

Little Tennessee Native Fish Conservation Area

Strategic Planning Retreat 2015 Outcomes and Products - DRAFT

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Benefits of the Little Tennessee Native Fish Conservation Partnership:

1. **Collaboration and coordination** within the Partnership –allows us to be more efficient , coordinated, and strategic
2. **Communication to the public** beyond the Partnership – selling what we’re doing
3. **Increasing and leveraging resources** to benefit the partners’ work –funding, skills, knowledge, people
4. **Magnifying efforts through efficiency and collaboration** –the Partnership allows us to make a bigger impact in an organized, strategic, and focused way. It allows all of us to move the ball forward separately as part of a unified plan for the greatest impact. Working together strategically allows us to prioritize and articulate priorities and to have a bigger measurable impact.

Mission, Vision & Core Values

Note – Mission and vision statements unchanged.

Mission:

To conserve and restore habitat in the Little Tennessee River Basin for the benefit of native fishes and other aquatic wildlife.

Vision:

The Little Tennessee River Basin is designated as a Native Fish Conservation Area. The aquatic resources of the Little Tennessee River and its tributaries are conserved and restored to the level that native fishes thrive as stable components of diverse ecological communities. Present and future citizens of the Basin benefit from clean water, outstanding outdoor recreation, and a stable economic base.

Core Values:

1. **FOCUS.** We work to conserve and restore aquatic and terrestrial habitats within the Little Tennessee River Basin, benefiting native fish and other aquatic wildlife.
2. **KNOWLEDGE.** We support educational and science-based efforts that foster a strong ethic of stewardship so that citizens, decision makers, and land managers are aware of the values of the Basin's aquatic biodiversity and consistently work to protect and enhance it.
3. **TEAMWORK.** We collaborate in an active partnership comprising agencies, organizations and individuals, in order to achieve common goals magnifying efforts through efficiency and collaboration.
4. **CONNECTION.** We communicate clearly and openly within the Native Fish Conservation Partnership and with other interested stakeholders.

Boundaries of the Partnership:

- Is focused on the Little Tennessee Basin
- Does not compete for resources with partners
- Informs about science and educates on issues to inform policy; does not support or oppose specific candidates or legislation
- Is not a legal entity
- Focuses on conservation of native aquatic organisms
- Respects the boundaries and requirements of Partner organizations

Functions & Partnership Structure

Executive Committee Functions:

Chair – Damon Hearne

- Communicate with team leaders
- Convene meetings
- Partnership communication (shared)
- Agendas (shared)
- Website updates (shared)
- Check in on communication

Vice Chairs – Stephanie Chance (TN), Andrea Leslie (NC)

- Meeting notes for Executive Committee (Andrea)
 - Create google doc with action items recorded during call
- Partnership communication (shared)
- Agendas (LEAD)
- Website updates (shared)
- Check in on communication

Conservation Team Leaders

Assessment – Erin McCombs, Outreach and Education – Jason Meador, One the Ground Implementation – Andrea Leslie and Shannon O’Quinn

- Communication with teams
- Organize team work, maintain momentum and focus.

Communications Chair – Gary Peeples

- Assemble Communications Committee
 - Develop outreach materials with Outreach & Education Team
- Communicate with Steering Committee
- Meeting notes for Steering Committee
- Communications coordinator
 - Lead on partnership communications
 - Create schedule to update teams
 - Develop communications plan
 - Send updates within the partnership, write internal newsletter.
- Website (shared)
 - Maintain, update, monitor
 - Coordinate content from others + content creation
 - Include social networking component + connect with other groups that are already active on social media

Fundraising Chair

- Assemble Fundraising Committee
- Lead for fundraising

Steering Committee Functions: (need to develop)

Friends of the Partnership Functions: (need to develop)

Strategy Screen

To be used for ongoing strategic decision-making

TOP TIER QUESTIONS:	
1.	Does it benefit native aquatic organisms?
2.	Is it aligned with Partnership mission, vision, core values?
3.	Is it a priority or a strategic opportunity? Consult strategic framework, geographic focus areas, and cost benefit considerations.
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:	
4.	Do we have or can we build the resources and capacity to do this? Consider Partnership and individual Partner resources and project leadership and oversight.
5.	Does engaging the Partnership increase the chance of project success? Does it fill a gap? Would it be done even if we weren't around?
6.	Does it bring in more resources vs. increasing resource competition?
7.	Does it give the Partnership momentum?
8.	Does it align with Partnership policies? Consult policies on advocacy, fundraising, decision-making process, etc.

