



## Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture 2018 – 2023 Strategic Plan

Our *mission* is to restore and sustain viable populations of native birds and their habitats in the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture region through effective, collaborative partnerships.

*Vision:* Partners working together for conservation of native bird species in the Appalachian Mountains region to attain:

- Fully-functioning ecosystems with sustainable populations of the region’s native avifauna, guided by state, regional, national, and international bird plans
- Effective delivery of habitat conservation through adaptive management and guided by a conservation approach consisting of biological planning, conservation design, delivery of conservation actions, evaluation, and research
- Success in capitalizing on funding opportunities relevant to partnership priorities
- An engaged Management Board, representative of the diverse landscape and effective partnerships in the Appalachian Mountains

### Theme 1: Dynamic Healthy Forest Landscape

The forests of the Appalachian Mountains stretch from northeastern Alabama and north Georgia to the central New York. The Appalachians are one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America, containing an array of forest types, including oak-hickory forests, northern hardwoods, spruce-fir stands at high elevations, and open pine communities. Wetland communities; glades, mountain-top balds, and other natural openings; cave and carst systems, and rivers and riparian communities add to the diversity of habitats found in the Appalachians. These forests and habitats have changed drastically over the last two centuries, and the processes needed to maintain a dynamic, healthy forest and associated habitats that support thriving populations of birds and other wildlife have been severely altered or are non-existent. Conservation under current circumstances is about managing change and must be an

adaptive, forward thinking, and pro-active process that seeks to maximize our contribution to conservation and prevent species loss in an ever-changing landscape. These factors necessitate a comprehensive approach for forest conservation in the Appalachians that includes a range of strategies, such as active forest management, restoration, and protection. We believe that habitat conservation must move forward rapidly while the science foundation for bird conservation is strengthened through biological planning, conservation design, monitoring and evaluation, and adaptive management. The AMJV uses the best available scientific information to establish measurable conservation objectives, implement on-the-ground projects, and conduct monitoring and research activities that will help track our progress and improve our effectiveness.

Science and Monitoring Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Expand our understanding of key human dimensions issues within the AMJV, including landowner participation and retention in private lands conservation and public opposition to active management</p>	<p>Build a human dimensions research and implementation program with universities, USFS SPF, landowner groups (e.g., American Forest Foundation, National Association of Forest Owners), and other partners focused on strategically addressing key human dimensions issues</p>	<p>Review and compile existing human dimensions work that looks at private landowner motivations for participating in conservation programs to better understand existing tools and resources. Look beyond cost share programs – e. g. easements, ownership changes.</p> <p>Enhance understanding of landowner motivations for participating in cost-share programs</p> <p>Enhance the understanding of the role partner/field positions play with private landowners</p> <p>Improve understanding of the messaging, tools, and techniques that are most effective for addressing concerns about/opposition to active management.</p>	<p>Identified high-priority research needs/projects that will address knowledge/capacity gaps and provide the greatest insight into successful private lands conservation.</p> <p>More comprehensive suite of outreach tools and strategies available to field staff.</p> <p>Increased enrollment by private landowners into cost-share programs.</p> <p>Increased understanding and greater support for active forest management and restoration activities that address AMJV priorities.</p>	<p>Number of completed graduate research projects (both MS and PhD) dedicated to addressing specific human dimensions questions identified by AMJV partners.</p>

