

Draft Agenda

Appalachian Mountains BCR Workshop Planning Session
Knoxville, Tennessee
December 13-14, 2004
University of Tennessee Conference Center, Room 302

Purposes:

Identify Scope and Objectives of Appalachian Mountains BCR (AMBCR) Workshop in Spring 2005

Identify assignments for coordination of Workshop

Prepare a detailed draft agenda for the Spring 2005 Appalachian Mountains BCR Workshop

Select a date, time, and location for the Workshop

Prepare a comprehensive list of invitees for the Workshop

Brief group on BCR map delineation exercise (from early Monday)

Essentials (from **Suggestion for a Successful Bird Conservation Region Workshop, Pashley et al.)**

1. Identify desired outcome of workshop (examples)
 - A. improving understanding of BCR conservation issues
 - B. improving biological foundation
 - i. refining priorities
 - ii. begin derivation of population and habitat objectives
 - iii. establish conservation areas
 - C. consolidating and translating information from other programs to a common format
 - D. landscape designs
 - E. project development
 - F. GIS development and support
 - G. education and outreach,
 - H. etcetera
2. Identify Participants – seek most involved, committed, and knowledgeable representatives from state and agencies/organizations
3. Identify location, date, and place for meeting – relatively remote with lodging and food provided, plenty of meeting space

4. Identify source for map production – depends on level of acuity desired in the workshop; consider having GIS capability at the workshop
5. Participant preparation – what we need to ask of workshop participants
6. Reference materials – who will gather needed references
7. Species assessments – who will gather and reproduce appropriate assessments
8. Introductory presentations – topics to cover and presenters
9. Breakouts – scope and objectives
10. Plenary Summary of Breakouts
11. Recording of minutes – who will record main and breakouts minutes
12. Follow-up and assignments

Draft Summary Appalachian Mountains BCR Workshop Planning Session

Knoxville, Tennessee
December 13-14, 2004

University of Tennessee Conference Center, Room 302

This group originally organized and came together in Knoxville to:

- 1) discuss delineation of sub-BCR boundaries for conservation planning
- 2) discuss and prepare for a Spring 2005 workshop for the Appalachian Mountains BCR.

Delineation of sub-BCR boundaries

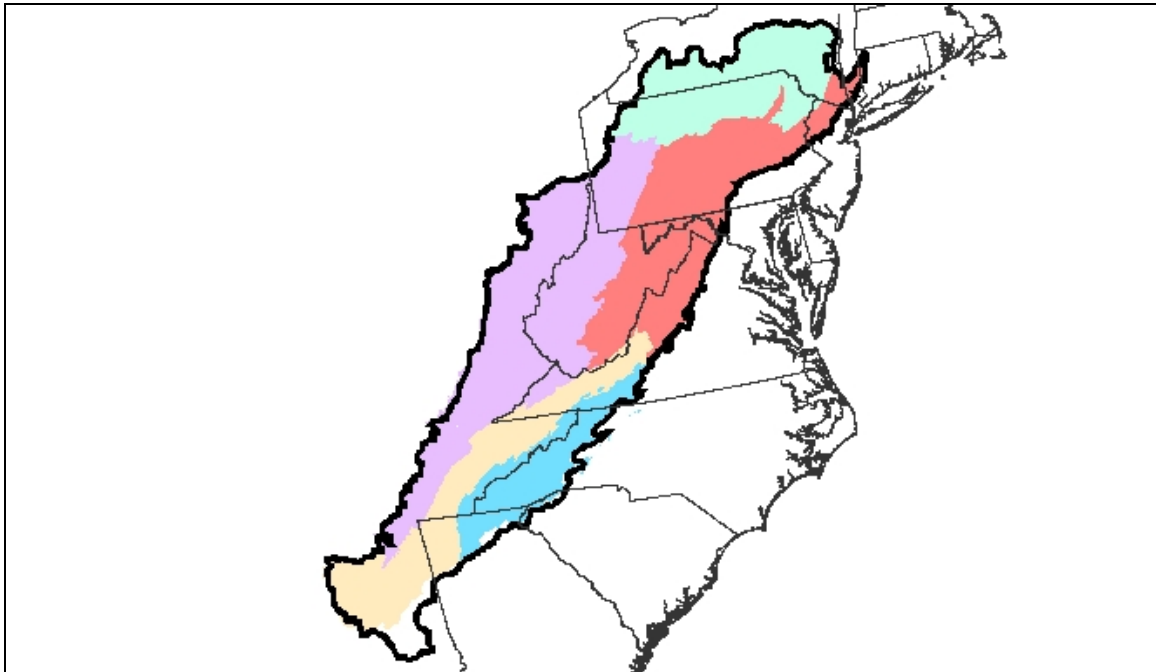
A small subset of the larger group met Monday morning to discuss and delineate potential sub-BCR level planning units in the Appalachian Mountains. The reasoning behind this exercise came from the recognition that BCR level priorities often dilute more regional and even local priorities identified in Partners In Flight bird conservation plans for physiographic areas; yet these regional or physiographic level priorities are extremely important in the Appalachian Mountains. By identifying sub-BCR planning units, and assessing priorities at this level, previously established physiographic level priorities would be accurately recognized and maintained, at least in the early planning stages of the initiative. No determination was made whether or not sub-BCR's would be the basis for carrying out all planning efforts; however, the sub-BCR level may prove to be most useful in landbird planning and perhaps less useful for shorebirds, waterbirds, and waterfowl in the BCR which have few yet broader regional priorities. At least for initial planning, sub-BCR's are perceived to be a way to comprehensively identify priority species and habitats. Future development and direction of the Appalachian Mountains initiative will determine how sub-BCR designations will affect planning and implementation efforts.

