



Meeting Summary
Working Group on Performance Measures for Wildlife Conservation Activities
The Heinz Center
August 1-2, 2007

Attendees:

Dennis Murphy, University of Nevada-Reno, Chair
David Chadwick, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Paul Dresler, U. S. Geological Survey
Danielle Flynn, Bureau of Land Management
Audrey Hatch, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (phone)
Mark Hughes, International Paper
Mark Humpert, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Gary Kania, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Christy Kuczak, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jeff Lerner, Defenders of Wildlife
Jina Mariani, USDA Forest Service
Barry Noon, Colorado State University
Timothy O'Meara, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
Nick Salafsky, Foundations of Success
Peter Stangel, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Michael Sweet, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Robert Szaro, U. S. Geological Survey
T. Bentley Wigley, NCASI

Staff:

Robin O'Malley
Jonathan Mawdsley
Claire Hayes

Key Points Resulting From Discussion:

- Important over-arching strategy for our report: the report should articulate the “state of the practice” and give examples of implementation, but cannot be prescriptive. Both the best approach (technically and scientifically) and the serious constraints facing states should be acknowledged.
- Important over-arching thread – there are a number of audiences and uses for indicators that may be used to describe or evaluate performance. No single indicator will serve all uses of

needs and it is important to distinguish what the use / purpose is when communicating any indicator.

- The spectrum of performance indicator applications includes
 - Project/field level: where the goal is to both ensure a clear and logical understanding of the link between objectives, actions, outputs, and outcomes for a specific project / action / conservation target
 - Plan / program level: where the goal is to describe the actions, outputs, and where possible, outcomes of plan implementation, at an aggregate level (i.e., not action-by-action or species-by-species).
 - “Ultimate outcome” level: where the goal is to characterize the overall condition of the species and habitats addressed by the plan.

- Project/field level:
 - Audience / use: implementation / program management level
 - use of the “8-point” outline, as augmented by use of the conceptual model to identify actions with logical linkages to outcomes, and monitoring targets

- Plan / program level:
 - Audience for this activity may be internal (program managers to understand and track their own progress) or external (i.e. funders and oversight entities)
 - The plan or program is not equivalent to the federal grant that provides partial funding. Performance evaluation of these two is related but not the same. The grant may be the most limited element, the specific state program (e.g., unit with DNR; funded by both state and grant funds) may be the next most expansive, and the overall plan impact (i.e., state program + actions by partners and others that is driven by or consistent with the plan) is the largest circle.
 - Evaluation at a plan / program level might include indicators describing:
 - Information and data (e.g., FL hierarchy starting with: do we know the taxonomy of this species >> do we know what its status / trends >> do we know the reasons for decline, etc.)
 - Actions: this can include both field level conservation activities (acres restored/treated, acres protected) and partnership and coalition building, outreach etc. (Activities by partners can be included also, as appropriate)
 - Ecological or system outcomes: i.e., intermediate outcomes (acres of habitat restored) and changes in threat status. (There may be a continuum or overlap between this set of indicators and the “ultimate outcome” indicators.)
 - All indicators should be embedded within a logical or causal or conceptual model that links the action to its next logical outcome/output and ultimately to higher level conservation goals (e.g., “ultimate” goals) in a clear and defensible fashion

- Ultimate outcome level: potentially includes both species and habitat indicators
 - Audience / use: program management use, plan reassessment (over time), funders/oversight entities
 - Species:
 - Very clear practical limits on ability to report on large numbers of species
 - Both criteria and process suggestions for selecting targets to be useful, practical, “representative”
 - Habitat: (quantity and quality/condition)
 - Quantity: area of (key) habitat types; helpful to work with consistent classification schemes (e.g., Ecological Systems)
 - Quality / condition: overall, fragmentation is #1, invasives #2; but focus of metrics should be driven by plan