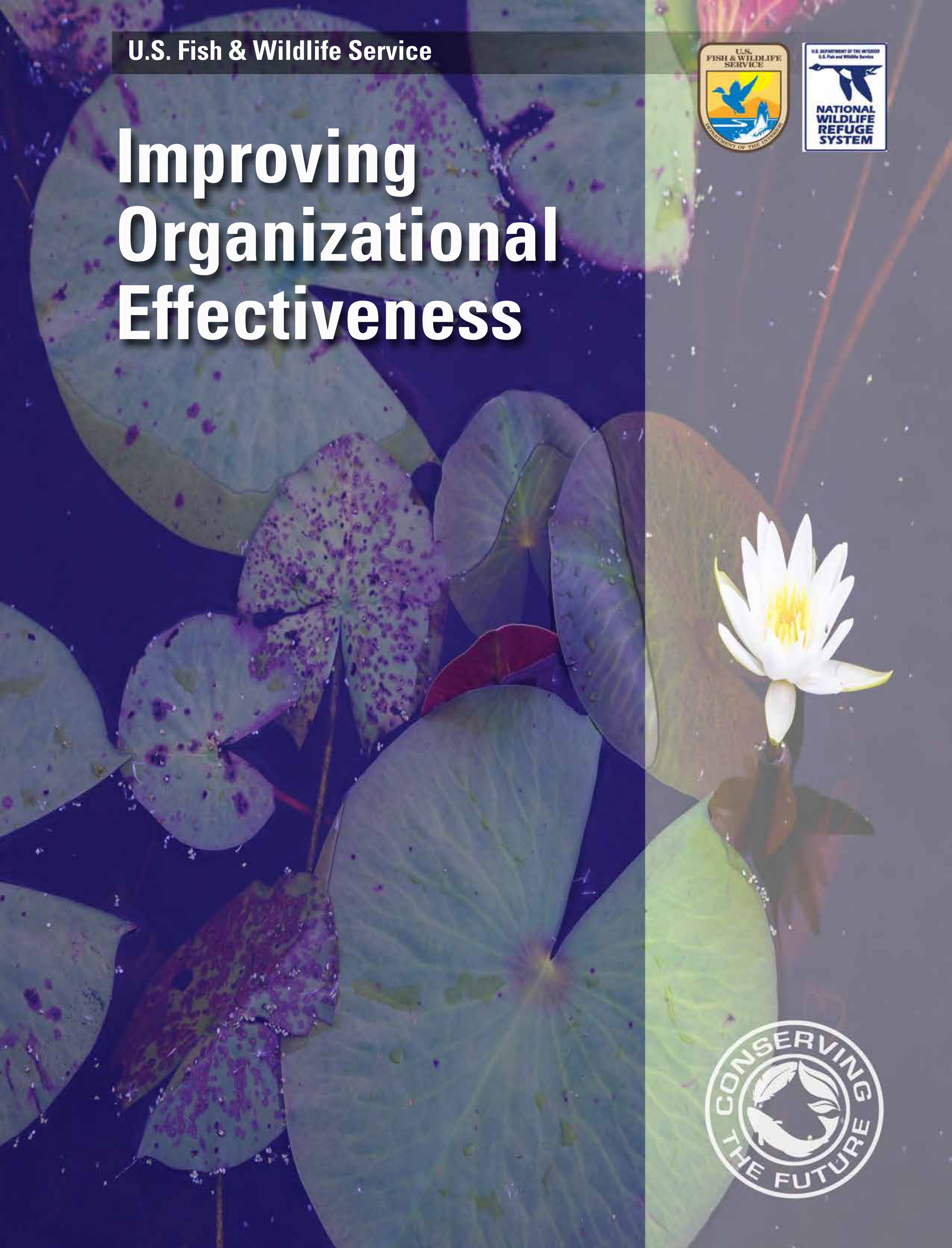
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Improving Organizational Effectiveness

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

CONSERVING THE FUTURE

Conserving the Future

Recommendation 21:

Improving Organizational Effectiveness

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conserving the Future provides recommendations to increase scientific capacity and excellence, connect the public with nature, and lead conservation into the future. Recommendation 21 specifically calls on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to “assemble an evaluation team consisting of Service and Refuge System leaders to report to the Service Directorate on opportunities for organizational realignments or programmatic efficiencies.” This paper is the product of that team – a group of people capable of leadership.

Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) is the primary framework for carrying out the Service’s mission, so one of the first issues the team examined was opportunities for efficiencies in implementing SHC. To fulfill our charge, we solicited input from Service colleagues on barriers to implementing SHC and to accomplishing the Service’s mission and suggestions for process and organizational structure improvements. We also investigated past reorganization and realignment efforts and compiled a report entitled *Learning from the Past and Looking to the Future: Lessons Learned from Past Reorganizations*.

In addition, over the past two decades the Service has invested in efforts to look at organizational efficiency such as the National Ecological Assessment Team (NEAT) report, the Management Systems International (MSI) review of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), and in-house programmatic reviews. There is little documentation of how many of these recommendations have been considered or implemented and what the results have been. Many of the recommendations our group developed are already identified in these previous reports, and we recommend following up on the NEAT report as a starting point for making progress on institutional changes that will increase agency effectiveness.

Our team's analysis builds on these past efforts, looks at current conditions, and identifies three primary areas for improvement: 1) create an environment and Service culture that better supports implementation of SHC principles; 2) enhance agency performance by focusing on accountability and follow-up; and 3) reduce administrative burdens by applying adaptive management principles to administrative functions.

Our team does not find evidence that the agency's current organizational structure is a primary impediment to using the SHC framework or to accomplishing the mission. Therefore, we do not provide recommendations for specific changes to the organizational structure. If organizational changes are considered in the future, we recommend they be based on a clear and compelling problem that can be clearly articulated, with specific goals and objectives and well-described sideboards. Examples of specific situations that could warrant changes to organizational structure include changes in budget resulting in a significant increase or decrease in staffing, changes in geographic areas of focus, opportunities created through development of partnerships with new constituencies, and changes in agency resource needs due to factors such as climate change or changing landscapes.

Rather than reorganizing, our team felt the agency could maximize efficiency by creating a more flexible and adaptive culture, and by streamlining administrative burdens that have a low payoff.

Key challenges within existing agency culture include:

- There is a tendency to be risk adverse and to avoid conflict, which leads to a loss of innovation and creativity. This outcome results in a failure to capitalize on the skills and talents present throughout all levels of the organization.
- There is a tendency to have inconsistent priorities at a field station or region, among field stations or regions, or over time. These mixed priorities have frequently contributed to changes in personnel.

- There are often unintended consequences when policy changes are implemented. For example, offices that independently and proactively make adjustments prior to national restrictions being implemented are actually penalized instead of rewarded when there is an across-the-board funding reduction.
- There is lack of follow-through and accountability. Employees may become disengaged when it is unclear what happens with work products they have created.
- Too often administrative burdens appear to exceed the benefits derived from implementing some administrative procedures.

Additional details are available in the full report.

Because most of the impediments we identified are culture-based, we are unable to provide simple solutions that will result in quick changes that rapidly improve efficiency. However, we have identified several key areas where we can make progress toward promoting a more flexible and adaptable culture that will allow employees to respond more rapidly to changing circumstances and better position the agency to move into the future. Developing a more flexible and adaptable culture Service-wide will require the personal commitment of senior authority figures throughout the Service.

Generally we recommend that the agency focus its efforts on: 1) promoting a culture that rewards innovation, promotes teamwork and sharing of resources, takes acceptable risks, sets priorities, uses adaptive management strategies, works in partnership with others, and provides a flexible work environment to fully implement SHC; 2) enhancing leadership through accountability and follow-up; and 3) improving the efficiency of administrative processes to meet agency needs while focusing resource expenditures on the highest priority: Service activities.

Promote a creative and flexible culture to better support the SHC framework:
Key organizational barriers that inhibit full implementation of SHC include: 1) programmatic funding and priority setting that impedes sharing resources and

committing to long-term projects; 2) annual funding allocations and focus on one-year accomplishments; and 3) disagreement on priorities leading to inconsistency, which leads to paralysis and the status quo. Without removing these impediments, the Service will continue to see programs disagree on SHC priorities, moving from crisis to crisis and missing opportunities to bring every Service asset to bear on the most-pressing conservation challenges. For example, without regional programs being in agreement on which species and needs are the highest priorities, adequate funding and cross-program leveraging may not be realized. Additionally, field station budgets fluctuate from year to year, hampering the ability to contribute, and maintain commitments to biological planning, conservation design and delivery, monitoring, and research.

Leadership and Accountability: In our examination we saw correlations between efficiencies and leadership from individuals, and accountability by supervisors. When either were lacking or inconsistently applied, projects or initiatives faltered. Organizations and their efforts are more efficient and successful when: All employees are encouraged and expected to exhibit leadership.

- Leadership skills factor into hiring selections and are fostered in all employees
- Purpose and need are articulated by senior authority figures in a clear and compelling way (vision)
- Stakeholders are involved in developing clear goals and objectives
- Quantitative methods are developed and used to measure results
- All employees hold themselves and colleagues accountable
- Consequences for lack of effort are described and deployed if needed

Administrative Efficiencies: Administrative burdens are unavoidable in government organizations, but at times the rigor of the administrative requirements is not commensurate with the benefits. We find that knowledge management and innovation are keys to reducing inefficiency in administration of organizations. For example, with a formal online system, information is available to increase efficiencies through the sharing and consistent use of best practices and supporting information. By connecting practitioners throughout the organization, ingenuity and innovation will undoubtedly increase across the board.

