



April 11, 2018

NAWMP Plan Community

RE: Report on Review of the Plan Committee

The NAWMP Plan Committee (PC) acknowledges receipt of the report on the “*Review of the Plan Committee – Achieving NAWMP Objectives*” that was submitted by the Institutions Subcommittee on January 15, 2018. The Plan Committee thanks the members of the sub-committee and all those individuals that provided input to the report for their time and commitment to ensuring the future of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The PC reviewed and discussed the report at its meeting on April 10, 2018 and concurs with the report’s content regarding the need for greater:

- clarity of its role and accountability;
- linkage between the Plan Committee and the NAWMP working groups; and
- linkage among the NAWMP working groups.

However, the need for a coordinator to support these outcomes requires further discussion.

The PC accepts the recommendation to replace the Interim Integration Committee (IIC) and to adopt a new system of liaisons between the PC and the NAWMP working groups. The PC intends to consider further strategic actions during a planning session in the summer of 2018 and to communicate the outcomes of this session to the NAWMP community.

Sincerely,

Jerome Ford
U.S. Co-chair

Silke Neve
Canadian, Co-chair

Report on Review of the Plan Committee – Achieving NAWMP Objectives

Submitted to the NAWMP Committee by the Institutions Subcommittee¹

January 15, 2018

Synopsis: *The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, with its 31-year successful history, remains the standard bearer for all continental-scale conservation initiatives. The Plan’s success results in part from a continued commitment to periodic review and renewal. A major revision of the Plan was completed in 2012, expanding the scope of the Plan to include not only waterfowl populations and the habitats needed to sustain them, but also to engage the people who value and support waterfowl and wetland conservation. After 5 years, the Plan Committee recognized that it is time to review the technical and governance-level structures, processes, responsibilities and accomplishments of the parties involved in implementation of the Plan and assess whether adjustments are needed to remain efficient, contemporary, and well-positioned to deliver waterfowl conservation. An overall recommendation calls for a focused and strategic effort to identify and refine a small number of primary responsibilities to be accomplished by the PC over the period covered by the 2018 Update. Ultimately, the structure, composition, and processes of the PC also would be revisited. Additionally, a specific and near-term recommendation is proposed to retain the function of the Interim Integration Committee (IIC) through advisory membership on the PC from waterfowl working groups and active liaison by PC members.*

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP or Plan), initiated in 1986, laid out overall goals for waterfowl conservation. Expanded partnerships, conservation delivery through Joint Ventures (JVs), sustained funding for habitat conservation through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and a strong commitment to waterfowl management have characterized progress under the Plan. From the outset, periodic updates, at roughly five-year intervals, were expected as necessary for the Plan to adapt and evolve. These updates and revisions have enabled the Plan to remain a preeminent model for long-term conservation at a continental scale.

The 2012 NAWMP Revision (Revision) established three broad goals for sustaining waterfowl populations, the habitats needed to support them, and engaging the human users and supporters of waterfowl conservation. The Revision also called for conducting waterfowl management in a more integrated manner, such that decisions would be made considering all three goals and NAWMP objectives.

Monitoring progress toward achieving multiple Plan objectives and managing adaptively to attain those objectives are vital to achieving Plan goals. However, the 2009-2011 consultations that led up to the Revision identified institutional challenges that remain today. Primarily, no single administrative or technical entity has a mandate to oversee and coordinate the pursuit of all three goals and the broadened set of objectives under the new NAWMP. Additionally, no single body has the mandate to receive and review monitoring data regarding the accomplishment of Plan objectives, nor the responsibility to recommend changes to either planning assumptions, objectives, adaptive modifications to program delivery, or improvements in process that might enhance Plan success. Metaphorically, no single body is charged with viewing the “whole chessboard” of waterfowl management and advocating essential strategic moves.

¹ Institutions Subcommittee: Diane Eggeman (chair), Mike Anderson, Brad Bortner, John Eadie, Dale Humburg, Chris Smith, and Jeff Ver Steeg; facilitated by D.J. Case and Associates

Implementation of the Plan requires integrative efforts at both the technical and policy levels, and these must be closely linked to manage adaptively going forward. The NAWM Plan Committee (PC), with its geopolitical breadth, is positioned to exert an influential, integrative role. To do so requires well-coordinated technical support to synthesize relevant monitoring and assessment data and to present well-founded science-based recommendations for actions. The key question is how to accomplish this effectively, with minimal structure and strong support of waterfowl management partners.

