



The National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan: A Brief History

Last Updated: August 2021

- The National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan (hereafter “Plan”) was originally the brainchild of the Midwest Pheasant Study Group (MPSG). The MPSG was a sanctioned working group of technical experts within the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) states.
- At the 2006 MPSG meeting in Nebraska, the subject of initiating a national conservation planning process for pheasants was discussed. Several MPSG members were also involved in the planning and activities associated with the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI), and saw merit in applying a similar approach to range-wide pheasant management.
- At the 2008 MPSG meeting in Ohio, a draft outline and timeline for the plan were constructed. Plan expanded to include non-MAFWA state biologists and encompass the entire pheasant range.
- At the 2009 meeting in North Dakota, it was agreed the plan would have a harvest-based objective, as most states consistently collected harvest data. Habitat goals were back calculated based on harvest numbers states desired to maintain.
- At their 2012 meeting in Kansas, the MAFWA Directors received a draft of the Plan from the MPSG and voted to approve it. MAFWA directors requested the MPSG pursue a Multistate Conservation Grant for funding the plan coordinator. After failing to win grants in 2013 and 2014 the MAFWA directors recommended the MPSG consider other funding mechanisms.
- A state funding mechanism similar to the NBCI was agreed upon to fund a coordinator. In 2014, the MAFWA Directors took the lead in raising funds to hire a Plan coordinator across the 23 states involved in creating the Plan. Pheasants Forever pledged additional funding and agreed to house the coordinator.
- The Plan was forwarded to AFWA’s Bird Conservation Committee and subsequently approved by AFWA in September 2014. At the 2014 MAFWA Directors meeting, it was decided to allow the MPSG’s charter to expire in 2015, and form a new national technical committee.
- The National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee (NWPTC) met for the first time in September 2014 in Walla Walla, Washington. Draft bylaws for the new organization were also constructed.
- The MAFWA Directors voted to formally disband the MPSG at their 2015 summer meeting, to be replaced by the NWPTC. The MAFWA Executive Committee asked Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Director Jim Douglas to facilitate the hiring of the coordinator and to provide oversight for the position until a Management Board could be formed.

- A coordinator (Scott Taylor) was hired and started April 6, 2016 at the Pheasants Forever office in Brookings, South Dakota.
- In April 2016, Management Board members were solicited among the 19 states and organizations providing funding for the coordinator position. As of early June, 11 states had named a board member, and the first Management Board meeting (via conference call) occurred on June 6th.
- The original Management Board approved a Coordinator Work Plan, a Standard Operating Procedures document, and elected Tony Leif of South Dakota as Chairperson on July 18, 2016.
- Following the addition of several new members, the 14-member Management Board held its first formal meeting on September 13, 2016 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Russ Mason of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources succeeded Tony Leif as Board Chairperson on September 10th, 2018.
- The Management Board directed the Plan Coordinator to begin work on a revision of the 2013 National Plan in March 2019. The Management Board, Technical Committee, and Plan Coordinator subsequently held a joint meeting in North Dakota that October to develop content and direction for the revision.
- The Pheasants Forever office in Brookings, South Dakota closed in the fall of 2019; the Plan Coordinator relocated to a home office in Manhattan, Kansas.
- The Plan Coordinator and Technical Committee developed the second edition of the National Plan, which was approved by the Management Board on July 26th, 2021.