FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESS

The Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Resource Agencies

Monitoring the Conservation of Fish and Wildlife in the Northeast – The Process

A Report on the Process to Develop a Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework for the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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This report provides a summary of the process we facilitated to develop a performance monitoring framework for the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. We present the framework itself in a companion document, *Monitoring the Status of Fish and Wildlife and Effectiveness of Conservation Actions in the Northeast.* Both reports and additional supporting materials are available online at http://rcngrants.org/regional_monitoring.shtml. For more information, contact:

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1. Introduction

The Northeast Region

The Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Resource Agencies (NEAFWA) includes state fish and wildlife agencies from Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington (D.C.) and West Virginia. The NEAFWA members are responsible for managing the species and their habitats in a diverse range of ecosystems that include forests, rivers and wetlands, lakes, and coastal and marine systems, all set amongst one of the most densely populated regions of the country.

NEAFWA itself was created to facilitate inter-state coordination and multi-state wildlife management efforts. It is one of four Fish and Wildlife Regional Association Members (the others being The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Association of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies). NEAFWA has several standing committees and has long term experience with organizing and implementing effective regional meetings, field research projects, and approaches to landscape level conservation.

Wildlife Action Plans

Fifty six states and territories across the United States have developed Wildlife Action Plans which together represent a collective vision for the future of conservation. The roots of this historic planning effort lie with the Teaming with Wildlife coalition – a coalition of more than 3,500 agencies, conservation groups, and businesses who have tirelessly worked to secure funding to keep wildlife from becoming endangered. The coalition's efforts led to the establishment of the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and the State Wildlife Grants Program in 2000. As a requirement of these programs, Congress asked each state wildlife agency to develop a Wildlife Action Plan (also called Action Plans throughout this document).

Wildlife Action Plans are proactive plans that assess the condition of each state's wildlife, identify the problems they face, and prescribe actions to conserve wildlife and vital wildlife habitat before they become more rare and costly to protect. These plans have been designed to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered and to keep common species common. What distinguishes the state Action Plans from previous plans is the focus on *results* for *all* wildlife in *every* state. These proactive plans outline steps that should be taken now and that ultimately will save the states money over the long term.

Need for a Performance Monitoring Framework

Congress and the Federal Office of Management and Budget now want to know that the funds they allocated are being spent in a cost-efficient manner, and that states are keeping species off the Endangered Species List. Moreover, from an effectiveness perspective, wildlife managers in each state need to know what is working, what is not working, and how they could best allocate their limited resources to the most effective conservation actions.

Because the Action Plans are very detailed and include extensive lists of species of concern, monitoring the wildlife described within the plans would be an exceedingly onerous and costly task – one that far exceeds the resources available for implementing the plans themselves. With this in mind, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) decided to lead a process to develop a performance monitoring framework that could be used across the region to inform decision makers and managers on how individual states are faring, as well as how the region as a whole is performing.

In order to be manageable, this framework would have to focus on the most important monitoring needs across the region. This means that the framework cannot provide an all-inclusive view of how the Northeast region is performing. Rather, it must rely on key indicators that are illustrative of overall progress and that will provide sufficient information to guide decision makers – political officials and conservation managers alike.

Overview of this Report

This report provides a summary of the facilitation process to develop the Northeast's Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework (hereafter, Framework or Monitoring Framework). The Framework itself in a companion document, *Monitoring the Status of Fish and Wildlife and Effectiveness of Conservation Actions in the Northeast,* is available at http://rcngrants.org/regional_monitoring.shtml.

- **Audience for this Report** – We have written this document primarily for agencies or individuals interested in developing a similar framework for their region. Please note that in writing this report, we struggled to walk the line between providing enough detail so that you could follow what we did, and avoiding overburdening the report with too much detail. In places, we may have strayed towards the latter – as a result, please feel free to skip any part that is not relevant to your work.

- **How this Report Is Meant to be Used** – We hope that you will use this report as a starting point to guide the development of a monitoring framework for your conservation work. You will obviously have to adjust the process that we present to meet your specific needs and situation.

- **How this Report is Organized** – Section 2 presents a summary of what we did during the overall process, including descriptions of a large stakeholder meeting, a smaller "experts" group meeting, and a series of conference calls and emails in smaller working groups. For each activity or working session, we provide a discussion of what worked and did not and our recommendations for going forward. Section 3 then contains a more general analysis of what worked and what did not. The Appendixes of this report provide a summary timeline/budget for the overall process and the facilitators' agendas for the workshops. Additional materials are also available online at http://rcngrants.org/regional_monitoring.shtml.

2. What We Did

The overall process for developing a Monitoring Framework for the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies involved working with a Steering Committee, a broad group of stakeholders, and a team of experts to collectively develop the Framework. The main steps were as follows:

1) The large group of stakeholders identified up to eight conservation targets (species, habitats, ecosystems, or ecological processes) that collectively represent what NEAFWA members are trying to conserve or need to conserve in order to ensure the health of fish and wildlife in the region (also referred to as the 'status monitoring dashboard'). Although participants were initially reluctant to narrow down the focus to that extent, they recognized that limited resources made it imperative to do so.
2) For each of those conservation targets, the stakeholders then worked in teams to identify up to five key indicators that provide a good understanding of the health of the target. The teams were to prioritize indicators for which data were already readily available, but also identify critical data gaps.
3) Based on those indicators, the teams then developed a plan for how to compile and analyze the data. This plan included attention to challenges or issues that might arise in the data collection phase.
4) Concurrent with the above steps, a small team also worked to think about the effectiveness of actions supported through State Wildlife Grants. This group decided to use results chains, a tool that makes explicit the underlying logic behind how a specific action is believed to lead to achieving conservation results. The group developed these chains for a few commonly-funded strategies under the State Wildlife Grants. The chains provide a base for identifying indicators that the team then proposed be collected by State Wildlife Grant recipients using these strategies.
5) Teams working on targets and effectiveness measures also developed mock-ups for their sections for an overall report to Congressional decision makers. These mock-ups were limited to two pages per team and served as an effective means to focus the scope of what the team produced.
6) Key Steering Committee members then compiled all of the products from this process into the final Framework.
7) This Framework is now available for review and consideration by the NEAFWA State Directors and other key individuals.

A great deal of facilitation and behind-the-scenes work helped determine the main steps needed and ensure that those involved stayed engaged and on-track. The facilitation process itself involved six distinct, but sometimes parallel components:

a) Planning and coordination of the overall process
b) Multi-stakeholder workshop in Albany, NY
c) Target and effectives working groups
d) Experts workshop in Rennselearville, NY
e) Completion and peer review of Framework
f) Roll-out of Framework

We describe each of the components in more detail in the following pages. Although we present these components separately and as distinct steps or phases, it is important to keep in mind that this was not always a linear process and that some of these components were ongoing throughout the facilitation process.

a) Planning and coordination of the overall process

As is the case with almost any facilitation process, one of the most important keys to success was the extensive work that we did upfront, as well as over the course of the facilitation process. Overall, the investment in this planning was very important to ensure that the process went smoothly, that we were all on the same page, and that we made mid-course adjustments where necessary. Specific activities included:

♦ Initial Planning Among NEAFWA Team

The overall idea for developing the Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework came out of the State Wildlife Action Plans Meeting, held in March 2006 in Albany, New York. The meeting brought together 45 individuals from all states except Rhode Island, and included representation from NEAFWA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The meeting focused on identifying actions that, based on the collective priorities identified in the states Action Plans, would further fish and wildlife conservation in the region. Participants identified a total of 72 actions, six of which were listed as priority projects. The Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework was one of these six.

NEAFWA applied for and received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation under the State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Support Program in May 2006.The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies served as fiscal agent, and Tracey Tomajer was the project manager representing NEAFWA. A grant totaling $71,700 was awarded in August 2006.

One of the first steps the project manager took was to send out a survey to all states and other relevant organizations to get a better idea of monitoring that was already taking place and what sort of data were available. The project manager also formed an initial steering committee (see below for more details) in late 2006. This group prepared and sent a request for proposal to several potential contractors who could facilitate the process to develop the Framework.

