

Cookeville Field Office
Five-Year Strategic Plan
2007-2011

The Cookeville Field Office is responsible for Ecological Services activities within the State of Tennessee. The State of Tennessee extends from the Mississippi Valley in the west to the Appalachian Mountains in the east. The diverse physiographic regions within the State provide habitat ranging from floodplain wetlands in the west to depressional wetlands in the east, and from glades/barrens across the middle of the State to mountain balds and hardwood coves in the east. These physiographic regions result in a similar diversity of aquatic habitats including warm, slow-moving streams in the west; cool-water, gravel-bottom streams in the central part of the State; and high-gradient, cold-water streams in the east. As a result of the diversity of habitats within the State, our geographic focus areas, which include some of the priority habitats identified in Tennessee's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, are scattered across the State. Our focus areas include the watersheds of the Clinch and Power rivers; the area encompassing the upper Caney Fork, Elk, and Duck river watersheds (the Barrens); the Central Basin; Cumberland Plateau and Escarpment; Southern Blue Ridge physiographic region; the area encompassing the upper Buffalo River and Shoal and Cypress Creek watersheds; and the Hatchie River watershed (see accompanying map of focus areas).

Since receiving responsibility for endangered species recovery, listing, and candidate conservation in 1998, the Cookeville Field Office has utilized all of the Service programs at various times to benefit the recovery and conservation of federally listed and candidate species. We fully realize the benefits that can be derived by working as "one Service." Consequently, the primary goal that we will continue to carry into the next 5-years is to work within the Service's "family" and with our external partners to accomplish the Service mission.

Recently, greater emphasis is being placed on looking at big picture, landscape-level planning as we work toward meeting our mission. The need to take a holistic approach to conservation planning is not new, but implementing such a plan remains a very difficult and costly undertaking. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, perhaps the most successful (implemented) landscape-level planning effort to date, involved high profile species that have been monitored and studied for over a half-century. In the endangered species arena, our mandate generally involves low-profile, narrow endemic species for which little scientific knowledge is available to translate into landscape-level planning efforts. Although the challenges are great, especially relative to funding and staffing resources, our office is committed to working with our partners to address species needs at the landscape level.

Our office goal for this five-year strategy is to: **"Further integrate FWS program activities with other public and private partnerships to more effectively conserve, restore, and enhance trust resources and their associated habitats."** The objectives and strategies to accomplish our goal are provided below.

Objective I: In coordination with our state, federal, and private partners, protect, restore, and enhance priority habitats through the review of federal activities.

Strategy A: Address resource issues through programmatic-level efforts, de-emphasizing project-by-project reviews.

Strategy B: Establish and implement interagency joint processing for Corps, surface mining, and state water quality permits.

Strategy C: Emphasize landscape-level conservation through wetland and stream mitigation programs.

Strategy D: Target activities that have been identified as key threats to critical habitat, federally listed species, candidate species, and species of management concern.

Strategy E: In consultation with federal agencies, seek to remove threats to listed species and to implement enhancement measures.

Objective II: Capitalize on the capabilities of GIS and the Web to assist in the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of trust resources.

Strategy A: In cooperation with our state, federal, and private partners, establish landscape-level focus areas and objectives designed to restore and enhance trust resources.

Strategy B: Develop GIS-based species/habitat models that assist in defining the “on-the-ground” activities that would lead to the conservation and recovery of federally listed species and preclude the need to list candidate species or species of management concern.

Strategy C: Develop web-based tools and informative materials to assist applicants, agencies, and the general public in meeting resource protection and conservation goals and requirements.

Objective III: Protect and restore trust resources through the environmental contaminants program.

Strategy A: Work with state and federal agencies responsible for regulating contaminants to ensure that the protections provided under their authorities adequately protect, and prevent the harmful effects of contaminants on, trust resources.

Strategy B: Provide environmental contaminants technical assistance to all Service programs relative to environmental compliance issues, habitat quality, and the effects of contaminants on trust resources.

Strategy C: Identify restoration and recovery opportunities for trust resources that have been impacted by the release of hazardous substances and/or oil using existing Memoranda of Agreements and the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process.

