

Strategic Plan

Environmental Contaminants Program
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3

November, 2006

Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program Strategic Plan
(November 2006)

The Great Lakes – Big Rivers Region (Region 3) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is home to abundant fish and wildlife resources that inhabit not only our lakes and rivers but our forests, prairies, and wetlands. Region 3’s Environmental Contaminants Program is faced with the challenge of preventing contamination before it becomes a problem that adversely affects our fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats. In cases where pre-existing contamination already impacts these resources, our challenge is to minimize the impacts and restore our trust resources impacted by myriad sources of contamination, including mercury deposition from power plants; PCBs released from a variety of industrial facilities that reside in sediments; contaminated runoff from the Region’s abundant agricultural lands; heavy metal contamination from lead, zinc, iron, and copper mining, processing, and smelting operations; and chemical or petroleum spills along transportation routes and waterways. Having a sufficient *quantity* of habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants, alone, is not enough; that habitat must also be of sufficient *quality*.

To further increase the challenge of protecting or restoring these resources, the Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program, like other governmental programs, must meet these goals under ever-increasing financial constraints. To help ensure we are focusing our limited resources on the most important activities, we will strive to achieve our vision by pursuing our mission consistent with our Regional priorities and strategic plan.

Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program Vision Statement

The vision of the Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program is to leave a legacy of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats free from adverse impacts of environmental contaminants. We will pursue this vision by: emphasizing prevention of contamination, in the first place; removing threats of pre-existing environmental contamination, recognizing that environmental contamination already exists across the Regional landscape; and ensuring the Environmental Contaminants Program’s contributions are recognized, valued, and supported by the Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), our conservation partners, and the public.

Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program Mission

Prevent contaminant impacts to fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats, and restore those resources that have been impacted by environmental contaminants, consistent with the mission and priorities of the Service.

Guiding Principles

We will implement the Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program consistent with the following Guiding Principles:

- ***Prevent adverse impacts of environmental contaminants to Service trust resources and Region 3 priorities***

“Service trust resources” are defined as Service lands; federally listed threatened and endangered species and candidate species; migratory birds; interjurisdictional fish; Regional Resource Conservation Priorities (RRCPs), and indicator or surrogate species that will have a direct and substantive connection to Service trust resources and/or RRCPs.

- ***Restore Service trust resources impacted by contaminants*** by using our existing authorities and influencing resource management and regulatory decisions

Recognizing the significant level of time and effort required to react to a contaminant problem to achieve restoration, it is critical to ensure these efforts are directed to resources and areas of greatest importance to the Service in Region 3.

- ***Facilitate achievement of other Service programs’ goals and priorities***

The strength of the Environmental Contaminants Program is that it provides the link between contamination and other programs’ management of Service trust resources. The Environmental Contaminants Program offers a variety of capabilities to other programs to collectively protect, restore, recover, manage, and enhance Service trust resources. We do this by identifying sources of contamination, assessing effects of contamination on Service trust resources through investigations and other approaches, and developing a range of effective solutions to address contamination impacts.

- ***Maximize partnerships*** with state, tribal, and local conservation stakeholders to facilitate achievement of shared goals and objectives.
- ***Communicate results, accomplishment, and capabilities*** to the public and conservation partners internal and external to the Service.

Prioritization of Our Work

The Environmental Contaminants Program will select actions to pursue based on application of two qualitative tiers of criteria: ***threshold criteria*** to determine if a potential action should be considered further and ***prioritization*** factors to determine if the action should be pursued relative to other ongoing and potential activities.

Threshold Criteria A potential Environmental Contaminants Program action should address one or more of the following threshold criteria:

- ✓ **Trust Resources** – Does the potential action address the needs of Service lands; threatened and endangered species; migratory birds; interjurisdictional fisheries; Regional Resource Conservation Priorities (RRCPs) - priority fish, wildlife, and

plant species for Region 3; or indicator (or surrogate) species that will have a direct and substantive connection to trust resources and/or RRCs? Yes/No

- ✓ **Statutory Mandate** – Is the potential action supported or required by Federal statute, regulation, or policy? Yes/No
- ✓ **Tribal Trust Responsibility** – Does the potential action facilitate the Department of the Interior’s fiduciary responsibility to assist tribal fish and wildlife resource management? Yes/No

Potential actions that do not address any of these threshold criteria are not necessarily precluded but potential actions that address at least one threshold criterion will generally be given greater consideration than actions that do not address at least one of these criteria.

