



CHARTER

For the

North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership

I. Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership (NCSCP) is to *coordinate the development and implementation of conservation strategies for the red-cockaded woodpecker, other native biota, longleaf pine and other ecosystems in the Sandhills of North Carolina compatible with the land use objectives of the partners.*

II. Steering Committee

Activities of the NCSCP will be guided by a Steering Committee. The primary responsibility of the Steering Committee will be to provide the necessary resources and guidance to accomplish the NCSCP Mission. The Steering Committee will establish a series of stakeholder Working Groups charged with developing various management plans for incorporation into a comprehensive conservation strategy for the North Carolina Sandhills. Members of the Steering Committee will serve as a supervising body for the Working Groups, resolve impasses in consensus within the Working Groups, and approve all final Working Group plans.

III. Membership

Members of the Steering Committee include:

- Raleigh Field Office Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Deputy Director, Public Works Business Center, U.S. Army at Fort Bragg;
- Chief, Training Division, Readiness Business Center, U.S. Army at Fort Bragg;
- Conservation Branch Chief, U.S. Army Environmental Center;
- Section Manager, Land Management and Budget, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission;

- Sandhills Project Director, North Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy;
- President, Sandhills Ecological Institute;
- Director, Sandhills Area Land Trust; and,
- Director, NC Division of Natural Resources Planning and Conservation

IV. Responsibilities of Members

- Attendance. Members of the Steering Committee agree to attend all meetings. Alternates may represent Steering Committee members, as needed.
- Preparation for Meetings. Members of the Steering Committee agree to read appropriate material and arrive prepared to work.
- Representation. Members represent their individual organization's positions to the Steering Committee. Members also represent the Steering Committee's position to their associated organizations.
- Members agree to support the mission of the NCSCP.

V. Decision Process and Internal Organization

Use of Consensus: The Steering Committee will operate by consensus. Steering Committee decisions will be made only with concurrence of all members represented at the meeting. No member can be outvoted.

Failure to Reach Consensus: If the Steering Committee fails to reach consensus on an issue, a trained facilitator, acceptable to all members, will be used to assist in resolution.

Officers: A Chair shall be selected annually from the members of the Steering Committee at the first meeting of each calendar year. Members will serve as Chair for a one-year term. A Vice Chair shall also be selected annually to function in the absence of the Chair.

Subcommittees: The Steering Committee may establish subcommittees to address specific issues as needed. Subcommittees may consult individuals with technical skills and information pertinent to the issue at hand. Subcommittees are not authorized to make decisions for the Steering Committee unless the Steering Committee explicitly grants such authorization. Subcommittee findings will be forwarded unchanged to the Steering Committee Chair. Reports may include preferred and alternative recommendations.

Agendas: Prior to each scheduled meeting, a draft meeting agenda will be developed by the Steering Committee Chair for distribution to committee members for review and approval.

Meeting Summaries: The Steering Committee Chair will distribute a draft meeting summary to all Steering Committee members for review prior to the next regular meeting. The summary will include attendance record, a summary of actions taken at the meeting, and other information pertaining to the deliberations.

Schedule: The Steering Committee will meet as needed or at least quarterly each year

VI. Rules of Order:

A. Ground rules: Members of the Steering Committee (and all Subcommittees) agree to participate constructively in all meetings. Ground rules for constructive interaction include:

1. Treat all members with courtesy and respect.
2. Speak one at a time.
3. Listen carefully.
4. Be clear and concise in your comments.
5. Stick to the agenda; avoid off-target discussions.
6. Be prepared to take part; be an active participant.
7. Be candid; it's ok to disagree.
8. Ask relevant questions.
9. Focus on the problem, not finding fault.
10. Separate interests from positions.
11. Don't bring hidden agendas.
12. Meetings adjourn on schedule or can be extended in duration by consensus.

These ground rules may be amended at any meeting. These ground rules will be provided to all subcommittees.

B. Enforcement of Ground Rules: Ground rules will be monitored and enforced by Steering Committee members and/or the Chair.

VII: Dissemination of Information

Any release of information regarding NCSCP activities will be done after coordination with the Steering Committee which must approve its release by consensus.

VIII: Responsibilities of the Chair

The primary task of the Chair is to guide the meetings of the Working Group within the framework of the charter. These responsibilities may include managing the meeting agenda, encouraging participation, helping the Steering Committee stay on task, and helping the Steering Committee reach consensus.

IX. Responsibilities of the NCSCP Coordinator

The responsibility of the NCSCP coordinator is to provide administrative support for Steering Committee members and to serve as a liaison between the Steering Committee and each of the Working Groups. Support will include meeting logistics, providing draft agendas, meeting minutes and other documentation to all members and securing a facilitator and other outside expertise upon request of the Steering Committee Chair.

X. Changes to the Organizational Protocol

Changes to this charter can be made at any scheduled meeting of the Working Group through a consensus procedure.