

NBCI



National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative

NBCI
2002-2012

A DECADE
OF LEADERSHIP
FOR BOBWHITES



The Unified Strategy to Restore Wild Quail





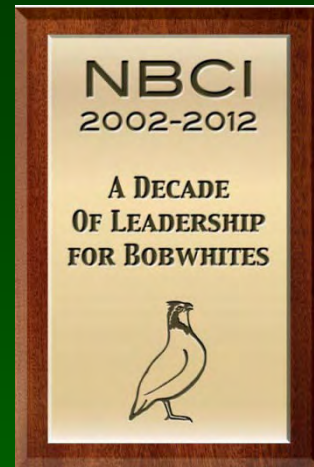
MAFWA: July 11, 2006, Spearfish, SC

- NBCI was 4 years old
 - I had been Coordinator 1 ½ years; No staff
 - 22 states in plan (16 SE + 6 MW)
- NBCI was SEAFWA and SEQSG initiative
 - Just beginning to broaden
 - Jeff Vonk first MAFWA rep to SEAFWA for NBCI
- Little success yet to brag about
- I provided overview:
 - Where we were
 - Where we are
 - Where we are going
- 2 asks:
 - MAFWA participate in NBCI revision
 - MAFWA join SEAFWA for quail



MAFWA: June 25, 2012, Wichita, KS

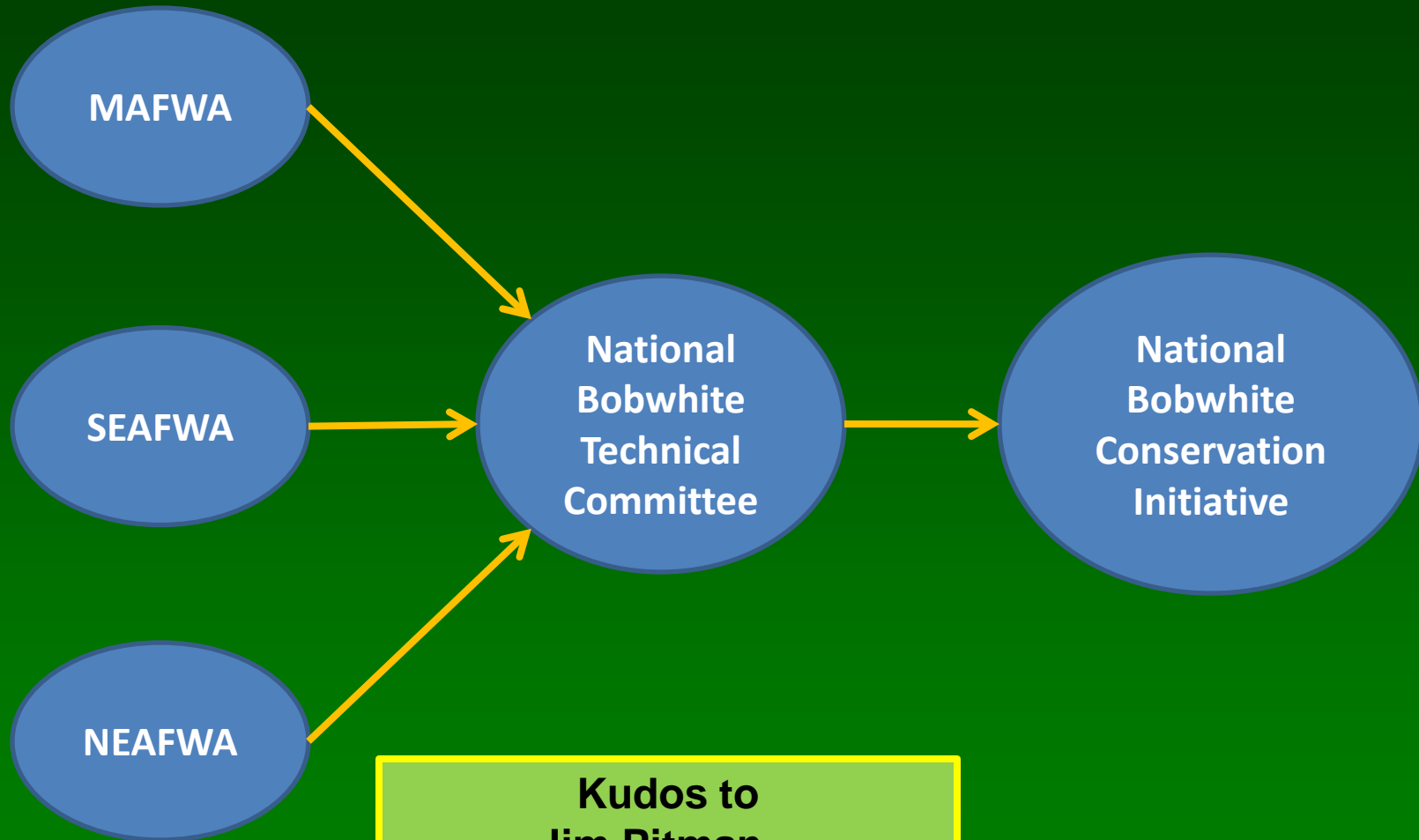
- NBCI is 10 years old
 - Endorsed by MAFWA (twice), NEAFWA, AFWA
- SEQSG now the NBTC
 - Equal ownership by MAFWA, NEAFWA
- NBCI Management Board
 - Every bobwhite state has standing seat, plus partners
 - Meets twice per year at AFWA, North American
 - Joe Kramer represents MAFWA on Exec Comm
- Nearly range-wide initiative now
 - 25 states participated in revision
- NBCI based at University of Tennessee
- My position supported by states
 - All MAFWA NBCI states
- 4 full-time NBCI staff



