

**Applying**  
***Wildlife Governance Principles***  
**in**  
**Public Trust Practice**

**A Guide for Improving Your Agency's**  
**Public Trust Practice**

Developed collaboratively by

Daniel Decker, Meghan Baumer, Christian Smith, Ann Forstchen,  
Michael Schiavone, Patrick Lederle and William Siemer

December 2018

(Version 2.1)

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Alignment to Wildlife Governance Principles.....	3
Our Vision in a Nutshell .....	3
Purpose and Use of this Guide.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
Background and Conceptual Foundation for Wildlife Governance Principles .....	6
Principles Needed to Guide Change .....	7
Key Terms.....	8
Wildlife Governance Principles.....	10
Readiness to Undertake the Agency Self-Assessment .....	12
Planning the WGP Assessment and Workshop .....	13
Get Ready.....	13
How to Get the Ball Rolling—the “Art” of Asking Questions .....	16
Agency Alignment with Wildlife Governance Principles: Guide to Using the Agency Self- Assessment Tool .....	17
The Agency Self-Assessment Tool .....	17
Guide to Using the Assessment Tool Results Report.....	22
Diagnostic Questions .....	29
Literature Cited .....	41
Appendices.....	42
Appendix A: Wildlife Governance Principles in Plain Language .....	42
Appendix B: Sample Facilitator’s Timeline to a WGP Workshop.....	43
Appendix C: Workshop Logistics.....	45
Appendix D: Template for a 3-day workshop, including preparation .....	46
Appendix E: Sample WGP Facilitator’s Workshop Agenda.....	51
Appendix F: Sample Workshop Flow Chart .....	54
Appendix G: Thoughts about people to involve .....	55
Appendix H: Email template to send to workshop participants.....	56
Appendix I: Results Report Interpretation at a Glance.....	57
Appendix J: Frequently Asked Questions about the WGP Workshops .....	58
Appendix K: WGP Case Study (OPTIONAL) .....	66

# Introduction

## Alignment to Wildlife Governance Principles

Fish and wildlife conservation is changing and becoming more complicated. Conservation agencies are facing many challenges, such as the increasing difference between values of stakeholders and agency staff; rampant habitat change/loss; novel impacts of climate change and invasive species; low citizen trust of government decision-making processes; generally decreasing participation in outdoor recreational activities; myriad impacts of urbanization and globalization; simultaneously managing both species declines and species overabundance; social conflict over the goals of wildlife management; increasing diversity of active interests in fish and wildlife; and increasing negative human-wildlife interactions. Of necessity, wildlife management agencies need to adapt their governance practices and procedures to address this range of contemporary social-ecological conditions if they wish to maintain support for their actions and improve the outcomes of conservation. Our objective in offering Wildlife Governance Principles (WGP)<sup>1</sup>, an Agency Self-Assessment tool, and the advice and other materials in this practitioner's guide is to support ecologically and socially responsible fish and wildlife conservation and thereby help state wildlife agencies (SWAs) in their efforts to relevant, valued and supported by society.

## Our Vision in a Nutshell

We have in mind a future where SWAs are broadly recognized as relevant, highly valued and strongly supported by society because:

- SWAs provide benefits to a broad cross-section of Americans.
- Stakeholders have substantial opportunity to influence wildlife management decisions and in turn are held to account with respect to considering the trade-offs between their interests and the needs of other beneficiaries (present and future).
- SWA commissioners (trustees), administrators and professional staff are fair and transparent in the exercise of their duties.
- Policies and processes are in place to ensure public wildlife resources are available for future generations.

Currently SWAs are under considerable pressure to be impartial, transparent and accountable, and to provide for a greater diversity of benefits from administration of public wildlife resources. As we thought about closing the gap between our vision of a better future and the current situation, we concluded that adoption of a set of broad, inclusive, and adaptable

---

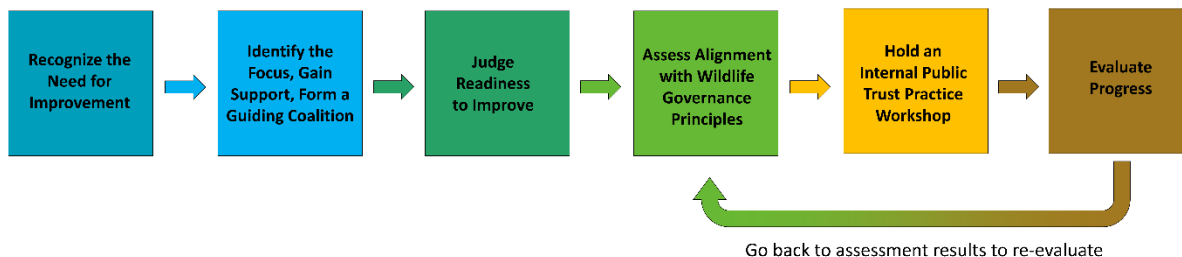
<sup>1</sup> Decker, D. J., Smith, C. A., Forstchen, A. B., Hare, D., Pomeranz, E. F., Doyle-Capitman, C., Schuler, K, and Organ, J. F. 2016. [Governance Principles for Wildlife Conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#). *Conservation Letters*, 9(4), 290-295.

principles was needed to guide the approach taken by a SWA. We believe the Wildlife Governance Principles presented by Decker et al. (2016) meet this need. We developed this guide and related tools that a wildlife agency can use to assess its alignment with the principles. We also developed an approach to facilitate internal SWA discussion about assessment results and to encourage leaders to identify and prioritize actions to improve alignment, keeping in mind each agency's unique situation and capacity for change. We have learned, however, that leaders should assess whether their agency is ready to think critically about and consider changes in practices of their agency before conducting an assessment of agency alignment with WGP's.

## Purpose and Use of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to complement the Public Trust Practice website <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/> by providing background and advice to agency employees who are formal or informal change agents empowered to work as facilitators with a group of agency staff as they learn about the Wildlife Governance Principles (WGP's), explore how well their agency's practices are aligned with the principles, and identify ways to improve such alignment. Basically, we share advice to help a SWA leader and his/her team design and facilitate a workshop that encourages agency staff to consider their self-assessment results and identify strategies for improvement.

This process is illustrated in the diagram below, and is described in more detail at <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/>



The website provides much of the background information needed to proceed to an agency self-assessment workshop (the first three boxes in the diagram above). The topics covered include: [agency transformation literature](#), [agency strategic change](#), [public trust concepts](#), the [wildlife governance principles](#), the [public trust anthology](#), the [principles performance assessment tool](#) (PPAT), and the [agency culture and capacity characterization instrument](#) (ACCC). An understanding of these concepts and taking the readiness assessments (the PPAT and ACCC) will help an agency determine if they are ready to embark on a self-assessment of the Wildlife Governance Principles and workshop (the final three boxes in the diagram above).

This guide covers all the information needed to interpret the results of the Wildlife Governance Principles self-assessment tool and to run a workshop that offers ideas about structuring discussions of those results. The expected outcomes of the workshop include understanding of governance principles that, if applied, will improve processes and procedures that ensure delivery of a broad suite of wildlife-related benefits to a diverse set of stakeholders. Application of the principles may look different from state to state; results of the self-assessment are not intended to be used to compare states. Every state is at a different point with respect to applying each of the principles based on their organizational history and social and political environments.

Part One of this guide provides brief overviews of the concepts of Public Trust Thinking (PTT) and Good Governance (GG), definitions, and points to additional resources that form the foundation for the WGP. Part Two provides guidance for planning the Agency Self-Assessment. Part Three details how to implement the Agency Self-Assessment tool and conduct a workshop to interpret and apply the results.

Some agencies will be prepared to advance immediately through the process of using the Agency Self-Assessment tool and holding a workshop to improve alignment with WGP. Other agencies may need to lay additional groundwork before undertaking the whole process.

To avoid negative reaction to the process, it is important to emphasize from the outset that improving alignment with WGP as described in this guide is an internal exercise, not one imposed by an outsider. Furthermore, the process is not prescriptive; agency staff will analyze their organization's strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve. This guide provides a framework for that analysis and facilitated discussion of the analysis.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors appreciate the many kinds of support received for the Wildlife Governance Principles outreach effort. Primary funding to develop and pilot test workshops and related materials during 2016 was provided by an Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Multi-State Conservation Grant (MSCG), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). In-kind support was provided by employers of the authors (FWC, MDNR, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation [NYSDEC], Wildlife Management Institute, Cornell University). Many people have contributed to thinking about this topic as participants in workshops to develop the training module concept and as reviewers of draft materials: Darragh Hare (Cornell University), Cynthia Jacobson (US Fish and Wildlife Service), Heidi Kretser (Wildlife Conservation Society), John Organ (US Geological Survey), and Shawn Riley (Michigan State University). Agency participants in four pilot workshops hosted by FWC, MDNR, Montana Game, Fish and Parks and NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife provided feedback for improvement of the training materials, including the facilitator's guide and the Wildlife Governance Principles Alignment Assessment instrument. A MSCG from AFWA is the primary source of support for the 2017 national training effort implemented by way of regional workshops.

## —Part One—

### Background and Conceptual Foundation for Wildlife Governance Principles

The purpose of Part One of this guide is to briefly review essential aspects of governance of public wildlife resources and define some terms. With respect to governance, we focus on public trust thinking (PTT) and good governance (GG); both of these ideas are covered in the PTP website (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/public-trust-concepts/>). We emphasize public trust thinking and good governance because the combination provides a linkage between legal concepts of trusteeship inherent to the public trust doctrine and decision-making processes inherent to wildlife management. We observe that PTT and GG are neither comprehensively nor consistently applied in wildlife management, but believe these ideas could be incorporated productively across the board. We also present [10 principles proposed for wildlife resource governance](#) (Decker et al., 2016).

In this guide, we have adopted a slightly modified version of the definition of wildlife management presented in “The Essence of Wildlife Management” (Riley et al., 2002). Our approach to the subject sees wildlife management as:

***...the guidance of informed decision-making processes and implementation of socially acceptable practices to purposefully influence interactions among and between people, wildlife and habitats to achieve impacts valued by stakeholders.***

Although the term governance is not explicitly used by Riley and associates, their definition makes clear that the rules and characteristics of decision making are central to sound management, as is stakeholder engagement that informs and facilitates management decisions. The nature of such decision making and associated approaches to stakeholder input are core components of effective wildlife-resource governance.

The successes and continuing challenges of wildlife conservation in the United States are well chronicled. Despite more than a century of practice, wildlife resource governance continues to evolve for state and federal agencies and their partners. Several authors have argued recently for reforming or transforming the wildlife conservation “institution” as it currently exists (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-transformation/>). Jacobson et al. (2010) and others have called for transformational, adaptive leadership to help guide positive changes in wildlife-resource governance (Decker et al., 2011). Change has been called for in three primary aspects of SWAs’ character: their *goals and purposes*; their *activities* (the services or products offered); and their *focus* on who is served (those benefitting from or otherwise affected by the SWA’s activity). Though never easily accomplished, Jacobson et al. (2010) found transformative change occurring in SWAs where: (1) leadership promoted cultural change conducive to broadening goals; (2) strategies to expand organizational boundaries and grow

coalitions included traditional and non-traditional groups; (3) public interest was systematically and comprehensively assessed, (4) accountability was demonstrated (evaluation was conducted to assess the extent to which impacts were produced); and (5) expansion of programs and services occurred.

The core message for SWAs coming out of the recent and ongoing discourse about agency transformation is that change is occurring in agencies (at different rates in different states), is expected by society (to different degrees by different stakeholders) and is inevitable. The “bottom line” for agency leaders is transformation can either be done largely *to* your agency or largely *by* your agency, as a purposeful organizational effort to provide strategic, vision-based direction to change within constraints of a public agency (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-strategic-change/>).

## Principles Needed to Guide Change

Change can be threatening for some staff and stakeholders. Having a set of principles that reflect the core beliefs of the agency and its mandated role in society can aid agency change efforts by providing comfort that whatever the specifics of change may be, the outcome will be consistent with those principles. Principles that reflect present-day expectations and aspirations for wildlife-resource *governance* and provide direction for public wildlife administrators, managers and their partners were offered recently (see below in the Wildlife Governance Principles section). This guide is designed to assist you in facilitating discussion about application of these principles, which we believe will help achieve wildlife conservation goals that are ecologically responsible and, to the extent possible, responsive to diverse societal desires for benefits from wildlife conservation and management.

The ideas and concepts ascribed to the public trust *doctrine* (the legal basis for government jurisdiction over wildlife) have important implications for wildlife resource governance. We adopt the approach others have suggested (Hare & Blossey, 2014), however, by looking beyond the legal focus of the public trust doctrine to public trust *thinking* (PTT), the broader set of ideas that informs public trust doctrine, and in turn the policies and practices of most wildlife agencies. PTT is an orientation towards natural resource ownership, access, and use that can be discerned across human cultures over time. PTT has arguably always applied in wildlife conservation and governance in the U.S., and interest in more fully exploring the implications of PTT applied to wildlife resources is increasing. Interest in Good Governance (GG) norms is also growing, which affects all public agencies including those administering natural resources such as wildlife. We therefore also summarize general GG expectations, many already embodied in statutes and administrative codes, and highlight their influence on wildlife conservation. We believe the combination of PTT and GG provide comprehensive guidance for contemporary wildlife conservation governance. Public trust doctrine and good governance can be found on the PTP website: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/public-trust-concepts/>

Refer to the following for an anthology of additional relevant literature:  
<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/public-trust-anthology/>.

One might ask, if both PTT and GG concepts are already being applied in wildlife management, what's the added value of a set of wildlife resource governance principles in conservation? The answer to this question centers on consistency and comprehensiveness of application. The U.S. wildlife conservation institution lacks an explicit, overarching expression of conservation governance principles (not to be confused with scientific principles or principles of professional ethics). Although some ideas associated with PTT and GG are operationalized in wildlife conservation, they are neither comprehensively nor consistently applied, even though public wildlife resource administrators in most states in the U.S. are obliged to implement them (depending on the legal framework they are operating under). This leads to the perception, if not reality, of inconsistent approaches to wildlife management across jurisdictions; a confusing situation for stakeholders. Misalignment of agency actions with PTT and GG contributes to loss of relevancy to the public, a decline in legitimacy and ability to implement conservation actions, and increasing occurrence of conflicts among stakeholders. The recently proposed wildlife governance principles (WGP) (Decker et al., 2016) were offered to guide wildlife conservation efforts in accordance with both PTT and GG, and ultimately to minimize the negative consequences of misalignment.

To facilitate application of WGP, we developed an assessment tool to help a state agency determine how well its practices align with the wildlife governance principles. The main value of results from the assessment tool is encouraging discussion about the conditions that exist in a particular governance context, particularly traits and practices that have been identified as aiding or impeding application of WGP. Understanding where an agency aligns (or does not align) with WGP will give focus for self-reflection, and discussion of opportunities to improve agency function and achievement of positive conservation outcomes.

## Key Terms

### Definition of terms

A number of key terms we use in this guide are found in other writing about public trust administration, good governance, and wildlife conservation, with a variety of meanings implied or defined by different authors. To minimize confusion and to clarify our intent, we provide definitions to describe how we use these terms.

**Beneficiary:** any person who receives a benefit from a wildlife resource or from wildlife conservation and management. This means all people drawing value from wildlife management, including those who are unaware of, or are indifferent to, the benefits received, and including future generations.

**Governance:** the processes and conventions through which decisions, either public or private, are made and implemented by individuals and institutions (Weiss, 2000; Sheng, 2009). Governance activities of interest in this guide focus on state government (wildlife agencies), but may include federal government, non-government partners such as businesses, special interest groups and civil society organizations (Lemos & Agrawal, 2006).

**Public Trust Thinking:** a philosophy applicable to natural resource governance that emphasizes concepts of trusteeship to frame responsibilities for conserving natural resources for the

benefit of current and future generations, without privileging particular individuals or groups (Hare & Blossey, 2014). Public trust thinking is older, broader, and in important ways, more aspirational than the public trust doctrine that has developed in the U.S. (see below).

**Public Trust Doctrine:** those elements of public trust thinking that are formally incorporated into the legal framework of a given jurisdiction. The Public Trust Doctrine is primarily associated with common law traditions and has applied historically to a narrow set of natural resources including wildlife.

