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CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE



Eastern Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina*

THE GOAL OF THE REVISION IS THAT IT WILL GO FAR BEYOND JUST SECURING STATE WILDLIFE GRANT (SWG) FUNDING FOR INDIANA. THE OVERARCHING PURPOSE OF THE SWAP IS TO UNIFY CONSERVATION ACROSS THE INDIANA LANDSCAPE.

An important element of the congressional guidelines for the SWAP requires that all states commit to reviewing and, if necessary, revising their SWAP at least every ten years.

Indiana's original SWAP, known as the CWS, was completed in 2005. This was Indiana's first attempt at providing a comprehensive overview of conservation in the state and resulted in notable successes. The CWS played a key role in determining species for the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program and provided funding for several collaborative projects including research of Eastern Hellbender populations in the Blue River, the ecology and population genetics of Eastern Box Turtles in Indiana, and the population genetics of the Allegheny Woodrat in Indiana. Funding was also provided for several land acquisitions including the Sorbo and Strube tracts in the Knobstone Escarpment/Knobs area, Floyd County (343 acres), and the Bloomington DFW Office (Girl Scout Office Complex), Monroe County (11.8 acres), among others.

REVISING THE ORIGINAL 2005 CWS TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS, APPLICABILITY, AND MAGNITUDE:

While successful, the CWS fell short in unifying the conservation community and in guiding landscape conservation actions. The plan was utilized mostly by agencies within the IDNR and lacked applicability to the conservation community as a whole. For these reasons, it was considered critically important that Indiana's conservation partners participate and provide input throughout the entire revision process. It is hoped that the foundation of the SWAP will be a unified conservation community.

The goal of the revision is that it will go far beyond just securing SWG funding for Indiana. The SWAP's overarching purpose is to unify conservation across the Indiana landscape. In order to have the most lasting and significant impact on habitat, and consequently our fish and wildlife resources, the conservation community must work together. So-called "random acts of conservation" must be avoided by focusing our resources on shared goals and working together through partnerships. What follows in the pages of this document is a road map for successful landscape conservation.

CONGRESSIONAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS:

States are given great latitude in creating their SWAP, but must ensure that all of the original eight elements are met. The following is a list of the eight elements and where they are located in the document:

1. Information on the distribution and abundance of species of wildlife, including low and declining populations as the DFW deems appropriate, that are indicative of the diversity and health of the state's wildlife (Chapter V, Appendix F, and Appendix G).

2. Descriptions of locations and relative conditions of key habitats and community types essential to SGCN (Chapter V).
3. Descriptions of problems which may adversely affect SGCN or their habitats (Chapter V and Appendix G-M), and priority research and survey efforts needed to identify factors which may assist in restoration and improved conservation of SGCN and habitats (Chapter V and Appendix N).
4. Descriptions of conservation actions proposed to conserve the identified species and habitats and priorities for implementing such actions (Chapter V, Chapter VI, and Appendices H-M).
5. Proposed plans for monitoring SGCN and their habitats, for monitoring the effectiveness of the conservation actions (Chapter VII), and for adapting these conservation actions to respond appropriately to new information or changing conditions (Chapter VIII).
6. Descriptions of procedures to review the strategy at intervals not to exceed ten years (Chapter IX).
7. Plans for coordinating the development, implementation, review, and revision of the SWAP with federal, state, and local agencies, and Indian tribes that manage significant land and water areas within the state or administer programs that significantly affect the conservation of identified species and habitats (Chapter IV and Chapter IX).
8. Congress also affirmed through this legislation that broad public participation is an essential element of developing and implementing these plans (Chapter IV), the projects that are carried out while these plans are developed, and the SGCN that Congress has indicated such programs and projects are intended to emphasize.

INDIANA'S SWAP: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT ISN'T

Indiana's SWAP provides an overview of conservation threats in Indiana and identifies needed actions. The SWAP includes biological aspects of wildlife and habitat conservation in the state, as well as information on the conservation organizations currently conducting on-the-ground efforts. It identifies conservation needs, organizations working in those arenas, and overlapping areas of interest for potential partnerships.