Science and Monitoring Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Increase the amount of outcome-based monitoring occurring in the AMJV, including citizen science-based efforts.</p>	<p>Implement an outcome-based monitoring program across the focal landscapes that documents progress towards both habitat and bird objectives</p>	<p>Develop standardized (targeting priority species) bird monitoring protocols across the JV, with initial emphasis on the focal landscapes.</p> <p>Augment monitoring programs and address gaps in monitoring capacity through citizen science monitoring efforts.</p> <p>Where feasible, integrate citizen science with targeted standardized protocols (e.g., advanced citizen science).</p>	<p>Changes in habitat conditions resulting from management actions are used to adaptively inform future management within focal landscapes.</p> <p>Responses of target bird species to management are used to adaptively inform future management actions.</p>	<p>JV staff and partners dedicate and/or actively seek resources for consistent, continued monitoring.</p> <p>Measured response of habitat and bird populations to conservation delivery to improve future efforts</p> <p>Increase in citizen science monitoring data, especially within focal landscapes (e.g. eBird, BBS routes).</p> <p>Increase in advanced citizen science monitoring data.</p>
<p>Develop desired future conditions that consider where forest structure and diversity differ most significantly from desired conditions and how to best intersperse forest seral stages throughout the landscape</p>	<p>Assess current conditions and possible future conditions (considering potential climate change, energy development impacts, etc.) in focal areas to inform future management goals.</p>	<p>Working with partners, compile resources (specifically GIS) that define current conditions and/or departure from desired conditions and develop methods for tracking into the future.</p> <p>Compile existing climate change resources and engage climate science centers to incorporate climate change scenarios into desired future condition planning.</p>	<p>Greater understanding of the management techniques that improve resilience of Appalachian forests and enhance our ability to adapt management as conditions change.</p> <p>Strategic planning within each focal landscape that identifies areas at high risk of conversion due to threats (e.g., climate/energy impacts).</p>	<p>BMP documents describing the most effective management techniques for achieving the goals of a focal landscape.</p> <p>The number of focal landscapes with quantitative, long-term habitat goals.</p> <p>Spatial habitat tracking of focal area habitat goals.</p>

Conservation Delivery Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Enhance and increase the amount of strategic habitat delivery within the AMJV to maximize our conservation impacts on the ground.</p>	<p>Establish at least one fully-operational focal landscape (conservation delivery guided by a long-term work plan) within each state in the AMJV (note that a focal landscape can span multiple states).</p>	<p>Continually assess barriers to conservation outcomes and refine program delivery to overcome those barriers</p> <p>Explore and develop mechanisms that accelerate implementation of recommended management, e.g., market-based incentives, carbon credits.</p> <p>Set population and habitat objectives for a few key species (2-4) selected by the partnership, and work towards these in a specified time frame</p>	<p>Focal Landscapes are established with a coalition of supporting partners that include multiple AMJV and partner conservation priorities, a long-term conservation vision, and resources to successfully accomplish that vision on the ground.</p>	<p>Number of operational focal landscapes within the AMJV geography</p> <p>Number and diversity of partners involved in the development and implementation of each focal landscape</p> <p>Number of completed long-term work plans for each focal landscape</p> <p>Increase in resources (e.g., funding, personnel, equipment) available to implement conservation goals within a focal landscape.</p> <p>Increase in acres managed and/or restored following forest management BMPs to meet habitat and populations objectives (from Strategic Objectives column)</p>

Conservation Delivery Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Promote AMJV bird conservation priorities through improved integration of the conservation initiatives across the AMJV (e.g., Fire Learning Network, Spruce Restoration Initiatives, SWAP conservation areas, etc.)</p>	<p>AMJV staff and partners actively incorporate AMJV priorities and tools into the conservation planning and delivery efforts of other initiatives (and vice versa).</p>	<p>Incorporate relevant data and tools from other initiatives into conservation planning and focal landscape establishment (e.g., the resilient and connected lands network from TNC's Mark Anderson's work)</p> <p>AMJV partnership identifies “spokespeople” who are engaged in other initiatives and will serve as liaisons.</p>	<p>Conservation efforts of other initiatives inherently address AMJV priorities.</p> <p>Clear understanding of how conservation efforts of these initiatives will benefit AMJV priorities, and vice versa.</p> <p>Greater cross-pollination of and comprehensiveness of conservation delivery efforts across the AMJV geography.</p>	<p>AMJV partners participate regularly in other conservation initiatives.</p> <p>AMJV staff attendance at meetings of other conservation initiatives.</p> <p>Outreach materials targeting specific initiatives demonstrating the overlap with AMJV priorities.</p> <p>Increased representation on AMJV Tech Committee by these initiatives.</p>

