

Wyoming's 2017 SWAP Conservation Approach

In 2001, the U.S. Congress created the State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program and charged each state and territory with developing a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) as a condition of receiving federal funds through the program. Wyoming completed its first CWCS in 2005.

CWCSs, now referred to as State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), are intended to be broad-based strategies to maintain the health and diversity of wildlife within a state, including preventing the need for additional species to be listed under the Endangered Species Act. Special emphasis is given to addressing wildlife species that have received less conservation attention in the past, including those that are not hunted or fished. All 50 states have developed SWAPs, providing a comprehensive framework for planning and coordination on wildlife issues that cross state boundaries.

In the legislation defining SWAPs, Congress outlined eight requirements (Table 1). Beyond these requirements, Congress and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the agency that reviews and approves SWAPs, provide substantial flexibility for each state to develop approaches that fit their unique wildlife, habitats, management context, and local issues.

Table 1. Eight Required Elements for SWAPs

1. Information on the distribution and abundance of species of wildlife, including low and declining populations as the state fish and wildlife agency deems appropriate, that are indicative of the diversity and health of the state's wildlife;
2. Descriptions of extent and condition of habitats and community types essential to the conservation of species identified in (1);
3. Descriptions of problems which may adversely affect species identified in (1) or their habitats, and priority research and

survey efforts needed to identify factors which may assist in restoration and improved conservation of these species and habitats;

4. Descriptions of conservation actions proposed to conserve the identified species and habitats and priorities for implementing such actions;
5. Proposed plans for monitoring species identified in (1) and their habitats, for monitoring the effectiveness of the conservation actions proposed in (4), and for adapting these conservation actions to respond appropriately to new information or changing conditions;
6. Descriptions of procedures to review the plan at intervals not to exceed 10 years;
7. Plans for coordinating the development, implementation, review, and revision of the plan with federal, state, and local agencies and Indian tribes that manage significant land and water areas within the state or administer programs that significantly affect the conservation of identified species and habitats; and
8. Broad public participation is an essential element of developing and implementing these plans, the projects that are carried out while these plans are developed, and in maintaining the species in greatest need of conservation.

While state wildlife agencies are responsible for developing and implementing SWAPs, many issues necessary for their success are beyond their jurisdiction and resources. Accordingly, SWAPs are required to be coordinated with other state, federal, and local natural resource organizations and agencies. The U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management have all signed an instructional memorandum for cooperation in developing and implementing SWAPs. In addition, many of Wyoming's most valuable

wildlife habitats occur on private land, which requires both developing conservation strategies that respect private property rights and nurturing strong functional partnerships with private landowners.

Conserving Wyoming's wildlife species is heavily dependent upon the future quantity and quality of available habitat, both terrestrial and aquatic. The amount and condition of wildlife habitat is influenced by the success in developing strategies to address the issues which are having the greatest impact on wildlife and habitat resources. With this in mind and to most effectively focus conservation efforts and organize information within this plan, Wyoming's SWAP is organized by a three-tiered approach:

Statewide	Leading Wildlife Conservation Challenges
Habitat	Terrestrial Habitat Types and Aquatic Basins
Species	Species of Greatest Conservation Need

As the reader moves through the SWAP, the identified threats and conservation actions progress from general statewide issues and actions to habitat-specific issues and actions, and finally to conservation strategies for individual Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), which are presented within each species account.

Each level of conservation is addressed in a separate chapter which is further broken down into sections. Within each section, the eight required elements for SWAPs are addressed (Table 2). Exceptions are elements 6 and 8, dealing with public involvement and plans for revising the SWAP, which are both addressed in separate chapters. Various sections are frequently cross-referenced throughout the SWAP to provide the reader with additional information on a given topic, but each section is also composed to function as a standalone document. This format was adopted because Wyoming's SWAP is most frequently accessed through the Internet for information on specific

subjects, as opposed to being accessed as a single document in its entirety. Additionally, individual sections of the SWAP are often duplicated and distributed.

