



**FY2025 — FY2029  
WATER RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN**

**USFWS WATER RESOURCES TEAM**



Water is life. We are the people who live by the water. Pray by these waters. Travel by the waters. Eat and drink from these waters. We are related to those who live in the water. To poison the waters is to show disrespect for creation. To honor and protect the waters is our responsibility as people of the land.

- *The Winona LaDuke Reader: A Collection of Essential Writings*,  
Winona LaDuke (2002)



YAKIMA TRIBAL MEMBERS FISH IN THE KLICKITAT RIVER (WASHINGTON) FOR FALL CHINOOK SALMON. PHOTO COURTESY USFWS.

COVER PHOTO: OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (GEORGIA AND FLORIDA). PHOTO CREDIT LARRY WOODWARD, USFWS.

#### Suggested Citation

USFWS Water Resources Team. 2024. Water Resources Strategic Plan FY2025 – 2029. [Water Resources | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(fws.gov\)](#)

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A philosophy of water management must pay heed to the fact that the hydrologic system is a highly interconnected plumbing network. Changes made in one part of the system have influences downstream. The continued functioning of the system is of great importance. To test whether the system is operating satisfactorily by economic and legal criteria alone will not guarantee its continued health. What is needed is some deeper feeling.

- A Reverence for Rivers, Luna B. Leopold (1977)



## List of Acronyms

ANO – Alaska Native Organization

ANC – Alaska Native Community

CADR – Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution

CoP – Water Resources Community of Practice SharePoint

DEIA – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

DOI – Department of Interior

FAC – Fish & Aquatic Conservation

HARC – Hydrology and Aquatic Resources Conservation webinar series

NAASH – National Assembly for Aquatic Science and Hydrology Conference

NFH – National Fish Hatchery

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NHC – Native Hawaiian Community

NRPC – Natural Resource Program Center (NWRS)

NWR – National Wildlife Refuge

NWRS – National Wildlife Refuge System

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WRT – USFWS Water Resources Team





## Introduction

Water connects everything. Water is at the forefront of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) mission to conserve and protect wildlife for the benefit of the American people, and it is essential to managing resilient habitats within the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), at the landscape scale, and beyond. The transboundary influence of water connects refuges to state waterways, to family farms and ranches, to cities and towns, and to Tribal lands and communities. Diminishing freshwater supplies, emerging contaminants, elevated surface water temperatures, sea level rise, and the intensity and frequency of floods, droughts, and wildfires are leading to ever more complex and challenging water issues that put marginalized communities at disproportionate risk and restrict our ability to support aquatic connectivity, migratory corridors, biodiverse wetlands, the National Fish Hatchery (NFH) System, and other USFWS water-dependent assets.

We, the USFWS Water Resources Team (WRT), began formulating this strategic plan during a weeklong planning session at the Coastal North Carolina National Wildlife Refuge Gateway Visitor Center in October 2023. We intermixed rigorous planning sessions with visits to three refuges in the complex to hear about water management challenges from refuge managers. We

discussed the impact of dam operations to bottomland hardwood forest regeneration at Roanoke River NWR. At Pocosin Lakes NWR, we conferred on the historical draining of the peatlands, land subsidence, and the desire to rewet, restore, and bring prescribed fire back to the peatlands as a management tool. We witnessed the effect of saltwater intrusion firsthand at Alligator River NWR, where once verdant coastal woodlands had transformed into a briny grove of snags, posthumously referred to as ‘ghost forests.’

We were reminded of the economic and racial disparities that exist throughout our country after learning that the nearby communities most at risk from flooding and sea level rise were predominantly Black and poor.



PHOTO COURTESY USFWS.

In the presence of these beautiful, diverse, and watery landscapes, I wrestled with the realization of ecosystems in transformation and wondered what might result from applying a Resist-Accept-Direct framework to resource and community planning here.

The key to beginning an effective planning effort is to achieve buy in by making the team feel passionate about the important but earnest work that lies ahead. To that end, our refuge excursions that week helped catalyze us and sharpen our resolve. It made us remember how important our work is, and the relentless conviction and love we share for aquatic systems. The irreplaceable North Carolina coastal refuge complex



helped garner our commitment to collaboration and the support needed to complete and enact this planning document.

In the introduction of his book, *For the Love of Rivers*, Dr. Kurt Fausch muses, “like trees and music and good health, streams and rivers are a gift to us humans. They are part of the essence of our lives in these surroundings we inhabit, within our own boundaries of place and time. They cause our deepest emotions to gather and flow near the surface and make our days and our seasons and years worth living. They are essential for us to be whole people, psychologically and spiritually. We need their sounds and their views, and their sound advice. And, in the end, I believe we will need to understand how and why we love rivers, if we hope to conserve them.”

In this vignette, Dr. Fausch is revealing a bit of everyone who first fell in love, often in our youth, with watery landscapes and the creatures we discovered there, and then went on to study and devote our careers to stewarding them. Whether or not we work directly in water management, I believe this reverberates with all my colleagues on the USFWS Water Resources Team. Like life itself, our essence, our adoration, our deeper feeling, and ultimately our calling, began with water. Water connects everything, and as the Ojibwe say, *nibi akawe mashkiki*; water is the first medicine. Water heals us and, if given time, heals itself.

Chad Abel  
National Water Resources Coordinator  
Natural Resource Program Center





SHERIDAN CHANNEL REHABILITATION PROJECT ON THE TRINITY RIVER, CALIFORNIA. PHOTO CREDIT AARON MARTIN, YUOK TRIBE.

## Background of Water Resources Team

The USFWS Water Resources Team was first chartered in 2003 to provide national coordination and technical advice on water-related matters across the National Wildlife Refuge System, and in direct response to “Wildlife & Habitat Recommendation 5” in the iconic [NWRS Fulfilling the Promise \(1999\)](#) report.

