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| **From:** | Matt Hogan |
| **To:** | Noreen Walsh |
| **Subject:** | RE: FY14 Priorities Document |
| **Date:** | Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:55:48 AM |
| **Attachments:** | FY14Priorities.V3.docx |

So just did a comparison to the FY13 priorities. There are about 1000 more words and 3 additional pages when you compare the two Word versions. That said, I think that is ok as more people will see themselves in the document.

Here is the draft as it exists now.

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**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:39 AM
**To:** Matt Hogan
**Subject:** RE: FY14 Priorities Document

Thanks, and sorry, I didn't read thewhole thing yet – just took a quick look at Will's comments. Let me know when it is ready. I can try to review tonight if it is. I thought Torbit had a good point that it seems a bit long. I wonder if we can state a priority, and then underneath "Action Items"?

Noreen Walsh
Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

303 236 7920

***The Mountain-Prairie Region of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service:*** *We provide conservation stewardship of some of America's most scenic lands, to ensure healthy fish and wildlife for the enjoyment and benefit of all people.*

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**From:** Matt Hogan [mailto:Matt_Hogan@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:26 AM
**To:** Noreen Walsh
**Subject:** RE: FY14 Priorities Document

It is in there:

- Initiate multi-year project to assess and determine needs and priorities for propagation of native aquatic species in R6

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**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2013 7:51 PM
**To:** Matt Hogan
**Subject:** FW: FY14 Priorities Document

I wonder if Sharon believes fisheries needs and priorities are sufficiently incorporated?
I would like to see something reflecting Molly's process: work with States to derive strategy for

using our hatchery system to meet regional aquatic priority needs….

Noreen Walsh
Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

303 236 7920

***The Mountain-Prairie Region of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service:*** *We provide conservation stewardship of some of America's most scenic lands, to ensure healthy fish and wildlife for the enjoyment and benefit of all people.*

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**From:** Sharon Rose [mailto:sharon_r_rose@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2013 4:02 PM
**To:** FW6 RO ARDs
**Subject:** FW: FY14 Priorities Document

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**From:** Sharon Rose [mailto:sharon_r_rose@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2013 3:59 PM
**To:** Matt Hogan
**Subject:** RE: FY14 Priorities Document

Under Aquatic Species
Correct word to say "in dealing" in 1st bullet.
Delete 4th bullet (appears to be more of a repeat of 1st bullet).

Joanne Grady is out sick today---If she makes it in tomorrow, I will ask her if the invasive species section looks ok to her….otherwise, we'll just leave as is.

Thank you.

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**From:** Matt Hogan [mailto:Matt_Hogan@fws.gov]
**Sent:** Friday, September 20, 2013 10:54 AM
**To:** FW6 RO ARDs
**Subject:** FY14 Priorities Document

Attached is the next version of our priorities document. Thanks for everyone's input. We are hoping to have a final draft by next week so we can finalize design and production before Oct 1.

Please review the entire document and provide any suggested edits. Please do not limit yourself to your sections but read the entire document to be sure it makes sense the way it is written as we want all our employees to understand each bullet.

Also, I tried to eliminate acronyms but there were several I missed. Please provide full name for any acronyms in your program area.

Please provide your comments by **COB Monday, September 23rd**. Thanks.

Matt

Matt Hogan
Deputy Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region
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# FY14 Regional Priorities

## OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

### Our People

Invest in our Workforce

Provide Professional Development Opportunities for Our Employees

- Fully implement the new Region 6 Employee Development Program while continuing to research/provide high quality/low cost professional development opportunities and resources to all employees.
- Work with Region 6 supervisors to develop a workplace culture that integrates professional development with our mission focused operations.
- Develop appropriate performance metrics to measure our professional development program progress and success.

Ensure Our Employees Have a Safe Work Environment

- Better educate our entire workforce on risk management and incorporate user-friendly, risk-based management tools into daily activities and decision making at every level of the Region.
- Ensure that every Project Leader/Station manager completes and follows up on their Safety and Environmental Self-Inspection prior to August 15.