3 Regions

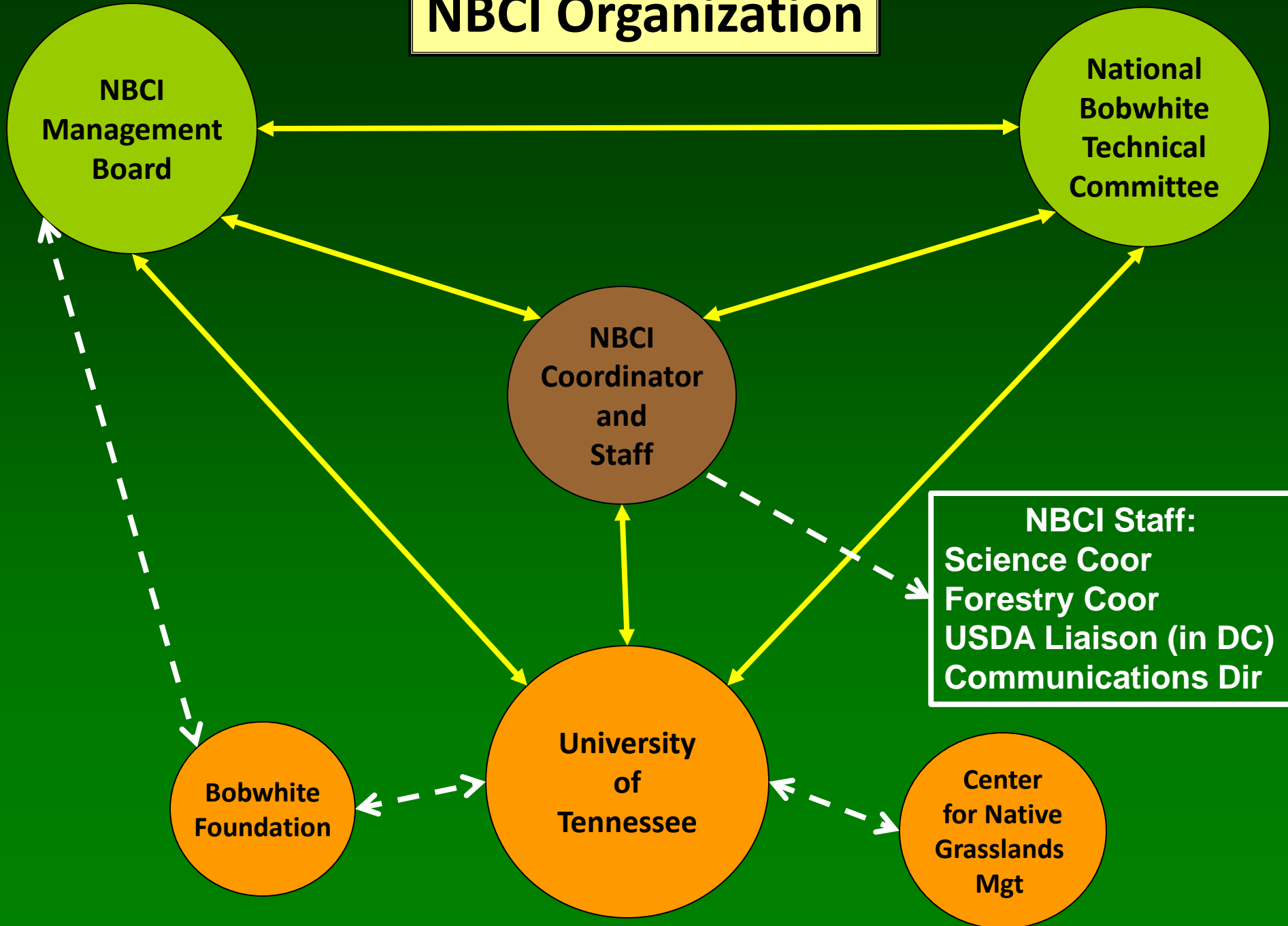
**1 Technical
Committee**

**1 Unified
Quail Initiative**



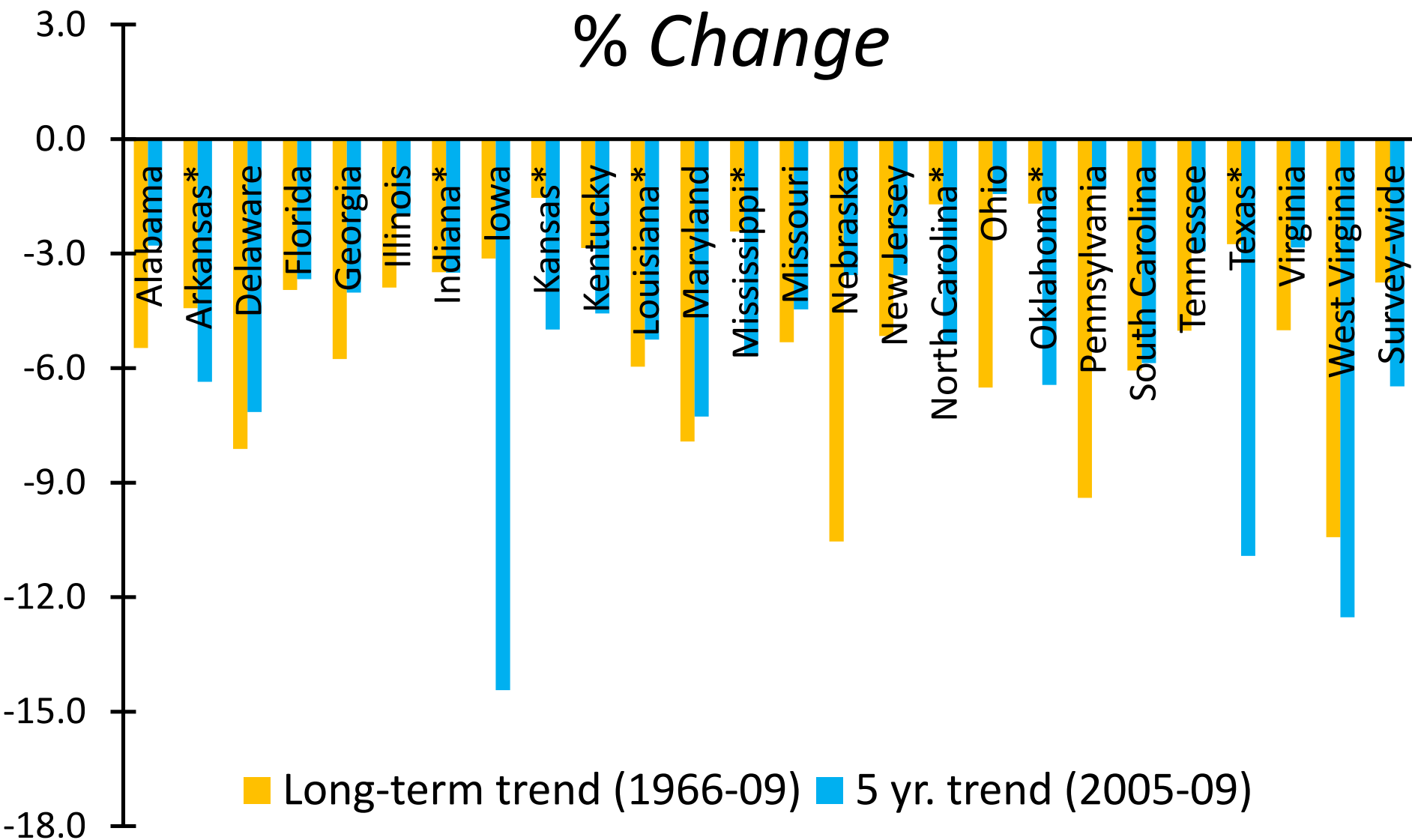
**Kudos to
Jim Pitman –
6 Years for MAFWA on
NBTC Steering Committee**