Advantages to the initial planning were that it:

- + Provided a clear mandate from the entire region for the Framework. The wide participation across agencies and across the region, combined with the high priority this topic received, sent a clear message that monitoring for the region was a critical issue, and there was a need to develop some sort of Framework for the region.
- + Allowed time to solicit input from across the region, develop a proposal, and start the initial work.
- + Provided clear leadership and responsibility. Designating one person to lead the project ensured smoother lines of communication.

Some challenges associated with the initial planning were that:

- – The project manager had to operate under the fiscal sponsorship of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This led to numerous bureaucratic hurdles and a significant amount of time spent on administrative matters.
- – The logistics required an enormous amount of time from the Steer Committee
- – Ideally, it would have been good to coordinate early work such as the monitoring survey with the final workplan developed between the Steering Committee and the external facilitator.
- – There may not have been sufficient overlap between the participants in the State Wildlife Action Plans Meeting (March 2006) and those in subsequent planning workshops for the Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework. As a result, the clear mandate that came out of the March 2006 meeting was not initially clear to some participants in later workshops.

♦ Hiring External Workshop Facilitators

NEAFWA put together a request for proposals, interviewed a pool of potential facilitators, and then developed a contract with Foundations of Success (FOS). FOS was chosen because of their expertise in monitoring and evaluation, their proven track record facilitating multi-stakeholder processes in the conservation field, and their experience in the Northeast.

> " Innovative techniques; passionate implementation"
> **- Anonymous, Multi-Stakeholder Workshop Evaluation**

> "Very good at capturing our ideas (doesn't always happen with other facilitators I've experienced)"
> **- Anonymous, Multi-Stakeholder Workshop Evaluation**

Overall, we would strongly recommend having a good facilitator to help guide and focus the process of developing a monitoring framework, especially when working across a region as large as the Northeastern US. Furthermore, if at all possible, try to obtain a “neutral” external facilitator who is familiar with strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation in the conservation field. Specific advantages of using a capable and neutral external facilitator included:

- Help with guiding and focusing what seemed like an overwhelming and daunting process to those on the inside.
- An emphasis that no one agency was steering the process in a direction that primarily suited its own organizational interests.
- Openness throughout the process such that participants were able to voice their opinions without concern about how they might be perceived by others.
- An outside perspective on the process itself.

One caveat is that:

– A facilitator who is not capable, who cannot adapt to changing conditions, or who is not sensitive to subtle group dynamics has the potential to do more harm than good.

♦ Convening a Steering Committee

One of the most important steps that we took was to convene a steering committee of key partners to help us with this process. In this case, there was an initial steering committee to set the project in motion and to identify an external facilitator. Once FOS was hired as the external facilitator, and the planning was underway, we expanded the steering committee. The final committee included a mix of representation from state Fish and Wildlife Agencies across the Northeast, US Fish and Wildlife Service (the Federal agency responsible for funding State Wildlife Grants), regional conservation organizations, and FOS.

The members of the steering committee participated in and took ownership of this process, playing a number of important roles. Key activities and decisions of the Steering Committee included:

- Helping set the appropriate scale and scope for the planning process. The initial scope of work – developing a Monitoring Framework for Northeast fish and wildlife – was enormous and daunting. Through a facilitated process, the Steering Committee was able to narrow that scope considerably to a Framework aimed primarily at key Congressional committees who make funding decisions for State Wildlife Grants. A secondary but also important audience was the fish and wildlife managers themselves. It was important to narrow down the focus prior to engaging a broader group of stakeholders in order to make interactions with those stakeholders more focused and productive.
- Providing feedback and advice – The committee reviewed workshop agendas and presentations, materials and instructions for working groups, and other interim products and gave us good feedback and insights that reflected the diversity of sectors and viewpoints represented within the Steering Committee.
- Serving as a sounding board and test audience – The Steering Committee served as a good sounding board for approaches we proposed to take with the broader group. For example, we did a mock target selection exercise with the Steering Committee so they could see how we proposed to help participants in the first workshop narrow down the

thematic focus for the Framework. This helped them understand the usefulness of the process, and it also helped us refine the exercise for the workshop audience.

- ✚ Reaching out to other stakeholders – The committee gave us advice as to who we needed to include in various steps of the process. They also took an active role in making direct personal contact with key people to make sure that the right people were participating in the process
- ✚ Demonstrating commitment – Several of the Steering Committee members took an active role in the process, presenting at the workshops and heading up working groups.

Although the Steering Committee functioned very well, there were some challenges in terms of time commitments. Specifically:

- – The tight timeline and the high level of participation required by Steering Committee members meant that some members felt over-stretched on their commitments.

b) Multi-stakeholder workshop in Albany, NY

We held a 2 day meeting that brought together nearly 40 individuals representing a variety of agencies across the Northeast. A full report of this workshop and its products is available at: http://rcngrants.org/regional_monitoring.shtml. This meeting had three main objectives:

1. Develop a list of targets for the “status monitoring dashboard”
2. Explore indicators and existing data sources for these targets
3. Introduce idea of results chains as a tool for effectiveness measures

♦ Developing a List of Targets

This first objective was probably the most important and seemingly the most challenging. We had to get these 40 stakeholders to agree on up to eight conservation targets (species, habitats, ecosystems and/or ecological processes) that collectively represented or encompassed the fish and wildlife biodiversity NEAFWA members were working to conserve. We decided to use a sticky tarp and card exercise (see Box 1 for instructions on how to make a sticky tarp). This exercise involves drawing on the collective wisdom of the entire group, under the assumption that together we are smarter than any one of us is in isolation. To help the group embrace this assumption, we used a simple jelly bean exercise. We filled a jar of jelly beans and had everyone guess how many jelly beans were in it. Responses ranged widely, but the average was very close to the actual count. We strongly encourage using this type of exercise when using a facilitated processes to illustrate a group’s ability to reach consensus on complex matters among a wide range of stakeholders. Specific advantages of the jelly bean exercise included that it:

- ✚ Very effectively made the point that all of us together are smarter than any one individual;
- ✚ Provided a fun and engaging introduction to the target selection exercise;

A caveat to keep in mind is:

- You should be prepared for how you will handle results that do not support your premise that collectively we are smarter than any one individually.

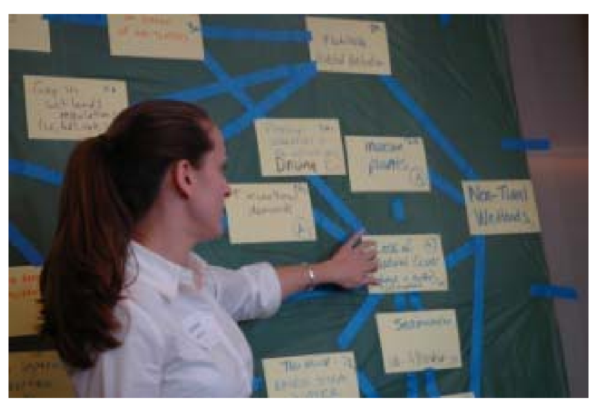
> "Results probably not unlike what a few folks from the region would come up with, but important for buy in and a building block to the process"
> **- Anonymous, Multi-Stakeholder Workshop Evaluation**

We continued this session with a brief PowerPoint presentation about what a conservation target is and why it is important to be clear about your conservation targets. For the target exercise itself, we asked participants to break into groups of 4 and for each group to answer the question: *"What 8 ecological systems, communities, and/or species would you select to be the targets that collectively represent the biodiversity of the Northeast region?"* Each group was then asked to pair up with one other group and winnow their 16 targets into 8, by reconciling overlapping targets and discussing which to eliminate or change.

At this point, the facilitator asked each of the new groups to select 2 or 3 of their clearest targets to put on the sticky tarp. The facilitator then put cards that seemed similar to one another in loose clusters, asking those in the room for their approval of each proposed grouping. The facilitator then asked each group for additional cards that contained different targets and then arranged the clusters in columns, giving each column a typographic symbol as a top card. The facilitator then asked the room to propose changes to the columns (combining them, splitting them, or moving cards). Once the room was generally happy with the results, the facilitator then asked the group to put up their remaining cards in the appropriate columns, adjusting the columns as necessary. Finally, the facilitator asked the group to come up with a summary name to replace the symbol on the top card for each column.

