



# State Wildlife Action Plans: Virtual SWAP and Dashboards

## Learning Series #15

**Date:** February 21, 2024

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

**Meeting Link:** <https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/81617990582?pwd=BaFZHFDOgixnh0N5VaOxyUPqE9auxC.1>

**Meeting ID:** 816 1799 0582

**Passcode:** 410505

**One tap mobile:** +16465588656,,81617990582#,,,,\*410505# US (New York)

+16469313860,,81617990582#,,,,\*410505# US

**Overview:** State Wildlife Action Plans are comprehensive documents that often include extensive biological information on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and their habitats. An important tenet of these plans is that they serve as blueprints for conserving SGCN and provide information that state, federal, and local partners can use to assist with implementing the plans. **The length and technical nature of a SWAP as a paper document or PDF can create accessibility issues for some partners and the public. Several states have or are considering developing a ‘virtual’ SWAP for their next plan revision.** Some states like the Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife have embedded information in their strategy (SWAP) into a dynamic website. The USFWS Science Applications Program is developing a dashboard prototype that states/territories could use for their SWAP. Furthermore, an AFWA working group is developing guidance for states and the FWS that can be used regarding virtual SWAPS for revision and approval. This Learning Session will provide several examples of a virtual SWAP and an update on the draft guidance.

### MEETING AGENDA

Time (ET)	Topic	Speakers
2:00 PM	Welcome and Introductions (5 min)	Jason Goldberg, FWS; Mark Humpert, AFWA
2:05 PM	USFWS State Wildlife Action Plan Dashboard (20 mins)	Jennylyn Redner, USFWS-Science Applications
	Oregon Conservation Strategy (SWAP) Virtual Platform (15 min)	Andrea Hanson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
	Virtual State Wildlife Action Plan Interim Guidance (10 mins)	Mark Humpert, AFWA; Paul VanRyzin, USFWS
	Q&A (10 min)	
2:55 PM	Breakout Groups	

2:20 PM	Reconvene	
3:30pm	Adjourn	

USFWS State Wildlife Action Plan Dashboard (Jennylyn Redner, USFWS-Science Applications)

- [Jennylyn.redner@redbosscience.com](mailto:Jennylyn.redner@redbosscience.com)
- This is a pilot project, expected to be completed by end of FY24 or FY25. Will provide additional tools and options for implementation of Digital SWAPs, help provide standardization and reportability across states and regions, facilitate cooperation.
- Effort is NOT intended to replace existing state dashboard efforts.
- Focus is on MAFWA and SEAFWA regions, 2015+ SWAPs.
- All data is publicly available.
- Software is PowerBi, Excel, and Access.
- State habitats crosswalked to IUCN. Data schematics designed to accommodate additional classifications.
- Seeks to improve map-centric functionality.
- (JennyLyn showed the current model.) Dashboard allows information to be filtered in different ways, such as by species, habitat, region, habitat threats, species threats, etc. covered by SWAP required Elements.
- Some help needed with monitoring. What would be useful?
- How might the revision tab be more useful?
- A static iteration is published about every 3-6 months. JennyLyn can share it if you want to explore it.
- How do you plan on maintaining information on taxonomy when states don't use the same scientific name for the same species?
  - We are utilizing ITIS taxonomy with specific IDs, but we are also implementing the name the states use in a separate column
- Have you thought of using a habitat classification like NVCC rather than IUCN?
  - We went with IUCN because this is being done with a parallel project that is using IUCN. We have the functionality to incorporate other landcover systems.
- I saw that you have listing status, but would you include other state or national conservation status classification systems in the dashboards? IUCN or NatureServe ranking?
  - They could be included.
- Who is the intended audience? State programs and partners or the general public or both?
  - Primarily state level planners and biologists, hopefully a way to help use common resources across state lines.
  - Theoretically both. The goal is to increase regional and multistate partnerships, but if a NGO like TNC could benefit we are hoping they could utilize as well.
  - Using (consuming and serving) is an ultimate goal once its polished and ready for action
- Has there been any consideration of how to expose the data via API so it can be utilized in other contexts?
  - Yes. Not in this phase, but ultimately in the next phase, as we move toward developing the map component.