Today, the waterfowl management community strives to manage for multiple objectives in an efficient, effective and coordinated manner. It does so, however, within management structures and processes developed when stated goals often were narrower and less overlapping. These include the Harvest Management Working Group (HMWG) created in the mid-1990s, the NAWMP Science Support Team (NSST) in 1999, the Human Dimensions Working Group (HDWG) and the Public Engagement Team (PET) established following the 2012 Revision. The PC itself remains structured largely as described in the 1986 Plan (although re-examined functionally in 2004). Most structures were layered upon existing national, Flyway, JV management structures. Presently, several of these bodies are delivering on a subset of the stated responsibilities and perhaps could be better aligned for integrated accomplishments. Recognizing this problem, the PC established the Interim Integration Committee (IIC) in 2013 to help coordinate a more integrated approach to waterfowl management. As we approach the 2018 Update it is appropriate to review how effective the IIC has been and how oversight and coordination should be structured going forward.

The Update Steering Committee formed the Institutions Subcommittee in fall of 2016 to review material related to NAWMP institutions contained in the 2012 Revision and Action Plan, results from a 2017 survey of waterfowl professionals, and numerous other related background documents. In support of this effort, the PC commissioned a substantive review of its 2004 mandate; the roles and responsibilities assigned to various bodies in the 2012 Action Plan; and the IIC's experience at promoting more integrated management and progress under the 2012 Action Plan over the past 5 years. This evaluation was to be matched against one criterion – the fundamental need to manage effectively and efficiently toward multiple Plan objectives in an adaptive manner. The Institutions Subcommittee addressed 2 objectives in this review:

1. Consider the roles and responsibilities assumed by the PC and its subsequent actions, which were last described in 2004. These need to be considered in the context of Plan goals that are considerably broader than recognized in 2004.
2. Consider the structure and function of the IIC for advocating and facilitating integration relative to 2012 Revision objectives among the various technical work groups and the PC. This task includes envisioning these needs for the future and advancing ideas for how these functions should continue beginning in 2018.

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Institutions Subcommittee with respect to these objectives.

1. Review of the Plan Committee Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 Charge to the Plan Committee Review Team

A team of 6 members conducted the review of the PC. Team members included a subset of the Institutions Subcommittee and four members with a strong background in NAWMP-related activities and familiarity with the PC structure and function (Appendix 1). The Plan Committee Review Team was charged with the following tasks:

- Conduct surveys and interview current and past Plan Committee members, IIC members, and key stakeholders who have knowledge of and been affected by recent work of the PC.

- Review pertinent documents, including
 - 2004 Plan Update Implementation Framework
 - 2012 NAWMP Revision and Action Plan
 - Minutes from Plan Committee meetings, particularly beginning in 2013, and other documentation of its work, as appropriate
 - IIC progress reports or summaries
 - Assessment and survey results completed for the 2018 Update, as related to institutions
- Assess the Plan Committee’s purpose, goals, and objectives. Determine whether they are contemporary or need updating, relative to the goals and objectives of the 2012 NAWMP Revision
- Review the Plan Committee’s management elements, policies, and procedures for effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency with stated purpose and goals

1.2 Methods and Approach

The PC review team conducted 24 phone interviews (~ 60 minutes each) with PC members (past and present) and wildlife professionals who had a strong working knowledge of NAWMP and familiarity with the role of the PC. Efforts were made to include a comparable number of PC members and outside professionals from all three countries, including current co-chairs of the PC (Appendix 1). Following consultation with D.J. Case & Associates, the team conducted interviews as open conversations to inquire about key issues and topics of particular interest or concern to the interviewee regarding the functions and structure of the PC. Interviewees were assured that opinions expressed in the interviews would be used without attribution to an individual. To provide a focus for these discussions, interviewees were asked in advance (via email) to consider three broad topics:

- a) Authority & charge – What is the unique role of the PC? What is the job to be done?
- b) Structure and function – Given that authority, how is the role accomplished? What is the structure to accomplish that role? What are the strengths of this approach?
- c) What is limiting effectiveness – Are there factors that hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of the PC and if so what are those?

The team developed a number of questions to prompt discussion on each of these topics (Appendix 2). A pair of team members conducted each interview; in a few cases only a single team member was able to participate. Interviews were conducted November 16 to December 14, 2017. We are deeply indebted to Lois Sheley of D.J. Case & Associates for a herculean effort in scheduling the interviews.

1.3 Key Observations

We report on our collective observations distilled from the 24 interviews and our reading of the background materials. We organize these according to the three broad topics explored. An extended summary of all interview comments is available upon request.

a) Authority & Charge

There was consensus that the PC continues to play a valuable role in delivering the mission and the vision of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Virtually all interviewees commented that the PC was essential to provide high-level guidance to the waterfowl and wetland community, to champion NAWMP, to ensure updates and implementation of NAWMP goals, and to lead the community on science and policy issues. Many interviewees – including those on the past and present PC – were not aware of the list of tasks for the PC outlined in the 2004 NAWMP update (see Appendix 3). Despite this, interviewees suggested a comprehensive list of the key roles of the PC:

