
SECTION 7– WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN-PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

7.1 BACKGROUND

In the early- to mid- 1990s, the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) began recognizing, in earnest, the need to reach beyond traditional constituents of hunters and anglers. During that period, the PGC and PFBC became very active in the national effort to promote Teaming With Wildlife (TWW/CARA). As the Commissions began to reach out to the type of non-consumptive organizations that supported TWW/CARA, they found high levels of support for the Commissions and the work they do. Eventually, staff working on the TWW effort went on to develop the third largest TWW/CARA support coalition in the nation. This public support resulted in several Pennsylvania members of Congress supporting the CARA legislation.

Though TWW/CARA did not survive the Congressional process, our agencies' interest in promoting public involvement has continued. Through public opinion surveys, staff input processes, focus groups, facilitated meetings of stakeholders, and a State Wildlife Grants Program (SWG) website that encourages public comment, the Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission have continued to solicit public involvement in the development of our Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (WAP).

The following five sub-sections provide more detailed information on the public involvement processes that have informed the development of PA's WAP: 7.2) The Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan (1996-2000); 7.3) the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Plan (2000-2005); 7.4) WAP Public Input (2004-2005). We fully expect that as our Wildlife Diversity efforts pick up momentum with the continued infusion of Federal SWG funds, we will be able to broaden public interest in the conservation and recovery actions outlined in the WAP.

7.2 THE WILDLIFE DIVERSITY CONSERVATION PLAN - 1996-2000

In 1996, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission began a four-year planning process to broaden management efforts beyond traditional game and sport fish management. As part of this planning process, the agencies contracted with Responsive Management to conduct a survey of Pennsylvanians' attitudes and opinions relative to agency resource management and performance. When the survey results were reported, the agencies then conducted an internal staff input process to further define the issues, strengths, and weaknesses of their Wildlife Diversity efforts.

Public Opinion Survey

The planning process began with a statewide survey of Pennsylvanians to assess the level of public interest and support for comprehensive fish and wildlife management efforts. The survey was conducted by Responsive Management Inc., a recognized expert in gathering

public opinion data regarding fish and wildlife management. The survey tool consisted of a telephone interview conducted with a randomly selected sample of Pennsylvania residents. Sampling was stratified to adequately sample urban and rural attitudes, and consumptive/non-consumptive recreationists' opinions across all Pennsylvania regions.

The public opinion survey was designed to provide the information necessary to: 1) Assist in the development of a comprehensive nongame fish and wildlife management plan; 2) Develop strategies for promoting the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative; 3) Identify the level of public support regarding alternative funding sources for state wildlife programs.

Public Input Results

The survey was conducted in May-June of 1996. More than 1,000 persons participated, and the margin of error was plus or minus three percent. Several of the findings revealed by the public opinion survey can be used to guide the development of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan:

- *Pennsylvanians recognize the need for a comprehensive management approach.* A majority of Pennsylvanians (84 percent) said they believe managing for a diversity of wildlife, not just a particular species, is important. Pennsylvanians exhibited support for many facets of fish and wildlife management.
- *Consumptive and non-consumptive recreationists exhibit similar levels of support for comprehensive management activities (Table 6.1).* Wildlife managers often assume that their 'traditional' constituents, hunters and anglers, are more narrowly interested in the management of game species, perhaps to the exclusion of broader management goals. These findings indicate that our sportsmen are just as supportive of comprehensive management as the public at large.
- *Managing endangered species and providing information and education about fish and wildlife were considered the most important activities of the Commissions.* Seventy-nine percent of respondents said managing endangered species was "very important," while 75 percent ranked providing information about fish and wildlife as "very important." The message that nongame management prevents species from becoming endangered would resonate well in Pennsylvania.
- *Increased involvement in nonconsumptive wildlife recreation results in higher approval ratings for the Commissions and their wildlife management efforts.* This would seem to indicate that reaching out to non-traditional constituents would be an effective way to improve support for the Commissions and our management efforts.
- *Increased involvement in nonconsumptive wildlife recreation results in increased support for the Commissions' role in providing hunting and fishing opportunities.* This would seem to indicate that reaching out to non-traditional constituents would be an effective way to build public support for hunting, angling, and the Commissions' role in these pursuits. Fears of the cultural schism between consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife enthusiasts, which other states have experienced, do not seem to be an issue in

Pennsylvania. However, while this trend was true for wildlife-related recreationists (those who view, feed, photograph, or maintain areas for wildlife), it was not the case with other types of outdoor recreationists (hiking and backpacking) who do not rely upon wildlife for the enjoyment of their pursuits.

