

**Recommendation 5:** *Use all of the Service’s conservation tools, especially Partners for Fish and Wildlife, to work nationwide to project conservation benefits beyond refuge boundaries, leveraging resources through partnerships with other governmental agencies, conservation groups and private landowners and achieving mutually shared and scientifically sound restoration and protection goals around refuges.*

Description: The Strategic Growth Implementation Team (SGIT) is responsible for developing and presenting to the Executive Implementation Council (EIC) a framework for implementing Recommendation 5. The concept of acquiring and managing refuges within a landscape context will be advanced by the SGIT with its draft strategic growth policy and associated recommendations. Likewise, these products, will acknowledge that one of the most important approaches for addressing climate change and other environmental stressors is working beyond refuge boundaries using a variety of conservation tools including the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and those of other state and federal agencies.

Approach: The SGIT has identified the following approach for completing this assignment.

- Develop draft strategic growth policy that encourages refuge managers to work beyond refuge boundaries in a landscape context
- Formulate recommendations to more closely tie the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program with the goals and objectives of the Refuge System especially for addressing external environmental stressors
- Check in with Refuge System Leadership – Headquarters (HQ) and Executive Implementation Council (EIC)
- Coordinate the development of draft policy and recommendations with the Conservation Planning and Community Partnership Implementation Teams
- Finalize recommendations and strategies concurrent with schedule identified for Recommendation 4
- Finalize draft strategic growth policy concurrent with schedule identified for Recommendation 4

Deliverables:

<b>Major Milestones</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Review policy and other materials	Ongoing	
Formulate early recommendations and strategies and early draft policy	By April 15, 2012	Completed
Check in with Refuge Leadership – HQ and EIC	By May 1, 2012	Completed
Integrate policy and recommendations from Conservation Planning and Community Partnerships Implementation Teams in draft plan and products	By August 15, 2012	

Finalize draft strategic growth policy	By September 30, 2012	
Finalize recommendations	By September 30, 2012	

Coordination Need: As articulated above, there is a demonstrated need to coordinate the development of SGIT products with the Conservation Planning and Community Partnership Implementation Teams. The approach SGIT will use is articulated in the table of deliverables for this recommendation.

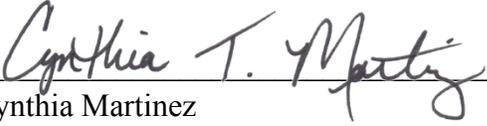
In addition, a special effort will be made to share SGIT draft products with the Community Partnership Implementation Team and seek their input. Draft products and periodic updates will be provided to this team as they are developed.

Success and Evaluation: The Strategic Growth Implementation Team will have been successful in meeting its responsibilities under Recommendation 5 if the following occurs:

- The primary elements of the draft strategic growth policy is adopted and supported by Fish and Wildlife Service leadership and converted into a final policy.
- The supporting products of the SGIT including the recommendations and strategies are adopted and supported by Fish and Wildlife Service leadership.
- The draft strategic growth policy will generate the development of decision support tools that will assist in determining explicit Regional and National land acquisition priorities for the Refuge System.

Communications: Internal communication needs through September 30, 2012 are articulated in the above table of deliverables. However, external communication needs are summarized in the attached document entitled *Communication Strategy for External Partners – Strategic Growth of the National Wildlife Refuge System*. This strategy was originally developed in October 2011 but has since been updated to reflect current needs.

**Executive Implementation Council Approval:**

  
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 Cynthia Martinez  
 Deputy Assistant Director – National Wildlife Refuge System  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

  
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 Date