

Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species

TRACS Advances with Announcement of Version 2

WSFR's Wildlife TRACS project and performance system took a major step forward June 01, 2015 with the initiation of Version 2 of the system. Software developers use versioning to group system enhancements in order to maximize the efficiency of development "sprints". TRACS Version 2 has two priorities: 1) Addressing TRACS "technical debt" (TRACS is a compilation of multiple software components and "technical debt" is how far removed those components are from their most current version); and 2) Implementing Project Outcome Reporting. Technical debt work is underway, and system development for Project Outcomes is scheduled to begin by the end of the year. Version 2 is projected to be completed by the end of calendar year 2016. TRACS Version 1 was focused on gathering user feedback to identify and correct system bugs and defects through the TRACS Helpdesk, TRACS Working Group and regional Federal Aid Coordinators meetings. TRACS will remain in Operations/Maintenance mode while Version 2 enhancements are being developed.

Tracking and Reporting Outcomes for WSFR Funded Projects

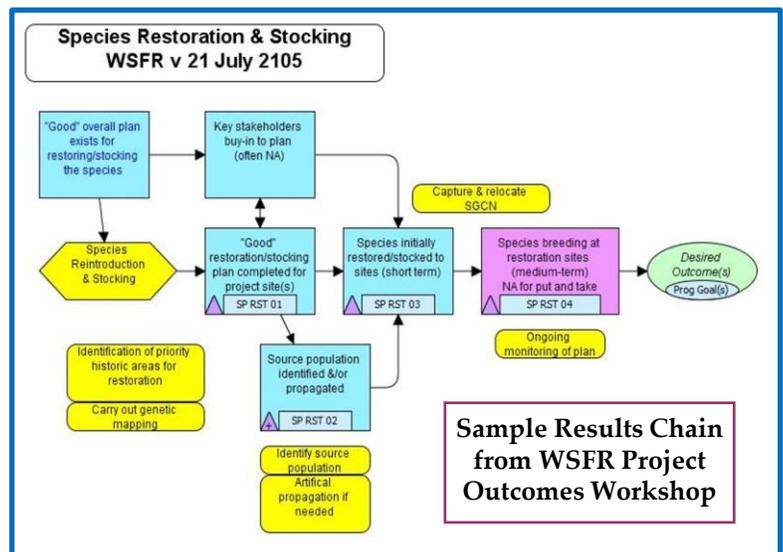
On June 24-25, a group of WSFR staff met in Denver to discuss an approach to tracking and reporting on WSFR grant-funded project accomplishments. The charge to participants was to begin implementation of recommendations developed by a State/Federal Outcomes Working Group that had been approved by WSFR Assistant Director Hannibal Bolton in December, 2014. Among those recommendations was the need to apply Outcomes Reporting to all 13 WSFR grant programs and sub-programs.

Workshop participants specifically looked at a methodology developed in 2011 by an Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies committee and captured in a report titled "State Wildlife Grant Effectiveness Measures. The report used results chains to describe a "theory of change" that would result from implementation of 11 different categories of conservation actions.

Measureable objectives were identified at key

points in each chain, representing stages of a project life-cycle. The unanimous conclusion at the end of the Denver workshop was that the same theory of change could be applied to the other 12 WSFR grant programs. In fact, participants discovered that the chains developed by the AFWA committee addressed many of the types of actions implemented under all WSFR grant programs. Workshop participants continued to develop and review chains after the workshop and now have draft chains for 18 categories of actions.

The next step for the Project Outcomes initiative is to review the approach with key committees at the AFWA Annual Meeting in September and the Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (JTF). WSFR's Program Accomplishment Reporting (PAR) Branch is planning to host a workshop in mid-October in Denver to seek state review of the draft results chains and to identify outcomes, objectives and measures that can be implemented without major disruption or inconvenience for project sponsors. The final step will be to apply the Outcomes data structure into TRACS for ease of reporting. WSFR hopes to have the Project Outcomes complete and fully implemented by December 2016.



