

Northeast Wildlife Teamwork Strategy (NEWTS)

A Proposal for the Northeast Assoc. of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Revised 12-23-06

Need:

To be eligible for State Wildlife Grant Funds, states have developed comprehensive Wildlife Action Plans that identify species and habitats of greatest conservation need. Many of the species, habitats, and conservation actions are common across the Northeast Region, or are common to a group of states within the region, and can most effectively be addressed by working across state lines. The "Northeast Wildlife Teamwork Strategy" (NEWTS) will develop, coordinate, and implement conservation actions that are regional/sub-regional in scope, and build upon the many regional initiatives that already exist.

As part of the first year's funding for a new 3-year grant program through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies received an award to conduct a regional meeting to develop blueprints of priority regional conservation projects. The meeting was attended by 43 people from 12 of 13 states and the District of Columbia in Albany, NY on March 28 – 30, 2006. The meeting resulted in a prioritized list of 72 regional projects. Six projects were subsequently identified for follow-up blueprint development resulting in 3 formal proposals for year 2 NFWF funding. Two of these were ultimately funded related to regional habitat classification and performance measures.

Many of the projects identified in the Albany meeting are to implement conservation actions that will encourage the best use of resources by eliminating duplication of effort or by creating tools that allow a consistent approach across the region. Working across state lines is difficult, both logistically and administratively. As such, a mechanism needs to be identified to organize, fund and pursue regional projects over time. Without a formalized process, sufficient manpower, and financial resources, a coordinated strategic effort will not be possible.

Objectives:

1. To address regional wildlife conservation issues with the input and involvement of multiple parties involved in the creation and implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plans;
2. To utilize a funding mechanism that is equitable to all Northeast states and the District of Columbia for base-level program funding, and to provide states and the District with the opportunity to obligate additional funds at their discretion to augment work on regional projects;
3. To create an administrative structure that will coordinate all aspects of the NEWTS, including:
 - a. Partnership development
 - b. Regional grant amendment and report writing
 - c. Regional project contracting
 - d. Reporting accomplishments
 - e. Technical Committee facilitation

Suggested Approach:

To develop and coordinate the Northeast Regional Wildlife Program, the following steps are recommended to the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA):

1. Enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) to provide overall coordination services. This agreement would be modeled off the current agreement

with NEAFWA to collect and manage assessments related to cooperative work done for Atlantic Flyway Council activities. The agreement would involve 3 separate components:

- Financial administrative services
- Fundraising
- Project coordination and report writing

WMI will facilitate the process described below to develop an annual list of projects, will coordinate the solicitation of cooperators and matching funds, prepare grant amendments for approved regional projects, and write annual and final performance reports. Finally, WMI would act as an agent of NEAFWA to invoice and collect assessments from partnering agencies for administrative and project costs. The term for the initial agreement would be 5 years. WMI may hire sub-contractors following consultation with NEAFWA to provide services.

2. Initiate a process to develop Regional Conservation Needs RCN's and projects to address those needs:
 - Charge the Northeast Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee (NEWDTTC) with:
 - A. Annually developing a prioritized list of RCN's that would advance the conservation of species in greatest need of conservation at the regional scale
 - B. Consultation with WMI in the selection of projects to address those needs
 - C. Identification of a Technical Coordinator for each RCN to assist in the review and prioritization of project proposals, and consultation with WMI in the payment of invoices from approved contractors
 - NEWDTTC would develop a process for developing RCN's that would include input from a wide array of aquatic and terrestrial specialists, partnering NGO's and federal agencies
 - The NEWDTTC will be comprised of both terrestrial and aquatic specialists from member states and the District of Columbia. It is essential that all aspects of wildlife conservation be represented at NEWDTTC meetings, in the development of RCN's and the coordination of project selection and implementation.
 - The Chair of NEWDTTC would meet annually with the Northeast Wildlife Administrators Association (NEWAA) and the Northeast Fisheries Administrators Association (NEFAA) during the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference to discuss progress on achieving regional conservation goals and resolve any issues that arise
 - The draft list of RCN's will be circulated among NEWAA and NEFAA members for review and comment. The Chair of NEWDTTC will incorporate comments and coordinate with the Chair of NEWAA and NEFAA the submission of a final draft list of RCN's to the Northeast Directors (NEAFWA)
 - NEAFWA will review the list, add their priorities as needed, and approve a final list of RCN's for that year
 - The list of RCN's would serve as the basis for an RFP coordinated by WMI
 - A prioritized list of projects will be developed by WMI in cooperation with NEWDTTC, NEWAA and NEFAA for review and approval by NEAFWA
 - A. Pre-Proposals would be submitted in response to the RFP categorized by RCN
 - B. The Technical Coordinator for each RCN would oversee the process of reviewing and ranking pre-proposals, resulting in the selection of up to 2 pre-proposals per RCN. One for projects under \$50,000 and one for projects over \$50,000.
 - C. Full proposals on selected projects would go to WMI and they would be circulated to the NEWDTTC and Technical Coordinators for prioritization
 - D. Prioritized projects would then be circulated to NEWAA and NEFAA for review and approval, with a funding recommendation to NEAFWA.
 - E. NEAFWA determines how much money is available, based on SWG funding levels and how many jurisdictions are participating, and selects projects for funding.