**Stakeholder:** an individual or group who significantly affects, or is significantly affected by, wildlife and wildlife conservation or management (Decker et al., 2012). Stakeholders exist in the context of a given set of circumstances (wildlife management decisions and practices), and each set of circumstances may have different stakeholders. Pragmatically, a beneficiary is identified as a stakeholder by the degree to which that individual is affected by or affects wildlife or wildlife conservation. Only those who significantly affect or are significantly affected by wildlife and wildlife management are stakeholders, yet they and, theoretically, all others can be beneficiaries.

**Trust administrators:** the aggregate of elected and appointed officials together with the professional staff of agencies having mandates for public wildlife resource management. People with responsibilities in trust administration can be divided into two categories: trustees and trust managers (Smith, 2011):

**Trustees:** Policy-level decisions regarding public trust wildlife resources are the domain of elected and appointed government officials—the trustees in public wildlife governance. Decisions regarding what species can be taken by hunters; what programs agencies are authorized to implement; and the allocation of harvest among beneficiaries are decisions typically made in statute or rule by the state legislature or wildlife commission, respectively. Governors and agency directors also make policy-level decisions related to programs, budgets, and management goals, though most of these officials' decisions fall within limits set by the legislature or commission. Elected and appointed officials are accountable to the public through the ballot box and courts.

**Trust managers:** Governance of the public's wildlife is executed largely through the day-to-day management of wildlife resources, including population and habitat management, research and monitoring, law enforcement, etc. This is primarily the work of staff employed by government agencies, aided in some instances by partner organizations. Typically these professional staff are tasked with developing management options, analyzing trade-offs, and making recommendations to decision makers; the authority for most high-level policy decisions is typically the domain of elected and appointed officials (the trustees).

## Wildlife Governance Principles

Attention to PTT and GG is necessary to respond to growing expectations for purposes and practices of public trusteeship of wildlife. Although state and federal legal and constitutional mandates exist for PTT and GG in the U.S., Decker et al. (2016: 2-3) question whether they have been adequately, comprehensively, or consistently applied and assert that improving the situation is a professional imperative. Adopting and practicing governance norms reflecting PTT and GG is particularly urgent at this time when the wildlife conservation institution is considering how it will evolve to remain relevant in response to social-ecological change. Governance norms grounded in PTT and GG, applied consistently across SWAs, will promote more effective conservation that seeks fair allocation of wildlife resource benefits to current and future citizens. With this outcome in mind, 10 wildlife governance principles (WGPs) have been identified. (Note that we use “wildlife governance” as shorthand for governance of the conservation institution responsible for all wildlife.) The agency assessment tool discussed in Part Two is designed to estimate a state wildlife agency’s alignment with these WGPs, based on inputs of individuals knowledgeable about agency governance conditions (traits and practices). A “plain-language” version of the principles is in Appendix A. The 10 principles are described briefly below. For more details and a brief video describing these, visit the website: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/wildlife-governance-principles/>

- 1. Wildlife governance will be adaptable and responsive to citizens’ current needs and interests, while also being forward-looking to conserve options of future generations.**

Wildlife decisions will consider probable future scenarios and allow for adaptation to social and ecological change. Options are retained for future citizens whose values, interests and needs are unknown, while addressing expectations of current beneficiaries (i.e., decision making that responds to present interests without precluding future needs).

- 2. Wildlife governance will seek and incorporate multiple and diverse perspectives.**

Wildlife resources will be managed with consideration given to all citizens’ values and interests. Attending only to the interests of narrowly focused or vocal stakeholders is inconsistent with both PTT and GG.

- 3. Wildlife governance will apply social and ecological science, citizens’ knowledge, and trust administrators’ judgment.**

Trust administrators will apply well-informed, evidence-based, sound judgment in decisions about allocation of benefits produced by wildlife resources. This will require credible, salient, and legitimate social and ecological science, local knowledge, and professional expertise, enabling conservation practitioners to meet conservation goals.

- 4. Wildlife governance will produce multiple, sustainable benefits for all beneficiaries.**

Wildlife resources will provide sustainable ecological, aesthetic, economic and recreational benefits. Trust administrators allocate benefits equitably and avoid systematically privileging some beneficiaries over others.

**5. Wildlife governance will ensure that trust administrators are responsible for maintaining trust resources and allocating benefits from the trust.**

Trust administrators are stewards of an intergenerational inheritance. Responsible trust administrators are efficient, effective, and adaptive, to ensure the quantity, quality and sustainability of wildlife resources.

**6. Wildlife governance will be publicly accessible and transparent.**

A mutually respectful and productive relationship between beneficiaries and trust administrators is fundamental to wildlife governance. Transparency and broad accessibility are crucial to this relationship.

**7. Wildlife governance will ensure that trust administrators are publicly accountable.**

Appropriate and accessible mechanisms are in place to allow beneficiaries to hold trust administrators accountable.

**8. Wildlife governance will include means for citizens to become informed and engaged in decision making.**

Citizens have the responsibility to be both knowledgeable about and to participate in wildlife governance to ensure their needs are recognized; one trait is insufficient without the other. Holding wildlife trust administrators accountable requires citizens be informed and engaged.

**9. Wildlife governance will include opportunities for trust administrators to meet their obligations in partnerships with non-governmental entities.**

Efficient, effective, and adaptive trust administrators will recognize when the capacity they control or direct is inadequate for sustaining the wildlife trust. Enhancing capacity to meet trust management goals may require partnerships with other individuals and organizations, including private landowners; such partners essentially become trust managers and therefore must adhere to WGP.

**10. Wildlife governance will facilitate collaboration and coordination across ecological, jurisdictional and ownership boundaries.**

Wildlife resources and beneficiaries' interests do not fall neatly within ecological, jurisdictional, and ownership boundaries. Collaboration and coordination across all types of boundaries improve the effectiveness and adaptability of wildlife governance.

## —Part Two—

### Readiness to Undertake the Agency Self-Assessment

With respect to agency “readiness” to engage in an assessment of alignment with Wildlife Governance Principles, we developed two rapid assessment tools that might be of use to some agencies. Briefly described here, more complete explanations of the tools and instructions for their use can be found on the PTP website:

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/principles-performance-assessment-tool/>;

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-culture-and-capacity-characterization-acc-cc-instrument/>

The **Principles Performance Assessment Tool (PPAT)** is a rapid assessment tool that allows any number of individuals within the agency, section or program to express their general perceptions of: (a) how *satisfied* they are with the efforts made by the agency, section or program with respect to each of the 10 wildlife governance principles (WGP), and (b) how *challenging* it is for the agency to align with each principle. Level of *satisfaction* is rated on a nine-point scale, ranging from not at all satisfied to extremely satisfied. Degree of *challenge* is rated on a nine-point scale, ranging from extremely challenging to not at all challenging. People external to the entity being considered (e.g., others in the agency but not in the section or program being considered; possibly partners from outside the agency) could be included in this assessment, if desired.

The Principles Performance Assessment Tool does not seek detail about specific traits or practices of the agency (this is what the more detailed WGP alignment self-assessment tool does). Instead, this instrument is designed to allow staff to assess agency performance with respect to the WGP quickly (approximately 15 minutes for input), leading to judgments about the need to conduct a more comprehensive alignment evaluation. Results from application of this tool (PPAT) contribute to a readiness assessment by answering the question, “Does my agency, section or program need to work harder or more effectively on various practices so they align better with certain WGP?” That is a key component for a judgment that improvements are in order and that more detailed assessment of traits and practices is warranted to help pinpoint where greater effort is needed (priorities for agency action regarding specific practices).

The **Agency Culture and Capacity Characterization (ACCC)** and associated diagnostic questions are designed to help an organization decide whether to proceed with the [Agency Self-Assessment and workshop](#). The ACCC focuses on characteristics of the referent’s culture and capacity relating to readiness to address change; it takes the form of a set of word or phrase couplets that are used to characterize your organization. The readiness diagnostic questions can be used by the team responsible for making the decision whether or not to proceed with the Agency Self-Assessment and workshop to analyze the results of the characterization exercise.

## Making a Decision to Proceed to the Next Steps

After an agency leader or leadership team engages in the rapid assessment exercises outlined above, they should be well informed to make a recommendation or decision either to proceed with the Agency Self-Assessment and workshop, to pause to take remedial actions, or perhaps to proceed with the assessment and take remedial actions. This will be a qualitative judgement, not simply the result of a numerical tally of values from ratings for the PPAT or ACCC. How the judgment about the next step is arrived at will be largely a reflection of the way the agency makes such decisions, so agency culture will be manifest in the decision-making process, decision and subsequent actions taken regarding agency readiness.

## Planning the WGP Assessment and Workshop

### Get Ready

Two activities are necessary for preparing a group of participants for the workshop. The first is background reading and familiarity of the content on the website: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/>. This pre-work focuses the participant on the purpose of the workshop. The second activity is completing the Agency Self-Assessment tool for measuring participants' perceptions of a state's alignment with wildlife governance principles.

Readings we recommend as background for the assessment participants (the same set suggested for the readiness diagnostic team), to be read in the order indicated, are:

1. Smith, C. A. (2011). **The role of state wildlife professionals under the public trust doctrine.** *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 75, 1539–1543.
2. Hare, D. & Blossey, B. (2014). **Principles of public trust thinking.** *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 19, 397–406.
3. Decker, D. J., Smith, C. A., Forstchen, A., Hare, D., Pomeranz, E. Doyle-Capitman, C., Schuler, K., & Organ, J. (2016). **Governance Principles for Wildlife Conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** *Conservation Letters*. doi: 10.1111/conl.12211
4. Hare, D., Decker, D. J., Smith, C. A., Forstchen, A. B., & Jacobson, C. A. (2017). **Applying Public Trust Thinking to Fish and Wildlife Governance in the United States: Challenges and Solutions.** *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 22(6), 506-523.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2017.1359864>

Additional resources can be found here: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/key-readings/> and here: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/public-trust-practice->

[publications/](#) that include bibliographies of other related readings for participants to consider following the workshop.

The participants need to be convened for one intensive session over a few days or a set of two sessions within no more than a two-week period. If the multiple-session alternative is chosen, it is important not to stretch the process out over too long a time period – we recommend no more than two weeks, start to finish (see Appendices B through F for a schedule leading up to the workshop, workshop logistics, a schedule template, a sample facilitator’s agenda, and a workshop flow chart that can be displayed on the walls during the workshop).

Whether convening an existing leadership team or forming a team specifically for purposes of the workshop, the facilitator seeks unfettered participation by all team members. This means that participants need to leave their formal position within the agency’s hierarchy outside the door. Ground rules that support this should be agreed upon (perhaps even reinforced with certain individuals before the first meeting). Many agencies and organizations have established such ground rules for interaction of people serving on internal working groups and teams. Useful ground rules include:

- Every member of the group is treated equally in the workshop context, regardless of official rank in the agency or academic credentials.
- Participants will be civil and courteous in their interactions with one another—this workshop is a professional undertaking where criticism and critique are useful insofar as it is constructively contributing to group learning, analysis and understanding.
- On occasion, it may be necessary for the facilitator to contain or limit input from more enthusiastic members of the group to give others opportunity to contribute—sensitivity, patience and understanding of this need will be expected by all participants.
- In this workshop context where analysis is based largely on personal observation, all information and insight are assumed to be potentially valuable. Experience of individuals can be as valuable as scientific data, and insight can come from many sources, including the naïve question of the least experienced member of the group.
- All suggestions are welcome, though they may not all be incorporated.
- Everyone’s claims and suggestions are open to constructive critique, regardless of whose idea it is. No one is privileged in this respect.
- The facilitator is in control of the process, but not outcome.

An agency may have additional cultural norms about teamwork to consider; incorporate those that will aid in ensuring an effective process. If some of the normative behaviors of the organization are counterproductive to effective teamwork, be clear about their inappropriateness for this workshop. In summary, ground rules are shared up front (perhaps even in communication preceding the workshop), discussed as needed, and adhered to consistently.

The fourth early step toward a productive process is to identify the right set of people to be engaged in the workshop (Appendix G). What is the “right set” of players? That depends on the scale of the governance system you are analyzing—local wildlife management area (or park), in-state region, statewide or multistate region (e.g., a regional network of parks, refuges and management areas). Consider including your agency’s managers, biologists, researchers (ecological and human dimensions scientists), law enforcement officers, community-relations specialists and education staff who have responsibility for the resource in the geographic area being considered. In addition, you want to select participants who are capable of constructive dialogue and have potential to influence change over time in the philosophy and practices of the agency. We discourage using the workshop for purposes of attempting to “convince” some participants to think a particular way about the need for change. People usually recognize when they have been placed into such a situation, typically resent it, and may disrupt progress of others in the group.

Traits of workshop participants that tend to improve productivity include: capable of productive dialogue; no hidden agendas; willing to engage (no extreme wallflowers); in a position to affect change and willing to do so if change is believed to be beneficial; broad knowledge of workshop organizational referent (e.g., agency, division, work unit); thoughtful and open to new ideas; can leave rank/position “at the door.” For some, these traits are natural. For others, they may be behaviors that need reinforcing ahead of selection to the group. Be careful not to leave out “obviously” key people, without appropriate effort to explain why.

The number of people to include in the assessment process and especially a workshop about it depends on your situation. How large is the entity being assessed? Is it the entire agency, a division or a work group within it? Your answer to this question may naturally describe the likely workshop participants. Typically the staff providing input for the assessment are those invited to the workshop; however, if a senior leadership team desires agency-wide input for their smaller leadership group to analyze and discuss, the assessment may include many more people than the set who participate in the workshop. The ideal number for a workshop tends to be 12 – 15, with a minimum of 10 and no more than 20. You need enough people to ensure breadth of experience and not so many that in-depth discussion is compromised, or opportunities for contributions by all participants is made very difficult. The small-group, break-out exercises we suggest help mitigate the effects of large group size to an extent, but resisting the temptation of involving too many people for a single workshop is suggested. If you want to engage a large number of people, consider the possibility of holding more than one workshop. If this is contemplated, think about how you would divide the population of workshop participants so as to avoid undesirable collateral effects of perceived meanings implied by segregations of staff for each workshop.

### **Many Hands Make for Light Work**

Experience has shown that a lead facilitator for workshops such as this can be most effective when working with two partners. The three individuals can work as a team in preparing for the workshop, as well as divvying up responsibilities during the event. For example, one can record ideas on flip charts, allowing the facilitator to focus on leading the

participants and process. In addition to the stand-up recorder, another individual can capture information and ideas associated with each section of discussion on a computer, enabling quick turn-around of text products and often real-time projection of ideas generated by the participants. Our experience indicates that distribution of facilitating/leading and recording tasks allows smooth progress in the group discussion, efficient compilation of information produced by the participants, and expeditious development of text files that can be useful references. Having partners who can help monitor participant reactions to the workshop and suggest modifications needed on the spot can be very beneficial.

Unless everyone in the workshop is already very familiar with everyone who will be involved, they should provide a brief (no more than half-page) biographical sketch that informs the facilitator and other participants about each individual's educational background, professional history (including experience level—positions held and years working in conservation), professional society affiliation and related activity. Inclusion of personal information is encouraged: where did they grow up, go to college, other work experiences, pets, favorite recreational and cultural activities, interest in the workshop, etc. The biographical briefs should be collected, compiled and distributed by the facilitator to all participants ahead of the workshop.

### **How to Get the Ball Rolling—the “Art” of Asking Questions**

By now it should be clear that one role of the facilitator and engaged participants is to be continually inquiring—actively asking questions to reveal the assumptions, knowledge, biases and logic of participants with respect to the topic at hand. Effective facilitators need to demonstrate art in asking questions. Inquiring is essential to make progress. By being respectfully inquisitive with one another, the group can more quickly identify barriers and opportunities present in a wildlife resource governance situation. The purposefully inquiring facilitator strives to:

- Identify individuals in a group who can facilitate analysis of agency alignment with WGP.
- Identify individuals who have particular skills in a group so that they can be encouraged to put those to use for the analytic task.
- Identify knowledge gaps that need to be filled to make progress.
- Gauge the diversity of abilities, knowledge, skills, experience and values that are represented by workshop participants.
- Identify needed assets (expertise, legitimization, etc.) that will enable analytic advancement.
- Identify barriers to communication (i.e., values inherent to different disciplines, variations in culture among a diverse group [e.g., game management section staff and endangered species section staff], etc.).

Inquiring also has to be approached with sensitivity to the individual, the group and the context to avoid awkwardness. For example, the facilitator has to judge whether individuals possess the self-confidence needed to respond. Is the context in which a question is posed non-threatening? For example, avoid questions leading to technically “correct” or “incorrect” answers; instead surface beliefs and rationales for them. Often these kinds of responses can be finessed into contributions of insight more easily than questions leading to apparent factual responses.