Prioritization Factors When a potential Environmental Contaminants Program action meets at least one of the threshold criteria, the priority of the action relative to other actions will be evaluated based on consideration of the following prioritization factors:

- ✓ **Prevention** The extent to which the action will contribute directly to prevention of future contaminant impacts.
- ✓ **Resource Management and Regulatory Decisions** The extent to which Environmental Contaminants Program involvement can influence the final resource management or regulatory decision - the nature and extent to which trust resources, RRCs, and/or Service priorities would be substantively affected.
- ✓ **FWS Program Support** The extent to which the action will support a stated or formalized objective or priority of another Service program.
- ✓ **Conservation Partnership Support** The extent to which the action will support a stated or formalized objective or priority of a Service partner.
- ✓ **Value-Added** The extent to which the action is dependent upon an Environmental Contaminants Program role.
- ✓ **Existing Commitments** The extent to which existing priorities, workloads, and commitments may affect implementation of the action.
- ✓ **Cost-effectiveness** - Consider the benefit to trust resources, RRCs, and/or Service priorities relative to the investment (e.g., funding, staff time, etc.) necessary to implement the action

Standards of Practice

The Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program will adhere to the following ideals of professional practice by:

- maintaining the highest professional and ethical standards
- using accepted scientific principles and best available science to contribute to decision-making for the best practicable protection and restoration of our trust resources
- applying the principles of an ecosystem approach to addressing contaminants-related concerns
- responding to those who request our services consistent with our prioritization criteria and periodically providing the status of our efforts on their behalf
- providing high quality work products and the bases for our products on a timely basis
- seeking opportunities to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate with our internal and external partners and stakeholders
- developing and maintaining high levels of expertise, knowledge, and experience of our staff
- fostering an atmosphere of trust and openness and a shared responsibility for the vitality of the Regional Environmental Contaminants Program and the Program at each field office
- seeking and pursuing opportunities that enhance Environmental Contaminants Program capabilities

Priorities for Fiscal Years 2007 – 2011

The Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program will focus its capabilities and efforts on several areas to maximize benefits to Service trust resources, to support other Service programs, and to increase awareness of the Environmental Contaminants Program by those within the Service and by our stakeholders. Though these priorities are not absolute, i.e., they will not be pursued to the exclusion of other actions, they do reflect the need to focus directed attention on them. These priorities will be monitored continuously to confirm they truly represent our highest priorities and are subject to change based on changing conditions at both the Regional and national levels.

Near-term Priorities (Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008)

- Update the Regional Spill Contingency Plan
- Complete restorations associated with previously settled Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) cases
- Provide information about the results, accomplishments, and capabilities of the Environmental Contaminants Program both within and outside the Service
- Focus Environmental Contaminants Program efforts on high priority activities, including those identified in the Governmental Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Service's Operational Plan, and Programmatic Work Activity Guidance (WAG)
- Manage Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program funding to maximize program performance

Long-term Priorities (Fiscal Years 2009 – 2011)

- Identify and prevent contaminant impacts to Service trust resources through investigations and technical assistance

- Identify and undertake new NRDAR cases based on Region 3 criteria/factors and in consultation and collaboration with pertinent Service programs
- Restore and recover Service trust resources impacted by contaminants through technical assistance to other Service programs and conservation partners and technical assistance to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and state agencies that conduct remedial actions
- Improve partnerships with other Service programs, external partners, and stakeholders to address their contaminant-related needs
- Develop and maintain a technically qualified and highly motivated Regional Environmental Contaminants Program staff

STRATEGIC PLAN

We will consider our Guiding Principles, priorities, and goals, objectives, and action strategies to develop portions of each office's Annual Work Plan and individual work plans for each Environmental Contaminants Program staff to ensure our work activities reflect our Program's mission, vision, and priorities. The order in which the goals, objectives, and action strategies are presented reflects a general, relative priority. All references to Field Offices (FO) and the Regional Office (RO) refer to the Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program within Ecological Services (ES), unless otherwise noted.

Goal 1. Prevention

The Environmental Contaminants Program will strive to prevent adverse impacts of environmental contaminants to Service trust resources by influencing resource management and regulatory decisions.

Objective 1.1 Engage in spill contingency planning and drills with local, State, Federal agencies, other Service programs, and private industry to maximize efficiency in spill response activities.