Recruit and Retain a Diverse and Highly Engaged Workforce that Reflects the Publics We Serve

- Use, refine and grow our extensive network of professional, academic, non-profit and governmental contacts in our efforts to attract, recruit and retain diverse, highly qualified and engaged employees.
- While safeguarding our current workforce, continue successful efforts by Human Resources and Civil Rights and Diversity Program (e.g., Pathways, special hiring authorities) to recruit and retain skilled and talented employees in the region.
- Work to isolate retention challenges in the region and develop solutions to address them.

Continue to Advance the Principles of Strategic Habitat Conservation as a Science Drive Agency

Work with Partners to Identify and Utilize Surrogate Species to Achieve Self-sustaining Fish and Wildlife Populations in Functional Landscapes

- Identify a geography to develop Version 1.0 Surrogate Species for Region 6, including the identification of potential surrogates, species to be represented and limiting factors for that geography
- Continue to Build Science Capacity through Our Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC)

- Refine and enhance information flow on FWS regional priorities and the opportunities that LCCs can implement to improve conservation design.
- Establish a cross-programmatic advisory group for the Great Northern LCC and Southern Rockies LCC designed to provide input to R6 LCC Steering Committee representatives to ensure Steering Committees are fully aware of regional priorities
- Develop and test a communication mechanism to determine how FWS best shares updated information regarding science support tools developed from regional LCCs for potential use by regional programs and partners.
- Initiate a process with other regions to integrate existing aquatic data with terrestrial information within the LCC GIS framework to support conservation at landscape levels for priority trust aquatic resources by the Service and our partners in the Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership area.

Leverage Other Existing Internal Science Capacity

- Further integrate HAPET to support regional priorities by working with FWS offices and programs to support the development of pilot landscape conservation projects by engaging and providing methodologies, data, and training regarding landscape conservation and the development of decision support tools to address landscape threats and protection efforts.
- Develop a cross-programmatic team to integrate Region 6 programs to support, strengthen, and coordinate our priority conservation delivery efforts. Specifically, maintain and enhance an annual inventory of priority research and information needs across programs and develop a database of wildlife and plant species that have been designated as priorities (e.g. focal, surrogate, target, conservation concern, threatened and endangered) in Region 6.
- Maintain efforts to utilize National Fish Passage Program's Geofin and the Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership's Midwest Habitat Assessment to focus and achieve strategic aquatic habitat conservation goals.

**<u>Our Partners</u>**

Maintain and Increase our Collaboration with State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Our Primary Partners

- Within each of our eight states, each Service program, or all programs together, will host at least one general coordination meeting to discuss mutual priorities and conservation opportunities with State wildlife agency directors and appropriate agency staff.
- Each Project Leader will ensure that State wildlife agency directors and appropriate agency staff are apprised in advance of local announcements or initiatives
- For major policy initiatives or decisions (such as ESA listing decisions), the Assistant Regional Director, DRD, or RD will personally communicate decisions to state directors in advance of public release using information provided by the relevant Service program.

- Continue to support our state partner agencies through effective and efficient administration of the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration (WSFR) program

Maintain and Increase our Collaboration with Tribes

- Each program/station with a nexus with a tribe will schedule at least one coordination meeting (alone or with other programs) with those tribes to discuss issues of mutual importance
- An RDT member will be identified to represent the RDT and the region at important gatherings (at least two annually) of important tribal leaders from the Region.
- Conduct a Tribal Roundtable Meeting-Part II to further the relationship with the Tribes, explore new ways to increase communication, enhance consultation, explore overlapping priorities, and provide a training workshop for grant writing.
- Increase tribal communications and awareness of Service priorities, initiatives, programs and funding opportunities through various communication tools and mechanisms.
- Plan and sponsor Eagle Summit 3.

**Our Public**

Enhance Communications Efforts and Further Align Outreach with Regional Priorities

- Build strategic, proactive approaches to public information campaigns and communications around our regional resource priorities.
- Implement visual tools (such as webcams) to capture real-time on-the-ground conservation efforts for regional priority activities.
- Redesign the Region's website to provide increased interactivity, brand consistency, streamlined maintenance, and user-centered focus.
- Strategically engage key Members of Congress, state legislators, and county commissioners on regional priorities.
- Increasing relevance of the Service and Refuges, incorporate the "Urban Standards of Excellence" into planning and daily operations at Rocky Mountain Arsenal (RMA) and Bear River Refuges. These efforts will target non-traditional audiences as well as highlight Denver Urban Bird Treaty activities at RMA.
- In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, feature articles on each of the eight field stations in Region 6 with designated or proposed wilderness area.

