



Incorporating Private Lands Conservation into your SWAP

Learning Series #16

Date: April 17, 2024

Time: 2:00pm-3:30pm (ET)

Meeting Link: <https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/88345203558?pwd=tLScIMvk2kMhnO28qBEIbnD5wxbcSu.1>

Meeting ID: 883 4520 3558

Passcode: 753436

One tap mobile: +13017158592,,88345203558#,,,,*753436# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,88345203558#,,,,*753436# US

Overview: About 60% (1.4 billion acres) of the land surface of the United States is held in private ownership. The percentage of private land varies greatly by state, from about 98% in Rhode Island and Kansas to 4% and 12% respectively in Alaska Nevada. Roughly two thirds of federal endangered and threatened species occur on private lands and it’s likely that percentage is even higher for species of greatest conservation need. This Learning Series will feature examples of conservation work on private lands that implement SWAPs and conserve species of greatest conservation need.

MEETING AGENDA

Time (ET)	Topic	Speaker(s)
2:00 PM	Welcome and Introductions (5 min)	Jason Goldberg, FWS; Mark Humpert, AFWA
2:05 PM	Conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need through the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (10 min)	AnnMarie Krmpotich, USFWS
	Conserving Species of Greatest Conservation Need on Private Forest Land (10 min)	Jimmy Bullock, NAFO
	Conserving Species of Great Conservation Need on Nebraska Private Lands (10 min)	T.J. Walker, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
	Connecting habitat enhancement opportunities with private landowners in partnership with the Sustainable Farming Association (10 min)	Jim Wanstall, Minnesota DNR and Johnathan Kilpatrick, Sustainable Farming Association
	Q&A (15 min)	
3:00 PM	Breakout Groups	
2:20 PM	Reconvene	
3:30pm	Adjourn	

Conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need through the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (10 min) AnnMarie Krmpotich, USFWS

- We have to consider private lands in conservation goals given the amount of private lands in the U.S.
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program works with others to achieve voluntary habitat conservation on private lands. Found in all 50 States and has been a strong win-win for conservation and people.
- The definition for private lands in the U.S. is broad and includes corporate, Tribal, county lands, and more. Basically anything that is not Federal or State lands.
- The work can take place in many different forms and many intersections between government and private sectors.
- National Strategy drops down to Regional Implementation Plans, which lead to local on the ground work.
- We identify focal areas in each FWS Region.
- PFW Strategic Plan – Helps internal stakeholders learn how they can engage. 2022-2026 Priorities
 - Species Conservation
 - Habitat Connectivity
 - Resilient Ecosystems
- We review SWAPs to determine where and how to work.
- In the Midwest, for example, priorities include waterfowl, migratory birds in decline, pollinators, and listed and at-risk species.
 - MAFWA worked with over 100 taxonomists and species experts to develop RSGCN, which PFW has used in its planning efforts. This has used for real-world delivery to identify which species we focus on.
- We're working to get habitat on the ground for species we care about. We're seeing results, such as Topeka shiner! We developed goals for the species, such as number of areas restored.
- Using SWAPs and other tools is supporting our work with pollinators such as Karner's Blue Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee. We're thinking about issues such as working in urban areas and connectivity.
- As land managers, we don't have enough lands to meet our goals. We need the private lands component. We're finding that people who participate find the experience a positive one and has been a catalyst for working on additional projects.
- USFWS Regional Coordinators for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program contact:
 - <https://www.fws.gov/program/partners-fish-and-wildlife/contact-us>

Conserving Species of Greatest Conservation Need on Private Forest Land (10 min) Jimmy Bullock, NAFO

- Jimmy is with Resource Management Service, which manages land in the South. Here today for National Alliance of Forest Owners. Which manages land across 34 states. NAFO and AFWA are partners in the Wildlife Conservation Initiative.
- 80 members, own or manage 44M acres in 34 States and 134 Congressional districts.
- Knowing FWS had a legal obligation to review over 500 species, we decided to be proactive in determining how working forests could be part of the solution. Our CEOs have committed to the conservation initiative. A condition of NAFO membership is demonstration of forest sustainability.

98% of NAFO use third-party audits, which helps provide certainty of management practices. We are working to build trust and move to a culture of collaboration.

- We have a strong science component. FWS has seeded work through Science Applications, for example. We've gained some other funds from NCASI and several companies. Our efforts cross a range of species from bats to aquatic species, all geared at the importance of managed forests. AFWA will also be involved in helping make decisions in the future.
- Example - wood turtles and gopher tortoise. Gopher tortoise is a keystone species in historical longleaf forests. Private landowners provided unprecedented data to FWS for listing decision determination. FWS made decision not to list gopher tortoise in eastern part of its range.
- We share best practices. We get into the field together. Kudos to WV, which has embraced Wildlife Conservation Initiative in supporting SWAPs, including SGCNs. WV has hosted field trips for aquatic and terrestrial species.
- Opportunities for NAFO and AFWA to work together
 - Address conservation of SWAP SGCNs.
 - Create new tools to encourage species conservation, surveys, research, and reintroduction on or to private lands.
 - Sharing proprietary information about species.
 - Field trips.
 - Other opportunities to build trust.
- Reticulated flatwood salamanders is a listed species. Exploring opportunities to use Partners Agreement as a conservation recovery tool where regulatory burden is diminished where the species is reintroduced without risk. We're looking to reintroduce other species.
- WCI has become a forestry pillar of how to achieve conservation without conflict. Promotes voluntary, proactive strategies to conserve species and achieve greater benefits than regulatory approaches alone.
- ESA has great flexibility; moving from what the ESA says we can't do to what the ESA does not say we can't do.
- Working to continue to build trust!
- Mark – If you have significant forests on your lands, get in touch with Jimmy!
- jbullock@resourcemgt.com and Bryan Petit (bpetit@nafoalliance.org)
- <https://nafoalliance.org/>
- <https://nafoalliance.org/home/partners/>

