

Charter for the Northeast Landscape Wildlife Conservation Committee

April 5, 2022

Background

In November 2021, the Directors of the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) endorsed a proposal to establish a Northeast Landscape Wildlife Conservation Committee within the governance structure of NEAFWA. This document provides recommendations for the NEAFWA Directors and Northeast U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) leadership to consider as they identify the initial foundational principles and structure for that Committee. The NEAFWA President wished to have the NEAFWA Directors and FWS leadership consider and review these recommendations, strengthen and improve the document with appropriate comments and suggestions, and formally approve the Committee under the auspice of NEAFWA. This Charter for the Northeast Landscape Wildlife Conservation Committee was approved by NEAFWA during their business meeting on April 5, 2022 in Long Branch, New Jersey.

Mission

Provide leadership and direction from the NEAFWA Directors and leadership within the Northeast Region of the FWS on efforts related to large-scale landscape conservation needs and opportunities, including the development and coordination of shared priorities and interjurisdictional efforts.

Function of the Northeast Landscape Wildlife Conservation Committee

The Committee shall be a forum for consideration, discussion, and development of shared conservation priorities at the landscape scale.

The Committee shall provide for coordination, engagement, and collaboration with the many necessary partners that are interested in, engaged with, contribute to, and are impacted by landscape-scale conservation planning and implementation.

The Committee will provide a more robust context for the NEAFWA Directors and FWS leadership to discuss large-scale conservation needs as they consider funding and staff allocation decisions that address priorities and capacities. The Committee shall provide an umbrella structure for the coordination of conservation needs, science and conservation tool development, and coordinated implementation.

The Committee will recognize and strengthen the important primary conservation authorities, relationships, and coordination roles among the NEAFWA member states and provinces, FWS, and other federal partners.

The Committee will support a strong collaborative relationship among those engaged in working on landscape conservation, State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), and At-risk Species conservation. These efforts will continue to encourage the coordination of science development and conservation implementation for Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (RSGCN).

The Committee will work to develop shared regional priorities from SWAPs and At-risk Species lists for coordinated science, information sharing, and conservation implementation.

The Committee will use the conservation planning tools developed through the Regional Conservation Needs program (RCN) and Nature's Network (many RCN products are incorporated in Nature's Network) to inform coordinated landscape conservation efforts across the region. These collaboratively-developed conservation planning tools are critical and the Committee will explore ways to continue to keep these tools current, available, and with technical support needed for effective application. Active engagement by NEAFWA's Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee, FWS's Science Applications program, and FWS's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program will be essential to the successful future of these tools.

The Committee will seek to fulfill the recommendations found in the AFWA Resolution entitled "Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Landscape Scales" ([AFWA Landscape Resolution](#)). The Committee provides opportunities to bring shared-priority species and habitat collaborative conservation work together, reduce redundancy, save time and money, and combine resources to conserve a landscape for the benefit of people and the future of fish and wildlife. To ensure the NEAFWA Directors the FWS leadership within the Northeast Region are aware of and have opportunity for input into decisions and recommendations developed by the Committee, the Committee Chair and Co-Chair will report twice yearly at meetings of the NEAFWA Directors, or at other times as appropriate.

Governance Structure

The Steering Committee will report to the NEAFWA Directors and FWS leadership within the Northeast Region.

The initial composition of the Steering Committee will be as follows:

- Paul Johansen, Chair (WV)
- Wendi Weber, Co-chair (FWS)
- Mark Tisa (MA)
- Becky Gwynn (VA)
- Bryan Burhans (PA)
- Dave Golden (NJ)

In addition, a Northeast Landscape Wildlife Conservation Working Group will be established that reports to the Steering Committee. The Working Group will be composed of a representative from each of the following:

- Northeast Wildlife Administrators
- Northeast Fisheries Administrators
- FWS Science Applications Program
- FWS Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
- Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee (Aquatic Specialist)
- Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee (Terrestrial Specialist)

Members of the various NEAFWA Technical Committees, FWS's Science Applications program, and FWS's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program will provide support to the Working Group on matters relating to landscape conservation efforts in the Northeast.