



Final Work Plan 2015-2017

Joint Implementation Working Group (JIWG) National Fish Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (NFWPCAS)

Since November 2013, the Joint Implementation Working Group (JIWG) has implemented a series of actions to fulfill its mission to promote implementation of the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (NFWPCAS). These efforts have increased awareness about the NFWPCAS, highlighted existing actions that support the Strategy, and identified future plans and needs for implementation.

This document proposes a Work Plan to guide JIWG efforts over the next two years (2016-2017). It is based on an initial proposed work plan (Oct 14) and initial feedback from JIWG members during an October 14, 2015 meeting.

The JIWG has a wide charge, limited resources, and is being asked to respond to increasing demands and opportunities. This Work Plan was developed by the Management Team to (1) identify some priority actions to focus on, (2) take advantage of current opportunities and (3) help maximize the contributions of JIWG and Management Team efforts over the next two years.

The initially proposed Work Plan included three different levels of activity, from Level 1 “core activities” that can be addressed with current staffing, to Level 3 “additional activities” that will require additional resources to implement. The JIWG was asked to select the combination of activities they feel are most important and doable over the next two years.

Level 1: “Core Activities” the JIWG can and should undertake throughout the year as needed. We recommend including all of these in a Work Plan.

Level 2: This “Priority Activity” describes the one activity that has emerged as a top priority, and that the co-chairs recommend we focus on in our Work Plan.

Level 3: “Potential Additional Activities” describes possible larger projects or initiatives for which the JIWG would require increased commitment of time and resources from its members. We recommend choosing one of the three options to include in a Work Plan.

Based on JIWG feedback, these levels have been combined in to one work plan organized around three work streams:

1. Promote use of the Strategy and recognize successful implementation



2. Improve implementation of the Strategy
3. Advance the financial capacity for completing Climate Adaptation for Fish, Wildlife, and Plants

This plan is ambitious and will require strong staff support from all JIWG member agencies. We will form subgroups around the major projects. These subgroups will require full staffing to make progress. Our ability to implement this work plan will be contingent on engagement from all JIWG member agencies.

Proposed Work Stream	Title	Resources required ¹
Promote use of the Strategy and recognize successful implementation	Administer a Climate Adaptation Leadership Award	Requires staff support, help soliciting nominations, and reviewing nominees
	Promote the Strategy goals and framework with regional partnerships and other stakeholder communities	Progress can be made at current capacity
Increase future implementation of the Strategy	Identify and promote climate adaptation best practices for fish, wildlife, and plants	Contribution of 1-3 hours per week from JIWG members or staff or financial support for extra staff
	Explore and highlight gaps in NFWPCAS implementation	Contribution of 1-3 hours per week from JIWG members or staff or financial support
	Contribute results to the Climate Resilience Toolkit	Progress can be made at current capacity
Incorporate climate adaptation requirements in to conservation funding	Influence conservation funding decisions	Contribution of 1-3 hours per week from JIWG members or staff or financial support

¹ Current NFWPCAS JIWG resources include \$50,000 each from USFWS and NOAA to support one full-time staff member at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies



Promote use of the Strategy and recognize successful implementation

Administer a Climate Adaptation Leadership Award

- **Goal:** Recognize leaders in the emerging field of climate adaptation; raise the profile of the Strategy and JIWG nationally; establish an official role for the JIWG in implementation of the Administration's climate change priorities.
- **Capacity needed:** JIWG staff time in a new subgroup that will take the lead on reviewing nominations, selecting winners, and coordinating presentation of award.
- **Description:** CEQ and the Climate Change and Natural Resources interagency working group suggested that the JIWG should take a lead role in implementing the President's Priority Agenda commitment to "establish a Climate Resilience Leaders award to recognize Federal, tribal, state, and local leadership in advancing the resilience of natural resources and the communities that depend on them." The JIWG has representation from a wide array of natural resource management agencies, and would provide an excellent venue for promoting success of this award. Initial coordination of this effort is already underway, under NOAA and DOI leadership, but the JIWG could ultimately serve as a selecting body for the award winners going forward.