Strategy D: Implement restoration and recovery of trust resources using settlement funds from CERLA, Clean Water Act, and Oil Pollution Act.

Objective IV: Implement conservation measures that protect and preclude the need to list candidate species and species of management concern.

Strategy A: Establish a prioritized list of species of management concern, define the threats for each species, and identify research needs.

Strategy B: In cooperation with state and federal agencies and private organizations, develop landscape-level conservation measures for candidate species and species of management concern.

Strategy C: Identify opportunities where other Service programs (e.g., Fisheries and Refuges) can assist in implementing conservation measures.

Strategy D: Work with the Service's Partners program and the various other state and federal conservation programs to protect, restore, and enhance habitat that is critical to candidate species and species of management concern.

Objective V: Conserve, restore, and enhance habitat that is critical to the protection and recovery of federally listed species.

Strategy A: Working with our partners, assess the status of each species, identify conservation measures that will improve the species status, and define research needs that will contribute to our ability to recover each species.

Strategy B: Through the Service's Partners program and the various conservation programs provided by our partners, implement "on-the-ground" measures that secure, enhance, and restore habitat supportive of endangered species populations.

Strategy C: Working with our partners, through relocation and propagation efforts, reintroduce species into suitable habitat that occurs within their historical range.

Objective VI: In cooperation with private landowners, implement habitat restoration and protection measures that benefit federally listed species and species-of-concern.

Strategy A: Based on existing habitat conditions and landscape objectives, identify habitat needs and opportunities within each focus area.

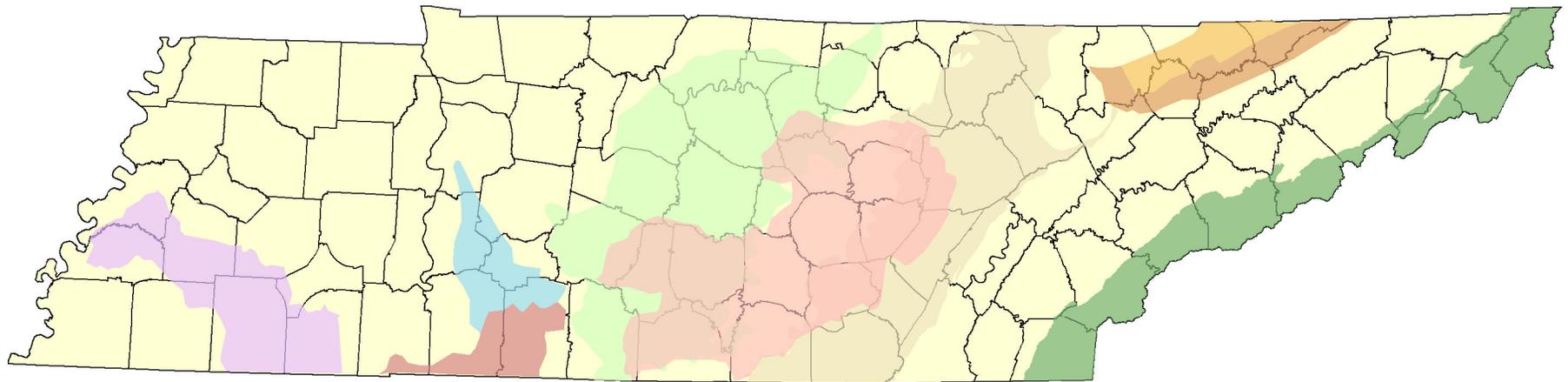
Strategy B: Within focus areas and with assistance from our partners, implement conservation measures that reduce threats to trust resources and meet landscape objectives.

Strategy C: When working with private landowners, capitalize on opportunities to implement CAAs, SHAs, and HCPs.

Revised 1/30/07

Focus Areas

Cookeville Field Office Strategic Plan 2007-2011



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Shoal Creek/Cypress Creek |  Powell River |
|  Hatchie River |  Clinch River |
|  Buffalo River |  Cumberland Plateau |
|  The Barrens |  Central Basin |
|  Southern Blue Ridge | |