The WRT charter was updated in 2008 when the team’s Refuge-centric purpose expanded to include “national coordination and technical advice on National Fish Hatchery needs to ensure water quantity and quality”.

The WRT’s 2016 charter again expanded the cross-programmatic influence by formalizing team membership to include a NWRS representative from each region, two representatives from Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC), and two representatives from Ecological Services. The 2016 charter stated the purpose of the WRT was,

**Wildlife & Habitat Recommendation 5**

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing water rights and needs for water quantity and timing in each region to include, where appropriate, remedies to resolve outstanding issues.

- *NWRS Fulfilling the Promise (1999)*

“to provide national coordination, and professional and technical advice on water resources management and policy to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats” with the vision of providing, “core agency leadership in the arenas of water science, water policy, and water rights.”



CANAL SYSTEM AT CIBOLA NWR. PHOTO COURTESY USFWS.

Today, the WRT mission is to conserve and restore water resources to help the USFWS manage its trust resources for, and with, the communities we serve. The team provides strategic guidance on water resource issues and challenges, offers water rights and hydrologic expertise, and maintains the Service’s national water database. Representatives on the WRT include:

- A representative from each region (eight in total)
- Two representatives from Ecological Services
- Two representatives from FAC
- One representative from Science Applications
- One representative from Migratory Birds
- The National Water Resources Coordinator, at NRPC

In addition to core team functions, the WRT also hosts the [Hydrology and Aquatic Resources Conservation \(HARC\) Webinar Series](#), the biennial [National Assembly for Aquatic Science and Hydrology \(NAASH\) Conference](#), and the 200+ member-strong [Water Resources Community of Practice](#).

The WRT meets each month to coordinate nationally in support of FWS water initiatives at multiple scales. The National Water Resources Coordinator in the Branch of Air and Water Resources at NRPC coordinates team calls and workflow.



## Our Vision

Water connects everything. Through collaboration and sound stewardship of our waters, the health and diversity of wildlife, fish, plants, habitats, people, and communities will flourish.



SUNRISE AT ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK (LAKE SUPERIOR). PHOTO CREDIT ZACH KLEEMANN, USFWS.

## Our Mission

The mission of the Water Resources Team is to conserve and restore water resources and to help the USFWS manage its trust resources for and with the communities we serve.

## Our Values

We embody the [USFWS Values](#) of Stewardship, Integrity, Respect, Collaboration, and Innovation in guiding our team interactions and our work with others.

We recognize State authority in managing water resources and endeavor to work in close coordination with our State partners in stewardship of critical habitats and trust species.

We embrace the principles of [Environmental Justice](#) and the meaningful involvement of all people in shared decision making.

We respect the sovereignty of Tribal Nations and honor our nation’s Treaty obligations and Trust responsibility. We recognize the unique relationship the federal government has to federally recognized Tribes, Alaska Natives (ANCs, ANOs), and the Native Hawaiian Community (NHC) and aspire to implement [Co-Stewardship](#) in all facets of our work.



TOGIAK NWR (ALASKA). PHOTO COURTESY USFWS.

Led by our commitments to Environmental Justice, Co-Stewardship, and coordination with States, we will forge new alliances and work collaboratively to address [climate change](#) impacts, guided by the understanding that water is a transboundary resource we all share, and upon which all life depends.

## Strategic Goals and Objectives

This document section provides a brief overview and narrative of the four goals and stepdown objectives that will guide the work of the Water Resources Team beginning in FY2025 through the end of FY2029 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2029). The full list of goals, objectives, and key actions are detailed in a Gantt table format in the appendix of this document.

### Goal 1 Data Management – Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.

- Objective 1.1 Database Management – Ensure accessible, standardized, and well-managed water data in the USFWS Water Resource Database.
- Objective 1.2 Database Utilization and Access – Increase awareness of database applications for USFWS staff to access and store water data.
- Objective 1.3 Interagency and Public Access to USFWS Water Data – Make data available through a public-facing data portal, or by contributing to data sharing platforms that already exist.
- Objective 1.4 Database Evaluation – Evaluate the USFWS Water Resource Database, the functionality of associated applications, and quality of customer service to determine the preferred software provider.
- Objective 1.5 Communication – Create and maintain communication forums and access to reference materials for field staff and data managers.



The WRT made data management Goal 1 to speak to its significance and role in fulfilling our mission and vision over the next five years. Throughout 2023 and into 2024, the regions migrated the water databases housed in each region to a central, cloud-based server. The database migration will improve the delivery of software updates provided by the database vendor and will adhere to new IT security requirements by USFWS. Merging regional databases to a single, cloud-based server provides a new



RESTORED BROOK TROUT STREAM AT CANAAN VALLEY NWR (WEST VIRGINIA). PHOTO CREDIT RYAN HAGERTY, USFWS.

opportunity for standardizing several tools and protocols. The creation of a national data management plan (Objective 1.1) will conform to the Water Data Act requirement to develop and adopt common national standards for water data. After two decades of using the same database vendor, the migration to the central server and the new applications provided in the subsequent software update gives the database team an opportunity to evaluate the software and decide if the current database system will continue to house our data in the years ahead (Objective 1.4).

Objectives 1.2 and 1.3 will help improve data access internally (1.2) and externally (1.3) in meeting the requirements of [USFWS Policy 274 FW 1](#) and the Open Government Data Act. Better internal access to data will help the USFWS provide a consistent resource for field staff and data managers for use in decision making and other mission and business-related purposes. The USFWS is likewise required to share our data with the public in an open and accessible format, to the extent possible and legally permissible. Objective 1.5 will likewise enhance internal data availability, and the objective strives to improve water data collection and storage across the USFWS.

## Goal 2: Continuous Learning & Professional Development – Water Resource professionals have ample opportunities for growth and well-being within a culture of mentorship, diversity, continuous learning, and professional and technical development.