- Pennsylvania residents are highly supportive of hunting and fishing, with 83 percent and 95 percent approval, respectively. “Anti-hunting sentiment is a non-issue in Pennsylvania,” stated Mark Duda of Responsive Management, the firm that conducted the survey.
- Desire for wildlife viewing opportunities is extremely strong in Pennsylvania. This, combined with the previously mentioned findings, may indicate that the development of wildlife viewing opportunities would be a very effective way to reach out to non-traditional audiences and thereby build support for wildlife management and the Commissions.
- Support for law enforcement and habitat protection was very high in Pennsylvania. Mark Duda, president of Responsive Management, stated that support for law enforcement is typical across the nation: WCOs are *the* public face of an agency. Combining public support for law enforcement with the high support for habitat management would be an effective way to market the Commissions.
- Nongame birds, such as raptors, songbirds, and shorebirds generate higher public interest among Pennsylvanians than any other class of nongame species. As throughout the nation, birds comprise the flagship species that attract public attention, concern, and monetary donations. Wildlife viewing projects focusing on birds would be very popular in Pennsylvania and would help build public support for the Commissions.
- Pennsylvanians are very active in wildlife-related outdoor recreation: 64 percent maintained areas to benefit wildlife in the two years prior to the survey and 53 percent viewed or photographed wildlife during that time. Those outdoor pursuits following in popularity were hiking, fishing, camping and boating, hunting, and backpacking. Only 12 percent of respondents stated that they had not participated in any of these outdoor pursuits in the two years prior to the survey. Little wonder then, that Pennsylvania consistently ranks in the top two or three states in the nation in resident participation in wildlife-related recreation.
- Pennsylvanians supported a user fee on outdoor equipment to fund nongame wildlife management. At the time of the survey, Pennsylvania exhibited the second highest level of support for an excise tax than any state previously surveyed by Responsive Management. Pennsylvania was also the first state in the nation in which nonconsumptive users supported such a tax at a higher rate than consumptive users. Hunters exhibited fairly high negatives on this issue, but a majority of them still supported such a tax. Increased speeding fines also were well supported as a revenue source.

Mark Duda, director of Responsive Management stated: “Pennsylvania is different from any other state I’ve worked in. It’s sportsmen-oriented, even among non-hunters. The support you have for hunting and fishing is like no other state I’ve ever surveyed. Pennsylvania truly is a sportsman’s state.” One obvious response to this survey is for the PGC and PFBC to continue to publicize the role of hunting/fishing in wildlife management, to continue to

publicize the role of the Commissions in hunting and fishing, and to continue to educate and encourage hunter and angler ethics and sporting behavior so that public goodwill is not eroded by bad behavior. Developing wildlife viewing opportunities appears to be an excellent way to further increase support for nongame programs and increase Pennsylvania residents’ awareness of the Commissions.

Table 7-1. Management activities of the Game Commission and Fish & Boat Commission considered important by Pennsylvania residents^a:

Program Area	Nonconsumptive Recreationists	Hunters/Anglers
enforcing laws	97%	97%
providing fish and wildlife info	96%	96%
restoring & improving habitat	96%	97%
educating public about wildlife	95%	95%
managing endangered species	94%	96%
providing fishing opportunities	91%	97%
providing wildlife viewing opport.	90%	88%
managing for a diversity of species	84%	83%
purchasing land to protect rare sp.	83%	79%
managing nongame wildlife	82%	82%
education programs in urban areas	80%	89%
providing hunting opportunities	80%	90%
nongame research	77%	77%
reintroducing species	77%	78%
landowner assistance	76%	81%

^a Pennsylvania Game and Fish & Boat Commission survey, *Pennsylvania Residents' Opinions On and Attitudes Toward Nongame Wildlife*, conducted by Responsive Management, June 1996

Commission Staff Opinion Survey

Once the results were in from the Public Opinion Survey, the planning staff of the Game Commission and Fish & Boat Commission produced a needs-assessment for broadening nongame fish and wildlife management. This document was circulated within the agencies for executive and field staff review and comment. The goals of this effort were to: inform staff of the status and importance of nongame species, and; assess internal support (or opposition) for strengthening nongame management efforts.

After reviewing the contents of the needs-assessment, staff was asked to complete a Personnel Input Form. This form provided examples of nongame program goals and initiatives, followed by several strategies that had been implemented in other states. Respondents were asked to indicate how important they considered each strategy to be (1- low priority, 3-medium priority, 5-high priority). Personnel were instructed to assume that there would be increased funding available to accomplish nongame management objectives, so that we were not asking staff to choose between existing and future programming.