David Pashley stated that any officially recognized changes in the BCR boundary would have to meet approval of some larger body, most likely the NABCI Committee. In the meantime, for planning purposes, the sub-BCR levels will only need Steering Committee endorsement.

The group agreed upon a delineation of 5 sub-BCR planning units: the Southern Ridge and Valley (includes Southern Cumberland Plateau), the Northern Ridge and Valley (includes Allegheny Mountains), the Southern Blue Ridge, the Allegheny Plateau, and the Northern Cumberland Plateau/Ohio Hills (see figure below). Most of the delineations were along Omernik's Level II and IV ecoregional lines, although some divisions were made arbitrarily by the group to

simplify boundaries of planning units and to avoid unnecessarily complicated Omernik boundaries.

Additionally, small changes in the actual BCR boundary were suggested and will be proposed to the NABCI Committee. The uncolored space in southern portion of the BCR is proposed to be excluded from the BCR due to bird affinities in these two areas more closely aligned with Piedmont avifauna. The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture GIS volunteer has compiled the proposed changes and delineations made by this group and has produced new ArcMap files for planning purposes. Here are the proposed delineations.



Spring 2005 Workshop (postponed)

After much discussion, it was apparent what the group really needed to do was decide if we were prepared to hold a workshop and what steps were needed to proceed or planning for the workshop. The group decided that we weren't really prepared at this time to hold a BCR wide comprehensive workshop; we need a lot more information before we approach our partners and ask them to participate in a comprehensive workshop.

The group identified essential steps that need substantial progress or completion before we engage ourselves in a workshop. We believe that substantial progress of completion of the tasks would entail answering the questions associated with each major task or completing identified tasks. Those questions and tasks are listed under each major task below.

Development of a GIS Support Framework

What are the layers and databases that we have?
What are the layers and databases that we need?
Where do we get this information?
Who can we get to do accomplish acquisition of this information?
Where can we house this information and provide access to it?
Where can GIS management/support be obtained?

Time frame for completion: September to October 2005

Species/Habitat Priorities and Population/Habitat Objectives

What do we need to do to update or refine the list of priority species?
What do we need to do to update or refine the list of priority habitats?
How do we associate population and habitat objectives to these updates (refinements)?
How do we populate the BCR 28 priority table based on delineation of sub-BCR's?

Time frame for completion: mid-March to mid-April

Bird Population Responses/Limiting Factors

Can models (in general) be applied across a BCR wide scale?
What would it take to model a species at a BCR scale?
How does forest management affects response of forest birds and how do we integrate these in the models?
How will the viability of a species be affected if x habitat loss/gain occurs?
What focal groups do we identify?
What are the limitations imposed during migration?
Can we identify the species in the BCR for which habitat is not a limiting factor?