Conserving Species of Great Conservation Need on Nebraska Private Lands (10 min) T.J. Walker, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

- 97% of Nebraska is privately held. Vast majority is used for agriculture, including lands in federal and state lands.
- NE Habitat Stamp initiated in 1977. Initially focused on game species, but later has turned to non-game species.
- First modern "Farm Bill" in 1985.
- 1992 – NE Environmental Trust started.
- 1993 – Sandhills Task Force formed.
- 1994 – Private Lands Section started within NGPC.
- 2002 – Landowner Incentives Program – moderate success and a big first step.

- 2005 – NE Natural Legacy Project
 - 23 members from Federal, State, NGO, landowner groups.
 - Writing teams for 4 ecoregions, scrutinized very closely.
 - Mark H. served on the team!
 - Written as Nebraska’s plan, not the NGPC’s plan.
 - Led to Focus Areas – Biologically Unique Landscapes (BULS)
 - Early steps – Identified flagship BULS.
 - Partnered with NGOs to add boots on the ground (Coordinating Wildlife Biologists) to deliver conservation and become part of the community.
 - Work is active today with many partners such as USFWS PFW, Rainwater Basins JV, NRCS, Sandhills Task Force, Quail/Pheasants Forever, Northern Prairies Land Trust, Audubon Great Plains, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Northern Prairies Land Trust and others.
 - Implementation
 - Doing habitat work on about 20,000 acres / year, mostly on working lands.
 - Projects focused on ecosystems to benefit at-risk species and “win-win.”
 - Significant focus on invasive species management.
 - Funding from SWG, NFWF grants, and other sources, probably about \$2.5M / year in total, not counting partner or landowner (25%) contributions.
 - Example of Loess Canyons BUL supporting elk, mule deer, wild turkey and other species.
- Incorporating the SWAP into USDA programs
 - Projects within BULs get additional ranking points for WIN/Wildlife funding pools in EQIP and ACEP.
 - Have utilized Conservation Priority Area designations within CRP to target portions of BULs
 - Depending upon practices and USDA cost-share rates, we can piggy-back SWAP incentives on top of USDA cost-share.
 - Many CSP practices target at-risk species
 - USDA has greatly limited use of “blanket spraying” in many areas.
- Also partnering with universities on research, monitoring, outreach and conservation planning.
- Greatest SWAP successes to date include landowner cooperatives.
- thomas.walker@nebraska.gov

Connecting habitat enhancement opportunities with private landowners in partnership with the Sustainable Farming Association (10 min) Jim Wanstall, Minnesota DNR and Johnathan Kilpatrick, Sustainable Farming Association

- Over 75% of MN is privately owned.
- Private land efforts through MN Conservation Focus Areas include
 - Direct partnerships through technical assistance and funding.
 - Working with private landowners in proximity to public lands to implement conservation easements and other protections.
 - Provide education, outreach, and one on one technical assistance.
- Sustainable Farming Association founded in 1988. Working to support regenerative agricultural practices which can support conservation on the landscape.
- SFA utilizes farmers and consultants experienced in regenerative agriculture.
 - Hosts full-day workshops to teach the foundation, then follows up with one-on-one opportunities for practical in-the-field work with farmers.

- SFA believes sustainability and profitability need to be tied together.
- Power of building relationships
 - Effective relationships build over time through personal relationships
 - Spend time in person on the ground
 - Be willing to learn and understand
 - Ask for input and advice
- james.wanstall@state.mn.us
- jonathan@sfa-mn.org