Communication and Outreach Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Establish a stronger linkage of our conservation activities with partners as well as local communities to advance our conservation priorities.</p>	<p>AMJV staff, working with partners, develop and execute communications and outreach strategies for each focal landscape.</p>	<p>Design management guidelines and tools for on-the-ground practitioners and transfer this information through education and outreach (e.g., workshops, presentations, etc.)</p> <p>Establish relevance to communities and organizations at local (e.g., focal landscape) scale.</p>	<p>Science-based conservation recommendations are integrated into decision making of key organizations and partners.</p> <p>Local governments (e.g., town/county, conservation districts) connect economic and working lands benefits with our conservation activities.</p>	<p>Increased engagement /partnerships with relevant entities (e.g., town/county governments) in each focal landscape.</p>

Partnership Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
Cultivate broader communities of interest with a shared purpose and vision	<p>Engage and establish relationships with non-traditional partners</p> <p>Fully engage AMJV partners across the JV geography through focal landscapes, regional working groups, and a complete and invested management board</p>	<p>Engage groups such as state ornithological societies, bird clubs and other conservation partners.</p> <p>Develop relationships with industry to promote expanded adoption/implementation of recommended management.</p> <p>AMJV members engage full array of sectors making decisions about the lands and waters in at least one focal landscape.</p>	<p>Increased assistance from these groups with conservation delivery, outreach, and monitoring</p> <p>Novel sources of funding for conservation efforts across the AMJV (e.g., corporate donation)</p> <p>SFI/FSC auditors understand how different forest management strategies benefit birds</p>	<p>Number of individuals from these groups that volunteer their time on conservation and/or monitoring projects.</p> <p>Number/type of organizations contributing funds towards AMJV conservation efforts</p>

Policy Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
AMJV work is recognized and supported by state/federal agency leadership and congressional offices within the AMJV geography	Develop an annual policy agenda for the AMJV that sets priorities and defines specific actions for enhancing state and federal support.	<p>Support state and federal policy priorities that further conservation delivery (e.g. Farm Bill priorities).</p> <p>Continue to build relationships with congressional offices, agency leadership.</p> <p>Integrate with existing policy frameworks (AFWA).</p>	<p>AMJV staff are considered a resource by agency and congressional leadership whose expertise is sought regarding conservation issues.</p> <p>Dedicated funding for the AMJV (and MBJVs in general) from state and federal agencies increases.</p>	<p>Field tours in focal landscapes for agency and congressional leadership.</p> <p>Continued presence in D.C. through Hill visits that are tied to field visits.</p> <p>Increased engagement with state and local elected officials</p>

## Theme 2: Full Annual Cycle Conservation

Many of the birds that breed in the Appalachians spend the winter in Central and South America. While many of our priority birds are benefiting from protection and habitat improvements on the breeding grounds, habitat loss and degradation in Central and South America is still rapidly occurring. Many of our partners are actively engaged in research and conservation efforts throughout Central and South America, and our partnership seeks to facilitate greater coordination, collaboration, and involvement by our partners in these international conservation efforts. This work, coupled with our conservation work in the Appalachians, will enable us to better achieve full annual cycle conservation for our priority species.