Action Strategy 1.1.1 By December 1, 2006, the RO will coordinate with the FOs to develop a succinct, non-technical issue paper identifying what is needed for effective spill contingency planning and proposing response roles and responsibilities for each Service program for use in the Regional Spill Contingency Plan (reference 1.1.2).

Action Strategy 1.1.2 By May 1, 2007, the Regional spill coordinator, in coordination with FOs and other Service Programs, will update and implement the Regional Spill Contingency Plan, which will identify roles and responsibilities of the Environmental Contaminants Program and other Service programs that may participate in spill contingency planning or respond to spills.

Action Strategy 1.1.3 Each FO will coordinate on a continuous or as-needed basis with its respective Area and SubArea spill response teams for spill contingency

planning and exercises, including updating and enhancing sensitive natural resource atlases that are published for the Region.

Action Strategy 1.1.4 To maintain preparedness, pertinent Environmental Contaminants Program staff in each FO and the RO Spill Coordinator will have at least 40 hours of hazardous waste operations (HAZWOPER) training, 8-hour HAZWOPER yearly refresher, and ICS training. The RO will provide updated National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) information to each FO as it becomes available.

Objective 1.2 Contribute to conservation of candidate species and recovery of listed species by providing technical assistance to facilitate identification and prevention of contaminant impacts to these species.

Action Strategy 1.2.1 The RO will coordinate with FOs and Endangered Species Program in the development of a status assessment regarding state water quality standards that may need to be revised to protect or allow for recovery of listed species or conservation of candidate species.

Action Strategy 1.2.2 After completion of action strategy 1.2.1, the RO and appropriate FOs, in cooperation with Endangered Species staff, will contact U.S. EPA Regions 5 and 7 to initiate/complete consultations on State water quality standards not subject to the national consultation.

Objective 1.3 Contribute to identification and prevention of contaminant-related effects to Service trust resources and Service lands and restoration of trust resources and Service lands impacted by contaminants through the Contaminant Assessment Program (CAP), on- and off-Refuge Investigations, and other investigations.

Action Strategy 1.3.1 By July 2007, the RO will consult with Refuges to develop a schedule for completing CAPs and CAP updates over the next several years for Region 3 Refuges.

Action Strategy 1.3.2 During FY 2008, the RO, in consultation with FOs, will work with the Region 3 Refuge Program and Washington Office (WO) to improve the CAP data base to make it more useful and user-friendly.

Action Strategy 1.3.3 FOs and RO, in consultation with Refuges, other Service programs, and others will continue to assess the need for, develop proposals for, and conduct on-Refuge and off-Refuge investigations to identify existing and emerging contaminant-related issues.

Action Strategy 1.3.4 By January 2007, the RO will coordinate with FOs to update the Region 3 investigation proposal screening approach to better identify and prepare competitive on-Refuge and off-Refuge investigation proposals for FY 2008 and beyond.

Action Strategy 1.3.5 In advance of the FY2008 allocation meeting in the WO, the RO will coordinate with FOs to develop suggested improvements to the national ranking criteria used to score investigation proposals and will provide suggested improvements to Environmental Contaminants Program staff in the other regions and the WO.

Action Strategy 1.3.6 By May 1, 2008, the RO, in coordination and consultation with the Regional Amphibian Monitoring Coordinator and FOs, will evaluate the National Amphibian Monitoring effort in Region 3 to determine the appropriate level of Environmental Contaminants Program involvement during the next several years.

Objective 1.4 Assist other Service programs in identifying and preventing contaminant-related impacts to Service trust resources and Service lands from Service-initiated activities.

Action Strategy 1.4.1 By June 1, 2007, the RO and FOs will re-evaluate and clarify roles of the Environmental Contaminants Program in fulfilling the requirements of the Service's Pest Management Policy in consultation and coordination with Refuges, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and other pertinent programs.

Action Strategy 1.4.2 Prevent contaminant impacts to Service trust resources by providing technical assistance to the Refuge and Realty Programs for consideration in their land acquisition decisions.

Goal 2. Restoration

The Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program will use existing authorities and strive to influence resource management and regulatory decisions to restore Service trust resources that have been adversely impacted by contaminants.

Objective 2.1 Use settlement funds previously acquired through NRDAR cases to restore natural resources lost or injured due to the release of hazardous substances or oil.