Part Three provides more specific guidance for facilitating discussion of the assessment results. We offer many examples of probing and clarifying questions that you may find useful.

## **—Part Three—**

### **Agency Alignment with Wildlife Governance Principles: Guide to Using the Agency Self-Assessment Tool**

#### **The Agency Self-Assessment Tool**

This section provides more detail on the topics covered here:  
<https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-self-assessment-tool/> Click on the link to view a short video that describes how to put the Wildlife Governance Principles into practice through the use of the agency self-assessment tool.

Application of wildlife governance principles (WGP) proposed by Decker et al. (2016) necessitates government agencies with legal mandates for wildlife management to embody certain traits and follow certain practices while avoiding others. Improvement of an agency’s alignment with the WGP is enhanced when it acknowledges where its strengths and weaknesses are with respect to such traits and practices. With reasonable self-awareness of areas needing improvement, the probability of prioritizing and addressing needs effectively is enhanced.

The agency assessment tool for measuring perceptions of an agency’s alignment with wildlife governance principles was developed through an iterative process involving several groups of wildlife professionals. The process identified traits and practices of agencies that facilitate or impede application of wildlife governance principles. Traits are characteristics an agency possesses, typically reflecting philosophical orientations that are either consistent with (enable) or antithetical to (hinder) application of the WGP. As the label indicates, practices are behaviors or actions performed by an agency that support or impede the WGP.

We assert that an agency that is well aligned with the principles will be able to meet its public trust responsibilities effectively. That being said, alignment with the principles is not always obvious and the degree to which alignment exists often depends on the circumstances.

The traits and practices measured by the tool are organized into five themes:

1. strategic thinking and organizational adaptability
2. evidence-based and broadly informed decision making
3. transparency and accountability for decisions and actions
4. inclusiveness and diversity
5. capacity for conservation

The connections between the WGP, themes represented by good wildlife governance, traits of an agency and its practices is portrayed below (Figure 3.1). This framework was used in the creation of the assessment tool and in the public trust practices workshop design.

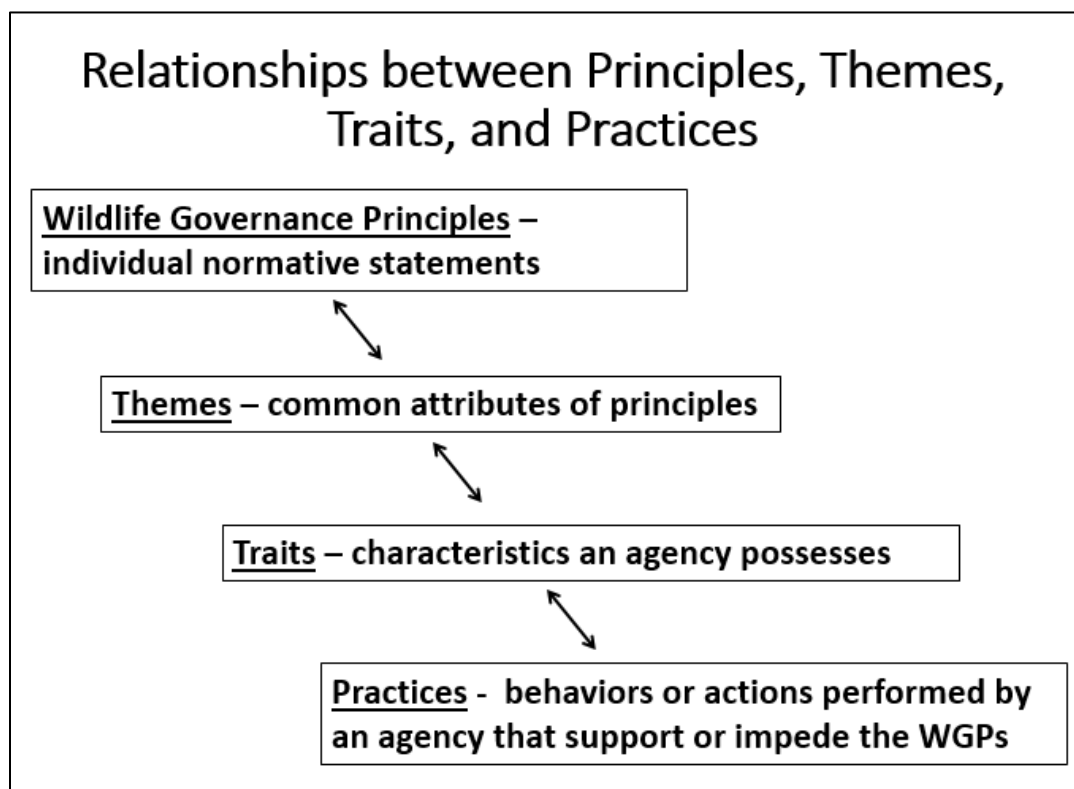
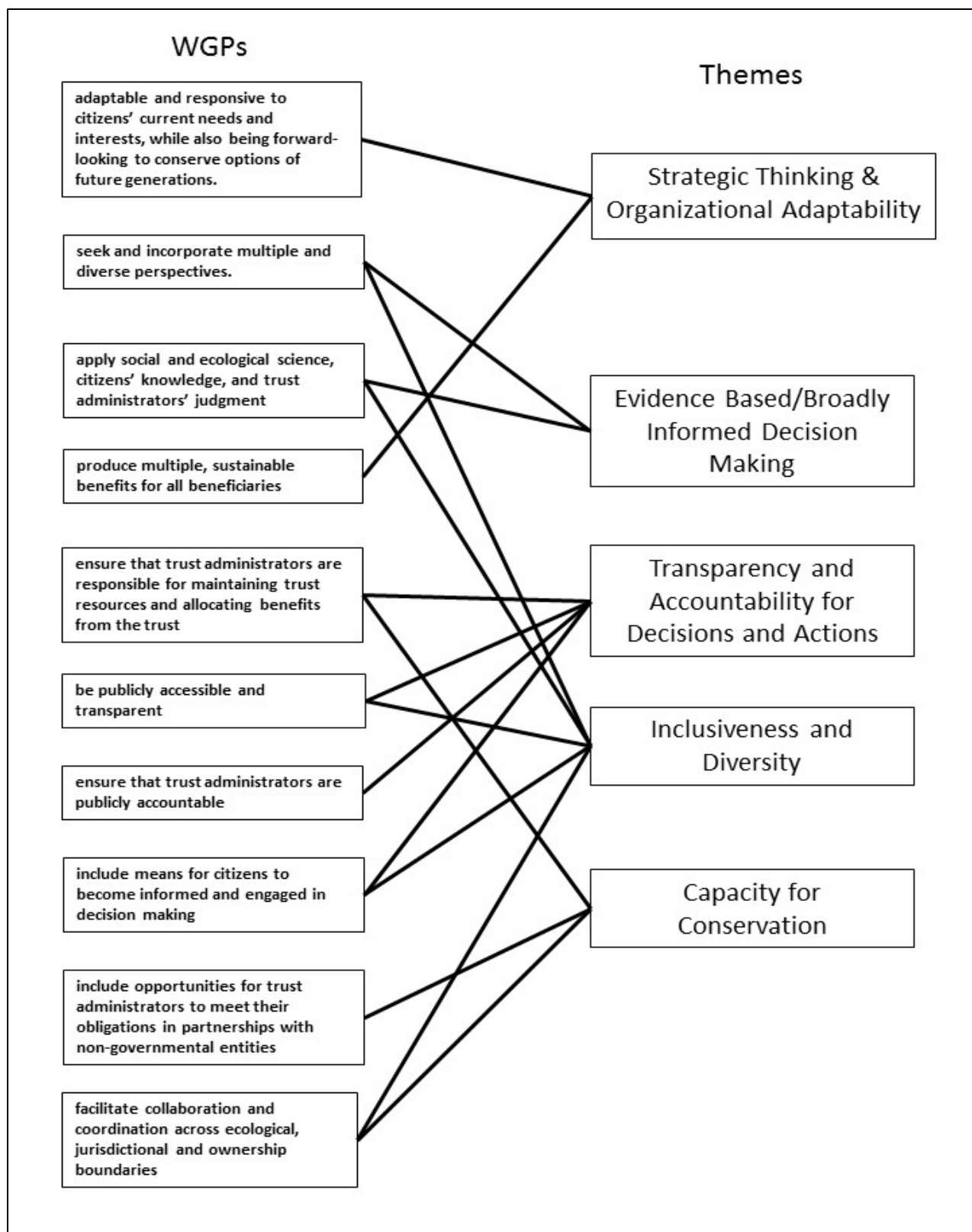


Figure 3.1 Relationships between principles, themes, traits and practices.

More specifically, Figure 3.2 indicates which WGs reflect which themes. As indicated, some principles are a manifestation of more than one theme.



**Figure 3.2 Correlation of wildlife governance principles with themes.**

## Components of the WGP Alignment Assessment Tool

The assessment tool is organized into two sections, one focuses on traits and the other on practices. For traits, respondents are asked to use a 5-point scale to indicate where on the continuum they would place their program/section, division, agency or organization with respect to each trait.

### Example:

Theme: Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability						
Scoring: 5 4 3 2 1						
Proactive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Reactive
Innovative, inventive, progressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Risk-averse, unimaginative, traditional, in a rut
Visionary, future-oriented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Short-sighted, tied to past

For the practices portion of the assessment, respondents are asked to indicate the degree of **satisfaction** with each practice in governance of wildlife resources by their agency, organization, or state. The response options for this set of questions are: *not at all satisfied*; *slightly satisfied*; *moderately satisfied*; *very satisfied*; and *extremely satisfied*. In addition to satisfaction, participants are asked to rate the **importance** to address these practices. Response options include: *not at all important*; *slightly important*; *moderately important*; *very important*; and *extremely important*.

### Example:

Theme: Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability										
	How satisfied are you with [your agency's] application of the following practices relating to wildlife governance?					How would you rate the importance of the following practices for [your agency] to address?				
	Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Using strategic planning tools (such as futuring, scenario planning, visioning, predictive modeling) to set realistic goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with agreed-upon expectations (goals and objectives).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Scoring: 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5

To make it easy to complete the assessment tool, administer it and compile the data it generates, we use on-line, web-based technology (<http://www.qualtrics.com/research-suite/>). For information about the assessment process or to sign your agency up for an assessment,

view <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-self-assessment-workshop/> and contact [ptpractice@cornell.edu](mailto:ptpractice@cornell.edu).

While the format of the assessment tool makes it easy to work through the instrument quickly, we ask recipients to resist that temptation and think carefully about their answers. The cover letter that accompanies the request to staff to complete the assessment instrument should emphasize this (see example cover letter; Appendix H).

We ask that when completing the tool, recipients **do not** report on the *past* or on their hopes for the *future*. We instruct them to give their best assessment of the *current* wildlife governance conditions. During the workshop it is the facilitator's job to draw out and capture staff ideas about desired future conditions. Knowing where governance practices and traits stand today in their agency (i.e., as indicated by the results of the assessment tool) helps ensure priorities for action can be determined that address identified needs for improvement.

Agency staff are asked to complete the WGP assessment tool ahead of the workshop because the results are used to tailor discussion about needs for change in the traits and practices of the organization/agency/state. Results are presented in aggregate; individual responses are not shared. We go through an example of the results in detail to demonstrate how they can be used and provide suggestions to guide you in facilitating the discussion.

## Guide to Using the Assessment Tool Results Report

### Using the Assessment Report to Facilitate Discussion

A "Results Report Interpretation at a Glance" table has been created to help as you go through this process (Appendix I). It may be useful to look at it as you read through this section of the guide.

It is important to remember that the values reported from the self-assessment tool are based on responses from the people who completed the assessment instrument (we do not recommend that you attempt to get your entire agency staff to complete the assessment). The results are meant to aid discussion among workshop participants. Because of the limited number of individuals whose perceptions are captured in the data reported herein, the values should not be taken as a valid representation of how the entire staff would characterize the agency.

### *The Data Reported*

Means (and ranges) for ratings of traits and practices made by evaluators are reported in aggregate, by each theme (grand means). Thus *traits* under each theme will have grand mean value between 1 and 5, bounded by the scale used in the instrument. *Practices* under each theme also will have separate satisfaction and importance grand mean values between 1 and 5, again bounded by the scale used in the instrument. The results report for a case (e.g., a particular workshop focused on state X) will have five grand theme means for *traits* and five for satisfaction with and importance of *practices*. Recall the themes are: strategic thinking and

organizational adaptability; evidence-based and broadly informed decision making; transparency and accountability for decisions and actions; inclusiveness and diversity; and capacity for conservation.

### ***Using Grand Mean Data about Themes***

We suggest that you start out by calling attention to the grand means of traits and practices (satisfaction and importance) for the five themes. This provides a simple overview of where workshop participants believe their agency has relative strengths and weaknesses (i.e., how they rated their agency in that thematic area). In the table below (Table 3.1), we see that the range in grand thematic means for traits is 2.6 – 3.0 for satisfaction with the practices it is 2.4 – 3.0 and for importance of the practices it is 3.7 – 4.0. The third column within practices labeled “difference” is simply the calculation of satisfaction subtracted from importance. It gives a relative idea at how much of a difference there is between importance and satisfaction within each theme.

There is a lot you can do with just these most general data emerging from the assessment. Relative performance in each thematic area will be apparent and the group can be guided to discuss their explanations for why their agency may be performing as it is in those areas. The comparison of satisfaction and importance within practices can shed some light on potential areas for discussion during the action prioritization process—large gaps where evaluators feel low satisfaction for highly important practices are made obvious by the difference value.

**Table 3.1. Grand mean ratings for traits, satisfaction with practices, and importance of the practices.**

	<b>Traits</b>	<b>Practices</b>		
<b>Themes:</b>		<b>Importance</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Evidence-based and Broadly Informed Decision Making	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Transparency and Accountability for Decisions and Actions	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>
Inclusiveness and Diversity	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Capacity for Conservation	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>

### ***Using Grand Mean Data at the Theme Level***

In the data for our example case, **traits** under the Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability theme have a grand mean value (which recall will be between 1 and 5) of 2.6, and a range of mean values for individual respondents of 2.4 to 3.2 (the range of mean values can be obtained by looking at the “Individual Traits and Practices Organized by Theme” section of the report, see Table 3.2). This result suggests that participants are fairly consistent in the rating they are offering for this set of traits overall. This focuses discussion—what do these look like specifically in the workshop participants’ experience? Why do the traits exist? Has anyone tried to improve them? Why or why not? Have efforts been partially successful? Why or why not? Etc.

The **practices** data in this example are interesting as well. For each practice, participants rated their satisfaction with the application of it in their agency. They also rated how important it was to address the practice. Comparing the overall means of satisfaction and importance within themes is a good way to begin discussion. In this example, the “strategic thinking and organizational adaptability” theme has the greatest difference between importance and satisfaction. Why might this be the case? Does this have implications for thinking about areas for prioritization? You may want to point out places where, as in the example, both the trait rating and the practice satisfaction rating are relatively low for a particular theme, but the importance of the theme is rated high. That’s signaling recognition of need for change.

During this overview discussion, it might be useful to refer to the “Individual Traits & Practices Organized by Themes” section in the report to help tell the story (see sample in Table 3.2 below). Don’t spend too much time on this as you will go into more detail about the individual traits and practices when you analyze each theme separately later in the workshop. You want to avoid later discussions repeating what was covered in the overview.

Workshop participants may ask to see the full range of responses to certain questions from the assessment tool, so they can see if participants’ responses to particular items varied widely at the time they completed the assessment. You will have a document with the full response set for each question that you can refer to if necessary that is separate from the report. Keep in mind that understanding the particular range of responses among their peers is likely less important than having participants think about the overall situation (existing traits and practices). The aggregate responses (grand means) help them understand the situation in their agency; this should be the focus of discussion, so avoid the tendency of some people to dig down into the weeds of any variations because they like to play with the data. You can decide if you’d like to provide copies of the individual response document for the participants to review along with their copies of the report. Just understand that sharing those data may satisfy some people’s curiosity, but also presents the risk of a time-consuming digression that doesn’t really help much with the larger discussion the workshop is intended to stimulate.