Conservation Delivery Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>AMJV will work with partners to produce efficient and effective full annual cycle conservation projects and programs</p> <p>JV Partners will deliver conservation within key stop-over and wintering grounds locations that align and contribute to the AMJV objectives for priority species.</p>	<p>Endorse and promote wintering grounds and stopover projects that address habitat needs and/or threats to AMJV priority species.</p> <p>Identify challenges and opportunities for areas with needs for and/or threats to AMJV priority species stop-over and wintering grounds habitat.</p>	<p>Use scientific framework to increase understanding of key conservation needs on the wintering grounds and strategies for how the AMJV can most effectively address those needs</p> <p>Clear communications among partnership regarding highest needs for priority species conservation during nonbreeding season</p> <p>Increase delivery of conservation actions that will directly or indirectly improve conditions for AMJV priority species</p>	<p>Work effectively with existing partnerships and increase participation and engagement on wintering grounds efforts among new partners and projects</p> <p>Improved communication regarding existing efforts and opportunities for additional engagement on high priority projects endorsed by the AMJV partnership</p>	<p>Increased participation by partners in full annual cycle conservation projects</p>



Science and Monitoring Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
Advance understanding of breeding and wintering ground linkages and migratory pathways for AMJV highest priority species	<p>Organize efforts for priority species within focal landscape context; assess knowledge/conservation gaps for species not abundant in focal landscapes</p> <p>Compile existing information about known migratory linkages for priority species</p>	Communicate breeding and wintering grounds linkages	Effective communication regarding breeding and wintering grounds linkages for priority species to internal and external partners	Annual synthesis of wintering grounds activities by partners
Increase work in critical locations to improve science and monitoring for AMJV priority species	<p>Identify critical wintering and stopover sites for highest priority species</p> <p>Promote science and monitoring activities for priority species to understand greatest conservation needs and assess effectiveness of ongoing efforts</p>	Identify limiting demographics/factors and where/when/why those occur	<p>Improved understanding of key wintering and stopover sites for priority species</p> <p>Increased science capacity to fill in major knowledge gaps regarding species occurrence and threats in nonbreeding season</p>	Increased monitoring and understanding of factors that will improve conditions for AMJV species during nonbreeding season

Partnership Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Improve collaboration and coordination among partners to advance full annual cycle conservation for AMJV priority species</p>	<p>Increase funding and support for migration and wintering grounds projects</p> <p>Increase coordination and alignment of science and habitat delivery on breeding, stopover areas, and wintering grounds</p> <p>Integrate full annual cycle into dynamic forest landscapes efforts</p> <p>Empower partners to become involved in full annual cycle conservation efforts</p>	<p>Promote collaboration, conservation and research activities in key wintering/stopover areas that have been prioritized by the AMJV</p> <p>Provide guidance or assistance to partners as requested on development, maintenance, execution and evaluation of projects or programs</p> <p>Promote and support the establishment of linked breeding ground/wintering ground partnerships between conservation organizations in both geographies, especially within our Focal Landscapes</p>	<p>Assist in identifying opportunities for involvement by partner organizations</p> <p>Linking communities of people and conservation practitioners between breeding and wintering grounds that share common conservation interests</p>	<p>Increased communication about ongoing efforts and funding opportunities to both internal and external partners</p> <p>Increased funding and support for international efforts</p>

Communication and Outreach Goals	Tasks	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<p>Improve communication about international efforts by AMJV partnership</p> <p>Improve general awareness of need for full annual cycle conservation.</p>	<p>Increase awareness of/support for initiatives that promote bird-friendly practices across the full annual cycle (e.g., bird friendly coffee), especially within AMJV focal landscapes</p> <p>Communicate the effectiveness and utility of contributing to conservation efforts outside the U.S. to agency decision-makers</p>	<p>Support improved communication regarding full annual cycle bird conservation efforts by partners to general public forums (e.g., bird clubs, schools, popular literature, agency/organization websites or blogs).</p> <p>Encourage state participation in Southern Wings in identified priority areas and projects</p> <p>Address barriers to participation in Southern Wings</p>	<p>Increased understanding of full annual cycle conservation challenges and opportunities for investment by both agencies and the general public</p> <p>Reduced barriers to states' ability to participate in Southern Wings Program</p>	<p>Increase in the number of states contributing to Southern Wings.</p>