The full report discusses each of these three areas in detail and provides the following specific actions for all levels of the organization (individual employees, supervisors, and the Directorate):

- Promote a supportive culture that encourages working together, setting priorities, taking risks, being flexible, and sharing resources
- Fully implement the 2006 NEAT report recommendations
- Develop incentives for cross-programmatic implementation of SHC
- Analyze actions for possible unintended consequences
- Provide frequent communication at all levels
- Ensure every employee can clearly articulate his or her role relative to SHC
- Conduct 360° feedback loops/pulse checks for every employee
- Support staff in developing high-quality Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAPs)
- Incorporate facets of Adaptive Leadership™ and similar programs into existing leadership programs
- Perform field station inspections using a standard checklist
- Refine employee recruitment methodology to focus on adaptive skills
- Review and act on previous reports that recommended organizational change, and provide a status report of what has been accomplished and explain why if there was inaction

- Commit resources to develop a single, coherent structure for storage, dissemination, and sharing of information within the Service
    - Adopt ServCat
    - Develop a shared, easily accessed, editable forum
    - Encourage use of the General Operations Advisory Council (GOAC) suggestion reporting system
    - Require staff to use these systems to disseminate information
    - Develop metrics to ensure this objective is fulfilling its goal
- Adopt an annual user satisfaction evaluation process for key administrative systems
- Work with Budget and Administration Assistant Regional Director (ARDs) to encourage and reward innovation

In conclusion, we do not recommend changes to organizational structures. While reorganizations can create new vitality in an agency, in many situations other approaches can achieve the same results with less disruption. We believe the Service can achieve greater gains by focusing on a culture of accountability, adaptability, and innovation.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2011, the Service finalized 24 recommendations to increase scientific capacity and excellence, connect the public with nature, and lead conservation into the future. These were captured in the *Conserving the Future* Vision report. Our team focused on the third element, and specifically on Recommendation 21, which calls on the Service to "assemble an evaluation team consisting of Service and National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) leaders to report to the Service Directorate on opportunities for organizational realignments or programmatic efficiencies."

A diverse team of individuals representing a broad array of backgrounds and experience was brought together to address this issue. This report is the product of that team. Team members were: Keenan Adams, Susan Alexander, Tina Ballard, Sabrina Chandler, Jimmy Fox, Kofi Fynn-Aikins, Glenn Gibson, Jana Grote, Thomas Harvey, Todd Logan, and Rebekah Martin.

Because Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) is the management framework of the agency, the team decided to focus on organizational barriers that may hinder more robust implementation of SHC. In addition, we solicited input from Service colleagues on barriers to accomplishing the Service's mission and suggestions for process and organizational structure improvements. We also investigated and compiled past reorganization and realignment efforts and provided a separate analysis entitled *Lessons Learned from Past Reorganizations* (Appendix A).

In addition, over the past two decades the Service has investigated organizational efficiency (e.g., the report of the National Ecological Assessment Team (NEAT), Management Systems International's (MSI) review of the NWRS, and in-house programmatic reviews). There is little documentation of how many of these recommendations have been considered or implemented and what the results have been. Many of the recommendations our group developed are already identified in these previous reports, and we recommend following up on the NEAT report as a starting point for making progress on institutional changes that will increase agency effectiveness.

Our team's analysis builds on these past efforts and identifies three primary areas for improvement: 1) agency culture is inhibiting full implementation of SHC; 2) lack of leadership and accountability impedes the Service's ability to accomplish its mission; and 3) inefficiencies in administrative processes must be reduced by applying adaptive management principles to administrative functions.

REMOVING ORGANIZATIONAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING SHC

The first key area to improve organizational effectiveness within the Service is identifying and removing barriers to fully implementing SHC. In 2006 the Service endorsed SHC as the conservation approach it would use to achieve its mission in the 21st century. In response to the unprecedented scale and complexity of challenges facing the nation's natural resources, agency authority figures saw the need to develop and implement a landscape approach to conservation that was more strategic, science-driven, collaborative, adaptive, and understandable.

Therefore, as part of implementing Recommendation 21, we particularly sought to determine if there are alternative organizational structures or program changes that would enable the Service to more effectively carry out SHC. As a result of this review, we provide recommendations for addressing barriers to more rigorous implementation.

To be fully successful at implementing SHC the Service needs to: a) refine how it integrates with the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) and other partners; b) develop new approaches to setting priorities; c) ensure that funding is aligned with long-term, broad-scale conservation goals; d) address critical conservation needs that may not fit into the SHC model; e) change agency accomplishment reporting processes to recognize the value of long-term initiatives; and f) communicate internally and externally on the importance of taking a broad-scale, long-term approach that can make it difficult to show year-to-year success.

We also looked at the *Ecosystem Approach* model the Service adopted in early 1994 for lessons relative to SHC implementation. The *Ecosystem Approach* delineated 53 watershed-based ecosystem units around which to mobilize staff resources, organize budgets, and help break down program barriers. Looking back at the agency's *Ecosystem Approach* is useful for identifying strategies that worked well and those that created additional obstacles (see Appendix B for details).

We also conducted a review of the literature to better understand the types of factors that become organizational barriers. Organizational barriers are anything that impedes job accomplishment. They can range from physical items such as not having the necessary tools, to individual or group attitudes or perceptions that may not be based on facts. Common organizational barriers within the Service include lack of communication, inefficient bureaucracy associated with a culture of increasing documentation and administrative accountability, limited financial resources, and disagreement about approaches to accomplishing resource conservation. Although we have little control over funding shortfalls and some administrative requirements, we do control what we think and what we do. Therefore, there are opportunities to make shifts in the culture of the Service to reduce or remove existing barriers to ensure more effective implementation of SHC.

Specific barriers to SHC implementation were identified through discussions with Service employees, comments provided on the surrogate species approach, and a survey conducted by the *Conserving the Future* Planning Implementation Team. In addition, the Leadership Development Committee and the Human Dimensions Division within the Natural Resource Program Center are conducting a workforce assessment through the lens of SHC; and the Species Conservation at Landscape Scales group is covering the technical expertise, communications, management, and training needed to support SHC.

Primary organizational barriers to more fully integrate SHC in the work of the Service include:

Programmatic budgets and priorities: Because funding and priorities are established programmatically, it is challenging to share resources across programs or to guarantee funding commitments for long-term projects that will require additional funding each year. Many of the funding sources available to a station – such as inventory and monitoring funding, invasive species funding, and cooperative recovery funding – are distributed on an annual or competitive basis, and a field station is not guaranteed it will have funding in those areas to commit to projects that extend more than one year. Frequently changing priorities also make it challenging to make long-term commitments. Because stations often must compete for funds, they have to make decisions on what activities to undertake each year based on current funding initiatives. These decisions are often dependent on the individuals involved in the project; priorities and commitments frequently change as individuals leave or when there are changes in senior managers at a station.

Annual accomplishment reporting: The emphasis on being able to demonstrate significant short-term results and on using annual accomplishments in resource allocation decisions impedes long-range thinking and planning. Depending on the species, positively influencing status or trends takes years or even decades. Because budgets are allocated annually, there is a tendency to focus on short-term accomplishments that, while beneficial, may not maximize conservation benefits. When programs do work together, there are challenges in determining who gets to “claim the credit” in the annual accomplishment reports. Additionally, different programs may report accomplishments using different metrics, which makes data sharing and accountability challenging. For example, with a habitat restoration project, one program may allow the project to be counted when funding is obligated, while another program may require that the project be completed in order to be credited. Some programs allow credit for multiple types of treatment on a single property, whereas others allow multiple activities on a property to be counted just once. On a large landscape, a restoration project could be ongoing for years or even decades, making it difficult to determine which accomplishments should be reported when.

Inconsistent approaches: There is not a unified vision for how to accomplish resource conservation. Some employees believe that focusing on habitat is the key to successful conservation; others believe that focusing on individual species is the most effective; and still others think focusing on assemblages is the best approach. Successful conservation likely depends on a combination of approaches, depending on the situation. Because there are different opinions on how best to achieve conservation, the natural tendency is to maintain the status quo rather than undertake the difficult task of developing a consistent, unified vision for approaching conservation.

Inadequate scientific capacity: The SHC framework has a strong scientific basis and requires specialized expertise. Redirection of funds from the field to establish LCCs may actually have created barriers to full implementation of SHC. The NEAT report identified additional capacities that would be needed to implement SHC, particularly the ability to do conservation design using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and predictive modeling. Yet the conservation design capacity of the agency decreased with the advent of LCCs, as funding and staff with design expertise moved out of programs and into the newly created Science Applications program, whose primary customers are the LCC members. This shrinkage of scientific capacity at the field is a very real barrier to implementing SHC and is reminiscent of the problems identified when science capacity for the Service was moved to United States Geological Survey (USGS) in 2004. There should be a concerted effort to have LCCs provide conservation design needs for the agency.

Insufficient funding: Full implementation of all aspects of the SHC framework requires substantial funding for planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and assessment. A sound SHC approach requires adequate funding for all elements of the SHC framework. Outcome-based monitoring can require extensive fieldwork involving personnel, equipment, travel, and training costs. An imbalance in one part of the framework due to inadequate resources negatively impacts the overall result.

Combined, these barriers significantly inhibit the Service's ability to fully integrate SHC in its work. Unless these impediments are removed, the Service will continue to see programs disagree on SHC priorities, operate reactively responding to crisis after crisis, and miss opportunities to bring every Service asset to bear on the most pressing conservation challenges.

ORGANIZATIONAL/CULTURAL BARRIERS – SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Addressing barriers to organizational effectiveness requires consistency. Clearly establishing a common goal and vision and incorporating affected employees into the process can help make the transition occur more smoothly. While there are substantial barriers to fully implementing SHC, our team did not identify any specific organizational structures that are barriers to SHC implementation. Before initiating organizational realignments, we recommend accomplishing the specific actions identified below.