NBCI Organization

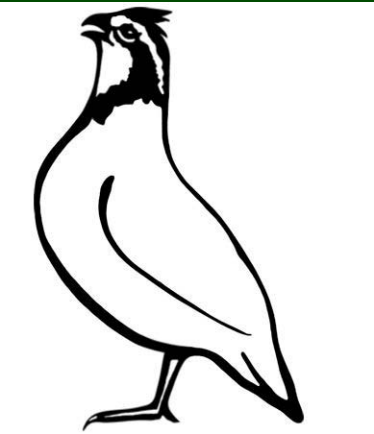


Annual Trend in Bobwhite Abundance

% *Change*



Quail Problem is Solvable:



Science

+

People, Politics and Money

NBCI is a:

- Vision – for widespread restoration of huntable quail populations
- Leadership commitment – of 25 states and their partners
- Strategy – a unified, scientific, habitat-based quail restoration plan
 - Product of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee
- Professional staff to help states and partners by providing national:
 - Leadership
 - Coordination
 - Capacity



2011 Update:

Goals of NBCI 2.0



NBCI 2.0

NATIONAL BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE:
A RANGE-WIDE PLAN FOR RECOVERING BOBWHITES

March 2011

NORTHERN BOBWHITE
CONSERVATION INITIATIVE



March 2002

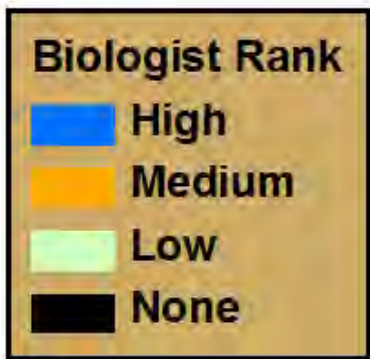
Increased functionality

- More states, people
- Spatial data base
- Improved restoration assessment
- Upgraded population objectives & monitoring
- Information easily accessed - Web Based GIS
- Seamless integration with state conservation plans, ecosystem initiatives and legislative boundaries

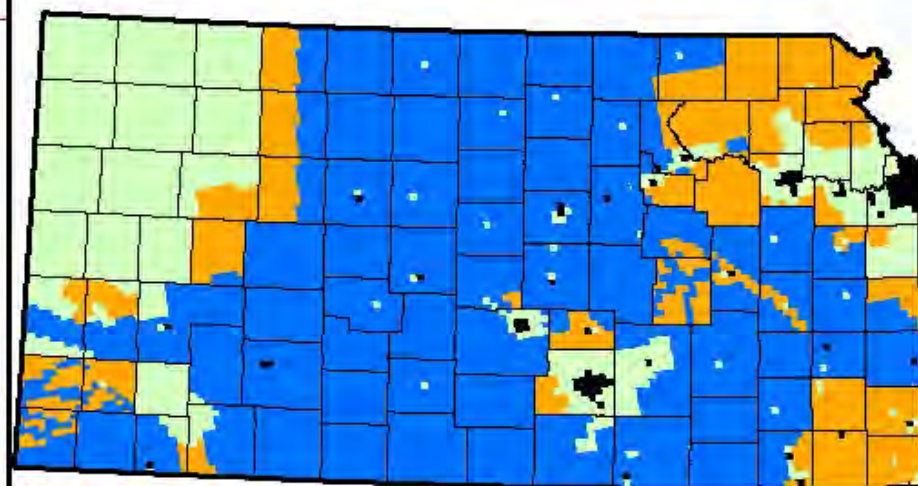
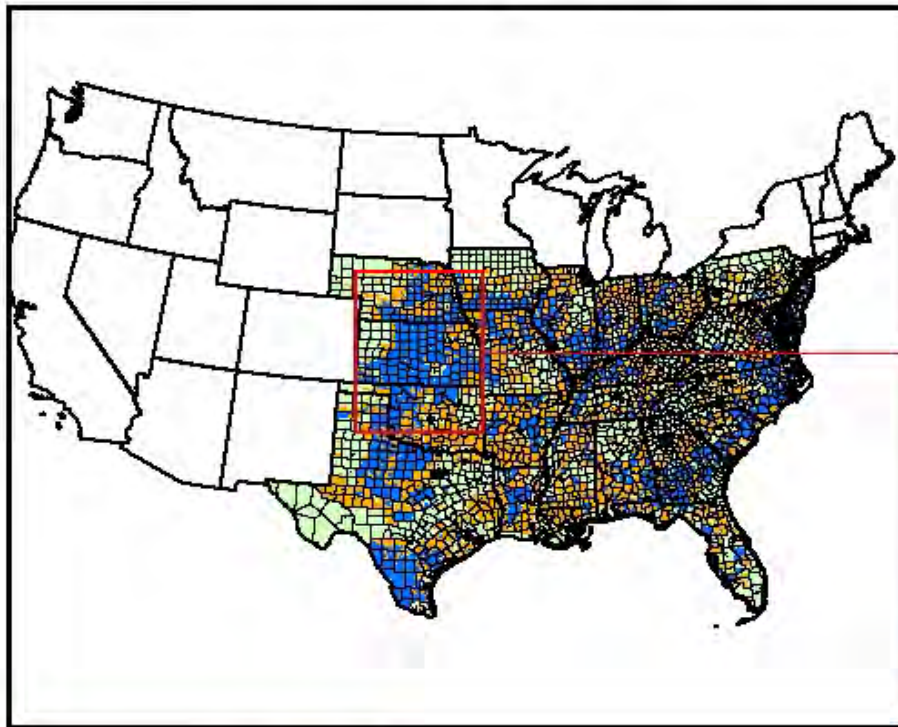
NBCI 2.0

Bobwhite Restoration Potential

4.7 Million
New Coveys



National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative: Kansas Biologist Ranking Information