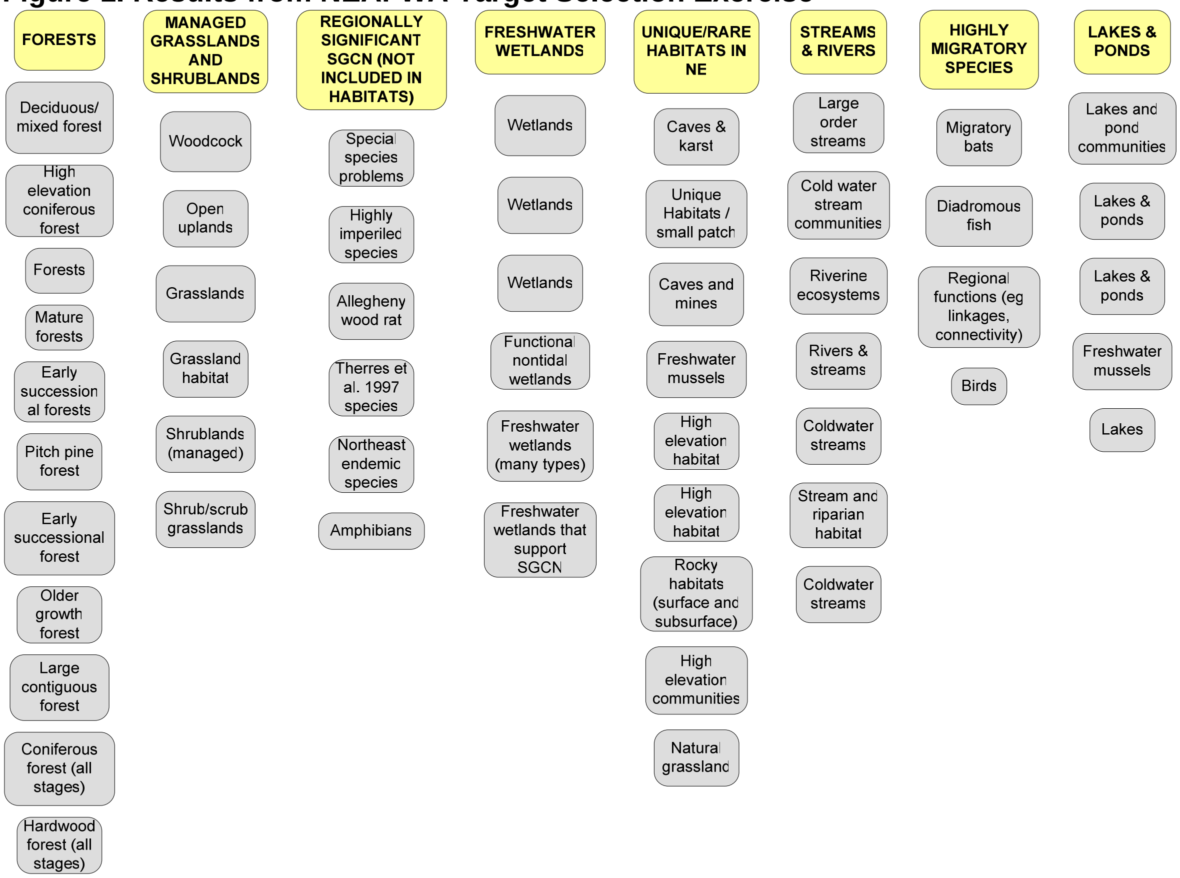
Box 1. How to Make a Sticky Tarp

One of the most useful tools for stakeholder workshops is a sticky tarp that you can use to do both the target selection in Step 1 and the threat and situation analyses in Steps 2 and 3. A sticky tarp is simply a large (2x3 meters is a good size) nylon tarp that has been liberally sprayed with a "retackable" artist's adhesive (e.g., 3M Spray Mount Artist Adhesive #6065 – make sure you use the white can!) on one surface and allowed to air-dry. This creates a tacky surface that does not dry out and allows any paper item to stick to it and yet be readily repositioned. Always remember to fold the sticky tarp onto itself (i.e., sticky surface to sticky surface) and to open it carefully not to dislodge the glue from the tarp. Over time you may need to reapply the adhesive to the tarp.



In this exercise, we were able to come up with eight targets upon which the entire group agreed fairly quickly (see Figure 1). These included two species targets (species of greatest conservation need and highly migratory species) and six ecosystem targets.

Figure 1. Results from NEAFWA Target Selection Exercise



Overall, we would strongly recommend using this type of plenary card exercise for selecting targets. Specific advantages of this methodology included that it:

- Avoided the problem of having different breakout groups come up with different sets of targets that then have to be painfully reconciled.
- Was a fun exercise involving discussion and lots of collaboration, which started the workshop off on a good note.
- Enabled both expert biologists and non-experts to contribute to and understand what a target is, and how they are selected.
- Made transparent to the participants that the Steering Committee had not pre-selected the targets.

A caveat to keep in mind is:

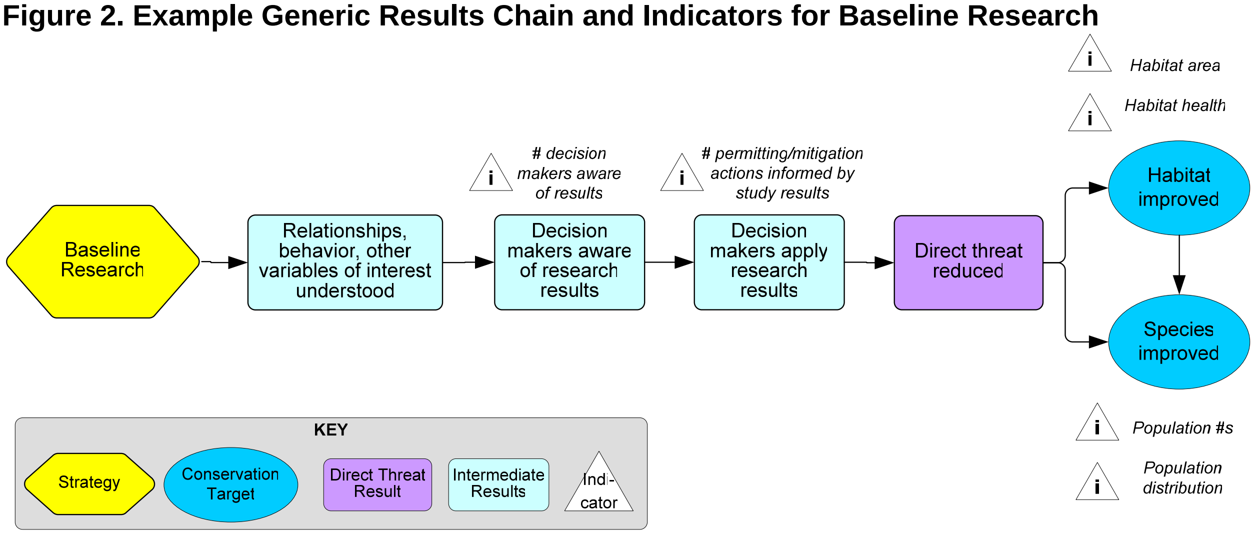
– This technique requires skilled facilitation – if you have never done a card exercise like this before, you might want to practice before you try it when it really matters. The

Institute of Cultural Affairs (http://www.ica-usa.org/) offers formal training courses in the Technology of Participation methodology on which this technique is based.