The 2010 and 2017 revisions of Wyoming's SWAP extensively utilize the expertise and feedback of wildlife and natural resources conservation experts. The broad scope of the SWAP and associated time and resource limitations made it impractical to conduct independent scientific analyses on each topic. Additionally, SWAPs are required to be developed using broad professional and public involvement and to discuss and address not only scientific issues, but also social, economic, and administrative considerations. Two committees assisted in the coordination of internal and external comment and feedback:

The WGFD Habitat Technical Advisory Group

The WGFD Habitat Technical Advisory Group (HTAG) facilitated the coordination of intra-agency expertise during SWAP revisions, as well as linking SWAP efforts to existing department activities and priorities. During SWAP revisions, HTAG helped to develop the plan's outline, identify experts within the WGFD to contribute information, evaluate various conservation and prioritization strategies, review draft sections, and provide a forum for discussing revision-related issues and making recommendations to the WGFD's administration. HTAG also has a central role in the implementation of the plan through recommending funding approval for SWG projects and other SWAP-related funds. A list of HTAG members can be found in Appendix A.

The SWAP Interagency Advisory Team

The SWAP Interagency Advisory Team (IAT) was created to support the involvement of other wildlife and natural resource agencies in developing and implementing the SWAP. Their role includes communicating respective agency expertise and concerns, identifying common priorities and opportunities, minimizing the duplication of efforts, facilitating information-

sharing, and conveying SWAP issues and activities to agency employees and constituencies. IAT contributed to the 2010 revision of the SWAP by providing input on the plan's outline, identifying leading issues and conservation actions, soliciting input from experts within their organizations, and reviewing draft documents. A list of IAT members can be found in Appendix B.

With the help of these two committees, input for the chapters on Leading Wildlife Conservation Challenges and Terrestrial Habitat Types was solicited from personnel representing agencies and organizations which have significant jurisdictional authority, financial resources, and/or technical expertise on each subject. Information was received either through focus groups or through individual written submissions to questions based on the subject headings of each section. This approach was considered to be both time-efficient for gathering information, as well as encouraging the involvement of entities whose participation is important for the implementation of the SWAP. Near the end of each section within these chapters is a list of individuals who reviewed the document and provided feedback on the subject matter. Individuals who participated in both the 2010 and 2017 SWAP revisions are included. The input of contributors was compiled and then further supported by independent research. Existing conservation initiatives pertaining to Wyoming's wildlife and natural resources were consulted and referenced throughout the revision process.

Mammal and bird species accounts were created cooperatively by the WGFD and the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. Wildlife Management sections within these species accounts were solely authored by the WGFD. All accounts were reviewed by the WGFD Fisheries Management Coordinator and the

Statewide Wildlife and Habitat Management Supervisor. Species accounts were also made available to the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database for review.

The SWAP should not be viewed as providing an exhaustive overview of each subject. Rather, it is intended to identify threats and conservation actions that are considered most important throughout the state, on which there is general consensus among the experts consulted, and for conservation actions, have some probability of being attained in the future. The breadth of information in each section and the specificity of conservation actions vary, based upon existing knowledge, the availability of information, and the input provided by contributors. This reduced the consistency of identified threats and conservation recommendations between sections according to the priorities of the contributors. With this in mind, and with the knowledge that many listed conservation actions cross jurisdictional boundaries, the intent of many conservation recommendations is more to provide strategic guidance than to set specific courses of action. Agencies and organizations helping to implement the SWAP will need to select and adapt recommendations to fit their individual mandates and priorities.

The content of this SWAP only reflects conditions and issues from one snapshot in time. It is the intent of the WGFD to formally revise its SWAP every 10 years with interim updates likely (see Reviewing and Updating the SWAP). Items and priorities addressed in the 2017 SWAP will change as new information becomes available, conditions change, and additional agencies, organizations, and individuals become engaged.

