



NATIONAL *fish, wildlife & plants*  
CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

**OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT  
PLAN  
FOR THE  
NATIONAL FISH, WILDLIFE, AND  
PLANTS CLIMATE  
ADAPTATION STRATEGY**

**PREPARED BY:  
STRATEGY JOINT IMPLEMENTATION  
WORKING GROUP**

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## 1. Overview

The purpose of this *Engagement and Outreach Plan (Engagement Plan)* is to describe mechanisms to continue and expand dialogue and engagement with stakeholders in implementation of the *National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy*<sup>1</sup> (*Strategy*).

The implementation of the *Strategy* is managed by a Joint Implementation Working Group (JIWG) made up of representatives of Federal, State and Tribal agencies with program responsibilities related to fish, wildlife and plants. This *Engagement Plan* is called for in the Terms of Reference that establish the operating guidelines for the JIWG. The purpose of the *Engagement Plan* is to describe how the JIWG will communicate and work with non-governmental groups, stakeholders and partners to keep them meaningfully engaged in *Strategy* implementation as well as how the JIWG intends to share information about the *Strategy* and reach out to new audiences.

### Background

Called for by Congress and the Administration, the *Strategy* was developed through a broad partnership between federal, state and tribal agencies. The effort was led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and state wildlife agencies.



The *Strategy* summarizes key impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife and plants and natural ecosystems, recommends goals and strategies to help safeguard natural resources under climate change, and describes opportunities for multiple sectors to address these challenges. The development of the *Strategy* included significant engagement from dozens of other agencies as well as stakeholder groups and the public. The *Strategy* was completed in 2012 and released in March of 2013.

Today, implementation of the *Strategy* is being overseen by a Joint Implementation Working Group (JIWG) made up of the Federal, State, and Tribal agencies that led the successful completion of the *Strategy*. The purpose of the JIWG is to help facilitate and promote implementation across multiple agencies, as well as to share information among participants. The group is led by four co-chairs representing FWS, NOAA, the state of California, and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). It first met in November of 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/>

As the JIWG is not operated as a Federal Advisory Committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, membership is limited to federal officials and elected officers of state, local and tribal governments (or their authorized, designated employees) acting in their official capacities. However, the Terms of Reference agreed to by the JIWG explicitly state the need for continued engagement with nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders to facilitate and promote implementation of the *Strategy*. Indeed, one of the five objectives of the JIWG is to “promote coordinated and collaborative activities to implement the *Strategy* across government (e.g., Federal, State, Tribal agencies) and non-government entities at a variety of levels and scales” (emphasis added). While non-governmental stakeholders do not participate in the JIWG’s decision-making, they can still provide important and valuable individual input for the JIWG’s consideration.

### **Engagement and Outreach Plan Development Process**

At the second meeting of the JIWG, a subgroup was established to focus on engagement and outreach with interested stakeholders. Participating agencies included FWS, NOAA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, GLIFWC, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

An initial draft of this *Engagement Plan* was developed by the engagement subgroup in early 2014, and first presented to the JIWG at the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The draft was approved with revisions at the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the JIWG.

### **Need for Engagement and Outreach**



In addition to strong partnerships between federal, state, and tribal agencies, public involvement from a wide range of non-governmental groups and stakeholders across the country is critical for the implementation of a robust response to the impacts of climate change. Guidance on priorities, recommended approaches, and issues or suggestions based on local knowledge and experience was extremely important in the development of the *Strategy*, and continued engagement with stakeholder groups and the public will be necessary to effectively implement *Strategy* recommendations.

Engagement with non-governmental stakeholders has been a priority throughout the development of the *Strategy*, which was shaped by an extensive national dialogue spanning nearly two years and the consideration of over 55,000 public comments. For example, a series of listening sessions and forums were held in 2009 and 2010 to generate early input and direction. Public input was solicited via a Federal Register Notice in June 2011 and again in early 2012. In addition, a series of informational workshops and web conferences were held around the country during January and February of 2012 to provide an opportunity for public dialogue.

The *Strategy* itself also reiterates the importance of broad engagement to support effective implementation. The *Strategy's* original guiding principles speak directly to the importance of fostering communication and collaboration across government and non-government entities, creating an environment that supports cooperative approaches among government and non-government entities, and otherwise engaging the public.

The *Strategy* specifically calls for the coordinating body overseeing implementation (I.e.; the JIWG) to:

“establish a mechanism to engage representatives of non-governmental organizations, natural resource industries, private landowners, local decision makers and international conservation partners to assist with *Strategy* implementation and revision.”

In addition, the JIWG Terms of Reference similarly emphasize the importance of engagement and outreach with stakeholders, stating that:

“The JIWG will seek to engage and communicate with other entities and stakeholders through participation at JIWG meetings, open sessions and other mechanisms as needed to fulfill its mission and objectives.”

## Target Audiences

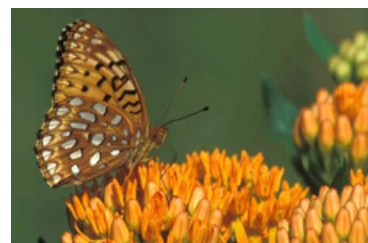


The target audiences for this *Engagement Plan* include both federal, state, local, and tribal entities, as well as a broad set of non-governmental and landowner stakeholder groups with conservation and natural resource interests. Stakeholders include both those organizations that have participated in the development of the *Strategy* through

providing public comments, attending public meetings, or otherwise promoting or helping to communicate about it, as well as those entities that have not been previously engaged (including private landowners, industries, user-groups, local governments and decision makers, and under-represented constituencies, etc.). The JIWG welcomes input from any organization with interested members to be part of helping to implement this *Strategy*, as well as individual citizens who would like to participate.