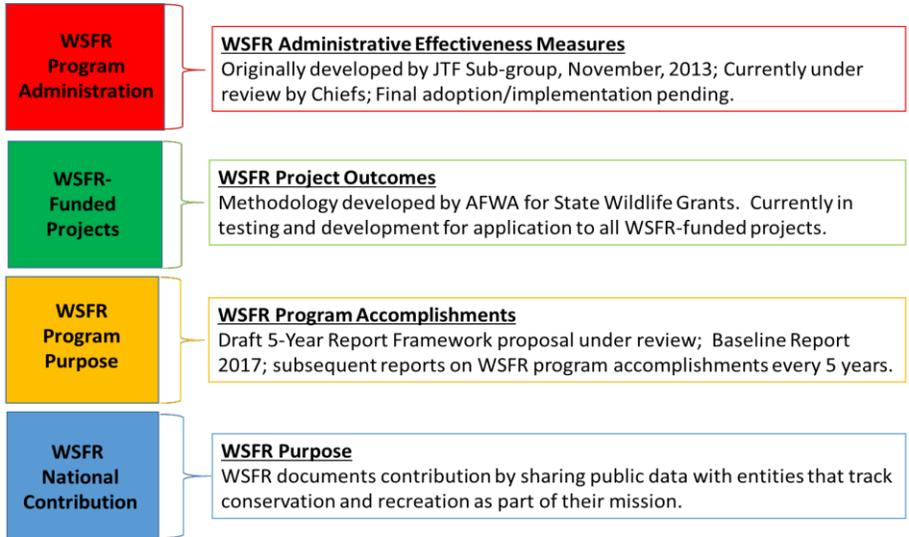


WSFR Pursues Program-Wide Performance Structure

Project-level Outcomes is just one of four efforts underway in the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program to measure the Programs performance.

WSFR is also in the final stages of adopting a suite of effectiveness measures related to grant administration. The PAR Branch intends to have Project level Outcomes identified by the end of 2015, and to be collecting project performance data in TRACS by the end of calendar 2016. WSFR is also developing an “accomplishment profile” that will be used to track the performance of WSFR’s 13 grant programs. WSFR program accomplish-

ments will be reported out in five-year increments, beginning in the Fall of 2017 – WSFR’s 80th anniversary. Finally, WSFR has begun discussions with other agencies and organizations to identify ways to measure WSFR’s contribution towards broad, national efforts related to conservation and recreation. By tracking and reporting performance at the administrative, project, program, and mission level, WSFR will address all of its statutory responsibilities, as well as stakeholder and public expectations related to transparency, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness.



States “Readiness” Assessment finds Three TRACS STARS

Idaho, Oklahoma, and Vermont received perfect scores on a recent assessment of states progress towards implementing WSFR’s “Wildlife TRACS” project and performance database. Eight others (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, Texas, and Virginia) received special recognition by evaluators for their efforts towards TRACS implementation. The assessment, conducted by WSFR regional staff and state federal aid staff, was developed by the TRACS Working Group to identify those states least able to meet the October 01, 2016 target for full implementation of TRACS. WSFR regional staff developed an initial rating on five questions related to TRACS implementation. WSFR then met with state staff to review the initial findings and discuss the obstacles faced by each individual state and territory. According to the results, 36 of 56 states and territories are “highly likely” or “likely” to make the 2016 target. Twenty states and territories were found “not likely” to make the October date. Ten of those (California, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virgin Islands, and Washington D.C.) were found unlikely to be able to implement the new technology without outside assistance. The TRACS Working Group will meet with WSFR staff in Denver in October to develop individual plans to assist those ten states and territories address the obstacles they identified. WSFR staff will present the ten individual state strategies to the JTF in November. The three TRACS STAR states will be recognized by WSFR Assistant Director Hannibal Bolton at the AFWA Annual Meeting in Tucson, Arizona in September.

For current information about TRACS, visit:

<https://tracs.fws.gov/learning>

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