

Charter And Guidelines for Governance

Northern Great Plains Joint Venture



Approved April 24, 2008, Wall, SD

Charter for the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture

The Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV) is a regionally based coalition of public and private natural resource conservation organizations that has been formally recognized as a migratory bird Joint Venture by the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The NGPJV seeks to deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation through a biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnership. NGPJV meetings and operations provide a regional forum and networking platform for conservation partner organizations who have agreed to work cooperatively and collectively in the conservation of North American bird populations under the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

The primary **purposes** of the NGPJV are to:

- Stimulate, facilitate and coordinate migratory bird conservation partnerships in the NGPJV region (Bird Conservation Region 17{BCR17});
- Link the NGPJV partnership with other Joint Ventures and BCR alliances, and to national, continental and hemispheric plans and efforts to conserve North American migratory birds;
- Develop scientifically sound habitat conservation objectives for the NGPJV region/BCR 17 for priority bird species dependant on habitats in the NGPJV;
- Collectively and cooperatively develop, implement and assist with programs and projects that contribute to achievement of the NGPJV habitat conservation objectives;
- Monitor and evaluate the effects of habitat conservation projects and other landscape changes on priority bird populations; and conduct research and directed studies to better understand key biological uncertainties and to improve conservation program design and targeting; and
- Inform Board organizations and other relevant entities regarding the effects of existing, proposed and possible legislation and resource management policies relative to the achievement of the NGPJV habitat conservation objectives.

The Northern Great Plains Joint Venture is guided by a Management Board (hereinafter the Board) comprised of organizations that have chosen to join this regional bird habitat conservation partnership. The priority activity of the Board is to implement projects and programs that conserve priority bird habitats in the Joint Venture region. The Board as an entity does not directly engage in developing legislation and policies or in lobbying.

By joining the NGPJV Management Board, organizations agree to actively participate in and support the NGPJV partnership, and to cooperate in the science based development and implementation of programs and projects to conserve bird habitats in the NGPJV region.

Guidelines for Governance of the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture

NGPJV Management Board

The Northern Great Plains Joint Venture Management Board provides support and guidance for the joint venture coordinator and for the overall administration and operation of the joint venture partnership.

Membership:

- **The Board shall be limited to twenty voting organizations.** Additional organizations are welcome to join the Board and participate as non-voting members, invited by a voting member or by the Membership Committee.
- To accommodate their broad responsibility for migratory bird management and administration of 1234 funding for the NGPJV, the US Fish and Wildlife Service may have two voting members on the Board - one representing region 6 and one being from a field station operating programs in the Joint Venture.
- To become a voting member of the Board an organization must accept the NGPJV Charter and agree to work in the “spirit of cooperative conservation” upon which the Joint Venture depends; and be approved by the then current voting Board members.
- An organization and/or Board Member may be retired as a voting member from the Management Board upon missing three consecutive meetings.

Voting:

- Board decisions on substantive matters will aim for unanimity, but may resort to a super majority vote (approximately two-thirds of the voting members) for decision-making if complete consensus cannot be achieved within a reasonable amount of time. Each voting member present or attending by phone conference may cast a single vote. The number of votes needed to pass a motion shall be determined by multiplying the number of voting members present times .667 and rounding to the nearest whole number.
- “Housekeeping” matters without objection may be decided by a simple majority of the voting members present.

Officers and other matters:

- The Management Board will elect Co-chairs, other Officers and Committee chairs by normal balloting, if necessary.
- Elections will be held at the time of the scheduled Fall Board meeting and terms will begin January 1 of the following year.
- Voting members of the Management Board are strongly encouraged to contribute both financially and otherwise annually to support meetings, operations and projects of the Joint Venture and State Action Groups.
- The priority activity of the Board is to implement projects and programs that conserve priority bird habitats in the Joint Venture region. With regard to legislative matters, which are often contentious even within the Board, the Board serves primarily as forum for discussing legislative and policy issues, and evaluating the implications for migratory birds. The NGPJV works through the Association of Joint Venture Management Board to promote Joint Venture and

other migratory bird program funding. The Board will encourage member organizations through external processes and coalitions to address legislative and policy issues with due consideration of Board discussions regarding the implications for bird conservation in the NGPJV.

NGPJV Management Board Co-Chairpersons

The NGPJV Management Board shall be co-chaired by an individual from a government agency and an individual from the private or NGO sector.

Election:

- Co-chairs shall be elected by secret ballot, if needed, and serve two year terms beginning January 1 following election at the previous fall Board meeting.
- Co-chairs will be elected to 2 year staggered terms A Co-chair may not serve more than two consecutive terms
- Co-chairs may agree and inform the Board that one or the other will be the active chair for a given period, with the other agreeing to assist as needed.

