

National Habitat Conservation Plan Coalition
Policies Adopted as of December 1, 2017 and Amended March 26, 2021

1. The National HCP Coalition promotes, encourages and supports, through collaborative partnerships, the development and implementation of multi-species, landscape-scale habitat conservation plans (HCPs) that serve to streamline endangered species permitting, facilitate public infrastructure and private development, and conserve endangered species and the ecosystems on which they depend.
2. When possible and appropriate, design and develop HCPs within an eco-regional context.
3. The NHCPC urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) (collectively, the Services) to prioritize work that relates to the development and approval of landscape-scale HCPs and to optimize resources available to its field offices to expedite plan completion and permitting.
4. The NHCPC urges the Services, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies to increase alignment of Endangered Species Act (ESA), Clean Water Act permits, and other federal laws for the purposes of streamlining permitting within areas covered by landscape-scale HCPs, achieving consistent mitigation ratios and requirements, and reducing permittee and agency staff time to prepare, review and administer duplicative permitting and mitigation.
5. The NHCPC urges the Services and HCP preparers to increase the alignment of relevant state laws for the purposes of streamlining permitting within areas covered by landscape-scale HCPs, achieving consistent mitigation ratios and requirements, and reducing permittee and state and federal agency staff time to prepare, review and administer duplicative permitting and mitigation.
6. The NHCPC urges the Administration and Congress to increase funding for the ESA Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation grant program to help fund land acquisition and easements critical to the conservation strategies of many landscape-scale HCPs. **The Coalition also urges that HCP land acquisition Notice for Funding opportunities [NOFOs] provide needed flexibility and maximum usefulness and that the Services work with our Coalition to achieve these outcomes.**
7. The NHCPC is concerned that there is inadequate funding and staffing for the Services to expedite ESA Section 10, Section 7, and NEPA reviews, thereby leading to HCP acceptance delays. The NHCPC urges the federal Administration and Congress to increase ESA funding and ensure adequate Field Office and Regional Office staffing to relieve this problem.
8. The NHCPC supports coverage of non-listed species when and where appropriate to increase the benefits of HCPs and to help prevent new species listings.
9. The NHCPC encourages HCPs to include net benefits and actions to aid species recovery but recognizes that this is not statutorily required and is not appropriate for all HCPs.

10. The NHCPC supports and recognizes the conservation value of small HCPs, particularly where large-scale HCPs are not practical and if mitigation is carried out through conservation opportunities that follow landscape-scale conservation planning principles.
11. The NHCPC supports and encourages the Services' continuing efforts to improve the process of reviewing and approving HCPs, HCP amendments, and their NEPA documents, to reduce the cost and time needed to reach HCP implementation and deliver conservation and economic development.
12. HCPs are an existing and proven local tool to achieve landscape-scale conservation that is resilient to climate change that will benefit special status species and native biodiversity. With additional federal funding, local agencies can leverage the existing HCP structures to be an effective tool to help offset climate change through actions that sequester carbon such as habitat restoration, land acquisition, and adaptive land management actions.
13. The NHCPC recognizes that HCPs play an important role in landscape-scale conservation efforts by enabling local agencies and private landowners to protect land with multiple benefits including conserving and restoring habitat, securing wildlife corridors, promoting biodiversity and species recovery, and maintaining working landscapes and healthy watersheds.