

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

**Meeting Time and Place – The technical committee met twice over the last year.** The first meeting (July 14, 2014) took place at the 2014 State Wildlife Action Plan/Strategy (SWAP) Workshop in St. Louis, MO. Workgroup members from 11 of the 13 states gathered over lunch on the second day to discuss region-specific issues and priorities. States present during the meeting included Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

The second meeting was a call-in meeting on May 11, 2015. Committee members from 9 of the 13 states participated. The meeting focused on the role that State Wildlife Action Plans play in conservation planning at the state and regional scales and opportunities for the Plans to drive conservation in the Midwest.

**Executive Summary** – For most states the 2015 revision deadline for updating or revising their State Wildlife Action Plans has required a significant investment in staff time and resources throughout the year. This has been in addition to the ongoing commitment on the part of the Wildlife Action Plan/Strategy Coordinators and Wildlife Diversity Program Managers to maintain and enhance their current programs for the implementation of their SWAP.

At the State Wildlife Action Plan/Strategy Workshop held in St. Louis during July 2014, members discussed how to better collaborate and learn from each other. The group identified the following process for moving this committee forward:

- We decided to have Co-chair positions that will rotate annually as the annual MAFWA Director's meeting rotates among host states. The co-chairs will be the SWAP coordinators for the host state that year, and the previous year's host state. This will provide some continuity across years. The 2014 meeting was in MI, MN will host in 2015, and Missouri in 2016 (host rotation is in alphabetical order, so members can foresee what year it will be their turn to chair the committee). (*Implemented: Faith Balch of MN and Amy Derosier of MI are jointly co-chairing the committee for 2014-2015*)
- We will meet at least annually, either face-to-face or by phone, in April or May. (*This was implemented with the May 11, 2015 phone meeting*)

May 11, 2015 phone meeting highlights:

States discussed the role that their SWAP plays in conservation planning and on-the-ground conservation in their state and shared information on how they were planning to maintain or strengthen that role in their SWAP revisions/updates.

All states emphasized how important conservation partners are to successfully implementing/operationalizing SWAPs.

States shared the concern that reductions in SWG appropriations and the decision to allocate more of those dollars to SWG competitive grants are reducing resources to implement SWAP at a time when more is being expected of the SWAPs. For example, in the updated SWAPs USFWS is encouraging/expecting States to address climate change, Monarch butterfly and pollinators and to increase partnering on projects. These increased

expectations coupled with reduce funding makes it more difficult to implement significant work on the ground.

Members discussed how to make our SWAPs more relevant at a regional scale (attract regional partners and nonprofit funders; identify topics/projects that MAFWA states could move forward together). The decision was to continue this conversation at regular intervals (at least quarterly).

**Director Action Items – N/A**

**Director Information Items –**

1. Revisions to the Wildlife Action Plans are due to the USFWS by September 30, 2015.
2. State Wildlife Grant funding continues to be a concern given that 2010 funding levels have not been reinstated, as well as the allocation of funds from the apportionment to fund the SWG Competitive grants.

**Time and Place of Next Meeting** – Members of this committee will meet via phone after the Wildlife Action Plan revision submission deadline.