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*North American Waterfowl  
Management Plan*

*Plan nord-américain de  
gestion de la sauvagine*

*Plan de Manejo de Aves  
Acuáticas de Norteamérica*

To: Waterfowl Management Community

From: Co-Chairs, North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee

Date: September 5, 2013

Subject: Progress in Implementing the 2012 Plan Revision

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Colleagues:

The 2012 Revision of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and associated Action Plan adopted three overarching goals:

- 1) Abundant and resilient waterfowl populations to support hunting and other uses without imperiling habitat.
- 2) Wetlands and related habitats sufficient to sustain waterfowl populations at desired levels, while providing places to recreate and ecological services that benefit society.
- 3) Growing numbers of waterfowl hunters, other conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation.

An Interim Integration Committee (IIC), prescribed in the Action Plan, has been charged with facilitating the integration of waterfowl management and advancing many of the specific recommendations identified in the Revision and Action Plan. You will have received a DRAFT WORK PLAN from the IIC in mid-July, and we discussed this at length last week at our Plan Committee meeting in Winnipeg.

In addition we heard reports from the nascent Human Dimensions Working Group (HDWG), the NSST, the NAWMP Joint Ventures, and the Plan Committee's new Public Engagement Team (PET). Collectively the work of these groups, in partnership with all of you is advancing the recommendations of the 2012 Revision on many fronts. As Co-Chairs of the international Plan Committee we are committed to implementing the 2012 Plan and updating you from time to time on the progress of this important work.

**Interim Integration Committee (IIC)** The IIC includes members connected to the Plan Committee, the Flyway Councils, the NSST, the HDWG and the Harvest Management Working Group. Chaired by Dale

Humburg, their ambitious multi-faceted work plan will require the participation and support of the entire waterfowl community to realize the integrated goals of the new NAWMP. The most important first steps for this team will be overseeing review and development of contemporary and coherent objectives for populations (including harvest), people and habitat. Please actively engage in reviewing the IIC's initial ideas about quantitative NAWMP objectives that were sent to you on July 15, 2013. The IIC, with the support of the Plan Committee will be striking a temporary NAWMP Objectives Task Group to lead a revision of the draft ideas circulated by the IIC. We need broad input from the waterfowl community to accomplish this. Our proposed timeline is to get this group engaged in related technical work this fall, receive input from the community as soon as possible but by March, 2014 at the latest, and then revise the first IIC draft ideas about objectives and measurable attributes immediately thereafter. Although plans are still forming, we believe that it will be desirable then to solicit reactions to these ideas from a broader suite of stakeholders through social science survey methods and thereby broadly enhance the relevance and support for the new NAWMP objectives.

Review of objectives will be "job one" for the next several months. Meanwhile the IIC will continue to mature its plans and solicit resources for undertaking several of the other items in its work plan. In particular, once objectives are agreed upon, modeling of the most vital management decision processes must follow soonalong with development of adaptive processes and monitoring systems to allow improvements in management decisions going forward.

**NAWMP Science Support Team (NSST)** The NSST met late in July and has fully engaged in contributing to the IIC work plan. Moreover, the NSST has reviewed its present active projects with an eye toward even stronger alignment with the priorities of the IIC and the 2012 NAWMP Action Plan. Several elements of the IIC work plan identify the NSST as a key body for moving the needed work forward. Communication and joint efforts with the HDWG are also on the near-term agenda as this long-serving technical support body for the Plan Committee throws its efforts into advancing the 2012 Plan recommendations.

**The Joint Ventures (JVs)** The Joint Ventures are strongly engaged in the Plan Revision through active engagement with on IIC, and individually by considering what the new trio of NAWMP goals means to their missions. We sense a great deal of interest and energy among the JVs in this evolution of Plan goals and a desire to experiment with various approaches to achieving the Plan's integrated goals in ways that make sense in their particular geographic regions. The JVs vary greatly in terms of the landscape issues of greatest importance, land ownership, stakeholders and social settings as well as ecological challenges. No one-size-fits-all solution is likely and several JVs are already actively engaged in exploring ways to define people-related objectives and potential adjustments to habitat objectives. We sense that a rich array of ideas is likely to flow from these early investigations by the continent's Joint Ventures.

**Human Dimensions Working Group (HDWG)** We are particularly excited to see the new HDWG taking form under the leadership of newly elected Chair, Cal DuBrock (PA). Last week the Plan Committee reviewed and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference for the Group, following similar actions earlier this summer by the four Flyway Councils. The HDWG, a joint undertaking of the National Flyway Council and the Plan Committee has been formed to provide technical support and expertise in pursuit of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Goal of the 2012 Plan. They are scheduled to meet again later this year and we are anxious to see their initial work plan and resource requirements. We were gratified to note that initial

work priorities being discussed by the HDWG already are closely aligned with the priorities of the IIC. That is not accidental as we have worked to ensure significant cross-membership on these important committees.

**Public Engagement Team (PET) and the Plan Committee** In order to advance the work identified under the 2012 Revision, including the priority projects of the work groups discussed above, the Plan Committee is establishing a Public Engagement Team made up of selected PC members, agency communication experts, and a few key consultants. Their task is to help our critical stakeholders, most importantly at the onset the entire waterfowl management community, find constructive ways to engage in the process of implementing the 2012 Revision. Engagement begins with understanding the purpose and direction of the work and seeing how implementing the Plan Revision can enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and success of our collective efforts in waterfowl management. Support for this work will need to build at the highest levels in our agencies, with elected officials and the private sector. We envision that a significant campaign will be required to achieve these outcomes. Under the chairmanship of Gray Anderson (TN), the PET will be developing its initial game plan over the next several weeks and you will hear more about them soon.

Although the four Flyway Councils have a reporting structure separate from the Plan Committee, the councils and their supporting technical committees are closely linked to the management of state and provincial lands and the people who use them, and have as well strong interests in harvest regulations. The councils, through their participants on the Plan Committee, IIC, HDWG, PET, NSST and many Joint Ventures, have already been closely involved with the development of the work plans described above and we hope will continue to offer cogent advice over the coming months. Just as the flyway councils have served as leaders in waterfowl management since their inception over 60 years ago, their continued participation in implementing the 2012 NAWMP Revision will be essential.

As leaders of the Plan Committee, we are pleased and much encouraged to see the evident level of broad engagement and enthusiasm for implementing the 2012 NAWMP Action Plan and the work of the important task groups noted above. We look forward eagerly to an on-going process of engagement, and we invite all interested individuals and agencies to identify ways in which you can contribute time, expertise, or other resources to our collective enterprise of waterfowl management.

We understand that the 2012 Revision has set us on a challenging quest. But we have at hand the opportunity to re-focus our collective actions to sustain the birds and habitats and human connections to waterfowl and wetlands that we hold dear in the face of unprecedented social, economic and ecological changes. We look forward to your growing collaboration in this vital work.

Yours in Conservation,

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