

Landscape Conservation Joint Task Force Charter

December 2, 2021

Task Force Purpose

The purpose of the Landscape Conservation Joint Task Force (Task Force) is to explore and coordinate interests, responsibilities, and efforts among state fish and wildlife agencies, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to provide guidance to, and facilitate coordinated implementation of, programs and policies affecting landscape conservation. The Task Force will develop consistent regional approaches across the country where helpful, identify challenges, remove barriers to working across jurisdictions effectively on shared priorities, and provide a durable and unified approach for working together and with other partners to meet the needs of fish and wildlife conservation at landscape scales. Coordination at the national level is intended to support the evolving collaborative landscape conservation constructs in each of the regional associations of fish and wildlife agencies as they tackle related issues and opportunities.

The Task Force in no way provides exclusive membership and engagement on landscape conservation issues, but is designed to recognize the unique authorities, responsibilities, and necessary peer-to-peer relationship of the fish and wildlife agencies (i.e., both the states and USFWS) for developing national leadership and coordination for landscape conservation. Collaborating on our statutory responsibilities will allow the states and USFWS to provide a foundation for working together more effectively with Tribes, other agencies, landowners, conservation organizations, and other societal sectors necessary for balancing landscape issues and implementing landscape-scale conservation in a collaborative, long-term, and sustained manner.

Structure and Members

The National Landscape Conservation Task Force shall be comprised of 10 members. Five members shall be from the AFWA Executive Committee, including the current president and a representative from each regional association, and five members shall be from USFWS leadership, including the Director, Assistant Director of Science Applications, and three Regional Directors.

The Task Force will be co-chaired by the President of AFWA and the Director (or Acting Director) of the USFWS. The Executive Director of AFWA and a representative from Canada will be ex-officio members.

Responsibilities

The Task Force members will convene as a national body to offer guidance on coordinating and implementing landscape conservation for fish, wildlife, and their habitats by:

- Developing a national approach to landscape-scale conservation that builds on the guidance and recommendations of successful state/USFWS collaborations identified in the joint AFWA/USFWS Resolution on Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Landscape Scales ([#2018-06-07](#)), the joint President’s Task Force on Science and Landscape Conservation Priorities ([President's Report](#)), and the joint State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and Landscape Conservation Framework ([SWAP and Landscape Framework](#)).
- Providing awareness of opportunities and guidance to encourage and implement landscape-scale conservation for shared fish and wildlife priorities.
- Providing communication, coordination, and input into federal and state practices and policies that can enhance or hinder large-scale conservation.
- Identifying obstacles that prevent working together effectively as peers in fish and wildlife conservation and providing guidance to enhance relationships to ensure greater effectiveness in implementing landscape-scale conservation priorities.
- Acknowledging this work is exploratory, relationship-building, and advisory only. No policy decisions will be made, except through consensus or by willing participants representing their agencies.

Topics to be explored may include policies, coordination opportunities, identification of barriers, and any other matters where discussion and collaboration could enhance relationships and working together on landscape-scale conservation. Topics should include recommendations for consistently including Tribes, other agencies, landowners and conservation organizations in collaborative landscape conservation efforts. In addition, the Task Force should work with the Administration to help ensure America the Beautiful/30x30 principles, priorities, and opportunities reflect the shared priorities of the states and USFWS.

The Task Force will establish a work group to support and provide guidance for the SWAP and Landscape Framework. This work group will further develop the connection between the SWAPs and landscape conservation, especially at regional scales. This work shall not imply that SWAPs are the only foundational platform for setting priorities for landscape conservation but serve as a resource for establishing shared priorities.

The Task Force members agree to represent not only their own agency, but also broader interests and association memberships where applicable. The purpose for the Task Force shall be to explore opportunities to gain knowledge, strengthen relationships, develop inter-jurisdictional priorities while respecting state and USFWS responsibilities, and combine our expertise and capacities to bring greater benefits to fish and wildlife conservation at landscape scales.

Meetings

The Task Force will meet at least quarterly. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed to address issues and opportunities in a timely manner. A majority of members present simultaneously, whether virtually or in person, will constitute a quorum, and it will be the goal of the group to come to consensus for any recommendations, if possible.

Topics will be brought to the attention of the co-chairs in advance of the meetings and an agenda will be developed and distributed before meetings.

The Task Force will be staffed jointly by an AFWA and USFWS staff member with supporting assistance as needed from each organization.

Minutes from each meeting will be developed and distributed to each member. Additional communication of ideas, concepts, and recommendations can be shared outside of the Task Force collectively by agreement of members.

Task Force activities, topics, and outputs agreed upon will be reported to AFWA members and within the USFWS.

Technical Advisors

The Task Force may enlist the help of technical and policy experts from within their agencies, AFWA, or any outside experts and partners to bring relevant information and perspectives to issues or topics that are before the Task Force as agreed to by the Task Force.

Signed:

Tony Wasley, President
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Date

Martha Williams, Principal Deputy Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date