Promote a supportive culture: No organizational structure is likely to be fully successful without a culture that promotes working together, setting priorities, taking risks, being flexible, and sharing resources. To implement actions in new ways requires innovation and acceptance of risk through experiential learning. Having a culture that has a common vision but allows for local flexibility and considers partner goals and objectives will enhance agency effectiveness. At times the Service will also need to take the lead to move forward on conservation actions even when there is disagreement among partners or the public on the best approach.

Implement the 2006 NEAT report: This report laid the foundation for the agency to move to the SHC model and recommended a number of actions. In the first years after release of the report, implementation teams monitored progress and guided accomplishments. However, the teams eventually stopped meeting, and there has been little documentation of any follow-up action. What is needed now is to establish clear roles and responsibilities for implementing the NEAT report. Form a team to review the report and describe what has been accomplished. Review the goals and objectives and prepare a strategic plan with updated goals and objectives. If recommendations from the report are not going to be implemented, identify them and explain why.

Develop incentives for cross-programmatic implementation of SHC: Provide funding, metrics, and accountability for cross-programmatic implementation of SHC. Recognize that changing the status and trends of living organisms can be multigenerational, and thus final outcomes can take years or even decades. Develop ways to record annual accomplishments that support initiatives that may take longer but result in more significant conservation benefits.

Analyze actions for possible unintended consequences: At times, agency actions can have unintended consequences that discourage employees from being proactive immediately or in the future. For example, across-the-board reductions in travel or administrative expenditures have a disproportionately adverse impact on those stations that have already reduced travel and administrative costs on their own initiative. While it is not possible to predict all possible outcomes of a decision, managers can reduce negative incentives by being flexible and tailoring solutions when possible.

Provide frequent communication at all levels: There has been progress on communications, both internal and external, on the social and political aspects of dealing with a changing landscape and myriad resource challenges. To maintain momentum, continue to use social media and oral and written communications, both within the agency and with partners. Encourage use of the National Conservation Training Center's human dimensions education program to help employees understand and value the human dimension aspects of agency responsibilities.

Ensure roles relative to SHC can be clearly articulated: For SHC to be a mainstreamed component of the Service's culture, it is important that all employees in the agency be able to identify what SHC is, why it is important, and how their specific job supports the SHC framework. From the Director through the supervisory hierarchy, the messages should be conveyed consistently in ongoing discussions with their employees to make sure that everyone can explain how they fit into the SHC culture.

By accomplishing these actions, the Service will effectively remove the major barriers to full implementation of SHC, improve its ability to respond to large-scale and complex natural resource challenges, and maximize its potential to achieve significant conservation accomplishments.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The second key opportunity to improve organizational effectiveness within the Service is providing strong leadership. Strong leadership is facilitated by an effective culture of accountability and follow-through. This kind of leadership not only provides a vision and direction for the agency but, by staying actively engaged, ensures incorporation of diverse ideas and viewpoints, keeps the agency focused on the highest priorities, accepts appropriate risks, and maximizes employee productivity.

When considering opportunities for programmatic efficiencies and evaluating past efforts within the Service, we found a consistent theme: inconsistent leadership and inconsistent supervision and accountability. To reduce or eliminate organizational inefficiencies within the Service, senior authority figures must first address and resolve these core issues.

There has been no shortage of good ideas presented to improve efficiencies in the Service. From system-wide analyses such as MSI's evaluation of the NWRS and the *Fulfilling the Promise* vision report published in 1999 to individual program reviews, many recommendations for organizational improvements have been identified. However, there appears to have been limited follow-through on many of these efficiency recommendations. What seems to be lacking is a process of ushering those ideas through evaluation, explanation, and full implementation. These important steps can and should occur at the individual, supervisory, and Directorate level.

A key step that is repeatedly missed, based on our research of past organizational efforts, is an explanation of why recommendations from workgroups are not fully implemented. If follow-through with a recommendation determines that it will not work or that pieces are missing, the agency should not just drop it. Instead, provide an explanation so that others can learn why it wouldn't work and continue to explore alternate ways to address the issue. Considerable time and money go into developing reports and recommendations. Therefore, lack of evaluation, explanation, and/or implementation can create disenchantment among employees involved in these processes.

There are many levels of accountability within an organization. Each level relies on the others, ultimately creating an all-inclusive, highly functional, and smoothly performing organization. Without effective accountability at every level, organizations flounder and struggle and never realize their full potential. For purposes of this report, we define three levels of accountability and roles within the Service: Individual, Supervisor, and Directorate.

Individual: Employees need to first look within themselves to begin the process of ensuring accountability, and then proceed to assist and encourage others.

Supervisors and Directorate: Supervisors need to hold their employees accountable, which will increase efficiency in the workplace. They must not accept or ignore conduct or performance issues. Supervisors must also be clear about priorities and provide necessary direction. Ultimate accountability requires ownership and tenacious implementation from senior authority figures.

Once the commitment has been made to proceed with implementing recommendations, there are a number of ways to ensure accountability throughout all levels of the Service. Some may apply to only one level of the Service, while others may apply at multiple levels. Listed below are a few examples of ways to build a culture of accountability within the Service. Levels of accountability are in parentheses.

- Hold ourselves and each other responsible for action and achieving results (All)
- Provide clear goals and objectives, with clear expectations (Supervisors and Directorate)
- Provide a vision for the future – explain the "Why" (Supervisors and Directorate)
- Exhibit leadership skills (Supervisors and Directorate)
- Do not limit leadership to only senior authority figures (All)
- Prescribe quantitative methods to measure results (All)

- Ensure consequences for lack of effort, not lack of success (All)
- Recruit, develop, support, and retain individuals with leadership skills, not just technical skills (another *Vision* team for Workforce Planning is developing recommendations) (Supervisors and Directorate)

How to Achieve Greater Leadership throughout the Service?

To instill a desire for Service employees to hold themselves and others accountable, empower them and show them the scale of positive impacts they can have by implementing even a small change. Promote a culture that understands that getting things done and done well often requires emotional intelligence and acts of leadership as well as technical competence. Simple changes in how an employee interacts with others can help him or her accomplish more and lead to a more efficient organization. We offer several recommendations below – including some from the National Conservation Leadership Institute, Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, and the Cambridge Leadership Associate’s Adaptive Leadership™ training – and suggest their dissemination to employees as a way to encourage acts of leadership.

Supervisors exhibit leadership and accountability by doing all of the above and the following:

disappoint subordinates and senior managers at a rate they can tolerate;
set high standards through words and actions;
acknowledge employees' loss during change events;
challenge and encourage employees;
create an environment where employees may speak freely;
give appropriate autonomy and authority to employees;
create meaningful and powerful EPAPs and IDPs that are clear and measureable;
be flexible yet firm;
provide meaningful feedback;
encourage feedback and evaluation both anonymously and otherwise;
reward performance;
keep allies to help them get a better picture of challenges;
keep confidants to tell them what they don't want to hear;
call upon subordinates to connect with something larger than themselves;
address issues promptly;
trust but verify;
provide formal and informal leadership training;
be consistent, particularly with disciplinary and corrective actions;
do not reward poor performance; and
do not pass along or promote "problems"; take corrective or disciplinary actions no matter how uncomfortable.

In addition to the actions above, **the Directorate** can exhibit leadership and increase accountability in the following ways:

recognize the difference between technical problems and adaptive challenges;
communicate more than believed necessary;
pace the rate of change – with no distress there is no incentive but too much and revolt is possible;
place the "work" where it belongs (people with the problem must develop the solution);
share observations when change bogs down;
be deliberate and calm, never defensive;
remember that service is expected when power is granted;
be cognizant that power silences input from subordinates;
model the behavior that is expected of all employees;
articulate why employees must do the things they believe they cannot;
commit to make recommended organizational changes;
establish goals and objectives and metrics for change actions;
be willing to accept risks associated with employees trying to new things;
set timelines for implementation and adhere to them; and
be transparent when (and why) recommendations are not implemented.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY – SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Although there is no surefire way to ensure full accountability and leadership throughout the agency, there are some fairly simple fixes that will start the agency on the right path. As employees begin on that path, they will realize that some things work better than others, and they will come up with additional methods. As this process unfolds, we must be sure to follow through with the suggestions posed previously in this chapter to ensure accountability. Below are a few recommendations:

Conduct 360° feedback loops/pulse checks for every employee: All employees would benefit from understanding how they are perceived by their peers and others with whom they work. By obtaining regular feedback, employees can take a more active role in adopting behaviors that are most likely to be successful in achieving resource goals.

Support staff in developing high-quality IDPs and EPAPs: The Service has had guidance in place for IDPs and EPAPs for several years, but there is still inconsistency in implementation. Additional training can help make better use of these tools and facilitate conversations between employees and their supervisors, so consider development of a simple online course on how to develop them.

Incorporate facets of Adaptive Leadership™ into existing leadership programs: This program contains sound principles for how all employees can provide leadership from all levels of the organization. Understanding that many challenges are adaptive (requiring emotional intelligence) and not technical in nature will lead to greater efficiencies because employees will spend less time and money hoping that more data will solve agency problems. This awareness should lead to more time invested in relationship building.

Perform field station inspections using a standard checklist: Regular feedback is critical to changing behaviors and promoting new approaches. Having a regular check-in promotes good communication, an opportunity to recognize beneficial practices, a chance to redirect practices that may be less beneficial, and the ability to share and innovate.

Refine employee recruitment methodology to focus on adaptive skills: Workforce requirements are shifting with changes in information management and technology. Opportunities to deal with diverse constituencies are increasing, while new approaches are constantly being developed, and rates of change associated with developments such as climate change and invasive species expansion are unprecedented. These changes require new sets of skills that go beyond scientific technical competency and expand into areas such as emotional intelligence and social skill sets. (This issue is partly addressed in a separate report by the Workforce Assessment Team.)