Staff Input Results

This Personnel Input Form generated a very strong response from staff of both the PGC and PFBC, with 164 responses from the Game Commission and 53 responses from the Fish and Boat Commission. In addition, staff from both agencies provided extensive written comments. These comments occupied 11 single-spaced pages from PFBC staff and 29 single-spaced pages from PGC staff. A summary of the results from the Personnel Input Forms and write-in comments are included in Appendix 1.

Overall, staff from both Commissions exhibited extremely high levels of support for expanded nongame programming efforts (Appendix 1). It is important to note, however, that staff was instructed to assume that new funding would be available to accomplish new goals, so they were not asked to choose between existing and future programming. Staff was presented with four broad goals of an expanded nongame/diversity program, and asked to rate how high a priority each goal should be. Though not a scientific survey, some interesting findings emerge when the priority rankings are compared for the various goals:

1. *“Build a strong, active constituency for wildlife management among both traditional and nontraditional audiences through the development of new wildlife recreation and education opportunities.”*

A majority of respondents from both Commissions ranked this as a 5-highest priority goal. However, when pressed further on the various ways that the Commissions could work to

create an active constituency, staff illustrated strongest support for traditional methods of public outreach:

Outreach Method	PGC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)	PFBC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)
Develop new I&E products and expand I&E efforts	5	5
Develop nongame newsletter, increase coverage in agency magazine(s)	5	4
Develop public education programs for nonconsumptive users	4	4
Develop public education workshops on nonconsumptive topics	3	3
Expand opportunities for volunteer involvement in agency programs	4	5
Expand public field trip opportunities	3	3

Based on the findings of the public opinion survey, which revealed that: 1) Pennsylvanians are extremely interested in wildlife viewing, 2) increased involvement in wildlife recreation leads to higher approval for the Commissions and for wildlife management activities, and; 3) residents exhibit a high level of interest and involvement in wildlife recreation, it would seem that increased public outreach in the form of education programs, volunteer opportunities, public education workshops, and field trips could be very effective. However, these were the mechanisms that received relatively low rankings from Commission staff.

Conversely, public survey results revealed that Pennsylvanians do not generally rely upon agency sources of information for nongame wildlife information (only 5 percent of general respondents and 11 percent of sportsmen identified PGC/PFBC as their source for information), yet expansion of agency information products were the outreach methods ranked most highly by staff. Thus there seems to be a bit of a disconnect between the type of public outreach our staff is most interested in providing versus the type that may resonate best with the public.

2. *Develop a watchable wildlife program as a vehicle for increasing public recognition of the Commissions and increasing public education and outreach.*

When presented with this hypothetical goal, Commission staff was not that enthusiastic, ranking it a 3-4 (medium priority) on the Likert scale. This was the lowest-ranked goal among PGC staff, and tied for lowest among PFBC staff. When asked to prioritize various aspects of a wildlife-viewing network, staff from both agencies was once again most interested in expanding existing activities rather than initiating new programming:

Wildlife viewing activity	PGC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)	PFBC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)
Identify and create viewing opportunities	3	4
Secure more public access to land and water	5	5
Develop or improve public facilities at existing sites	3	4
Managing for populations of desired species at viewing sites	3	3

Once again, this would seem to indicate a discrepancy between the type of programming that the public is most interested in versus the type of programming Commission staff is most interested in providing.

3. *Expand agency activities (where appropriate) to improve management of nongame species.*

This goal received a 4-medium/high priority ranking from staff of both Commissions. Since this goal is so broad, several sub-strategies were presented for additional rankings:

Expand agency activities to improve nongame mgt	PGC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)	PFBC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)
Inventory and Monitoring	4	4
Habitat Acquisition & Mgt.	5	5
Information Mgt. Systems	3.5	4
Interagency Coordination	3.5	4.5

Once again, there seemed to be somewhat of a tendency to support the strengths already in place in the Commissions, rather than toward expanding into new programming. Even within the Habitat Acquisition and Management sub-strategy that received the highest ranking, support dropped off to a 4 for “provide technical assistance and/or input into land use and

land management decisions beyond the agency in order to maintain, restore, and enhance habitats.” The same result occurred in the PGC with “enhance agency participation in preparing land use plans, removal and fill permits, environmental impact statements, public and private forest management plans, etc.” – this was the only other sub-strategy to receive a 4 (as opposed to a 5) under the Habitat Acquisition and Management category.