- I love the idea of standardized data across boundaries. How do you see the workflow for updating the application? Would states get a format for the data to be loaded and they would be expected to upload? Or would we send it to you and you'd upload?
  - I've got a few ideas for the data will be updated. I would love for states to have some ownership of updating / editing data (cause they know their data best!). This would need to be pushed to the 2nd phase functionality
- it looks like there may be some species name repeats - how did you navigate different states using different names or nonstandardized names (e.g. bald eagle vs American bald eagle)
  - We're still rectifying. If a species has an ITIS number, we'll include it as well as a separate column. We may also include subpopulation and breeding populations.
- Will the dashboard keep track of revisions made by states? An element of our SWAP guidance is to provide information about what changed from one revision to the next. I think of it as "chain of revision custody" tracking.
  - We're working to give some users the capability to make revisions and upload their own changes.
- What do you do when a certain state's SWAP does not contain the information you are presenting in the dashboard. For example, if actions are not presented in a way that can be linked to habitat types or specific species or taxa?
  - Currently, that state simply doesn't have representation in a particular tab, or it gets aggravated to a very broad level (ex. Terrestrial Threat X)
- In monitoring tab, was that actions that States identified in their SWAP or was it intended to be things that are happening and ongoing? Is it conservation actions or active monitoring?
  - A little bit of both. It's an identified need and action we need to do for the species.

#### Oregon Conservation Strategy (SWAP) Virtual Platform (Andrea Hanson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife)

- **Andrea.V.Hanson@odfw.oregon.edu**
- During last comprehensive revision in 2015, we asked partners where barriers to using the strategy. Using the PDF and printed document was a challenge.
- In 2016, we set up a website in response. It's been a huge success in meeting FWS needs and allows us to update the website to make it more current.
- The site allows all major subjects to be shared at the top screen so people can find their subject of interest. Any user can find priority issues at whatever scale they're working on, at different scales.
- We use a "rotator" to highlight new tools and conservation stories, helping keep content relevant and allowing us to reach more diverse audiences.
- Overview is where we put key information on the site without overwhelming users who have a particular subject of interest.
- Different levels of information is available.
- Links are also provided. It takes time to update, but it allows users to be linked to more detailed information about different issues, species, and habitats and get more on-the-ground conservation actions.
- Data can be viewed in different formats, such as by key conservation issues or ecoregion.
- We've seen people engaging more throughout the website.
- Conservation actions are stepped down to local level. Potential partners are also identified.

- The website includes embedded tables and can be configured to desired interests.
- Users can also create maps with specific data of interest. Data can be exported.
- Google Analytics
  - We can track SWAP use and users. In 2023, for example, 153K user sessions. We can follow which pages were most used, etc. We use the data to inform our updates so we can identify what users are really using and provide more information on specific areas of interest. We can also identify pages that are low use and work to identify why.
  - Helpful to providing some metrics about user interest.
- What's behind developing it, or did you contract it out? And what about maintenance?
  - We went to contractors - EcoTrust. There was a lot of information for the SWAP, GIS, etc. It wasn't difficult to find someone, there were a lot of organizations interested in this.
  - We do the long-term maintenance. Contractors developed the look and areas, where we edit words and information and website repopulates. We have a small contract for long-term issues.
  - In the last revision this was contracted out. We're assessing if Compass can be updated/managed internally with existing staff due to the availability of new/more accessible tools.
- You web-enabled the plan in 2016. Did you use the plan to develop the site, or did you rely on the relevancy survey to change how you developed your plan?
  - We took the Strategy and updated it, took it to the contractor, and the contractor designed the site around the content we showed them. There was a little restructuring with new information.
- Comment: I really like the "read more" or "read less" buttons so that people can delve into things without navigating to a different page.
- Have you needed to do extra work to make the website compatible with phones?
  - It's part of our revision effort. The site does work with phones. Some of the maps don't work as great with phones, which we're working on.
- Have you thought about static maps that can be zoomed in on for phone users? Definitely something we've had issues with if there are any number of polygons. Seems like iPad and Chromebook sizes plus are fine. If you find a phone solution for complex maps that are embedded definitely let us know!
  - We're working on it too!
- Comment: This is really cool Andrea! Definitely feeds into the pictures and interactions worth a thousand words. Curious if the tables are exportable? Would suspect that would make a lot of feds happy to be able to grab information regarding the 8 Critical Elements, but also point to your showcasing of specific COAs and conservation efforts on the ground (this also goes for everyone, definitely love seeing your stories and pictures from the field in your SWAPs. Builds that personal connection and I'd assume that is good PR with the general public in your respective regions
- It took the contractor about nine months to build the website, including uploading data and working out the bugs.
- Is your virtual SWAP hosted on your state's IT servers or do you contract for hosting service?
  - Agency doesn't host it. We pay for the website names but it's not part of our agency servers.
  - Some people buy websites and try to sell to us.
- Is going to an enterprise system an important step in moving to your own state servers?

