

## **SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES**

### **Committee Report for the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS) Steering Committee**

**Chair Robert H. Boyles, Jr.**

**Meeting of March 29, 2023**

**Danish Customs House, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands**

**Meeting convened** 09:02 a.m.

**Chaired by** Robert H. Boyles, Jr.

**Committee Members Attending:** Robert Boyles -SC, Ted Will - GA, Thomas Eason – FL, Mike Oetker – FWS, Sara Parker Pauley – MO (via telecom)

**Other Attendees:** Amanda Sesser, SECAS Coordinator; Ross Melinchuk, SEAFWA Executive Director; Evan Gwilliam, NPS, Jon Gassett, Wildlife Management Institute

#### **Scheduled Discussion Items:**

- Review and summarize the recent actions and progress of SECAS since the October 2022 SEAFWA conference.
- Discuss the current SECAS governance model, engagement of other sectors, and establishing SECAS Points of Contact (POCs).
- Review and discuss the processes used to identify shared priorities (e.g., America the Beautiful Challenge grant priorities), seek recommendations on process modifications, and discuss ideas for leveraging the upcoming Landscape of the Future Summit to further define shared priorities.
- Share ideas for the Southeast Landscape Summit scheduled for August 29-30 to bring together the entire conservation community in the Southeast to advance collaborative approaches to conservation.
- Examine the need and timing for undertaking strategic planning and initiating a comprehensive planning process for the SECAS partnership.
- Discuss the need and potential timing for a SECAS Steering Committee Retreat in summer 2023.

**Other Discussion Items:** N/A

#### **Action Items and Recommendations:**

1. SECAS will develop a more formal governance and guidance document. Amanda will work with Ross Melinchuk to complete a draft for review by the Committee.
2. SECAS Blueprint User Support staff will visit with state agency staff to improve communications and increase collaboration. The committee encourages more personalized meetings among agency staff, leadership, and SECAS support staff to deepen engagement in and understanding of the SECAS partnership.

3. SECAS leadership and the Executive Steering Committee will remain engaged through AFWA and the Joint Task Force on Landscape Conservation to promote incorporation of the Southeast's shared priorities (conserving grasslands and restoring aquatic connectivity) in the evaluation and scoring processes for NFWF and other conservation granting organizations and opportunities.
4. SECAS staff will prepare a bulleted list of background material and talking points for steering committee members to share with other SEAFWA Directors and network colleagues to explain SECAS and its value to landscape conservation.
5. SECAS staff are urged to focus comprehensively on the SE Landscape of the Future Summit, keeping the Steering Committee informed throughout the planning process, then following the Summit, examine the need for undertaking strategic planning.

**Committee Recommendation for Chair:** The Committee expressed its appreciation for the leadership and oversight of Chair Robert Boyles.

**Meeting adjourned:** 4:00 p.m.

**List of current committee members and contact information:**

SC	Robert Boyles, Jr., Chair	<a href="mailto:boylesr@dnr.sc.gov">boylesr@dnr.sc.gov</a>	803-734-4007
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FWS	Mike Oetker	<a href="mailto:michael_oetker@fws.gov">michael_oetker@fws.gov</a>	404-679-4000

**List of interested participants and contact information:**

Amanda Sesser, SECAS Coordinator	<a href="mailto:amanda_sesser@fws.gov">amanda_sesser@fws.gov</a>
Bill Uihlein, FWS Science Applications	<a href="mailto:bill_uihlein@fws.gov">bill_uihlein@fws.gov</a>
Jon Gassett, Wildlife Management Institute	<a href="mailto:jgassett@wildlifemgt.org">jgassett@wildlifemgt.org</a>
Ross Melinchuk, SEAFWA Exe. Dir.	<a href="mailto:rossmelinchuk@gmail.com">rossmelinchuk@gmail.com</a>

**List and description of active committee members:** above.

**Submitted by:** Amanda Sesser, SECAS Coordinator on behalf of Robert H. Boyles, Jr., Chair