This trend continued throughout the remainder of Goal 3 statements: when sub-strategies suggested an expansion of agency activities beyond current bounds, staff support tended to dwindle, particularly among PGC respondents. Most strikingly, respondents from both Commissions gave their lowest ranking to the sub-strategy that stated: “Incorporate the management concerns of public and private resource managers (in local, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as private landowners) into comprehensive management programs.”

Staff did show high levels of support for encouraging “the development of interdisciplinary perspectives among agency personnel through expanded professional training opportunities.” Respondents also exhibited relatively high levels of interest in professional development topics relating to wildlife diversity topics (Appendix 2, pg 8). This would indicate that in-house professional development opportunities may be an effective way to educate staff on the various aspects of public demand in Pennsylvania as well as the importance of various facets of a comprehensive fish and wildlife management program.

4. Develop and promote sustainable support for comprehensive fish and wildlife management efforts.

This goal was strongly supported by staff from both Commissions, which ranked it a 5-highest priority. In fact, this goal tied with Goal 1 as the most strongly supported. Staff from both agencies understand that Commission budgets are not adequate to undertake comprehensive fish and wildlife management efforts without some type of new revenue stream to support such efforts.

While this seemed to be a strong area of support, it also provided insight into the area of greatest disagreement between staff of the two Commissions. When asked to rank the sub-strategy “intensify efforts to identify all beneficiaries of fish, wildlife, and habitat management efforts and implement methods whereby all beneficiaries contribute to resource management activities” staff from the two Commissions ranked this very differently. PGC respondents gave this sub-strategy their lowest ranking (3-medium priority) while PFBC respondents gave it their highest ranking (5-highest priority). Nowhere else, among 38 rankings of various goals and sub-strategies, did respondents from the two Commissions show such a difference in opinion.

Develop Sustainable Support	PGC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)	PFBC (majority response) (1-low priority 5-highest)
Seek financial support from all beneficiaries of wildlife and habitat management	3	5
Identify existing programs/activities where comprehensive mgt can be incorporated at minimal expense	4	4

The mid-to-late 1990s was a time of increased activity among anti-hunting groups within and outside of Pennsylvania, and the Game Commission response may have been a reaction to that pressure. It’s likely that internal support for this sub-strategy is greater now.

7.3 THE PENNSYLVANIA BIODIVERSITY PLAN – 2000-2005

The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership (PBP), a public-private partnership dedicated to building a biodiversity conservation movement in the state, was formed in March 2000. The PGC and PFBC have provided significant support to the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership (PBP) through multi-year WCRP and SWG funding. Since the issues surrounding biodiversity conservation are inextricably linked with the issues surrounding the conservation of fish and wildlife diversity, the PGC and PFBC have incorporated the public involvement results of the PBP into our WAP planning.

Since 2001, the PBP has embarked on a broad stakeholder and public input process to assist in developing a comprehensive statewide Pennsylvania Biodiversity Conservation Plan (BCP). The objectives of the overall input process are:

- To engage a broad range of individuals in the planning process by gathering their perceptions about a range of topics concerning biodiversity.
- To engage stakeholder groups in planning process by gathering their perceptions about a range of topics concerning biodiversity.
- To document and summarize their input for use by PBP task forces and the Biodiversity Conservation Plan Team in developing the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Conservation Plan (BCP).

As a secondary objective, increase awareness on the part of stakeholders of PBP, its activities, and the development a statewide plan for conservation of biodiversity in Pennsylvania.

Public input gathering has been conducted via several channels, depending upon the target audience. The first input gathering tool is a brief pencil & paper survey. This survey has been presented for the public to complete at conferences and meetings attended by PBP staff. It has also been posted on the PBP website for public review and completion. The second input gathering tool is a series of facilitated focus groups designed to gather critical information and input from a broad range of stakeholders about important biodiversity issues in Pennsylvania. Brief descriptions of the public involvement processes are presented below. A full report of results is included in Appendix 1.

Public Comment Forms

The public comment form was designed as a simple method of gathering input from diverse individuals through a short pencil-and-paper format. Two versions of the form are used, depending on the audience, however the questions are the same. One format is open-ended and is used with more knowledgeable audiences and the other contains check-off boxes as well as space for open-ended response. These forms have been administered by PBP staff at conferences, meetings, lectures, and focus groups as well as being available on the PBP website. Forms have been completed at locations throughout the state, including:

