

Wildlife Action Plan

Hunter & Angler Recruitment & Retention

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Wildlife Action Plan Technical Working Committee Report

Meeting Time and Place – No formal meeting of this technical committee took place in 2014.

Several members of this technical committee were able to meet to discuss regional priorities during regional breakout sessions at the 2013 National State Wildlife Action Plan Summit at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia June 4-6, 2013. States present during those breakout meetings included Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Executive Summary – Although some MAFWA states have already completed a comprehensive review/revision of their State Wildlife Action Plan, the 2015 revision deadline is the target date for most states. State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Coordinators are working to maintain a strong program of implementation of their Wildlife Action Plans/Comprehensive Conservation Strategies, while at the same time working towards improvements to the Plans through the revision process.

During multiple regional breakout sessions at the National SWAP summit in June 2013, committee members discussed approaches to prioritization of geographic areas, conservation actions, and species. Members also discussed mapping or other tools needed to assist with landscape-level conservation. A related topic of discussion was the potential for region-wide approaches to climate adaptation. These regional discussions are fruitful and at times lead to multi-state projects and grant applications in support of the projects. These discussions offer opportunities for partner agencies and organizations to participate and take an interest in supporting the efforts of the states. For example, after participating in the Midwest Regional Breakout Sessions during the 2013 Summit, The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative has actively worked to address the needs identified by the member states during the discussions.

Due to state agency budget shortfalls and travel restrictions, and competing demands for the time of SWAP coordinators, convening this committee for a full meeting has not been possible since 2010. Midwest states plan to hold a brief meeting in conjunction with the State Wildlife Action Plan Summit scheduled for July 14-16 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Because of the liaison role which plan coordinators fill for their respective states, there are many national and regional meetings which compete for travel approval with the MAFWA SWAP committee meeting (for example, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Joint Ventures, and Flyways meetings, [all of which may occur in multiples for several states], national SWAP Coordinator or Wildlife Diversity Program Manager meetings, Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In Days, other AFWA regional association meetings, AFWA Meetings and Work Groups, and other MAFWA committees). Also, most members of this committee were required to travel to receive several days of training in the use of the Fish and Wildlife Service's TRACS programmatic reporting program during 2013.

Director Action Items – N/A

Director Information Items –

1. Last year, the Directors sent a letter to Fish and Wildlife Service Director Ashe regarding the uneven levels of priority placed on State Wildlife Action Plans by Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). No response was received. Some LCCs in the Midwest region explicitly value and engage with State Wildlife Action Plans, others continue to remain less engaged with SWAP priorities.
2. The Administration's FY15 Budget Request included a 15% cut for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. AFWA sent a letter to Secretary of Interior Jewell expressing disappointment over this additional cut to the program, which has experienced 35% declines since 2010, and which is an important source of funding for the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. Given that these plans together create a national platform for conservation, many state and federal agencies, and NGOs look to the plans to include broader natural resources issues, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation. Further, State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinators are often asked by the USFWS to participate in their initiatives such as the LCCs, surrogate species, and Wildlife TRACS. With decreased funding, it makes it more and more difficult for the state agencies to address local, regional, and national issues and priorities.
3. We continue to need the MAFWA Directors to offer their full support for staff participation in this Committee and provide travel approval to attend out of state meetings. Without this support, this technical working committee cannot provide the guidance the Directors expect or the coordination that Plan/Strategy Coordinators need.
 - a. It will aid in planning if the committee establishes a regular meeting schedule and follows the model used by more established MAFWA technical working committees that the chairmanship role follows the same order as the location of the Director's meeting host state. That way, every member can anticipate which year they will need to chair the committee, or serve as vice-chair, and can also anticipate when it will be their turn to host the technical committee meeting.

Time and Place of Next Meeting – Members of this committee will meet during a regional breakout session of the upcoming State Wildlife Action Plan Summit, which will take place at the Hyatt Regency in St. Louis, Missouri July 14-16, 2014. Recommend an additional in-person meeting in April of 2015 in Minnesota.