Time frame for completion: September 2005

This group will obviously not be able to complete such long term task but rather this group will work to develop a strategy to answer these questions

Conservation Design – Uplands

What do we have now? – link to mapping (the assessment of data/mapping exercise)
What are trends in land use?

What is the capacity of the landscape to hold birds? (An opportunity assessment)
What can we do currently to achieve objectives?
How do we contribute to objectives?
What do we need and where in the future to achieve objectives?
How do we achieve or develop a conservation design for the BCR?
How do we best identify current opportunities for conservation?
What decision support tools or products are needed to help guide land managers?
How do we develop bottom up population objectives?
How do we link to other terrestrial aspects of Appalachian biodiversity and protection?
What are the immediate needs from GIS development group?

Time frame for completion: March or April 2005

Conservation Design - Wetlands

What do we have now? – link to mapping (the assessment of data/mapping exercise)
What are trends in land use?
What is the capacity of the landscape to hold birds? (An opportunity assessment)
What can we do currently to achieve objectives?
How do we contribute to objectives?
What do we need and where in the future to achieve objectives?
How do we achieve or develop a conservation design for the BCR?
How do we best identify current opportunities for conservation?
What decision support tools or products are needed to help guide land managers?
How do we develop bottom up population objectives?
How do we link to other aquatic aspects of Appalachian biodiversity and protection?

Time frame for completion: March or April 2005

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assess status of ongoing efforts
How do we make use of what information we have?
Identify areas and species with insufficient data
How do we measure bird response to management and habitat change?
How to manage information?
How to fund identified needs?
Do we need a CBM effort in the Appalachians?
How do we evaluate BCR efforts toward goals?

How do we evaluate accomplishments of partnership?
Are there wintering birds in need of monitoring?
Evaluate state strategies and identify needs
Evaluate PIF Monitoring Needs documents and identify needs
Conduct some preliminary assessments of sample sizes, times,
etc., to refine monitoring
Identify data sets for National Point Count Database and arrange to enter
data
Do we need to establish a Coordinated Bird Monitoring (CBM) workshop?

Time frame for completion: October 2005

Surely, additional questions will become evident once the team begins exploring these questions, so the existing questions are not exclusive, but represent a beginning for the teams' work. Also, since many of Steering Committee members were not present for the discussions and most of the team members were not present to relate the questions and tasks to the context of discussion, there is likely to be a need to refine and clarify the questions and tasks. Keith will attempt to do this but may call on others who were present at the meeting to provide input.

To accomplish these tasks, we identified potential people to organize working groups. Progress on these tasks is planned to proceed over the next 14-16 months. Working groups might represent logical committees to sustain over the long-term. Results from these working group efforts will provide very useful baseline data and provide the basis for holding productive workshop, we hope, in Spring of 2006 We envision the spring workshop to bring together Appalachian partners to use the information prepared by the working groups to accomplish established bird conservation objectives. Keith and others have assignments to contact working group leads and discuss potential to organize groups to accomplish identified tasks in the agreed upon timeframe.

Draft Summary Appalachian Mountains BCR Workshop Planning Session
Knoxville, Tennessee, December 13-14, 2004
University of Tennessee Conference Center, Room 302

On December 13-14, 2004, several members of the Appalachian Mountains Bird Conservation Region Steering and Technical Committees met in Knoxville, Tennessee to plan for a comprehensive technical/biological workshop specific to the Appalachian Mountains BCR sometime in spring 2005.

A smaller portion of this group met before the workshop planning session to discuss how to subdivide the BCR to make more effective biological planning decisions.

December 13th, 2004

Basically, BCR subdivision group agreed upon a delineation of 5 sub-BCR planning units: the Southern Ridge and Valley (includes Southern Cumberland Plateau), the Northern Ridge and Valley (includes Allegheny Mountains), the Southern Blue Ridge, the Allegheny Plateau, and the Northern Cumberland Plateau/Ohio Hills. Most of the delineations were along Omernik's Level II and IV ecoregional lines, although some divisions were made arbitrarily by the group to simplify boundaries of planning units. Additionally, small changes in the actual BCR boundary were suggested and will be proposed to the NABCI Committee; however, for planning purposes, the changes will be adopted upon approval by the Steering Committee. The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture GIS specialist will compile the proposed changes and delineations made by this group and produce a new GIS documents for planning purposes. The proposed changes will be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.