### **Spider Diagrams**

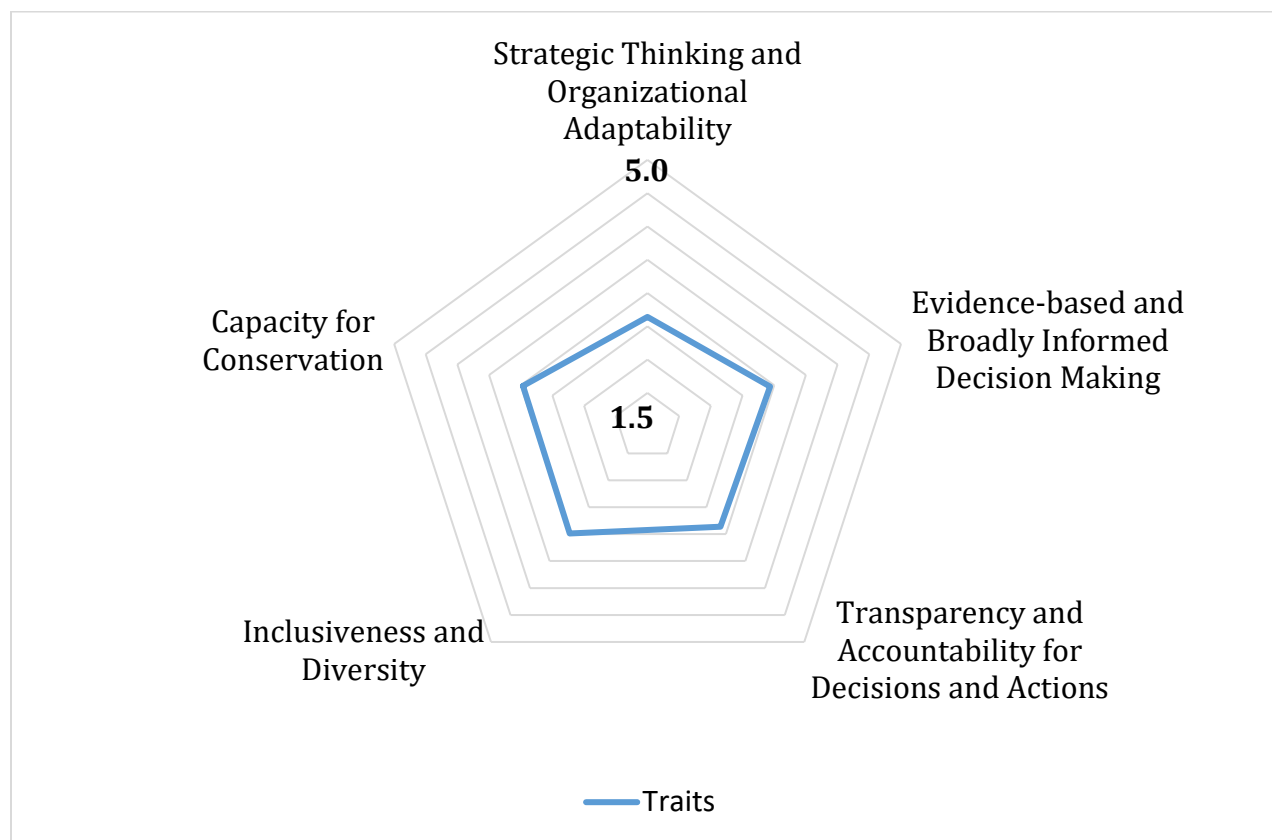
The spider diagrams are included in the report to provide simple visual representations of the aggregate assessment results. The diagrams represent average values of responses by

theme (the data are the same as that presented in Table 3.1 above in the “Overall Ratings of Traits and Practices” section of the report).

These diagrams can supplement the grand means table to help workshop participants think about the culture of their organization or unit (reflected in traits) and how these may relate to overall satisfaction with practices within each theme; i.e., the presence or absence of practices and how well practices are applied. Thus, the first spider diagram (Figure 3.3) provides a broad snapshot of the traits of the organization.

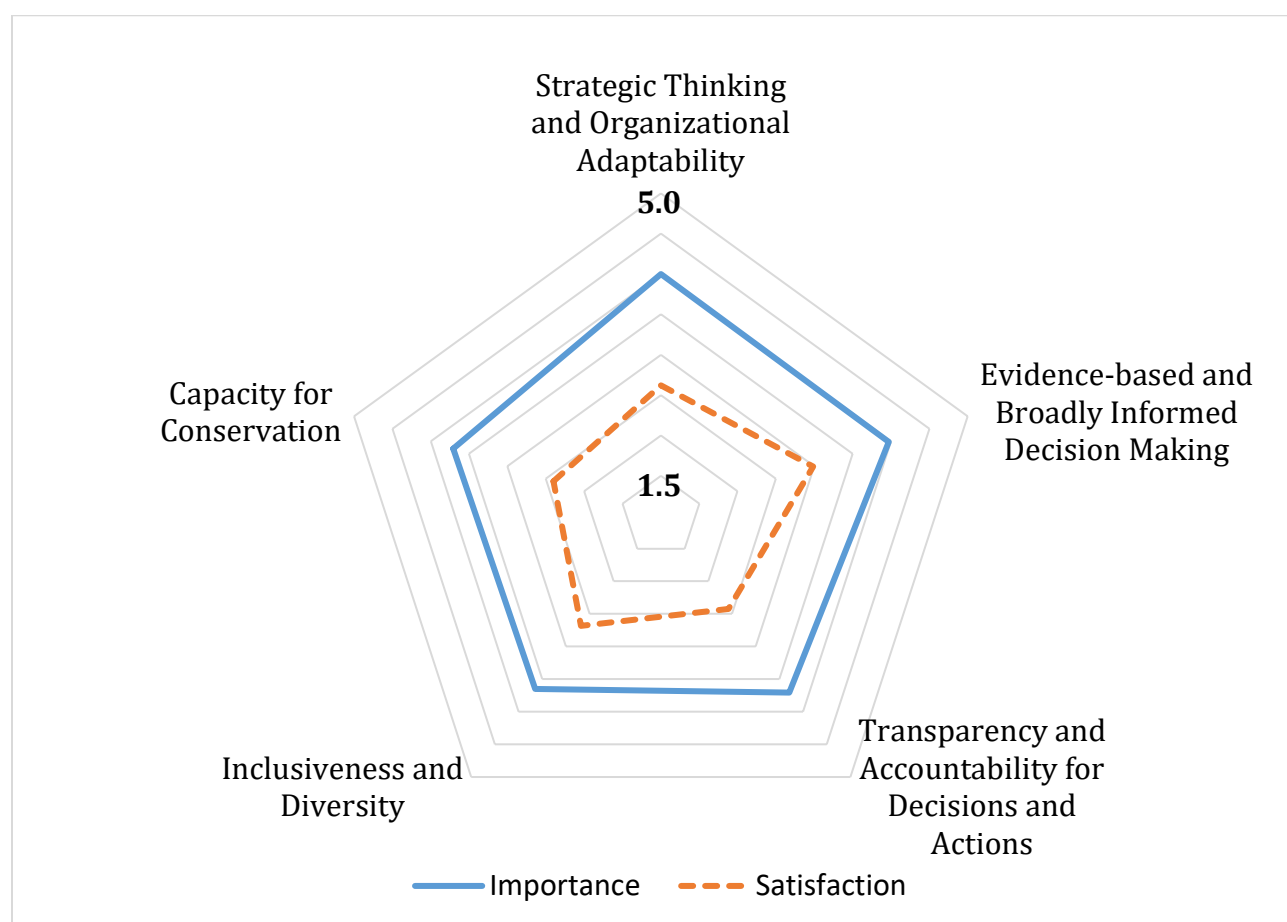
Each point of the gray pentagons in the background (representing the scale) correspond with the theme written next to it. These pentagons represent mean rating demarcations within each theme at 0.5 point intervals. Note that the range of values on these diagrams is 1.0 to 5.0, (the same lowest and highest response values that were used for the assessment tool). The colored lines are the measured means for ratings by respondents who completed the assessment tool, and will reflect the same values that are reported in the “Overall Ratings of Traits and Practices” table from the report.

To interpret the spider diagram, look at where the thicker colored line falls within the nested gray pentagons. In Figure 3.3 below, the line does not go higher than 3.0. This indicates that the trait ratings were not high for any theme. Again, these data are the same as in the table above. It is useful to show the traits portion of the table and this figure side by side or in succession. Something else might be observed in the data if it is viewed in a different format.



**Figure 3.3. Traits of the organization by theme.**

The second spider diagram (Figure 3.4) enables a quick assessment of respondents' assessment of satisfaction with practices of the organization compared to the importance they attribute to each practice, by theme. Recall that the numbers in this diagram are the same as those in Table 3.1; you'll want to decide whether to use the table or graph as the primary focus during discussion. This comparison can indicate where the greatest improvement in practices might be needed. Basically, anywhere importance exceeds satisfaction substantially (e.g., by more than one unit), you have an underlying indication of a theme where practices might need attention. On the other hand, if satisfaction is higher than practice importance, one could consider additional attention to that theme as less urgent. If the ratings are low for importance, point this out and guide discussion about why the practices in general under that theme are not seen as important. Arguably, accomplishment of practices in every theme is needed in a well-balanced portfolio of good governance and public trust administration effort.



**Figure 3.4. Satisfaction with practices of the organization compared to the importance of the practice, by theme.**

## Instructions for Examining Assessment Results for Traits and Practices, by Theme

We advise facilitators to review report results carefully well before the workshop to identify inconsistencies and interesting points that can be used to stimulate discussion. We suggest that facilitators develop questions around those observations of the data.

After facilitating discussion about the grand means findings of the assessment at the general theme level, your group will be ready to shift into more detailed exploration of findings with respect to traits and practices within each theme. Tables presenting data for this purpose are found in the “Individual Traits and Practices Organized by Theme” section of the Assessment Tool Results Report (see Table 3.2 for an example of one of the themes). We suggest that you simply start with the first theme—Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability—working systematically through all five themes, initially calling attention to how individual traits were rated and asking about the reasons and implications for the ratings received. Then, address individual practices within the same theme, pointing out where practices were rated quite satisfactorily and where they were not. Look for inconsistencies.

Turn next to the importance ratings for practices within the referent theme—ask which were regarded as most and least important, and why? Were there instances where very important practices received not very satisfactory ratings? Which practices have the largest difference between importance and satisfaction? Encourage the group to explore why this gap might be perceived by them, and in so doing identify likely challenges to change.

Discussing the first theme may not proceed very smoothly because workshop participants will be learning how the process of critique and discussion unfolds, but work through it patiently. Get as many people engaged in the discussion as possible. Draw in the quiet ones and limit the talkers. Establish a process that can be used consistently to explore thoughtfully the traits and practices of each theme, such as identifying behaviors or processes that contribute to a trait or practice. It is recommended that the whole group go through the first theme together. If enough skilled facilitator’s are present such that break-out groups are used, split the remaining four themes among the groups (e.g., split into two groups and each group goes through the discussion of two of the themes). Be sure that adequate time is reserved for the break-out groups to report back and engage in discussion with the rest of the workshop participants.

One can glean from the grand means table above (Table 3.1) that participants in our example case feel their agency does fairly well at data collection and application of data in decision making (implied by ratings for the second practice listed—evidence-based and broadly informed decision making). Presented with such data, you can question the group about why they believe this to be the case by focusing on the individual traits and practices data within that theme. Also, ask for some examples to make their assessment concrete. Following that discussion, you may have opportunity to ask additional, broader “why” questions. For example, with the sample data reported here, one can point out that the ratings indicate agency *traits* associated with this theme are not particularly strong with respect to WGP. (Identifying consistent and inconsistent responses such as this is important for stimulating analytical thinking, so when you encounter inconsistencies, probe but don’t judge!) Why is that discrepancy present? Are certain *traits* driving the *practices*?

**Table 3.2. Example Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability table found in the “Individual Traits and Practices Organized by Theme” section of the results report.**

<b>Trait Couplets</b> <i>more desirable trait (5) &lt;--&gt; less desirable trait (1)</i>	<b>Mean</b>		
Relevant, valued<-->Irrelevant, insignificant, unimportant	3.2		
Innovative, inventive, progressive<-->Risk-averse, unimaginative, traditional, in a rut	2.7		
Creative thinking<-->Conventional thinking	2.6		
Proactive<-->Reactive	2.5		
Flexible, embraces change, adaptable<-->Rigid, resists change, inflexible	2.4		
<b>Practices</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Working with agreed-upon expectations (goals and objectives).	4.5	2.8	1.7
Recognizing that planning is a useful process.	4.3	3.3	1.0
Limiting reactions to external pressure by following existing strategic and operational plans.	4.2	2.6	1.7
Not punishing employees for challenging the status quo.	4.1	2.8	1.6
Staying on course with respect to established priorities.	4.0	2.9	1.3
Rewarding employees for innovation.	3.8	1.5	1.5
Using strategic planning tools (such as futuring, scenario planning, visioning, predictive modeling) to set realistic goals.	3.4	2.5	1.1

Expect that each time a “why” or “how” question is posed, the discussion is likely to move to specific traits or practices. Refer to the appendices in the assessment report for data at the individual trait and practice level; your review of these data prior to the workshop will help you focus on traits and practices that most likely warrant critique.

Stay focused on the why and avoid enumerating solutions or actions to improve the situation exhaustively or in great detail. Coach the participants that they will need to guard against the common tendency to jump immediately to discussion of actions before the causes for a problem are fully explored. Nevertheless, throughout the process of questioning and discussion, you can expect participants to be suggesting changes and improvements needed. These should be captured on flip-chart paper and also in computer files, thus you (i.e., the facilitator) will benefit from the help of two people: a designated flip-charter and someone capturing key points on computer files (some of which may be usefully projected for the group to see). These recorders should not be workshop participants, but people you have selected as staff for your workshop team.

## Diagnostic Questions

Diagnosis of an agency's alignment with the WGs requires a clear understanding of existing conditions that facilitate or hinder application of WGs, typically reflected through the agency's history, philosophy and behaviors. The agency assessment tool provides a starting point for the kinds of questions and discussion that will improve clarity through systematic analysis of the situation.

The nature of the discussions may become uncomfortable if not guided skillfully. At times the discussion may head toward details in order to reveal specific behaviors and potential solutions; try to avoid having workshop participants concentrate on individuals (i.e., naming names) if not necessary to make a point. Nevertheless, try as you might, sometimes individuals are named; thus, the need to stress discretion in conversations following the workshop – emphasize that whatever is said in the workshop should stay in the workshop, because it is a “confidential zone” as well as a “safe zone.” Some examples of useful questions were shared in the previous section, but in this subsection we provide more extensive sets of probing questions.

Note that for workshop purposes, we assume that everything the group needs to know to get started is in the minds of the participants, some of which is revealed in the assessment results. Put another way, the participants will know enough to allow them, with your guidance, to conduct a reasonable first-cut analysis of their context for wildlife resource governance and, further, to help develop strategies for improving it. Selected for their demonstrated leadership (whether in senior level positions or informal thought leaders/opinion leaders) or for their leadership potential, the participants' collective observations and experiences should be adequate for the tasks we envision in the workshop (Appendix G).

In the following section we focus on questions that you can pose to your group to reveal the nature, extent and origins of traits and practices measured by the alignment assessment tool. But another area of questions for clarification should be kept in mind, as well—those that get at participants' understanding of key terms that they use often. The concern here is to ensure consistency in meaning and therefore accurate communication among participants. These include but are not limited to terms we defined early in this guide (e.g., stakeholders, public engagement, diversity, etc.). The facilitator's task is to help the group as a whole define the terms they use. They can be given some leeway with respect to how they want to use terms—no need to get too rigid with respect to “textbook” definitions. The main objective is to get people thinking hard about the concepts various terms represent, rather than just throwing terms around with loose and inconsistent ideas about what they mean. It is possible they will come up with their own working definitions superior for their context compared to textbook definitions.

Now we move on to sharing some probing questions that you can use to facilitate your group's clarification of traits and practices.

## General Probes for Clarification

To start a discussion about a trait or practice that is rated in the extreme, whether good or bad with respect to application of WGs, you may want to learn more detail about the specifics of the trait or practice being referred to by the participants and the circumstances leading to the condition. You can ease into your first question by making a nonjudgmental observation such as: *“So, based on the assessment results it looks like you feel you are doing well [not so well] in theme area \_\_\_\_.”* From this “starter,” some logical questions can flow for each theme.