Table 2. Road Map to Required SWAP Elements

Required SWAP Element	Location in SWAP
<p>Element 1. Information on the distribution and abundance of wildlife including SGCN.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species accounts for each SGCN contain information on rangewide and statewide abundance, as well as Wyoming range and distribution maps. • Terrestrial habitat types and aquatic basins have lists of associated SGCN and information on wildlife diversity. (Page III –1i – 1 to III - 11 - 17)
<p>Element 2. Descriptions of extent and condition of habitats essential to SGCN.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWAP habitat types and aquatic basins contain information about their distribution throughout Wyoming and physical and biological conditions. (Page III – 1 – 1 to III – 17 - 17) • Maps found within habitat types and aquatic basins show their locations within Wyoming. (Page III – 1 – 1 to III – 17 - 17) • SWAP priority area maps evaluate level of habitat intactness based upon 8 habitat disturbances. Land ownership and associated level of protection is also displayed for all terrestrial habitat types. (Explanation and statewide maps Page III – i - 6 to 14, individual terrestrial habitat types III – 1 – 1 to III – 11 - 17) • Species accounts describe habitat requirements for each SGCN.

<p>Element 3. Descriptions of problems that may adversely affect SGCN and their habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SWAP Leading Wildlife Conservation Challenges chapter addresses the five statewide threats that are most significant to SGCN and their habitats including climate change. (Page II 1 - 1 to II – 5 – 21) • Leading threats to each terrestrial habitat type and aquatic basin are listed within these sections. (Page III – 1 – 1 to III – 17 - 27) • Each species account lists threats to SGCN. For mammals and birds threats are included in Conservation Concerns and are broken down by Abundance and Population Trend as well as Intrinsic Vulnerabilities and Extrinsic Stressors. • Priority research and survey efforts are identified within the individual sections on leading wildlife conservation challenges, terrestrial habitat types, aquatic basins, and species accounts. (Page II 1-1 to II – 5 – 21, Page III – 1 – 1 to III – 17 - 17)
<p>Element 4. Descriptions of conservation actions to conserve SGCN and their habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation actions needed to conserve SGCN and associated habitats and to address the most significant statewide wildlife conservation issues are found within individual species accounts, terrestrial habitat types, aquatic basins, and leading wildlife conservation challenges. (Page II - 1 - 1 to II – 5 – 21, Page III – 1 – 1 to III – 17 -17)
<p>Element 5. Proposed plans for monitoring SGCN, their habitats, and the success of conservation actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and needed monitoring is included within the Monitoring/Research and Conservation Actions sections found within fish, amphibian, reptile, crustacean, and mollusk species account. Monitoring is address within Key Activities in Wyoming and Management in Wyoming sections in mammal and bird species accounts. • Terrestrial habitat types and aquatic basins include monitoring recommendations. Existing monitoring is addressed within the Current Conservation Initiatives section. (Page III – 1 – 1 to Page III – 17 - 27) • Each of the five leading wildlife conservation challenges contains a section on recommended monitoring to track impacts and evaluate the success of conservation actions. (Page II 1- 1 to II – 5 – 21)

Element 6. Descriptions of procedures to review the SWAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These procedures are found in the Reviewing and Updating the SWAP chapter. (Page V – 1)
Element 7. Plans for coordinating the development and implementation of the SWAP with other agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the SWAP Interagency Advisory Team in developing and implementing the SWAP is described in the chapter on Conservation Approach. This chapter also explains how information was collected from various agencies, organizations, and experts in developing the SWAP. (Page I - 2 --3) • A list of individuals from various agencies/organizations who contributed information or reviewed the 2010 SWAP is found in Appendix C of this section (Page I – 2 - 7 to 15) • The 2017 SWAP external review process is described within the chapter on Public Participation. . (Page VI – 1 – 1 to VI – 1 – 4)
Element 8. Public participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Participation chapter. (Page VI – 1 – 1 to VI – 1 – 2)

Appendix A

WGFD Habitat Technical Advisory Group (HTAG) Members (2017 Revision)

