

Indiana State Wildlife Action Plan Meeting on December 17, 2013

At the Indiana Wildlife Federation Office (Sol Center)

Attendees

Cliff Chapman

Daniel Arndt

Andrew DeWoody

Joe Robb

John Bacone

Barbara Simpson

Gary Dinkel

Justin Schneider

Kevin Crane

Raul Moore

Mark Reiter

Justin Harrington

Jeffrey Kiefer

Michael Sertle

Randy Showalter

DFW Core Team:

Nate Levitte

Shannon Winks

Brant Fisher

Sam Whiteleather

Steve Donabauer

Kent Hanauer

Adam Phelps

Coordinators: Julie Kempf, Amanda Wuestefeld

Facilitator: Jack McGriffin

Intro & Collaboration Commitments

Meeting began with a short discussion on the results of the kick-off meetings. That was quickly followed by a timeline that covered both past and future items. The timeline pdf is available on the website.

Following the timeline presentation, the Advisory team was asked to begin to take on some new leadership roles as the planning process moves forward. It was identified that over the next year (2014) the DFW Core Team will be consumed with gathering the technical data to establish the Actions and Priorities for the 2015 plan. Knowing this, the Core Team has asked that the Advisory Team help keep pieces of the collaboration moving forward. The group was asked to vote on the items 'that they wanted to work toward in 2014'. The initial list came from the Eppley Recommendation Report and discussions that have happened earlier in 2013 from both the Core and Advisory Teams. The group was also given the opportunity to add to the lists before voting. Each person was given 6 dots to vote with. They were told they could use as many or as few as they wanted but they had to put their name on the dot so that we knew which organizations were willing to commit, time, talent or treasures to the items on the list. The dot voting exercise with all the voting is listed below. The Advisory Team was also asked for Advisory Team members to help lead each of the themes. Two of the four themes ended up having lead volunteers for at least portions of the actions before the end of the meeting (see votes below).

Dot Commitments

Conservation Community

- Form working group to communicate conservation needs/issues **5 Votes (NWTF, Indiana Land Protection Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, Duke Energy, Farm Bureau)**
- Designate SWAP Coordinator **4 Votes (DNR- Nature Preserves, DNR- Fish and Wildlife, Purdue –FNR, Indiana Wildlife Federation)**
- Market Indiana Natural Resources – **1 Vote (Indiana Forest Woodlands Owners Association)**
- Create shared goals and common language **2 votes (DNR-Fish and Wildlife, Farm Bureau)**
- Establish regular meetings **2 Votes (USFWS –Refuges, USFWS –Private Lands Office)**

-Identify gaps and opportunities through a policy driven process 1 Vote (Purdue FNR)

Citizens

- Form working group to educate and engage citizens 5 Votes (DNR –Fish and Wildlife, DNR – State Parks and Res., Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management, Duke Energy, Farm Bureau)
- Increase formal k-12 education opportunities and programs, like outdoor labs, teacher literacy, etc. 3 Votes (USFWS – Refuges, Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management, USFWS – Private Lands Office)
- Identify and educate landowner programs for habitat and working lands 3 Votes (Indiana Forest Woodlands Owners Association, DNR –State Parks and Reservoirs, USFWS – Private Lands Office)
- Increase awareness and engage urban populations 3 Votes (DNR-State Parks and Reservoirs, Indiana Wildlife Federation, DNR-Fish and Wildlife)

Environment

- Establish issue-based technical committees
 - Climate change 1 votes (Purdue – FNR)
 - Invasive species 5 Votes (DNR – State Parks and Reservoirs, Indiana Land Protection Alliance, Purdue-FNR, Indiana Forest Woodlands Owners Association, DNR – Nature Preserves)
 - Landscape conservation 9 Votes (Ducks Unlimited, US Forest Service, DNR – Nature Preserves, DNR – State Parks and Reservoirs, DNR – Fish and Wildlife, Indiana Land Protection Alliance, Purdue – FNR, USFWS – Private Lands Office, USFWS – Refuge)
 - Adaptive management 3 Votes (USFWS – Refuges, DNR – State Parks, DNR –Fish and Wildlife)
- Form regional working groups to address regional issues
- Establish a process to communicate across issues
- Identify critical lands 10 votes (National Wild Turkey Federation, Purdue –FNR, Ducks Unlimited, USFWS – Refuges, US Forest Service, Indiana Land Protection Alliance, DNR – Nature Preserves, DNR – Fish and Wildlife, USFWS – PLO, Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management)

