

## QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one) 2022\_1st 2022\_\_2<sup>nd</sup> 2022\_\_3<sup>rd</sup> 2022\_4th

Grant Program, Number and Title: RCN 2017-03 GSA 00029, Amendment #4- Synthesis

Contractor: Terwilliger Consulting, Inc.

Project Leader: Karen Terwilliger

Abstract: Summary

The proposed 2023 Conservation Synthesis updates the original TCI 2013 report that summarizes the innovative and strategic approaches to conservation developed collaboratively with NEAFWA's Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee (NEFWDC) and its key partners. This synthesis captures what the Northeast states have created together; a regional conservation planning framework enabling the systematic development of common terrestrial and aquatic habitat classifications, identification of Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (RSGCN), an integrated monitoring framework for species and their habitats, and regional assessments of species and habitat condition. Key Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need conservation efforts (e.g., New England cottontail, Blanding's turtle, Xeric pollinators) document how the states apply this regional conservation planning framework across state lines to preempt federal listing by implementing on the ground conservation.

The report synthesizes almost 100 plans/projects, resource documents, and tools to provide guidance and information that states can incorporate into their Wildlife Action Plans and beyond. NEAFWA's Fish and Wildlife Diversity Committee has led the development of this diverse set of regional conservation tools through its Regional Conservation Needs (RCN) Grant Program that addresses key landscape-scale wildlife conservation needs of the Northeast, as prioritized by the states and their partners. The RCN Program continues to provide states with the tools they need to meet their wildlife and habitat conservation goals in the context of a regional planning framework. The conservation projects synthesized in this report provide a strategic foundation and should be used to inform further cooperative efforts to protect and conserve the Northeast's vulnerable fish and wildlife and their habitats.

This report follows the order of the eight required State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) elements. Chapter 1 presents the Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Chapter 2 presents information on the key regional habitats and work with partners and Job 3 PIs to include any available maps and habitat condition information. Chapter 3 synthesizes the key regional threats and Chapter 4 lists the conservation actions that address these threats. Chapter 5 describes the regional monitoring framework, available protocols, and specific examples. Chapter 6 highlights the regional coordination, review and partnerships that continue to enable exemplary collaboration across the Northeast states. Appendices provide summaries and information for each Regional Conservation Needs Grant Program project and selected species and habitats.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes.

Progress Achieved: scoping meetings began. Steering team meetings confirmed goals, objectives and a draft table of contents.

### **Project Scoping : Fall- Winter 2021-2022**

The first phase of this project was spent surveying and gathering input from the SWAP Coordinators subcommittee/work group of the NEFWDC to identify their needs. This first several months would be focused on gathering input to design the contents/format of the synthesis. The scoping process could include a survey and/or webinar with follow up input /feedback so that SWAP coordinators have input into what they want the synthesis to contain. A Work Group will be identified and will be coordinated with on a monthly basis throughout the project.

To complete this Scoping phase by 31 December 2021, we:

- Formed a project Work Group of representatives from the NEFWDC and SWAP Coordinators Subcommittee;
- Coordinated monthly meetings throughout the project, or at an interval mutually agreed upon to meet project objectives;
- Provided a summary of the consensus reached by the Work Group on expectations for the 2023 Northeast Conservation Synthesis.

### **Project Design and Planning : Winter-Spring 2022**

The second phase of the project we spent designing how to incorporate that information into the project, coordinating closely with SWAP coordinators/representatives and providing regular progress reports monthly. Coordination was planned with these committees/Work Group as well as other relevant projects including the Lexicon, Conservation Assessment, and Database projects. Other NEFWDC Technical Services Projects was coordinated closely with including the RSGCN current update. This Design and Planning phase was conducted between December 2021 and March 2022. To complete this phase by 31 March 2022, TCI:

- Coordinated with the Work Group/SWAP coordinators and provide progress updates as requested; we schedule 2 meeting with them and a third that coordinated all projects-lexicon, and the TNC habitat assessment.
- TCI designed and planned how the Synthesis will coordinate with other projects, including the Lexicon Update (Job 1), Conservation Status Update (Job 3), and Database projects;
- We met with our team and the other projects monthly to coordinate species, habitats, threats and are now working on actions.

This quarter, TCI:

Tasks initiated and/or completed:

- Collaborate with the RSGCN Update project to identify and compile data on RSGCN in the Northeast (Element 1)
- Compile list of reliable data sources and databases from RSGCN taxa teams for specific taxonomic groups (Elements 1 & 5)
- Solicit and compile region-wide threats (existing and emerging) from RSGCN taxa teams for specific taxonomic groups (Element 3)
- Attend NEFWDTC, SWAP Coordinators, Lexicon and Conservation Status Project Committee Meetings
- Prepare and submit presentation on the Synthesis update for the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Meeting
- Continue analysis of Regional Threats and Conservation Actions for RSGCN dataset (Elements 3 & 4)
- Continue development of habitat and threat classification systems for regional roll-up and analysis, coordinating with the RSGCN Update and Lexicon projects (Elements 2 & 3)
- Host planning team meeting (January 11, 2022) to evaluate habitats and threats options (Elements 2 & 3)
- Prepare and give presentation on project to SWAP Coordinators at their February 10, 2022, meeting
- Evaluate Midwest and Southeast regions' methods to identify regional threats and conservation actions for RSGCN; share their approaches with planning team (Elements 3 & 4)
- Collaborate with the Lexicon project to evaluate the CMP classification system for Conservation Actions, draft a customized approach, and host a joint planning meeting (March 21, 2022) with the Lexicon project team to review options (Element 4)
- Attend presentation on new BMPs for shorebird conservation at the USFWS biannual conference for piping plovers, least terns and red knots (Elements 3, 4 & 5)
- Attend NE CASC seminar on Northeast climate change drivers (Element 3)
- Host information sharing meeting with the Electric Power Research Institute on potential partnership opportunities related to renewable energy projects (Element 7)
- Review workshop findings from USACE and partners on North Atlantic / Mid-Atlantic beneficial use of dredged material and partnership opportunities (Element 7)
- Prepare progress report on project for NEFWDTC Annual Report

**Developed and submitted to the Work Group/SWAP Coordinators a detailed outline for the 2023 Northeast Conservation Synthesis**

We provided a draft TOC for the synthesis and solicited input at our team meetings. we presented to the NE SWAP coordinators and NEFWDTC as progress reports and again solicited input at each of their monthly meetings.

Difficulties Encountered in Meeting Goals and Objectives: The NE SWAP Database has outgrown its capacity and structure and would benefit greatly from an upgrade to a web-based platform.

Expected End Date: February 29, 2023

Costs: federal expense to date: \$8,666.25

Total 2022 YEAR to date expenses (include this quarter): = \$13,458.75

Total Approved Budgeted Funds yr 5: \$75,000

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

**The foregoing information is accurate as of the date set forth below.**

**TERWILLIGER CONSULTING, INC.**

By: *Karen Terwilliger* Name: Karen Terwilliger

Title: President, Terwilliger Consulting, Inc.

Date: 4-6-22