Action Strategy 2.1.1 By March 1, 2007, each FO, in coordination with the RO, pertinent Service programs, and others, will develop schedules and outline approaches for completing restoration projects for NRDAR settlements in their respective states. FOs may consider such approaches as: (a) pooling personnel resources and Service restoration expertise across programs and offices; (b) developing Regional Restoration Plans, where possible, for combining smaller settlements; (c) partnering with other conservation or governmental organizations; (d) using existing grants programs to administer requests for proposals for NRD-funded restorations and (e) seeking assistance in restoration planning and implementation from the Department of the Interior (DOI) Restoration Program's Restoration Center.

Action Strategy 2.1.2 By October 15 of each year, each FO will provide Restoration Progress Reports to the RO that describe the status of each case identified in Action Strategy 2.1.1.

Action Strategy 2.1.3. The Regional NRDAR Program Coordinator will continuously lead and sustain a Region 3 effort to identify the administrative barriers to implementing restoration projects and other actions to develop ways to reduce these obstacles or facilitate resolution of administrative steps needed to facilitate restoration implementation.

Objective 2.2 Use the NRDAR process and authorities provided by Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)(Superfund), the Oil Pollution Act, and associated regulations to restore natural resources lost or injured due to the release of hazardous substances or oil.

Action Strategy 2.2.1 Before initiating new NRDAR cases, FOs will evaluate them based on coordination and consultation with pertinent Service programs, Environmental Contaminants Program prioritization criteria/factors, Region 3-specific NRDAR criteria, and criteria presented in the CERCLA and OPA regulations:

Region 3 NRDAR Criteria:

- a) Significance of Service trust resources at risk in relation to agency resource priorities
- b) Availability of other Service program expertise and resources for assessment and restoration
- c) Potential for restoration, including the existence of conservation plans (especially Service plans) and project proposals, and opportunities to coordinate restoration with response actions
- d) Position of co-trustees, especially State trustees
- e) Status of Responsible Party(ies) (viability, position within the community/State, interest in achieving restoration, interest in funding trustees, etc.).

Action Strategy 2.2.2 FOs will use implement restorations associated with future settlements using efficient approaches such as: (a) pooling personnel resources and Service restoration expertise across programs and offices; (b) developing Regional Restoration Plans, where possible, for combining smaller settlements; (c) partnering with other conservation or governmental organizations; (d) using existing grants programs to administer requests for proposals for NRD-funded restorations and (e) seek assistance in restoration planning and implementation from the DOI Restoration Program's Restoration Center.

Action Strategy 2.2.3 Where releases of hazardous substances have, or potentially have, caused significant injury to Service trust resources that are not otherwise being addressed, FOs will seek funds for assessment and restoration planning from the DOI NRDAR fund or work with the DOI Office of the Solicitor to negotiate a funding agreement with the Potentially Responsible Party(ies).

Action Strategy 2.2.4 For oil spills that have caused significant injury to Service trust resources that are not otherwise being addressed, FOs will seek funds for restoration planning from the Potentially Responsible Party(ies) or the U.S. Coast Guard's Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund.

Objective 2.3 Influence hazardous waste site remediation and spill response processes to protect and restore Service trust resources.

Action Strategy 2.3.1 When possible, FOs will use participation in Biological Technical Assistance Groups (BTAG) or other site-specific technical assistance to influence remedial alternatives so that they address Service restoration needs at the site to minimize or prevent the need to proceed with an NRDAR case.

Action Strategy 2.3.2 Following Service protocols to be established within the revised Regional Spill Contingency Plan (Action Strategy 1.1.2), FOs and the RO will coordinate with State and Federal spill response agencies to identify and protect Service trust resources at risk from spills of hazardous substances or oil, utilizing emergency restoration actions to the extent necessary.

Objective 2.4 Contribute to restoration and recovery of federally listed species and conservation of candidate species and their habitats by identifying, preventing, and addressing contaminant-related concerns and issues related to listing and to recovery of federally listed species and conservation of candidate species.

Action Strategy 2.4.1 The RO and FOs will coordinate with the Region 3 Endangered Species Program beginning in January 2007 to develop an approach to identify, analyze, and address contaminant-related issues associated with listing, recovery of listed species, and conservation of candidate species, in conjunction with implementation of Action Strategy 1.2.1.

Action Strategy 2.4.2 On an annual basis, the RO and FOs will coordinate with the Region 3 Endangered Species Program to develop investigations to address contaminant issues related to listing and to recovery of listed and conservation of candidate species as identified in Recovery Plans.