- i) Provide vision, champion NAWMP, motivate partners.
- ii) Leadership – provide guidance and oversight, connect and coordinate the work in support of the Plan, ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and integration, address conflicts.
- iii) Inform the community regarding NAWMP science and policy issues; hold forums on major issues; regularly communicate progress to all partners.
- iv) Oversee updates and accountability for implementing NAWMP goals.
- v) Ensure adequate resources and policies are in place to achieve success; help to secure sufficient funding.
- vi) Represent NAWMP partners/constituencies; ensure the waterfowl enterprise stays active in other institutions, such as JVs, state agencies, federal agencies; provide international coordination.
- vii) Develop agreement on habitat priorities across the continent.
- viii) Ensure continued relevance and promote continuous improvement.
- ix) Require an adaptive approach – monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness.
- x) Provide direction for technical work (policy guidance and priority setting).
- xi) Ensure (and expand) communication with upper levels of federal agencies.
- xii) Maintain a vital and evolving relationship between the PC and the JVs, adapting to new challenges and opportunities.

b) Structure and Function

Comments on the structure of the PC were somewhat varied. Many interviewees felt that the current structure and composition of the PC was adequate. Representation on the PC from all three signatory countries was viewed as essential, as was representation by state and federal agencies, JVs and Flyway Councils. These were viewed as the core constituencies of the NAWMP community, and there was a consensus that they continue to play a vital role in shaping the NAWMP mission. It was also thought that there was merit in keeping the PC small – as one interviewee commented “work gets done by individuals not by large groups”.

Many of the interviewees commented that the success of the PC depended on individuals, yet there was a growing challenge to find qualified and motivated people to serve on the PC. It was unclear how individuals were assigned to serve on the PC, and there was concern that responsibilities were being shifted from the very top-level positions of federal and state agencies (e.g., directors of state wildlife agencies) to mid-level staff, suggesting a waning of priorities and enthusiasm (see section 3 below).

A second viewpoint emerged indicating that it was time to consider expanding the scope and composition of the PC, consistent with on-going conversations about “broadening the tent” beyond core waterfowl management (a topic of discussion at the 2017 Future of Waterfowl Workshop 2, FOW2). Maintaining the traditional strength of the waterfowl plan but in the context of a contemporary policy and social environment presents a challenging balancing act for the waterfowl management community. The Review team did not detect a consensus on this topic, and it should be a priority for the NAWMP community and the PC to resolve firmly and soon. Several interviewees suggested that structural and operational changes were needed for relevance, to expand representation and accomplish integration across the 3 goals of the 2012 Revision. This would require greater time and effort commitments to the PC, along with new voices in the membership, with waterfowl and non-waterfowl specific (e.g., other birds, habitat conservation) interests “coming together for a bigger enterprise with more funding to do the work”. Other interviewees were concerned that any additional resources that would be brought to bear by such expansion would be limited and would dilute the focus of the Plan that has made it so successful. There were strong opinions expressed that the Plan is first and foremost about waterfowl (as co-chair Jerome Ford emphasized in his

closing comments at FOW2). There was also a concern that until integration within the existing waterfowl and wetland enterprise is enhanced, adding additional constituencies could be a distraction. A useful perspective offered by one interviewee was that the intent was “not to change the objectives of NAWMP, but to change the way we achieve those objectives.” In other words, focus on objectives that accomplish things for waterfowl with stronger recognition and better leveraging of the great value of NAWMP efforts for society through effective partnerships at the JV level.

c) What is limiting effectiveness?

Interviewees provided extensive comments about factors that impact the effectiveness of the PC. All interviewees noted the very demanding role for PC members in the face of ever-increasing duties and responsibilities. We summarize some of these issues here, not as criticisms of any individual or partner organization, but rather to identify areas where increased attention by the PC could improve effectiveness.

i) Leadership and energy of the PC has been a challenge –

A recurrent theme in many of the interviews was that the PC lacked some of the vitality and energy of the past. Interviewees commented that there was a “shortfall of energy, enthusiasm, aggressiveness to achieving goals” and that the PC needs some “spark plugs with energy to spread vertically and horizontally throughout enterprise.” Once again, the need to find the ‘right people’ was emphasized.

There was a consensus that strong and visionary leadership of the PC is vital, and this has been challenging. There was a sense that co-chairs and members have so many other priorities and demands that they are unable to devote the necessary time and effort to the Plan. Some noted that a contributing factor to this shift may be the lower level of urgency or crisis in recent years felt by administrators due to sustained high waterfowl populations. Yet, as one interviewee commented “...leadership is not just showing up and going through the motions of plan updates, but demonstrating leadership by returning to their own agency and ensuring implementation.”

