

USING THE CONSERVATION PLANNING TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY RECOVER NORTHERN BOBWHITES: AN EXAMPLE FOR STATES TO EFFECTIVELY STEP-DOWN THE NBCI PLAN

Theron M. Terhune¹

Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32312, USA

William E. Palmer

Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32312, USA

Thomas V. Dailey

National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, University of Tennessee, 1110 South College Avenue, Columbia, MO 65021, USA

Billy Dukes

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202, USA

Charles L. McKelvy

Division of Hunting and Game Management, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 275 North Mulberry Street, Monticello, FL 32344, USA

John J. Morgan

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601, USA

James C. Pitman

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1830 Merchant, P. O. Box 1525, Emporia, KS 66801, USA

Marc Puckett

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, 107 Foxwood Drive, Farmville, VA 23901, USA

Reggie E. Thackston

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, Game Management Section, 116 Rum Creek, Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029, USA

ABSTRACT

The National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) 2.0 provides a sound foundation for recovering northern bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*) range-wide, regionally and, to some extent, even locally. However, the NBCI does not provide detailed guidance to states on how to step-down the plan for efficacious delivery of on-the-ground management actions prescribed via biologists within the plan itself. States often must incorporate multiple planning efforts (e.g., state wildlife action plans) and geospatial layers not directly included in the NBCI plan (see NBCI Appendix in these Proceedings) to make tenable decisions which best guide allocation of resources and benefit multiple species of greatest conservation concern. The Conservation Planning Tool (CPT), developed as part of NBCI 2.0, provides the infrastructure for states and conservation organizations to capture biologist information coalesced in the plan while incorporating other data (e.g., species emphasis areas, current CRP implementation, etc.) germane to conservation planning. We use 3 states (Kansas, Florida, and Virginia) to demonstrate the utility of the CPT and to develop a step-down implementation plan, via creation of a habitat prioritization model, for recovery of bobwhites in each state. We explore the implications associated with creation of focal areas with respect to high versus medium ranked areas and underscore the importance of inclusion of major land-use opportunities and constraints prescribed within the plan to garner successful bobwhite recovery. We propose a framework for the integration of monitoring efforts into the step-down model to assess bird response and evaluate NBCI success through estimating bobwhite population density.

Citation: Terhune, T. M., W. E. Palmer, T. V. Dailey, B. Dukes, C. L. McKelvy, J. J. Morgan, J. C. Pitman, M. Puckett, and R. E. Thackston. 2012. Using the conservation planning tool to effectively recover northern bobwhites: an example for states to effectively step-down the NBCI plan. Proceedings of the National Quail Symposium 7:304.

Key words: *Colinus virginianus*, Conservation Reserve Program, National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, northern bobwhites

¹E-mail: theron@ttrs.org