The SWAP is not an operational plan. It does not identify specific tasks, assignments, or schedules for achieving conservation. The intent is that the SWAP will guide and encourage development and/or compilation of operational plans within the DNR and from DNR's many conservation partners. Developing operational plans and creating partnerships are the next steps in the process.

The major change and focus from the CWS to the SWAP is the creation of planning regions to better focus actions and priorities based on regional resources, needs, and threats. This change was a result of recommendations from staff and partners. The map below shows the Indiana planning regions. More information on Indiana's planning regions can be found in Chapter VI.

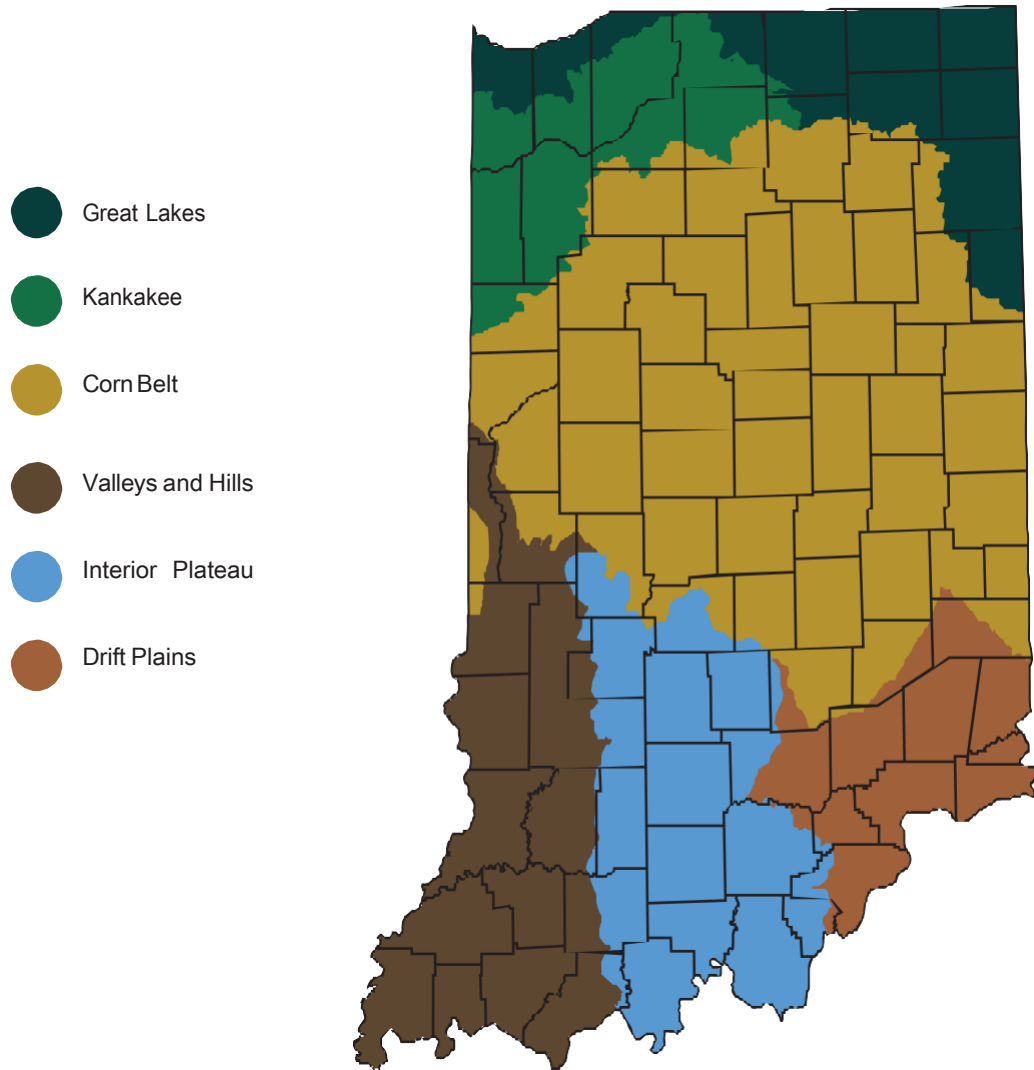


Figure 3-1. Indiana planning regions for the SWAP.