

Survey of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Bank Managers

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Department of the Interior's Office of Policy Analysis are undertaking an analysis of the USFWS habitat conservation banking program. As part of this analysis, we are surveying conservation bank sponsors and managers to obtain information on experiences with and opinions of various aspects of the conservation banking program. Your responses as a conservation bank manager are critical to our efforts. Responses to the survey are anonymous and will be reported in aggregate form.

If you have any questions or have trouble completing the survey, please contact Sarah Cline, DOI Office of Policy Analysis, at 202-208-6018 or sarah_cline@ios.doi.gov.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This survey is authorized by the Endangered Species Act. It will provide information necessary for us to understand the current performance of the conservation banking program and to identify areas where the program can be improved. Your response is voluntary. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to an information collection unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take conservation bank managers about 15 minutes to complete this survey, including time to gather information, read instructions, and complete the survey. You may send comments on any aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, (Mail Stop BPHC), Falls Church, VA 22041

The questions in this survey pertain to your **direct professional** experiences with habitat conservation banking, *not* wetlands or stream mitigation banking. Please answer the following questions based solely on your experience with habitat conservation banks administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or jointly by the USFWS and another agency.

1. Are you involved with the development and/or management of individual conservation banks (preparing and submitting banking documents, land management, etc.)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. What is your role in conservation banking? (Please choose all that apply)

- a. Bank Sponsor
- b. Landowner
- c. Bank Manager
- d. Other: _____

3. How many years have you been involved in conservation banking?

4. How many banks have you helped develop?

5. Have you participated in any conservation banking training (as an instructor or participant)? (Please select all that apply)

- a. Yes - Instructor
- b. Yes - Participant
- c. No

6. How familiar are you with 2003 USFWS "[Guidance for the Establishment, Use, and Operation of Conservation Banks](#)"? (Please select one answer below)

- a. Very familiar
- b. Somewhat familiar
- c. Unfamiliar

7. Currently, no regulations exist to guide the development of conservation banks. Do you feel that changes to the current guidance (mentioned in Question 6) or the development of new conservation banking regulations are needed? (Please select one answer below)

- a. Yes – Changes to current guidance
- b. Yes – Development of new regulations
- c. Yes – Both changes to guidance and development of new regulations
- d. No
- e. No opinion

8. In your opinion, what is the perception of conservation banks as a conservation tool for each of the different groups listed below? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neutral	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Don't know/ No opinion	List Field/Regional Office
USFWS - Field office							
USFWS - Regional office							
USFWS - National office							
Other Federal agencies							
State agencies							
Local government							
Local Non-Governmental Organizations							
Energy, mining & related industries							
Manufacturing							
Shipping/ transportation industries							
Real estate developers							
Private landowners							

9. Based on your experience, how likely is each of the following factors to lengthen the USFWS review time for banking agreements? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Extremely likely	Don't know/No Opinion
Insufficient USFWS staffing						
Unsupportive USFWS management						
USFWS staff not adequately trained						
Government legal review and approval						
Inexperienced bankers						
Long or complex banking agreements						
Lack of standardized documents/templates						
Determination of credits						
Coordination with other Federal, State, or local agencies						
Lack of defined timeline						
Other: _____						

10. In your opinion, how important are each of the following factors in hindering conservation bank creation? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Don't know/No opinion
Unsuitability of species for banking					
Weak demand for credits					
Lack of start-up funding					
Landowners not willing to sell land or easement					
Economic uncertainty/risk					
Other mitigation options substitute for banking					
Lack of USFWS support					
Lack of USFWS Field Office experience					
Lack of clear deadlines/timelines for USFWS					
Delayed USFWS response					
Lack of ESA enforcement					
Lack of species and habitat data					
Other: _____					

11. To what extent do you agree that each of the following changes to the FWS conservation banking program would make conservation bank creation easier? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know/No opinion
Known timeline after complete submission						
Expressed preference by USFWS for advance compensatory mitigation						
Equivalent standards for all types of compensatory mitigation						
Policy preference for conservation banking above other compensatory mitigation options						
Approved conservation banking document templates in use in all regions						
Formal conservation banking regulations						
Other: _____						