- 3rd Statewide Summit for Volunteer Watershed Monitors, Penn Stater
- 4th Annual PA Watershed Conference, Grantville
- Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs
- Allegheny Society of American Forestry Summer Meeting, State College
- BioForay 2003, Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector
- County Commissioners Association of PA, Philadelphia
- Earth Day Fair, Beechwood Farms, Pittsburgh
- Earth Day Fair, Renfrew Institute, Waynesboro
- Environmental Issues Forum: Green Infrastructure, Shippensburg University / Kings Gap, Shippensburg
- Heritage Conservancy, Doylestown
- Invasive Plant Conference, Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia
- Native Plant Conference, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh
- Ned Smith Festival, Millersburg
- Pennsylvania Academy of Science Annual Meeting, Grantville
- Pennsylvania Alliance for Environmental Education Annual Meeting, Altoona
- Pennsylvania Association of Council of Governments 29th Annual Conference, Champion
- Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals Annual Conference, Harrisburg
- Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts Fall Meeting, State College
- Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership K-12 Work Group Meeting, Harrisburg
- Pennsylvania Invertebrate Biodiversity Project Annual Meeting, State College
- Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference, Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, Bethlehem
- Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society Annual Conference, Penn Stater

Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs Annual Conference, Philadelphia
 Rachel Carson Day, Rachel Carson Homestead Association, Springdale
 Rare Plant Forum, Pennsylvania Biological Survey Vascular Plant Technical
 Committee, Bellefonte
 Smart Growth Conference, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh
 Smart Growth Summit, Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County,
 Greensburg
 Society of American Forestry / Wildlife Society Joint Meeting, State College
 Sustainable Systems Seminar, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock
 Venture Outdoors, Western Pennsylvania Field Institute, Pittsburgh
 Wilson College Biodiversity Presentation, Chambersburg
 World Population Day, National Aviary, Pittsburgh

Public Input Results

To date, nearly 500 public comment forms have been received. The survey questions and a summary of the responses (as of December 2003) are given below. A full report of the public comment results is included in Appendix 1.

In your opinion, what are the greatest threats to native species and their habitats in Pennsylvania?

1. Development/sprawl
2. Habitat loss
3. Pollution
4. Invasive species
5. Land planning (poor land planning, or lack of regulations)

Do you think that biodiversity conservation should be a priority for the state of Pennsylvania? Why or why not?

Yes – 404 No – 0 Did not respond – 45

If you were constructing a plan to conserve biodiversity in Pennsylvania, what are the issues you would include?

1. Research and education
2. Development of a statewide & community-based effort and plan
3. Wetland preservation
4. Preservation of land and open space
5. Development of county and local guidelines

Please list any specific geographic areas or habitats in Pennsylvania that you consider most important to conserve. The top five responses were:

1. All of Pennsylvania
2. Wetlands
3. Water resources and watersheds
4. Appalachian Mountains
5. Old growth forests

These public input results have helped inform the development of the WAP in several ways. First, the findings highlight the high degree of public concern about habitat loss, development and sprawl. Therefore these issues, as well as tools to conserve habitat, are discussed at length in Section XI of the WAP.

Secondly, the public input results verify the need for planning: Lack of planning, development of a statewide & community-based effort and plan, and development of county and local guidelines were all identified as important by the public. It is the hope of the Commissions that the WAP, a statewide strategy, and the WAP Phase 2, ecoregional strategies, help address these public concerns.

Thirdly, the public input results identify the habitats and geographic areas that the public is most concerned about, namely, wetlands and watersheds, the Appalachian mountains, and old-growth forests. These findings are in agreement with the findings of the WAP, which verifies that: 1) wetlands and waterways support not only the highest number of WAP-Priority species, but also many of the most-imperiled species; 2) the Appalachian mountains (comprised of the Northern Ridge and Valley and Northern Plateau physiographic areas) are indeed the primary locations for Responsibility species – those species for which Pennsylvania plays an important regional, national, or global role, and; 3) “old growth forests”, though a vaguely-defined term, provide optimum habitat for several WAP-Priority species. This is particularly true of mature conifer stands, where many WAP-Priority species exhibit higher densities.

7.4 WAP PUBLIC INPUT

SWG/WAP Web Pages

In April of 2004, planning staff began development of a SWG area on the PGC website . This web area can be viewed at www.pgc.state.pa.us by clicking on the _Wildlife button, then clicking on Projects and Programs, or (<http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/cwp/browse.asp?a=496&bc=0&c=70008>). The web area provides an overview of the state SWG program, a list of all SWG projects funded to date, as well as information on the development of the WAP.

The SWG web area contains the Needs-Assessment, which was created to generate public awareness of the need for improved management of nongame species. This needs-assessment is largely represented in Section IV of this document.

The area also provides a comment section whereby the public can provide feedback on the SWG program, the WAP and its development, or ask questions regarding the programs. We have fostered continuous public participation and comment through this outreach and feedback mechanism.

