

Chapter 6: Plan Implementation, Revision, and Coordination

Plan Review and Revision

Many government plans end up collecting dust, unread and unremembered after the initial energy of plan development is spent. WDCP is designed and expected to be a living document. During the plan's implementation, MD DNR will review, evaluate and update progress on conservation actions, research, surveys, and monitoring on a periodic basis, most likely annually or as projects are completed. This will provide information for dissemination to internal and external partners. An outcome of the adaptive assessment strategy described in Chapter 5, the results of these reviews may frequently indicate that minor modifications in conservation actions are required. However, if the results indicate that a major change may be required due to significant changes in the status or condition of GCN species or key wildlife habitats, such as those affecting an entire guild, taxa group, or key wildlife habitat, a revision of the WDCP would be warranted. Maryland DNR WHS is the responsible party for implementing the review and evaluation process.

In addition to the ongoing input into databases and GIS datasets and the evaluative reviews described above for adaptive assessment of conservation progress, MD DNR will work with its Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee (WDAC) to perform a general overview and review of the WDCP in 2010. WDAC is a panel created by MD DNR and consisting of nine members who represent various aspects of the scientific and conservation community in Maryland. This review will assess the overarching threats and will look for any new landscape-scale or significant local issues that need to be addressed. It may also make recommendations to modify the overarching conservation actions or the specific actions provided in Chapter 4 within the appropriate key wildlife habitats based on these newly evaluated threats. At any time throughout the implementation cycle that significant changes to WDCP are warranted, MD DNR will seek broader input and comment from other agencies and the public, as described later in this chapter.

Maryland DNR will coordinate and complete a comprehensive revision of this WDCP by October 2015. To adequately prepare for this 10-year revision, periodic scientific reviews will have been performed to allow for re-evaluation of the status of species, habitats, and their threats, as well as the effectiveness of the actions to date. The results of these meetings and scientific updates will be incorporated into future reviews and revisions of this document, as appropriate. Committing to such significant coordination efforts indicates that Maryland DNR will continue to involve its many conservation partners and interested stakeholders in the WDCP progress. This will help ensure that the WDCP will be a living, dynamic document and that each revision includes the most current scientific and administrative information for the key conservation partners in the state and institutionalizes these important coordination and revision efforts.

In the interim, MD DNR will utilize both short and long-term iterative, existing mechanisms and processes with built-in review and evaluation to maximize opportunities for both internal

and external implementation. Each division and program has a set operational timeframe for program evaluation and reporting. For example, the existing USFWS process requires annual reporting and review with 5-year AFA work plans and evaluations. The WHS, as well as most other MD DNR agency programs, have annual reporting requirements from their granting federal or other funding source. Annual or project-end results that indicate any changes or new information, including information from periodic review by the technical experts, will be assessed for adaptive management purposes and eventual plan revision.

An important outcome of this plan will result from the GCN species, key wildlife habitats, and priority conservation strategies being actively integrated into the revision processes of MD DNR's plans and of its many partners' plans and programs. This integration effort alone produces the ripple effect for conservation efforts across the state, providing a consistent and unified approach for conservation of Maryland's wildlife and habitats. Incorporation of GCN species and key wildlife habitats across all MD DNR programs and plans will provide a focus for conservation targets for land acquisition and other conservation efforts. Integration of these GCN species and key wildlife habitats into the plans and programs of local, state and federal partner agencies will facilitate implementation of these actions by both private and public partners.

With the completion of annual progress reports to the USFWS Federal Aid office, an iterative, adaptive process will include the incorporation of the results of research, monitoring and survey efforts that provide for refinement of the priorities and actions of this plan. Each revision of this WDCP document and the planning documents of conservation partners should reciprocally integrate the updates of partners' plans.

Coordination with Federal, State and Local Agencies and Indian Tribes

The MD DNR took the lead in coordinating Maryland's WDCP, beginning its process in early 2003 as information on the SWG and WCRP requirements and guidelines became available. Appendix 6b lists more than 300 stakeholders and partners that were contacted and invited to workshops during this effort. Development of the WDCP was coordinated with key federal, state and local agencies and Indian tribes as described in Appendix 6c.

Many of the programs presented in this WDCP (Appendices 4b and 5) are ongoing, and the coordination among various governmental agencies that is necessary for them to be successful will continue. As new projects related to specific actions within this WDCP are implemented, agency partners will be solicited for input and feedback via electronic correspondence and phone conversations, invited to meetings and workshops, and requested to provide review of draft versions of reports and articles, as appropriate. Key federal partners include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chesapeake Bay Field Office, National Wildlife Refuge Offices, Fishery Resources Office, and Federal Aid); U.S. Geological Survey; National Park Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Department of Agriculture; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and the Department of Defense. To enhance implementation and coordination, it is anticipated that many federal partners will begin to

incorporate the conservation of GCN species and key wildlife habitat conservation targets into their programs and plans, as appropriate.