Q&A

- For NE – It appears your plan is integrated into agency priorities. How was that accomplished? Did it start out that way, or did you have to promote it internally?
 - Thomas – Mark and others had the entire agency involved from the get go, which helped. This was a chance for us to do things for both game and non-game species. We’ve gradually developed the Diversity Program. Partners were also brought in.
- 98% - Is the dynamic between the agency and ag producer / landowner different because it’s their land?
 - TJ – Loess Canyon is a great example. We were trapping American burying beetles in county right of ways and went from landowners telling us to move or were apathetic to today they are proud that we have an endangered species on their property. It took a while to get things rolling and establish community.
- To TJ Walker: What degree of ongoing follow up do you have with landowners following implementation? How selective are you about new projects? That is, is there excess demand?
 - If it’s too expensive, we have passed, but we try to get people in the order they come in.
 - We don’t visit every project site every year but we have 5 to 10 year agreements and typically revisit every site at least once if not multiple times. Many projects have follow up management, such as prescribed fire either built into their agreement or encouraged.
 - Yes, there is excess demand. We’ve added positions in some cases. USDA catches some excess demand through EQIP.
- Are there regional coordinators for the MOA? If so, could you post the contacts in the chat? I think we might have some opportunities to explore this in WA if we aren't already (I'd need to ask our forest resource managers in our agency WDFW and sister-agency DNR)
 - there are multiple - and I hate to admit I do not have the list and contact info in front of me. For WA/OR, the lead is Jenn Bakke with Manulife. Adrian Miller with Weyco and Galen Sculer with Green Diamond are also active.
 - **Jimmy to follow-up.**
- Mark – There are 80 member companies with millions of acres of land under their management.
- For AnnMarie – Are you seeing strong partnerships in other states too on SGCNs, or are there pockets where it’s happening?
 - There are pockets. We know the rigor that goes into SWAPs, so we take priorities from those.
 - How do we learn from the TJs of the world? There are definitely opportunities for improvement.
- To all - What resources do you need to better address private land conservation in your SWAP?

- Permanent long-term funding that can be dedicated to positions to help keep people employed. TJ – We’ve always had to hire term-position employees, which makes long-term recruitment difficult. We need to have people to support delivery.
- Jimmy – Large landowners can’t qualify for Farm Bill funding. We’re trying to find ways to put more resources on the ground.
- TJ – Sometimes having someone employed by an NGO can help with trust because they’re not technically from the government.
- For Jimmy – Is there a place to find your affiliates and where you’re active?
 - (Links added above.)

Breakout Group Discussion Trigger Questions (Not discussed due to time)

Question-Do you plan to prioritize work on private lands in your SWAP and why or why not?

Question- What conservation actions do you include in your SWAP that are directed at private lands?

Question-What resources do you need to better address private land conservation in your SWAP?

Links to Video and Notes from Past SWAP Learning Series and Tentative Future Topics

Date*	Topic (w/Recording Link)	Recording Password	Link to Notes
Wednesday, November 16, 2022	#1 Engaging Tribes and Indigenous People in State Wildlife Action Plans	OT?41Gz.	SWAP & Tribal Engagement Notes
Wednesday, December 14, 2022	#2 SWAPs and Climate Adaptation Guidance	XU.=69*j	SWAP & Climate Adaptation Notes
Wednesday, January 18, 2023	#3 State Wildlife Action Plans and Renewable Energy	=7NSqgQT	SWAP & Renewable Energy Notes
Wednesday, March 15, 2023	#4 Interactive data and tools for SWAP planning and implementation	+6@f9jQW	SWAP & NatureServe Notes
Wednesday, April 19, 2023	#5 Engaging Diverse Partners & Making your SWAP More Relevant	\$p?=!g95	SWAP & Engaging Diverse Partners Notes
Wednesday, May 17, 2023	#6 Using the SWAP & Landscape Conservation Framework for Interjurisdictional Landscape Conservation	B=Jg^@8=	SWAP & Landscape Conservation
Wednesday, June 21, 2023	#7 Making Your SWAP RAWA-Ready	FnJane%1	Making SWAP RAWA-Ready

Wednesday, July 19, 2023	#8 Incorporating corridors into your SWAP	2r#+^rIa	Incorporating Corridors into SWAP
Wednesday, August 16, 2023	#9 Roundtable Discussion	LtnZ1x\$V	SWAP Open Discussion
Wednesday, September 20, 2023	# 10 SWAPs, Federal Planning, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	3v4O08?X	SWAPs and Federal Planning
October 18, 2023	#11 SWAPs and Bat Conservation	?2W2UA*B	SWAP and Bat Conservation
November 15, 2023	#12 Incorporating Fish & Wildlife Health into your SWAP	7XvFM&a\$	SWAP & Fish & Wildlife Health
December 13 th , 2023 (2 nd Wed of Dec.)	#13 2023 Round-up on Lessons Learned & Open Forum	M&md51We	
January 17, 2024	#14 Species of Greatest Conservation Need	?Zc7+aL3	
February 21, 2024	#15 Dashboards & Paperless SWAP	\$aBp*6Yt	
March 20, 2024	No Learning Series (See you in Portal, AZ for the WDPM Annual Meeting)		
April 17, 2024	#16 Incorporating Private Lands Conservation into your SWAP		
May 15, 2024	#17 Using Social Science in your SWAP		
June 12, 2024 2 nd Wed of the month	#18 Addressing Full Lifecycle Bird Conservation in your SWAP		
July 17, 2024	#19-Topic TBD		
August 21, 2024	#20 Open Forum		
September 18, 2024	#21-Topic TBD		
October 16, 2024	#22-Topic TBD		
November 20, 2023	#23-Topic TBD		
December 18, 2024	#24-Topic TBD		
* Note all SWAP Learning Series sessions will be held from 2:00pm-3:30pm ET unless otherwise indicated.			