United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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In Reply Refer To:
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Memorandum

To: Service Directorate

From: Acting Director Kenneth Stansell

Subject: Strategic Habitat Conservation

Through a series of discussions, stretching over nearly three years, we have defined, endorsed, and now begun to implement a framework for Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) as a key element in shaping the future of our organization. In support of this concept, following our most recent Directorate meeting, in Yulee, Florida, we decided that –

> *"Strategic Habitat Conservation and structured decision making will be used to implement the Service organizational priorities."*

To facilitate this process, our SHC Executive Oversight Group (see Attachment 1) has recommended "next steps." First is the establishment of a Technical Advisory Team (TAT) that will help us build a more complete and consistent understanding of SHC, identify and build needed capacity, and support regionally-based implementation. Directorate members were given the opportunity to submit nominations to the Executive Oversight Group, and I have accepted their recommendations for TAT membership:

Representative	Region	Program
Steven Miller	**R1**	**ES**
Patrick Donnelly	**R2**	**NWRS**
Craig Czarnecki	**R3**	**ES**
Tracy Hill	**R3**	**Fisheries**
Todd Sutherland	**R3**	**NWRS**
Charles Baxter	**R4**	**MB**
Dixie Birch	**R5**	**NWRS**
Andrew Milliken	**R5**	**MB**
Mike Estey	**R6**	**MB**
Greg Watson	**R6**	**RD**
Jim Zelenak	**R7**	**ES**
Gil Cintron	**R9**	**IA**
Christopher Horsch	**R9**	**EA/NCTC**
Rex Johnson	**R9**	**MB**
Christy Kuczak	**R9**	**FA**

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Mary Jane Lavin	**R9**	**LE**
Ken Elowe	**State**	**Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**
Robert Fisher	**USGS**	**WERC**
Pat Heglund	**USGS**	**UMESC**
Mike Runge	**USGS**	**PWRC**

This is a strong and balanced team, and I am very pleased to see our State and USGS partners represented.

The immediate tasks of the TAT will be to: 1) publish a SHC handbook to serve as a general guide for field implementation; 2) develop a memorandum of understanding between FWS and USGS that will support cooperative implementation; 3) design and conduct a national workshop to support complete and consistent understanding and regionally-based implementation; 4) serve as a source of expertise, and support for programs, regions and the field as they evaluate implementation opportunities and build capacity; and 5) provide leadership in outreach, particularly to the states and key nongovernmental organizations, as we move forward in instituting SHC as an approach to add value to and support the work of our conservation partners. I expect that the Technical Advisory Team will host its initial meeting this spring and will be a source of, not only technical expertise and direction, but also energy, innovation and inspiration as well, as we move application of the SHC framework forward for the Service.

Second, because we have agreed that SHC implementation efforts must be regionally-based and driven, each region will establish a Regional Implementation Team. The size, composition, and role of each regional team will be up to the Regional Director, but several examples of implementation team roles might be –

1. Provide a source of regional leadership, direction, and peer assistance;
2. Identify "best" opportunities to build capacity, expand applications, and train personnel;
3. Highlight field accomplishments and reward early adapters and innovators;
4. Identify barriers to implementation for consideration and action;
5. Engage USGS (and others) and identify opportunities for shared capability and expertise;
6. Provide input to the SHC/TAT.

I encourage you to consider including at least one member of the TAT on each Regional Implementation Team, and consider inviting USGS and state participation.

Thank you for moving the Service forward in this crucial endeavor.

Attachment

<u>Attachment 1</u>:
Strategic Habitat Conservation
Executive Oversight Council

Dan Ashe, Science Advisor to the Director, FWS
Sam Hamilton, Regional Director (Southeast), FWS
Sue Haseltine, Associate Director (Biology), USGS
Geoff Haskett, Assistant Director (NWRS), FWS
Mike Howell, Assistant Director (CIO), FWS
Anne Kinsinger, Acting Regional Director (Western Region), USGS
Associate Western Regional Director (Biology), USGS
Rick Lemon, Director (National Conservation Training Center), FWS
Marvin Moriarty, Regional Director (Northeast), FWS
Paul Schmidt, Assistant Director (Migratory Birds), FWS
Karen Siderelis, Associate Director (GIO), USGS
Beth Stevens, Assistant Director (External Affairs), FWS
Robyn Thorson, Regional Director (Midwest), FWS

The Executive Oversight Council provides executive leadership and direction in implementing the recommendations of the *Strategic Habitat Conservation* report. Our goal is to continually and progressively expand awareness of, and capacity for, landscape conservation that integrates science and management in an iterative, adaptive framework incorporating Biological Planning, Conservation Design and Delivery, and targeted Monitoring and Research -- all accomplished cooperatively with conservation partners.