- Payment of invoices will be coordinated by WMI in cooperation with the Technical Coordinator identified by NEWDTC
 - In 2007 the 6 blueprints from the Albany meeting plus a 7th topic on habitat conservation at a landscape scale added by NEAFWA will be used as the RCN's for solicitation of proposals, they are:
 - A. Creation of Regional Habitat Cover Maps
 - B. Impact of Invasive Species on SGCN Spp. in the Northeast
 - C. Development of Instream Flow Standards, Guidelines and Policies
 - D. Technical Assistance to Private Landowners
 - E. Identification of Regional Focal Areas and Corridors for the Conservation of SGCN Spp. in the Northeast, and Development of Habitat Conservation Initiatives at a Landscape Scale
 - F. Development of Habitat Conservation Initiatives at a Landscape Scale
 - G. Development of Regional Indicators and Measures
3. Provide the financial resources necessary to fund the agreement with WMI and implementation of regional projects:
- Each state and the District would provide up to a cumulative minimum of **4%** of their annual State Wildlife Grants federal apportionment for funding the regional program. This is a new proposal, up from 3% because no state cash match would be required.
 - One hundred thirty-five thousand dollars (\$135,000) would be identified to pay administrative costs to WMI. The remainder would be available to fund regional projects. This number would vary depending on the SWG appropriation and which jurisdictions were able to participate any given year. Additional non-federal contributions may be sought for some initiatives, and agencies would have the option to obligate additional federal funds at their discretion.
 - Funds for administration would be invoiced annually by WMI to each agency at the beginning of each project year based on the relative % of the participating state's SWG funds allocated to that state.
 - Project specific funds would be invoiced once the required non-federal match has been identified and grant amendment submissions have been incorporated into the overall grant agreement. See Table 1 for a breakdown of administrative and project costs based on the 2006 apportionment **if all states participate**. Note, the new strategy being proposed uses deferred indirect costs from WMI as match for administrative funds. Therefore, **no state cash would be needed to fund this program**. Depending on what minimum contribution is approved (i.e. 3% or 4%) and the number of states participating, the amount available to fund regional projects will vary.
4. Federal Aid Grants
- A single AFA will be developed to create a regional wildlife program grant for each state. The grant would have two projects:
 - A. Project 1 for the annual administration of the program
 - B. Project 2 for conducting regional programs,
 - Each state will submit a grant agreement annually to obligate ½ % of their State Wildlife Grant funds to the regional program. Performance reports will be prepared by WMI to cover reporting requirements of all states
 - Amendments would be submitted to create jobs under the regional programs project to implement specific regional projects and obligation of up to 2 ½% of program funds
 - Federal Aid is working cooperatively with this effort to streamline that process
 - WMI will prepare the text of all amendments and reports, states will still have to officially file documents to be in compliance with federal aid guidelines, but involvement of state federal aid coordinators and biological staff should be minimal

Table 1. Allocation of administrative and project costs based on the FY 2006 apportionment to states in the Northeast Region.

4% Scenario							
State	FY 06 SWG Funds	% of Regional Funds	Cumm. 4% SWG Min.	Administrative Funds ¹	Federal Project Funds ¹	50% Match ²	Total Project Funds
CT	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
DE	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
DC	\$301,676	2.23%	\$12,067	\$3,011	\$9,056	\$9,056	\$18,112
ME	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
MD	\$789,592	5.84%	\$31,584	\$7,880	\$23,703	\$23,703	\$47,407
MA	\$919,222	6.80%	\$36,769	\$9,174	\$27,595	\$27,595	\$55,190
NH	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
NJ	\$1,198,168	8.86%	\$47,927	\$11,958	\$35,969	\$35,969	\$71,937
NY	\$2,903,489	21.46%	\$116,140	\$28,978	\$87,162	\$87,162	\$174,324
PA Game	\$982,763	7.27%	\$39,311	\$9,808	\$29,502	\$29,502	\$59,005
PA Fish	\$982,763	7.27%	\$39,311	\$9,808	\$29,502	\$29,502	\$59,005
RI	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
VT	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
VA	\$1,225,504	9.06%	\$49,020	\$12,231	\$36,789	\$36,789	\$73,579
WV	\$603,354	4.46%	\$24,134	\$6,022	\$18,113	\$18,113	\$36,225
TOTAL	\$13,526,655	100.00%	\$541,066	\$135,000	\$406,066	\$406,066	\$812,132

3% Scenario							
State	FY 06 SWG Funds	% of Regional Funds	Cumm. 3% SWG Min.	Administrative Funds ¹	Federal Project Funds ¹	50% Match ²	Total Project Funds
CT	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
DE	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
DC	\$301,676	2.23%	\$9,050	\$3,011	\$6,039	\$6,039	\$12,079
ME	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
MD	\$789,592	5.84%	\$23,688	\$7,880	\$15,807	\$15,807	\$31,615
MA	\$919,222	6.80%	\$27,577	\$9,174	\$18,403	\$18,403	\$36,805
NH	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
NJ	\$1,198,168	8.86%	\$35,945	\$11,958	\$23,987	\$23,987	\$47,974
NY	\$2,903,489	21.46%	\$87,105	\$28,978	\$58,127	\$58,127	\$116,254
PA Game	\$982,763	7.27%	\$29,483	\$9,808	\$19,675	\$19,675	\$39,349
PA Fish	\$982,763	7.27%	\$29,483	\$9,808	\$19,675	\$19,675	\$39,349
RI	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
VT	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
VA	\$1,225,504	9.06%	\$36,765	\$12,231	\$24,534	\$24,534	\$49,068
WV	\$603,354	4.46%	\$18,101	\$6,022	\$12,079	\$12,079	\$24,158
TOTAL	\$13,526,655	100.00%	\$405,800	\$135,000	\$270,800	\$270,800	\$541,599

¹ Federal funds billable to states

² Non-federal matching funds provided by partners as documented in project proposals