Funding

- Form a working group to address funding issues 5 Votes (National Wild Turkey Federation, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Indiana Land Protection Alliance, Farm Bureau, DNR-Fish and Wildlife)
- Identify existing funding sources for SGCN and critical habitats, and then advise how to access these dollars
- Lobby for conservation dollars 2 Votes (Ducks Unlimited, Indiana Wildlife Federation)
- Identify economic incentives for landowners/corporations 5 Votes (USFWS – Private Lands Office, Indiana Forest Woodlands Owners Association, US Forest Service, DNR – Fish and Wildlife, National Wild Turkey Federation)

Following the Dot Voting Exercise the group broke for a short lunch then began the discussion of the next RFP for the technical piece of the 8 Elements (complete list of the 8 required elements and their sub-elements are listed below). The Core Team wanted to work through Elements 1-5 with the Advisory Team. We had shared a very rough draft for the RFP process for these 8 elements before the meeting (that draft is included below). Element 1 was discussed as part of a large group conversation while Elements 2-5 were discussed in small groups with notes being captured on flip charts. The Advisory Team was asked to think about what the process should look like to gather the technical information to answer each of these elements. They were told they could use the 2005 plan for a starting point, plus any of the Best Practices documents that were reference in the draft RFP.

Federal Requirements and Element 1 (Species of Greatest Conservation Need)

The Core Team had felt like the discussion on the Element 1 should be done as larger group because there was already an established process for determining the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The 2005 plan identified the SGCN by using the Federal and State Endangered Species as well as the State species of Special Concern. The Core Team was comfortable using the process from 2005 and recommended that we continue that process with the 2015 plan. It was discussed in the meeting that in the 2005 plan insects were only addressed to the point that insects that qualified as Endangered or Special Concern were listed in the plan. The 2005 Plan did not place insects into specific habitats or identify threats and actions for those insects. There were some concerns in the room about not doing more for insects in the 2015 Plan that some partners may have a hard time finding ways to implement the Plan. The Core Team feels that it is acceptable to include insects in the plan but because of the Division of Fish and Wildlife Authority, the Division is unable to lead that piece of the project. However, they welcome partners to assist with that piece of the project. It was also discussed that while we are gathering the technical data to identify the insect species listed, we could ask those experts to provide a habitat association for each Endangered or Special Concern insect. Adding the insects to the habitat component will at least provide threats and actions associated with the critical habitats.

There was also discussion of using more common species, like representative species listed in the current plan or surrogate species from the FWS in order to tie some of the conservation work being done to species of greatest conservation need.

To facilitate the discussion of Elements 2-5 the Advisory Team broke into 4 flipchart groups to discuss the individual elements. The flipchart notes from these discussions are listed below.

All this information will be taken into consideration as we prepare the RFP. Once we have and an updated draft of the RFP we will share that with the Advisory Team.

Flip Chart Notes from the 8 elements small group discussion

Element 2: Habitats

- Statewide habitat evaluation -- data source? Resources?
- Most recent data? What would it take to classify?
- Do species distributions exist to determine habitat quality by occurrence?
- Habitat quality (condition) vs. quantity
- Start gathering/analyzing data now for next revision
- Get best data we can from habitat specific groups to compile into one layer
- Have contractor work up classification/change method for next iteration
- Separate RFP for this to produce habitat info to be used by writing contractor?

Element 3: Threats

- Start with 5 planning regions
 - Species of Greatest Conservation Need (approx. 150)

-Habitats

-Experts

-Technical Advisory Committees (4-5 TACs with 6 or more members)

-Ask 'who else?'

