

Climate Collaboration Work Group

Context and Summary

The task of our small work group was to help define a structure or framework within which the Department of the Interior could collaboratively construct with states, tribes, other federal agencies, and NGO participants, a national adaptation strategy for responding to the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.

We endorsed the following guidance principals for this collaboration:

1. Embrace the need for and utility of a “national” not “federal” natural resources adaptation strategy.
2. Think expansively and inclusively. Our effort will be better informed with the engagement of more, not less, partners.
3. Respect jurisdictions and agency mandates, but think outside of your own agency about what other agencies may best inform solutions.
4. Look for opportunities in partnerships that already exist that are approaching conservation from a landscape level eg, the WGA Western Wildlife Council; migratory bird Joint Ventures; National Fish Habitat partnerships; Partners in Flight, etc, and use existing strategies as entry points to building a national strategy.
5. Think in terms of what you can contribute, not just what you can get out of it.
6. Use to the extent possible, scheduled national or regional meetings as an opportunity to convene agencies and groups to construct the building blocks of a national strategy.

Over a series of conference calls, we identified the need for and developed a set of work products, which are appended to this report, that we believe can facilitate, frame and inform the development of a national adaptation strategy. A narrative for each of those work products follows this summary.

It is our recommendation that the Department develop a general outline as the basis for consideration at a number of regional workshops, for building and refining the national adaptation strategy. The work products provided herein can inform the development of the strategy with respect to participants in the workshop (federal and state agencies; NGOs); existing landscape conservation approaches; potential venues for workshops; and an at least partial inventory of existing federal climate change research.

Work Groups participants included:

Bob Bendick, The Nature Conservancy
Ken Haddad, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Evan Hirsche, National Wildlife Refuge Association
John Kostyack, National Wildlife Federation

Scott Kovarovics, Izaak Walton League of America
Jane Lyder, Department of the Interior
Roger Pulwarty, Department of Commerce - NOAA
Gus Rassam, American Fisheries Society
Gary Taylor, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Special thanks to Donna Brewer, US Fish and Wildlife Service, for logistical assistance and diligent attention to keeping good notes.

Narrative on Climate Collaboration WG Products

- Task a&b** Climate Wildlife Adaptation Collaborators:
We assembled a list of federal and state agencies with an annotated description of their statutory roles and anticipated responsibility in delivering adaptation programs. We are assuming that the BIA will reach out to the appropriate Indian tribes and Alaska Native Organizations. We also include a list of Non-Governmental Organizations by type or category, with an annotation of what roles they could play in adaptation programs. We advance these as recommended principal participants in the DOI workshops that will be convened to discuss and develop a national adaptation strategy. We thus recommend that these entities be appropriately invited to the workshops. State Executive Branch Organizations, like AFWA for the state fish and wildlife agencies and ECOS for the state departments of environmental quality, etc can assist in ensuring that the invitations be appropriately distributed to their respective member agencies.
- Task c** Existing Landscape Conservation Approaches
We assembled this list of programs and projects as a useful inventory of already existing approaches to landscape level conservation because of their utility to inform a national adaptation strategy. While no means inclusive, they represent good on the ground efforts to identify and apply, from many partners, those synergistic activities that can contribute to successful landscape approaches. We believe that these existing approaches could greatly inform the workshops designed to develop a national adaptation strategy.
- Task d** A Calendar of Upcoming National and Regional Meetings
We assembled a calendar of upcoming regional and national fish and wildlife and other natural resource meetings which could potentially provide a venue at which to affiliate a workshop on developing a national adaptation strategy.
- Task e** A Summary of Federal Agency Climate Research Products
We provide at least a snapshot of what climate change research is ongoing by the federal agencies that might inform the development of a national adaptation strategy. While again not inclusive, it provides a good basis for ensuring that the best available science – based information is used on the development of a national adaptation strategy.