Action Strategy 2.4.3 When listed or candidate species and/or their habitats are impacted by releases of oil or hazardous substances, FOs will work with the Endangered Species Program to focus NRDAR restorations on implementation of relevant aspects of recovery plans and candidate conservation plans.

Objective 2.5 Identify adverse impacts of contaminants and provide information to guide related restoration efforts for Service trust resources.

Action Strategy 2.5.1 In instances when a contaminant is suspected or anticipated to be causing adverse impacts to Service trust resources, FOs will, in coordination and consultation with other pertinent Service programs and others, initiate an investigation that provides data to inform resource management decisions and facilitate resolution of the problem. Funding sources may include Environmental Contaminants Program funds for on-Refuge and off-Refuge investigations, Regional emergency analytical funds, USGS Scientific Support program, and other outside sources. Sites where remedial investigations are complete or in progress will be a priority to efficiently provide complementary data.

Objective 2.6 Provide technical assistance to other Service programs to restore Service trust resources adversely impacted by contaminants.

Action Strategy 2.6.1 When CAPs, investigations, or other information indicates Service trust resources have been or are being impacted by contaminants, FOs and the RO will work with pertinent Service programs and others to proactively provide technical assistance to those agencies responsible for administering regulatory processes.

Action Strategy 2.6.2 When Service trust resources are being impacted by contaminants subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits or Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) watershed assessment efforts, FOs will work with pertinent Service programs to provide technical assistance to the regulatory agencies, i.e., U.S. EPA and State agencies, on a case-by-case basis to seek restoration of watersheds for the benefit of Service trust resources.

Goal 3. Program Vitality

The Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program will enhance the vitality of the Program to support our capabilities in fulfilling the goals, objectives, and priorities of the Program and the Service. We will accomplish this by: (1) developing effective working relationships with peers, partners, and stakeholders to identify and achieve shared objectives; (2) providing information to management and policy forums, the scientific community, and the public to influence resource management decisions; (3) holding ourselves accountable for the efficient and effective expenditure of program funds and resources; and (4) maintaining an adequately sized and highly skilled, experienced, professional, and motivated workforce.

Partnerships

Objective 3.1 Identify specific opportunities to address contaminant-related needs of the Endangered Species, Habitat Conservation, Refuges, Migratory Birds, Fisheries, and Law

Enforcement Programs and, consistent with the Environmental Contaminants Program's prioritization criteria and in relation to existing priorities, develop approaches to meet high priority needs.

Action Strategy 3.1.1 FOs and the RO will coordinate annually with other Service programs at both the Field and RO levels to identify specific contaminant-related needs of these programs.

Objective 3.2 FOs and the RO will identify specific opportunities for the Environmental Contaminants Program to contribute to implementation of contaminant-related aspects of the National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI).

Action Strategy 3.2.1 By January 1, 2007, and periodically thereafter, the Rock Island, Twin Cities, and Green Bay FOs will coordinate with the RO to identify and contribute to resolution of contaminant-related aspects of the Driftless Area Focus Area of the NFHI.

Action Strategy 3.2.2 By January 1, 2007, and periodically thereafter, the RO will coordinate with FOs and the Fisheries Program to assist in identification of additional NFHI focus areas.

Objective 3.3 The Environmental Contaminants Program will identify opportunities to contribute to implementation of contaminant-related aspects of the State Comprehensive Wildlife Management Plans.

Action Strategy 3.3.1 Each FO will review by January 1, 2007, its respective State Comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan, and periodically thereafter, to identify specific opportunities and actions that contribute to achievement of contaminant-related aspects of the Plan.

Objective 3.4 Identify specific investigation, prevention, and restoration opportunities to address contaminant-related needs of others.

Action Strategy 3.4.1 On a continuous basis, FOs and the RO levels will coordinate and consult with staff of other Service programs, Federal and State agencies, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations to identify specific opportunities for the Environmental Contaminants Program to address contaminant-related needs of other entities and to develop and implement approaches to meet those needs.

Action Strategy 3.4.2 FOs and the RO will participate actively in landscape-scale activities, such as the Great Lakes Collaboration of National Significance and review and or revision of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, that provide substantive opportunities to address contaminant-related aspects of Service trust resources and interests at the landscape scale.

Information and Outreach

Objective 3.5 Communicate with others about the results, accomplishments, and capabilities of the Environmental Contaminants Program to increase awareness of and support for the Program.

Action Strategy 3.5.1 Within 3 months after finalization of the Environmental Contaminants Program strategic plan, the RO will coordinate with the FOs in the development of outreach messages for Service staff and management in Region 3 and non-Service entities about the Program.

