



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

DIRECTOR'S ORDER NO. 146

Subject: Joint Venture Administration

Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order? This order establishes policy and provides guidance for the establishment and organization of joint ventures receiving administrative funding through the Service.

Sec. 2 To whom does this Order apply? This Order applies to all employees who are involved with the coordination and management of Service-supported joint ventures.

Sec. 3 What are the authorities for this policy?

a. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 709a) authorizes appropriations to carry out the provisions and to accomplish the purposes of the migratory bird conventions with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the Soviet Union.

b. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4401) finds that the protection of migratory birds and habitats for these species will require the coordinated action of governments, private organizations, landowners, and other citizens and encourages partnership among public agencies and other interests.

c. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 2901) authorizes financial and technical assistance to the States for the development, revision, and implementation of conservation plans and programs for nongame fish and wildlife.

Sec. 4 Why is this Order necessary?

a. Policy and guidance on joint venture administration contained in the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual (661 FW 3) became outdated with the release of the 1998 Update to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the development of other national and international bird conservation initiatives. These actions lead to a broadening of scope for most joint ventures to include species other than waterfowl.

b. We must ensure a logical and coordinated approach to the development and support of joint ventures that are regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships delivering the full spectrum of bird conservation.

Sec. 5 What is a joint venture? A joint venture is a self-directed partnership of agencies, organizations, corporations, tribes, or individuals that has formally accepted the responsibility of implementing national or international bird conservation plans within a specific geographic area or for a specific taxonomic group, and has received general acceptance in the bird conservation community for such responsibility.

Sec. 6 What do joint ventures do? Working both collectively and independently, joint venture partners conduct activities in support of bird conservation goals cooperatively developed by the partnership. These activities include:

- a. Biological planning, conservation design, and prioritization.
- b. Project development and implementation.
- c. Monitoring, evaluation, and applied research activities.
- d. Communications and outreach.
- e. Fund raising for projects and other activities.

Sec. 7 How are new joint ventures established? Federal, State, tribal, or private parties may suggest new joint ventures at any time. The initiating agency or organization will:

- a. Coordinate with potential partners to produce a scoping document or concept plan.
- b. Circulate the document for review and comment by agencies, organizations, and individuals. Based on this review, a decision whether or not to form a management board and develop an implementation plan will be made.
- c. Submit a draft implementation plan to the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, which will coordinate review of the plan within the Service, with appropriate Flyway Council(s), with the national or international councils that oversee the various bird conservation initiatives, and other interested parties. Based on this review, the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation will determine whether or not a recommendation for Service support of the proposed joint venture should be made to the Director.

Sec. 8 What are the criteria for recognition as a joint venture? A joint venture:

- a. Accepts the responsibility for delivery of national or international bird conservation plans in the United States. Joint ventures should strive to develop the capacity to become the delivery agents for all migratory bird habitat conservation priorities in their geographic areas.
- b. Is directed by a management board consisting of a broad spectrum of representatives from public and private organizations, institutions, and interests vested in conservation of fish and wildlife habitat within the region of the joint venture.
- c. Is guided by an implementation plan, developed or adopted by the management board, that identifies the biological planning, conservation implementation, and evaluation process of the joint venture. The bird conservation objectives of joint ventures should be established through a biological planning process that establishes conservation priorities.

d. Has the capacity to implement conservation actions identified in the implementation plan including the design, funding, and tracking of conservation projects that advance the objectives of the joint venture.

e. Has an evaluation strategy to guide monitoring and assessment activities to analyze the effectiveness of conservation actions, test the biological assumptions that underlay the joint venture strategies, and guide future conservation planning.

Sec. 9 How are joint ventures staffed? A joint venture should be staffed by a full-time joint venture coordinator and other staff as may be necessary to carry out the mission of the joint venture. Technical capabilities, which may include biological staff, GIS support, access to research scientists, etc., are required to ensure that the joint venture is guided by sound science. A technical committee(s) will usually be organized to assist the management board in biological planning, conservation design, and evaluation issues. Other committees, steering groups, focus groups, geographic or taxonomic groups, or other structures should be developed and are encouraged where they will assist the management board in accomplishing the mission of the joint venture.

Sec. 10 How will the Service support joint venture coordination? For Service recognized joint ventures, we will seek support for a full-time joint venture coordinator and associated costs for basic program infrastructure. We will not fund all facets of joint venture work, but will encourage contributions by other Federal and State agencies, conservation organizations, and private interests. Such contributions have been made in the past for existing joint ventures, will be needed in the future, and are entirely consistent with the partnerships aspect of joint ventures. As Service funding increases, we will direct new funding to the greatest needs among all the joint ventures. Service funds expended via grant or cooperative agreement must be in compliance with 43 CFR 12. Priorities are as follows:

- a. Providing a joint venture coordinator in each recognized joint venture.
- b. Establishing base capability for biological planning, conservation design, implementation, and evaluation.
- c. Supporting joint ventures that address the full spectrum of bird conservation as defined by the international and national bird plans.
- d. Assisting new joint ventures with initial planning and organization.

Sec. 11 What is the effective date of this Order? This Order is effective immediately. We will include the contents of this Order in Part 661 of the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual. This Order will expire on September 30, 2003, unless amended, superseded, or revoked.



DIRECTOR

Date: September 12, 2002