The lack of any sense of urgency and reduced prioritization of PC efforts likely stems from a belief that ducks are generally doing well, populations are high, and there are few harvest management concerns. In short, there is no crisis (unlike the 80’s when low duck numbers and disappearing habitat motivated the international response that led to the Plan). One interviewee suggested simply that in today’s world of multiple conservation crises “NAWMP is not new and different.” However, a few individuals cautioned that with rapid changes in agricultural tillage and draining on the prairie breeding grounds, and shifting agro-economics on the wintering grounds, we are at a tipping point – a “duck bubble” awaiting only the next drought to reveal the drastic changes that have occurred. The PC should be structured and motivated to anticipate and adapt rapidly to such change; “we can’t wait for a crisis to build the base; we need the base to be ready for a crisis.”

ii) PC has little time for strategic thinking or planning –

The PC would benefit by investing more of their meeting time in higher-level strategic thinking. Many of the meetings are reported to focus on receiving reports (“reactive/agenda ticking”), and reviews of the JVs take much of the meeting time. There was also a strong sentiment that PC members had little time to prepare in advance of meeting and that little time was invested between meetings. Some of this was due to material required for meetings being prepared last minute such that PC members had no chance to review information beforehand. Consequently, meetings were focused on information delivery, rather than deeper more thoughtful consideration of the issues at hand.

iii) Too much is being asked of the PC and the responsibilities are unclear –

Given the growing demands on time and human resources, efforts to increase the effectiveness of the PC must consider how to refocus key roles and tasks. As noted, few if any of the current or past PC members were aware of the tasks outlined explicitly in the mandate for the PC in the 2004 NAWMP update (Appendix 3). Moreover, a surprising number of PC members felt that the roles and responsibilities of PC members were not well defined, and this was especially problematic for new members. There is no Term of Reference available to clarify roles and responsibilities; perhaps contributing to the reactive tendency in PC actions. It is essential for efficiency and effectiveness that the PC and the NAWMP community clearly identify and describe the top priorities arising from the 2012 Revision and the 2018 Update. These should comprise a small number of high priority tasks for which the PC takes leadership, assumes responsibility and can guide well-defined implementation strategies to move forward.

iv) Too many committees, too few resources and limited authority –

Some respondents commented on the ever-growing number of committees and working groups associated with NAWMP and cautioned that such expansion taxes an already overcommitted group of individuals (often the same ones) to advance NAWMP objectives. In a similar vein, some commented that Plan updates, while effective in keeping the community engaged, are more frequent than necessary and take time away from implementing the current version of the Plan (the 1986 North American Waterfowl Management Plan mandated updates of the Plan at approximately 5-year intervals). Conversely, respondents recognized that current schedule of updates and revisions serves to reengage and energize the waterfowl management community, raising awareness of the NAWMP and involving emerging leaders – “keeping it fresh helps keep it relevant in a changing world”. Attendant with these concerns were numerous comments about the very limited resources over which the PC has influence and can mobilize to inspire or support Plan efforts.

Most interviewees pointed to the need for continued PC focus and emphasis on guiding the people-related goal of NAWMP. This front was identified as key to ensuring relevance and effectiveness for the Plan’s future and requires continued intensive care-and-feeding because it is least mature in terms of technical work and adaptive implementation.

All interviewees recognized that the PC’s role was to provide high-level leadership and guidance, but noted that this is challenging when the PC has no true authority over many (any) of the partner agencies and organizations for which the PC is charged to lead. Even JVs – one of the truly great visionary accomplishments of the original 1986 Plan – through their maturity, have become increasingly independent and autonomous. JVs now are engaged in many more activities beyond delivery of NAWMP goals; accordingly, what authority does – or should – the PC have? Conversely, it was noted that JV’s remain tied and obligated to NAWMP goals and objectives because of the NAWMP funding provided by USFWS for JV administration and operations (i.e., putting the capacity in place) to enable JV’s becoming increasingly independent and autonomous. Federal formal commitment to the NAWMP and the PC allows this funding to flow. In this rapidly changing dynamic, the NAWMP community and PC need to clarify their roles and the support they can offer to JVs and, in turn, clarify for JVs what the expectations are to help implement NAWMP goals.

v) Communication of PC with JVs and working groups, and among JVs and working groups is variable

The interviews illuminated a need for communication and collaboration to be increased and strengthened. This includes not only communication of the PC with JVs, working groups, Flyway councils, partner agencies and NGOs (we refer to this as ‘vertical communication’), but also greater exchange of ideas and collaboration among JVs, working groups, Flyways and partners (‘horizontal communication’). There was a strong expression of a need to continue to build trust and understanding of mutual goals across all levels of

the Plan community, and this will be essential to move forward with efforts to integrate all three goals of the 2012 Revision (habitat, populations and people). Suggestions by which to do so included more face-to-face work (although travel restrictions may severely limit such opportunities) or occasional (but regular) joint PC-JV meetings to strategize and share successes and new approaches (for example, a joint meeting was held in Sacramento, CA in 2013 and was considered successful).