Facilitated Meeting of Conservation Partners

Described in more detail in Section VIII of this document. Through a day-long facilitated meeting hosted by the PGC and PFBC, conservation partners from across Pennsylvania worked together to identify the overall vision, issues, and goals of the state WAP. Beyond the one-day meeting, these partners have continually provided comments and suggestions as Commission staff worked to develop Strategic and Operational Objectives in order to accomplish partners' vision for comprehensive wildlife conservation in the Commonwealth.

Partner Input Results

See Section VIII for detailed discussion of the results of this meeting.

Pennsylvania All-Bird Conservation Workshop *

*(*narrative contributed by Doug Gross, PA Game Commission)*

Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Pennsylvania All-Bird Conservation workshop was a watershed event for the Commonwealth. The broad and enthusiastic participation by many organizations and individuals was breathtaking at this very ambitious workshop. The All-Bird Conservation workshop started the process of constructing a comprehensive bird conservation plan for the state, as well as informing the WAP by identifying habitat and ecoregion-based issues, priorities, and strategies.

More than 500 people were invited in a mass mailing and several hundred others were contacted through the internet. This resulted in a large and diverse participation with more than 130 people attending the two-day workshop. Not only were government agencies and organizations involved, but this workshop appealed to many local, grassroots bird and land conservation organizations. Of those who attended the meeting, 47 were Game Commission employees. The Department of Conservation and natural Resources' Bureau of State Parks and Bureau of Forestry, as well as the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs also were represented. There were five federal agencies involved with the meeting. They were the National Resource Conservation Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U. S. Geological Survey. The Pennsylvania Academic community also was represented with faculty members and students from six Pennsylvania colleges or universities in attendance. In the private sector, five

companies (consultants or software manufacturers) were represented. There was broad representation by non-governmental conservation organizations, 25 in all. These included well-known game bird habitat organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, the Ruffed Grouse Society, and the National Wild Turkey Federation. Many participants were members of the National Audubon Society or statewide bird organizations, PA Audubon and the PA Society for Ornithology. Local bird organizations were very well represented by seven Audubon chapters and six local bird clubs. In addition to the Nature Conservancy and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, three local land trust organizations also participated in the workshop.

Each participant was provided with a registration packet with a great deal of information to enhance each person's participation and continued involvement with Pennsylvania bird conservation. Each packet included the following:

- Maps of the Bird Conservation Areas, PIF Physiographic Areas, and the ACJV Waterfowl Focus Areas
- Executive Summaries of the PIF plans for all PIF areas in Pennsylvania, including priority bird populations and habitats
- American Bird Conservancy's *Bird Conservation* latest edition, August 2004, outlining the PIF Continental Plan and ABS's Green List
- A pamphlet on the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture
- A list of Resources for All Birds Conservation in Pennsylvania
- Lists of PA bird species of Conservation Concern, listed by habitat and indicating PIF Tiers and Scores
- A list of Pennsylvania's Species of Special Concern
- *The State of the Forest: A Snapshot of Pennsylvania's Updated Forest Inventory 2004*, a recent publication by the USDA Forest Service.

The workshop was enhanced by displays brought by partnering organizations. The following organizations engaged participants with their displays: the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Ruffed Grouse Society, Pennsylvania Audubon (including the Important Bird Areas project), and Ducks Unlimited. Many copies of the PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan and the North American Shorebird Management Plan were taken by participants.

Programs and Speakers: On November 17, the PA Game Commission was represented by Scott Klinger, Bureau of Land Management director, who welcomed participants and made introductory remarks about habitat as a uniting factor among the diverse bird conservationists. Dan Brauning, PGC Wildlife Diversity Section supervisor, invited the broad participation to the workshop and challenged the audience to make this a productive meeting. He noted how Pennsylvania is a Keystone state for eastern North American forest birds.

