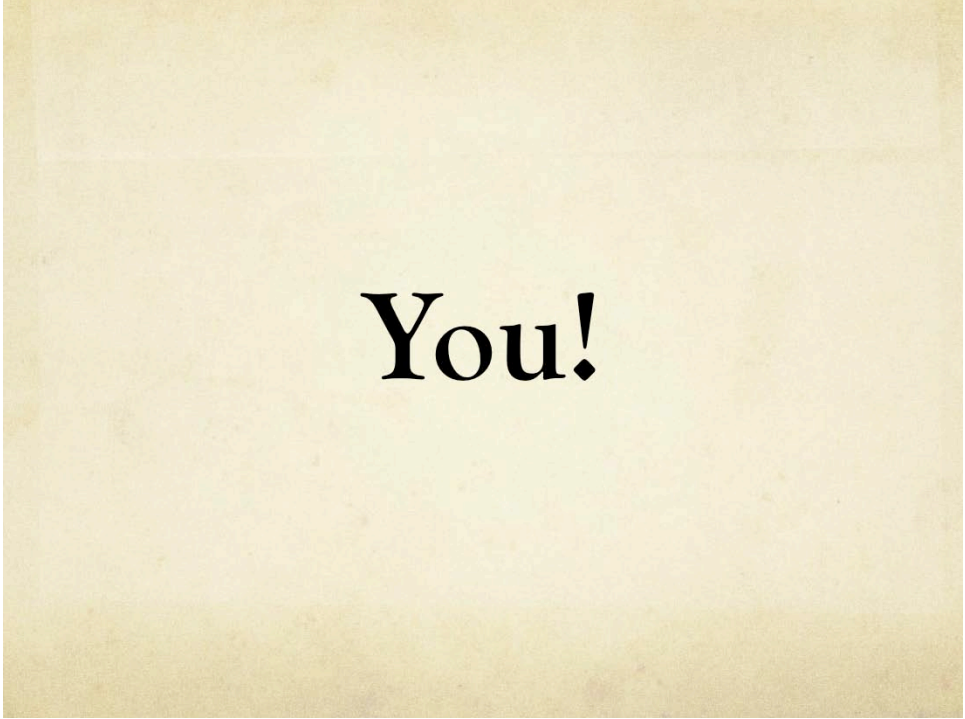
“This is your world.
Shape it, or someone else will.”

Without a doubt, the answer is yes!

Again, I will ask you again – If not us, who? If not now, when? This is our time to build on an extraordinary conservation legacy the first building blocks of which were put in place more than a Century ago.

We need your help!

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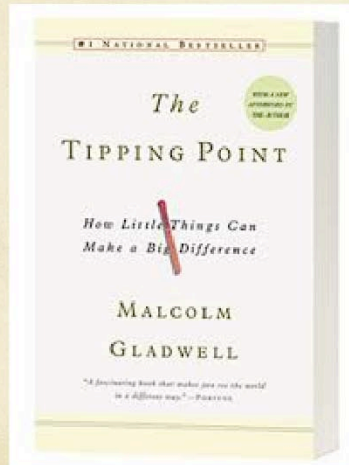
You!

The right people for the Service are on this phone! As with many things, we have early adopters. We've not yet reached the tipping point with this change we are being asked to embrace.

The only way we are going to be successful in taking this next big step, is if every one of you take bold steps to help us.

Doing what matters has never been more important.

Connectors and the Tipping Point



We are creating a movement, ultimately a social epidemic across the Region that includes the conservation community, utilities, urban planners, road builders, energy producers, private landowners, and the decision makers that make our work possible. We've got early adopters as I noted earlier. Thinking bigger has rarely been more important.

Malcolm Gladwell wrote a book called the Tipping Point. In it, he describes different kinds of folks that make things happen and influence trends, work and the like.

One of those groups he calls connectors. What makes a connector? Gladwell says it is pretty simple. Connectors are folks who know a lot of people. In fact, they seem to know everyone. Folks with a knack of meeting lots of people and making lots of acquaintances in their communities.

I don't believe we have reached the tipping point in this change we are seeking. I believe we are making progress towards that and I believe in each of you and your ability to help us put these pieces together for the benefit of America's fish and wildlife.

Are you engaged? What we need you to do!



- ❑ You are **making decisions everyday** and probably don't know everything you need to to make that decision. Have a common understanding of the system-level changes we are seeing like sea-level rise and accelerating climate change.
- ❑ We need your creative thinking, experience, ideas, understanding, engagement and willingness to help us figure out how to address the change coming our way that will continue to impact our ability to **put the right conservation in the right places to benefit fish and wildlife populations.**
- ❑ We are **empowering you to connect** with each of these partnerships and efforts that can influence what you do and help you solve conservation problems and challenges you have and we share.

Here's how we want you to do this:

Facilitate conversations with your teams. We will be sending you a series of questions to use in that conversation and would like your feedback through your respective ARDs. This will be enormously helpful to us and we move forward.

You can use examples like SALT – the South Atlantic Leadership Team, and other efforts within the Peninsular Florida LCC and the GCPO LCC among others.

You will be getting a much more detailed presentation to use for those conversations. You can also use this presentation to facilitate conversations with partners – old and new - to help them understand how we are doing our work and **how the pieces are beginning to come together.**

The ripple effect of the change we are seeking is taking hold. I trust you to help us achieve this change with energy and commitment.

We want to hear from you by June 27th to get your insights and those of your team members that I referred to in my note earlier this week.. Thank you very much and I think I'd like to turn this conversation over to our operator to moderate a question and answer session.

Thank you again. Now I will turn the conversation over to our moderator for any questions you might have.

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Discussion & Questions