



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/MBSP

May 16, 2006

Memorandum

To: ARD's, RO Division Chiefs, All ARW/FR/ES/MB/LE field offices, Region 3

From: Acting Regional Director, Region 3

Subject: Region 3 FWS Support for Implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the status of the statewide comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies, their effect on the Service mission and how we will incorporate them.

In 2001 and each succeeding year, Congress appropriated funds for grants to states for wildlife conservation with emphasis on species in greatest need of conservation efforts. The legislation, which also authorized two grant programs (Wildlife Restoration and Conservation Program, and State Wildlife Grants), required the states to commit to develop statewide plans for wildlife conservation by October 2005. During those years, the Service worked with states, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and numerous non-governmental organizations to provide guidance and assistance to states as they developed their plans.

Each of the 56 states and territories met the commitment and submitted it's statewide plan by the target date. 38 were approved by the Director and 18 were conditionally approved. Of the Region 3 state plans, five were approved and three were conditionally approved including Indiana, Iowa and Ohio. States with conditionally approved plans have six months to submit revised plans for approval.

States have already begun acting on the priorities of their Strategies and have also met to discuss priority interstate projects. Similarly, some of our own staff and from other federal agencies, have noted the value of the Strategies and initiated contacts and actions to meet identified priorities.

Director Hall has recently instructed all Service offices to assist states to implement their plans wherever consistent with Service priorities. I have some initial guidance for all of you. **It is simple guidance: look for opportunities to partner with states on mutual plan priorities, where possible, and report accomplishments through the ARS.** Further guidance will be forthcoming as we discuss the most efficient ways to partner with the States on the implementation of their Wildlife Action Plans.

Attached are two CDs with the electronic versions of the state plans for your review. Become familiar with the plan(s) that is (are) relevant to your work and reach out to the states and other conservation partners to address the priorities identified in these plans that are consistent with Service priorities. As you may note, these plans are the versions submitted to the NAAT for review and are expected to change through time as part of the normal strategic planning process.

The three conditionally approved plans from Iowa, Indiana and Ohio will change over the next few months. However, the changes will be limited because the required changes are narrow in scope. While you will learn of changes as you partner with individual states, notices of modified documents will be placed on our Region 3 Federal Assistance web site. It will include links to web sites with relevant information; it currently links to a web site managed by the AFWA which contains state plans and related information. The URL for that site is http://www.teaming.com/state_wildlife_strategies.htm. The AFWA plans to develop another site that will include revised plans and other related contributions. From time to time, check the sites to see what is new.

I applaud all of you for the dedication you have shown for our natural resources and the public which enjoys them. Partnering with state fish and wildlife agencies and other conservation partners to address the mutual priorities in these statewide plans will allow each of us to increase our efficiency through cooperation and coordination. Thank you all for contributing to this worthwhile national effort.

/S/Charles M. Wooley
Acting Regional Director