♦ Using Results Chains as a Tool for Measuring Effectiveness

Again, we started off this session with a PowerPoint presentation about results chains, including how to develop them and how they are used. We tried to be very explicit about how one can use results chains to specify and then test the logic behind a conservation strategy. We had previously asked participants to fill out cards identifying some key strategies they knew were being implemented in their region. Among these, we chose six common strategies (including at least three for which we knew it would be easy to develop a results chain) and divided the workshop participants into three groups. We let individuals self-select the group (strategy) in which they would participate. Each group was led by a facilitator who helped them develop two results chains, starting with the simplest chain. The facilitator would start the discussion by putting a card up on a sticky board that had the strategy on it and another card that had the conservation target. The facilitator would then encourage participants to start naming the assumptions linking the strategy to the target. The group continued doing this until it felt like it had a well-developed and fairly complete results chain (Figure 2). For each result in the chain, the facilitator then encouraged participants to identify some specific indicators. After the first chain and indicators were developed, participants were free to move to another group to develop the second chain.

Figure 2. Example Generic Results Chain and Indicators for Baseline Research



A results chain tool is very powerful, and we encourage its use in situations where you need to identify measures of effectiveness. Specific advantages of using this tool in the workshop included that it:

- Helped groups agree upon and make explicit the logic underlying specific strategies and how they are assumed to lead to conservation results. As such, results chains provide the basis for identifying effectiveness measures.
- Familiarized participants with the process of developing a results chain and how to use this tool effectively.
- Simplified the typically daunting question: "How do we show our actions are effective?"

A caveat to the use of results chains in this workshop is that:

- We could have done a better job explaining how the use of results chains would tie into the overall report and why we were introducing them. This may have been due, in part, to the fact that we had to introduce the concept earlier in the workshop than we had wanted because some participants were leaving before the end of the workshop, and we wanted to make sure they learned about results chains. Nevertheless, we should have been more explicit about the role of results chains in the overall process.

♦ Exploring Indicators and Existing Data Sources for Targets

The last session of this workshop was dedicated to defining more precisely the targets and then identifying indicators and data sources for them. There were four self-selected breakout groups, each led by a facilitator. They were each given two targets and asked to:

1. Agree on the name of their target
2. If necessary, identify nested targets
3. Develop indicators and identify data sources
4. Mock-up a 2 page “Report to Decision Makers” on their target, and
5. Discuss next steps

This was a lot to do in the short amount of time available. Most groups made good progress on the first three points, but only a couple of groups were able to cover all five. In general, we would strongly encourage this type of exercise in a workshop setting. Specific advantages included that it:

+ Very effectively harnessed the collective knowledge of many experts in a short period of time
+ Forced teams to get specific about how they will measure their targets. In particular, the use of The Nature Conservancy’s method to identify “key ecological attributes” and then develop indicators for them helped the teams focus on the most important indicators.

A caveat to this exercise is that it:

- Required the right people to be present. Some groups (e.g., wetlands) did not have any participants who were very familiar with the target. The groups took their best guesses, but the resultant products needed greater expert input at a later date to ground them in reality.

General Workshop Comments

Participants generally seemed engaged and enthusiastic about this process and the expected end results. At the end of the meeting, however, one participant raised questions about why we were engaging in this process and why it was necessary to report at a regional level. He was frustrated with multiple planning processes and did not see how this process was going to help him with his work. In retrospect, we should have done a better job upfront explaining the overall purpose, the benefits of reporting across the region, and how the Framework we were developing would contribute to work at the state level. For others planning similar meetings, we strongly recommend that you:

⇒ Share a brief and clear description of your project, the overall process, and how participants can contribute to and benefit from the process

⇒ Spend time upfront explaining the process and fielding questions. We did this but apparently did not spend sufficient time on it or did not explain it clearly enough to the target audience.

⇒ Try to draw out any negative feelings early in the workshop or on the side so that you can address them upfront and create a shared understanding from the start.

c) Target and effectiveness working groups

For each of the targets identified in the Albany workshop, we formed working groups with participants who had expressed interest in the topic. We identified a lead for each group – someone with a demonstrated strong commitment to the process (e.g., a Steering Committee member) or someone who had shown leadership capabilities in the Albany workshop.

The working groups (on average comprised of 2-6 people) had approximately 2 months to refine the work begun in Albany (in the Exploring Indicators and Existing Data Sources for Targets session). With input from the Steering Committee, we developed a template for them to follow (Appendix 2). The template requested prioritized indicators, methods and sources for collecting them, potential challenges related to compiling and/or analyzing data collected, and a mocked-up example of what a report to decision-makers on the target or effectiveness indicators might look like (Figure 3). The working groups held conference calls and exchanged emails to develop good working drafts of indicators and monitoring plans for their target (following the template provided). The groups also prepared PowerPoint presentations to share their progress with others at the Experts Workshop. These PowerPoints summarized the completed templates.
Despite these obstacles, the groups made impressive progress and produced very good drafts of indicators and monitoring plans in advance of the Experts Workshop. Given our experience, we highly recommend using working groups to make progress on an overall framework. Specific advantages included that working groups:

+ Allowed smaller groups to make good progress on smaller portions of the larger Framework. Breaking down the work this way made the overall process much more manageable. More manageable tasks meant that the overall Framework could progress as each group made progress on its contribution to the overall product.

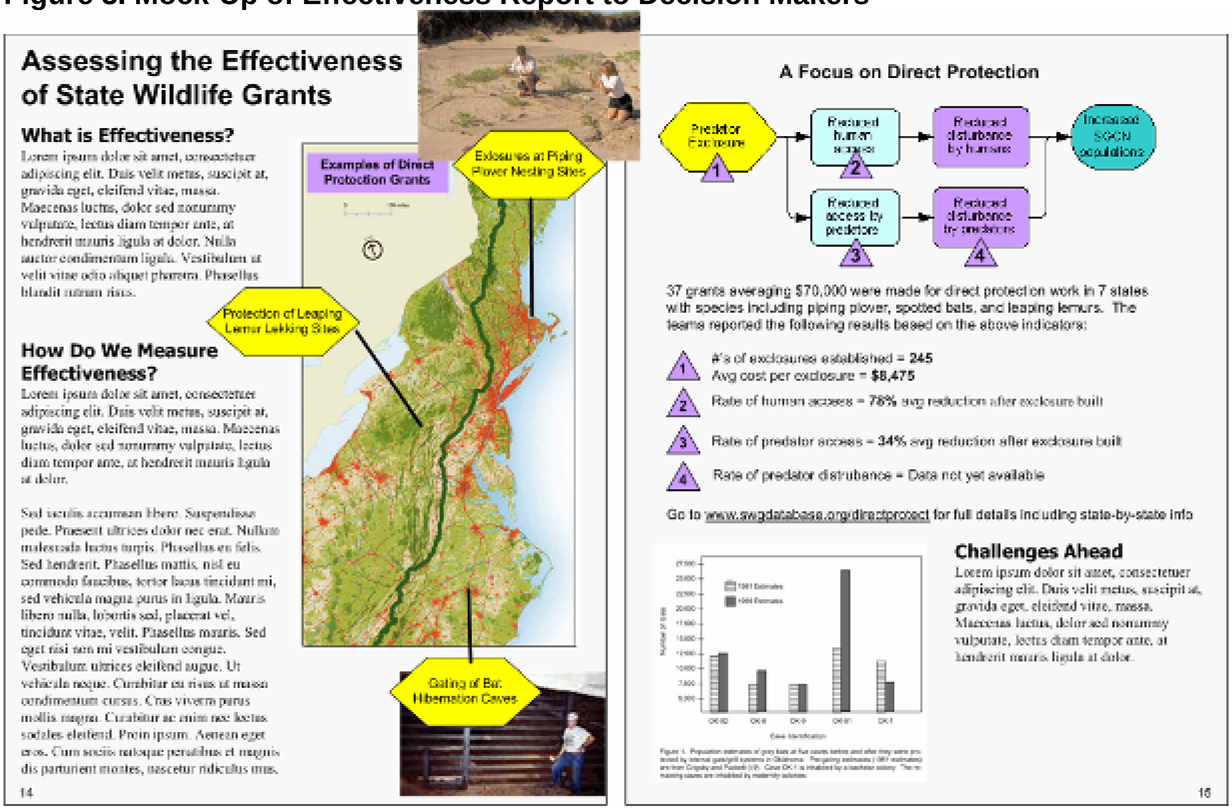
+ Encouraged greater participation from individuals. We have found that smaller working groups tend to engage greater numbers of people.

