

Gulf Coast Joint Venture Management Board Discussion on the NAWMP Interim Integration Committee draft (July 15 ,2013) Work Plan

February 13, 2014

The NAWMP Revision and Action Plan have been major topics of discussion at the past 3 semi-annual business meetings of the Gulf Coast Joint Venture (GCJV) Management Board, with the Interim Integration Committee (IIC) discussed at the past 2 meetings, and the subject draft IIC work plan available to inform only the most recent discussion at our October 2013 meeting. The draft work plan and the 9/16/13 GCJV Waterfowl Working Group comments summarized by Mike Brasher were distributed to board members prior to this most recent meeting.

As one of the original NAWMP Joint Ventures, and one of the few (only?) that has maintained a full-time waterfowl-focused science staff member, the GCJV Board feels a strong linkage of mutual accountability with the NAWMP Committee and its products (e.g., NAWMP Revision and Action Plan). Consequently, the presumptive position of the GCJV Board has always been that they will strive to fully deliver the aspects of NAWMP that are relevant to this geography. With that context, following are some of the discussion points relevant to the draft work plan:

- There was near-simultaneous frustration with a) the slow pace of developing continental objectives, which many expected to be part of the Revision and/or Action Plan, and b) the realization that much time-consuming work seems to remain in finalizing continental objectives. While that might not seem to be a very helpful comment, JV staff interpret that as an encouragement to proceed to the next steps without delay, while recognizing that it may take awhile for the community to reach consensus.
- Several comments emanated from the discussion regarding a perceived lack of vision for integrated objectives or a framework of integrated objectives. This suggests to JV staff that inspirational examples highlighting improved efficiency due to integration are lacking. Numerous small victories, won at small scales, will likely be necessary to demonstrate the value of integration and thereby ensure progress toward that end.
- Other than questions about integration, there was not much discussion about the strawman waterfowl population objectives. JV staff do not interpret that to represent disinterest, but rather an assumption that we will incorporate whatever continental objectives are ultimately agreed upon. This assumes that the waterfowl population objectives will be depicted in a form that can be readily stepped down, with our recent/current experience limited to static continental abundance, linked to static regional abundance, empirically linked to quantified habitat objectives. If continental abundance is depicted with ranges (as in the strawman objectives), we will most likely have to first translate that range to a single value before we can use it in our current modeling framework. Implicit in this interpretation is that continental waterfowl objectives are an imperative tenet of the NAWMP, though we do not assume that those objectives will necessarily be in the form/metric of abundance.
- While there was at best lukewarm embrace of a potential GCJV role in fulfilling continental human objectives, there was strong interest in further exploring application of human dimensions

(HD) science in delivery of existing (or revised) habitat objectives. There was some traction in the notion that we may stand a greater net gain toward our regional conservation goals through investments in HD, than through our traditional investments in natural resource science.

- The board was comfortable that JV staff were heavily engaged with HD efforts of our major Landscape Conservation Cooperative (Gulf Coast Prairie), and see that as a potentially fruitful avenue to address some of the JV's HD needs.

- While the NAWMP's Revision and Action Plan have clearly already put us on a path toward more explicit treatment of HD, there remains discomfort among at least a small minority of GCJV partners about NAWMP leadership in that regard. JV staff interpret this as reflective of the somewhat awkward position that multi-guild JVs now face, with explicit guidance from only one (and part of a second?) continental initiative to explicitly tackle HD and human objectives. This is coupled with a perception by some state partners that HD needs are so broad (e.g., across hunters of migratory and resident animals, among various consumptive and non-consumptive groups) that burying it within work toward one guild of migratory birds might not be efficient.

- An observation from JV staff was that lack of clear consensus on some issues was limited by different levels of understanding regarding the definition and potential application of HD. JV staff have a strong interest in distributing some basic HD training to GCJV partners, if such training could be developed in an easy-to-distribute manner (e.g., a web application that folks could peruse on their own time).