Biologist Rank

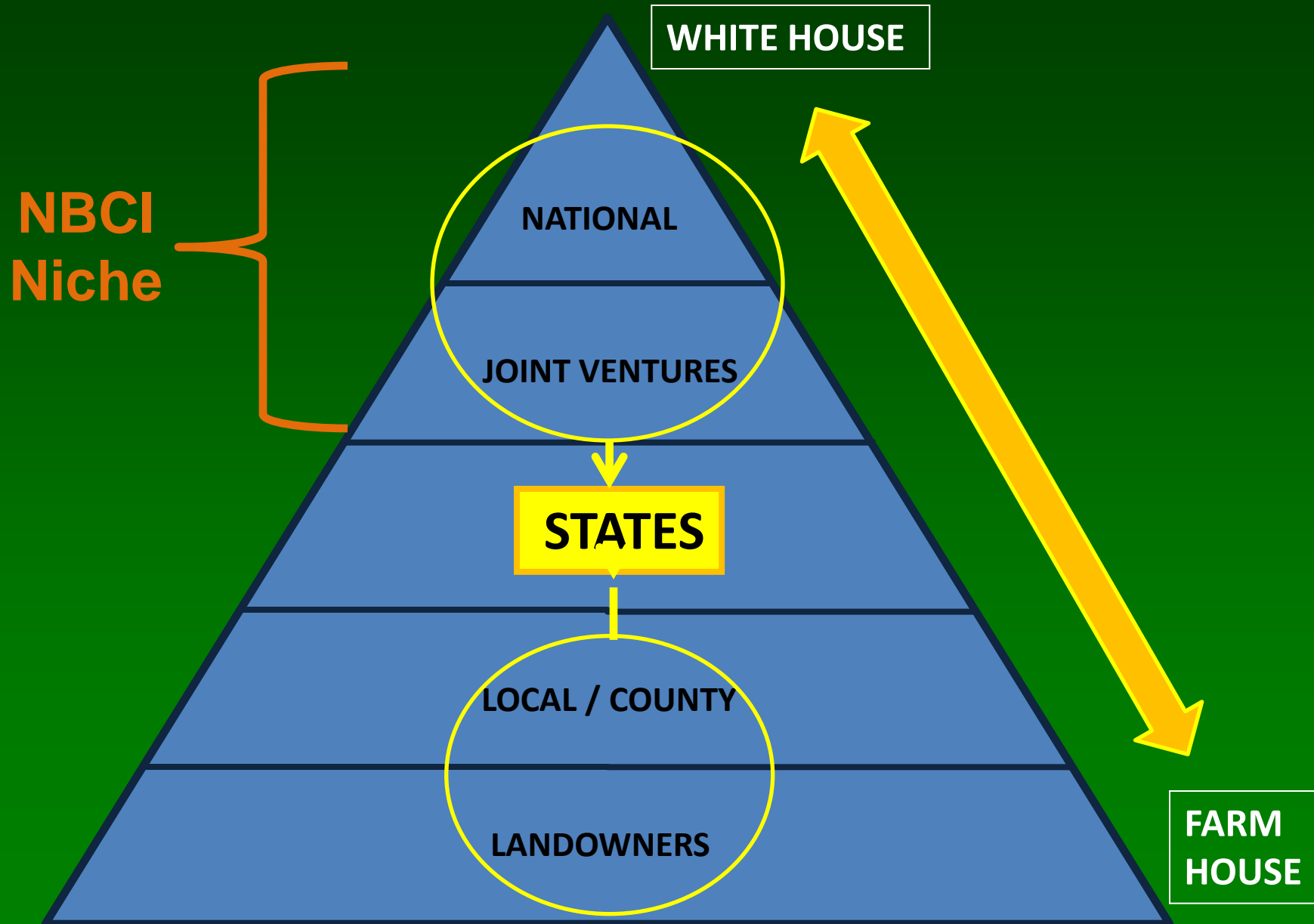


What Else Will It Take to Fix Quail?

- Aggressive state agency leadership
 - Greater sustained effort than for deer or turkey
- National coordination, leadership, capacity
 - The NBCI's unique role
- Energized grassroots-level uprising
 - With NGO and local leadership
- Full collaboration
 - Top to bottom to top: Federal / State / Local
 - Side to side: Game / Non-game / Agriculture / Forestry / Livestock / Pollinators, etc.
- Perseverance through Time
 - Quail problem is 3/4 - century old