+ Brought more perspectives to the process. Because these small working groups engaged more people, they also increased the diversity of perspectives and likely increased buy-in among stakeholder groups.

A caveat to keep in mind is that working groups:

- Required participation from at least two or three people who are interested in and dedicated to the topic at hand. One group (managed grasslands and shrublands target) never formed because no one came forward to take the lead on it. Despite the recognized importance of this target, we did not end up developing it for the final Framework. Likewise, only one person was involved in developing the template for the Regionally Significant Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This person made admirable progress on the target, but when he presented his work at the Experts Workshop, there was a lot of disagreement as to the indicator species he had chosen.
- We were somewhat apprehensive about how much work these groups would accomplish, given that they were working remotely with peers scattered across the Northeast, their time was limited, and the work fell during the summer months when many people are on vacation or in the field.

Figure 3. Mock-Up of Effectiveness Report to Decision Makers



d) Experts workshop in Rensselaerville, New York

This workshop convened a smaller group (approximately 20) of experts with the purpose of soliciting their input on the Framework sections developed to date. A full report of this meeting and its products is available at: http://rcngrants.org/regional_monitoring.shtml. Specific objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Review progress made by working groups and provide feedback/standardize

2. Agree on what final products will look like
3. Agree on roll-out and outreach strategies for the overall initiative
4. Develop thinking on data management and sharing
5. Agree on next steps

♦ Review of and Feedback on Working Group Progress

Each working group was given 10 minutes to present and 10 minutes for follow-up feedback. In order to keep the meeting flowing and respect the meeting close time, we were strict timekeepers. We used an *American Idol* format of employing a panel of judges to provide feedback on the presentations. Each of the three judges was expected to comment on the presentation and, where appropriate, ask thought-provoking questions. The rest of the audience would then have time to ask a limited set of questions. We purposefully chose judges who we thought would be animated and insightful and would embrace their roles. We highly recommend using a similarly engaging format to get feedback in a workshop setting. In particular, advantages of this approach included that it:

- ✚ Required a few individuals to listen closely to a group's presentation and to provide critical and stimulating feedback. This was very valuable for the groups, as well as the judges, who were able to learn more about the proposed Monitoring Framework content.
- ✚ Provided a light-hearted and fun means to get high quality feedback. This format was very entertaining, especially when the judges embraced their roles, but the feedback was very serious and of high quality.

A couple of caveats to keep in mind when using a similar feedback format are that it:

- Required serious engagement. You should be careful not to let the fun format interfere with the quality of the feedback.
- Required adequate time. In this particular case, it was very important to leave enough time for feedback. Although participants generally appreciated that the facilitators kept the meeting on task, there was a general feeling that the teams needed more time for feedback. We had convened a group of experts for a limited amount of time, and they wanted to tap into that expertise. One thing we have learned about workshops is that it is important to be ready to adapt if something is not going as well as anticipated. With this in mind, we added a new session – Feedback Stations – the following day. See below for more details.

♦ Agreement on Final Products

In this workshop, we also took some time to discuss what the final products for the overall process should be and what format they should take. We prepared a matrix ahead of time that included the report type, audience, length, format, and content. We made some initial suggestions that we presented and vetted in plenary. This was a straight-forward, yet important session. We would recommend involving all workshop participants in some sort of session to help all agree on the final products. Doing so had several advantages, including that it:

- + Helped all participants understand and agree upon the final products of the process.
- + Engaged all participants in determining those final products and, as such, may have inspired them to be more committed to helping complete them.
- + Provides creative ideas for designing and/or promoting the products.

♦ Feedback Stations

After debriefing about how Day 1 of the workshop went, we decided to adjust the agenda to allow more time for teams to get feedback on their presentations. We had eight teams total (seven targets, since there was no presentation on Managed Grasslands and Shrublands + the effectiveness group), so we broke the approximately two hour session into two time slots (four teams per time slot). This allowed participants the opportunity to visit at least two teams.

The primary advantage of this session was that it:

- + Allowed for more one-on-one interaction between the target teams and experts in the field. This served as an effective way to take advantage of the variety of expertise in the workshop.

The one minor disadvantage is that it:

- \- Took away time from the overall agenda and, in particular the data management and roll-out sessions. This was not a flaw in the feedback stations per se but rather just an adjustment that had to be made to an already tight agenda. In the end, it did not seem to negatively impact the overall meeting.

♦ Data Management and Sharing

To accommodate the feedback stations, we ran parallel sessions on data management/sharing and roll-out/outreach. The group split according to their interests. The purpose of the data management and sharing session was to start thinking about what it would mean to collect data across the Northeast – how would we manage the data, who would collect it, where would we get it, who would analyze, what problems might we encounter, etc. We started the session with a presentation from one of the participants who has had several years of experience in managing ecological and land use data across the Northeast. He was able to ground this session in the real-world realities of what collecting, sharing, managing, and analyzing data across the region really entails.

We then chose a few example indicators and for each, talked about the availability of data, at what scale would we collect the data, how would we get the data, and what issues might we encounter throughout the data management and sharing process.

The advantages of this session include that it:

- + Encouraged participants to be realistic about what we could reasonably accomplish with this Framework.

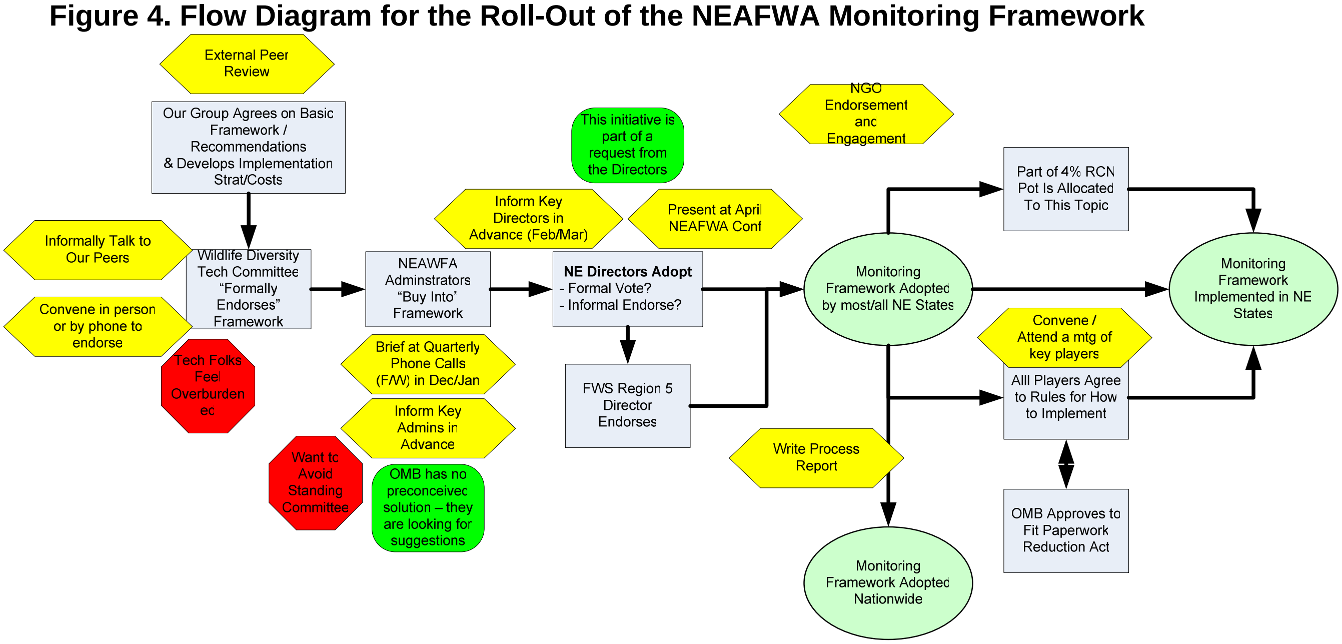
A parallel disadvantage is that it:

- Could discourage participants about the implementation of the Framework if they start to feel overwhelmed by it.