There were mixed opinions about the effectiveness of the JV reporting done at the PC meetings. Most respondents felt that there was some utility for the PC in learning about JV approaches and successes, but several factors were mentioned as limiting the value of these efforts, including: (a) they are highly variable in content, focus, and length; (b) the endgame of these reviews is uncertain – to inform, report (audit), seek feedback ... what are the objectives of these reviews? and (c) the results of JV reviews and lessons learned are not shared among JVs and there are limited means to doing so. Some JVs felt that feedback from the PC was delayed or may not have helped direct the JV in the way it had hoped. Conversely, PC members commented that often presentations were not delivered in advance to the PC, resulting in limited time for careful thought and feedback. Ideally, these presentations would be used as 2-way communication with the JVs to provide helpful and timely strategic guidance and feedback from PC to JV.

Finally, several interviewees noted that communication with working groups was unclear and variable (some did report at PC meeting, but occasionally these were too technical given the composition and expertise of PC members). Some thought needs to be given on how to streamline the information pipeline. The notion of the PC's role in policy oversight and integration of the NAWMP-related technical work is addressed in Section 2)

1.4 Recommendations

We offer strategic and tactical recommendations for the PC to consider. These are based on the results of the interviews, review of related documents, and discussions among committee members. We believe that addressing the strategic issues is the highest priority, but note that some tactical adjustments could be made soon and are unlikely to be much affected by the outcomes of the strategic discussions.

Strategic Issues

1. We believe that it is imperative that the PC first engage in a focused and strategic effort to identify and refine a small number of primary, specific responsibilities for the PC itself, related to NAWMP implementation, over the period covered by the 2018 Update, and second, refocus energy and efforts on these areas. The details in our report, both from the interviewees and our recommendations, provide background context and examples for the PC to consider. Ultimately, the PC will need to decide which ones to select and focus on.

In considering these leadership functions, we note that the PC alone has policy-oversight responsibility for monitoring and managing adaptively toward the achievement of the multiple objectives that were embraced in the 2012 Revision and 2014 objectives addendum. We offer the following as important issues for the PC to consider in formulating its strategic focus and “work elements” following the 2018 update:

- a. Evaluation and adaptation – Establish a process to regularly monitor data on the achievement of the multiple Plan objectives and recommend adaptive modifications. These may include strategic changes to delivery, planning assumptions, processes, or the objectives themselves.
- b. Integration – Continued integration of the goals of habitat and waterfowl populations, keeping front and center the goal of providing sufficient high quality habitat to sustain waterfowl populations at desired levels, while providing places to recreate and ecological services that benefit society. A priority for integration efforts is continued development and integration of human dimensions into

NAWMP long-term planning in order to meet the 2014 objective to increase waterfowl conservation support among various constituencies.

- c. Linkage of policy and technical efforts – Success in the first two areas listed (a and b) will require ongoing linkages across both policy (SRC, NAWCC, Flyway Councils, PC) and technical entities (NSST, HMWG, HDWG, PET, flyway technical sections, JV science groups, etc.), and between related policy and technical bodies (e.g., as has the IIC).
 - d. Connections with JVs – Enhanced connection and communication with the JVs and promotion of enhanced JV-JV and JV to Flyway collaboration and planning. Clarity around the nature of the relationship between the PC and JVs, recognizing and responding to evolutionary changes in these relationships.
 - e. Communication – Enhanced communication with working groups, NAWMP partners and the public to re-affirm the PC's role as the international voice and champion for waterfowl and wetland conservation and management. This is likely to require that the PC function as a stronger advocate for Plan needs with federal and state agency leaders, NGO leaders, and other opinion leaders.
 - f. Funding – Focused efforts to work with federal and state agencies and other partners, perhaps including the private sector (e.g., NGO's), to develop and facilitate additional funding support for NAWMP and the work of the PC.
2. We recommend that the PC undertake a focused strategic planning meeting in early 2018 with high-level input from across the NAWMP community, to identify objectives, tasks, and responsibilities related to the three fundamental goals outlined in the 2012 Revision. The timing of the 2018 Update, combined with the assessment work preceding it, (including this review) means the time is now for reassessment. Continuing business-as-usual risks marginalizing the role and the influence of the PC. This effort will require strong leadership by the Plan co-chairs, active engagement of all PC members, and development of an action plan to implement resulting changes. This may become a two-stage process wherein the PC along with representatives from closely vested institutions (e.g., Flyway Councils, JVs, technical working groups, AFWA, NABCI, NGO's etc.), broaden the discussion about process and structures in waterfowl management community (reflective of the "policy summit" idea that emerged at FOW2).
 3. Once there is clarity about key PC functions going forward and after the essential linkages with other working groups are in place (see Section 2 regarding the urgent need for integration and linkage between policy and technical entities), determine what, if any, changes in the institutional structures of NAWMP will be necessary to successfully implement the efforts derived from the strategic planning process above. For example, this might entail restructuring the PC to:
 - a. Provide broader expertise and consider adding partners from the other bird- and habitat conservation arenas.
 - b. Provide more individuals to help with the workload (perhaps staff support? recognizing the tradeoff of getting too large, but ensuring enough folks are at the table, and available between meetings, to get work done).
 - c. Critically assess the standing and ad-hoc subcommittees of the PC and their roles in the newly defined PC functions.