Review previous reports that recommended organizational change, provide a status of what has been accomplished, and if a recommendation was not implemented, explain why: For employees to be most fully engaged, they need to know that their input is important and will be used to make a difference. Following up on past recommendations will likely increase future employee engagement. Most employees recognize that decisions will not always directly support their individual ideas, but they are more likely to support outcomes when they know their views were fully considered.

ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES

The third key opportunity to improve organizational effectiveness within the Service involves reducing administrative burdens throughout the organization. Increases in administrative efficiency are especially valuable in this time of declining budgets, as they free up time, resources, and funding for critical natural resource work. The volume and complexity of administrative duties have increased substantially over the past decade in response to calls for increased data gathering and legislative and executive branch accountability. By applying adaptive management principles to administrative functions, employees can achieve long-term improvement in agency performance in this area.

As part of our analysis, we reviewed past efforts at increased efficiency and compiled a list of perceived inefficiencies within the Service, based on team input and informal surveys. (Proposed disposition of items on that list is discussed in Appendix D.) Our review of this material pointed to an opportunity to achieve greater efficiency in the Service's administrative functions. While some administrative requirements are beyond the Service's control, we feel significant progress can be made. The nature of administrative functions is such that major improvements can most effectively be accomplished on a Service-wide, national scale.

Our recommendations are:

- based on issues and themes noted in the list of current administrative inefficiencies compiled by the team
- provided to follow up on recommendations from prior efficiency initiatives (for more detail, see Appendix E)
- grounded in our collective work experience
- designed to yield the greatest benefit for the effort expended

To achieve the goal of greater administrative efficiencies, we focused on two primary areas: knowledge management and innovation for greater efficiency. We identified several specific actions for improvement in these areas. We encourage the NWRS Leadership Team to forward these recommendations to the General Operations Advisory Council (GOAC) for evaluation, further development, and implementation.

Knowledge Management

Current State – The need for better management of information and institutional knowledge was a primary concern noted in the MSI evaluation of the NWRS in the area of organizational excellence (see Appendix E). The report stated that "there is not a formalized system to identify best practices, to share knowledge, or to routinely bring together practitioners around common topics. … The NWRS does not have an effective information archive or document management system, which makes it difficult for staff to access the information that does exist." Since the time of that report, progress has been made in some areas – for instance, the development of SharePoint sites and the community of practice forum in the *VS Connect* site for Visitor Services. However, available resources are still scattered, inconsistent, and confusing. Some information is still not available or is not easy to find.

Desired State – The Service would benefit from a single, coherent, online system for storing, disseminating, and sharing information. While allowing for the varying needs of different programs, this system should have a central structure and search capability to reduce the time wasted searching multiple sites or creating dozens of "favorites."

Specifically, policy and other key documents should be housed in an electronic library with a simple, flexible search capability. Superseded and obsolete documents should be noted as such and retained in an archive. Email should be used not to provide employees with copies of new policy documents for their files, but to inform them of the existence of the new policy and its location in the electronic library. Effective forums and information-sharing mechanisms should also exist within this structure to capture and share best-management practices and other innovations (see more under "Innovation" below).

Innovations for Greater Efficiency

Current State – Innovation in administrative efficiency is happening all across the Service, but is not systematically captured and shared. Those most likely to positively influence innovation in this arena – Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) for Budget and Administration – do not appear to be consistently encouraged to innovate, nor are they rewarded for doing so.

Desired State – The online knowledge management system described above should include simple, effective mechanisms to share best-management practices and to capture, test, and implement suggestions for Service-wide innovations that simplify and streamline work. Suggestions made via this system should be efficiently routed to the most appropriate individual or group for consideration. Employees across the Service should be motivated to use this system because they find valuable guidance there, and because they routinely receive news of improvements made via the system. In addition, ARD for Budget and Administration should be actively and consistently encouraged to innovate and to support genuine innovations proposed by their staffs and by program personnel in the interest of greater efficiency.

ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES – SPECIFIC ACTIONS

The following actions have been identified as the basis for an adaptive management strategy to address administrative inefficiencies:

Commit resources to develop a single, coherent structure for storage, dissemination, and sharing of information within the Service:

An overall system owner should be designated for this knowledge management system to ensure efficient system management, but program leads should be responsible for content management of their portion of the system. We realize that parts of this system exist and/or are under development, but we believe that bringing those disparate parts together into a single, easy-to-use system is essential. Here is what we recommend:

a. Adopt the Service Catalog or ServCat to serve as an electronic library for all final policy documents with simple, flexible search capability, and as an archive of superseded and obsolete policy documents with appropriate references to current policy. Other key documents, such as Solicitor's Opinions, Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, etc., should be included in this library as well. We recommend using the ServCat library administered by the Natural Resource Program Center for this purpose.

b. Develop a shared easily accessed, editable forum for sharing best management practices. This portion of the system would function as a community of practice for the entire organization, not just for administrative functions. This electronic forum would allow users to share innovations that could be put into practice by individuals in their day-to-day work. Documents that tend to be more flexible with time, such as user guides and manuals, should be included here. The forum should be easily searchable by topic and allow users to flag particularly helpful tips, similar to the way online product reviews allow users to rate the helpfulness of individual reviews. Crowdsourcing is a new and innovative method to economically arrive at collaboration and best practices. However, the success of a shared, editable forum will highly depend on having dedicated staff to administer, operate, and update the software.

c. Encourage use of the GOAC suggestion reporting system**.** The existing "SAVE" suggestion box is an effective avenue for Service employees to submit efficiency recommendations for consideration by managers of administrative systems or by the GOAC itself. Although there has been a concerted effort to inform employees of the existence and purpose of the GOAC, many are still unaware of it or unsure as to its purpose and function. We encourage the GOAC to engage in a continuing in-reach effort to ensure that "GOAC" is a household word among Service employees. The unfortunate reality in today's information-rich environment is that a sustained effort is necessary to be noticed above the background noise and competing demands. The GOAC suggestion box link should continue to have a prominent location within the Service knowledge management system (as it currently does on InsideFWS), but we believe it would be more likely to be used if the GOAC portal included some basic information about the GOAC itself. We also encourage the GOAC to provide regular reports to employees to highlight improvements made as a result of suggestions submitted.

d. Require headquarters and regional staff to use these systems to disseminate new regional and national policy documents**.** Rather than conveying copies of new policy, email should be used to inform staff of the location of policy documents within the system.

e. Develop metrics to annually verify that this objective is fulfilling the goal of greater administrative efficiencies.

f. Hire one Full-Time Employee (FTE) to manage the single, coherent structure for storage. This FTE will work with headquarters and regional staff to effectively input data on this site so that information is easily found by others and the site has a consistent format and appearance.

Adopt an annual user satisfaction evaluation process for key administrative systems: Conduct an annual formal assessment of user satisfaction with key systems (e.g., QuickTime, Concur, procurement, etc.) to enable the Service to evaluate whether progress is being made in improving these systems. This evaluation should include the knowledge management system itself. Develop metrics to annually verify that this objective is fulfilling the goal of greater administrative efficiencies.

Formally encourage and reward innovation for all Budget and Administration ARDs: Include in the performance plans of all ARDs for Budget and Administration a critical element that addresses: 1) responsiveness to recommendations made via the electronic suggestion box, and

2) overall innovation and improvements in administrative efficiency. Develop metrics to annually verify that this objective is fulfilling the goal of greater administrative efficiencies.

CONCLUSION

Based on our analysis, the team is not recommending changes to organizational structures or realignments. Reorganization is most effective when the need is compelling and it is done in response to specific goals or objectives. While reorganizations can create new vitality in an agency, in many situations other approaches can achieve the same results with less disruption. We recommend that the Service improve organizational efficiency and remove barriers by: 1) promoting an agency culture that rewards innovation, promotes working together and sharing of resources, takes acceptable risks, sets priorities, uses adaptive management strategies, works in partnership with others, and provides a flexible work environment to fully implement SHC; 2) enhancing leadership through accountability and follow-up; and 3) improving the efficiency of administrative processes to meet administrative needs while focusing resources expenditures on the highest-priority Service activities.

APPENDIX A:
Lessons Learned from Past Reorganizations

The prospect of reorganization typically elicits strong reactions from those likely to be affected. Reorganizations can revitalize the workforce, promote efficiencies, refine and refocus missions, and take organizations in a new direction. However, when poorly implemented, reorganization can have the opposite effect, as reflected in a quote widely attributed to the Roman author Petronius (c26-66 AD), but possibly of more modern origin (Charlton Ogburn, 1911-1998):

> "We trained hard … but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization."

Given this dichotomy in views and outcomes, our organizational efficiency team sought to determine if there were specific factors common to reorganizations or programmatic realignments that result in positive outcomes. As quoted by George Santayana, the 20th century philosopher and essayist, "*those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*" To avoid that costly mistake, we began by analyzing 12 previous governmental organizational or efficiency efforts. Our methods included conducting interviews with managers and field staff directly involved in these efforts, examining Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviews and congressional testimony, and reviewing any available written reports or other documents. A brief overview of the 12 efforts we analyzed is contained in Appendix A.

Because there were not well-defined metrics for most of these efforts, identification of an effort as "successful" or "not successful" was highly subjective, and opinions varied widely depending on a person's role and position in the organization. Even though there was seldom a formal evaluation of the results, commonalities arose that significantly impacted people's perception of how successful the effort had been. We believe these themes provide helpful direction for implementing future successful reorganization or realignment models. We recommend that any future reorganization or realignment efforts incorporate all of these components to improve the likelihood of success.