Andrew Millikin represented the North American Bird Conservation Initiative as well as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the N. A. Waterbird Conservation Plan, the

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Partnership. He had the unenviable task of explaining the purposes of and relationships between these various bird conservation initiatives. Scaling the perspective down to a state level, Ken Rosenberg spoke of Pennsylvania's Bird Population and Habitat goals, giving the background for the Partners In Flight (PIF) approach to "keeping common birds common" through good planning and cooperation. He explained which species are given conservation priority in the state and why. PGC biologist Lisa Williams discussed the developing PA Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, which includes many species from various taxa that are either on the state Species of Special Concern lists (including Endangered and Threatened species), high priority PIF species, or are indicators of native ecosystems or habitats of the state. One of the most important bird conservation initiatives in the state is the National Audubon Society's Important Bird Areas project. Pennsylvania was the pioneer state for the IBA program. John Cecil presented the IBA program and explained how Audubon is enlisting volunteers to monitor species at each of the nearly 80 IBAs. PGC biologist John Dunn provided the priorities for waterfowl in Pennsylvania including the breeding, passage migrant, and winter populations. On the second day of the session, Nels Johnson presented the Nature Conservancy's "Conservation by Design" environmental planning approach. Conservation by Design prioritizes conservation targets, develops strategies, takes action and measures success in a continual loop. Bird conservation could be modeled after this approach. Millikin echoed Johnson's message about the need for an adaptive management approach to bird conservation and presented the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. Rosenberg "stepped down" the PIF plan to Pennsylvania and explained the origin of the state's bird population estimates and goals.

After each day's presentation, all participants engaged in lively break-out sessions. The first day's break-outs were based on habitat groups: wetlands, grassland and agriculture, and forests (including early successional habitats). On the second day, the break-out sessions were divided geographically with groups concentrating on the Appalachian Mountains (central), the Ohio Hills region (Southwest), the Northwest wetlands, the Piedmont (Southeast), and the Poconos bioregion. Highlights of each session were presented to the entire group at the workshop's end.

The All-Bird Conservation Workshop is only the beginning of a comprehensive approach to bird conservation in Pennsylvania – and a necessary first step to developing implementation priorities for a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. The organizers of the meeting came away with several messages from participants. The overall message from participants was: "Great workshop. Don't stop here. Keep on going!" This is only the first step in a long journey.

Public Input Results

On November 17, all participants took part in discussions focusing on habitat types. The groups were divided into forest (including early successional), grassland and agriculture, and

wetland habitats. In each habitat session, participants listed the potential threats and their solutions. Each group prioritized the threats by vote.

Forests

The [forest habitat group listed](#) five main obstacles to species conservation in forested habitats were identified as:

1. habitat loss through development
2. change in forest composition (caused by deer over-browsing, invasive species, lack of fire, acid deposition, and other factors)
3. lack of early successional habitat
4. poor forestry practices on private lands
5. lack of coordination among agencies

Grasslands/Agricultural Habitats

The grassland/agricultural habitat group addressed major issues occurring in agricultural sites, reclaimed strip-mines, and other habitats including airports, landfills, and military parks. Problems and solutions were addressed for each of these habitat categories.

Wetlands

It was determined the following were the biggest obstacles to wetland bird conservation:

1. habitat loss
2. lack of information
3. funding (lack of financial incentives)

7.5 STATEWIDE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As described in Section VIII of this document, conservation partners from across the Commonwealth identified five broad goals for the WAP. Agency staff then developed a hierarchy of strategic and operational objectives to support the broad conservation goals. Many of these goals and objectives have relevance to continued public involvement, public outreach and conservation education. The goals and objectives most relevant to public involvement efforts include the following:

Goal 3: Develop a knowledgeable citizenry that supports and participates in wildlife conservation.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Build greater public understanding and support for wildlife conservation.

Operational Objectives:

3.1.1. Identify opportunities and implement activities that promote the values of wildlife, habitat conservation and conservation ethics.

3.1.2. Identify opportunities and implement activities that showcase Wildlife Diversity Program activities.

3.1.3. Identify important conservation issues in the Wildlife Diversity Program and ways of providing information about them to the public.

3.1.4. Provide science-based wildlife information to the public and the media upon request.

3.1.5. Keep Program supporters and other members of the public informed about the progress, activities, accomplishments, and funding of the Wildlife Diversity Program, and solicit their opinions and input.

3.1.6. Broaden support for the Wildlife Diversity Program by reaching out to new potential constituents.

3.1.7. Evaluate the effectiveness of public awareness and outreach efforts.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Encourage public input and participation in wildlife management decisions and activities.

Operational Objectives:

3.2.1 Identify opportunities and implement processes that encourage early and continuous public involvement in planning and implementation of wildlife diversity projects.

3.2.2. Seek to identify and involve the affected and interested organizations, businesses and individuals, including those traditionally underrepresented, in decisions affecting wildlife diversity conservation.

3.2.3. Provide timely public notice and reasonable availability of information relating to key decisions affecting wildlife diversity conservation.

3.2.4. Ensure the public has opportunities to comment on draft documents affecting wildlife diversity conservation.

3.2.5. Encourage open and active exchange of information and ideas into the decision-making process through open public meetings or other effective means of communication.