12. In your opinion, to what extent are the following factors good measures of conservation bank success for your company, for species and for credit purchasers? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Very Poor Measure	Poor Measure	Neutral	Good Measure	Very Good Measure	Don't know
Meeting criteria for recovery plan/Accomplishing conservation goals						
Maintaining a stable population/growing the species						
Linking existing conservation/natural areas						
Increasing the number of acres of "preserved" habitat						
Increasing the number of acres of critical habitat secured						
Preserving ecologically valuable private lands						
Minimizing costs to project proponents						
Number of credit sales						
Conservation bank profitability						
Reinvestment of capital in						

additional banks						
Other: _____						

13. In your opinion, to what extent is each of the following factors a good measure of conservation bank ecological performance? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Very Poor Measure	Poor Measure	Neutral	Good Measure	Very Good Measure	Don't know/No opinion
Index of biological integrity						
Indicator species number and diversity						
Habitat conditions						
Number of individuals of the species						
Health of ecosystem						
Species threats addressed						
Other: _____						

14. How would you rate the availability of species and habitat data in your region(s)? (Please answer for each region in which you work)

Region	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Don't know/No opinion
1 (Pacific)						
2 (Southwest)						
3 (Great Lakes- Big Rivers)						
4 (Southeast)						
5 (Northeast)						
6 (Mountain- Prairie)						
7 (Alaska)						
8 (California & Nevada)						

Region 1: ID, OR, WA, HI, Pacific Islands; Region 2: AZ, NM, OK, TX; Region 3: IL, IN, IA, MI, MO, MN, OH, WI; Region 4: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, PR/VI, SC, TN; Region 5: CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV; Region 6: CO, KS, MT, ND, NE, SD, UT, WY; Region 7: AK; Region 8: CA, NV

15. In your opinion, how important are the following factors in impeding conservation bank operations? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Don't know/No opinion
USFWS reticence to publicize availability of conservation banking					
HCPs without conservation banking option					
State or local government agencies unwilling to accept use of conservation banks					
Other: _____					

Wetlands Mitigation Banking

The questions in this section pertain to your experiences with wetlands and stream mitigation banking only, not habitat conservation banking. Please answer the following questions based solely on your **direct professional** experience with wetlands and/or stream mitigation banking only.

16. How familiar are you with wetlands mitigation banking? (Please select one answer below)

- a. Very familiar
- b. Somewhat familiar
- c. Unfamiliar

If you answered c, skip to Question 19

17. In your view, how does conservation banking compare with wetlands mitigation banking in the following areas? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Worse	About the Same	Better	Don't know
Length of time required for review/approval of conservation banks				
Ease of application process for conservation banks				
Developer's cost to establish conservation banks				
Ease of determining the total number of available credits for conservation banks				
Monitoring requirements - timing, cost, complexity for conservation banks				
Ecological performance of conservation banks				
Ability to measure ecological performance of conservation banks				
Government administrative costs of conservation banks (including oversight)				

18. How familiar are you with the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Final Rule \(2008\)](#) related to wetlands mitigation banking? (Please select one answer below)

- a) Very familiar
- b) Somewhat familiar
- c) Unfamiliar.

19. Do you think any of these elements in the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Final Rule \(2008\)](#) related to wetlands mitigation banking should be considered for addition to USFWS' conservation banking guidance? (Please select one response for each item below)

	Add	Already Exists	Don't Add	No opinion
Establish equivalent standards for all mitigation mechanisms				
Establish timelines for agency review of bank proposals and instruments				
Require short-term financial assurances that restoration would be completed as planned (usually through bonds, letters of credits, or escrow funds)				
Establish an explicit preference for bank credits (when available) over other forms of mitigation				
Require the establishment of 'service areas' for banks and in-lieu fee programs. Service areas are defined as the geographic area within which impacts can be mitigated at a specific bank or in-lieu fee program				
Other: _____				

20. Is there anything else you would like to add that was not addressed in the questions above?

Thank You!

Thank you for participating in our survey! Your responses are very valuable for our analysis of the USFWS conservation banking program.

Please click "Done" to submit your responses.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, please contact Sarah Cline at the DOI Office of Policy Analysis: sarah_cline@ios.doi.gov, phone: 202-208-6018.