The consensus ultimately may be that there is no need or desire to alter the current structure and composition of the PC. However, at this juncture, an explicit and focused evaluation of alternatives, following reassessment of PC functions, would help clarify for all Plan partners how the PC intends to oversee implementation of the 2018 Update.

Tactical Adjustments

1. Develop clear, focused Terms of Reference on roles and responsibilities for all plan committee members (including new members, co-leaders, and mechanisms of succession for PC members). Clarify roles and functions of support staff.
2. Review the current JV Reporting Guidance approved by the PC in 2013 and, if needed, make appropriate updates and clarifications regarding the suggested JV reporting format, PC response format, and the role of the PC with respect to JVs and JV reporting.
3. Consider expanding beyond JV reporting to include significant, relevant updates from partners actively engaged in NAWMP delivery (e.g., USDA/landowners, NGOs).
4. Build on successful NAWMP communications efforts and develop new, comprehensive communications of accomplishments and NAWMP needs to Plan stakeholders and agency decision-leaders. Focus on leveraging successes (rather than simply reporting progress).

2. Structure and Function of IIC -- Working Group Representation on the PC

2.1 Issue Statement

The 2012 NAWMP sought to “Integrate waterfowl management to ensure programs are complementary, inform resource investments, and allow managers to understand and weigh trade-offs among potential actions.” The IIC, established in 2013, provided an initial focal point for consensus-building around integrated objectives and facilitating an adaptive approach; however, a more permanent focal point will be necessary to ensure consensus-building and agreement around integrated objectives. The IIC has coordinated technical work under the 2012 NAWMP and reported progress to the PC. This responsibility for strong linkage between policy and technical work of NAWMP remains critical for ongoing NAWMP implementation. The linkage requires operative “vertical” communication between the PC and the technical working groups (NSST, HMWG, HDWG, PET) and increased “horizontal” coordination at the technical level.

Despite agreement about the need for coordination, concern remains about the number and membership overlap among of special working groups, committees, partnerships, and initiatives. Interviewees participating in the PC review echoed this concern. Thus, the challenge facing waterfowl institutions involves retaining the essential roles and responsibilities for integration, which were previously overseen mainly by the IIC, but doing so in a way that is codified and explicitly incorporated into operations of the Plan Committee and technical working groups. This will require clarification of the roles and responsibilities of some PC and working group members and commitment of resources to a position assigned, at least half time, to coordinating integration and communication.

2.2 Relevant findings

The following needs were identified, based on feedback from professionals engaged in NAWMP implementation, including the 2017 survey of professionals and the PC review (Section 1):

1. Improved communication and coordination is needed among working groups between working groups and policy groups to ensure participants are more aware of how all the pieces fit together.
2. There is a need for somebody to "own" and oversee the full suite of goals and associated actions under the 2012 NAWMP.

3. There has been an increasing number of special working groups, committees, partnerships, and directions with substantial overlap in participants. This can be confusing, potentially inefficient, and seem redundant. There is a sense that we need fewer layers.
4. Structural and operational change is needed to accomplish integration across NAWMP goals.
5. Stronger linkage is needed between policy and technical work of NAWMP
6. Energy, commitment, and active leadership remain important for Plan Committee members, and these can be revived and refueled by a clearer sense of responsibility for tangible outcomes.

2.3 Recommendation

Disband the IIC and move its function into the PC by structurally incorporating the roles and responsibilities as follows:

1. Improve “vertical” communication by assigning liaison responsibility to identified NAWMP Committee members and appointing ex-officio representation to the PC from waterfowl working groups (NSST, HMWG, HDWG, and PET); and
2. Assign primary responsibility for coordinating “horizontal” integration among the working groups and facilitating communication at all levels to a permanent position (at least half time) formally associated with the NAWMP.

2.4 Rationale

Appointing ex officio / advisory representation from the working groups to the PC and assigning liaison responsibility for PC members to each working group will improve communication and establish a formal link across the technical and policy levels in waterfowl management. Assigning responsibility for coordinating integration and communication will overcome the problem of having these responsibilities added to existing staff, all of whom are already fully committed. This also ensures that the essential role of integration, key to advancing goals of the 2012 NAWMP Revision, is retained as a formal and explicit element of NAWMP implementation.

2.5 Roles and Responsibilities

Specific roles recommended include: 1) an ex officio member of the PC designated from each waterfowl working group to serve in an advisory capacity, 2) a liaison from the PC to each ex officio member, and 3) a coordinator to facilitate integration among ex officio members and NAWMP liaisons.