- These are issues we need to address in the revision process. We're working to identify how to bring things in-house or align the software used to design the websites better with our IT and security measures.
- Cost for the entire process was about \$100K.
  - Depends in part on whether resources are already available.
- Andrea, any idea how much time is invested in ongoing website support/maintenance? In terms of hours or \$\$?
  - Set sideboards at the beginning on how often you will update information, new taxonomic names, etc. Otherwise, there's an expectation that you will fix errors ASAP. We do updates every six months.
  - It probably takes 4-8 hours to update links, but it varies.
- Is there something in JennyLyn's presentation you would like to integrate?
  - There was a lot of good info. It's great to see all of the different ways in which people are using information.

Virtual State Wildlife Action Plan Interim Guidance (Mark Humpert, AFWA; Paul VanRyzin, USFWS)

- **If you are interested in talking further about Plan Enhancement funding, please contact me at paul\_vanryzin@fws.gov.**
- Overview
  - A number of representatives from the States and others have been working on this through a Paperless SWAP Working Group.
  - A long history of innovation!
  - 2005 SWAPs were submitted in hard copy, but 2015 SWAPs were digital.
  - AFWA published Best Practices for SWAPs in 2012.
  - 2013-2015, WSFR offered Plan Enhancement grants through C-SWG.
  - Discussion at September 2023 AFWA meeting on web-enabled SWAPs.
- The Memo
  - 2017 Guidance. We're following collaborate policy-making for SWG program. We're following same approach for SWAPs.
  - Jointly-signed letter to all state and territory Fish and Wildlife agencies.
  - Interim guidance will support digital SWAPs. It's for state agencies when revising and submitting digital SWAPs. It helps the writers, reviewers, and FWS to help encourage digital SWAPs consistently in all of their forms.
- Definitions
  - Almost all SWAPs are in PDFs now.
  - Web-hosted SWAP – Exists on a server and available online as a series of web page.
  - SWAP database – Serves as a standalone SWAP or that supplies Eight Element content to Web-hosted SWAP or a SWAP Dashboard
  - SWAP Dashboard – SWAP that exists as a digital dashboard with an interactive user interface.
- Draft Interim Guidance
  - Acknowledges that we're not changing the 2017 Guidance.
  - Encourages Digital SWAP advancement and reaffirms a state's choice to pursue any format for their SWAP.

- Proposes to distinguish between “Core” Eight Elements content necessary for grant (WSFR) and SWAP (RRT) approvals and non-required SWAP content.
- Proposes use of a template with descriptions and examples of required Core Eight Element content.
- Next Steps
  - Continue working on Core Eight Element content, template, and overall interim guidance.
  - Reach consensus by mid-March.
  - Seek approval by leadership in WSFR by 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March, then approval at the North American.
  - Provide webinars and one-on-one support to assist in use of the template.
  - After 2025, consider updating the 2017 Guidance.
- No pressure to change what you’re doing with your SWAP revision. You can still do the PDF if you like, but the info is here if you decide you want to do something more.

