



State Wildlife Action Plans-Open Forum

Learning Series #9

Date: August 16, 2023

Time: 2:00pm-3:00 pm (ET)

Meeting Link: <https://fishwildlife-org.zoom.us/j/87634507360?pwd=WW9SSDIXWTNIWG9qeGdEMDZiSitNdz09>

Meeting ID: 876 3450 7360

Passcode: 433829

One tap mobile: +13017158592,,86186876959#,,,,*002978# US (Washington DC)

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Overview: It’s August, which means it is likely vacation time for some but not all hard-working SWAP coordinators. For the August SWAP Learning Series we are turning the microphone over to you share the ingredients of your secret SWAP revision sauce, pose questions, offer advice or to just get to know each other better. The agenda for this edition of the SWAP Learning Series is...actually there is no agenda. This 1-hour session will be recorded so those of you who are hiking in the mountains, lounging at the beach, and/or spending quality time with family and friends an opportunity to listen later.

MEETING AGENDA

Time (ET)	Topic	Speakers
2:00 PM	Welcome	Mark Humpert, AFWA and Jason Goldberg, USFWS
2:05 PM	Open Forum-Your time to tell us what is on your mind. We’ll use the trigger questions below as a last resort.	
2:55 PM	Wrap up and adjourn	

Trigger Questions

- What one piece of advice would you share with your colleagues on SWAP revision?
- What do you know or want to know about open [standards for the practice of conservation?](#)
- What tools, resources, and help do you need to help with revision of your State Wildlife Action Plan?
- What other topics should we explore during future SWAP Learning Series?

NOTES

- Kurt T.
 - Spoke about AFWA Multistate Grant to develop a knowledge hub. This will be an opportunity to share experiences.
 - How do we capture lessons learned from across a variety of experiences and provide this as a tool for Directors and staff?
 - Goal is to develop a resource so people know where to go for more information.
 - We're developing a proof of concept and identify a few themes.
 - We want to know if Directors find this value-added and build it out, or focus our priorities elsewhere.
 - One of the areas is resource management – stakeholder engagement as it pertains to SWAPs. Within that topic, are you all aware of great examples that you would be willing to share?
 - Goal is to present the Directors with a high-level, non-interactive storyboard in September, with an actual website in December that could be searched.
 - What is the relationship to other resources, such as CART?
 - We don't want to recreate other resources. It's meant to be a quick resource on how to get the information rather than a compendium of the information.
 - Let Kurt know if you have any suggestions!
- 2025 Revision – UT - We haven't considered plants and insects before in our SWAP. We're working on a full integration and encourage staff to be cognizant of the number of species we're adding to our plan. How are others tackling this issue, and what has your messaging been? We want to fully integrate but not trying to develop a full list.
 - MN – We're adding plants and insects. Adding plants under hopes of RAWA but also recognize that there are different implementation mechanisms, not just SWGs. Invasive species, for example. We're working through NatureServe calculator and then going through expert review, which will help us with research-deficit species. It's not too big of a stretch for us to identify these needs and help us identify partners.
 - NM – We took plants and insects in 2015, bringing back insects for 2025. Our Director has given us go-ahead to focus on pollinating insects. That emphasis will allow us to bring some important organisms in. Some pollinators are more charismatic. So far, people have been supportive and seem to want even more, so it's a good starting point. Maybe in 2035 we can expand beyond pollinators. Not given green light for plants because other agencies have authority.
 - MT
 - We're considering adding plants and pollinators. We're running it past our Director's Office. Current plan is to include about 20 insects, focusing on species that can represent the entire group.
 - We'll bring MT Plant Strategy into our SWAP as an Appendix.
 - We don't have authority to work on plants and insects. But legal team has helped us draft language to allow us to include them:
 - Language to include insects: Because invertebrates are not classified in statute, the management of their habitat would likely fall under management of species in MCA 87-1-201(9)(a)(i) to avoid listing as a species of concern or under the endangered species act, see MCA 87-5-107.

- Language to include plants: I know we have programs that deal with the management of plants and lands as they relate to the habitats for our wildlife, 87-1-209(1)(b)(ii). So think the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Act, MCA 87-5-806; Stream Protection 87-5-502; noxious or invasive weed programs Noxious Weeds Management | Montana FWP (mt.gov).
 - VT – We have plants included and inverts. We made case through the SWAPs that it's bigger than SWGs. We're not focusing funding, but rather telling the story about what we need to better manage fish and wildlife communities in the state.
 - NV was seeking authority for inverts that are SGCNs under legislative action.
 - If you don't have authority for plants and invertebrates, are you working to get that authority?
 - UT – Not something we want to take on.
 - Groups outside of NMDGF have been trying to give us authority over insects. We have not thus far been supporting those bills.
 - NC
 - 2015 SWAP included insects. We worked with Natural Heritage Program and its partners for recommendations. Pollinators are a part of keeping habitats viable. We will address insects from that perspective. We just added plants as a major revision anticipating RAWA, thinking we could pass funding through to the agencies that have the authority to manage plants.
 - There have been discussions in the State whether we want to ask for writing insects into our mandate. Slippery slope – a threat to pollinators is use of pesticides in agriculture. That would set us up for adversarial perspectives with other agencies.
 - Alex Fish – How do other states deal with historic or extinct species?
 - VT – Wolf and cougar are on our lists. Actions involved improving habitat. We're focused on the wildlife that are here, not as able to invest as much for reintroduction efforts.
 - NM - In this version of our SWAP we are actively excluding potentially extinct spp. That may change depending on feedback we get internally and externally.
 - UT – We've looked at reintroduction of leopard frogs. Don't have resources. How realistic can you be about the species and efforts to bring them back? We look at this case-by-case.
 - Is there a nexus to put that priority / focus? We have Karner blue butterfly, listed as endangered in our state but it's not found here. Could ESA be the nexus for the work rather than working through SWGs?
 - There's a public perception issue to prevent future listings, but public often focuses on SGCN.
 - Pennsylvania considers "recoverable" SX, with "recoverable" defined as "species that no longer occur in the state but whose range is expanding and Pennsylvania supports, or could support through active management, available habitat for the species. Public values must also be favorable for its recovery within the Commonwealth."
 - MT – Workflow – Formed a Steering Committee to handle big decisions with four technical teams working on different parts. Starting meetings next week, with about 40 people. How do you structure your work on SWAPs with other people in the agency. Do you meet once / month, etc.?
 - UT – We held a partners meeting to help identify key areas that partners felt were useful or deficient. Those have been meeting for a year. We work within different organizations with