- Objective 2.1 Continuous Learning – Facilitate continuous learning of the WRT and the CoP to maintain a workforce able to respond to changing water resource and demographic conditions, advance career goals, and cultivate water resource expertise.

## HURON THE BEAUTIFUL



“There is no environmental justice without economic justice.”  
Rey Leon, Mayor of Huron, CA.

Communities facing environmental justice issues typically have the fewest resources and often must fight for what they do have. Our mission compels us to work in support of these communities.

Service staff are working with the City of Huron (CA) and the National Park Service to build a community led restoration plan for 3000 acres of underutilized land held by the Bureau of Reclamation. If this project goes through, it will bring much needed green space to a city bereft of such spaces and is an example of how our work can extend beyond our traditional boundaries.

Photo credit Leah Worthington

- Objective 2.2 Professional Development – Build and maintain interpersonal relationships to create a culture of belonging and a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment.

We aspire to create an inclusive and supportive work environment where staff are valued and continue to learn and grow in their careers. Objective 2.1 builds our technical skills as well as the collective investment we’re making to address socio-environmental challenges while providing measurable co-benefits.

Professional development (Objective 2.2) provides opportunities for growth, cross-pollination, and advancement. The objective also seeks to create a culture of belonging by building a diverse, inclusive, and nimble workforce that relies on our collective expertise and individual contributions.

**Goal 3: Strategic Growth & Integration – USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.**

- Objective 3.1 – Increase awareness of water’s importance to achieving the USFWS mission, and establish WRT as the unified voice to leadership on water resource matters.
- Objective 3.2 – Leverage the expertise and resources within the WRT and across divisions and programs within USFWS.

Goal 3 objectives are intended to improve conservation delivery by adopting a proactive and science-based approach that fosters cross-programmatic collaboration to ensure adequate water quantity and quality for ecosystems and communities. Objective 3.1 is a renewed approach the WRT will take to continue to be a resource



to leadership on water-related data calls, legislative matters, and policy issues by enhancing our accessibility, outreach, and reporting to leadership. Supporting water-related initiatives Service-wide is the backbone of Objective 3.2 and, with that, the need to target funding support to grow our team in response to ever-increasing water challenges.

#### Goal 4: Partnerships & Coalition Building – Promote inclusivity and collaborations that connect water, ecological systems, and people to address transboundary priorities and advance co-stewardship and environmental justice.

- Objective 4.1 – Promote community engagement to address community impacts and underrepresentation.
- Objective 4.2 – Forge collaborations across agencies, states, and NGOs.

Water is a transboundary resource that we all share, and for which all life depends. Goal 4 is a direct reflection of our desire to shift the conservation paradigm by integrating environmental justice, social science, and co-stewardship in our work to forge new alliances (Objective 4.1). Objective 4.1 likewise adopts the principles of nature-based solutions, which integrates adaptive management, environmental justice, equity, and Indigenous Knowledge in its implementation framework ([600 DM 7](#)). Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge is further bolstered by [301 DM 7](#). Objective 4.2 emphasizes the need to continue to cultivate our existing partnerships, such as continued collaboration with the States in acknowledgement of their role as the water authority, and with other federal agencies, private entities, and NGOs with similar missions. Both the National Fish Habitat Partnership (see below) and the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) provide opportunities to forge stronger interagency collaboration in support of our water conservation mission.

## LAKE SUPERIOR CO-STEWARDSHIP



Red Cliff Tribe fisheries staff lifting gillnets on the Tribe's research boat during the lake trout spawn assessment in management unit WI-2 of Lake Superior.

The Red Cliff and Bad River Tribes maintain sovereign rights to regulate Treaty harvest and cooperatively manage the fishery with the Wisconsin DNR.

The USFWS Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Ashland, WI provides instrumental support with the lake trout stock assessment model to recommend triennial lake trout quotas in collaboration with Red Cliff, Bad River, and Wisconsin DNR fish biologists.

Photo credit Chad Abel

## Alignment with Other Plans and Initiatives

### National Plans & Initiatives

**National Fish Habitat Action Plan (2012)** created the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP), whose mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the nation's aquatic habitat through partnerships that foster aquatic habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people. The plan was developed and endorsed by 19 federal agencies and all 50 State fish and wildlife agencies to improve coordination, communication, and collaboration in aquatic habitat conservation. Goals of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan include:

- Protect and maintain healthy and intact aquatic systems.
- Prevent further degradation of fish habitats that have been adversely affected.
- Reverse declines in the quality and quantity of aquatic habitats to improve the overall health of fish communities and other aquatic organisms.
- Increase the quality and quantity of fish habitats that support a broad natural diversity of native fish and other aquatic species.

**America the Beautiful (2021)** establishes the goal of conserving and restoring 30% of our lands and waters by 2030. Co-chairs of America the Beautiful include the Chair of the Council of Environmental Quality and the Secretaries of DOI, USDA and the Dept. of Commerce. America the Beautiful principles include:

- Support Tribally led conservation and restoration priorities
- Expand collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife habitats and corridors
- Use science as a guide
- Support locally led and locally designed conservation efforts
- Conserve America's lands and waters for the benefit of all people
- Pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation

**America the Beautiful Freshwater Challenge (2024)** sets a new national goal to protect, restore, and reconnect 8 million acres of wetlands and 100,000 miles of our nation's rivers and streams by 2030. The freshwater protection goals rely in part on partnering with Tribal, state, and local efforts to protect and restore America's lakes, rivers, streams, estuaries, and wetlands. Additional goals include:

- Protect our sources of clean drinking water
- Support achieving and maintaining fishable and swimmable waterways
- Enhance the natural climate resilience provided by healthy and functional freshwater and estuary resources
- Support aquatic ecosystem biodiversity and address invasive species



## WETLAND RESTORATION AT KLAMATH MARSH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WITH THE KLAMATH TRIBES

Refuge staff collaborated with [The Klamath Tribes' Ambodat Program](#) to begin to restore the hydrology of the refuge's Little Wocus Bay and promote the growth of Wocus (*Nuphar polysepala*), commonly known as the yellow water lily. Wocus is a culturally significant plant traditionally harvested by The Klamath Tribes for its Wokas (seeds). The collaboration involved building and maintaining five Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA) in the bay to address lower water levels and less riparian woody vegetation than was historically present when Wocus was abundant.



