

**SUMMARY OF KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
HABITAT/SPECIES STRATEGY TEAM MEETING
IN TRAVERSE CITY, MI - APRIL 28-29, 2005**

Draft- 5/12/05

NOTE: If you attended the meeting and have any comments or suggestions about revising or adding to this summary of highlights please send them to Cynthia Manson at cjm@indecon.com by COB, Wednesday ,May 18, 2005.

1. Habitat/Species Strategy Team Meeting and Participants- Habitat/Species Strategy Team (ST) Co-Chairs Leon Carl (USGS) and Chuck Ledin, representing Scott Hassett (WI) convened the meeting. A list of participants is attached.

2. Executive Committee (EC) Feedback- Chuck Ledin summarized both the general and specific feedback that was provided by the Executive Committee and Staff sub-committee. The key guidance that was provided by the EC was that each Strategy Team (ST) should prioritize their top 5 recommendations in priority order while at the Traverse City (TC) meetings. Key insights included:
 - Need to focus on specific recommendations; link to problem issues.
 - What actions need to be taken and what are the expected outcomes?
 - Who will do work - Federal, State, local - need to specify level of government for implementation?
 - Need realistic meaningful goals: will the short term ideas work and can they be expanded later?
 - This is a living document; we need to keep returning to it; needs short and long term goals and recommendations.
 - Short term - 2-5 years should be included as actions - but 20 year long-term goals should be clear as well.
 - Short term actions should build momentum, provide results for Congress.
 - Need to build excitement and urgency for habitat/species restoration needs.
 - Outcomes need to be compelling –
 - How habitat/species restoration can be an economic driver for the region
 - Tourism and recreation \$\$; economic benefits and "cost of inaction"
 - Benefits to tribes
 - Congress will want to know what they will get for the \$\$ they invest.
 - Research and monitoring not crucial in short term - Congress less likely to support it. Action, education more critical in near term.
 - Need to think strategically so habitat/species recommendations make the final cut of the 10 of the 40 ideas being put forth by teams.

- Agreement that focus should be on leveraging existing programs, priorities.

The EC also indicated that the recommendations should be more specific (particularly in the 3-5 year timeframe), should link the desired end state with problem statements, and should describe milestones toward achieving ultimate goals.

Appendices - critical importance for justifying approaches, revealing solidity of ideas. They should also demonstrate regional coordination - ability to prioritize areas quickly and agree on where to spend finite resources. This is true for all objectives.

3. Desired State- Participants discussed and redrafted the Desired State section of the Habitat/Species report and noted the following:
 - The Desired State was divided into four types of habitat, expanded from the three types included in the draft report. In addition to open water/near shore fisheries, wetlands (including riverine and inland lakes), and riparian habitats, important to add upland habitats as separate category.
 - Terrestrial component/issues – must include, not just water issues – basin wide; but tie uplands to Great Lakes system
 - Cite critical or unique upland habitats or name specific habitats.
 - Use matrix to help craft desired state for uplands.
 - New language for each of the four desired states was drafted and reviewed - assignments were made for final revisions.
 - General agreement that desired state was achievable in roughly 20 years - recommended actions would move toward this goal.
4. Problem Statement- It was noted that the Habitat/Species Problem Statement should convey a greater sense of urgency about the potential economic losses in tourism and quality of life associated with degraded habitat. Also it was noted that the both the problem statement and the recommended actions should focus on the uniqueness of the Great Lakes region and resources.
5. Over-lapping and Cross-Cutting Issues- Over-lapping issues were discussed only briefly; it was noted that Habitat/Species will address habitat issues w/in the AOCs, including urban habitat issues. Other topics such as terrestrial invasive species were left to follow-on discussions with other teams - it was acknowledged that Non-Point Source team, AIS team will be relevant to Habitat/Species goals.
6. Formulation of Top Four Priority Recommendations- The four recommendations presented in the draft report were generally maintained. The team worked on agreement related to the general recommendations and focused on what economic and quantitative measurement data could be gathered to support the measures.

- **Recommendation #1- Restore Open Water/Near Shore Fisheries** [*Mark Holey, Kurt Newman to re-write*].
 - Remove discussion of Act/Law - instead "Great Lakes Stewardship Fund" or "GL Protection Fund" was suggested.
 - Clarify that dollar amounts are related to current efforts - that existing plans, if fully funded, are sufficient to achieve desired state.
 - Add economic data about size of fishery (commercial and recreational).

- **Recommendation #2- Wetlands Restoration** [*Gildo Tori, Ric Lawson to re-write.*]
 - Goal of 550k acres of wetlands over five years - includes both coastal and non-coastal. Is a minimum estimate of what has been lost to development.
 - Another goal is 1,000,000 acres added by 2025 - unclear if that one will also be incorporated. Stated as "expanding coastal/non-coastal programs".
 - Important to include estimate of costs.
 - Wording should specify "functional" wetlands, permanent easements. Include breeding pair and population goals (Gildo T) of birds, other species - name some specific, unique Great Lakes resources (birds or locations).
 - Statement about water levels should be mentioned.

- **Recommendation #3- Native-Coastal Habitats** [*Karen Rodriguez., Karen Vigmostad, Lois Morrison to re-write.*]
 - More specificity in types of habitats - Adjacent uplands, dune, beaches, islands (note unique locations).
 - Terrestrial "species of greatest conservation need" - identify one or two (piping plover?)
 - Goals: still to be determined but Lois Morrison, others have identified TNC goals related to dunes, islands, and plover.
 - Important to spell out what funding would buy - who would be working on this (local issue).

- **Recommendation #4-Riparian Habitats** [*Chuck Ledin to re-write.*]
 - Need rivers protection program - could be based on watershed program. Stream bed, stream banks, flood plain protection, improvement using "non-invasive techniques."
 - Non-agricultural riparian buffers.
 - Discussion of how to measure success - 10 tributaries in every state (or 10 percent of GL tributaries, whichever is smaller).
 - Note that might be useful to look at hydrologic contribution of tributaries in order to prioritize, or to tributaries with important species.

- Appendix with TNC ecosystem flow requirements spelled out.
7. Next Steps- The following assignments were set to finalize the Habitat/Species ST report. The sections would all be drafted to be submitted to co-chairs by May 6, 2005, with the exception of the appendices.
- **Problem Statement:** Rick Lawson will take the lead. One goal is to document economic values (USFWS data, DU data, other data), for uses and services related to habitat - also cost of "doing nothing". *Mark Holey and Gildo Tori will help with data.*
 - **Desired State:**
 - **Fisheries, Open water-near shore:** *Sandy Morrison and Chuck Ledin will write.*
 - **Coastal:** *Karen Rodriguez will write.*
 - **Watershed/Riverine:** *Chuck Ledin will write.*
 - **Uplands:** *Lois Morrison will write.*
 - **Bridging Statement:** *Sandy Morrison and Chuck Ledin will write.*
 - **Objective A:** *Mark Holey, Kurt Newman*
 - **Objective B:** *Gildo Tori, Rick Lawson*
 - **Objective C:** *Karen Rodriguez., Karen Vigmostad, Lois Morrison*
 - **Objective D:** *Chuck Ledin*
 - **Appendices:** *Karen Rodriguez.*

Participant List for Habitat-Species Strategy Team Meeting in Traverse City
April 28, 2005

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