Promote the Strategy goals and framework with regional partnerships and other stakeholder communities

- **Goal:** Help connect the Strategy recommendations and organizational framework with relevant activities of regional partnerships and NGOs; raise the profile of the Strategy and JIWG nationally; Increase awareness of the impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife, and plants
- **Capacity needed:** JIWG staff time and participation in the Outreach & Engagement Subgroup that could take the lead on developing materials and identifying outreach opportunities.
- **Description:** The JIWG (or a subgroup) could continue to pursue outreach opportunities with these NGO partners and partnerships, develop relevant materials, encourage partnerships to align and report their climate adaptation projects within the broader context of NFWPCAS, and promote examples of work that is influenced by NFWPCAS. For example, the LCC Network Science Plan (in draft) currently identifies implementation of the Climate Strategy's Goal 1, Strategy 1.1 (Identify areas for an ecologically-connected network) as a key theme, and identifies a number of actions and approaches to achieving this goal. These partnerships include CSCs & ACCCNRS, LCCs & LCC Council, RISAs, and USDA Hubs.
 - The JIWG (or a subgroup) could sponsor briefings, webinars, workshops, symposia on topics relevant to implementation of the Strategy. These efforts could build on and enhance existing efforts by USFWS/NCTC and others focused on resilience/adaptation of natural resources.
 - The Outreach & Engagement subgroup encourage NGO participation with JIWG activities through targeted outreach.



Increase future implementation of the Strategy

Identify and promote climate adaptation best practices for fish, wildlife, and plants

- **Goal:** Identify, share, and promote practical examples of how state, tribal, and federal agencies and NGO partners are successfully approaching climate adaptation challenges.
- **Capacity needed:** JIWG staff time and participation in new subgroup that could take the lead on identifying best practices and developing mechanisms and venues for highlighting and sharing them.
- **Description:** The Strategy enumerates 100+ recommended actions for climate adaptation for fish, wildlife, and plants. As state, federal, and tribal agencies and NGO partners have been implementing some of these actions, we are learning more about how they are best achieved. The JIWG (or a subgroup) should work to identify and highlight some of the best practices relating to fish, wildlife, and plants adaptation for states, tribes, federal agencies, and NGO partners.

Explore and highlight gaps in NFWPCAS implementation

- **Goal:** Bring attention to Strategy recommendations that need additional dedicated attention; raise the profile of the JIWG and the Strategy nationally.
- **Capacity needed:** JIWG staff time and participation in new subgroup that could take the lead on identifying priority implementation gaps and developing recommendations for addressing them.
- **Description:** The JIWG has primarily focused on tracking and highlighting activities that are examples of the implementation of Strategy recommendations (Taking Action and Next Steps reports). The JIWG (or a subgroup) should now begin looking across the conservation landscape for gaps, or Strategy recommendations that are not yet being widely implemented. Activities should include determining where work is underway on under-reported activities, identifying activities of high value that are recommended by the Strategy but not currently underway, and identifying potential opportunities, actions, or partners to help increase implementation of key priorities.

Contribute to the Climate Resilience Toolkit

- **Goal:** Share and highlight tools that the JIWG has developed related to best practices and gaps in implementation; raise the profile of the Strategy and JIWG nationally; connect the Strategy to the ongoing implementation of the Administration's climate change priorities.
- **Capacity needed:** Management Team will liaise with Climate Resilience Toolkit staff.
- **Description:** The Climate Resilience Toolkit, recently launched as part of the President's priority agenda, provides online resources and a framework for understanding and addressing the climate issues that impact people and their communities. It includes guidelines and tools for helping managers assess and respond to climate-related risks and opportunities, and to help guide communities in building resilience to extreme events. JIWG member agencies are very close to the managers who are using and developing



NATIONAL *fish, wildlife & plants*
CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

new tools relevant to natural resources and wildlife management. The JIWG can play a role in making sure that these are widely available on the Climate Resilience Toolkit, helping to make connections, flesh out the Ecosystems Level of the site, and feed tools into the toolkit.

Incorporate climate adaptation requirements in to conservation funding

- Goal: Encourage conservation funders at all Levels to consider the principles and recommendations of the Strategy when developing funding criteria and decisions; encourage implementation of the Strategy goals; raise the profile of the JIWG and the Strategy nationally.
- Capacity needed: JIWG staff time and participation in a new subgroup that could take the lead on identifying funding opportunities and developing recommendations for integrating Strategy principles and recommendations into funding criteria.
- Description: The federal government spends a great deal of money on grants for conservation (SWG, Farm Bill, WHIP, etc.) each year. In addition, foundations and NGOs also provide conservation funding for a wide range of projects and activities (NFWF, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, etc.). This new subgroup of the JIWG should work with federal and non-federal grantees to encourage consideration of how projects will contribute to the climate resilience of a habitat or species. The JIWG (or a subgroup) could review current grants programs, identify how these concepts are currently being considered, develop recommendations about how to integrate the principles of the Strategy into existing conservation funding sources, and reach out to federal funders and external foundations about how the Strategy can integrate into criteria for how they give grants, including their RFPs, selection criteria, and funding decisions.