♦ Agreement on Roll-out and Outreach Strategies

The purpose of this session was to get ideas about how we can roll-out the Framework, get it into the right hands, and ensure that it is implemented. To do this, we used a flow diagram to map out all the steps and the results we would need to see in order for the Framework to ultimately be implemented. This included putting our goals for the roll-out in green ovals and the steps leading up to achievement of those goals in grey boxes. We the superimposed on this basic chain the potential barriers (red stop signs), opportunities (dark green rounded rectangles). Finally, and most importantly, we added the actions we needed to take to roll this out (yellow hexagons).

Figure 4. Flow Diagram for the Roll-Out of the NEAFWA Monitoring Framework



The advantages of using a flow diagram for this discussion were that it:

- Gave the group an explicit tool to discuss and then ultimately agree on roll-out steps.
- Made very clear what steps need to happen and the sequence of those steps.
- Enabled us to identify both opportunities and barriers
- Effectively conveyed a lot of information in a small amount of space.

Because we separated the large group into two groups for the data management and roll-out sessions, we then had a limited amount of time once we were in plenary for both groups to share with one another the work that they had done and the conclusions they made. The advantages to doing this were that it:

- Made sure that all workshop participants were informed about the decisions and discussions made in all sessions.

- ✚ Provided an opportunity to get additional feedback from others with different perspectives.

The main disadvantage of sharing working group results in plenary was that doing so:

- Took away valuable time from the rest of the workshop. When time is limited and there is a need to get several concrete products, this disadvantage can be significant. It is important to balance the need for collective understanding and ownership and the need to make progress on products.

♦ Next Steps

This was a brief session in which we laid out the main next steps, who was responsible for them, and by when they should happen. Although this was a short and straightforward session, it was an important one because it:

- ✚ Made explicit what was expected of all the participants. Having the participants present provided the opportunity to get their verbal commitment to follow-through on the agreed upon products.
- ✚ Identified gaps we had not anticipated. For instance, one participant suggested we add a step to have the Framework undergo a peer review by participants from both workshops as well as external reviewers before it was finalized.

General Workshop Comments

This workshop went exceptionally well. Participants were very engaged, the feedback and exchange was productive, and most seemed to leave the workshop on a very high note. We think this is due to a few reasons: an exceptional venue, participants' commitment to the process, and the structure of the meeting. Although we have addressed each of these throughout this report, it is worth repeating that if you will be hosting a similar workshop, we suggest you:

- ⇒ Find a venue that will inspire participants and take care of all the minor but very important details.
- ⇒ Keep participants actively involved in the process between meetings to help ensure a high level of commitment and engagement.
- ⇒ Experiment with fun formats (e.g., *American Idol* panel) that will give you high quality inputs.

e) Completion and peer review of Framework

After the Experts Workshop, target and effectiveness teams returned to their work and refined it based on the input from the workshop. This involved additional follow-up phone calls and email correspondence with team members. This was a necessary step, but it was not as smooth as we had hoped. The main challenge with this step was that it:

- Required a fair amount of additional energy, which many teams lacked. They had invested a lot of intense work in the templates for the Experts Workshop and seemed to run out of steam after the workshop. As a result, some teams missed the deadlines or did not turn in any revisions to their original templates. We had to work with what we received and simply make note of the limitations of the information in the Framework.

To complete the draft Framework, we used the templates submitted by the team members. We realized that the templates had a lot of great information, but that each one was too detailed to be included in its entirety in the summary Framework. As such, we presented the most pertinent information in the Framework and left the detail for an appendix.

Once we had the final templates, we constructed a matrix to identify where there was conceptual or complete overlap in indicators. The purpose of doing this was to determine if we could simplify the Framework and reduce data collection needs by using the same indicators for multiple targets. Based on this exercise we identified one indicator that had complete overlap and several that were conceptually similar. In the review period, we asked reviewers and the appropriate teams in particular whether they thought it was possible to combine some indicators and thereby eliminate others.

We sent the Framework out for review to all those who participated in the workshops and working groups. We also shared it with other key folks who had expertise in technical and/or political matters related to the Framework. We received comments from 13 individuals. We incorporated editorial suggestions and considered all substantive comments. Some substantive comments we were able to easily address and did so. For others that we felt required more input from the target working groups, we noted them on a list and determined that an immediate next step of the Framework implementation would be to review them among a broader group of experts.

f) Roll-Out of Framework

The original idea was that we would roll-out the Framework once the final draft had gone through peer review and been revised. In the interim, we would keep in touch with key individuals (e.g., state directors) about what we were doing and where the process was going. While we generally stuck to this process, we had the opportunity to make an interim presentation to key US Fish and Wildlife Service staff members following our second workshop. A Steering Committee member was responsible for bringing this opportunity to our attention, which emphasized to us, once again, the importance of a Steering Committee and having the right members on that committee. The many useful comments that we got from agency staff also reinforced the importance of getting input and buy-in to the process.

3. What We Learned

In the previous sections, we have attempted to draw out a number of specific lessons about each step or phase in the Framework development process. Here we include some more general lessons.

Things That Worked…and Why

General Points

- **Steering Committee Was Essential –** As discussed in detail above, the time invested in developing and working with the Steering Committee was more than fully repaid. The Steering Committee we formed had a good mix of technical knowledge, political connections, understanding of the inner workings and dynamics of state and federal agencies, and strong facilitation skills.

- **Outside Facilitation Was Helpful –** Also as discussed earlier, it was important to have an outside facilitator with ample experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder processes and with strong skills in strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation. The facilitators, in particular, helped make manageable what initially appeared to be a daunting task.

- **Regular Communication Among Steering Committee Members Was Key** – With such a large team filling so many roles, it was important to have regular meetings and open discussions about concerns with the process or any particular products. For most of the facilitation process, the Steering Committee met frequently and took advantage of these forums to voice their concerns. It provided all members an opportunity to refine the process and make sure it was headed in a direction that would be useful for all.

- **There Needs to Be a Lead Person** – Although the Steering Committee worked well together and the facilitators were effective at guiding the process, it was very helpful to have one person who took the lead on the project. The development of this Framework was a substantial part of their overall scope of work, so it was guaranteed that someone would have this at the top of their agenda on a daily basis. This helped keep the overall process on track.

- **Having Face-to-face Workshops Was Essential –** Although most of the interaction among and between stakeholders and Steering Committee members was via telephone, email, and/or WebEx, our productivity and ease of working together was greatly improved by our face-to-face time at the two workshops.

Multi-Stakeholder and Experts Workshops

- **It Was More Efficient and Effective to Get Broad Input First and Then Bring in the "Experts"** – We contemplated hosting an experts meeting first to narrow down the scope of the Monitoring Framework and then hosting a workshop with a broader group of stakeholders. We ultimately decided that it was more important to get the broad group of stakeholders on board from the start. Thus, we decided to flip-flop the order and bring in the experts once we had a more narrowly defined scope. This appears to have been a very effective way to proceed.

- **Getting the Right People to the Workshops Ensured a Good Mix of Technical Input and Political Buy-In** – We put a lot of effort into identifying the right people to be involved in the process and then following up with them to encourage them to participate. We seemed to have found a good mix of the right skills. For instance, we were able to get multi-stakeholder input to focus the effort at a broad level. Then, we were able to bring in those individuals with detailed knowledge about the targets and ways to measure effectiveness. These individuals have helped ensure the technical integrity of the Framework. Finally, our links to key decision makers (e.g., through US Fish and Wildlife Service) have helped us roll out the Framework and reach the appropriate people.

- **Get the Right Participants, But Ensure Follow-Up with Those Who Cannot Attend** – It is important to recognize that no matter how hard you try to get the right people around the table, you are bound to be missing some experts or key players. Especially for a multi-workshop series, not all of your participants can attend all the meetings. For these reasons, it is important to have good communication with the participants through regular emails or other forms of communication whereby you can keep interested parties who miss meetings or phone calls informed and up-to-date on the project.