Ray Bredehoft

Habitat and Access Chief

Carol Bybee (Luckenbach)

Federal Aid Coordinator

Paul Dey

Aquatic Habitat Manager

Scott Gamo (Former)

Habitat Protection Biologist

Renny MacKay

Communications Director

Bob Lanka

Statewide Wildlife and Habitat Management Supervisor

Kerry Olson

Lands Resources Biologist

Glenn Pauley

Planning Coordinator

Ian Tator (Chair)

Statewide Terrestrial Habitat Manager

Dave Zafft

Fisheries Management Coordinator

John Keck

Montana and Wyoming State Coordinator-Assistant Superintendent, National Park Service

Alan Williamson

Wildlife Program Manager, Medicine Bow National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland, U.S. Forest Service

William Munro

Laramie Ranger District Biologist, Medicine Bow – Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland, U.S. Forest Service

Paul Obert

State Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Glenn Pauley

Planning Coordinator, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Dennis Saville

Wildlife Program Lead, Wyoming State Office, Bureau of Land Management

Temple Stevenson

Natural Resource Policy Advisor, Wyoming Governor's Office

Justin Williams

Agricultural Program Coordinator, Wyoming Department of Agriculture

Appendix B

SWAP Interagency Advisory Team (IAT) Members (2010 Revision)

Gary Beauvais

Director, Wyoming Natural Diversity Database

Susan Childs

Deputy Director, Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments

Pat Deibert

Branch Chief of Listing and Conservation Partnerships, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Appendix C

The following individuals reviewed or contributed information to development of the 2010 SWAP. Individual who were not involved in the 2010 SWAP but contributed to the update in 2017 are noted by a “2017” after their names

Rural Subdivision and Development

Land Trusts

Pam Dewell

Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust

Paula Hunter

The Nature Conservancy – Wyoming Chapter

Rick Pallister

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Glenn Pauley 2017

WGFD Planning Coordinator

Judie Petersen

WGFD Administrative Assistant

Jordan Vana

Wyoming Land Trust

Growth Planning

Terry Cleveland

Building the Wyoming We Want,
Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming

Joe Evans

Wyoming County Commissioners Association

Joanne Garnett

Planning Consultant

Diana Hulme

Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and
Natural Resources

Mark Reid

Sheridan County Planner

Glenn Pauley 2017

WGFD Planning Coordinator

Don Threewitt

City of Cheyenne Planner

Jim Whalen

Sonoran Institute

Energy Development

State Agencies

Scott Covington

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Energy
Coordinator

John Emmerich

WGFD Deputy Director

Mary Flanderka*

WGFD Habitat Protection Coordinator

Glenn Pauley 2017

WGFD Planning Coordinator

Dennis Saville*

Bureau of Land Management

Gary Strong*

Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation
Commission

Amanda Withroder 2017

WGFD Habitat Protection Biologist

Conservation Organizations

Daly Edmunds*

Audubon Wyoming

Alison Lyon-Holloran*

Audubon Wyoming

Sophie Osborn*

Wyoming Outdoor Council

Cathy Purves

Trout Unlimited

Industry

Wanda Barget*

Peabody Energy – Powder River representative

Penny Bellah*

WPC representative

Dave Brown*

British Petroleum representative

Karyn Coppinger*

Invenergy LLC

Nate Crain*

LS Power

Joe Drmas*

Rocky Mountain Power

Kelly Goddard*

BP America

Matt Grant*

Rocky Mountain Power representative

Bob Green*

Rio Tinto Energy of America representative

Charles Kelsey*

UR – Energy

Cheryl Sorenson*

Petroleum Association of Wyoming representative

Roger Swensen*

E-Quant Consulting representative

Paul Ulrich*

Encana representative

Lynn Welker*

Wyoming Mining Association representative

* Denotes individuals who participated in focus groups on energy development and wildlife conservation. A focus group with representatives from the energy industry was held on June 24, 2009. A focus group with representatives from natural resource agencies and wildlife conservation groups was held on December 17, 2009.