**RESOURCE PRIORITIES**

**Proactively Identify and Influence Significant Environmental Stressors to Minimize Impacts to Fish, Wildlife and their Habitats**

**Water, Energy Development and Invasive Species**

- Implement a cross-programmatic, non-hierarchical team to address water quality and quantity issues, in light of water's broad-ranging impact on the trust species for which we have responsibility. The team will be authorized to independently identify opportunities and explore measures otherwise unlikely to be pursued through traditional program approaches.
- Continue to reach out to the energy industry to develop conservation strategies that are consistent with State/Federal conservation efforts for sage-grouse.
- Develop an analytical framework utilizing geospatial analysis, incorporate such analysis into Landscape Energy Action Plan (LEAP) and present to the energy industry to advance their sage grouse conservation efforts.
- Identify high priority eagle conservation practices and incorporate those in to existing decision support systems such as LEAP as well as relay to the energy industry to be implemented in eagle permitting efforts.
- Finalize regional policy to establish processes to prevent invasive species range expansion by Service personnel.
- Update HACCP plans for R6 FAC stations and develop Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans for R6 ES field stations to minimize risk of spreading invasive species through Service activities. Initiate annual AIS inspections for all hatcheries in R6.
- Conduct baseline water quality assessments for three hatcheries to document existing water quality and to determine if environmental contaminants may be present that could adversely impact fish recovery.

**Conserve, Restore and Protect Priority Landscapes and the Wildlife that Depend on Them**

**Grasslands Dependent Species and Native Grassland Ecosystems**

- Protect over 40,000 acres of grassland and 8,000 acres of wetlands of highest priority migratory bird breeding habitat at risk of conversion with perpetual conservation easements using Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) dollars.
- Develop "Phase II--Crisis on the Prairies" strategic communication campaign on the value of the prairies to further gain public support , attract national attention, and work collaboratively with our partners on prairie conservation efforts.
- Continue the collection of Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data while identifying the need for additional sampling for under-represented species, habitats, and geographies while integrating spatial models derived from BBS to inform landscape conservation delivery actions.

**Sage-Grouse and the Sage Steppe Ecosystem**

- Lead the Service's participation in the range-wide effort to conserve the Greater Sage-grouse.
- Working with R1 and R8, develop a mitigation framework that identifies the mitigation tools and principles for both traditional mitigation as well as advancing the principles associated with advanced crediting.

- Lead the efforts regarding sage-grouse conservation and using the Field Management Team as the principle operation advisory group to Service leadership on the adequacy of conservation efforts range-wide.
- Develop the necessary metrics to report measurable biological outcomes for sage grouse conservation efforts.
- Provide direct input to the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service planning efforts regarding sage-grouse conservation.
- Work with and advise State planning efforts regarding sage-grouse conservation.
- Accelerate the Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI) through the Intermountain West Joint Venture's (IWJV) coordination of the multi-partner Strategic Watershed Action Team (SWAT). This involves leveraging potential new funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and partners to support capacity that will continually refine SGI's approach to strategic conservation delivery and quantify outcomes to sage-grouse populations.
- Enhance Greater Sage-grouse partnership conservation efforts through full implementation of our cooperative agreements with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). Implementation will include but is not limited to the current efforts to complete funded research, facilitate state data integration in LC MAP and the compilation of information and management of the invasive species/fire complex with WAFWA.

**Advance Conservation for Priority Trust Resources**

Black-footed Ferret Recovery (BFF)

- Maximize additional reintroduction sites with recently completed Safe Harbor Agreement.
- Implement the Black-tailed prairie dog management plan at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR which outlines a long-term management strategy, in support of the goals and objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan which lays the groundwork for the reintroduction of black-footed ferrets.
- Work with NRCS to implement working lands for wildlife program for BFF
- Work with Animal Plant Health Inspection Service/ Wildlife Services (APHIS WS) and others to implement range wide boundary control program for BFF
- Work with U.S. Geological Survey , APHIS WS, and others to implement range wide disease management program for BFF

Grizzly Bear Recovery (GB)

- Finish the White Bark Pine food synthesis for Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE)
- Finalize the revised GYE demographic criteria.
- Finalize the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Conservation Strategy.
- Utilize food synthesis and Conservation Strategy to develop decision documents on listing status of GB in the NCDE and GYE.

Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery

- Finalize a basin-wide aquatic invasive species control strategy that provides a sustainable approach to managing threats of predation and competition to the endangered Colorado River fish.
- Publish a draft Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Plan.
- Convene a Recovery Team to begin revision of the Humpback Chub Recovery Plan.
- Revise and finalize the Recovery Program's Integrated Stocking Plan with the intent of improving survival of hatchery reared bonytail.

Topeka Shiner

- Fully implement a project plan to evaluate designation of two Distinct Population Segments (northern and southern), and initiate rulemaking to change the status of the northern DPS if appropriate

Pallid Sturgeon

- Continue monitoring population status to guide habitat protection and restoration and stocking efforts for restoration of pallid sturgeon in the Missouri River.

Aquatic Species

- Working with State, Federal and NGO partners, prioritize and initiate 3 fish passage/habitat projects that will assist target species/populations to be more resilient and adaptive in dealing with the impacts of environmental stressors, such as climate change.
- Continue working with state partners to transition propagation programs at Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery to further conservation goals for native fish.
- Continue working with partners, including the States, other Federal agencies and Tribal governments to develop a native cutthroat trout conservation plan.
- Initiate multi-year project to assess and determine needs and priorities for propagation of native aquatic species in R6
- Continue cooperative efforts by the Lander FWCO and Garrison Dam NFH, working with the states of North Dakota and Wyoming and the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribes, to restore sauger populations in the Wind River.

Golden Eagles

- Collaborate with USFWS Regions 1, 2, and 8 to initiate landscape-scale conservation planning for golden eagles in relation to impacts from renewable and nonrenewable energy development in the western U.S. Specifically, through an appointed team, prioritize landscapes at an

appropriate scale and develop a first draft of specific conservation strategies applicable to energy development in those landscapes.

- Develop a research plan and measure environmental contaminants in eagles and other large raptors to evaluate concerns over dietary exposure to rodenticides, mercury and lead.
- Complete one NEPA evaluation concerning potential issuance of a programmatic eagle take permit for a wind energy facility.

Wyoming Toad

- Announce availability of draft revised recovery plan for public comment.
- Fully develop land acquisition as a priority recovery strategy as called for in the revised Wyoming toad recovery plan.
- Increase captive propagation capabilities.

Utah Prairie Dog (UPD)

- Finalize low-effect Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) for Iron and Garfield Counties in Utah.
- Establish/protect additional colonies of UPD.

Sprague's Pipit

- Develop and support publication of an International model of Sprague's pipit population distributions.
- Collaborate with USGS BBS to analyze Sprague's pipit population trends within population core areas.
- Host a meeting of Sprague's pipit experts to inform development of multi-organization conservation efforts for the species. Invite other state and federal agencies and conservation organizations to attend and jointly develop plans for conservation projects to benefit Sprague's pipit.

**Continue Existing and Identify New Priority Landscape Conservation Efforts**

- Protect an additional 12,000 acres within the Crown of the Continent in Montana through conservation easements to prevent land fragmentation and protect habitat for numerous trust species including grizzly bears, Canada lynx, bull trout and numerous migratory bird species.
- Protect an additional 4,000 acres of prairie in the Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area through easements to protect critical migratory bird habitat from accelerated habitat loss and conversion.
- Protect an additional 3,500 acres of tallgrass prairie habitat in the Flint Hills using perpetual conservation easements.
- Continue to work with partners and Region 1 to officially establish the Bear River Conservation Area through the acceptance of the first easement.

- Secure Director's approval to establish the San Luis Valley Conservation Area that will protect up to 280,000 acres of habitat in south-central Colorado through a mix of easements and fee acquisition for key species including the southwestern willow flycatcher, Gunnison sage grouse, and Greater Sandhill cranes.
- Secure Director's approval to establish the Southern Laramie Plains Conservation Area in southeast Wyoming that will protect up to 43,299 acres through a mix of easements and fee acquisition of key habitats for the Endangered Wyoming Toad.
- Secure Director's approval to protect up to 140,000 acres of habitat along the Missouri River for key species including bald eagle, piping plover, least tern and pallid sturgeon.