United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

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In Reply Refer To:
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Memorandum

To: Regional Chiefs, National Wildlife Refuge System

From: Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System *James W. Kurth*

Subject: Final Report: A Landscape-Scale Approach to Refuge System Planning

The Planning Implementation Team (PIT) was chartered to address **Recommendation # 1**: *Incorporate the lessons learned from our first round of CCPs and HMPs into the next generation of conservation plans, and ensure these new plans view refuges in a landscape context and describe actions to project conservation benefits beyond refuge boundaries.*

The report is the PIT's proposal for "A Landscape-Scale Approach to Refuge System Planning." It provides an overview of the planning effort and its value and investigates how National Wildlife Refuge System planning will address large-scale conservation challenges such as climate change, while maintaining the integrity of management and conservation delivery within our boundaries.

The PIT recommends that we focus the next generation of planning on Landscape Conservation Designs (LCDs), developed by the greater conservation community through partnership in Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). LCDs are consistent with Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) and are a partnership-driven conservation strategy that identifies desired future conditions and management prescriptions at multiple scales across jurisdictions. Key to their recommendation is incorporating LCDs into the preplanning phase of every Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Land Protection Plan (LPP). With limited exceptions, no CCP or LPP should be developed until after an LCD has been completed.

I have reviewed the Final Report and accept it as a final product of the Planning implementation team and completion of Recommendation #1 in *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*. Please consider the Report as final and ready for distribution.

Attachments