### Set of generic questions for each theme:

1. *Given the data in the assessment results report, what are we doing well/not so well?*
2. *Help me understand why this result occurred.*
  - a. *Are there any surprises? Are the results consistent with your thinking about the trait or practice? What aspects of our agency lead you to think this result of the assessment is accurate or not?*
  - b. *Are there any inconsistencies in the data (within traits or practices, and between traits and practices)?*
    - i. *What might cause that inconsistency?*
  - c. *What is the desired future condition with respect to this theme?*
    - i. *individually identify bullet points for desired future condition*
    - ii. *round robin reporting out by individuals and recording on flip chart or white board*
    - iii. *discussion of full set of elements in desired future condition*
  - d. *(given 2c...) What behaviors, cultural traits, structures, procedures, skills or resources are needed to excel in this theme?*
3. *Given the results and nature of our discussion, what needs to occur to change the situation for the better? What actions need to be taken? (prioritize list from #2d)*

As the discussion generated by the questions above unfolds, find opportunities to ask about breadth and depth of the behavior in the organization. Questions to consider include:

- a. *What is an example of [trait or practice] in our agency or governance context more broadly? What does it look like in your experience?*
- b. *Why does [trait or practice] occur at the level indicated from the assessment?*
- c. *Can you think of evidence for why you think our agency is weak or strong in an area? (Note: don't let the conversation get too far down into the weeds.)*
- d. *To what extent does [practice] exist because of particular traits of our agency?*
- e. *How does [trait] manifest in the practices of our agency?*

- f. *How do the conditions that produced this outcome affect the performance of our agency? (start getting at consequences)*

At this general level, as suggested earlier, try to ensure everyone has a common understanding of terms participants are using. Ask questions that probe what a participant means when she or he says the agency is weak or strong in a given area (e.g., when one says, “we involve diverse groups,” how is that person defining diversity? What is meant by “groups”? Organizations or individuals with nontraditional interests in wildlife?). Ask questions that help the group define common meanings of terms, so they are not talking past one another.

Here and elsewhere, note where perceptions seem inconsistent. Do the results make sense? Ask probing questions to see why participants perceive these inconsistencies: *How can our agency be high here and low there? This seems inconsistent? What causes this discrepancy?*

### **Specific Probes for Analysis of Trait/Practice Tenacity and Challenges to Change**

After clarifying what might be key practices and traits that are facilitating or impeding behaviors of the agency or overall governance system, you will want to turn to more focused elicitation and analysis of those particular conditions. By probing more specifically and deeply, you can reveal the tenacity of the condition, gauge its resistance to change and evaluate the challenges likely to need attention in any effort to change. This will be useful information later in the workshop when considering strategies for improvement. Questions to consider include:

1. *How long has [trait or practice] existed? Are you aware of any efforts to change (or reinforce) this [trait or practice]?*
2. *Would you say the [trait or practice] is deeply rooted in the culture of the organization?*
3. *Is this trait or practice found across the agency or just at certain levels? What is the depth and breadth of commitment to practice X?*
4. *Is the behavior happening across many parts of the organization or just in isolated compartments?*
5. *What are the structures, policies or forces at play that lead us to this condition?*
6. *What are barriers preventing us from succeeding in this area?*
7. *(If a trait) Is it widely held internally? By whom? Is it reinforced externally? By whom?*
8. *(If practice) Is it widely practiced? Who is responsible for the practice? Is the practice expected externally? By whom?*
9. *Who are the key players (internal or external) with regard to this particular practice? Who owns the practice—is it something everyone is responsible for, or is this practice the sole responsibility of a particular work-unit? Does this influence the probability for change (improvement or abolishment)?*
10. *Who influences this the most? Who is likely to win or lose if a given change is made?*  
(Answers to this question help in anticipating who will support or resist change, or why a

given condition exists. It identifies who the key players are in an issue. The often referenced “status-quo” persists for a reason. If you are trying to change the status-quo, someone will inevitably lose, so try to identify who these people are likely to be and ways to mitigate their losses. Also discuss the winners. Thinking hard about the key players involved can inform development of a strategy to address changing a trait or practice.)

11. *What has helped our agency get this far? Or what has been problematic and held our agency back from being further along? What are the barriers to making progress in a given area?* (Taken together, these questions get at identification of what facilitates or impedes particular practices.)
12. *If our agency is going to make a change, what would have to occur to address the loss some players in wildlife governance will experience?*
13. *Does this trait or practice fall within or outside of your sphere of influence; your sphere of control? If outside, who do you need to get to pay attention to it?*
14. *What are the consequences of this [trait or practice] with respect to agency performance toward [Theme]? How widely recognized are the consequences? Who recognizes the consequences and is concerned about them? Who does not recognize the consequences, but should be concerned about them?*

## **Don’t Let it Get Personal**

During this questioning process you will learn a lot about how people perceive the way their organization is run and the formal and informal hierarchy of the organization. Comments will often reveal how the agency “really works,” which may be different than the official organization chart indicates. Acknowledging barriers to WGP’s application that are inherent in formal and informal structure is appropriate, but we strongly advise not allowing the discussion to focus on personalities.

Agency traits are going to be voiced, too (e.g., “*I think we are too inflexible*”). Continue to ask why questions (e.g., *Why do you think we are inflexible? What factors explain the inflexibility?*). Try to avoid enumeration of “who” participants think are responsible for problems and associated finger pointing. Redirect this line of discussion to focus on behaviors (rather than individuals) that lead to strengths or weaknesses (related to the traits).

## **Identifying Priorities for Improvements**

After discussing the results from each theme, the next step is to identify priorities that the participants can agree to focus on after the workshop—possible action items. Appendix A in the results report (not this guide) lists all the **traits** as rated by participants (Table 3.3). The traits are ordered from least to most positive. Look for logical connections of traits-- are there some strengths that naturally group together? Are the traits that appear at the top of the list

and the bottom of the list reflecting an accurate picture of the weaknesses and strengths of your organization? If possible, try to keep this discussion succinct to avoid perceptions of redundancy. Recall that the group has already given thought to these traits during the discussion of each theme.

**Table 3.3. Example table found in the “Traits Ratings Organized by Means” section of the results report. (*Theme codes: ST = Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability, EB = Evidence-based and Broadly Informed Decision Making, TA = Transparency and Accountability for Decisions and Actions, ID = Inclusiveness and Diversity, CC = Capacity for Conservation*).**

Trait	Mean	Theme
Fully staffed<-->Insufficient personnel to accomplish high-priority tasks	1.8	CC
Proactive<-->Reactive	2.5	ST
Diverse work force<-->Homogeneous work force	2.6	ID
Open<-->Secretive	2.9	TA
Actively acquires new knowledge, learning organization<-->Dated research, relies on hunches based on old ideas	3.0	EB
Broad, comprehensive thinking<-->Narrow-minded, narrow focus	3.1	ID
Decisions are evidence-based<-->Decisions are based on opinions or anecdote	3.3	EB
Well connected<-->Isolated, cut off	3.5	CC
Collaborative, cooperative<-->Stand-offish, uncooperative	3.6	CC

The report includes tables (Appendix B) and scatterplots (Appendix C) providing an overview of where each practice fits with respect to its satisfaction and importance ratings.

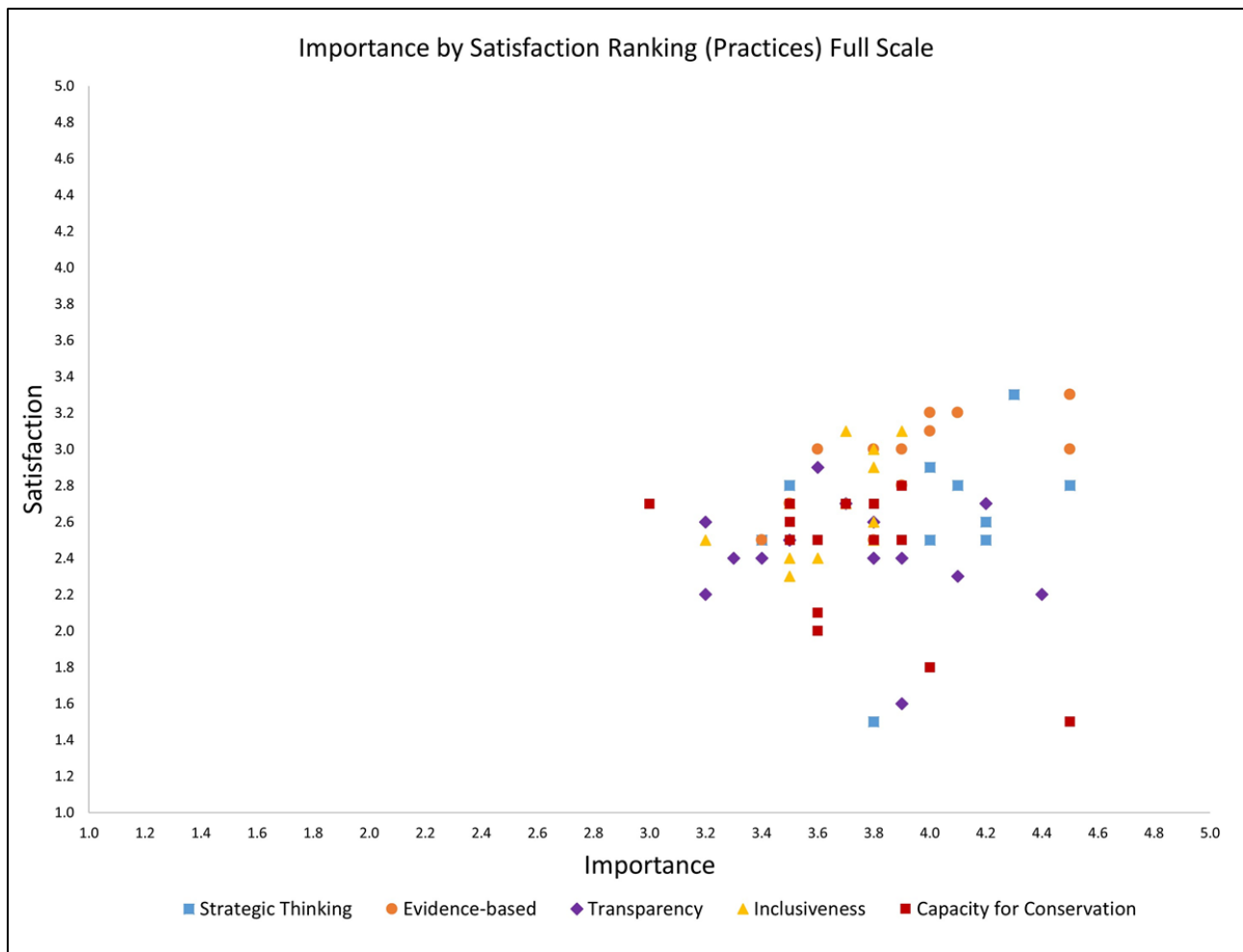
The **practices** in Appendix B of the results report has the entire set of practices organized into quadrants regardless of theme. The practices are sorted by relative importance and satisfaction into arbitrary but reasonable groups as a starting point to aid consideration of the data (generally grouped such that approximately 20 practices are in the higher importance, lower satisfaction quadrant). The ranking for the quadrants has the higher importance, lower satisfaction table first, followed by the higher importance, higher satisfaction table (Table 3.4).

Start by having the group review the practices listed in the first quadrant. Does this seem like the right list of most important considerations? Are there any practices in the first quadrant that should not be priorities (e.g., because changing them is beyond our control)? Are there any practices in the second quadrant that we should work on to boost our satisfaction even higher? The report also has the other quadrant results listed. Try to avoid looking at these too closely, because they are of lower importance, regardless of satisfaction. The first two quadrants will have more practices than an organization could feasibly address so it is best to focus group effort on refining the list from the practices that appear in the first two quadrants.

**Table 3.4. Example practices table found in the “Practices Ratings Organized by Quadrants (table)” section of the results report. (Note: this table is abridged from what will be in the report. There will be more practices listed in each quadrant.)**

Higher Importance, Lower Satisfaction			
Practice	Importance	Satisfaction	Theme
Fostering professional development of agency staff.	4.5	1.5	CC1
Communicating decision-making processes effectively to stakeholders (e.g., clearly describe process, including limitations of decision making authority and roles of all players).	4.1	2.3	TA3
Not punishing employees for challenging the status quo.	4.1	2.8	ST5
Focusing on strategic objectives to avoid decisions that are often biased towards operating “the same as last year.”	4.0	2.5	ST6
Staying on course with respect to established priorities.	4.0	2.9	ST7
Higher Importance, Higher Satisfaction			
Practice	Importance	Satisfaction	Theme
Actively seeking relevant ecological science to make management decisions.	4.5	3.0	EB1
Recognizing that planning is a useful process.	4.3	3.3	ST2
Soliciting best available professional judgement to use in decision making.	4.1	3.2	EB4
Actively seeking relevant social science to make management decisions.	4.0	3.2	EB7

These data are also displayed in graph form using two scatterplots. The first scatterplot shows the full range of potential responses – values of 1 to 5 on both the importance and satisfaction axes (Figure 3.5). The colors and shapes indicate the different themes; however, for this exercise have the group focus on the general clustering of the data points on the graph. Where does the largest group of practices fall? Are there multiple clusters or any outliers? Don’t spend much time on this scatterplot, the more detailed discussion will come with the next scatterplot, the zoomed in version.



**Figure 3.5. Full scale scatterplot of importance by satisfaction rankings of practices.**

The second scatterplot (Figure 3.6) provides a zoomed-in view of the data points from the previous one. The key for the codes on the scatterplot are in the tables of Appendix B of the report. Note the truncated range of the importance and satisfaction scales. As mentioned previously, the green lines delineating each quadrant will be drawn such that approximately 20 practices fall into higher importance, lower satisfaction quadrant in the lower right. Your workshop participants may choose to identify a minimum importance rating (say 3.5) such that any practice with a higher importance rating but with less than a target satisfaction rating (say 2.5) would indicate need for attention. You should feel free to use other methods for identifying which practices your group feels should be placed in higher importance, lower satisfaction quadrant. This kind of thinking helps focus in on areas that might be given highest priority for improvement—higher importance + lower satisfaction → needs attention. A challenge with this approach may be to avoid spending too much time finding agreement on the *exact* values used for importance and satisfaction criteria; some discussion is needed to find an acceptable rationale for the values used, but haggling could become an unproductive distraction. This is especially true when one keeps in mind that your agency is likely to have

[illegible]

You may choose to use the zoomed-in scatterplot (Fig. 3.6) as the primary data representation for discussion, and rely on Table B in Appendix B as back-up. On the other hand, you may choose not to use the scatterplot at all. Our experience indicates that many people prefer the scatterplot, but need the data as presented in Table B as a reference, where they can see actual values from the assessment.

36

If the overall discussion isn't helping to narrow down the list enough, a round or two of voting (round robin, sticky dots, etc.) may be useful. A ballot sheet with the practices that fall into the higher importance, lower satisfaction quadrant will be provided to you along with your results report. However you choose to do your voting, have the participants choose their top 2 or 3 priorities from the list. After voting, the facilitators will tally the results. If using the provided ballot sheet and the group removes or adds some practices to that higher importance, lower satisfaction quadrant, those edits will need to be made to the ballot sheet as well. After these lists have been vetted by the participants, the next step is to identify the strategy for improvement.

When going through this prioritization process, it is helpful to keep in mind certain criteria. Perhaps some think a certain practice should be a priority, however addressing it would not be something the agency can do without the support of commissioners. This may be a more difficult task than addressing an equally important practice that can be done within the agency. Here's a list of other criteria for consideration. Encourage your participants to think of others.

1. *Is it within our control?*
2. *What would provide staff capacity?*
3. *What would provide feedback to the public?*
4. *Sequencing (e.g., does another practice need to be addressed before tackling this one?)*
5. *Ease of implementation (feasibility)*
6. *Largest need*
7. *Immediate impact*
8. *Multiplicity of benefits*
9. *Greatest impact*
10. *Maximize social learning*
11. *Highest priority for improvement*
12. *Cost*
13. *Timing (right time for certain things)*
14. *Politically possible*
15. *Is it our responsibility?*
16. *Do we have the expertise needed, or do we have easy access to the expertise (partners)?*
17. *Lasting effects/benefits*

### **Outlining Strategy for Improvement**

You can expect that most groups of wildlife professionals who will be participating in this agency assessment to be action oriented, which means they will be constantly migrating toward strategies and actions to "fix" the problems (sometimes before the problems are fully described and analyzed). We pointed out earlier that it is important to keep such discussion reined in. Moving too quickly to actions is a governance problem itself that the facilitator needs to guard against. However, participants' satisfaction and sense of the workshop being successful seem significantly tempered by whether they have opportunity to outline next steps that include reference to action. Therefore, it is advisable that they create a strategy for improvement. You can guide this effort.