- **Combining Workshop Sessions and Working Group Follow-Up Was an Efficient and Effective Way to Draft the Framework** – The multi-stakeholder workshop helped us broadly determine the inputs for the Framework. We held the Experts Workshop three months later, which realistically gave us two months for working groups to make progress on the details of the Framework. We found it very productive to divide the large group of participants into eight working groups (seven groups focused on conservation targets; one focused on effectiveness measures) to develop in more detail the Framework inputs. These groups were able to make tremendous progress in the two months between workshops. Then, they were able to take another couple of months to finalize the Framework inputs. In addition, the tasks per group were much more manageable than if the whole group had tried to develop the entire Framework.

- **Pre-Workshop Planning Is Essential to Success** – Discussing the complexities and nuances of different agendas, and crafting clear, concise breakout group instructions are essential to a successful workshop. Making sure that the entire facilitation team is “on the same page” about how to facilitate the process and what to expect at each stage is essential for consistency and improving the quality of the workshop products. Also, the facilitation team must be flexible and prepared to adapt agendas as necessary once the workshop gets underway.

- **Designated Panel to Provide Feedback Ensures Each Presenter Receives Thoughtful and Relevant Feedback** – In our Experts Workshop, we experimented with an *American Idol* format in which three “judges” were responsible for critiquing and providing thoughtful feedback on the working group’s proposal for the content related to their target or effectiveness measures. This structure worked very well because it required a few individuals to listen closely to a group’s presentation and then provide critical and thought-provoking feedback. It also helped lighten the tone of the meeting while simultaneously improving its quality.

- **With Good Facilitation, You Can Do a Lot Quickly** – We packed a lot into our workshop sessions. Although our evaluations revealed that people did feel rushed in some cases, overall we were amazed at how much work the groups were able to accomplish in short time frames. This was due in part to effective facilitation in both plenary and in breakout groups, but also because the short timeframe meant that groups could not get stuck on pedantic points. They had to keep moving forward to meet presentation deadlines. Moreover, because we were able to pack so much into a short timeframe, we were probably more successful in getting participation from key individuals since we did not request a lot of their time at any one point.

> "Everything kept on track, focused, and hit all important points "
> **- Anonymous, Experts Workshop Evaluation**

- **Debriefing Throughout the Process is Essential** – During the workshops and throughout the entire process, we held regular debriefing sessions with the Steering Committee (and sometimes other involved participants). These sessions were very important to make sure we were all happy with our progress and determine what adjustments needed to be made. For example, in the Experts Workshop, we modified the agenda to accommodate more time for working groups to get one-on-one feedback on their products.

Workshop Logistics

- **Location, Location, Location –** The venue for the Experts Workshop was exceptional. The setting was spectacular, the accommodations were charming, the food was excellent, and the logistics were flawless. This seemed to have a direct impact on the enthusiasm of the participants. At a minimum, it created a relaxing, pleasant environment in which to do serious work.

> "Wow! What a perfect spot for this size of workshop."
> **- Anonymous, Workshop 2 Evaluation**

- **Keep the meeting on task and on time!** In order to keep the meeting flowing and respect the meeting close time, we were strict timekeepers. In general, one of the most often-cited positive feedbacks was that we respected meeting times and that we moved the process along. Sometimes this means having to cut short an important discussion. We tried to be lenient when really important issues arose, but we also encouraged individuals to continue conversations in smaller groups at later opportunities.

Things That Could Have Been Improved…and Ideas for Doing So

- **Be Very Explicit about the Overall Process, Why It Is Important, and the Benefits to Participating in the Process –** In the Multi-stakeholder Workshop, we provided a background presentation on the Monitoring Framework and what we hoped to accomplish with the process to develop that Framework. Based on critical feedback as we were closing the workshop, it became very clear that we had not succeeded in effectively communicating what we were trying to do, why we were trying to do it, and how the Northeast and individual states might benefit from participating in the process. In retrospect, we should have more explicitly addressed these questions and sought to draw out the critical feedback earlier in the workshop..

> "Should have had more discussion of where we were going and why"
> **- Anonymous, Multi-Stakeholder Workshop Evaluation**

- **Identify Potential Detractors and Work with Them to Help Clarify the Process and/or Product** – We might have been able to avoid the situation described above if we had been more proactive from the start and identified participants we suspected might hold concerns about what we were trying to do. We could have met with these persons individually, or we could have even brought them on as part of the Steering Committee or as advisory members. Doing so would have let them voice their concerns and helped us to work with them to address their concerns in a constructive way. It also would have avoided bringing unnecessary or unproductive conflict into a broader workshop setting. This is not to imply that all conflict is bad or should be avoided – conflict is often very healthy and helps one ultimately develop a better product. The key is to find the most productive way to voice concerns and work together to resolve issues.

- **Send a Limited Set of Materials to Participants Well in Advance of the Workshops** – One of the criticisms from the Multi-stakeholder Workshop was that participants did not feel they had a clear understanding of the process or expected products, and they did not have enough advance notice to prepare for attending the meeting. In reality, arrangements for the meeting were set at least six weeks in advance, but identifying the right participants within an agency was a time-consuming process of talking to directors and other staff. This meant that many participants did not even know they would attend the workshop until one or two weeks prior to the workshop. It also meant they did not have much time to read the materials and consult with their own staff about their interest and position. While this could not be entirely avoided, we probably could have used more lead time to contact potential participants. In addition, we learned it is best to keep contact and materials delivered to a minimum so as not to confuse or overwhelm people. At the same time, the materials should cover the most important matters for the audience.

- **Determine Which Sessions Could Substantially Benefit from More Time** – As mentioned above, one of the strengths of the process we used was that it forced groups to work through problems and make decisions in a timely fashion without getting bogged down on pedantic matters. At the same time, it is important to give topics sufficient time that participants are confident in the products and process and will support them going forward. Finding that right balance can be a challenge, but it is something to keep in mind when facilitating a similar process.

> Needed more time to get further – I worry teams don't have enough to make sure they are going in the right direction."
> **- Anonymous, Experts Workshop Evaluation**

4. A Final Word

This process was the first attempt of state fish and wildlife agencies to develop a Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework for an entire region. The Framework, when implemented, will help fish and wildlife agencies, as well as Congress and other decision makers, determine the state of fish and wildlife across the Northeast and the effectiveness of the actions funded through the State Wildlife Grants. Overall, we are pleased with the results of this experiment. And judging by the enthusiastic and energetic participation, the written evaluations after each session, and the ongoing relationships that have formed, we are confident that the workshop participants were pleased as well. As a result, we would certainly encourage others to try similar efforts. We hope that this process report is useful in that regard and that you will share your experiences so that others can also benefit from what you have learned.

Appendix 1. Facilitator Agendas for Workshops

The following is the annotated facilitator's agenda that we developed for the multi-stakeholder (Albany) and experts (Rensslearville) workshops. To produce a public version, delete the text in blue.

Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework

Initial Meeting

Version: 17 June 2007 *** Annotated Version for Meeting Facilitators ***

Meeting Objectives

1. Develop a list of targets for the status monitoring dashboard (using principle "all of us are smarter than any one of us")
2. Explore indicators and existing data sources for these targets
3. Introduce idea of results chains as a tool for effectiveness measures

Working Agenda

Note that this agenda is constructed to allow travel to the site on the morning of the first day.