Action Strategy 3.5.2 By June 1, 2007, and continuously thereafter, the RO will develop, update, and maintain, in coordination with FOs, the Regional Environmental Contaminants Program web site.

Action Strategy 3.5.3 By June 1, 2007, each FO will develop and maintain an Environmental Contaminants Program web page that describes the FO's organization, contacts, capabilities, accomplishments, etc.

Action Strategy 3.5.4 FOs and the RO will continuously seek opportunities to give presentations on pertinent aspects of the Program at pertinent meetings of other Service programs.

Action Strategy 3.5.5 FOs and the RO will respond to requests for information and assistance from Service programs and outside entities consistent with the Environmental Contaminants Program's prioritization criteria.

Action Strategy 3.5.6 FOs and the RO will report accomplishments in the Accomplishment Reporting System as they occur.

Action Strategy 3.5.7 FOs and the RO will provide pertinent information on specific projects and aspects of the Environmental Contaminants Program to appropriate State and Federal Congressional representatives at local and Washington, D.C., offices.

Action Strategy 3.5.8 FOs and the RO will make Environmental Contaminants Program information widely available by publishing relevant work in reports, news releases, Service web pages and publications, popular publications, and peer-reviewed scientific journals. Authors will seek NTIS document numbers for FO reports, when possible.

Accountability

Objective 3.6 Focus efforts on high priority activities, including achieving GPRA, Operational Plan, and Work Activity Guidance (WAG) goals.

Action Strategy 3.6.1 Ecological Services Program Field Supervisors and RO Program managers will engage actively in activities of the Environmental Contaminants Program to ensure that Program priorities are addressed, its capabilities are utilized efficiently, and that Field Supervisors and Program managers are fully informed about and are proactive advocates for the capabilities and roles of the Environmental Contaminants Program in their respective offices.

Action Strategy 3.6.2 By October 1 of each year, FOs and the RO will develop annual workload plans that identify high priority activities each office will undertake to achieve its GPRA and Operational Plan goals and targets.

Action Strategy 3.6.3 The RO and FOs will track progress in achieving Region 3's annual performance targets, including GPRA and Operational Plan goals, throughout the year using various means, including monthly, Regional Program conference calls.

Action Strategy 3.6.4 The RO will coordinate with FOs to develop end-of-fiscal year reports describing Environmental Contaminants Program accomplishments in achieving annual performance targets.

Action Strategy 3.6.5 The RO will coordinate with FOs annual reviews of the Region 3 Environmental Contaminants Program strategic plan to monitor progress in implementing action strategies and achieving Program goals and objectives, to make needed changes to near-term and long-term priorities, and to make needed modifications to the plan.

Objective 3.7 Manage Environmental Contaminants Program funding to maximize program performance and allocate/spend funds in a timely and effective manner.

Action Strategy 3.7.1 Each fiscal year, the RO will allocate funds to FOs as quickly as practicable after receiving the Regional allocation from the WO.

Action Strategy 3.7.2 The RO and each FO will maintain fidelity to appropriate Program and project funding accounts to the maximum extent practicable.

Action Strategy 3.7.3 The RO and each FO will develop opportunities to leverage Service funding and staffing resources with those of partners to accomplish priority work activities.

Action Strategy 3.7.4 By January 1, 2007, and periodically thereafter, the RO will coordinate with FOs on consistent use of the most appropriate ABC codes for each Environmental Contaminants Program activity.

Action Strategy 3.7.5 The RO will coordinate with FOs, other Service Regions, and the WO to develop out-year budget justifications and initiatives that reflect the stated prevention and restoration goals of the Environmental Contaminants Program.

Objective 3.8 The RO, in coordination and consultation with FOs, will seek to ensure GPRA and Operational Plan goals and performance targets are established for the Environmental Contaminants Program that accurately reflect our prevention, restoration, and other goals and priorities.

Action Strategy 3.8.1 By March 1, 2007, and annually thereafter, if necessary, the RO, in coordination with FOs and the WO, will clarify existing Operational Plan goals and associated definitions.

Action Strategy 3.8.2 The RO, in coordination and consultation with FOs, will work with the Environmental Contaminants Program in other Service Regions and WO on a continuous basis to influence development of GPRA and Operational Plan goals and definitions that adequately represent and quantify the Environmental Contaminants Program at the national level.