THEMES OF SUCCESS

Describe a Clear and Compelling Problem

In examples of successful reorganization efforts, organizers of the process described a clear and compelling problem or need that the effort was designed to resolve or address. The urgency, significance, and need created by the problem were clearly articulated from the beginning. For example, the combination of Region 2 and Region 4 Human Resource Offices, largely viewed as a success, clearly set forth the problem the consolidation was intended to resolve: HR support in one region had excellent customer service, while help was needed to improve customer service in the second region. Unsuccessful efforts either failed to identify a problem or only vaguely identified one. Examples showed that the clearer the initial description of the problem, the easier it was to achieve all of the components described below.

Scale the Solution to the Problem

Often when designing reorganization efforts, the people involved are inclined to create a solution that is much larger than the problem at hand. For example, when the Department of the Interior (DOI) sought to improve key functions and oversight in the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), managers contemplated consolidating all of the agencies involved. However, it is critical to the success of an effort to scale the solution to fit the problem. In the OSM example, the department decided not to merge the agencies, but instead to share functions that would address their specific goals. In essence, the solution was scaled to the existing problem rather than expanding and encompassing items extraneous to the problem. Similarly, the Service found that creating the Geographic/Programmatic Assistant Regional Director (GARD/PARD) structure added unnecessary complexity and confusion that detracted from the organization's ability to support ecosystem teams. Future reorganization efforts should diligently seek to scale the solution to fit the problem that has been articulated.

Set Clear and Specific Goals and Objectives

Reorganization efforts that were categorized as successful all included the setting of clear and specific goals and objectives. Examples of this included reducing budgets by 25 percent, decreasing personnel by 10 percent, and increasing response time to less than 15 minutes. The clear and specific goals and objectives were all measurable. Efforts that were categorized as unsuccessful either lacked goals and objectives entirely or set ambiguous targets that were not measurable. Examples of ambiguous goals included "streamlining processes," "flattening layers of supervision," and "increasing efficiency." While all of these seem to be worthy undertakings, the vagueness, ambiguity, and immeasurability of the goals contributed to the failure of the efforts. Future reorganization efforts must be based on clear, specific, and measurable goals and objectives.

Establish Clear Sideboards for the Process

Individuals who were involved in both successful and unsuccessful efforts commented that clear sideboards for the reorganization process should be established in the beginning. In the Region 4 workforce planning example, individuals interviewed said they had recommended establishing sideboards such as whether offices could be closed. Sideboards should also define specific roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved, timelines for completion, and identification of any teams that are created to assist in the process.

Demonstrate Transparency and Communication

Perhaps the most important component of successful reorganization efforts was the attention paid to social and political aspects throughout the process. Unsuccessful efforts were consistently described as “closed” and “secretive” processes that involved only a small number of participants. In these examples, people felt that the final decision was largely made before employees, partners, and others were aware the effort had begun. This led to low morale throughout the affected organizational levels, lack of support by the majority of affected individuals, and ultimately unsuccessful efforts.

In contrast, successful efforts were transparent processes that offered opportunities for input by interested parties. We recognize that reorganization teams will need the ability to work in privacy. However, being transparent about the problem, the specific goals and objectives, the process being used to design a solution, and any opportunities for input will give the effort a greater chance of success.

Transparency throughout the process involves continual communication that keeps affected parties aware and knowledgeable about the effort. In unsuccessful efforts, the lack of information bred distrust, frustration, and the spread of false information. In all of those examples, organizers of the efforts struggled to establish clarity and effective communication.

Authority figures must also be consistent in the message that is being communicated regarding the effort and the actions being taken in the process. Several unsuccessful reorganization efforts provided examples of discrepancies between the message that was being delivered and what was actually being done. In each situation, the discrepancy led to significant issues related to trust, morale, and future support of the effort. Successful efforts ensured that the messages being communicated and the actions being taken were completely aligned. Future efforts should also demand the alignment of messages and actions.

Apply Adaptive Management

Understanding how changes in one part of the organization can have unintended consequences on other parts is critical. While the U.S. Forest Service's consolidation of administrative functions did result in decreased expense for personnel in the administrative program, it significantly increased the administrative burden for thousands of field staff, resulting in inefficiencies in field operations throughout the system. This required an adaptation in which some administrative functions are being returned to the field.

In another example, zone management can be very efficient, but if poorly implemented can result in a lack of oversight. The keystone is the zone supervisor and strong personnel within the zone. If a strong authority figure with good communication and interpersonal skills is in place, success can be accomplished. But a lack of leadership, bad people skills, poorly placed supervisor, or inadequate resources can create high inefficiency and neglect. Zoning services does not necessarily equal "centralization." In many cases, centralization may result in less service to the service area (zone). By being sensitive to possible outcomes and ensuring regular dialog, reorganizations can monitor for negative impacts and take actions to correct them.

Ensure Follow-Up and Accountability

Setting clear and specific goals and objectives enabled managers involved in successful efforts to also establish an effective system of measuring results and providing oversight of the effort. Successful efforts clearly identified individuals or groups of individuals responsible for monitoring the outcomes of the efforts, based on the goals and objectives. Measurable objectives were also established in these cases and were used to assess progress in achieving the goals and objectives. Unsuccessful efforts failed to establish any metrics for measuring progress or to identify where responsibility for oversight fell within the organization. The lack of follow-up and accountability in these efforts significantly contributed to their dismantling. Future reorganization efforts must identify individuals or teams who will oversee the reorganization, be responsible for measuring – based on the established goals and objectives – the progress and results of the effort, and hold all levels of the organization accountable for making or not making progress in reaching those goals.

Conclusion

Reorganizations or realignments can have powerful payoffs when carefully implemented, but should not be entered into lightly. By utilizing good communication and following the basic tenets of a structured decision-making process by clearly defining the problem, identifying specific objectives, developing an array of alternatives, and comparing consequences and tradeoffs of the alternatives, managers can effectively consider whether reorganization and realignment will better help employees achieve the Service's mission. Many examples within and outside the agency are available to help.

Appendix A

Summary of Past Reorganization/Realignment Efforts

Ecosystem Approach and Geographic and Programmatic Reorganization

The Service formally embraced an ecosystem approach to fish and wildlife conservation in early 1994. To emphasize this change in focus, the Service established cross-program ecosystem teams for 53 watershed-based units around which to mobilize staff resources, organize budgets, and help break down program barriers. In late 1996 the Service reorganized "to better support ecosystem teams." Most prominently, Assistant Regional Director (ARD) positions were restructured, shifting them from their traditional programmatic focus to a geographic focus. Offices were aggregated geographically, regardless of program, and supervised by a Geographic ARD (GARD). However, since policy and budgets exist programmatically in the Service, each GARD was also assigned a single program responsibility in addition to supervision of a suite of cross-program offices.

Goal: To contribute to the effective conservation of natural biological diversity through perpetuation of dynamic healthy ecosystems.

Outcome: In 1997 the Service contracted with Ohio State University to assess the approach because the agency believed it wasn't achieving desired results.

Key findings included:

> "The implementation of GARDs as middle managers in the Service was seen as hindering the ability of the Service to achieve its mission. Loss of technical expertise and creation of policy inconsistencies were of particular concern to employees. … Employees also desired more consistency among the regional organizations, and between the regional and Washington structures. It was strongly recommended that Ecosystem Teams remain active."

Even though the assessment identified concerns, in 1998 the Service continued with a geographic organizational structure and added a second suite of ARDs to handle programmatic responsibilities (PARD). While this resolved some workload issues, it created an expensive, much-expanded bureaucracy in the regional offices and still left all the problems of trying to run a program-based organization via cross-program geographic supervision. In June 2000 the Service found that while Service employees "clearly ... support the ecosystem approach", they find the PARD/GARD organization "complex ... and do not feel it adds to accomplishment of the Service's mission."

Despite the support for, and apparent effectiveness of, many of the original cross-program ecosystem teams, they largely vanished over time. In part, this may have occurred because of the attempt to create an ecosystem program encumbered by bureaucratic process rather than recognizing the ecosystem approach as a philosophy of how to accomplish resource objectives.

References:

1) Beattie, M. (1996). An Ecosystem Approach to Fish and Wildlife Conservation. Ecological Applications, 6, (pp. 696-699).

2) Christensen, J. E., Mullins, G.W., Danter, K. J., Norland, E., and Griest, D.L. (1998). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Approach to Ecosystem Conservation: An Assessment by Ohio State University.

3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2000). Fish and Wildlife News – May-June 2000.

4) Personal communication with regional and headquarters leadership.

Forest Service Administrative Function Centralization

In 2006 the Forest Service centralized the operations of three major business service programs in Albuquerque, NM: (1) budget and finance, (2) human resources (HR) management, and (3) information technology (IT).

Goals: To streamline and improve operations, address negative audit findings, and reduce costs.

Outcome: Audit findings were addressed and GAO found that the HR and IT centralization had significant negative impacts on field operations. Cost savings were likely substantially less than anticipated, but it was impossible to document due to inconsistent baseline data and unclear assumptions.

Reference: GAO Report - FS Business Services Centralization, http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-769.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Engineering Review (2007-2009)

On October 23, 2007, the Service Director asked an interdisciplinary team to prepare a comprehensive review of the Service's engineering organization.

Goals: To have an effective engineering program that incorporates the goals of 1) leading national engineering programs (most of which are required statutorily), 2) designing and constructing projects; and 3) providing technical engineering assistance.

Outcomes: Specific evaluation criteria related to how each alternative would impact workload, funding, customer service, cost efficiency, and feasibility were identified to help evaluate options. Recommendations from the report were implemented inconsistently, with some regions maintaining a separate engineering function and others incorporating engineering expertise directly into the programs. In 2012 a follow-up review was conducted, resulting in moving forward with establishing virtual engineering centers that will share expertise across regions.

Reference: Engineering Review Final Report (Sept 2008), https://intranet.fws.gov/region9/engineering/DEN/FinalEngReviewReport.pdf.