## All

- You don’t want to share all information, such as locations of sensitive species. How do you make decisions of what to share?
  - Andrea – Any listed species has a buffer of six square miles. You can’t click on a single hexagon to identify it, but you know the species is somewhere in there.
- How many States are planning to develop a Web-hosted SWAP or Dashboard SWAP? Is SWAP enhancement program something you would want to tap into in the future?
  - Vermont still shopping around for the right format/platform. Any advice/recommendations would be appreciated. Yes, we’d like to tap the Action Plan Enhancement fund.
  - NJ would be interested in applying for an enhancement grant in 2025/26
  - Cindy (NC): We don’t have in-house capacity but are interested.
  - Ohio is interested in pursuing a digital format and yes we would also be interested in the plan enhancement grants.
  - Maintaining C-SWG SWAP Enhancement would be great, Paul!
  - We are going to try to develop a web enabled SWAP for GA as well.
  - NJ is moving forward with a web enabled SWAP along with a queryable tool.
  - Similarly for Maine, I believe there would be interest in taking advantage of a SWAP enhancement grant to develop a digital SWAP. However, it wouldn’t be until after the SWAP revision is complete.
    - ditto for RI.
- Georgia – We’re looking at a storymap and exploring other options such as AGOL.

## Breakout Group Discussion Trigger Questions (Skipped)

Question-Is your state/territory planning to submit a virtual SWAP and if so, what platform do you plan to use?

Question-What challenges are you facing to make your SWAP more accessible?

Question-What resources or support do you need to make your SWAP more accessible?

## 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	<a href="#">#1 Engaging Tribes and Indigenous People in State Wildlife Action Plans</a>	0T?41Gz.	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; Tribal Engagement Notes</a>
Wednesday, December 14, 2022	<a href="#">#2 SWAPs and Climate Adaptation Guidance</a>	XU.=69*j	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; Climate Adaptation Notes</a>
Wednesday, January 18, 2023	<a href="#">#3 State Wildlife Action Plans and Renewable Energy</a>	=7NSqgQT	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; Renewable Energy Notes</a>
Wednesday, March 15, 2023	<a href="#">#4 Interactive data and tools for SWAP planning and implementation</a>	+6@f9jQW	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; NatureServe Notes</a>
Wednesday, April 19, 2023	<a href="#">#5 Engaging Diverse Partners &amp; Making your SWAP More Relevant</a>	\$p?-=!g95	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; Engaging Diverse Partners Notes</a>
Wednesday, May 17, 2023	<a href="#">#6 Using the SWAP &amp; Landscape Conservation Framework for Interjurisdictional Landscape Conservation</a>	B=Jg^@8=	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; Landscape Conservation</a>
Wednesday, June 21, 2023	<a href="#">#7 Making Your SWAP RAWA-Ready</a>	FnJane%1	<a href="#">Making SWAP RAWA-Ready</a>
Wednesday, July 19, 2023	<a href="#">#8 Incorporating corridors into your SWAP</a>	2r#+^rla	<a href="#">Incorporating Corridors into SWAP</a>
Wednesday, August 16, 2023	<a href="#">#9 Roundtable Discussion</a>	LtnZ1x\$V	<a href="#">SWAP Open Discussion</a>
Wednesday, September 20, 2023	<a href="#"># 10 SWAPs, Federal Planning, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</a>	3v4O08?X	SWAPs and Federal Planning
October 18, 2023	<a href="#">#11 SWAPs and Bat Conservation</a>	?2W2UA*B	<a href="#">SWAP and Bat Conservation</a>
November 15, 2023	<a href="#">#12 Incorporating Fish &amp; Wildlife Health into your SWAP</a>	7XvFM&a\$	<a href="#">SWAP &amp; Fish &amp; Wildlife Health</a>
December 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed of Dec.)	<a href="#">#13 2023 Round-up on Lessons Learned &amp; Open Forum</a>	M&md51We	
January 17, 2024	<a href="#">#14 Species of Greatest Conservation Need</a>	?Zc7+aL3	
February 21, 2024	<a href="#">#15 Dashboards &amp; Paperless SWAP</a>	\$aBp*6Yt	

March 20, 2024	<b>No Learning Series</b> (See you in Portal, AZ for the WDPM Annual Meeting)		
April 17, 2024	#16 Tentative: SWAP & Conservation on Private Lands		
May 15, 2024	#17 Tentative-Using Social Science in your SWAP		
June 12, 2024 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed of the month	#18 Tentative-Addressing Full Lifecycle Bird Conservation in your SWAP		
July 17, 2024	#19-Topic TBD		
August 21, 2024	#20-Topic TBD		

\* Note all SWAP Learning Series sessions will be held from 2:00pm-3:30pm ET unless otherwise indicated.