reviews along the way to help prevent surprises at the end. We have different subcommittees.

- NC – We have a technical team as peer reviewers, all senior level biologists. About 16 people altogether. We’ve started with virtual meetings and will switch to in-person as the project develops. We have taxa teams with in-house and external partners. Those teams have flexibility on how often to meet. SGCN process is what we’re doing first. I’ve used Natural Heritage and Plants programs to help develop categories of habitats. I also use Workgroups where we invite partners. For climate change, we are planning to use USGS and FWS process for RAD.
- In NM thus far I have been focusing on SGCN criteria review and revision. Will be reaching out to a contractor we've hired to do a lot of key tasks for our SWAP on that soon. Then will reach out to internal and external experts for input. Will be sharing segments of the SWAP out with our core team for comments - will be meeting with them 4 times between now and Oct 1, 2025.
- Example of a launch survey - <https://forms.gle/EQDYvg4kVA8SdcQZ7>
- MN – We will be launching Regional Workshops in the Fall for internal and external DNR audiences, asking about priorities based on SWAP Elements. We’ll form teams working forward, but details remain to be determined. We use MS Teams for file management, with each Team having its own working space. We also use Clickup, which is a task management site.
- Note re documents: version control is very important. People will tend to make their own copies and you'll get a SWAP -monster of documents if you're not careful
- In Utah we are using SharePoint and depending on partner involvement, they can access folders and information that relates to their committees/involvement. There are folders that are not shared as well.
- VT – We identified taxonomic teams to work on basic elements for SGCNs. How do you get partners and staff to come to work together on these?
 - Once we get feedback, we switch to decision mode. We have needed to work out how to respond to feedback and suggestions. We are sharing extensive information with participants prior to our meetings so we can start a deep dive.
- Working on SWAP content, including databases. We’re also thinking of developing web resources. Trying to estimate the cost of the work, ideas for tracking dashboards, etc.?
 - MN – Difficult to estimate costs. We have to work through internal IT and Comms teams to assess if the work can be done in-house, but we have to pay them too. Recommended talking with Rafa about some cost issues. We also developed Covid dashboards during the pandemic, which could be an example of what it takes to develop the information.
- MT – Heritage Program will do dashboard for us under a contract.

Links to Video and Notes from Past SWAP Learning Series and Tentative Future Topics

Date*	Topic (w/Recording Link)	Recording Password	Link to Notes
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Wednesday, November 16, 2022	#1 Engaging Tribes and Indigenous People in State Wildlife Action Plans	OT?41Gz.	SWAP & Tribal Engagement Notes
Wednesday, December 14, 2022	#2 SWAPs and Climate Adaptation Guidance	XU.=69*j	SWAP & Climate Adaptation Notes
Wednesday, January 18, 2023	#3 State Wildlife Action Plans and Renewable Energy	=7NSqgQT	SWAP & Renewable Energy Notes
Wednesday, March 15, 2023	#4 Interactive data and tools for SWAP planning and implementation	+6@f9jQW	SWAP & NatureServe Notes
Wednesday, April 19, 2023	#5 Engaging Diverse Partners & Making your SWAP More Relevant	\$p?=lg95	SWAP & Engaging Diverse Partners Notes
Wednesday, May 17, 2023	#6 Using the SWAP & Landscape Conservation Framework for Interjurisdictional Landscape Conservation	B=Jg^@8=	SWAP & Landscape Conservation
Wednesday, June 21, 2023	#7 Making Your SWAP RAWA-Ready	FnJane%1	Making SWAP RAWA-Ready
Wednesday, July 19, 2023	#8 Incorporating corridors into your SWAP	2r#+^rla	SWAP and Corridors
Wednesday, August 16, 2023	<i>No SWAP Learning Series- Enjoy the Summer</i> Note: If there interest we may have a roundtable discussion		
Wednesday, September 20, 2023	# 9 Connecting federal planning efforts into SWAP (NWRS, USFS, BLM)		
October 18, 2023	#10 Tentative Topic-Bat Conservation Guidance		
November 15, 2023	#11 Incorporating Fish & Wildlife Health and One Health into your SWAP		
December 13 th , 2023 (2 nd Wed of Dec.)	#12 Tentative Topic-2023 Round-up on Lessons Learned		

* Note all SWAP Learning Series sessions will be held from 2:00pm-3:30pm ET unless otherwise indicated.