Sharing Human Resources Functions Between Regions 2 and 4

Consistent with Government Operations Advisory Committee recommendations, standardized hiring procedures were instituted in February 2012 across Regions 2 and 4 of the Service.

Goals: To improve customer service.

Outcome: With the well-regarded Region 2 HR team as a model, and through sharing of administrative personnel between Regions 2 and 4, a standardized process for conducting hiring actions was established that generally received positive feedback from management in both regions. Despite concerns that customer service in Region 2 may have been initially impacted, ongoing results of the effort are overwhelmingly positive; therefore, further sharing of functions such as the office of Workers Compensation and Diversity and Civil Rights should be considered. The successful Region 2 HR program is characterized by accountability, close tracking of hiring actions from start to finish to ensure timeliness, resolution of any outstanding issues, and customer service.

Reference: Personal communication with regional authority figures, regional staff members, and field employees.

USFWS Zone Management (Fire, Law Enforcement and Biological Sciences)

Zone or district management approaches were established for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Law Enforcement and Fire programs in 2003 and for the Biological Sciences program in 2010.

Goals: To leverage resources across a broader area and promote greater efficiency.

Outcomes: Fire management officers supervise fire staff within their districts; zone law enforcement officers and biologists provide technical and training support and ensure consistency with operations, standards, and policies. Overall, the system of geographic zones has been beneficial by promoting collaboration within zones (e.g., sharing personnel, equipment, resources) and with other federal, state, and local entities, while also encouraging administrative efficiencies by reducing redundancies at the field station level. The relative success of each zone is greatly influenced by the interpersonal skills of the zone manager. Specifically, one with a strong sense of customer service and who is actively engaged and a good communicator with their stakeholders regarding zone priority-setting is most likely to succeed. Challenges have involved unequal focus and attention, with more distant facilities sometimes receiving less support.

Reference: Personal communication with fire management officers and regional authority figures.

National Wildlife Refuge System Complexing

Around 2004-2005, the Refuge System complexed several of its field stations.

Goal: To centralize common functions and share resources. Complexing has traditionally been used to meet budgetary constraints, but other criteria for complexing decisions include administrative efficiencies, span-of-control issues, and resource management.

Outcomes: Consolidation of operations saved office space, salary, benefits, training, and travel costs. According to the Response to Congressional Directive on Refuge Complexing (May 2, 2008), a number of key factors contribute to the success of complexing, including a manageable number of total units within a complex; units that share a similar purpose; the absence of political boundaries (e.g., state, county, or congressional); the existence of dependable forms of communication, especially two-way radios and the Internet; a maximum travel time between units of approximately one to two hours; and a manager who considers the complex as a whole, with no affinity for a particular unit. In order to achieve operational efficiency, proposed complexes must provide one or more of the following elements:

- Efficiency – Complexing field stations based on cost-saving benefits, compatible proximity to parent stations, and centrally efficient administrative functions.
- Span of Control – Limiting the size of proposed refuge complexes to manageable units in order to functionally administer and manage the day-to-day operations of satellite refuge field crews, resources, and management decisions.
- Similarity – Complexing refuges with similar habitats and habitat management practices.

References: National Wildlife Refuge System Strategic Workforce Planning Report: June 13, 2008; *Response to Congressional Directive on Refuge Complexing* (May 2, 2008) GAO-08-797 *WILDLIFE REFUGES Changes in Funding, Staffing, and Other Factors Create Concerns about Future Sustainability.*

USFWS Region 4 Workforce Reduction

Region 4 released "Southeast Region Workforce Management Plan: October 1, 2006- September 30, 2009."

Goals: To guide the region through a period of flat or declining budgets and to increase management capability to above 15 percent.

Outcomes: Opinions about the process and product were mixed and highly contentious. The specific refuges and positions incurring reductions were identified in the report. Personnel movements began (changes of positions, early retirements, etc.), but implementation was halted midway. The margin of management capability increased from an all-time low of 5 percent.

References: Interviews with regional leadership, field employees, and other individuals who were impacted by the process; and the "Southeast Region Workforce Management Plan: October 1, 2006- September 30, 2009."

Office of Surface Mining and Enforcement Consolidation

In 2011 Interior Secretary Ken Salazar instructed senior leadership in his department to explore a possible merger between the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR). Substantial public concerns were raised, and a formal comment period was provided.

Goal: To achieve strategic improvements in four primary areas: Administrative Support Functions; Environmental Restoration of Abandoned Mine Lands; Fee Collections; and Regulation, Inspection, and Enforcement and State Program Oversight.

Outcomes: Based on public input, it was decided that OSM would remain an independent entity within DOI but would share administrative functions with BLM and ONRR for fleet and property management, Equal Employment Opportunity, Ethics, Safety, General Training, and Space programs. Each agency maintained its own communications, emergency management, and budget functions.

References:
http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/newsroom/2011/october/NR_10_26A_2011.html.
http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=283745.

USFWS Business Unit Reorganization

In September 2005 the Region 6 Administrative Officer's Council was asked by management to evaluate the concept of "Business Units." A "Business Unit" was considered a tool to balance workload and manage volumes through shared specialist support from other field stations.

Goal: Identify various methods of accomplishing administrative work that could lead to a more efficient organization and provide flexibility for the future.

Outcome: Three Business Units were modeled and field-tested in Fiscal Year 2007. Recommendations were made for nationwide implementation in 2009. Regions implemented different models that best fit with their situations to achieve a goal of no more than 75 percent of the budget being spent on staffing.

Reference:
https://portal.doi.net/usfws/nwrsvision/ileadership/default.aspx?RootFolder=%2Fusfws%2Fnwrsvision%2Fileadership%2FShared%20Documents%2FOrganizational%20Efficiency%20Subteam&FolderCTID=0x012000DC1AA8FBFF4F7A489ECA24C76D58D903&View={A97437D5-7B89-4F1C-BDA6-0CAA11BB3443}.

USFWS & BLM Combined Human Resources Office in Alaska (2008-Present)

In 2008 the directors of the Alaska Region of the Service and the Alaska Region of the BLM agreed to combine HR divisions.

Goal: Promote customer service and efficiency by combining HR offices.

Outcome: Today, the perception is that both offices have kept doing the same thing with no perceived cost savings and uncertainty if staffing efficiencies were realized. There are not fewer people now than when the realignment began. However, there may have been some savings realized due to more specialization, which may have led to efficiencies.

Reference: Personal communication with regional office authority figures.

Maintenance Action Teams

Maintenance Action Teams (MATs) are formally planned, coordinated, and executed restoration, rehabilitation, construction, or demolition projects that are completed using predominantly in-house staff and equipment. The NWRS and Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation (FARC) programs are working to expand use of MAT projects to achieve two primary benefits: cost efficiencies and strengthened capacities within their workforce.

Goals: To make efficient use of available funds for completing projects and sustaining or strengthening Service organizational capacities to meet the mission.

Outcome: During FY 2007-2012, a 30-60 percent cost savings in completing maintenance and construction projects was documented through use of MATs. They are resulting in better use of, and return on, investments in heavy equipment. MATS have facilitated networking, training, and mentoring opportunities for Wage Grade staff and have improved the capacity of NWRS and FARC employees to respond to emergencies.

Reference: August 6, 2012, memorandum from Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, to regional directors 1-8 regarding expanding use of Maintenance Action Teams (Reference: FWS/ANRS/ITM/052297); personal communication with regional and headquarters authority figures and staff members.

Independent Evaluation of the NWRS Strategic Plan

This independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the NWRS was conducted as part of the Office of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool evaluation. Our organizational efficiency team reviewed Strategic Outcome Goal (SOG) 12: *Promote and Enhance Organizational Excellence.*

Goal: Evaluate how well the NWRS is doing in accomplishing each of the 12 strategic outcome goals in its 2007 strategic plan.

Outcomes: Management Systems International (MSI), the contractor selected to perform this evaluation, conducted an extensive investigation that included nearly 250 interviews with USFWS staff and partners, site visits to all eight regional offices and 11 refuge field stations (at least two in each region), and an online survey of refuge managers. MSI's extensive report rates the NWRS's performance on each SOG from "ineffective" to "highly effective," and makes recommendations for improvement for each of the 12 strategic outcome goals. In June 2009 the NWRS prepared a paper titled *Response to Independent Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Refuge System* that provided a response of "agree" or "partially agree" for each finding in the MSI report. In addition, it described an action plan to improve the effectiveness of the system based on the MSI recommendations. Many of the action items in the response document have been at least partially accomplished. One notable exception is the stated intention for this report to be the first in a series of annual action plans to monitor and address NWRS effectiveness.

References:

Summary: http://www.fws.gov/refuges/pdfs/NWRS_EvaluationSummaryFINAL_7-15-08_508v.pdf.
Full report: http://www.fws.gov/refuges/pdfs/NWRS_Evaluation_FullReport.pdf.
Annexes: http://www.fws.gov/refuges/pdfs/NWRS_Evaluation_Annexes.pdf.
NWRS response:
http://www.fws.gov/refuges/policiesandbudget/pdfs/MSI/MSI%20Action%20Plan_June%2009%20progess%20report_final.pdf.

APPENDIX B:
Funding and Culture as Organizational Barriers: Lessons Learned

We found two specific barriers during implementation of the *Ecosystem Approach*: funding and culture. Efforts to avoid creating similar barriers should be considered as the Service continues to institutionalize Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) as its conservation business model. Suggestions for ways to remove these barriers are included for consideration.

Did a lack of focus on funding and culture contribute to the demise of the *Ecosystem Approach* as the agency's conservation business model? The authors of the 1998 Ohio State University report warned the Directorate that a singular focus on reorganizing the Service would be a mistake: "[T]he most overused mechanism for change in most government agencies [is] organizational structure, and the most overlooked [is] the budget process." Absent a strong command and control environment, financial incentives along with consistent messages and actions are necessary to signal that change is needed. Asked in the development of the report for their advice on advancing ecosystem management, major stakeholders suggested the agency consider changes to funding and culture rather than organizational structure.