Ex Officio / Advisory Members:

- PC co-chairs will work with each waterfowl working group to identify a representative to serve as an ex officio member of the PC. This would replace the working groups’ participation through representatives to the IIC, which has been ongoing since 2013. Responsibilities include:
- Integrate considerations for habitat conservation delivery, harvest management, human dimensions, and public support.
 - Facilitate development of specific proposals to advance integration of NAWMP goals.
 - Ensure communications across Joint Ventures (technical working groups / science teams) and Flyways regarding integration proposals and feedback from the NAWMP Committee.
 - Advisory members from the U.S. and Canada already serve in an ex office capacity on the PC; the recommendation for additional advisory members acknowledges the important bridge that is provided between technical and policy functions integral to NAWMP implementation.

PC Liaisons (PC members):

Assign a PC member to serve as a liaison to each working group through the ex officio member. These liaison roles would be described and codified in the PC Terms of Reference, as recommended in Section 1 of this report. Responsibilities include:

- Actively engage with the corresponding ex officio member to ensure that policy considerations provide appropriate context to technical deliberations related to the specific working group.
- Facilitate active involvement and communications between technical working groups and the NAWMP Committee.
- Act as a champion or sponsor for the technical working group, particularly its efforts to integrate work across NAWMP goals.
- Encourage and support coordination among technical working groups and assist with acquiring funding.

Integration Coordinator (ex officio to the PC):

This position (~1/2 time) is responsible for coordinating integration among working groups and effective communication among ex officio members and PC liaisons. This would replace the current IIC coordinator, which has been in place at approximately the half-time level since 2013. Responsibilities include:

- Serve as a “bridge” among technical working groups, ex officio members of the PC, and NAWMP liaisons.
- Act as the “hub” for horizontal and vertical coordination, communication, and integration.
- Coordinate proposal development and provide a formal conduit to the PC for integration initiatives that are transmitted via a formal recommendation for consideration and approval (or modification) by the PC.
- Assure integration across working groups – specific to integration proposals.
- Coordinate regular conference calls (~monthly) and face-to-face meetings (1 per year) to include ex officio members and NAWMP Committee liaisons.
- Align communications efforts, proposals, and recommendations with existing technical and policy meetings (e.g., AFWA, NAWMP Committee).

Appendix 1. List of Participants in Review of the NAWMP Plan Committee Roles and Functions

PC Review Team (alphabetical)

John Eadie, co-chair	Department of Wildlife, Fish & Conservation Biology University of California, Davis
Diane Eggeman, co-chair	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Keith McKnight	Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture
Dave Morrison	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Seth Mott	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tasha Sargent	Environment and Climate Change Canada

Interviewees (alphabetical)

Gray Anderson	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries	11/21
Mike Anderson	Retired	11/21
Joe Benedict	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency	11/28
Mike Brasher	Gulf Coast Joint Venture	11/30
Andre Breault	Environment and Climate Change Canada	11/22
Eduardo Carrera	Ducks Unlimited de México	12/14
Jorge Coppen	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	11/1
Jim Dubovsky	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	11/16
Jerome Ford	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	11/17
Karla Guyn	Ducks Unlimited, Canada	11/28
Mike Johnson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	11/1
Cam Mack	Wildlife Habitat Canada	11/21
Silke Neve	Environment and Climate Change Canada	12/1
Jim Ringelman	Retired	11/20
Lyle Saigeon	BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations	11/27
Paul Schmidt	Retired	11/27
Casey Stemler	Prairie Pothole Joint Venture	11/27
Mike Szymanski	North Dakota Game and Fish Department	11/22
Jeff Ver Steeg	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	11/28
Josh Vest	Intermountain West Joint Venture	11/16
Barry Wilson	Gulf Coast Joint Venture	11/16
Scott Yaich	Retired	11/30
Dan Yparraguirre	Pacific Flyway Council	12/1

Appendix 2. Questions for Interviewees

1. **Authority & Charge** – what, do you feel, is the unique role of the PC? What is the job to be done?

Prompts for interviewers:

- What is the primary or most important role or function of the plan committee?
- Is the plan committee prepared/structured to be that “single institution” referenced above to serve in the central coordinating, leadership role, OR to provide sufficient leadership in identifying or developing that institution? If not, why not?

2. **Structure and Function** – Given that mission and authority of the PC, how is the role of the PC accomplished? What is the structure to accomplish that role? What are the strengths of this approach?

Prompts for interviewers:

- What do you think the plan committee does best? What is working well with the plan committee, what are some of the key elements that facilitate this?
- Are the functions, roles, or mandates of the PC appropriate? Please elaborate.
- How might the structure of the PC be modified to advance the goals of the 2012 Revision?
- To what extent do PC members fully understand and live up to their role in providing policy oversight of NAWMP work? What could be done to improve this?
- Is the plan committee well supported, in terms of its operation as a committee?
- How well is the PC able to fulfil its role of policy oversight of NAWMP work (technical support, on-the-ground conservation achievements)?