The group discussed objectives of a potential workshop, which led into a lot of discussion regarding BCR planning and the various types and orders of processes involved. The general processes identified were:

- Developing partnerships
- Leveraging resources
- Identifying priority landscapes and projects
- Translating these to the implementation folks

The following are some of the highlights of the discussion of the processes.

- Steering Committee – is currently established and still developing
- Technical Committee – under development from input of Steering Committee
- Conservation objectives
 - Setting population targets
 - Planning for waterbirds (shorebirds, waterbirds, waterfowl)

Comprehensive monitoring
Information management
Organizing information from bird conservation initiatives on species and habitats is an early step – coordinator, technical committee, contractors,
(Need to identify a centralized GIS support function)
Understanding limiting factors
Conservation Design
Determining regional options for landscape management
Influencing policy
Understanding the bird conservation context

At this point, many of the group realized the Appalachian Mountains BCR initiative did not have knowledge of the above issues and raised the question if indeed we were going to be able to provide a productive workshop in spring of 2005. The general consensus was that **we would be not be ready** to do this in 2005. The discussion then centered on two aspects: 1) what is the current status of the Appalachian Mountain BCR Initiative? and 2) what do we need to think about doing, technically, to proceed with biological planning and implementation?

After a brief discussion on the current status of the initiative, the remainder of the meeting focused on #2.

Tuesday December 14, 2004

After reviewing Monday's potential workshop topics and the Five Elements, the group re-ordered and refined the above list, agreeing that these topics were relevant to the future workshop. The following is what the group identified as necessary work tasks to be completed before a BCR wide workshop is held. Six topical areas were identified that required significant progress before a successful workshop could be held. The format for each of these groups is to 1) identify the issue 2) identify questions that need to be answered with regard to the issue 3) identify a potential working group that could best address these questions, 4) identify a time frame for potential completion and 5) identify what products or tools are needed to accomplish the task(s). Following are those six issues/needs.

1. Mapping /Landscape Characterization and Assessment (development of a GIS support system)
2. Populations objectives – Technical Committee function, or a small subset
3. Bird Population Response/Limiting Factors
4. Conservation Design – Uplands
5. Conservation Design - Wetlands
6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The group decided at this point that since many of the work group participants come from a variety of technical backgrounds and could deal with these immediate issues, no formal technical group for the Appalachian Mountains BCR will be established. Current members of the Technical Committee will be placed on one of the identified work groups depending on interest and expertise.

After full consideration of the above topics and time frames, we asked ourselves "Will we have a workshop? And time frame?" The result was that we will not have the planned workshop in spring 2005, and that completion of the above tasks and conservation designs will likely result in a meeting of the partners/land managers in a workshop that will be at least one year or more in the future from this time, late winter or spring 2006.

Funding some of the work group task was identified as a need – ABC currently holds some partnership money and that the Steering Committee would be the group to approve an expenditure recommended by the coordinator/work groups/steering committee.

First projects – Mapping/GIS as early as January; may need some partner funds for this

Assessment of needs to SC with list of needs for funding, and prioritized
Any requests to Steering Committee need to be clear and specific

One last question dealt with was asked by Carol Hardy; How does the BCR deal with rapidly declining species such as GWWA."

In this case the group discussed this and offered several suggestions

This species was identified by FWS in cooperation with USFS in
development and review of forest plans

New sub-BCR rankings should show high priority for this species

Uplands conservation design group and following workshop should help
identify this species as a high priority

Completion of status assessment might help

Document prepared for Bird Conservation Alliance will be prepared

Although we did not agree to have a workshop in 2005, significant progress was made in the development of processes and tasks to complete to advance bird conservation in the Appalachian Mountains BCR.

None of the original purposes for this meeting were met; however, the meeting did result significant progress toward identification and implementation of key elements of a large bird conservation initiative.