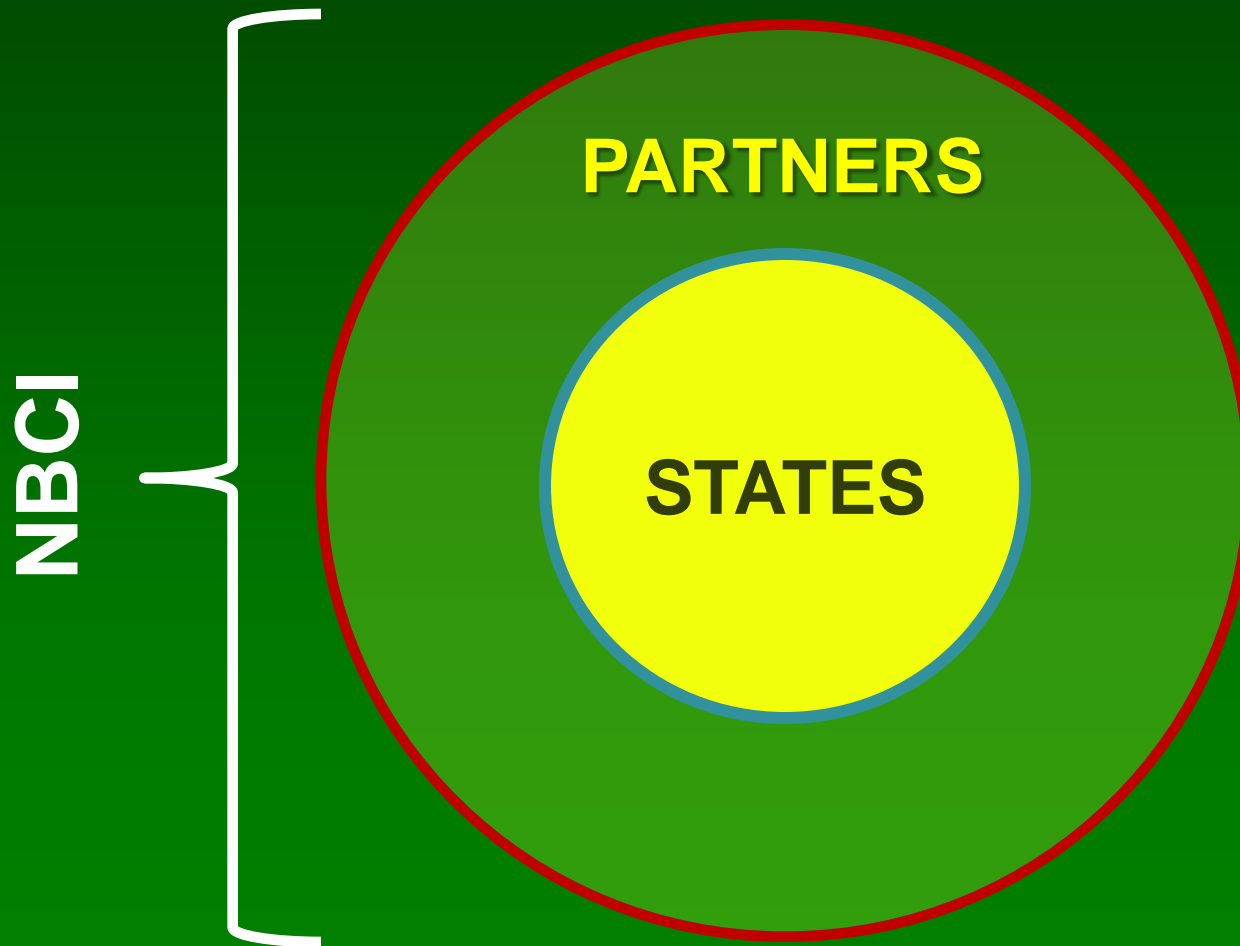
NBCI Strategy Stretches Top to Bottom



NBCI STRATEGY IS STATE-CENTERED

States Assert Leading Role

Partners Collaborate and Reinforce





States Stepping Up

Several Ongoing Active Quail Initiatives

Examples:

- Georgia Bobwhite Quail Initiative
- North Carolina CURE
- Missouri bobwhite recovery plan
- Virginia Quail Action Plan
- Mississippi NBCI step-down plan
- Kentucky quail plan
- Florida UERP

Latest State Quail Initiatives

- Kansas Quail Initiative: 2012 – 2017
- Pennsylvania Northern Bobwhite Management Plan: 2011 – 2020
- Georgia Bobwhite Quail Initiative (2nd round)
- Oklahoma's Upland Urgency
- Texas Quail Focus Area Initiative: 2012

Some Major NBCI Prongs of Attach

- Agriculture Policy (Bridget Collins)
 - Improving CRP policy
 - Instituting native plant policy at NRCS, FSA
- Forest Management, Rx Fire (Mike Black)
 - Opening doors with forestry leaders
 - Catalyzing prescribed fire, shortleaf pine alliance
- Science (Tom Dailey)
 - Coordinating protocols, data collection from states
 - Establishing central data management
- Public Outreach (John Doty)
 - Magnifying web capability, visibility
 - Engaging outdoor writers
- Grazing Lands Mgt. (UT CNGM)
 - No national capacity yet
- Mineland Reclamation
 - No capacity



10 NBCI Short-term Objectives

2012-2013

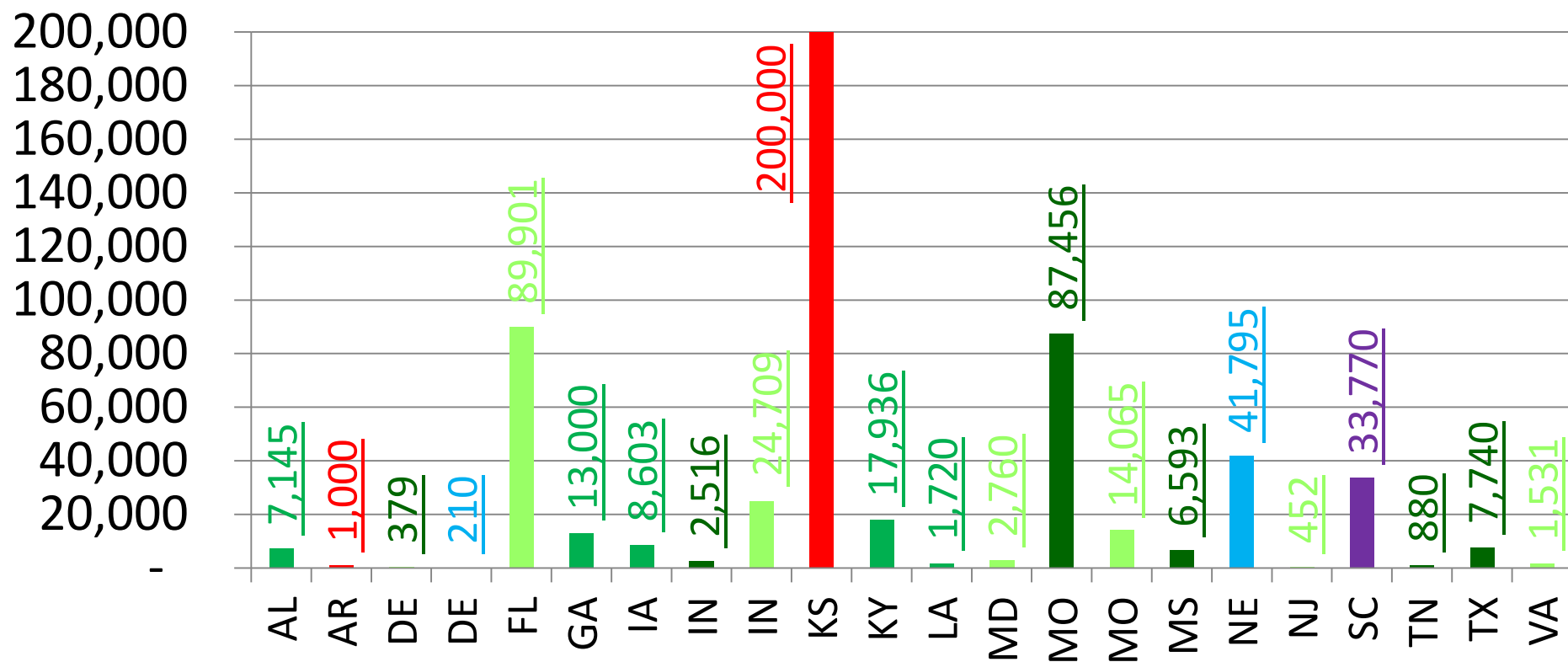
- **Central NBCI data collection, databases**
- **“Natives First” coalition for new NRCS policy**
- **State NBCI implementation model**
- **Model focus area concept for states**
 - **Design and implementation**
 - **Monitoring protocols**
- **Shortleaf pine ecosystem group formed**
 - **Range-wide restoration plan started**
- **NBCI website upgraded as science clearinghouse**
- **NBCI awards upgraded for quail achievers**
- **Launch Bobwhite Foundation**
- **Hire NBCI Grasslands Coordinator**
- **Strengthen NBTC Outreach Subcommittee**
 - **More public communications potency**



Preliminary NBCI Index of Annual Acres of Habitat Management for 2011* for 19 NBCI States