3. **What is limiting effectiveness** – Are there factors that, in your opinion, hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of the PC and if so what are those?

Prompts for interviewers:

- What are some of the constraints or challenges that limit effectiveness of the plan committee?
- What is the least important or least necessary activity of the plan committee that nonetheless takes up time? (In other words, what would you drop or reallocate?)
- Are there new or developing opportunities for the plan committee to achieve the goals in the 2012 Revision? What might be needed to move in those new directions?
- What are the areas of the plan committee that need improvement and why?
- What are the major communication challenges of the plan committee, both to the joint ventures and to agencies or other partners, and how may communication be improved?

Broader perspective – Switching gears to thinking about the waterfowl management community/effort as a whole, including and beyond the plan committee, what are your thoughts about the strengths and challenges facing our efforts over the next several years?

Prompts for interviewers:

- Considering your experience with the joint ventures, flyway councils, USFWS, CWS, NAWCC ... (etc.) what do you see as:
 - The primary strength of the waterfowl management community
 - How would you ensure its perpetuation?
 - The primary deficiency in the waterfowl management community
 - How would you address this deficiency?

Appendix 3. The Plan Committee Mandate (2004)

The mandate for the Plan Committee was last revised as part of the 2004 Update and presented in the 2004 Implementation Framework (pp. 84-85).

Institutional, Legal, and Administrative Authorities, Functions, and Arrangements

Plan Committee

“The North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee is an international body that provides leadership and oversight for the activities undertaken in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.” The mandate of the PC was then described in two broad categories: Plan leadership and Plan management.

Leadership

“Taking advice from all Plan partners and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Science Support Team (NSST), the Plan Committee provides leadership and promotes synergies within the North American waterfowl community, across relevant sectors, and internationally by:

- *Championing waterfowl conservation in the context of coordinated bird management.*
- *Enhancing communications on waterfowl conservation and coordination within North America and with other nations that share North American waterfowl.*
- *Continually scanning the institutional network influencing waterfowl conservation and seeking ways to foster synergy among them.*
- *Promoting the development and assessment of continental waterfowl population objectives and species and geographic priorities through development and distribution of the Plan document.*
- *Connecting with the broader scientific community and ensuring that the Plan — and the NSST — link effectively and operationally with relevant scientific authorities such as the joint venture technical committees; flyway councils; and federal, state, and provincial agencies.*
- *Serving as a forum for discussion of major, long-term, international waterfowl issues and problems, and developing those discussions into recommendations for consideration by the cooperating partners and countries.*
- *Directing waterfowl-related recommendations to the Canadian Wildlife Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Mexican General Directorate of Wildlife, and returning information from those agencies to the Plan community.”*

Plan Management

“The Plan Committee has oversight responsibility for assuring the quality of Plan actions and the overall effectiveness of the Plan. The committee also needs to be able to report on the impact of Plan funding and activities. To meet these obligations, the committee orchestrates Plan community resources to:

- *Review and monitor progress toward achieving the Plan’s population goals and related habitat objectives.*
- *Update the Plan approximately every 5 years in response to new or changing circumstances, policy developments, and opportunities.*
- *Foster an adaptive management approach among joint ventures in conservation implementation.*
- *Review and endorse waterfowl conservation components of joint venture plans.*
- *Review implementation and evaluation strategies developed by joint venture or other regional partnerships.*
- *Review periodic joint venture reports to ensure joint venture activities effectively further the Plan’s purposes.*
- *Encourage coordination and consensus among joint ventures and other relevant bodies concerning waterfowl conservation needs, biological planning, monitoring, and assessment.*

- *Maintain and promote strong relationships with flyway councils, wetland councils, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's Trilateral Committee, and other bird initiatives.*
- *Host periodic conferences for the NSST, joint ventures, and Plan partners to discuss improvements to the Plan's biological foundation.*
- *Annually solicit joint ventures and other Plan partners for input on the status of Plan implementation and issues to be addressed by the Plan Committee.*
- *Prepare periodic reports on the status of Plan implementation for the three federal wildlife agencies using input from the joint ventures and the NSST.*
- *Review periodically — in the spirit of adaptive management promoted in this Update — the Plan Committee's own effectiveness and consider structural, relational, and management approaches to enhance committee impact."*

Membership

Since 1986, membership The Plan Committee has consisted of 12 members (6 each) from Canada and the United States, and since 1994, 2-6 members from Mexico. In each country members are selected from agencies and non-government organizations responsible for waterfowl management in their respective countries and appointed by the director of their federal wildlife agencies. In the United States the tradition has been to have 4 of the 6 members recommended by the Flyway Councils. Members with a broader blend of expertise and affiliation have been selected in Canada and Mexico over the past 15 years or so, based in part on recommendations from NAWMP Joint Ventures.