Invasive Species

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Carbon County Weed and Pest
Medicine Bow Conservation District

Everet Bainter*

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Beth Bear*

WGFD Fisheries Biologist, AIS Coordinator

Larry Bentley*

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Coordinated Resource Management

Bobbie Frank*

Association of Conservation Districts

Slade Franklin* 2010 and 2017

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Kim Johnson*

Fremont County Weed and Pest

Brian Mealor*

The Nature Conservancy/
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meeting)

Glenn Pauley 2017

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Ian Tator 2017

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Jennifer Vollmer*

Weed Scientist/Consultant

* Denotes individuals who participated in a focus group on invasive species in Wyoming on June 2, 2009.

Climate Change

Gary Beauvais

Director, Wyoming Natural Diversity Database

Jeff Beck

University of Wyoming, Department of
Renewable Resources

Molly Cross

Wildlife Conservation Society

Steve Gray

Wyoming Water Resources Data System/State
Climate Office

Glenn Pauley 2017

WGFD Planning Coordinator

Mike Stone

WGFD Chief of Fisheries

Disruption of Historic Disturbance Regimes

Glen Berkhart*

Bureau of Land Management

Bill Crasper*

Office of State Lands and Investments

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Jessica Crowder*

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Justin Derner*

USDA – Agricultural Research Service

Paul Dey* 2010 and 2017

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Greg Hayward*

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Claudia Regan*

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Steve Wolff*

State Engineers Office

* Denotes individuals who participated in a focus group on disruption of historic disturbance regimes in Wyoming on July 23, 2009.

Aspen/Deciduous Forest Habitat Type

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Ryan DeSantis 2017

Forest Health Program Manager, Wyoming State Forestry Division

Jim Gates

Wyoming BLM Bighorn Basin and Wind River District Forester

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Bert Jellison

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Steve Kilpatrick

WGFD Terrestrial Habitat Biologist

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Wyoming BLM Forestry, Climate Change, and Stewardship Coordinator

Andrea Orabona 2010-2017

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Susan Patla

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Christy Schneider

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Keith Schoup 2010 and 2017

WGFD Terrestrial Habitat Biologist

Ian Tator 2017

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Zack Walker 2010-2017

Statewide Nongame Bird and Mammal Program Supervisor

Cliffs, Canyons, Caves, and Rock Outcrops Habitat Type**Gary Beauvais**

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Bob Oakleaf

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Andrea Orabona 2010-2017

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Glenn Pauley 2017

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Desert Shrublands Habitat Type**Gary Beauvais**

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Jerry Altermatt 2017

WGFD Habitat Biologist

Grant Frost

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Andy Warren

Wyoming BLM Rawlins Field Office Vegetation and Rangeland Specialists

Eve Warren

Wyoming BLM Rawlins Field Office Natural Resource Specialist for Fuels Planning and Fire Ecology

Foothill Shrublands Habitat Type**Jerry Altermatt**

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Gary Beauvais

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**Montane and Subalpine Forests
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Zack Walker 2010-2017

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Supervisor

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Water Management Coordinator

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Jim WolfWyoming BLM Wind River and Bighorn Basin
District Fuels Specialist**Sagebrush Shrublands Habitat Type****Amy Anderson 2017**

WGFD Habitat Biologist

Gary Beauvais

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Jeff BeckUniversity of Wyoming Assistant Professor,
Wildlife Habitat Restoration Ecology**Nichole Bjornlie 2010 - 2017**

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Joe Bohne

WGFD Staff Biologist

Wetlands Habitat Type**Gary Beauvais**

Wyoming Natural Diversity Database Director

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Holly Copeland

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Aquatic Habitat Manager

Martin Grenier

WGFD Nongame Mammal Biologist

Andrea Orabona 2010-2017

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Wyoming Joint Ventures Steering Committee

Xeric and Lower Montane Forests**Gary Beauvais**

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