Agency-Based Public Land Management

Confidence: **High** **Moderate** **Somewhat**
Uncertainty: **High** **Moderate** **Somewhat**



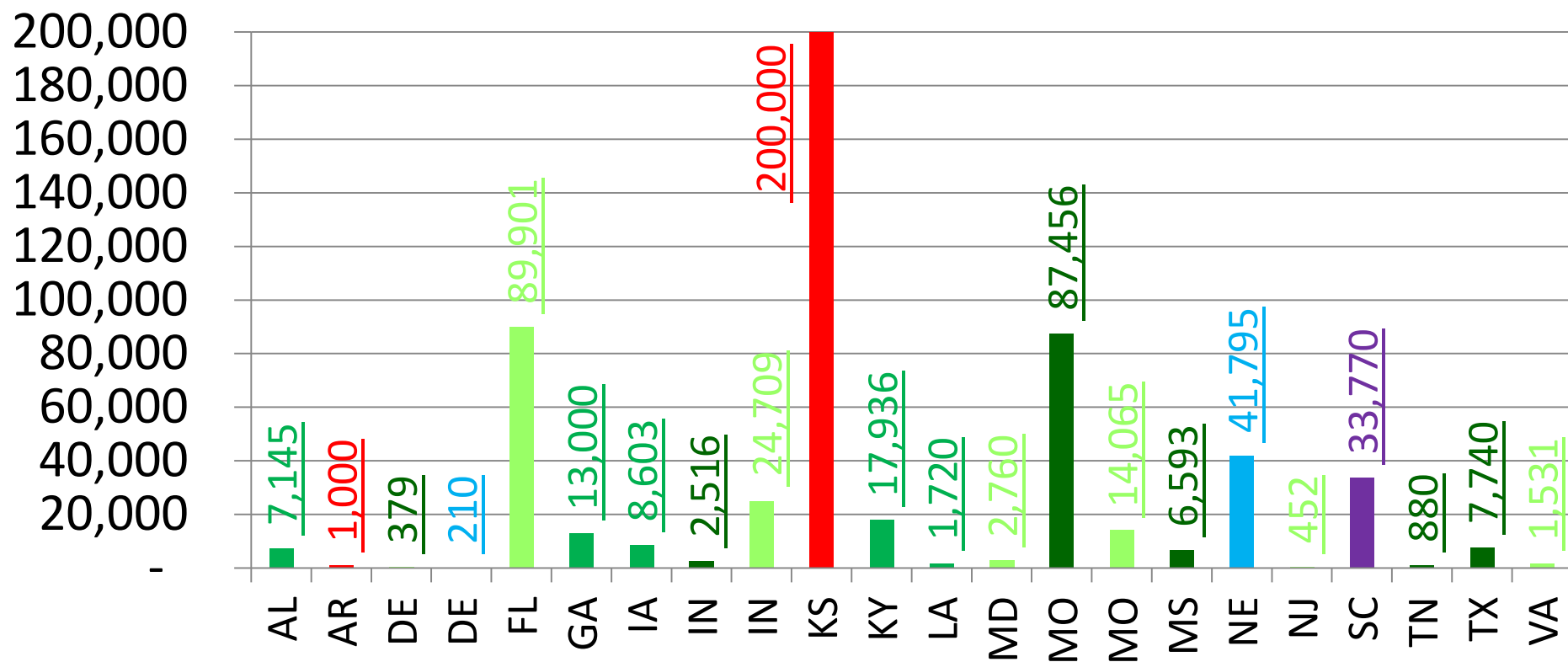
*Year of data collection varies--CY and different FYs, range 7/1/2010—12/31/2011



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“Natives First” Policy for NRCS

- **FSA and NRCS are still subsidizing “invasive” grasses**
 - **NRCS: 365,000 acres pasture enhancement in FY 10**
- **Stop the bleeding!**
- **FSA won’t stop till NRCS does**
- **NBCI has prioritized this problem**
- **“Natives First” proposal to NRCS Chief
December 2011**
- **NBCI proposal rejected, May 2012**
- **Next steps**

State NBCI Implementation Model

(Draft suggestions from NBTC, ~2006)

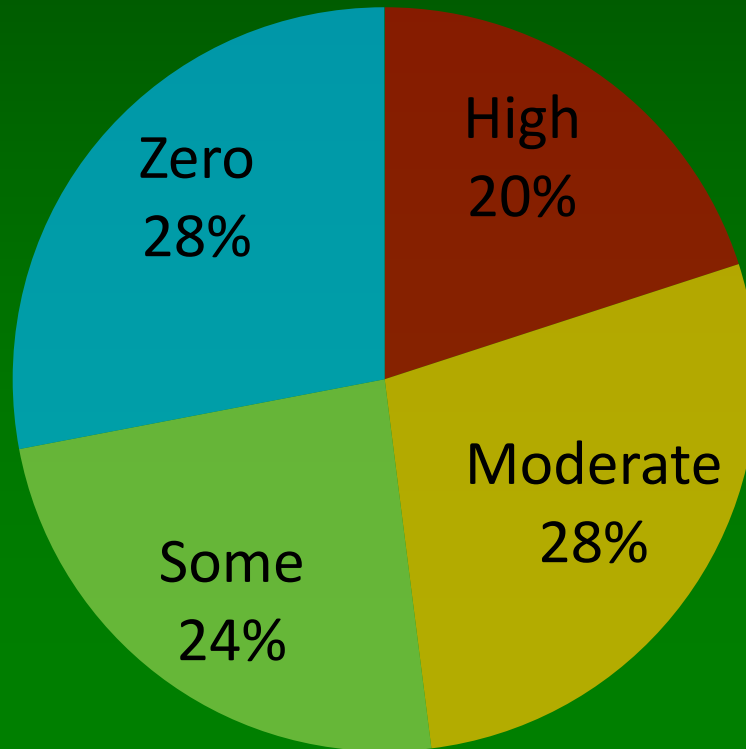
- **Quail restoration as state priority**
- **State NBCI step-down plan**
- **State interagency quail council**
- **Full-time state quail coordinator**
- **Full-time agriculture liaison**
- **Private lands biologists**
- **Engage joint ventures**
- **Quail focus areas**



QUAIL AS A STATEWIDE PRIORITY

Degree to which State Agency has Publicly Identified Bobwhite Restoration as a Priority, either for 1st Time or Continuing