Photo credit © 2014 Sean Patrick

- Honor Tribal trust and treaty obligations and ways of life
- Ensure freshwater resources and estuaries continue to support regional and rural economies
- Harness and protect the national security, supply chain, and drinking water benefits of freshwater and estuary resources
- Protect clean, safe access to our freshwater and estuary resources, especially for communities with environmental justice concerns

**Nature Based Solutions (2022)** are actions that incorporate natural features and processes to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use, and manage natural or modified ecosystems to address socio-environmental challenges while providing measurable co-benefits (600 DM 7). Nature-based solutions integrate adaptive management, environmental justice, equity, and Indigenous Knowledge in its implementation framework.

**Department of Interior Plans & Initiatives FY 2022-2026 DOI Strategic Plan** establishes a high-level framework for DOI bureaus to conserve, protect, manage, and restore our Nation's natural and cultural resources. The plan prioritizes the climate crisis, DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility), environmental stewardship and environmental justice, Tribal Nations, and an inclusive outdoor economy. Goals of the plan are:

- Goal 1 – Promote well-being, equity, and justice for Tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Insular Communities
- Goal 2 – Conserve, protect, manage, and restore natural and cultural resources in the face of climate change and other stressors
- Goal 3 – Sustainably balance the use of resources while supporting communities and the economy
- Goal 4 – Serve and honor the public trust

Each goal has actionable objectives and stepdown performance goals. For example, under Goal 3, objective 3.3 reads, "land, water, and non-energy

mineral resources support the diverse needs of communities” with these performance goals:

- 3.3.1 Residents of the western United States have a sustainable water supply to address impacts of drought and climate change
- 3.3.2 Communities benefit from a balanced approach to using and conserving resources
- 3.3.3 Communities, scientists, and other stakeholders have the information needed to make informed decisions
- 3.3.4 Communities have access to more robust water data, nationally consistent water availability assessments and predictions, and modeling tools to make decisions under changing climate conditions and competing urban, agricultural, and ecological demands

**DOI Climate Action Plan (2021)** identifies actions to address five climate vulnerabilities that directly impact the department’s mission.

- **Vulnerability 1 – People, Communities and Cultural Resources**  
The Department is the primary federal agency charged with carrying out the United States trust responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Native people, maintaining the relationship with 574 federally recognized Tribes, and promoting and supporting self-determination.



STAFF MEMBER AT PENDILLS CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY CLEANING THE WATER INTAKE. PHOTO COURTESY USFWS.

- **Vulnerability 2 – Healthy Watersheds and Water Supplies**  
Climate change is impacting the health and functionality of the Nation’s watersheds, causing significant changes in water quantity and quality across the country. Aquatic ecosystems are increasingly affected by changes in streamflow and the loss of wetlands.
- **Vulnerability 3 – Biodiversity and Ecosystems**  
The Department is committed to enhancing biodiversity, sustaining ecological processes, and promoting the health and function of ecosystems by sustaining fish, wildlife, and plant species.
- **Vulnerability 4 – Coastal and Marine Resources**  
The Department manages, protects, and provides access to significant ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. The USFWS specifically manages 180 marine and coastal National Wildlife Refuges and more than a million square miles of marine National Monuments.

- Vulnerability 5 – Infrastructure and Facilities  
Poorly maintained assets exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, placing them at a higher risk of failure.

## USFWS Plans & Initiatives

**USFWS CoStewardship Work Plan (2023)** was completed in response to [Director's Order 227](#), *Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Tribes and the Native Hawaiian Community, and Other Obligations to Alaska Native Corporations and Alaska Native Organizations, in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters* (2022), with goals for Consistency, Communication, Capacity, Education, and the use of Indigenous Knowledge to bring co-stewardship front and center across all USFWS programs. The plan calls for each USFWS program to create a program-specific plan for implementing CoStewardship objectives (1.10), and to identify CoStewardship champions at all levels of the organization who can support the work plan implementation (3.2) to increase opportunities for collaborative work with Tribes, ANCs, ANOs, and the NHC (3.4). Director's Order 227 steps down the requirements of [joint Secretarial Order 3403](#), signed by the Secretaries of DOI and USDA in 2021.

**NWRS CoStewardship Action Plan (2023)** is the program-specific refuge program plan completed in response to Goal 1.10 of the USFWS CoStewardship Work Plan, detailed above. It calls on programs to track co-stewardship work across the refuge system (2.1), update existing policies and procedures to reflect co-stew principles (2.4), increase opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous Groups (3.2), and to meaningfully and consistently involve Indigenous Groups when carrying out activities that may affect their interests (5.5).

**Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (2024)** The USFWS is finalizing an updated policy and regulation to ensure that biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health (BIDEH) of the NWRS are maintained, and where appropriate, restored and enhanced, in accordance with the NWRS Improvement Act of 1997. The five proposed management directives of the BIDEH regulation are illustrated in the image to the right.



**Natural Resource Leadership Team Strategic Plan and 5-Year Action Plan (2023)** focuses on the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) policy, adopted in 2006, as the framework for delivering wildlife conservation Service-wide. The goal of SHC is to



provide the right conservation in the right places to benefit America’s fish and wildlife in an adaptive management framework. Since 2019, the Natural Resource Leadership Team (NRLT) and the Inventory and Monitoring Coordination Team helped each refuge identify their priority ecosystems and priority species within the larger conservation landscape. The NRLT is integrating climate adaptation into conservation planning and is developing a SHC toolbox to share knowledge, training opportunities, and right-sized survey protocols to inform management.

