

North American Conservation Action Plan (NACAP) Framework

The following account offers the main agreements and outcomes from the Ensenada trilateral workshop (January 21-22, 2004) carried-out with the goal of developing the framework and the essential elements of a North American Action Plan (NACAP)

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the NACAPs is one of the twelve priority areas for action identified by the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group for the implementation of CEC's *Strategic Plan for North American Cooperation in the Conservation of Biodiversity*.

The vision of the above-mentioned strategic plan is to help build "A North American society that appreciates and understands the importance of biodiversity and is committed to collaborative conservation and sustainable use of North America's rich and diverse ecosystems, habitats and species for the wellbeing of present and future generations."

This vision will be achieved through six goals, one of which relates to species, namely, to "Promote the conservation of North American migratory and transboundary species, and other species identified by the Parties." This is expected to be accomplished, among other through the identification of marine, freshwater, and terrestrial species of common conservation concern and through strengthening ongoing trilateral conservation efforts.

Consistent with the main audience and implementers identified in the above-mentioned strategic plan, it is expected that the main users of the resulting NACAPs will be those organizations and individuals engaged in the conservation of shared North American species, including federal, state/provincial, local and tribal/first nations' governments and civil society.

The NACAP initiative is complemented by a parallel trilateral process aimed at establishing a North American Marine protected areas network (NAMPAN), a project under the first goal of the Strategic plan: *"Promote the cooperation for the conservation and maintenance of North American regions of ecological significance."*

2. NACAP: A tri-national endeavour for the conservation of species of common concern

The joint efforts to conserve species of conservation concern will be guided by *North American Conservation Action Plans (NACAPs)*. As currently envisioned, the goal of a NACAP is to facilitate the conservation of species of common concern (SCCC) through cooperative action in North America's landscapes and seascapes.

The NACAP shall express the joint trilateral *commitment* to conserve particular species of common concern (SCCC) to Canada, Mexico and the United States. The Action Plans will reflect a long-term, cooperative agenda to jointly address concerns and to tap into opportunities associated with the conservation of SCCC. Furthermore, the Parties work

cooperatively by building upon international environmental agreements and existing policies and laws and by bringing a regional perspective to international initiatives. Each Action Plan will be unique and reflect the differentiated responsibilities of each of the countries, consistent with their respective institutional, ecological and socio-economic contexts.

Hence it is expected that a NACAP will assist the parties to work together to:

- *Meet regional and national expectations (E.g., Ministers of the America's communiqué (Montreal 2001), CEC's Strategic plan for North American Cooperation in the Conservation of Biodiversity, national biodiversity and development strategies)*
- *Meet international expectations / requirements regarding biodiversity and sustainable development, E.g.;*
 - *Significantly reduce biodiversity (species, habitats) loss by 2010*
 - *Poverty alleviation / Sustainable development (health, wealth, quality of life)*
- *Foster synergies between biodiversity-related conventions (CITES, UNFCCC, Convention on migratory species)*
- *Generate and maintain commitment of all stakeholders*
- *Provide a strategic lens / focus for the conservation of species of common concern*
- *Add value to existing initiatives*
- *Identify priority actions and facilitate their implementation*
- *Measure success and report on progress*
- *Identify implementation /coordination mechanisms*
- *Provide shared targets and timelines*

2.1. Guiding principles

NACAP will be guided by the following principles:

1. *Recognize jurisdictional responsibilities, including federal, state, provincial, and aboriginal/first nations' mandates within each country in the conservation of biodiversity*
2. *Identify the main implementation groups and main audience (e.g. managers, educators, etc.)*
3. *Base decisions on science and relevant traditional knowledge*
4. *Promote and facilitate participation and partnerships among governmental, non-governmental, private sector, individuals, and local communities*
5. *Be accountable, transparent and respectful*
6. *Cooperate at all geographical scales from local to international*
7. *Measure success*
8. *Understand and recognize social and cultural values of the selected species*
9. *Consider, support and build upon existing treaties, mechanisms, strategies and fora such as NABCI, and the Canada/ Mexico/United States Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management*
10. *Promote conservation ethics and support public education and information efforts*
11. *Consider, value, share and build upon successful initiatives*
12. *Build capacity to strengthen public agencies, private organizations, land owners and individuals at various geographic levels of conservation actions.*
13. *Promote sustainable practices*

14. *Be innovative, adaptable and promote a quick response to address emergency situations*
15. *Adopt multi-species approach when possible (be synergetic)*
16. *Prevent and act with precaution (prevent listing of species)*
17. *Cooperate and share with other countries/regions*

2.2. Priority species of common conservation concern (SCCC) in North America

Based upon the existing 16 marine and 17 terrestrial species of common conservation concern (SCCC) the selection of the initial subset of three marine and three terrestrial SCCC will be guided by the criteria below.

The criteria below were proposed primarily to identify the first subset of species, in recognition of the importance of a marketing effort to highlight the value of trinational cooperation. Moreover these criteria shall not necessarily be fulfilled by any one species but by the *suite* of species selected. The initial subset of species should show taxonomic diversity and relevancy to Canada, Mexico and the United States.

1. *Needs intervention of CEC to achieve results*
2. *There is clear understanding of threats and of the problem*
3. *Has a high chance of success¹ within five years*
4. *Has a high profile and is charismatic*
5. *It is found within geographically focused area and is amenable to protected areas (their distribution and aggregation)*
6. *There is an existing champion for the species*
7. *It is highly threatened and helps build public support*
8. *It is already subject to significant joint efforts*
9. *Its threats are found within North America*

2.4. NACAP Framework

This section presents the key issues that build the structure of the NACAP framework

2.4. Conservation context

The following conservation-related elements shall integrate the structure of each NACAP.

- 1. Threats prevention, control and mitigation**
- 2. Education and outreach**
- 3. Information sharing and networking**
- 4. Capacity building and training**
- 5. Research gaps**
- 6. Innovative enabling approaches**
- 7. Institutional and legal arrangements**
- 8. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

¹ The meaning of “success” can be in terms of response of the species, institutional infrastructure, etc.