Rating by 25 States

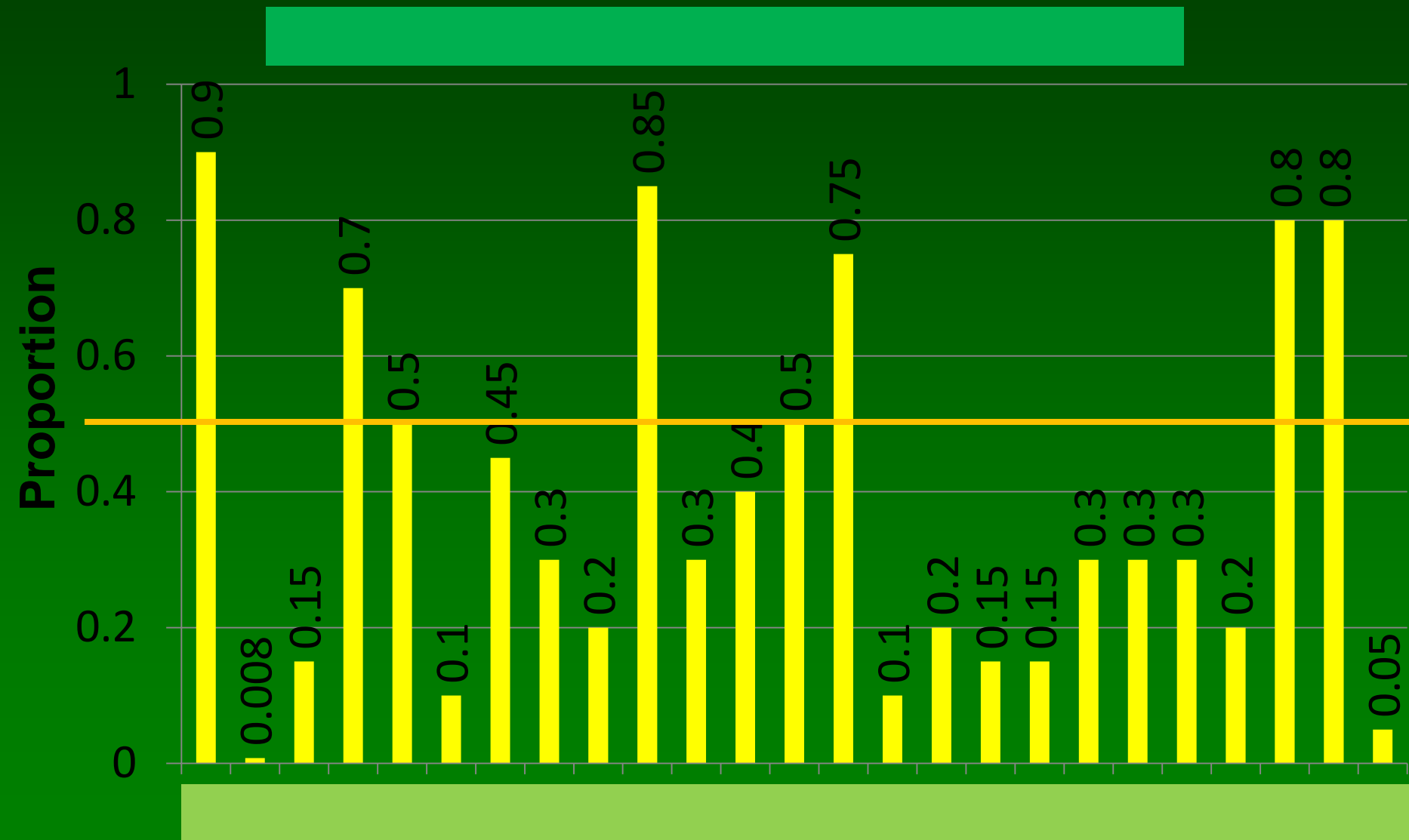


2006
45% "YES"

2011
72% "YES"



Proportion of State Quail Coordinators' Time in 2010 on Bobwhites

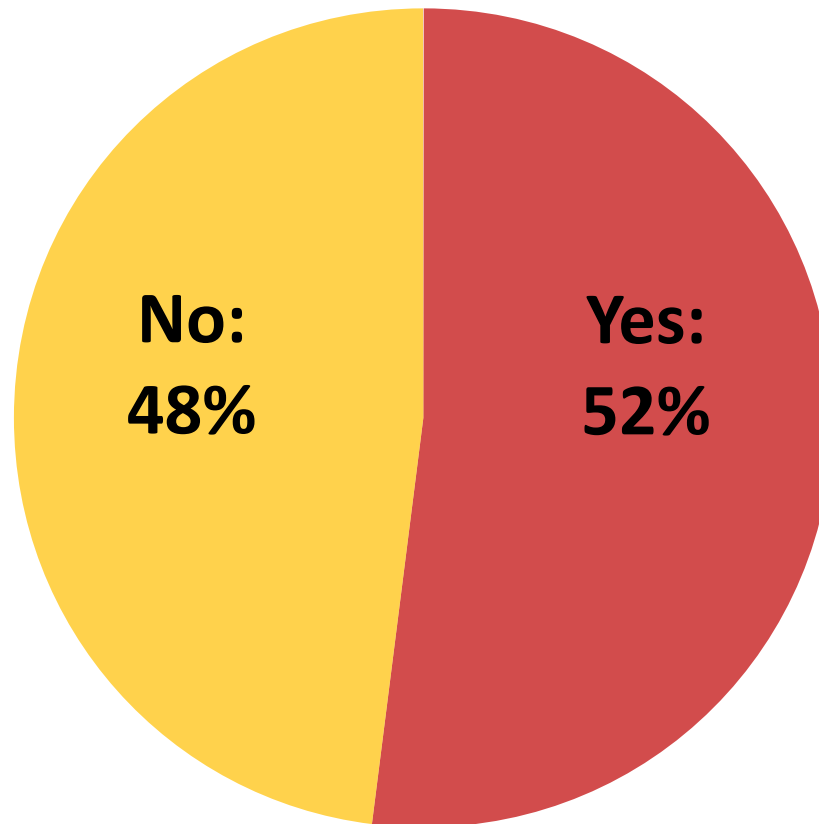




STATE AGENCY QUAIL FOCUS AREAS

(From NBCI INVENTORY 2010-11)

In 2010, my agency had quail focus areas, defined as geographies where quail are the number one priority and there are political boundaries that affect allocation of funding, cost-share, incentives, personnel time, partnerships, outreach and monitoring.



**13 of 25
NBCI
states**

NBCI Focus Area Diversity

- Part of 2002 NBCI strategic plan
- 52% of states (13 of 25) had viable focus areas in 2010
- 182 *Quail* focus areas
 - 79 measuring abundance;
 - 45 with statistically valid estimates
 - 10 million acres total
 - almost half of focus areas are greater than 100,000 acres in size & one is 2.3 million acres
- Positive results: MO, KY, GA, NC, VA, FL...