Similarly, the coordination necessary for the successful implementation of ongoing state and local level projects will continue. As new projects related to specific actions within this WDCP are implemented, state and local agency partners will be solicited for input and feedback via electronic correspondence and phone conversations, invited to meetings and workshops, and requested to provide review of draft versions of reports and articles, as appropriate. MD DNR's key partner agencies at the state level include, but are not limited to, Department of the Environment, Department of Agriculture, Department of Planning, Department of Transportation (SHA), University of Maryland and major state universities, and the Maryland National Guard. Key partners at the local government level include the planning and zoning agencies within each of Maryland's 23 counties, as well as Baltimore City. Coordination at the local level includes contact with county staff related to environmental protection and resource management. Maryland has more than 150 municipalities and coordination at this level is frequently accomplished through the county agencies or via the Department of Planning. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is also a regional-level agency that develops and operates public park systems and provides land use planning for the great majority of both Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties.

There are no federally recognized Indian tribes in Maryland today. Non-federally recognized Indian tribes and communities include the Piscataway-Conoy Confederacy in La Plata, Maryland, with the American Indian Cultural Center of Cedarville Band in Waldorf, Maryland. They were contacted, invited to participate in the WDCP process, and invited to review the draft material on the website.

The MD DNR WHS will continue to lead in monitoring the progress of the WDCP implementation, and will communicate this information with the network of agency partners involved in the development of the plan. Periodic interagency informational and input meetings will be held, as warranted, to continue coordination efforts with these agencies in the implementation, review and revision of the WDCP.

Broad Public Participation

In addition to the coordination with key federal, state and local agencies and Indian tribes, MD DNR utilized an assortment of outreach techniques (Appendix 6e) to encourage broad public participation in every stage of WDCP development. Appendix 6d provides detailed information on the public participation process used to engage all interested members of the public.

For the purposes of this WDCP effort, the "public" was categorized into 3 external tiers:

- Tier 1: private/NGO partners and collaborators with a significant role/program
- Tier 2: interested NGO's and individuals with a more limited role/program

Tier 3: the general public

The WDCP mailing list was compiled using numerous sources as an initial stage in the development of this WDCP. The list includes about 500 Tier 1 and Tier 2 entities, of which roughly 300 are partner and stakeholder groups (Appendix 6b) and the remaining 200 are individual partners and stakeholders, including researchers, educators, and experts, as well as citizens that are more actively involved and interested in some aspect of wildlife conservation. One of the primary sources of this list was the Maryland Teaming With Wildlife Coalition's list of member participants. The WDCP mailing list was compiled to contact and invite a large portion of Maryland's "affected" public to workshops. During the implementation phase of the WDCP, this mailing list will be updated and kept current as new NGO's form, as existing organizations change their contact information, and as partnerships with additional individuals develop. Because it is a dynamic list, it will continue to be used to invite stakeholders to future workshops that will be held in conjunction with major reviews and revisions of the WDCP.

As is outlined in Appendix 6e for the development of the WDCP, DNR will continue to focus its public participation efforts at those stakeholders and partners within Tier 1, while at the same time providing an appropriate level of participation and input opportunities to Tier 2 groups/citizens and the general public (Tier 3). Information about the implementation of the WDCP, including project reports, monitoring results, and review cycles will be shared with partners and the public through various means, such as updates to the MD DNR website, articles, and press releases (Appendix 6e). Inclusion of updates in partner (Appendix 6b) newsletters and outreach efforts will also be encouraged. As in the development process for the WDCP, stakeholders will be invited to provide input and feedback on future plan revisions.

Some of the Tier 1 NGO partners that are involved currently in assisting or implementing conservation actions and research, monitoring, and survey projects with MD DNR NHP include The Nature Conservancy, NatureServe, National Audubon Society, Environmental Defense, and the Maryland Ornithological Society. Numerous other organizations are currently assisting other MD DNR units with implementation of a wide array of conservation and monitoring programs (Appendices 4b and 5).

Some public participants belong to groups that, while having limited staff/capacity to provide scientific data that is directly applicable to the implementation of the WDCP, have a potential role in outreach, general input, and advocacy for the implementation and continued adaptive management of the WDCP (Tier 2). The remainder of Maryland's citizens (Tier 3), while not as actively or directly involved, will benefit from the implementation of the WDCP as related to recreational, quality of life, and economic benefits from effective statewide wildlife diversity conservation.