### 1. Vision and Principles

In managing the implementation of the *Strategy*, the JIWG intends to follow the vision and principles



related to stakeholder engagement and outreach described below:

### **Engagement Vision:**

Meaningful engagement from interested and affected stakeholder groups and citizens supports and informs successful implementation of the Strategy and ensures that adaptation work is communicated to key external audiences.

### **Principles for Engagement**

In guiding engagement and outreach with non-governmental stakeholders, the JIWG intends to ensure its approach is:

- Transparent – The JIWG will hold open meetings, decision-making processes are understood, and activities are well communicated.
- Authentic – JIWG members demonstrate a commitment to working with and considering the individual input of non-governmental stakeholders including underrepresented communities.
- Informal – The role of non-governmental participants is to provide individual input for the JIWG’s consideration, not to make formal recommendations.

All JIWG engagement and outreach activities around the *Strategy* are intended to complement and build upon what agencies are already doing (or are required to do) regarding engaging stakeholder groups, tribal groups, and the public.

## **2. Objectives and Actions for Engagement and Outreach**

The JIWG intends to operate in accordance with the following key objectives:

- Objective 1: Promote meaningful stakeholder participation in JIWG activities
- Objective 2: Implement direct outreach to diverse stakeholders
- Objective 3: Communicate implementation activities to the broader public

Specific actions to accomplish each of these three objectives are identified below.

### **Objective 1: Promote meaningful stakeholder participation**

#### ***Actions:***

- The JIWG will hold public meetings and calls, and meeting minutes will be made public. As needed, JIWG co-chairs may hold closed sessions to discuss





financial, regulatory, or other sensitive internal matters (meeting topics will be made public).

- Announce JIWG meetings on the Strategy website and JIWG agency sites, broadly publicize opportunities for stakeholders to participate, and post meeting materials and information prior to meetings through a variety of online and other venues
- Develop an email distribution list for meeting invitations and mass mailings and a clear process for signing up on the existing website
- Allow time on meeting agendas to address questions, suggestions, and concerns from non-governmental and other participants, and/or to present on special topics as needed
- Promote non-governmental organization, landowner, and other key stakeholder participation in subgroups established by the JIWG (for example, subgroups focusing on engagement, tracking implementation progress, implementation, etc.), and publicize opportunities to participate in these groups
- Designate a point of contact on the website for stakeholder contacts to the JIWG
- Annually assess stakeholder engagement and outreach activities, including soliciting public feedback if needed, and review and revise this *Engagement and Outreach Plan* as needed
- Ensure that relevant case studies, photos, stories, etc. featuring non-governmental stakeholders are included in progress reports called for in the Terms of Reference
- Maintain the Engagement and Outreach Subgroup that developed this *Engagement Plan*

## **Objective 2: Direct outreach to stakeholders**

### ***Actions:***

- Identify key stakeholder categories and target opportunities for outreach/presentations, including to low income, minority and Tribal communities as part of Federal responsibilities for ensuring environmental justice per Executive Order 12898.
- Make presentations on the *Strategy* and its implementation at conferences and workshops (e.g.: the 2015 National Adaptation Forum and meetings of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies)
- Develop targeted webinars or forums for stakeholders to discuss *Strategy* implementation and specific topics
- Develop targeted materials for stakeholders as needed
- Development of a stakeholder database/distribution list
- Consider reaching out to foundations or other funding organizations as needed



### **Objective 3: Communicate with the broader public**

#### ***Actions:***

- Revise the “Engagement” section of the *Strategy* website to focus on current activities rather than past activities
- Update the “Implementation” section of the *Strategy* website with stories and case studies from Progress Reports and elsewhere
- Communicate adaptation activities and progress through a variety of JIWG agency websites, social media, newsletters, and other venues
- Ask stakeholders to share information and announcements with broader public audiences through their lists, members, websites, newsletters, etc.
- Develop public-oriented materials describing the *Strategy* and its implementation (e.g.; like factsheets, etc.)
- Highlight the ways in which adaptation of the *Strategy* will benefit the public, and provide ways the public can play a role in implementing the *Strategy*

### **3. Implementation**

#### **Roles and responsibilities:**

The Management Team will be responsible for working with the members of the JIWG subgroup on outreach and engagement to implement the Objectives outlined above.

#### **Proposed Timeline:**

July 2014 –JIWG Approves *Engagement Plan*

Summer 2014 – JIWG Engagement subgroup works with Management Team to develop specific workplan and assignments for implementing *Engagement Plan*, initial implementation begins

Fall 2014 In-Person JIWG Meeting – Non-governmental groups are invited and included in JIWG meeting and discussions

Fall/Winter 2014 – Implementation of *Engagement Plan* is underway

#### **Future Revisions:**

The JIWG Engagement Subgroup will periodically assess the need for revisions or updates to this *Engagement Plan*, including assessing feedback from the public and stakeholders, and will work with the Management Team and JIWG to prepare and approve any needed changes.