Workforce Development

Objective 3.9 Develop and maintain a technically qualified and highly motivated Environmental contaminants Program staff.

Action Strategy 3.9.1 ES Field Supervisors and Program managers will provide staff with opportunities to develop and maintain competencies and capabilities in their positions through 40 hours of training per year, temporary details within and outside the DOI and Service, etc.

Action Strategy 3.9.2 ES Field Supervisors and Program managers will support regular participation of FO and RO staff in scientific meetings consistent with office budgets.

Action Strategy 3.9.3 ES Field Supervisors and Program managers will identify and pursue opportunities to prepare staff for increasingly responsible positions within the Service.

Action Strategy 3.9.4 ES Field Supervisors and Program managers will recruit highly qualified and motivated personnel with high levels of technical expertise and interpersonal skills to fill vacancies as they occur, consistent with Regional and Field Office budgets and workforce plans.

Objective 3.10 Maintain an appropriately sized and strategically positioned Environmental Contaminants Program workforce that maximizes delivery of Program capabilities to high priority activities consistent with funding and staffing levels and constraints.

Action Strategy 3.10.1 ES Field Supervisors, FO staff, and Program managers will participate actively in workforce planning efforts at the Regional and WO levels pertinent to the Environmental Contaminants Program.

Appendix – Description of Environmental Contaminants Program activities

Spill Prevention and Contingency Planning

Function: Environmental Contaminants Program personnel provide assistance to local, State, and Federal emergency response agencies, as well as private industry, to plan for effective response actions in the event of a spill of oil or hazardous material and in responding to spills of oil and hazardous material.. Planning and exercises are coordinated with Service Law Enforcement, Refuge, and Endangered Species personnel, as applicable. Service trust resource information (locations, priorities, etc.) and management recommendations are integrated into contingency plans for response actions to ensure resource impacts are prevented and minimized in the event of a spill. Spill response can both prevent impacts to Service trust resources, as well as restore those resources impacted by the spill; the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) process is utilized to achieve the latter.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Target:

2.8.2 - # of spill prevention activities and spill responses.

DOI GPRA Goal: No goals currently identified.

Environmental Contaminants Program Investigations

Function: Environmental Contaminant Investigations are developed separately to address both on- and off-Refuge contaminant-related issues. Investigations can include conducting and assisting with law enforcement investigations of contaminant-related cases. A related investigation capability, the Contaminant Assessment Process (CAP), provides a “desktop” screening of potential contaminant factors affecting Refuge lands. Investigations are designed to inform resource management and regulatory decisions to prevent contaminant impacts to Service trust resources, or to restore those resources impacted by contaminants.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Targets:

4.2.2 - # of completed contaminant investigations and restorations on Refuges.

13.2.5 - # of completed contaminant investigations.

DOI GPRA Goal: No goals currently identified.

Hazardous Waste Site Assistance

Function: Environmental Contaminants Program personnel provide assistance to State and Federal [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)] regulatory response agencies responsible for cleaning up hazardous waste sites. Recommendations for contaminant source, pathway, and ecological receptor factors are provided for the remedial action to address in order to prevent and/or eliminate risks to trust resources.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Target:

2.1.7 - # of wetland acres protected through technical assistance and NRDA.

2.2.5 - # of upland acres protected through technical assistance.

2.3.7 - # of riparian, stream, shoreline acres/miles protected through technical assistance.

2.4.7 - # of marine/coastal wetlands acres protected through technical assistance and NRDA.

DOI GPRA Goal: No goals currently identified.

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration

Function: NRDAR is an authority of the Secretary of the Interior provided by CERCLA and OPA. The NRDAR process allows the Service (representing the Secretary of the Interior) to seek compensation to restore natural resources lost or injured due to releases of hazardous substances or oil. Service NRDAR activities are coordinated primarily through the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Restoration Program.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Targets:

1.1.5 - # of wetlands (acres) enhanced/restored through NRDA (including NRDA restoration).

1.2.4 - # of upland acres enhanced/restored through NRDA (including NRDA restoration).

1.3.3 - # of riparian stream/shoreline miles restored/enhanced through NRDA (including NRDA restoration).

1.4.8 - # of marine/coastal acres restored/protected through NRDA (including NRDA restoration).

2.1.7 - # of wetland acres protected through technical assistance and NRDA.

2.2.6 - # of upland acres protected through technical assistance through NRDA.

2.3.8 - # of riparian, stream, shoreline acres/miles protected through technical assistance through NRDA.