## Appendix – Detailed Goals, Objectives, and Key Actions

# Appendix

## USFWS FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

### List of Acronyms

AFS - American Fisheries Society	NFH - National Fish Hatchery System
BAWR - NWRS Branch of Air and Water Resources	NHFP - National Fish Habitat Partnership
BIA - Bureau of Indian Affairs	NGO - Non Governmental Organization
Big C - formal consultation with Tribes	NRLT - USFWS Natural Resource Leadership Team
BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	NRPC - USFWS Natural Resource Program Center
BMP - Best Management Practice	NWI - National Wetlands Inventory
CCP - Comprehensive Conservation Plan	NWRS - National Wildlife Refuge System
CoP - Water Resources Community of Practice	Science Apps - USFWS Science Applications Program
DOI - Department of Interior	SOP - Standard Operating Procedure
EJ - Environmental Justice	USFWS - United States Fish and Wildlife Service
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency	WRDT - NWRS Water Resources Database Team
ES - USFWS Ecological Services Program	WRIA - NWRS Water Resource Inventory and Assessment
FAC - USFWS Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program	WRT - Water Resources Team
HARC - Hydrology and Aquatic Resources Conservation webinar series	
HQ - USFWS Headquarters	
ICWP - Interstate Council on Water Policy	
IK - Indigineous Knowledge	
JEDIA - Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility	
LCD - Landscape Conservation Design	
Little C - informal consultation with Tribes	
MB - USFWS Migratory Bird Program	
NAASH - National Assembly for Aquatic Science and Hydrology Conference	
Natl Database Admin - USFWS National Database Administrator	
Natl Water Resources Coord - USFWS National Water Resources Coordinator	
NCTC - USFWS National Conservation Training Center	

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1 Data Management - Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1 Database Management. Ensure accessible, standardized and well managed water data in the USFWS Water Resource Database.	1.1.A Develop standards and protocols for effective cross-regional management of data to standardize tools, settings, and metadata in the USFWS Water Resource Database.	1.1.A.i Review existing data standards, address needs, and facilitate implementation.	WRDT SubTeam	█	█	█	█																
		1.1.A.ii Create new standards for data and develop strategies and timelines for implementation, referencing other federal standards.						█	█	█	█												
	1.1.B Create SOPs for data release, metadata, and data that will be available internally.	1.1.B.i Create standards for data release, and define proper handling for data that does not meet standards.	WRDT SubTeam					█	█														
		1.1.B.ii Update the data portal to improve clarity, accessibility, and standards.		Regional Databse Admins, Natl Database Admin					█	█													



USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1 Data Management - Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.																							
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1 <b>Database Management.</b> Ensure accessible, standardized and well managed water data in the USFWS Water Resource Database.	1.1.C Develop data management plan for data flow in USFWS Water Resource Database, including data archiving and metadata.	1.1.C.i Review existing data management plan elements and identify elements for improvement.	Natl Database Admin, WRDT SubTeam	█																			
		1.1.C.ii Draft improved elements and any additional elements required.			█	█	█																
1.2 <b>Database Utilization and Access.</b> Increase awareness of database applications for USFWS staff to access and store data.	1.2.A Standardize collection and storage of USFWS water quality data.	1.2.A.i Inventory water quality data being collected at refuge and hatchery scale.	Natl Water Resources Coord			█	█																
		1.2.A.ii Provide suggested SOPs for water quality data collection on Water Resource Community of Practice site.				█	█																
		1.2.A.iii Suggest usage of EPA Water Quality Portal to house and improve storage of inventoried water quality data.				█	█	█															
1.2.B Raise awareness and use of the NWI Geospatial Dataset and applications.	1.2.B.i Seek opportunities to communicate with field staff and programs on value of NWI and staff requirements.	NWI Chief Scientist, Natl Water Resources Coord																					

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1 Data Management - Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.																								
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029				
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
1.2 Database Utilization and Access. Increase awareness of database applications for USFWS staff to access and store data.	1.2.C Expand USFWS awareness and utilization of the dataportal to explore, display, and download data.	1.2.C.i Develop and implement Refuge awareness campaign of the dataportal.	Natl Water Resource Coord, Natl Database Admin																					
		1.2.C.ii Develop and implement FAC and ES awareness campaign of the dataportal.																						
	1.2.D Preserve, expand, and make available WRIA threats and needs data.	1.2.D.i Restructure Power BI database to have simplified categories.	BAWR staff, NRPC detailee																					
		1.2.D.ii Develop a new user entry template that aligns with NRPC's specification.																						
		1.2.D.iii Provide access to Power BI database.																						
	1.2.E Expand refuge use of USFWS Water Resource Database in Regions 4 and 5 (R4 and R5).	1.2.E.i Inventory water quantity data collected across R4 and R5 refuges that could be housed in database.	R4/5 WRT Refuge Reps, Natl Water Resources Coord																					
		1.2.E.ii Develop a targeted rollout strategy to promote database use for inventoried refuge data.																						
		1.2.E.iii Host trainings and provide support to bring telemetry and inventoried data into database.	Natl Database Admin																					