3.2.6. Seek collaborative input into strategies and alternatives from the scientific and conservation communities and other appropriate individuals and organizations.

3.2.7 Use a combination of public involvement techniques, designed to meet the diverse needs of Commonwealth residents, to inform the public of wildlife diversity planning decisions or project implementation having significant public impact.

3.2.8. Produce and distribute easily understood educational materials relating to wildlife diversity planning and implementation efforts.

3.2.9. Establish an institutional framework to ensure continuation and participation of SWG stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 3.3: Support Wildlife Conservation Education

Provide appropriate and easily understood wildlife information to educators and the public.

Operational Objectives:

3.3.1. Identify wildlife information needs of educators and ways the Commissions can help meet those needs.

3.3.2. Develop printed materials, electronic information and programs to help meet the needs of educators.

3.3.3. Identify wildlife information needs of the public and ways in which those needs can be met most effectively.

3.3.4. Implement projects that effectively convey wildlife information to the public.

3.3.5. Work with agencies, organizations, businesses, communities and landowners to provide wildlife-oriented educational experiences and opportunities.

Strategic Objective 3.4: Wildlife-Associated Recreation

Increase or enhance opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn about wildlife in the out-of-doors, without compromising wildlife objectives.

Operational Objectives:

3.4.1. Identify wildlife species, animal communities and associated habitats that can provide wildlife viewing and other outdoor wildlife-oriented activities.

3.4.2. Identify opportunities for wildlife viewing and other wildlife-oriented activities, and measures that can be taken to provide such activities.

3.4.3. Implement the measures identified in order to provide wildlife viewing and other wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities.

3.4.4. Provide resources and expertise to other agencies, organizations, businesses, communities and landowners who wish to provide wildlife-oriented recreational experiences and opportunities.

3.4.5. Provide wildlife viewing and other wildlife-oriented recreational skills development opportunities for the public, to enhance their enjoyment of, and responsible participation in, those activities.

3.4.6. Conduct research on the potential impacts of recreational activities on wildlife and their habitats. Apply those results and share them with cooperators and other providers of outdoor wildlife experiences.

3.4.7. Monitor the impacts of recreational activities on wildlife and its varied habitats and modify those activities as necessary.

Strategic Objective 3.5: Ensure that private landowners are engaged in the conservation of PA's wildlife and habitats.

Operational Objectives:

3.5.1. Provide technical information and support to landowners, land managers and local governmental agencies about habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement.

3.5.2. Develop incentives and recognition programs to assist in the conservation, restoration and enhancement of habitats on private lands.

7.6 SWG –FUNDED PROGRESS: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The following SWG-funded projects are furthering the WAP goals and strategic objectives relating to public involvement through: 1) building public understanding and support for management activities, 2) encouraging public participation in conservation efforts; 3) developing educational materials for the public; 4) providing wildlife-based recreational opportunities for the public, or; 5) providing accurate and up-to-date wildlife information for public decision-makers and private landowners.

<p>Strategic Objective 3.1 Building Public Understanding and Support</p>	<p><i>SWG-FUNDED PROGRESS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a Biodiversity Conservation Movement in Pennsylvania – WCRP ‘01 • PA Biodiversity Plan – USFWS TITLE VIII ‘03
<p>Strategic Objective 3.2 Encouraging public input and participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeding Bird Atlas – WCRP ‘01, SWG ‘03, SWG ‘05 • Important Bird Areas - WCRP’01, SWG’02, SWG ‘03 • Important Mammal Areas - WCRP’01, SWG’02-05 • Statewide Inventory/Registry of Seasonal Wetlands – SWG’04
<p>Strategic Objective 3.3 Wildlife Conservation Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Amphibian and Reptile Educational Curriculum – WCRP ‘01 <p><i>Education is not an allowable expenditure under SWG</i></p>
<p>Strategic Objective 3.4 Wildlife-associated Recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail – WCRP ‘01 • Watchable Wildlife/Water Trails – WCRP ‘01 <p><i>Recreation is not an allowable expenditure under SWG</i></p>
<p>Strategic Objective 3.5 Private Landowner Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation and/or completion of county inventories of Pennsylvania – SWG’02 • Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist Program – SWG/LIP ‘03 (PGC technical assistance to private landowners for managing species of conservation concern) • From Birding to Environmental Review: developing data for conservation use – SWG ‘05 • Multi-Species Management Guidance for Barrens – SWG ‘05 • Conservation easements for exemplary sites - Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) – ‘03

WCRP– Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (this was essentially the first year of SWG in 2001.