



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Washington, DC

July 6, 2004

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16 (2340)

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Memorandum

To: Regional Directors

From: Associate Director, Natural Resources Stewardship and Science /s/
signed by Michael Soukup, /s/

Subject: Working with the States on their Comprehensive Wildlife Strategies

Many of you are probably aware that the States have sought a regular source of funding from Congress to sustain their wildlife and fisheries programs – the Teaming with Wildlife initiative. In response to this initiative, Congress created the States Wildlife Grants program in 2001. This program builds on a successful history of federal-state partnership in wildlife conservation. It is aimed at species of greatest conservation need, with the overall goal of keeping wildlife from declining to the point of becoming endangered.

In order to receive State Wildlife Grants funds, each state has agreed to develop a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy by October 2005. The State fish and wildlife agencies are actively engaged in developing these strategies. Each strategy must include information on the distribution and abundance of wildlife in the state; the description, location and condition of key habitat types; the assessment of significant problems and research priorities; and the identification of conservation actions needed to conserve wildlife and habitat. The strategies also must articulate plans for monitoring species and habitats to evaluate the success of conservation actions. Finally, Congress required that the strategies be developed and implemented with extensive public involvement and in coordination with Federal agencies, as well as local governments and Tribes.

In some significant ways, this major effort by the States reflects our own undertaking already begun with the Natural Resource Challenge. One lesson seen time and again in the initial years of the Challenge is that we can not succeed in sustaining park natural resources on our own.

I am asking that we make an effort to actively work with the States in developing these strategies. We have expertise at the region, the network and at the park level, that would be invaluable in identifying species in common, particular problems across jurisdictions, and in reviewing drafts of the State strategies. Both the Park Service and the States can benefit from sharing research and data on fish and wildlife occurrence, condition, and habitat needs. Exchanging information on management objectives and priorities will assist in coordinating wildlife conservation actions across the landscape, and ultimately improve the ability of both

NPS and the States to reach their management goals. Greater coordination of monitoring and data collection activities also has the potential to help address the information gaps that challenge both the States and the Park Service.

Attached is a list of the strategy coordinators in each State, as well as the Fish and Wildlife Service contact for each of their regions. I encourage you to designate someone in your region to ensure our coordinated involvement in the process.

At the national level, our Biological Resource Management Division (BRMD) will work with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to discuss this and other important resource issues. If you have questions or would like to provide comments, contact the chief of the BRMD, Loyal Mehrhoff (Loyal_Mehrhoff@nps.gov, phone 970-225-3521). Additional information on the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies is available on the Teaming with Wildlife web site at <http://www.teaming.com>.