Co-chairs of the Board will serve the NGPJV in the following ways:

- Work with the Joint Venture Coordinator to convene meetings, to develop meeting agendas, to lead and facilitate scheduled meetings.
- Conduct business of the Board between meetings including calling for additional meetings, phone conferences and where necessary votes between meetings.
- Communicating regularly with and overseeing the activities of the Joint Venture Coordinator.
- Ensuring that necessary communications with and among Board members are undertaken.
- Represent the Board where and when necessary and as may be authorized by the Board. Between meetings, the Co-chairs are granted considerable latitude to speak and act on behalf of the Board. When appropriate the Co-chairs, acting on behalf of the Board, should acknowledge that they do not represent the view of each individual Board organization, and, when deemed necessary, they should indicate that the action they are taking or the statement they are making may be reviewed with the Board and will stand until such time as the NGPJV Board may withdraw support by a super majority vote. Any such actions by the Co-chairs should be brought to the Board for review as soon as reasonable.

Management Board Meetings

- The Management Board shall attempt to meet at least twice a year – a spring meeting generally in April or May and a fall meeting in August or September with meetings rotating among the four states of the NGPJV.
- The Co-Chairs may call additional meetings including phone conference meetings as needed.
- A simple majority of the voting members of the Board, including those participating telephonically, will constitute a quorum.
- The Co-chairs may contact or convene the Board to vote on specific issues or actions between meetings. Such votes must obtain approval of a super majority of the voting Board members.

Recorder

Election:

- A Recorder may be elected to serve a two-year term and may serve unlimited additional terms.

A Recorder will serve the NGPJV in the following ways:

- Ensure that Board meetings are documented in minutes, and that the minutes are distributed to all Board members one month prior to the next meeting;
- In lieu of the election of a Recorder, the Co-chairs will ensure that minutes are taken and distributed and that Board member contributions are pursued.

Committees and Work Groups:

Formation:

- The Board may form, direct and dissolve Committees/Work Groups by simple majority vote as needed and will be reviewed annually by the Board.

The following are suggested as Standing Committees, that may be structured and serve the Board in the following ways:

Finance Committee

- At least three members including the Co-chairs and the USFWS project officer for the 1234 federal financial award.
- Additional members may be added by the Co-chairs to represent the organization that is the 1234 award recipient on behalf of the Joint Venture, should that organization not be the same as that which is represented by either of the Co-chairs.
- Ensure that all paid Joint Venture staff have annual performance evaluations and develop annual work plans.
- Recommend annual salary adjustments for all paid employees of the Joint Venture.
- Review Joint Venture 1234 FY budgets and operational fund budgets.
- Recommend to the Board support levels for State Action Groups and State AG Coordinators.
- Review and approve expenditures of paid Joint Venture staff including the operations fund.

Technical Committee

- Comprised of individuals who agree and are approved to serve at the request of the Board.
- Chaired by the Joint Venture Science Coordinator with the Joint Venture Coordinator acting an ex-officio member of the Committee and active chairman in the absence of the Science Coordinator.
- Assists the Science Coordinator in developing and accomplishing science priorities for the NGPJV, and in carrying out assignments from the Board.

Membership Committee

- Three to five voting Board members.
- Appointed by the co-chairs, who may also designate a committee chairman.
- Will recommend organizations for Board membership and may be asked to assist in recruiting prospective Board members.

State Action Groups

In each NGPJV State, the Joint Venture Coordinator with the assistance and approval of the Board should attempt to organize a State Action Group. State Action Groups are intended to be the forum through which the Board seeks to stimulate, facilitate, coordinate and reward project and program implementation in the NGPJV area of each State. The Board gives wide latitude to the J V Coordinator to work with state and local partners to determine how each State Action Group is organized and functions. The Board encourages active involvement in State Action Groups by Board members, especially within the State(s) in which a Board member resides or focuses their job duties.

The primary functions of State Action Groups should be to:

- Hold at least one annual meeting to facilitate networking among state partners and with NGPJV.
- Report on projects, programs and activities that may be of interest and to share on the ground successes and “lessons learned”.
- Identify program and project needs and opportunities in the state.
- Identify personnel and funding needs in the state.
- Cooperate and collaborate in the implementation of projects and programs and leverage funding through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and other funding grants.
- To provide input on the Federal Farm Bill to the Board.
- Coordinate NGPJV activities with other Joint Ventures and cooperate with other Joint Ventures operating in the state.

In each state the JV Coordinator with Board approval may designate a State Action Group Coordinator. The State Action Group Coordinator will be encouraged to work with the JV Coordinator to:

- Convene and lead at least one meeting annually;
- Assist in developing State Action Plans for the NGPJV ;
- Designate committees and work groups as needed;
- Assist the JV Coordinator with reporting on state habitat conservation accomplishments; and.
- Attend Board Meetings periodically to report on State Action Group activities.

The Management Board will support meetings of State Action Groups, and, as feasible and necessary, may provide salary support for State Action Group Coordinators and seed funding for State Action Group projects. By supporting State Action Groups the NGPJV seeks to stimulate, facilitate and reward grass roots conservation ideas and efforts, and thereby to foster partnership projects across the NGPJV region.