For each high-priority practice identified by the group, urge them to answer this series of questions:

1. *What is the desired future condition (the practical conditions preferred to be in place in the future) that you envision for this practice?*
2. *How will we get there? What actions are needed? What steps do we need to take?*
3. *Who are the key players that need to be involved to reach the desired future condition? These may include internal and external folks, other government agencies and NGOs, etc.*
4. *What is the timeline for achieving this?*
5. *How will we monitor progress and assure accountability?*

As facilitator, you will need to decide how far the group can take identification of strategies for improvement of priority practices in need of change is a task the group can tackle in the time remaining in the workshop. You should strive to plan enough time in the workshop to develop strategies for at least a few of the most important practices. This will do two things: first, give staff some practice in developing strategies, and second create some momentum. Without that there is a risk of other pressures on staff time resulting in nothing coming of the workshop. In any event, you can expect that you will need to seek the group members' mutual agreement and commitment to work further on this task another time. You need to assess the risk of losing momentum if you take a break versus the risk of losing energy if you continue.

In the larger picture, how far to venture into strategy discussion depends partly on the agency's capacity to change and partly on its initial state with respect to current alignment to the governance principles. Even if you believe the agency could address priority changes in practices needed if a strategy were developed, from a practical standpoint the group simply may not have adequate time remaining in the workshop to delve into meaningful strategy discussion, and doing so superficially is usually unsatisfactory. Also consider that the workshop participants may not include enough of the appropriate staff to design and implement a change.

It is possible that your participants could spend most of the workshop time going through interpretation of results; however, try hard to budget time for this strategy discussion. We suggest that as part of the workshop that you lead the group in development of a follow-up game plan to assure that any priority practices not addressed with respect to strategy for improvement during the workshop are addressed afterward. As indicated earlier—participants seem to value this as important for satisfactory closure to the workshop. If a follow-up meeting is required, be sure to devote adequate time for rich discussion, not just superficial treatment (e.g., avoid relegating this topic to a brief agenda item at a regular staff meeting).

## Elements of Strategy for Change

Developing a strategy will require attention to several different considerations. Identification of people who need to be informed, involved or supportive is always key in a strategy of change. Institutionalized requirements or incentives for desired agency staff behaviors need to be identified and addressed. Communication at many levels and with many audiences needs to be thought out carefully as part of a strategy. The assignment and acceptance of responsibility for change efforts needs to be clearly identified.

Some steps that might be considered in a strategy include:

***Reaching out to internal and external actors needed to legitimize, enable or make changes at various levels of the governance institution.*** You might ask your group:

1. *Who else needs to be involved internal to the agency?*
2. *Who do we need to have on board to make sure these happen (e.g., a director who isn't at the workshop)?*
3. *Who needs to be involved external to our agency—other agencies, nongovernmental partners, stakeholders, elected officials (or their staff), etc.?*
4. *Is special expertise needed (consultants)?*

***Communication for developing awareness, understanding and commitment to better alignment of the governance institution with WGP.*** You might ask your group:

1. *Who will be responsible for reporting out/summarizing the assessment and workshop outcomes? When? To whom?*
2. *Who will communicate to higher level directors and to others in the agency to get support for steps that need to be taken?*
3. *How do we get these and other people exposed to the governance ideas, to the needs?*

***Identification of level of institutional changes needed to enable WGP alignment.*** You might consider the need for:

1. *Law change?*
2. *Policy change?*
3. *Regulations change?*
4. *Protocol/practice change?*

***Post-workshop considerations.*** You will want to consider follow-through and accountability:

1. *Who will own the task of making sure the overall effort continues?*
2. *What are next steps, when will workshop participants be meeting again, how will they be held accountable, how can the group ensure commitment to actions?*
3. *How will the participants remain connected (email, conference calls, web-based network, meetings, etc.) and communicate about assignments (progress on change efforts)?*
4. *How will the agency's appetite for additional WGP alignment assessments be monitored within other units or groups of staff? Could it be expanded to include partners?*

### **Follow-up after Workshop**

Two significant areas need attention for timely follow-up after the workshop: feedback to agency leadership and to workshop participants. For participants, perhaps the most important follow up is a reminder of key outcomes regarding priority actions, including who may have committed to particular actions and by when (deadlines). Some of these actions may be securing additional information or clearance with supervisors.

We suggest that an Executive Summary be prepared for leaders. This would include a description of the process (who, when, etc.) and key outcomes—especially action items. These actions may be of greatest interest. As when briefing the leaders prior to the assessment, expect leaders to ask about anticipated values and potential backlash, including actions to reduce probability of any problems. Leaders will want to know if personnel time and financial costs will be associated with actions, so be prepared to address those concrete concerns of budget-strapped administrators. Fortunately, improvement of governance often requires doing things differently without a great additional cost, but not always.

This concludes our guidance about the assessment process and immediate follow-up to it.

## Literature Cited

- Decker, D. J., Jacobson, C. A. & Organ, J. F. 2011. Transformation of state fish and wildlife agencies: ensuring the future of conservation in a rapidly changing world. Leaders' Guide. Human Dimensions Research Unit and Cornell Cooperative Extension, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA. 54pp.
- Decker, D. J., Forstchen, A. B., Jacobson, C. A., Smith, C. A., Organ, J. F., and Hare, D. 2013. What does it mean to manage wildlife as if public trust really matters? In *Transactions of the 78th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference* (Vol. 78, pp. 18-25).
- Decker, D. J., Smith, C. A., Forstchen, A.B., Hare, D., Pomeranz, E.F. Doyle-Capitman, C., Schuler, K., & Organ, J. 2016. Governance principles for wildlife conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Conservation Letters*. 9(4) 290-294. doi: 10.1111/conl.12211
- Decker, D. J., Riley, S. J., and Siemer, W. F. (eds.) 2012. Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hare, D. & Blossey, B. 2014. Principles of public trust thinking. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 19, 397–406.
- Hare, D., Decker, D. J., Smith, C. A., Forstchen, A. B., & Jacobson, C. A. (2017). Applying Public Trust Thinking to Fish and Wildlife Governance in the United States: Challenges and Solutions. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 22(6), 506-523.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2017.1359864>
- Jacobson, C. A., Organ, J. F., Decker, D. J., Batcheller, G.R. & Carpenter, L. 2010. A conservation institution for the 21st century: implications for the state wildlife agencies. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 74, 203-209.
- Lemos, M. C., & Agrawal, A. 2006. Environmental governance. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 31, 297-325.
- Riley, S. J., Decker, D. J., Carpenter, L. H., Organ, J. F., Siemer, W. F., Mattfeld, G. F., & Parsons, G. 2002. The essence of wildlife management. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 30(2), 585-593.
- Sheng, Y. K. 2009. What is good governance? Bangkok, Thailand, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf>
- Smith, C. A. 2011. The role of state wildlife professionals under the public trust doctrine. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 75, 1539–1543.
- Weiss, T.G. 2000. Governance, good governance and global governance: conceptual and actual challenges. *Third World Quarterly*, 21, 795–814.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Wildlife Governance Principles in Plain Language

The following “plain language” version of the Wildlife Governance Principles is adapted from an effort by Michigan DNR biologist Chris Hoving to improve clarity and accessibility of the ideas contained within the principles. Our hope is that a “plain language” version of the principles will be user-friendly for managers and the public so that they can understand and apply them more effectively.

**Good Wildlife Governance is characterized by:**

- 1. Careful consideration of interests of all those who benefit from wildlife, both now and in the future.** This will require us to adapt to both social and ecological change.
- 2. Considering all citizens’ values and interests by seeking, listening, and responding to different perspectives.**
- 3. Using science, citizens’ knowledge, and the wisdom of wildlife trustees and trust managers<sup>1</sup>.** This requires effective communication and trust between citizens, wildlife managers, and elected officials.
- 4. Providing diverse benefits for current and future generations, while avoiding privileging some citizens’ desires over others.**
- 5. Trustees and trust managers being responsible for maintaining or enhancing the benefits that wildlife provide, and for making sure that citizens have an opportunity to experience those benefits, while preserving them for future generations.**
- 6. Trustees and trust managers making decisions in a manner that is open and transparent.** This will foster citizens’ faith in wildlife managers and elected officials and maintain their credibility.
- 7. Ensuring the availability of methods that allow citizens to hold trustees and trust managers answerable for the quality of their management decisions and actions.**
- 8. Ensuring the availability of resources and processes that allow for citizens to learn about issues in order to participate in decision-making in effectively.** The citizenry have a responsibility to be aware, knowledgeable, and participatory.
- 9. Partnering with non-government organizations.** This will help to diversify perspectives and expertise, and to address trust managers’ capacity and capability limitations, but does not imply abdicating public trust responsibilities to non-government organizations.
- 10. Working across natural and cultural boundaries.** Collaboration is necessary to manage wildlife, habitats, and people on sufficiently large scales (e.g., landscape, ecosystems) to yield long-lasting conservation outcomes.

<sup>1</sup>Wildlife trustees typically are elected or appointed government officials; trust managers generally refer to professional wildlife managers and others in government employment who contribute to management.

## Appendix B: Sample Facilitator's Timeline to a WGP Workshop

Dates		Who's responsible?
At least 5-6 months prior to workshop	Secure support and identify venue (support of Executive Leadership & funding)	
5 months prior to workshop	Identify workshop support staff - note taker and flip chart recorders; secure venue (e.g., contract with facility, negotiate room rates, decide on food service, etc.) Contact Cornell to register for the assessment tool implementation at <a href="mailto:ptpractice@cornell.edu">ptpractice@cornell.edu</a> See <a href="https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-self-assessment-workshop/">https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-self-assessment-workshop/</a> for more information.	
4 months prior to workshop	Agree on participant selection criteria, identify candidates, obtain their supervisor's permission, and send initial participation invitation email	
3 months prior to workshop	(OPTIONAL) Case study (unique to state) identification & write-up (see Appendix K). Request participant and facilitator biographies	
1 month prior to workshop	Obtain biographical info from each participant, to be compiled and shared with others	
2 weeks before implementation of assessment tool	Reading assignments sent to participants for their review (2 weeks); biographical information about participants and facilitator(s) distributed participants	
Approximately 1.5 months before workshop	Implementation of assessment tool (requires 2 weeks) (Cornell staff)	
As soon as all participants have completed assessment tool	Creation of assessment results report (allow at least a half week, ideally a week) (Cornell staff)	
Approximately 3 weeks before workshop	Report from assessment tool sent to facilitators, laminate WGP posters, print timeline poster, and send draft notebook materials to facilitators for review	
At least a week before workshop	Facilitator conference call to discuss results and last-minute preparation	
Week before workshop	Put together workshop participant binders	
Day before workshop	Facilitators' on-site planning day	
<b>Workshop dates</b>	<b>Conduct Workshop</b>	
Day after workshop	Facilitators' debrief day	
1 month or less after workshop	Output report(s) to supervisors and workshop participants	
As needed	Follow-up workshops, etc.	

Helpful tips:

- When filling in the dates for this timeline, start with the dates of the workshop.
- Facilitation/organizing team should schedule multiple meetings or conference calls throughout this timeline.
- In addition to filling in the dates leading up to a workshop, it is advised that the tasks are assigned to certain facilitators/staff by the lead facilitator. That way it is clear who will be responsible for each task.

## **Appendix C: Workshop Logistics**

If possible, conduct the workshop away from the normal offices of the participants. This will make it easier to hold the participants' attention, and not be distracted by the brushfire down the hall. As the workshop outcomes are to identify and effect change in the agency, it is likely that the participants will include senior level staff. Frame communication about the workshop as an opportunity to step away from day-to-day work and take the time to have focused and meaningful discussion that will result in significant improvements to the agency's relevance and value to current and future stakeholders -- all citizens.

Ideally, look for a location with lodging and food services available on-site so you don't lose participants or waste time with travel for meals. This adds to the "specialness" of the workshop and helps build a sense of common purpose among members of the group. A convenient, comfortable, self-contained event tends to keep discussion going without loss of momentum.

The meeting room should allow hanging of many flip chart pages. Lots of ideas will be generated during the discussions and this is a good way to capture them.

It may be helpful to project output of discussions in a spreadsheet or WORD document for ease of manipulating content. So make sure you have a data projector available and the room is suitable for projection (a screen is available, room can be darkened, etc.).

## Appendix D: Template for a 3-day workshop, including preparation

There is no single right way to organize this workshop, but we believe the template below is a good one to consider. In it we offer suggestions for an agenda/schedule for participants and associated tasks or responsibilities for the facilitator. Timing can be adjusted based on group knowledge of each other and familiarity of the WGs, GG, and PTT. Participant group size should be small enough to allow for productive dialogue but large enough to include all key perspectives. We recommend 10-20 (max) participants.

Production Schedule for WGP workshop

### WGP Workshop Production Schedule

Month, Date, Year

Date Due	Activity	Who's doing?	Completed?	Comments
	Get commitment from leadership to support assessment and workshop			
	Identify internal agency "Coordinator"			
	Establish workshop dates			
	Identify internal funding source to support			
	Engage in contracting process for workshop facilitators (if needed)			
	Register for Assessment Tool from Cornell University			
	Solicit names for WGP workshop			
	Workshop venue reservation Lodging/food reservation			
	Prioritize & select nominees			
	Send nominees to appropriate Directors for approval			

	Order ____ # 1 inch binders , and 8 tab dividers, tent cards, flip chart pads, etc.			
	Solicit or develop WGP Case Studies (OPTIONAL)			
	Participant notification			
	Participant confirmation			
	Inquire about food sensitivities and preferences			
	Reserve projectors, screens, easels, etc.			
	Readings assignment			
	Participant biography request			
	Tent cards printed			
	Print notebook materials			
	Compile workshop notebooks			
	Bios due			
	Send email with Assessment Tool link			
	Finalize agenda			
	Send mtg notice for expectations mtg and include draft agenda			
	Poster printing/lamination			
	Reminder email about readings/survey assessment			
	Reminder email with agenda, times & directions to workshop venue			
	Reserve needed state vehicles for travel			
	Provide draft generic travel authorization form - with			

	payment org codes or blanket approval email			
	Final instructions (lodging rooms, food accommodations to workshop venue			
	Courtesy reminder note to agency Directors about workshop			
	Expectations note to workshop helpers (roles and responsibilities)			
	Instructors planning meeting			
	Instructors debrief meeting			
	Finalize all payments with meeting venue			
	Finalize all travel paperwork			
	Write executive summary of workshop for agency leadership			
*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
<b>Meeting supplies</b>				
	2 Projectors			
	Slide advancer/pointer + extra batteries			
	Easels			
	Digital camera/phone			
	Flip charts pads with sticky back			
	Flip chart markers			
	Painters tape			

	Portable printer + ink cartridge			
	Multi-plug + extension cord			
	Office supplies: paper clips, stapler, post its, scissors			
	3-hole punch and 3 hole paper			
	Notebooks & dividers			
	Tape			
	1 projector screen			
	Beverages/snacks			
	Coolers (2 large)			
	Container for supplies			
	Name plates			
	Misc. small tools- pliers, hammer, etc			

## Meeting Location Logistics

### Meeting site requirements

- On-site lodging
- On-site food service
  - Accommodates food allergies
- On-site meeting room
  - Large meeting room to fit all comfortably, room to move around
  - U-shape of Tables - can be re-configured
  - Wall space to accommodate flip chart pages
  - Plenty of electrical outlets
  - Windows
  - Air/heat control
  - Beverages/snack availability or table to accommodate
- On-site social area
- Internet/phone line access

### Meeting materials

- Notebooks

- Divider tabs
- Printed copies of documents
  - Bios
  - Agenda
  - Intro overview of WGs
  - Acknowledgements
  - Background readings
  - Will add assessment report at workshop
  - Paper for notes for critiques
  - WG list as reference (back of notebook?)