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1 Data Management - Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.2 Database Utilization and Access. Increase awareness of database applications for USFWS staff to access and store data.	1.2.E Evaluate need and feasibility for cross-programmatic use of USFWS Water Resource Database.	1.2.E.i Inventory current water quantity data and storage within their programs.	ES, Migratory Birds, FAC, and Science Apps reps to WRT; Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		1.2.E.ii Consider cost benefit of cross-programmatic utilization based on data inventoried and desired accessibility.																					
		1.2.E.iii If warranted, host trainings and provide support to bring cross-programmatic data into database.	Natl Database Admin																				
1.3 Interagency and Public Access to USFWS water data. Make data available through a public-facing dataportal, or by contributing to data sharing platforms that already exist.	1.3.A Create standards and SOPs for data release, metadata, and data that will be available externally.	1.3.A.i Create standards for data release, and define proper handling for data that does not meet standards.	WRDT, Natl Database Admin																				
	1.3.B Engage in decision process to make data available through an external-facing dataport, by contributing to data sharing platforms that already exist, or a combination.	1.3.A.ii Document decision process and basis for the decision on what, if any, data is made available, and the capacity necessary.	Natl Water Resources Coord, National Database Admin																				



USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1 Data Management - Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.																							
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.4 Database <b>Evaluation.</b> Evaluate the USFWS Water Resource Database, the functionality of associated applications, and quality of customer service to determine the preferred software provider.	1.4.A Formalize evaluation factors.	1.4.A.i Evaluation Factor 1 development to meet criteria under Objective 1.1 of WRDT strategic plan.	BAWR staff, NRPC detailee																				
		1.4.A.ii Evaluation Factor 2 development to meet criteria under Objective 1.2 of WRDT strategic plan.																					
		1.4.A.iii Evaluation Factor 3 development to meet criteria under Objective 1.3 of WRDT strategic plan.																					
	1.4.B Have Contract Officer Representative (COR) implement evaluation period and provide findings to Contract Officer.	1.4.B.i COR to work in close coordination with WRDT to develop ratings throughout evaluation period.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
1.4.C If needed, utilize last option year in contract to complete contracting process to bid and select new software provider.	1.4.C.i Work in close coordination with Contracting Officer to ensure process meets federal procurement standards.	Natl Water Resources Coord																					

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1 Data Management - Ensure accessible, standardized, and defensible water data to inform decision making.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.5 <b>Communication.</b> Create and maintain communication forums and access to reference materials for field staff and data managers.	1.5.A Utilize Water Resources Community of Practice site to provide reference materials and access to the WRDT communication site.	1.5.A.i Compile and provide how to documents for common USFWS database tasks (e.g., adding time series data, filtering data, developing rating curves).	Natl Database Admin	█	█	█	█																
		1.5.A.ii Compile and provide suggested water sampling field techniques and SOPs.	Natl Water Resources Coord					█	█	█	█												
		1.5.A.iii Provide links to data portal, EPA Water Quality Portal, and WRIA Power Bi App.	Natl Water Resources Coord					█	█	█	█												
		1.5.A.iv Provide link to WRDT communication site, if developed, or a roles and responsibilities document for database support, or both.	Natl Database Admin			█	█																

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 2 Continuous Learning and Professional Development - Water resource professionals have ample opportunities for growth and well-being within a culture of mentorship, diversity, continuous learning, and professional and technical development.																										
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029						
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
2.1 <b>Continuous Learning.</b> Facilitate continuous learning of the WRT and CoP to maintain a workforce able to respond to changing water resource and demographic conditions, advance career goals, and cultivate water resource expertise.	2.1.A Identify training needs.	2.1.A.i Utilize results of capacity assessment to identify areas to enhance water resource capacity through training of new and existing employees.	Capacity SubTeam, Natl Water Resources Coord	█	█	█	█																			
		2.1.A.ii Identify EJ, implicit bias, and co-stewardship training needs through close coordination with associated USFWS communities of practice (e.g., JEDIA council, BIPOC, NWRS Co-Stew Committee).	Natl Water Resources Coord																							
	2.1.B Inventory, promote, and regularly update existing trainings and reference materials within and outside of DOI.		2.1.B.i Catalog database training materials on CoP.	Natl Database Admin	█	█	█	█																		
			2.1.B.ii Compile inventory of inter and intra agency training resources on CoP and update quarterly.	Natl Water Resources Coord					█	█																
			2.1.B.iii Maintain a reference archive on the CoP of publications, NWI fact sheets, online tools, and links to available reference libraries.	Natl Water Resources Coord	█	█	█																			



USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 2 Continuous Learning and Professional Development - Water resource professionals have ample opportunities for growth and well-being within a culture of mentorship, diversity, continuous learning, and professional and technical development.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.1 <b>Continuous Learning.</b> Facilitate continuous learning of the WRT and CoP to maintain a workforce able to respond to changing water resource and demographic conditions, advance career goals, and cultivate water resource expertise.	2.1.C Develop in-house trainings and learning opportunities, and advocate for the development of enhanced training platforms to address unmet needs.	2.1.C.i Invite EJ and Co-Stewardship practitioners to present at WRT meetings at least twice per year.	WRT	█		█						█	█		█					█	█		█
		2.1.C.ii Produce a monthly, 6-part HARC winter webinar series annually, with at least one EJ presenter and one tribal presenter each year.	Natl Water Resources Coord			█	█																
		2.1.C.iii Work with learning-based organizations and platforms (e.g. Instream Flow Council, AFS, NCTC, DOI Talent) to encourage development of unmet learning needs.	Natl Water Resources Coord													█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 2 Continuous Learning and Professional Development - Water resource professionals have ample opportunities for growth and well-being within a culture of mentorship, diversity, continuous learning, and professional and technical development.																								
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029				
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2.2 Professional Development - Build and maintain interpersonal relationships to create a culture of belonging and a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment.	2.2.A Prioritize Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in workforce planning to meet the objectives of FWS MD-715 reports and CLF requirements in coordination with regions and Workforce Diversity Coordinators	2.2.A.i Provide a job board resource through the CoP and connection with the Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management and the USFWS Workforce Recruiting Staff as vacancies occur.	Natl Water Resource Coord, WRT supervisors																					
		2.2.A.ii Compile relevant USFWS plans on meeting CLF Diversity requirements (e.g., Barrier Analysis Team Reports, Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan, MetGroup Systems Assessment). Pull applicable sections into WRT annual workplans to track progress.	Temporary Volunteer Assignment																					
		2.2.A.iii Consolidate resources for hiring BMPs on the CoP. Promote the use of scoring rubrics (e.g., FWS Paneling Checklist and Best Practices).																						