Strategic Framework (DRAFT)

Overarching Goal for the Partnership: <i>A full complement of native species are thriving and persisting in the Little Tennessee watershed.</i>	Responsible party	Time frame
Goal 1: Improve scientific understanding and knowledge of native aquatic fauna.		
Key Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Number priority research needs or data gaps addressed or being addressed</i> • <i>Conservation focal areas identified and prioritized</i> 		
Objective 1a: Address gaps in knowledge of distribution, life history, and ecology of native fauna		
Objective 1b: Understand causal factors in decline of priority species		
Objective 1c: Improve our understanding for rare species propagation		
Objective 1d: Identify key conservation focal locations that allow Partnership to protect, conserve, and restore priority native species		
Goal 2: Protect and restore habitat and water quality of streams in the Little Tennessee Basin. (Oct 2015 Note: Existing reports and plans have been reviewed and applicable information for Objectives 2a-2c is being summarized)		
Key Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A diversity of connected, high-quality habitats are present in the basin.</i> • <i>Federally and state listed aquatic taxa in basin have been delisted due to recovery</i> 		
Objective 2a: Assess stream integrity across the basin, identifying high quality habitats and problem areas		
Objective 2b: Identify key stressors and management strategies to abate them		
Objective 2c: Prioritize high quality habitats for protection and focal areas for restoration		
Objective 2d: Implement protection and restoration projects in prioritized areas		

Goal 3: Protect and restore the historical assemblage of native aquatic organisms.		
Key Indicators of Success : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A full complement of native species and populations thrive and persist in the watershed</i> • <i>Federally and state listed aquatic taxa in basin have been delisted due to recovery</i> 		
Objective 3a: Identify priority species and populations for restoration		
Objective 3b: Identify priority assemblages for protection → feed into Objectives 2c and 2d		
Objective 3c: Restore priority species and populations		
Goal 4: Implement a comprehensive outreach and education program.		
Key Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Each state has a conservation education program for the Little Tennessee River basin</i> • <i>Outreach materials on the NFCA are available</i> 		
Objective 4a: Develop outreach materials, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic suite of materials • Website • Materials for fund-raising • Information on the economic impacts of stream resources 		
Objective 4b: Implement a riparian buffer awareness program		
Objective 4c: Develop a stream stewardship program for faith communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible activity: host a stream stewardship workshop for faith leaders 		
Objective 4d: Develop a stream education program for children and young adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all students in the basin can participate in a “kids in the creek” event • Ensure all students in the basin can participate in fish in the classroom activities • Each state has a stream snorkeling program (even each county?) 		
Objective 4e: Inform and engage elected officials and policy makers in stream stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual “State of the Watershed” briefing for policy-makers and elected officials? • Get connected to city and county planning efforts • “High-end” snorkeling trips for policy makers and influential people • Festival or event for Little Tennessee with opportunities for elected officials to participate 		

Commented [CS1]: Species and populations? May need to reword? Delete populations?

Objective 4h: Hold a Little Tennessee Native Fish Conservation Area designation event		
Goal 5: Build and grow a sustainable and successful NFCA Partnership.		
Key Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The partnership has an excited and large set of stakeholders working from a science-based, evolving plan</i> • <i>Partners are collaborating to accomplish conservation projects</i> • <i>Ample funds to support the priority objectives are available</i> • <i>A long-term funding source exists for watershed projects</i> • <i>Little T NFCA will be recognized as a model for native fish conservation and other NFCAs will be established across the nation</i> 		
Objective 5a: Develop a draft strategic conservation plan, naming priorities and geographic focal areas, by April 2016. The plan is upgraded and revised on a two-year cycle		4/2016, updated biannually
Objective 5b: Expand the partnership to include non-traditional membership (e.g., county governments, ag agencies and community, economic development entities, recreation agencies)		
Objective 5c: Secure funding, resulting in new or expanded projects		2015- 1 grant received 2016- 1 significant strategic grant received
Objective 5d: Create and compile success stories to gain credibility and breed success		Year 2– survey & publish partner accomplishments Year 3- pilot success story
Objective 5e: Hire coordinator		Part-time: 2016 Full-time: 2017
Objective 5f: Steering Committee communicates effectively and resolves any conflicts effectively		
Objective 5g: Partners continue to participate and feel that the Partnership is worth their time		