- Posters
  - 2 WGs list

Example: detailed facilitators agenda; timings for topics are estimates—be flexible

## Appendix E: Sample WGP Facilitator's Workshop Agenda

### Wildlife Governance Principles

Workshop for \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Location

#### Day 1

- **Lunch** (12:00-1:00pm)
- Introductions and review purpose of workshop (1:00-1:45pm)
- Background (1:45-3:15pm)
  - Principles: need, genesis, meaning PPT (20 mins)
  - Discussion of each principle PPT (50 mins)
  - Structure of the assessment: principles/themes/traits/practices PPT (20 mins)
- **Break** (3:15-3:30pm)
- Agency Assessment Results (3:30 – 5:00pm)
  - Discussion/overview of results (PPT and handouts of spider diagrams)
  - Distribute assessment report and case study description to participants

#### Day 2

- Welcome back and re-focus (8:00 – 8:05am)
- Discussion of Traits and Practices by Theme
  - Full group discussion of 1 theme (8:05 – 8:50am)
  - Orientation to breakout session 1 (8:50-9:00am)
  - Distribute and refer to prepared instruction sheet for breakout session 1
  - Breakout Session 1 (9:00 – 10:30am)
    - Two groups, each focuses on 2 themes
    - Discuss traits/practices overview from assessment report
    - Any surprises, inconsistencies, anything missing, etc.
- **Break** (10:30 – 10:45am)

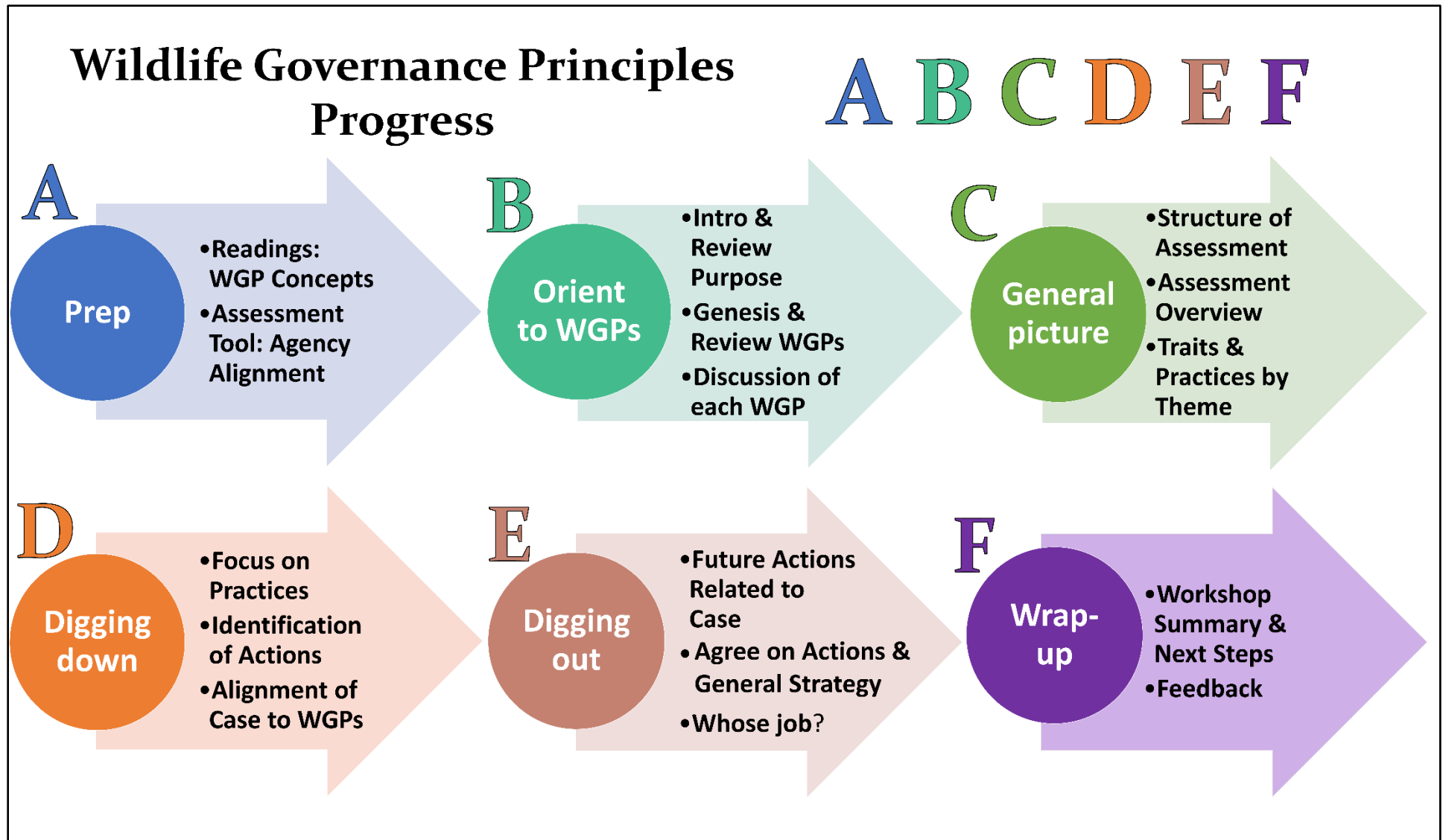
- Reports from breakout session 1 and discussion (10:45 – 11:45pm)
- **Lunch** (11:45-12:30pm)
- Focus on practices (12:30 – 1:30pm)
  - Use scatterplot to discuss practices overall; follow-up to morning breakout reports, identify practices in order of importance, organized by importance and satisfaction rather than by themes
  - Explain process of practice re-organization
  - Any modifications needed regarding which practices to place in high importance/low satisfaction category?
  - Elicit reasons to make decisions for selecting priority practices. (give them one or two examples)
  - What are the priorities for improvement? Vote
- **Break** (1:30 – 1:45pm)
- Orientation to breakout session 2 (1:45 – 2:00pm)
  - Show results of the ballot
  - Distribute and refer to prepared instruction sheet for breakout session 2
- Breakout session 2 (2:00 – 2:30pm)
  - Brainstorm (identification) about what could be done to improve alignment through practices used
  - 2 groups, each with responsibility for discussing one-half of the list of priority practices (those in high importance/low satisfaction category); identify possible actions for improving priority practices (brainstorming, not detailed analysis)
- Reports from Session 2 and discussion (2:30 – 3:15pm)
- **Break** (3:15 – 3:30 pm)
- Overview/discussion of “Case Study” (3:30 – 4:15pm)
  - Discuss specific case; examine where the process aligned and didn’t align with WGP

### **Day 3**

- Welcome back, refocus, agenda for the day (8:00 – 8:15am)

- Brief review of Case Study and wrap-up comments, questions, clarifications (8:15 – 8:30am)
- Group Discussion - focus on high priority aspects of future implementation of the Case Study to better align with WGP (8:30 – 9:15am)
  - Group drafts strategies for implementation in line with WGP (going forward)
- Revisit top practices from Breakout Session 2, discuss criteria for selection (9:15 – 10:15am)
  - As a group, identify the high priority actions (3-5?) from Breakout Session 2 that should be implemented to improve alignment with the WGP
  - For high priority actions, identify how to implement, obstacles, key players/partners, time frame
- **Break** (10:15 – 10:45am)
- Wrap-up, closure, next-steps including prospect and value of sharing these ideas throughout the agency (10:45 – 11:30am)
- Elicitation of participant feedback on workshop and adjourn (11:30am – 12pm)
- **Lunch—brown bag for travelers** (12:00-1:00pm)
- Workshop debrief among facilitation team (1:00pm-2:00pm)
- Depart

## Appendix F: Sample Workshop Flow Chart



## **Appendix G: Thoughts about people to involve**

### **Desired Traits of Facilitator**

If internal, respected as a neutral party with no hidden agenda

Recognized for leadership skills, fairly applied

Solid facilitation skills

Skilled in inquisitive inquiry

Knowledge of workshop referent is helpful

Will fully commit to reading all background materials (will clarify questions with material authors)

Will come prepared (will read the required pre-workshop readings and study the facilitator's guide; will have become familiar with assessment report and be prepared to use it to direct discussion)

### **Desired Traits of workshop participants (try to limit group size to around 7-8; no more than 12)**

Capable of productive dialogue

No hidden agendas

Willing to engage (no wallflowers)

In a position to affect change and willing to do so if change believed to be beneficial

Broad knowledge of workshop organizational referent (e.g., agency, division, work unit)

Thoughtful and open to new ideas

Can leave rank/position "at the door"

## Appendix H: Email template to send to workshop participants

NOTE: the 4 papers listed on page 13 of this guide should be included as attachments to this email.

-----

Greetings! Hopefully you remember that you agreed to attend a Wildlife Governance Principles workshop [DATES]. There will be a bit of homework before our workshop, please review the attached 4 papers **before [DATE]**.

On or about DATE, I'll send you a link for an online survey. The survey instrument will take about 20-30 minutes to complete and you'll have a week or so to complete it. When completing the survey instrument, do not report on the past or your hopes for the future of the organization. Please give your best assessment of the **current** wildlife conditions. The instrument will come with more detailed instructions. Your answers to the survey questions will be anonymous and will provide us an assessment of how well we are aligned the Wildlife Governance Principles. Research staff at Cornell's Human Dimensions Research Unit will crunch the survey data and provide a report.

The workshop at [LOCATION] will involve a discussion about the results of the assessment survey, help identify actions to improve areas where the assessment reveals weak alignment, and will help us prioritize those actions (agenda to come soon!).

You don't need to make any arrangements for the workshop; I've taken care of that already. The workshop designers and facilitators include [NAMES] (title and organization).

So please review the attached papers and keep an eye on your email for a link to the survey.

Let me know if you have any questions!

## Appendix I: Results Report Interpretation at a Glance

Report Section & Pages	Elements	Facilitation Supplies &	Facilitation Technique(s)	Outcomes
Overall Ratings of Traits and Practices (pp. 5-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminder of scales used</li> <li>Overview of grand mean data in table and graph form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slides of tables and graphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General observations of strengths and areas for improvement</li> <li>Set tone for the types of conversations to come</li> </ul>
Individual Traits and Practices, Organized by Theme (pp. 9-13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Means of responses for every trait and practice in each theme Calculation of the difference between the importance and satisfaction of each practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide(s) of table for first theme</li> <li>Print-outs of tables for other four themes, or use hard copies of the reports</li> <li>Flip-charts for each group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussion of first theme (diagnostic questions)</li> <li>Break-out groups for remaining four themes (and report-backs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deeper understanding of data and implications of ratings</li> <li>Identification of behaviors (why &amp; how) that contribute to traits and practices</li> </ul>
Traits Ratings, Organized by Means (pp. 14-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table of all traits (regardless of theme), ordered by mean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide(s) of table or refer to report pages 14-15</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of more or less preferable traits</li> <li>General trait observations</li> </ul>
Practices Ratings, Organized by Quadrants (pp. 16-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All importance and satisfaction values (regardless of theme) for practices, in table and graph form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slide(s) of scatterplots</li> <li>Print-outs of higher importance, lower satisfaction quadrant table</li> <li>Practices ballot sheet</li> <li>Flip-charts for groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussion of higher importance/lower satisfaction practices on scatterplot</li> <li>Voting on highest priority practices</li> <li>Break-out groups to discuss agency alignment (and report backs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of higher priority practices</li> <li>Discussion about what can be done to improve alignment to WGP's through the practices</li> </ul>

## **Appendix J: Frequently Asked Questions about the WGP Workshops**

### **What is the relationship of the WGP to the North American Model of Conservation?**

Dr. Valerius Geist and colleagues in 2001 articulated tenets of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation to describe aspects of the historic approach to conservation of game species that is unique to North America. Those tenets remain largely relevant today, with respect to hunted species.

Like the model described by Geist et al. (2001), the Wildlife Governance Principles articulated by Decker et al. (2016) are grounded in the public trust duties of government with respect to wildlife resources, but provide broader guidance for conservation of all species for all citizens – hunters and non-hunters alike. By integrating concepts of “public trust thinking” and “good governance,” the Wildlife Governance Principles provide guidance to help address any conservation challenge in a way that should respect all interests, reinforcing the relevance and value of wildlife conservation to a broad spectrum of society.<sup>2</sup>

### **Is this scalable to my work unit?**

Yes, the Assessment Tool can be used at multiple scales. However, implementation of actions to improve specific processes or procedure may require action at a different scale.

### **What outside help we can engage for this?**

Facilitators for the Training Workshop for Public Trust Practice are available to answer questions (best to contact them by email; see contact information below). They will also provide some basic interpretation of your state’s results report as part of the self-assessment (see <https://blogs.cornell.edu/publictrustpractice/agency-self-assessment-workshop/> ).

Dan Decker [djd6@cornell.edu](mailto:djd6@cornell.edu)

Chris Smith [csmithwmi@msn.com](mailto:csmithwmi@msn.com)

Ann Forstchen [ann.forstchen@myFWC.com](mailto:ann.forstchen@myFWC.com)

Pat Lederle [lederlep@michigan.gov](mailto:lederlep@michigan.gov)

Mike Schiavone [michael.schiavone@dec.ny.gov](mailto:michael.schiavone@dec.ny.gov)

Colleagues from other states who have taken the Public Trust Practice training are excellent resources as well. Join the Wildlife Governance Principles Community of Practice to connect with others. Email [ptpractice@cornell.edu](mailto:ptpractice@cornell.edu) with your preferred email address to be added to the facebook group.

---

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from text prepared by Dan Decker, Chris Smith, and Ann Forstchen for the 81<sup>st</sup> North American conference.

## **What other states have used this? And what was their experience?**

Wildlife Governance Principles workshops were piloted during 2016 in four states; Florida, Michigan, Montana, and New York. See below for excerpts from their executive summaries prepared following the workshops.

### **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

January 2016 (by Ann Forstchen)

#### **Key outcomes of workshop:**

Ten practices were identified by the group and multiple actions were identified to improve in each of these areas. The practices (not prioritized) include:

1. Communicating accomplishments and performance effectively to the public and policy makers
2. Soliciting input from diverse types of stakeholders about expectations of wildlife management
3. Using strategic and operational plans to limit reactions to perceived external pressure
4. Increasing the scope of information applied to decisions
5. Collaborating across internal and external boundaries for management planning and implementation
6. Adapting management objectives and actions based on metrics; systematic evaluation, re-prioritizations and adjustment
7. Communicating decision-making processes effectively to stakeholders
8. Using strategic planning tools to set realistic goals
9. Including all stakeholders, not making deals outside of the public process or scrutiny
10. Making all relevant information readily available to the public

#### **Proposed Next steps:**

Recognizing the significant effort invested and predicted for the development and implementation of FWC's Strategic Plan, Strategic Initiatives, and Commission Policy Focal Areas, Forstchen is reviewing the identified action items to determine alignment with already identified activities. It is expected that most, if not all, will be complementary to existing activities, and will provide some additional emphasis to those efforts. If any outliers are

identified, Forstchen will work with the workshop attendees and FWC leadership to develop a strategy to address them.

Workshop participants suggested using a similar workshop format to further diffuse the WGP (and concepts of public trust thinking and good governance) deeper within FWC. Other suggestions included informing our Commissioners of this work, helping our sister trustee agencies understand these concepts and roles, and helping our stakeholders better understand our roles and responsibilities as wildlife trust administrators.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division

May 2016 (by Pat Lederle)

### **Results of the Assessment**

Many of the discussions at the workshop focused on identifying practices where improvements were possible that would help align the Division's actions with the ideals of the WGP (and lead to better conservation outcomes). The assessment allowed ranking of practices in terms of importance, and how satisfied workshop participants felt the Division was meeting the spirit of any particular practice. Overall, participants felt most of the practices described (across all five themes) were important, yet satisfaction with those practices was lower. One way to interpret this overall result was participants believed in the concepts described by the practices (i.e., deemed them important), yet felt the Division was not doing as well as they would like to see in terms of exhibiting those practices or behaviors. In other words, there was ample areas for improving how the Division implements its programs and the results of the assessment provide additional insight on how the Division can improve its operations to help meet our trust responsibilities.

A small group exercise focusing on specific practices was used to explore what sorts of actions could be taken by the Division to improve overall alignment with the WGP. Potential actions, along with challenges of implementation based on criteria were developed by the small groups and shared and discussed with the entire group. This exercise did not reflect what practices the Division would deem the most important to work on, yet provided a good example of how the Division could identify implementable actions to better align with the WGP.

### **Action Items Identified by Participants**

- 1) An Executive Summary of the workshop will be developed and shared with the Wildlife Division Management Team, workshop participants, and facilitators. In addition, the Management Team will be briefed on the workshop at their meeting on June 15, 2016.
- 2) Pat Lederle will facilitate continued communications to participants, including continued dialog regarding the principles, useful examples of case studies to contemplate alignment (or not) with the principles, and useful tactics for promotion of the WGP during day-to-day work.