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 2 Continuous Learning and Professional Development - Water resource professionals have ample opportunities for growth and well-being within a culture of mentorship, diversity, continuous learning, and professional and technical development.																								
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Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2.2 Professional Development - Build and maintain interpersonal relationships to create a culture of belonging and a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment.	2.2.B Improve youth mentoring in the WRT workforce.	2.2.B.i Submit at least 1 host application annually within the WRT to each; BIA WaterCorps, Infrastructure Management Division intern program, and the Directorate Fellows Program.	WRT	█				█				█				█				█				
		2.2.B.ii Maintain an active presence at internship, fellowship, and early career onboarding sessions to promote USFWS water resource careers. Track participation as part of annual accomplishments reporting.																						
		2.2.B.iii Provide all new staff a one-year, non-supervisory mentor from a different program or region.	WRT Supervisors, BAWR Branch Chief	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	



USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 2 Continuous Learning and Professional Development -Water resource professionals have ample opportunities for growth and well-being within a culture of mentorship, diversity, continuous learning, and professional and technical development.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.2 Professional Development - Build and maintain interpersonal relationships to create a culture of belonging and a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment.	2.2.C Hold recurring in-person meetings to build and maintain relationships among WRT members across USFWS.	2.2.C.i Host NAASH conference biennially.	WRT																				
		2.2.C.ii Schedule an annual WRT meeting on non-NAASH years.																					
		2.2.C.iii Encourage regions and NRPC to set aside travel assistance funding, prioritizing use by early career and lower grade employees across WRT.	BAWR Branch Chief, WRT																				
	2.2.D Adopt cross-regional workload sharing to fill capacity gaps and provide development opportunities	2.2.D.i Use capacity assessment findings to enhance water resource capacity through temporary or permanent placement of national support SMEs. Be proactive in considering shared positions as needs arise.	WRT																				
2.2.E Utilize the CoP to create a bridge between WRT regions, programs, and the broader community of water resource professionals.	2.2.E.i Periodically highlight individual and team successes on CoP in a story format similar to the "People" section of Wild Weekly. Share stories with Wild Weekly as well for potential inclusion.	Natl Water Resources Coord, WRT																					

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 3 Strategic Growth and Integration - USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 Increase awareness of water's importance to achieving the USFWS mission, and establish WRT as the unified voice to leadership on water resource matters.	3.1.A Produce and disseminate WRT annual accomplishments report no later than March 1 of the following year.	3.1.A.i Report on national cross-programmatic accomplishments, including the database team and others organized nationally.	WRT, BAWR		■				■				■				■				■		
		3.1.A.ii Include accomplishments reported from each region's refuge programs.	Regional WRT Refuge Leads																				
		3.1.A.iii Include photos, illustrative figures, and other visuals to report accomplishments with concisely written copy.	Natl Water Resources Coord		■				■				■				■				■		
		3.1.A.iv Disseminate to regional leadership teams, NRLT, HQ, and program analysts who compile reporting widgets to Congress and administration officials.	BAWR																				
		3.1.A.v Attend at least one leadership meeting each year to brief highlights of the accomplishment report.	Natl Water Resources Coord			■				■				■				■				■	

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 3 Strategic Growth and Integration - USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.																							
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Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 Increase awareness of water's importance to achieving the USFWS mission, and establish WRT as the unified voice to leadership on water resource matters.	3.1.B Ensure Department, Regional, and HQ awareness of WRT as a resource for water-related data calls.	3.1.B.i Do annual outreach to DOI/USFWS Chiefs of Staff, identifying the collective expertise available to respond to water related inquiries (data calls, legislative inquiries, and policy issues). Be responsive to requests.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		3.1.B.ii Perform issue-based briefings to leadership as needed when water related court cases and other legal, policy, and legislative matters occur.	Water Rights SubTeam, MB Regs & Policy Coordinator																				
		3.1.B.iii Send annual accomplishment report no later than March 1 each year to Chiefs of Staff and others.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		3.2.B.iv Maintain communication channels amongst team members when requests are received from regional/HQ forums. Respond as a collective as the situation dictates.	Regional WRT leads, BAWR Branch Chief																				

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 3 Strategic Growth and Integration - USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 Increase awareness of water's importance to achieving the USFWS mission, and establish WRT as the unified voice to leadership on water resource matters.	3.1.C Coordinate communication efforts to USFWS audiences.	3.1.C.i Target a biennial presentation at the All-Hands meeting.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		3.1.C.ii Invite leadership to water science and policy forums organized by WRT like NAASH and HARC, and issue of the day solutions the WRT workshops first internally.	Water Rights SubTeam, MB Regs & Policy Coordinator																				
3.2 Leverage the expertise and resources within the WRT and across divisions and programs within USFWS.	3.2.A Contribute to NWRS technical guidance and be responsive for requests for technical resources.	3.2.A.i Link WRT to Climate Adaptation Technical Services to contribute to climate change vulnerability assessments and other climate-based refuge needs.	BAWR Branch Chief																				
		3.2.A.ii Support teams engaged in refuge planning (CCPs, habitat and species plans, IMPs) and landscape conservation design efforts.	Regional WRT leads, BAWR Branch Chief																				



USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 3 Strategic Growth and Integration - USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.																							
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Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.2 Leverage the expertise and resources within the WRT and across divisions and programs within USFWS.	3.2.A Contribute to NWRS technical guidance and be responsive to requests for resources.	3.2.A.iii Provide field survey protocols, monitoring techniques, and database resources to field staff upon request, in coordination with WRDT.	Natl Database Admin																				
		3.2.A.iv Place a water rep on the NRLT, I&M Coordination Team, and Climate Change Coordinating Group.	BAWR Branch Chief																				
	3.2.B Strengthen national and regional channels to achieve the USFWS mission to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.	3.2.B.i Maintain proactive lines of communication across regions and programs at WRT monthly meetings to find areas of mutual benefit.	WRT																				
		3.2.B.ii Participate with NWI in American Wetlands Month (May) to reach new audiences.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		3.2.B.iii Utilize capacity assessment findings to develop a collaborative framework that can support and react to immediate issues and short-term needs.	WRT, BAWR Branch Chief, Natl Water Resources Coord																				

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 3 Strategic Growth and Integration - USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.																							
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Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.2 Leverage the expertise and resources within the WRT and across divisions and programs within USFWS.	3.2.B Strengthen national and regional channels to achieve the USFWS mission to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.	3.2.B.iv Encourage all WRT members to provide areas of expertise and WRT affiliation on Co-Worker Connections application.	Natl Water Resources Coord	█				█				█				█				█			
		3.2.B.v Inventory and assess the diverse water needs of the National Fish Hatchery System in order to better message on and partner regarding those needs.	FAC Reps, WRT Reps	█				█				█				█				█			
		3.2.B.vi Join Science Apps, Migratory Bird Joint Venture, Fish & Aquatic Conservation, and NFHP national calls to detail the water nexus and support needs.	Natl Water Resources Coord, WRT reps	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	3.2.C Sustain the funding needed to do our work.	3.2.C.i Solidify NRPC annual funding support to regions for WRIA or other WRT-endorsed and prioritized initiatives by start of fiscal year.	Regional WRT Refuge Leads	█				█				█				█				█			

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 3 Strategic Growth and Integration - USFWS water resource programs have sufficient capacity and resources to support effective conservation delivery and to proactively address climate change and other landscape-level challenges affecting Service operations, refuges, surrounding communities, and watersheds.																								
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029				
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
3.2 Leverage the expertise and resources within the WRT and across divisions and programs within USFWS.	3.2.C Sustain the funding needed to do our work.	3.2.C.ii Identify non-traditional funding strategies as opportunities arise for project-specific priorities that meet a medium-term need and are clear in scope and duration.	WRT																					
		3.2.C.iii Seek sustained, long-term funding by highlighting water resource needs in the USFWS Greenbook.	BAWR Branch Chief, Natl Water Resources Coord																					
	3.2.D Utilize CoP as the WRT's communication and awareness channel to the USFWS.	3.2.D.i Develop a contact list of staff and resources, updating annually.	Natl Water Resources Coord																					
		3.2.D.ii Post and archive important WRT information materials, like annual accomplishment report, NAASH conference proceedings, and HARC webinar recordings.	Natl Water Resources Coord																					

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 4 Partnerships and Coalition Building - Promote inclusivity and collaborations that connect water, ecological systems, and people to address transboundary priorities and advance co-stewardship and environmental justice.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.1 Promote community engagement to address community impacts and underrepresentation	4.1.A Routinely include environmental justice and co-stewardship considerations when asked for technical feedback and recommendations.	4.1.A.i Provide the BIA map viewer tool and NWRS Geographic Connections tool on the CoP to identify tribal communities that could be influenced or impacted by natural resource decisions and to forge communication channels.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		4.1.A.ii Compile on the CoP at-risk community tools like Climate and EJ Screening Tool, EPA:EJScreen, and EnviroAtlas to consider project impacts on marginalized communities and to forge communication channels.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		4.1.A.iii Advocate for inclusivity in public engagement during planning initiatives like CCPs, LCDs, watershed plans, etc.	WRT																				



USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 4 Partnerships and Coalition Building - Promote inclusivity and collaborations that connect water, ecological systems, and people to address transboundary priorities and advance co-stewardship and environmental justice.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.1 Promote community engagement to address community impacts and underrepresentation	4.1.A Routinely include environmental justice and co-stewardship considerations when asked for technical feedback and recommendations.	4.1.A.iv Link CoP to NWRS Co-Stewardship Toolkit to understand actions that require Big C, actions that promote Little C, utilization of IK, and customs and norms on how to approach Tribes in a good way.	Natl Water Resources Coord																				
		4.1.A.v Encourage, recognize, and reward WRT members for developing relationships with local communities and Tribes. Include noteworthy examples in annual accomplishments report.	WRT																				
4.2 Forge collaborations across agencies, states, and NGOs.	4.2.A Disperse WRT member involvement across interagency, interstate, and NGO groups and committees to maximize participation and influence.	4.2.A.i Ensure at least one WRT member attends all WestFAST meetings, all ICWP meetings, and frequently explore opportunities for expanded USFWS participation on other partnerships addressing critical water resource issues.	WRT																				

USFWS Water Resources FY2025 - FY2029 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 4 Partnerships and Coalition Building - Promote inclusivity and collaborations that connect water, ecological systems, and people to address transboundary priorities and advance co-stewardship and environmental justice.																							
				FY2025				FY2026				FY2027				FY2028				FY2029			
Objective	Key Action	Task	Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.2 Forge collaborations across agencies, states, and NGOs.	4.2.A Disperse WRT member involvement across interagency, interstate, and NGO groups and committees to maximize participation and influence.	4.2.A.ii Identify networks outside the USFWS that assess water quantity and quality and, where appropriate, partner in such a way that USFWS monitoring is complementary to these broader efforts.	SubTeam delegated by WRT																				
		4.2.A.iii Prepare a white paper that identifies key agencies and organizations who missions are similar to, or whose actions significantly impact, the USFWS mission with respect to water resources and aquatic habitats; clarify roles, responsibilities, and channels of communication; and outline an outreach strategy to identify and advance a shared agenda.	SubTeam delegated by WRT																				