> "Most agencies reorganize as a primary signal to their workforce and to constituents that their philosophy and way of operating is changing. Often reorganization accomplishes only the public relations goal of convincing outsiders that things may be changing. Rarely do agencies do a good job of actually changing the way they operate because they do not 1) clearly define and support new expectations for their people, 2) hold them accountable to these new expectations, or 3) change operational systems to make the desired changes realistic and achievable. The budgeting process, however, is rarely modified as part of an agency-change effort. However, a modification in the way budgets are created and money is allocated can be a more powerful motivator of change than any other single action an organization can take."

Nonetheless the Directorate moved forward with a technical fix by adding management positions at the regional and national level, which redirected funding and technical capacity away from the field. Incentivizing cross-programmatic collaboration with dollars was rare, and when funding was made available to ecosystem teams the money was distributed to programs with no apparent mechanism to ensure that funds were spent on cross-program (ecosystem team) activities. Not only was there little project funding, but the ecosystem approach did not appear to become agency culture because "… few of the communication channels have been used effectively to help people define and understand ecosystem approach from a common perspective."

Is funding a barrier to implementation of the SHC business model? Of course lack of money will always be perceived as a barrier. But in a period of declining budgets, redirection of funds from the field to establish Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) appears to have created a barrier to a more robust implementation of SHC. The report of the National Ecological Assessment Team (NEAT) identified additional capacities that would be needed in order to implement SHC, particularly the ability to do conservation design using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and predictive modeling. Yet the conservation design capacity of the agency decreased with the advent of the LCCs as funding and existing staff with design expertise moved into the newly created Science Applications program, whose customers are the LCC members. This shrinkage of scientific capacity in the field is a very real barrier to practicing SHC and is reminiscent of the problems identified in the OSU report. There should be a concerted effort to have LCCs provide conservation design needs for the agency. Furthermore, a clear role for the Natural Resource Program Center to play in facilitating monitoring of focal species should be described and communicated. Meanwhile, have we ruled out or been afraid to test a different funding mechanism to reward a focal species approach? Are there lessons to be learned from how Endangered Species Act work is funded? These are some questions the national team currently investigating funding a new conservation business strategy may want to research.

Is culture impeding implementation of SHC? Workplace culture is the underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs of all employees in the organization, and influences how and what work is done. A culture that adopts SHC believes habitats are being degraded and disappearing at a fast rate; is ready to prioritize, fund, and practice adaptive management; and values working with partners. Staff have witnessed authority figures clearly present a case that threats are growing and funding is diminishing. Employees have heard they need to work with others and focus on biological outcomes, not “parts and pieces.” But the connection to what needs to change about day-to-day work has not been so clearly articulated. Consider the following questions:

- Can every employee describe clearly what facet of SHC he or she does currently or should be doing?
- Is that work toward conservation of a focal species and its habitat? With partners?
- Is every employee confident his or her work is or will be informed by planning, design, monitoring, and research?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then it is fair to assume that SHC is not part of agency culture. Perhaps the first barrier is disappearing as more communication occurs. The second barrier – knowledge of focal species – cannot be overcome by the individual. In fact, the first step in SHC is identifying focal species, because if every species is a priority then no species is a priority. We believe the draft technical guidance for *Selecting Species for Design of Landscape Conservation* and the process being used to develop the guidance are helping craft a common set of values for the agency. But authority figures should continue to engage in conversations that relate SHC to the daily work of Service employees. The last barrier – informing agency work with planning, design, monitoring, and research – can be addressed through education and funding recommendations discussed previously.

APPENDIX C:
Analysis of SHC and Best Management Practices

Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) is the primary framework for carrying out the Service's mission. Other groups are tasked more specifically with developing implementation strategies for SHC, so our group focused on reviewing SHC in light of whether there are organizational barriers preventing its full implementation.

In our research of past reorganizations, summarized in *Lessons Learned from Past Reorganizations* (Appendix A), we identified several "themes of success" associated with successful reorganizations and realignments. These themes also represent overarching ways in which the agency can be more efficient. Successful efforts should:

- Describe a Clear and Compelling Problem
- Scale the Solution to the Problem
- Set Clear and Specific Goals and Objectives
- Establish Clear Sideboards for the Process
- Demonstrate Transparency and Communication
- Apply Adaptive Management
- Ensure Follow-Up and Accountability

We used those themes of success to identify additional areas where the organization may be able to improve implementation of SHC. Those thoughts are as follows:

Has the agency described a clear and compelling problem that requires SHC? Partially. In 2006 the National Ecological Assessment Team (NEAT) provided a report, *Strategic Habitat Conservation – Final Report of the National Ecological Assessment Team*, now known as the NEAT report. The report's authors describe why the Service must change the way it approaches its mission, given decreasing budgets, increasing demands for accountability, and deteriorating conditions faced by many of the agency's trust resources. Advancements in conservation theory and geospatial technologies and increasing emphasis on accountability, they argue, compel the agency to change the way it does business. A few years later, the Service issued the report *Conservation in Transition*, which built upon the NEAT report and made a clear and compelling case for organizational change. More recently, employees have been engaged numerous times by the Director making the case for species conservation at landscape scales using a surrogate species approach. While a clear case has been made for the benefits of using an SHC framework, it appears less focus has been given to identifying the compelling need that would require use of SHC with the surrogate species approach. Many employees feel there are compelling issues associated with climate change, expansion of invasive species, loss of water quality and quantity, and other conditions, but do not feel that a clear link has been made to how SHC will addresses those issues using a surrogate species approach. While there are urgent conservation needs, the compelling case for the surrogate species approach as the way to solve those conservation needs is not as strong.

Is the solution scaled to the problem? Yes, the problem as described in the NEAT report and *Conservation in Transition* is national in scope, as are the goals and objectives identified in the NEAT report and the draft technical guidance for selecting species. Landscape conservation cooperatives (LCCs) and a national inventory and monitoring program for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) have also been established to support a SHC operational framework.

Does the agency have specific goals and objectives for the implementation of SHC? Partially. In 2006 the NEAT report recommended four goals to successfully implement SHC: 1) commit in principle; 2) expand understanding; 3) expand engagement and ownership; and 4) expand operational capacity. The goals were further refined with 25 specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, and time-specific (SMART) objectives and 26 supporting actions. The NEAT report suggests identifying focal species as a way to prioritize the work of the Service. Missing from the report was who and how to select focal species, which can be the tie that binds all programs in the application of SHC. In 2012 the Service released draft guidance on selecting species to represent other species in an effort to implement SHC. While overarching goals and objectives have been identified, additional work is needed to develop specific goals and objectives for individual field stations and individual employees. Programs such as refuge planning clearly fit into the conservation planning part of the SHC framework. But the links may be less clear for other programs, such as visitor services and refuge law enforcement. In addition, it is unclear which of the NEAT goals and objectives have been accomplished and which still need to be carried out.

Have clear sideboards been identified for SHC? Partially. After a Directorate meeting in March 2004, the NEAT team was chartered. It included representatives from all regions and U.S. Geological Survey. Many of the objectives outlined in the report described roles and responsibilities for existing staff as well as future employees. Appendices C and D of the report described personnel and infrastructure needs, which appear to have been fulfilled to some degree. An oversight steering committee and sub-teams (technical, communications, management, and workshop) as well as headquarters and regional office points of contact exist to oversee "Species Conservation at Landscape Scales (SCALs)." The SCALs oversight committee makes recommendations to the Directorate, though it has not been well publicized that this group is responsible for implementation or institutionalization of SHC.

Has enough attention been given to transparency and communication when implementing SHC? No. The NEAT report's objectives included communicating the importance of SHC with internal and external audiences. There are also objectives related to addressing accountability through accomplishment reporting. Agency performance metrics have not been changed to reflect the SHC conservation business strategy. In addition, many employees do not understand how their role, or the role of partners, fits into SHC. Finally it is unclear how most employees should link or interact with the LCCs. In addition, direction is needed to help employees understand how SHC will be implemented in light of available resources and funding.

Communication related to SHC as the way the Service does business began in 2006 with the NEAT report. The technical advisory and regional implementation teams then began to develop informational materials about SHC. Regions formed implementation teams and held workshops in the summer of 2007. In September 2007 all employees were required to watch a SHC implementation video. In 2008 the Service issued the SHC Handbook to guide implementation. In 2009 the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) launched a website that lists training courses designed to support scientists and managers at each stage of the SHC process. Communication seemed to taper off in 2010 and 2011 as efforts to work with LCCs ramped up. However, messages related to SHC increased in the last six months of 2012. Over the past several years, External Affairs provided multiple methods and tools for communicating with internal and external audiences. And in the past few months, regional directors have encouraged employees to engage in SHC discussions.

Clear and compelling examples are starting to be shared on a Service website dedicated to SHC to help employees understand the “why, how, and what” of SHC. An apparent inconsistency is how regions have approached focal species and identifying priority species. Since many trust species are migratory, regions must collaborate on this component of SHC. Nonetheless, we recommend that decisions on focal species be left to field staffs working in concert with partners. In addition, the key message seems to be that the agency will use SHC, and that reports and accountability should be addressed using the SHC framework, but there are inconsistent messages about what SHC actually involves.

In addition, inconsistent actions such as making significant cuts in the refuge planning program, a key element of the SHC framework, lead to confusion. Other aspects of the SHC framework that most employees concur are valuable, such as monitoring and evaluation, are not adequately funded; and on a national scale it would be prohibitively expensive to attempt to come up with scientifically sound data on status and trends for most species. Additional effort is needed to explain how to implement the SHC framework with limited resources that must be prioritized among competing interests.