- 3) A short guide will be developed for participants to use at meetings or in day-to-day encounters to ask compelling questions regarding whether decisions made, and actions taken, by the agency are consistent (or inconsistent) with the traits and practices that describe the WGP.
- 4) Investigate the potential for “Thinking Like a Manager” training for selected staff surrounding a specific issue (e.g., crops damage, urban deer, wolves) to help build mental models and test the assumptions of those models for more successful outcomes. This training draws heavily on public trust thinking and good governance principles.
- 5) Convene a small planning team to help conduct future WGP workshops within the Wildlife Division to disseminate this philosophy of work more broadly. In addition, take advantage of venues (e.g., the Division Annual Meeting) where WGP can be discussed and used.
- 6) The assistant Chief will discuss the utility of WGP in a broader context with his counterparts in Fisheries and Forest Resources divisions. He will also advocate for the WGP with the Division Chiefs. The Office of the Great Lakes is another good contact for discussion of the WGP outside of the Department.

### **Proposed Next Steps**

Significant effort has been invested over the years developing and implementing the Division’s strategic plan (the GPS) and we recognize some significant similarities between the philosophies of work embodied in the GPS and those incorporated in the WGP. Intentional and improved alignment with the WGP will help promote the Division’s desires to continually improve our operations, increase engagement with stakeholders and partners, and forward the concept of becoming a learning organization. Keeping the WGP in the forefront of our thinking will complement existing activities and initiatives. In addition, participants are familiar with taking surveys and developing actions based on assessment results because of the Michigan State University study on evaluation of the GPS and the Department-wide Price-Waterhouse survey.

Workshop participants suggested using a similar workshop format to continue to diffuse the WGP (and concepts of public trust thinking and good governance) deeper within the Division, and a team will be pulled together to implement this task. Other suggestions (perhaps more challenging to implement) included informing trustees of this work, interacting with other Divisions and Departments to help them understand these concepts, and helping stakeholders better understand our roles and responsibilities as wildlife trust administrators.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

August 2016 (by Deb O'Neill)

### **Steps to Incorporate Governance Principles into Management Team's Implementation Plan for the Vision and Guide**

A. Management Team (MT) members completed a Governance Principles Assessment prior to the workshop. Assessment results were compiled by the Human Dimensions Research Unit at Cornell University.

B. Sixty-six practices were assessed by MT members. Twenty-two practices were identified as having the highest importance with the lowest satisfaction. One practice that did not make the cut on the scatterplot was added back in by MT.

C. To refine the 23 further, the MT was asked to individually identify their top 3 practices that should be addressed. The top 9 were identified, and 2 practices were. Because of limited time MT members addressed the top 3 practices (one per breakout group). The practices were: 1) *Raising public awareness of need for sustainable, long-term funding aimed at broad natural resource conservation purposes*, 2) *Building relationships with and informing diverse stakeholders in a management issue*, and 3) *Recruiting employees with diverse backgrounds, values, and skill sets (e.g., facilitation training, communication skills, bilingual, social science background)*. *Recruiting and hiring employees with diverse backgrounds and experience*.

D. For each of the top 3 practices, the facilitation team listed related actions identified by MT at the workshop and related actions found in the Vision and Guide. The breakout groups were asked to develop tasks for as many actions as they could in the time given. They were instructed to focus on actions they thought should be priorities.

E. The actions and tasks identified in this workshop were incorporated into the MT Implementation Priority Matrix.

\*\*\*\*\*

## New York Department of Environmental Conservation Bureau of Wildlife

September 2016 (by Mike Schiavone)

### **Results of the Assessment**

Workshop participants completed an assessment tool that characterized their perception of how well the Bureau of Wildlife's *traits* and *practices* align with the WGP. The assessment tool addressed five overarching themes that capture the essence of the WGP (Strategic Thinking and Organizational Adaptability, Evidence-based and Broadly Informed Decision-Making, Transparency and Accountability for Decisions and Actions, Inclusiveness and Diversity, Capacity for Conservation).

**Traits** are characteristics the Bureau possesses, typically philosophical orientations, that either enable or impede application of the WGs. Examples include whether the Bureau is proactive, open-minded, operates transparently, and seeks input from diverse stakeholders. Overall the results of the traits evaluation provided a starting point for discussion of the Bureau's culture and provided the context within which we discussed the next step in the workshop – an evaluation of practices.

**Practices** are behaviors or actions performed by the Bureau that support or impede alignment with the WGs. Many of the discussions at the workshop focused on identifying practices where improvements were possible that would help align the Bureau's actions with the ideals of the WGs (and lead to better conservation outcomes). The assessment allowed rating of practices in terms of importance and how satisfied workshop participants were that the Bureau was meeting the spirit of any particular practice. Overall, participants felt most of the practices described (across all five themes) were important, yet satisfaction with how those practices of the Bureau played out in general did not seem commensurate with importance (i.e., there was "low satisfaction"). One way to interpret this overall result was participants believed in the concepts described by the practices (i.e., deemed them important), yet felt the Bureau was not doing as well as they would like to see in terms of exhibiting those practices or behaviors. In other words, there was ample room for improving how the Bureau implements its programs and the discussions that followed provided additional insight on how the Bureau can improve its operations to help meet our trust responsibilities.

The assessment tool identified 28 practices that were of relatively high importance, but for which there was low satisfaction with the Bureau's ability to perform those practices. Of these, eight were identified as the highest priorities for improvement based on criteria such as feasibility, span of control, immediacy and size of impact, and staff capacity:

- Limiting reactions to external pressure by following existing strategic and operational plans
- Communicating reasons for management actions to the public
- Communicating decision-making process to stakeholders
- Communicating about decision-making processes (rationale outcomes, etc.) effectively to agency staff
- Raising public awareness of the need for broad conservation funding
- Providing programs that benefit a broad range of stakeholders and create broad support for conservation
- Fostering professional development of agency staff
- Rewarding employees for innovation

A small group exercise focusing on these eight practices was used to explore what sorts of actions could be taken by the Bureau to improve overall alignment with the WGs. Potential actions were identified by the small groups, along with challenges to implementation, and these were shared and discussed with the entire group. Two clear themes emerged from these discussions as particularly important for improving alignment with the WGs: (1) Create a culture of information sharing within the Bureau of Wildlife; and (2) Document and distribute the rationale for decision-making internally and externally.

As a large group, participants refined the potential actions that could be implemented to address these two themes (NOTE: not all items are included here, only 2 bullets from each subsection to give readers a sense of the types of things that can come out of these workshops):

### ***Creating a culture of information sharing within the Bureau of Wildlife***

#### ***Bureau Culture***

- Provide more opportunities for information exchange through casual discussion and informal interactions between staff at Bureau-wide meetings, and meetings between managers and staff where staff can voice their concerns and ideas.
- Encourage face-to-face meetings rather than conference calls.

#### ***Information Sharing***

- Have meeting minutes and action items and BoW quarterly highlights easily accessible on a shared network drive or internal website.
- Create and maintain a staff directory that highlights staff responsibilities.

#### ***Internal Networking***

- Encourage and allow regional staff to attend BMT meetings to share information and concerns formally or informally.
- Encourage staff to create state-wide (internal) networks and cross-training opportunities outside of the regular team structure.

### ***Documenting and distributing the rationale for decisions internally and externally***

#### ***Internal***

- Identify and reduce/eliminate decision making that is outside recognized procedures such as teams, planning documents.
- Create a summary document (white paper) of routine decision-making processes and who is involved in them including chain of review & timeline.

### ***External***

- Have plans or policy and procedures (species plans, strategic plans, SOPs) in place prior to taking action.
- Have program staff produce and distribute talking points for staff when management actions are taken (e.g., new regulations, management plans, etc.).

### ***Internal and External***

- Prioritize the hiring of a “communications coordinator” who will develop outreach programs to share information both internally and externally.
- Provide mechanisms that allow both staff and the public to provide input to the decision-making process.

### **Proposed Next Steps**

Due to time constraints, participants did not refine or prioritize this list of potential actions, but the process provided a good example of how the Bureau could identify implementable actions to better align with the WGP.

Participants were enthusiastic about “continuing the conversation” on how the actions identified could be refined, prioritized, and implemented at a future meeting or workshop, or as a special session during a statewide Bureau meeting. They were also excited about incorporating the ideas embodied by the WGP in their day-to-day jobs and sharing these ideas with their co-workers.

Several participants felt that the WGP are a good reinforcement of many things we already do, and do well, but that there are definite areas where we can improve alignment with the WGP (e.g., internal communications and clear communication of decision-making) that will improve conservation outcomes, thus better serving current and future generations of New Yorkers.

## Appendix K: WGP Case Study (OPTIONAL)

Experience indicates that the best way to make the WGP discussion “come alive” with respect to perceived relevance is to use the WGP as an analytic framework and evaluative criteria in a group debrief of a timely wildlife management case. The idea is to have a recent or ongoing case described in detail by an individual(s) who was/is deeply involved and willing to share the intricacies of the case, and willing to engage in discussion about how well various actions aligned with the WGP. Though preferably the focus would be a local management situation with moderate to high salience for the workshop participants, a case that is well and thoroughly described from another context can be used as a substitute. For example, below we provide for back-up a description of the case of Florida’s Imperiled Species Rule Development. This can be used if for some reason a “local” case is not available or appropriate for the group review vis-à-vis WGP alignment. If a case from elsewhere were used, a feature of the workshop could be to invite an individual with first-hand experience with that case to join the workshop for that portion of the workshop, either in person or perhaps skyped in or via a web (e.g., webex).

**Preferably**, a local (in your state) case that is regarded as important to the agency can be used for this practicum. It would be especially fortunate if you have one or more individuals participating in the workshop who have familiarity with such a case and can be coached beforehand such that they can describe the management actions to others in wildlife governance terms. This can be delivered by the informant(s), perhaps preferably, in an informal, roundtable manner with a beverage. The process for this practicum is straightforward. It has just two steps: articulation of the case and then analysis of the case.

The first step is to get the case laid out for the group such that they understand it adequately. This starts with establishing concurrence from the group that “what is said in the practicum stays in the practicum.” The exercise is intended to be instructional, not critical of the players (possibly the individual[s] volunteering to describe the case). During this first step, questions from the group to the informants about the case should be of a clarifying, not critical nature. It is the facilitator’s job to keep the discussion and exchange on track.

The second step is systematic review of the case with respect to manifestations of traits and practices in each of the five themes for WGP:

1. strategic thinking and organizational adaptability
2. evidence-based and broadly informed decision making
3. transparency and accountability for decisions and actions
4. inclusiveness and diversity
5. capacity for conservation

The facilitator ensures that the group refers to the traits and practices that were used in the assessment tool—essentially this is moving from the general assessment of how the agency performs in terms of alignment with WGP to how things played out in a particular case. The value is not in “grading” the case but in seeing what was done well and how, as well as what was not done as well as desired, and why. This exercise will reveal the pragmatic challenges in

attempting to apply WGP in practice. Impediments will be revealed and can be discussed constructively by the group.

**NOTE: We believe this exercise may contribute substantively to the workshop's success because it is where the ideas of public trust thinking and good governance become real and their value identified.**

### **Florida's Imperiled Species Rule Development**

In 2000 the FWC and the USFWS were sued over their management of the federally endangered Florida manatee. Additional lawsuits were threatened by various groups. A settlement agreement was reached in 2001 which resulted in a change of expectations about how the 2 agencies should work together for the conservation of this species. Both agencies' cultures were changing toward a more expansive stakeholder base and increased transparency in their decision-making processes. And both agencies recognized the need to move away from business as usual, which often involved managing species by litigation.

In 2003 FWC and USFWS decided to form a Manatee Forum with a goal of increasing cooperation and reducing litigation. It was an attempt to work with representatives of competing interest groups and move ahead of the lawsuit/litigation management of manatees. The Manatee Forum was made up in equal parts of manatee advocates, environmental stakeholders and boating interests. It provided a common ground where both agencies could speak together and at the same time with interest groups. The Forum met several times a year until December 2007 when the Manatee Management Plan was approved and meetings have continued twice a year since then. Currently, the focus is more on keeping communication open between the agencies and stakeholders and to provide updates on all things related to manatees so the forum members have access to the accurate information on manatee issues. The Forum was the original source of the philosophy of "no daylight between us" with respect to FWC and USFWS communication and relations which continues today. It's recognized that it isn't necessary to always agree with one another, but important to make sure there are no surprises to either party and there is support and resources for staff to find common ground and build trust and long-term relationships between the agency staff at all levels.

Both agencies recognized the value of involving stakeholders as well as the need to work in collaboration with others (i.e., NGOs, industry) for real and lasting conservation. Both also recognized that they couldn't conserve manatees alone. As the agencies worked toward common ground, the socio-political environment around them was changing too, and external pressure for good governance processes (i.e., open, transparent, inclusive) reinforced the changes that were occurring internally.

Internal cultural changes led to different expectations from the public, key stakeholders, and staff working on complex conservation issues. They all expected: agencies to work together, transparency in the decision making, and broad stakeholder input in the decision-making process.

FWC formed an imperiled species team in December 2007 after Commissioners requested that staff evaluate the existing listing process and develop recommendations for making the process less controversial. FWC was transforming its management of imperiled species – away from managing each aspect of conservation (i.e., listing process, research, management, law enforcement, education and outreach, permitting, legal) independently toward recognizing it as an interconnected management system.

Using a situational analysis tool (Manager's Model), FWC identified its desired future conditions for the management of imperiled species, clearly articulated constraints (i.e., FWC doesn't regulate habitat, water or private land) and opportunities (i.e., incentives can be developed for landowners to manage species), identified stakeholders and developed goals, objectives and management actions to improve imperiled species management in Florida. This innovative management approach was shared with stakeholders and improved based on their suggestions.

The process of revising the imperiled species management rule spanned several years and scores of meetings; it was approved by the Commission with broad stakeholder support in 2010. The rule was considered just one part of the State's imperiled species management system, along with development of management plans. It revised the State's listing process to avoid confusion with federal system; provided an opportunity for improved and enhanced conservation of federally listed species; streamlining take permitting; reduced inconsistencies between federal and State recommendations and management practices; and created more predictable permitting outcomes and consistent mitigation and conservation measure requirements.

FWC was embracing change and innovative ideas to address challenging problems that involved examining and modifying the practices, procedures and behaviors of staff. The work focused on understanding diverse perspectives, taking into account ecological and social science information as well as professional judgment, worked across multiple jurisdictions, provided many opportunities for stakeholders to become engaged, created open and transparent practices to develop management alternatives, increased trust among agencies and stakeholders and resulted in a well-supported, durable decision.

The Manatee Forums are an example of the Wildlife Governance Principles (WGPs) in practice. The Forums were established because of stakeholder distrust and frustration with FWC and the USFWS (an indication of FWC and the USFWS not being accountable to or transparent with stakeholders (WGP 6 and 7)). The Forums emphasized that the overall conservation goal was the long-term sustainability of manatee populations but also helped stakeholders and the management agencies understand the current concerns and needs of all stakeholders impacted by manatee management regulations (WGP 1 and 2). The Manatee Forums provided opportunities for any interested citizen or interest group to become informed and engaged about manatee research, monitoring, and management actions (WGP 2 and 8). They helped stakeholders better understand the Commission and USFWS trust responsibilities and decision making processes (WGP 5). The Forums brought together different perspectives or competing interests in manatee management (WGP 1), helped them find areas where they could work together (WGP 10). They provided venues where ecological and social science could be shared and discussed and also provided a platform for local professional insight to be shared (i.e.,

observations from charter boat captains about manatee behavior) (WGP 3). Long-lasting partnerships have been generated from the Forums (WGP 9), and trust in the “system” has increased. Stakeholders testified that while they didn’t love everything about the new rule, they trusted the agencies and the processes to accommodate modifications in the future if the management actions didn’t result in the broadly desired benefits identified and agreed upon by the Forum participants.

## *“All wildlife for all people”*

### **Wildlife Governance Principles**

1. Wildlife governance will be adaptable and responsive to citizens' current needs and interests, while also being forward-looking to conserve options of future generations.
2. Wildlife governance will seek and incorporate multiple and diverse perspectives.
3. Wildlife governance will apply social and ecological science, citizens' knowledge, and trust administrators' judgment.
4. Wildlife governance will produce multiple, sustainable benefits for all beneficiaries.
5. Wildlife governance will ensure that trust administrators are responsible for maintaining trust resources and allocating benefits from the trust.
6. Wildlife governance will be publicly accessible and transparent.
7. Wildlife governance will ensure that trust administrators are publicly accountable.
8. Wildlife governance will include means for citizens to become informed and engaged in decision making.
9. Wildlife governance will include opportunities for trust administrators to meet their obligations in partnerships with non-governmental entities.
10. Wildlife governance will facilitate collaboration and coordination across ecological, jurisdictional and ownership boundaries.