Why Quail Focus Areas?

- **Long-term Challenge, but short-term:**
 - Expectations
 - Attention spans
 - Budget cycles
- **Cannot fix entire states at once**
 - Need manageable-sized areas
 - Bigger than traditional plot, field or farm
- **Must demonstrate short-term successes:**
 - Prove concepts
 - Instill hope
 - Secure perseverance



Upgrading NBCI Focus Areas

- Adopted by many states, but:
 - Diverse, uncomparable
 - Lack of monitoring is major weakness
- 2011 NBCI 2.0 re-emphasized focus areas
 - Now is time to *improve our approach*
- NBCI is working to:
 - Design better focus areas
 - size, landscape, population goals, habitat objectives
 - Standardize monitoring
 - Density, standardized, central database

NBCI Model Quail Focus Area Concept

**(objective of NBTC Annual Meeting,
Abilene, TX, August 2012)**

- **Right size**
 - Bigger than farm, but smaller than ecoregion
- **Public land core, when possible**
 - Public recreation = public support
- **Private lands to supplement**
 - Private lands are big “pot of gold”
- **Concentrate resources**
 - People, money, partnerships
- **Set objectives**
 - Population, habitat (e.g. 20%)
- **Monitor results**
- **Publicize success**

State Agency

Quail Population Monitoring

(2012 NBCI survey of 24 states)

- 23: monitoring very or somewhat important
- ≥ 19 : willing to participate in standardized or coordinated monitoring
- ≥ 21 willing to do focal area monitoring
 - < 11 willing to monitor statewide
- States' focal area monitoring (compared with bigger scale) :
 - More statistically valid
 - Usually measures density (the new & better metric)
- Window of opportunity for action

NBCI Monitoring Retreat

Lexington, KY, May 2012

- 9 people – NBCI, 4 states, OPJV, academics
 - Reporting to NBTC Research Subcommittee in Abilene, TX in August 2012
- Two main objectives:
 - 1: Standard monitoring protocols for focus areas
 - 2: “Model” focus areas concept for states

NBTC Annual Meeting

Abilene, Texas

August 7-10, 2012



- Special Workshop for state quail coordinators, August 7
- Two main objectives:
 1. Complete final version of focus area monitoring protocol
 2. Develop first full draft of Model Quail Focus Area concept
- Attendance by state quail coordinators is very important to success!

Bobwhite Foundation

- Approved by NBCI Mgt Board
December 2011
- Managed by UT Foundation
- BF will have own Development
Board
- Mission is NBCI implementation
- NBCI Mgt. Board sets priorities
- Initial search for Board members
underway
- First major donation committed



STATE OF THE **BOBWHITE**

**Grassland
Conservation at a Crossroads**



2011 REPORT



Southeastern Outdoor Press

Association

Branson, MO

October 6, 2011



*The Unified Strategy
to Restore Wild Quail*

Bringbackbobwhites.org

**Southeastern
Outdoor**

**2nd Annual SOTB report:
2012 SEOPA meeting
Johnson City, TN
September 26-29, 2012**

ion
MO
2011

**STATE OF THE
BOBWHITE**

2011 REPORT

NBCI
National Bobwhite
Conservation Initiative

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*The Unified Strategy
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Bringbackbobwhites.org



bringbackbobwhites.org



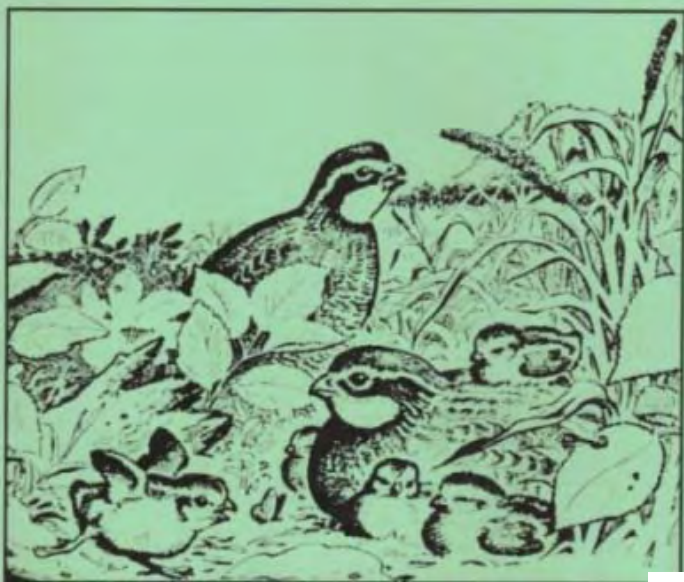
...the unified strategy to restore wild quail

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NBCI
**National Bobwhite
Conservation Initiative**

2002 NBCI

NORTHERN BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE



March 2002

- Habitat based, on scientific consensus
- Promoted unity
- Bobwhites as national issue
- Bobwhites as state priorities
- Big, new farm bill practices
- Integration with JVs, PIF
- Catalyzed other game bird initiatives
- 100,000s acres new habitat
- Re-kindled enthusiasm



How to Fail with NBCI Focus Areas

(based on real state experiences since 2002)

- Weak agency commitment
- Too big / too small
- Poor landscape context
- Weak landowner interest / involvement
- Weak concentration of resources
- No population goals
- No habitat objectives
- No population monitoring
- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of patience and perseverance



Bobwhites May Be The Most Difficult Wildlife Management Challenge Of Our Time

- **States have primary responsibility**
 - Not Federal or joint
 - ~ 30 independent jurisdictions
 - No central infrastructure (e.g. USFWS)
 - Landscape-scale habitat problem
 - No shortcuts
 - Mostly private land
- **Constituency is fading**
- **Long restoration process**
- **Hope is stretched thin**



Texas Quail Strengths

- A passel of passionate quail people
- TPWD providing key leadership
- Texas has much of last, best habitat and huntable populations
- Potent research history, capacity
- Hunters, landowners intensely engaged, motivated
- Joint ventures involved

First Steps of Long Journey

- NBCI vision is “widespread” quail restoration
 - not just a few hot spots
- Focus areas are beginning, not end
- Show short-term success ...
 - Then expand to new areas
- Keep moving forward

Scott County, Missouri

1st NBCI “Success Story”

- 98,000 acre focal area, mostly cropland
- Goal: 4,500 ac restored to habitat in 20 yrs
- Treatments: Farm Bill programs targeting field borders, non-irrigated croplands
- Results: 7,000 ac restored in 3 years
 - ~7% of the cropland in focal area
- Bobwhites:
 - 5X increase in treated areas
 - 300% increase in roadside counts
 - 1 covey per hour by hunters