-Other than species experts

-Ag Economist

-Climate Change

-Developers

Element 4: Actions

Strengths

- ICAP (idea or similar product)
- Complete list of actions developed in 2005 plan
- Species plan allows for monitoring metric that goes to SGCN
- Habitat plan = easy to measure
- Continue to connect efforts
- a lot being done
- we have a model to base funding on (PR/DJ)
- we are going through this process
- A lot of interest – a lot of stakeholders
- We have a saleable message
- We have a hierarchal system to prioritize our actions
- use adaptive management to adjust priorities

Weaknesses

- Not prioritized by region
- Lacked specific goals and objectives and timeline, check-in , follow-up
- species plan = harder to monitor (out of our control)
- More difficult to link to SGCN
- efforts are still scattered
- currently there are no dedicated funds
- need more citizen support, interests and stakeholders
- disconnected population
- 2005 plan did not have priority rankings

-May be hard to prioritize correctly

Element 5: Monitoring

Strengths

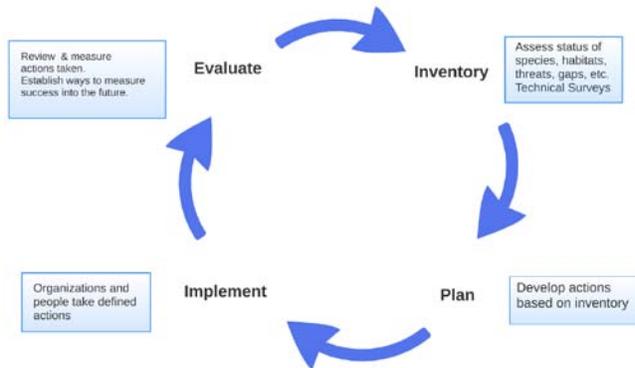
- Identified gaps (but did we do anything with it)
- Bottom QHEI substrate data is there (linked to aquatics)
- Is there a centralized database (but not used)
- gauging stations
- New DNR sequencing/New technology
- update database in real time
- close gaps when you can analyze the data
- innovative monitoring
- Scientific purpose license – permit database in Excel by county that includes annual report

Weaknesses

- Didn't monitor effectiveness of actions
- Don't have only state monitoring but all groups = capture better
- Communication is weak (on what we are doing)
- Is there an unused centralized database?
- No SWAP coordinator (makes collaboration difficult)
- having a real time database could create legal issues with Private Information Act
- Decentralized database



Four Stages of SWAP Planning



Fall of 2012 thru the end of 2013 was all the evaluation period

Fall 2012

- Created DFW Core Team
- Developed Mission and Vision
- Establish the process for moving forward in the planning of the 2015 SWAP

Early 2013

- Established the SWAP Advisory Team
- Create the SWAP website
- Evolution of the 4 themes
 - Environment
 - Conservation Community
 - Funding
 - Citizen Engagement

Summer/Fall 2013

- Identified 5 planning regions to be used in the 2015 plan
- Engaged Stakeholders
 - database of over 700 organizations
 - ground truth the 4 major themes
 - provided us with next steps

Late 2013

- Establish process for technical component (8 elements)
- Identify the technical experts
- Develop the technical RFP
- Share responsibilities with Advisory Team to help lead in the development of the 4 Themes

2014 will Begin the inventory and planning phase of the 2015 SWAP project

Early 2014

- Select contractor to conduct next phase of project
- Conduct research for the technical components
 - species
 - habitats
 - threats/actions

Mid to Late 2014

- Build and prioritize actions by planning regions
- Share with stakeholders
- Create planning region working groups
- Develop process to track success

Mid 2015 will begin the implementation phase

Late 2014/Early 2015

- First draft Plan available
- Share the draft Plan with all partners/stakeholders for input and comment

Mid 2015

- Finalize the Plan
- Begin plan implementation
- Development of system to track implementation and success