Time	Session (Facilitator)	Desired Outputs(s)	Prep/Materials Needed
Day 1			
11:00	**Facilitators Meet**	Final preparations	
12:00 – 1:00	**Lunch**	Get folks there on time	Order lunch Jelly beans / jar / cards
1:00 – 2:00	**Introduction** - Welcome (Jon & Tracey) - Introductions (FOS) - Overview presentation (Jon & Tracey) - Review Meeting Agenda (FOS)	Introduce participants	Prepare room *Flipchart paper & markers.* *Background materials* Agenda/Participants
2:00 – 5:00 (includes break)	**Group Exercise to Select Targets ("all of us smarter than one of us")** - Habitat presentation (10-15 min - Steve Fuller or Sue Galler from NatureServ) - Discuss / agree on desired goal (report to decision makers) - Overview of types of monitoring, targets, and setting stage (FOS)	Select set of targets that we would like to track	Prep intro presentation *Computer projector* *Sticky board, markers, & cards* Get cards from folks with major strategies they are involved in

Time	Session (Facilitator)	Desired Outputs(s)	Prep/Materials Needed
	- Sticky board exercise (FOS) - Discussion - Target prioritization – if needed - Check against habitat classification		
5:15	**Facilitators meet to debrief/plan**		
6:00	Social hour and dinner		Arrange drinks and dinner
7:30	**Open time for evening presentations or group work if needed**		
Day 2			
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast		Order breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	**Recap and Review**		
9:15 – 12:00 (include break)	**Intro to Results Chains** - Initial presentation (FOS) - Small group work - Brief present backs	Learn about results chain tool for effectiveness measures Produce initial chains for common strategies	*Presentation* *Instructions* *Sticky boards, markers, cards & masking tape*
12:00 – 1:00	**Lunch**		Order lunch
1:00 – 3:00	**Breakout Groups to Explore Indicators/Data Sources for Targets** - Data sets - Feasibility		Set up groups *Instructions* *Flip chart, markers & paper* Assign people, allow some movement
3:00 – 3:30	**Present Back Results** - Group Presentations - Discussions		
3:30 – 4:00	**Discuss Next Steps & Meeting Close** - Discuss Next Steps - Clear Parking Lot - Evaluation - Closing Words (Tracey & Jon)	Where do we go from here?	Prep evaluation form
4:00 – 4:30	**Facilitators Meet**	Quick initial debrief	

Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework

Second Meeting – September 25 & 26 2007, Rensselaerville, NY

Version: 25 September 2007 *** Annotated Version for Meeting Facilitators ***

Meeting Objectives

6. Review progress made by working groups and provide feedback/standardize
7. Agree on what final products will look like
8. Agree on roll-out and outreach strategies for the overall initiative
9. Develop thinking on data management and sharing
10. Agree on next steps

Working Agenda

Note that this agenda is constructed to allow travel to the site on the morning of the first day.

Time	Session (Facilitator)	Desired Outputs(s)	Prep/Materials Needed
Day 1 (9/25)			
12:00 – 1:00	**Lunch**		
1:00 – 2:00	**Introduction** - Welcome (Tracey & Jon) - Overview (Tracey & Jon) - Introductions (FOS) - Review Meeting Agenda (FOS)	Introduce participants	Prepare room *Name tags* *Background materials* *Agenda* *Participants List*
2:00 – 4:30 (includes break; 3:00-3:30)	**Presentations from Working Groups** - Each group gets 10 min to present followed by 10 min for feedback and discussion (We have 9 total groups – we will do 6 this afternoon and 3 the next morning to break things up a bit)	Feedback on each group's work to date	Judges' station *Computer projector* Arrange refreshments
4:30 – 5:30	**Plenary Discussion of Reports from this Process** - Overall framework - Report to decision makers - Process report	Agree on what the reports will look like	Prep matrix of reports *Computer projector*
5:45 – 7:30	Social hour (cash bar) and dinner		Arrange drinks and dinner
8:00	**Evening Activities. Extra meeting if Needed.**		

Time	Session (Facilitator)	Desired Outputs(s)	Prep/Materials Needed
Day 2 (9/26)			
7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast		Arrange breakfast
8:30 – 8:45	**Recap and Review**		
8:45 – 10:00	**Presentations from Working Groups** - Each group gets 10 min to present followed by 10 min for feedback and discussion (Three remaining groups)	Feedback on each group's work to date	Judges' station *Computer projector*
10:00 – 10:30	**Break**		Arrange refreshments
10:30 – 12:00	**Discuss Roll Out Strategy** - Key audiences - Barriers and opportunities - Steps that we need to take		*Note: agenda change – this was moved to a parallel session in the afternoon. This session was replaced with feedback stations.*
12:00 – 1:00	**Lunch**		Order lunch
1:00 – 2:30	**Data Management Issues** - Data sets - Potential data bases - Next steps	Figure out general data management needs	Parallel session with roll-out strategy *Computer projector* *Flip chart* *Markers* *Computer to record group work*
2:30 – 3:00	**Discuss Next Steps**	Where do we go from here?	*Computer projector* *Flip chart* *Markers*
3:00	**Evaluation and Meeting Close**		Prep evaluation form

Annex 2. Template for Target Working Groups

Template for Indicators of Target Status

Version: 2007-07-27

Instructions: *Each workgroup needs to fill this template out, to the best of its ability, for its assigned target. The workgroup should start with the target definition and indicators that were developed at the meeting in Albany and refine them as necessary. Bulleted responses are fine – you do not need to craft complete paragraphs, but please be precise in your choice of words and where it would help others to understand your intent, please provide additional detail.*

The information collected in this template will feed directly into the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (NEAFWA) Monitoring and Reporting Framework, providing the basis for section 4.1 and annex 1 on assessment of target status in the outline document. ***Please complete this form by September 18, 2007*** *and email it to Tracey Tomajer (tmtomaje@gw.dec.state.ny.us). If you have any questions, please contact Tracey at the above email or via phone at: (518) 402-8877*

1. Description of Target

Starting with the material from the Albany workshop, please name and then define your target, considering what it should include and whether it also has sub-targets. To the extent possible, try to keep your target at a fairly high level and avoid creating long lists of specific sub-targets. (1-2 paragraphs max)

2. Indicators of Target Status

Starting with the material from the Albany workshop, please fill out the following information for up to 5 indicators that the group has identified for its target (note that you do not have to have 5 indicators – 1 or 2 is okay too). These indicators should measure key attributes of the status of the target (e.g., # hectares of continuous coverage, if you have a forest target). These indicators will generally be direct measures of the target, but in some cases, can also be proxies, like a direct threat, that infers what the status of your target is (e.g., deforestation rate). You should primarily identify indicators for which monitoring data already exist and can be readily collected, although your group can also make recommendations as to gaps that need to be filled. The group should "replicate" this template for each of its indicators.

A. Indicator – Name the indicator and describe its key characteristics. *(1-2 paragraphs)*

B. Existing data source(s) – Describe existing monitoring programs (i.e. programs implemented by other organizations/agencies) assessing this indicator.. For this program or indicator, describe the following items *: (Up to 1-2 sentences per item)*

- Why is this indicator being monitored by this program
- Who is collecting the data

- When is the data being collected (monitoring frequency)
- Where is the data collected (monitoring scope – remote, screening, intensive)
- How is the data collected (sampling design; random; stratified random; fixed; before/after; probabilistic; etc)
- Data management/storage
- Data analysis/assessment
- Quality Assurance

C. Issues you foresee in applying these data sets to our needs – Describe any potential challenges to compiling and analyzing these data (e.g., different units of measurement used across the region; different classifications across states). *(Bulleted list or 2-3 paragraphs)*

D. Data gaps that you recommend be filled through additional monitoring work – if necessary! – If needed, describe additional data that could be collected for this indicator . *(Bulleted list or 2-3 paragraphs)*

E. Next steps for data compilation and analysis – If possible, make recommendations as to how data should be compiled and analyzed in the future, using the items in B as a guideline. Please provide cost estimates. Ideally your group will be able to help with this work, but if not, suggest who could. *(1 paragraph for each point below)*

F. Baseline condition and/or past trends of the target, with respect to this indicator – If possible, do the initial compilation and analysis for this indicator across the NE States. Include at least the most recent baseline data for this indicator, but if data are available for the past, include that too. Graphs or summary tables are preferred. *(Up to 1 page)*

G. Comments – Record any other comments you may have *(up to 1 page, if needed)*

3. Mockup of Report to Decision Makers

Provide a mock-up of what your group thinks should be included in a 2-page "spread" on this target as part of a report to decision makers. This can be a hand-drawn sketch if that is easiest.