Is SHC using an adaptive management approach? Yes, adaptive management is a key part of the SHC framework. Regions are being encouraged to learn from each other, and examples of successful and unsuccessful efforts are being shared.

Is sufficient follow-up and accountability in place to monitor SHC implementation? Partially. The NEAT report recommended several objectives for the Service Directorate to “commit in principle,” including the immediate drafting of a memorandum of understanding with USGS and creation of a National Implementation Task Force (NITF) with responsibility for accomplishing several of the report’s objectives. According to an October 2006 Director’s message to employees, in lieu of an NITF the Directorate recommended that a technical advisory team (TAT) be established to provide assistance and guidance as well as produce a technical handbook to “serve as a resource and reference (not a requirement) to support regional, program, and field implementation … and establish/make use of existing regional implementation teams and charge them with leadership in developing regional strategies for implementation and with fostering cooperation and coordination across regional boundaries.” An Executive Oversight Committee, composed of members from the Directorate and USGS Executive Leadership Team, formed to provide the TAT with assignments and guidance. However, the committee has not met for over a year. Through the years, multiple employees participated on multiple teams. A Species Conservation at Landscape Scales oversight committee is overseeing some facets of institutionalization of SHC and making recommendations to the Directorate. However, it does not appear that any metric to measure successful implementation of SHC has been established or monitored for accountability at a national, regional, or station level.

APPENDIX D:
Disposition of Identified Administrative Inefficiencies

In order to better understand the current state of administrative efficiency (or lack thereof) within the Service, our team compiled a list of existing inefficiencies, based on team input and informal surveys. We identified more than 130 inefficiencies that employees feel impact the agency's ability to accomplish its resource objectives. These inefficiencies ranged from broad general statements to specific recommendations. This appendix discusses our recommended actions in relation to the items on that list, which fell into five primary groups:

Actions have already been implemented to address the inefficiency – for example, employees can now share calendars among agencies and offices using Bison Connect. Our team will take no further action on these elements.

Actions can be implemented under current protocols and guidelines and implementation decisions can be made at the local level – for example, some offices still require paper time sheets in addition to QuickTime. These items should be evaluated locally to determine if the apparent inefficiency has an essential purpose. It is within the office's authority to eliminate the inefficiency if it isn't needed. Our group will summarize these inefficiencies so project leaders are aware of them and can make appropriate decisions.

Some actual or perceived inefficiencies may be necessary to meet other goals – for example, the need for multiple passwords and the need to change passwords frequently to meet Department of the Interior security expectations. For these, it may be necessary for employees to accept some level of inefficiency. Our group will summarize actions that fall into this category and pass them along to the managing program for their awareness.

Programmatic practices, guidelines, or protocols could help reduce inefficiencies – for example, by making standard operating procedures, special use permits, and similar documents available on the web, offices can learn from each other and have a template to work from to reduce the time spent developing new documents. The recommendations in this report should provide an information management framework to address this type of inefficiency. These will also be summarized so as to be available for developers of the information management framework.

Broad-scale culture changes are needed to address the inefficiencies – for example, efficiencies that could be created by greater cross-program collaboration and sharing of expertise. We believe that changing the culture, as discussed in our team's report on barriers to implementing SHC, and focusing on leadership and accountability are the best way to achieve greater efficiencies in this area.

APPENDIX E:
Prior Administrative Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Recommendations included in this document address some of the unimplemented recommendations from prior efficiency efforts within the Service. In making our recommendations, we focused on those areas that we felt would yield the greatest benefit for the effort expended.

However, it should be noted that meaningful progress has been made, specifically in response to the Management Systems International (MSI) and "Administrivia" reports discussed below.

Management Systems International Evaluation of the Refuge System

In 2007 and 2008, an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the Refuge System was conducted by MSI. Our team examined the recommendations in the MSI report with regard to organizational excellence (Goal 12) and found that some have not been implemented or have been implemented only partially. We also found that in many cases the MSI recommendations echo themes common to other past efforts we examined. The MSI recommendations are:

- Develop an annual work plan template for use by all refuges
- Implement base budgeting system-wide
- Implement a clarified policy development process
- Conduct periodical operational assessments
- Strive for greater policy and program consistency between regions
- Improve knowledge management

These recommendations are discussed in great detail in the 2008 MSI report. In June 2009 the Refuge System responded to the report with an action plan that addressed three core elements for Goal 12: 1) redesign the Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP); 2) charter a team to identify information needed by Refuge System managers to address budget, performance, operational needs, and geographic data; and to use that list of unmet needs to guide development and revisions of information management systems; and 3) improve the sharing of best management practices.

RAPP has been significantly improved since the 2009 action plan. This effort should be recognized and applauded. Further, this team recognizes that certain elements of RAPP are out of the sphere of influence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), as many elements are driven by external factors (i.e., the DOI Strategic Plan). However, RAPP can still be improved to reflect other recommendations in the MSI report, specifically in Goal 12: B1, Lack of annual work plan guidance, pg. 189; D, Quality control over RAPP entry, pg. 197; and E, Refuge performance evaluation, pg. 199.

MSI action plan Goal 12 elements #2 and #3 have not been implemented, but we believe that the recommendations in this report will effectively address that.

“Administrivia” Report from the Deputies Group

In 2004 FWS Director Steve Williams tasked Deputy Director Matt Hogan to lead a team- which came to be known as the Deputies Group- to review the administrative workload requirements on Service personnel. The team’s task was to assure that employees focused their time and energy on fish and wildlife conservation and service to the American people, while recognizing the need for business practices that assure fiscal responsibility, accountability, and efficiency.

“Administrivia” was defined by the Deputies Group as: The unintended, unplanned, unnecessary, uncoordinated, unrealistic, or just plain stupid work processes and workload that adversely effects the ability of field stations to deliver the Service’s mission.

The 16-member team included Directorate members and deputies, other Washington and regional officials, and four field project leaders. After H. Dale Hall replaced Williams as director in 2005, he requested that the team’s work continue. In its final report, dated October 22, 2007, the Deputies Group offered 17 recommendations. At the end of this appendix is a list of these recommendations, grouped by what we believe to be their current status.

Overall, 14 of the 17 recommendations were implemented or Service policy has changed so that the issue is no longer valid. Of the three remaining items, one is an issue outside the Service's control. The two remaining issues and recommendations for further follow-up are discussed below.

One of the Deputies Group's recommendations that we felt warranted follow-up states: "We recommend that all field station upgrades to high-speed connectivity be funded and completed by the end of FY 09. Most should be completed in FY 08." This recommendation was implemented at some field stations, and funding has been provided to help cover the monthly cost of improved connectivity (from the 1664 account). However, many stations continue to have connectivity problems. Reasons for this problem vary, but the common theme is the need to provide funding in order to improve the infrastructure that supports high-speed lines. This team recommends:

- A review be performed to ensure that the funding allotted for high-speed access is keeping pace with escalating costs
- The use of deferred maintenance funds be allowed when major infrastructure changes are needed to improve connectivity, and that a priority be placed on these requests

The remaining recommendation that still needs to be addressed states: "We recommend a formal policy review updating the National Reports Directory and eliminating unnecessary reports." This recommendation applies to the Service as a whole and therefore should be turned over to the General Operations Advisory Council for follow-up.

Recommendations of Deputies Group in 2007 and Current Status

<u>Position Description Recommendations:</u>

- We recommend that the use of approved standard position descriptions should be mandatory
- We recommend that when an organizational chart is approved by the authorized officials, and a standard position description is available, there is no need for the position to be reclassified
- We recommend that we identify a comprehensive list of standard position descriptions for the common positions used throughout the Service
- We recommend the Service Manual should be amended to include direction on the mandatory use of standard position descriptions
- We recommend that we develop standard position descriptions for those positions where they do not currently exist
- We recommend that we develop a standardized protocol for evaluating positions and applicant qualifications that would be used by all Service HR teams

Addressed by:

- DTS 047132 Required Use of the New Position Description/Classification Support System "PD-Express" Servicewide, dated January 14, 2011
- DTS 039707 225FW1 Position Classification, dated August 5, 2009 (Director's Order 197, Use of Standard Position Descriptions, dated December 16, 2008)

IT Recommendations:

- We recommend that the Management Information Efficiency Team proposed by Deputy Director Hogan be appointed
- We recommend formal policy review, establishing a National Automated Information System Directory in 270 FW, and elimination of outdated systems
- We recommend increased attention be given to password simplification and that the Service CIO submit a formal recommendation to the Director

Addressed by:

- DTS 044123 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Information Technology Investment Review Board, dated March 3, 2010

- DTS 03774 Review of Proposed Service Manual Chapters 274 FW1, Data Resource management, and 274 FW 2, Establishing FWS Data Standards, dated September 8, 2008

Training Recommendations:

- We recommend the Service Manual 231 FW Training Management be amended to include a new section on Mandatory Training that includes guideline to be met before new mandatory training requirements are imposed
- We recommend that the list of Mandatory training be included in 231 FW as a reference guide

Addressed by:

- 231 FW 6 updated August 1, 2008 - Development and Approval of Mandatory Training

Reasonable Assignment Due Date Recommendations:

- We recommend updating the Service Manual 050 FW 3, Management Communications, to include direction that work assignments to field station project leaders must be made by their chain of command
- We recommend no routine or recurring assignment of work should be normally made to Project Leaders that is due in less than 30 days after assignment

Addressed by:

- 050 FW 3 Management Communications updated August 21, 2008

No Longer Applicable due to policy changes since the Deputies Group report was issued:

- We recommend pursuing the delegation of authority to approve attendance at professional society meetings to the Service Director and Regional Directors
- We recommend amending the restriction on limited open travel authorizations by including attendance at *approved* training and *approved* conferences within the LTA