

Report on the NSST Scoping Meeting Memphis, TN June 14-15

The purpose of the meeting was to garner feedback from the Joint Ventures on the Plan Committee's proposed NAWMP Science Support Team and the mandate to work with the Joint Ventures to strengthen the biological foundations of the waterfowl plan.

Our goal was to emerge with a consensus regarding major functions of the NSST and its makeup. 28 delegates attended (some NSST nominees, some JV Board members, some JV coordinators ---- a pretty good mix)

All habitat Joint Ventures were represented except Playa Lakes (Mgt. Board conflict) Sonoran (status?) and Rainwater Basin.

Mexico was represented by Ariel Rojo of the National Institute for Ecology

Anderson and Caswell attended from PHJV following a pre-meeting conference call with Davis, Rohwer, and Clark.

Mike Anderson and Seth Mott were the organizers of the meeting for Canada and the U.S., respectively, and the primary facilitators.

Reasonable consensus was achieved on the following:

There is a need for a technical body to support the Plan Committee with a continental scale outlook.

The mission of the NSST, as set forth in the proposal adopted by the Plan Committee last November, is appropriate (if a little vague for some): "To help strengthen the biological foundations of NAWMP, and facilitate continuous improvement of Plan conservation programs.". There was similar support for the NSST's proposed objectives, once elaborated.

Much of the meeting was devoted to exploring roles for the NSST, and the complementarity of such roles to existing JV bodies, flyway technical committees, agency institutions (e.g., AMAT) and the like.

A list of 6 major roles (and 20+ sub-roles) was circulated among participants from the meeting. These were refined and communicated back to the meeting facilitators for report to Joint Ventures, NAWMP Co-Chairs and the Plan Committee.

Roles of the NAWMP Science Support Team

1) Provide technical input and recommendations to the NAWMP Committee on NAWMP implementation.

(i) summarize NAWMP accomplishments and assess achievements in relation to NAWMP objectives and periodically report to the NAWMP Committee.

(i) assist in periodic review of NAWMP population objectives considering the habitat implications of waterfowl sub-population management.

(ii) advise on NAWMP species and geographic priorities.

(iii) provide input on NAWMP updates and technical companion documents.

(iv) provide technical assistance in developing broad-scale implementation strategies for NAWMP.

(v) help interpret long-term implications of climate, agro-economic, and other global changes for the future of waterfowl conservation.

1) Facilitate the identification of methods for biological planning and for evaluating Plan performance at continental and regional scales.

(i) assess the function and appropriate form of continental and regional population objectives.

(ii) assist in developing a better understanding of the effects of habitat variation on population demography in order to link regional habitat objectives to continental population objectives, and assess NAWMP progress while accounting for uncontrolled environmental variation.

(iii) help identify metrics and standard methodologies for evaluating NAWMP performance.

(iv) identify common currencies and definitions for inter-joint venture planning.

(v) seek standardization and integration in survey and data management protocols for habitat and population monitoring and provide input on priority data holdings of the emerging Migratory Bird Population and Habitat Data Center.

1) Act as a forum for discussions and integration of biological planning and evaluation at multiple scales.

- (i) improve the coordination of national/continental and regional assessments.
- (ii) improve the coordination of biological planning, monitoring, and assessment efforts among the joint ventures.
- (iii) identify broad-scale information gaps and technical issues beyond the scope of individual joint ventures.
- (iv) promote the conceptual framework of adaptive resource management as an effective decision-making tool.

1) Facilitate technical information exchange and reporting among joint ventures and the NAWMP Committee.

- (i) improve technical information exchange among joint ventures.
- (ii) improve technical information and report exchange among the NAWMP Committee, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, and the joint ventures.
- (iii) provide effective lines of communication among joint ventures and the NAWMP Committee.
- (iv) improve coordination among joint ventures and the Adaptive Management and Assessment Team.
- (v) provide a vehicle for synthesis and dissemination of information.

1) Help identify and communicate data, monitoring, assessment, and research needs to USGS-BRD, academia, FWS, and other Plan partners.

- (i) develop a biological framework to prioritize research, assessment, and monitoring needs that enables objective comparison of evaluation investment decision options.

2) Facilitate technical integration with the Flyway system and other bird initiatives on issues of common interest.

- (i) provide a point of contact to the Flyway System to improve coordination on issues of common concern (e.g., population objectives, monitoring).
- (ii) provide a point of contact to national technical groups of other bird conservation initiatives.

- (iii) provide for technical exchange with the states through the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
- (iv) communicate habitat monitoring needs to other conservation initiatives.

Generally, the Joint Ventures liked the notion of staffing the NSST primarily with JV-appointed technical members. The issue of time and resources required to fulfill the roles of the NSST remains a concern with many people, but conversely there was very little support for any alternative model that would reduce JV involvement. The group was strongly of the view that NSST meetings should be open to participation from any interested NAWMP partner, regardless of formal NSST membership. The need for parallel technical teams at the JV level was apparent and strongly supported.

Seth Mott (NAWWO) agreed to lead the preparation of a meeting report and recommendations in advance of the August Plan Committee meeting. Meanwhile, JVs will be encouraged to appoint members to the NSST if they haven't already done so. Assuming that the Plan Committee agrees to the relatively minor recommendations for changes coming out of the Memphis meeting, we propose to hold a first formal, organizational meeting of the NSST in October at a location yet to be determined (perhaps Bismarck or Minneapolis).

Until the NAWMP Co-Chairs appoint formal national team leaders to the SST, Seth Mott (U.S.), Steve Wendt (Canada) and Ariel Rojo (Mexico) have agreed to serve as interim leaders.

Recommendations to the Plan Committee

Adopt the 6 roles for the NSST as outlined above as clarification on how the specific objectives included in the NSST proposal will be addressed. It is recognized that many of the roles and sub-roles identified have some degree of overlap with one another, but the thorough listing of the sub-roles helps to clarify exactly what functions the NSST will engage.

Retain the proposed membership structure but allow the NSST to propose additional regular members in addition to short-term ad-hoc members as the Team considers appropriate.

Take action to seek and obtain the new funding and personnel resources necessary to support the NSST as outlined in the proposal. Recognize that without additional support at both the national and joint venture levels, the long-term viability of the NSST is doubtful.

Endorse an inaugural meeting of the NSST for the fall of 2000, at which time specific near-term actions and objectives will be identified.

Attendance

Tom Moorman	Ducks Unlimited/LMVJV
Ruth Ostroff	FWS/CVHJV
Seth Mott	FWS/NAWWO
Bob Hoffman	Ducks Unlimited/ UM/GL JV
Rex Johnson	AMAT
Brad Bortner	FWS/Region 1
Tice Supplee	AZ Game&Fish/ IMWJV
Craig Watson	USFS/ACJV
John Frampton	SCDNR/ACJV
Mike Eicholz	Ducks Unlimited/CVHJV
Andre Breault	CWS/PCJV
Ariel Rojo	INE/Mexico
Sean Kelly	FWS/PPJV
Dale Caswell	CWS/PHJV
Barry Wilson	Ducks Unlimited/GCJV
Mark Koneff	AMAT
Charles Baxter	FWS/LMVJV
Randy Wilson	FWS/LMVJV
Mike Anderson	Ducks Unlimited/Canada
Frank Bowers	FWS/Region 4
Steve Wendt	CWS
Reg Melanson	CWS/EHJV