2.4.7 - # of marine/coastal wetlands acres protected through technical assistance and NRDA.

2.8.5 - # ongoing NRDA cases, final settlements, and other environmental assessments.

20.3.6 - # of restoration settlements having a recreational component.

28.3.5 - # of technical assistance support activities to Tribes for NRDAR, Restoration, CWA, Pesticides.

DOI GPRA Goals:

PIM.2.01.001 - # of wetlands (acres) enhanced/restored through NRDA (including NRDA restoration).

PIM.2.01.002 - # of riparian stream/shoreline miles restored/enhanced through NRDA (including NRDA restoration).

Endangered Species Act Consultation

Function: Environmental Contaminants biologists often participate in consultations for contaminant-related issues under the ESA with other Federal agencies on the effects of actions on listed species. This includes ESA Section 7(a)2 consultation and Section 7(a)1 planning. Consultation is intended to avoid or minimize impacts to species proposed for listing that occur on Service lands, federally listed threatened and endangered species, candidate species, and critical habitat.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Target: No targets currently identified.

DOI GPRA Goals: No goals currently identified.

Clean Water Act Coordination

Function: The U.S. EPA establishes water quality criteria and the States establish water quality standards based on these criteria. Operational controls (i.e. – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits) are implemented by the States under authority of U.S. EPA (see <http://cfpub2.epa.gov/npdes/>). The Service role in establishing criteria and reviewing permits is based on the requirement for other federal agencies to consult with

the Service under Section 7 of the ESA. The consultations are with U.S. EPA on their Federal action to approve State standards and practices. A national Memorandum of Agreement between the Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. EPA is intended to facilitate this consultation process

(<http://endangered.fws.gov/consultations/epamoa.html>). Although this is an ESA function, the Service's ecotoxicological expertise lies within the Environmental Contaminants Program and Environmental Contaminants biologists participate extensively in these consultations at the local, state, and national levels.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Target: No targets currently identified.

DOI GPRA Goals: No goals currently identified.

Technical Assistance

Function: The Environmental Contaminants Program provides technical assistance primarily to other Service programs and, as staff resources and the Service mission allow, to State and tribal partners, the private conservation community, and the general public. Technical assistance, centering on the professional practice of ecotoxicology, takes many forms, including consultation, advice, investigations, development of management actions, and all relevant types of information and technology transfer.

This category encompasses a wide variety of Environmental Contaminants Program functions, most of which have been described above. However, these functions include primarily: 1) Assisting Service program field stations in pest management decisions, including development of Pesticide Use Proposals (PUPs); 2) Assisting Service field stations to evaluate contaminant- and water quality-related aspects of land use both on- and off-Service lands; 3) Assisting Refuges and Realty in identifying contaminant and other environmental quality issues on real property proposed for acquisition as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System to enable decision-makers to make informed decisions related to the condition of the property and the potential legal liabilities for environmental cleanup and compliance. 4) Assisting with development and/or implementation of contaminant- and water quality-related aspects of endangered species recovery plans; 5) Assisting with reviews of proposed federally permitted projects and actions; 6) Assisting

U.S. EPA and State-led remediation at hazardous waste sites; and 7) Providing information to conservation partners and the public on contaminant effects to fish and wildlife.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Targets:

2.1.7 - # of wetland acres protected through technical assistance and NRDA.

2.2.5 - # of upland acres protected through technical assistance.

2.3.7 - # of riparian, stream, shoreline acres/miles protected through technical assistance.

2.4.7 - # of marine/coastal wetlands acres protected through technical assistance and NRDA.

2.8.1 - # of pesticide use proposals reviewed.

13.2.6 - # of Clean Water Act consultations (NPDES, TMDLs, Triennial Reviews).

13.2.7 - # of Section 7 Consultations Pesticides – Off Service lands – State and EPA consultations and technical assistance.

13.2.8 - # of Section 7 Consultations CWA – Off Service lands – State and EPA consultations and technical assistance.

28.3.5 - # of technical assistance support activities to Tribes for NRDAR, Restoration, CWA, Pesticides.

DOI GPRA Goal: No goals currently identified.

Environmental Contaminants Program Administration

Function: This category includes workload and budget development, fiscal management, accomplishment reporting and outreach, employee training, and project file and reference library management.

FWS FY2006 Operational Plan Performance Target: No targets currently identified.

DOI GPRA Goal: No goals currently identified.