



# Cumberland HCP

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- A Habitat Conservation Plan is an agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service.
- TWRA will be developing a HCP for Catoosa, Royal Blue, Sundquist and Mt Roosevelt WMAs.
- Cumberland, Morgan, and Scott counties are now actively involved with the Water HCP.
- The Species Working groups have made progress on Warblers and Bats

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## Greetings from Alex Wyss, Project Director for the Cumberland HCP Project

Welcome to the first issue of the Cumberland Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) newsletter. The HCP initiative began as an idea in 2004 when Gary Meyers, Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, challenged his agency to facilitate development of the first multi-species HCP in Tennessee. A tool that was needed in the Cumberlands but also unprecedented, participation and interest in HCPs has steadily grown. Today, due to outstanding leadership by state agencies and local communities, there are two HCPs under development, a tremendous milestone

for Tennessee. HCPs are complex efforts involving strong scientific support and extensive technical planning. But perhaps most importantly, our success will rely on collaboration between multiple and diverse interest groups as well as public support. Therefore, effective communication with the various project teams and outreach to the public and key decision makers are critical to the HCPs' success. We hope that this newsletter will help you not only keep up with the overall progress of these HCPs but also be an interesting and helpful source of information

on technical subjects and other topics related to the HCPs. Lastly, if you have ideas for future newsletter topics please do not hesitate to let us know.



## The Cumberlands, a Balancing Act

More than ever, there is a need for constructive solutions that seek to promote biodiversity conservation while enabling sustainable use of natural resources of the Cumberland Plateau and Mountains of Tennessee. In the coming years, economic development pressures will continue to stress and fragment land and aquatic habitats if careful planning is not conducted. Unplanned development can often adversely impact wildlife and the habitats on which they depend, which can also affect long-term economic security and quality of life for

area residents. HCPs present a viable method to resolve the sometimes conflicting objectives associated with using and conserving natural resources. With dynamic growth comes a need to manage the way we grow.

At least twenty-one species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act exist in the Cumberlands, one of the highest concentrations of federally listed species in the United States. As communities experience unprecedented growth and land uses such as forestry continue to receive

scrutiny for environmental impacts, there will be an increasing need for innovative and effective ways to balance resource use and conservation.

The HCP process provides a unique opportunity to work together to find innovative means for growth to occur with minimal impact to the natural resources of this area.

An “endangered” species is one that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A “threatened” species is one that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

## What is a Habitat Conservation Plan?

A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a means to protect natural resources and encourage economic growth through a collaborative process of sustainable planning and development.

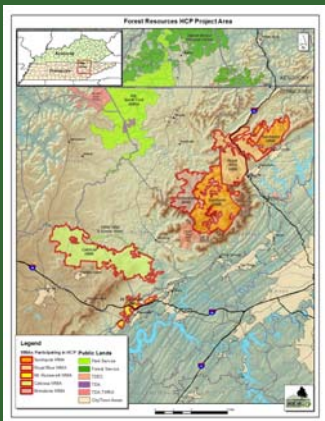
The Federal Endangered Species Act prohibits the harm (also called “take”) of threatened and endangered species and their habitat. Private landowners, corporations, State or local governments, Tribes or other non-Federal landowners who are interested in conduct-

ing activities that might incidentally harm (or “take”) endangered or threatened wildlife on their land are required to obtain an incidental take permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to provide protection from violating the Endangered Species Act.

To obtain a permit, the applicant needs to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan designed to offset any harmful effects the proposed activity (like building a subdivision or installing a utility crossing) might

have on the species. The HCP process allows development to proceed consistent with conserving endangered or threatened species.

With an approved HCP an Incidental Take Permit is issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that allows resources to be used and take to occur as long as harm to the species is avoided, minimized and mitigated through the HCP.



## Forest Resources HCP Update

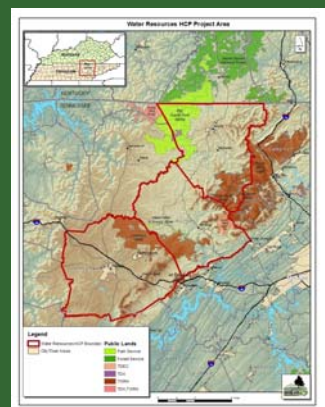
The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) is working closely with the Cumberland HCP project to develop a habitat conservation plan for Catoosa, Royal Blue, Sundquist and Mount Roosevelt Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). Two key elements of a HCP are to choose covered activities and covered species to include in the inci-

dental take permit from USFWS. TWRA will cover timber management on four of its WMAs and approximately 25 animals and 7 plants.

The Forest Resources HCP has a Steering Committee guiding decisions that are made about the contents of the HCP and a Technical Team developing key implementation policy for the HCP process. The

members of these committees are TWRA staff, private industry, conservation interests and Tennessee Division of Forestry. The Steering Committee and Technical Team have been meeting for the past year.

See notes and presentations online at [www.cumberlandhcp.org](http://www.cumberlandhcp.org) under Forest Resources HCP Gateway.



## Water Resources HCP Update

The Water Resources HCP is a regional planning effort among a partnership of local and state governments, developers and conservationists. The focus of this group is to find a balance between protecting the animals and water resources of the Plateau and the exciting growth and development happening in the Plateau area.

Cumberland, Morgan and Scott counties along with the Cities of Crossville and Wartburg have passed formal, nonbinding resolutions in support of developing a HCP. When the HCP is approved, each jurisdiction will hold an Incidental Take Permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service

The three counties and two

cities have appointed Steering Committee members and helped determine Technical Team members to develop the HCP. These groups have been meeting since February 2008.

See notes and presentations online at [www.cumberlandhcp.org](http://www.cumberlandhcp.org) under Water Resources Gateway.

# Science Advisory Committee News



Blackside dace will be one of the covered species.

### What is the role of the SAC?

The Science Advisory Committee (SAC) plays an important role to the Cumberland Habitat Conservation Plan project. It provides the best possible conservation planning

for the HCP covered species. The SAC coordinating team of scientists and staff from Tennessee Tech lead the SAC members to fulfill the HCP scientific and technical needs using the best available science. The SAC offers scientific support from an alliance of scientists, natural resource staff, graduate students, and a variety of other experts. A shared interest in conservation and scientific issues enables this dynamic, mainly volunteer group of people to participate in myriad ways.

Through the process of surveys, research, and organized discussions,

the SAC identifies informational needs and scientific gaps. Requests for Proposals target specific research needs where in-depth knowledge can be gained to benefit the Cumberland HCP project. As the SAC works to acquire and compile scientific information, communication is kept open with the HCP Development Team and Technical Teams of both HCPs. The SAC continues to progress in its development of scientific solutions, promoting a viable future for the Cumberland.

*The Cumberland are home to a diverse group of species, including the Blackside dace. Read more about the Blackside dace on Page 4.*

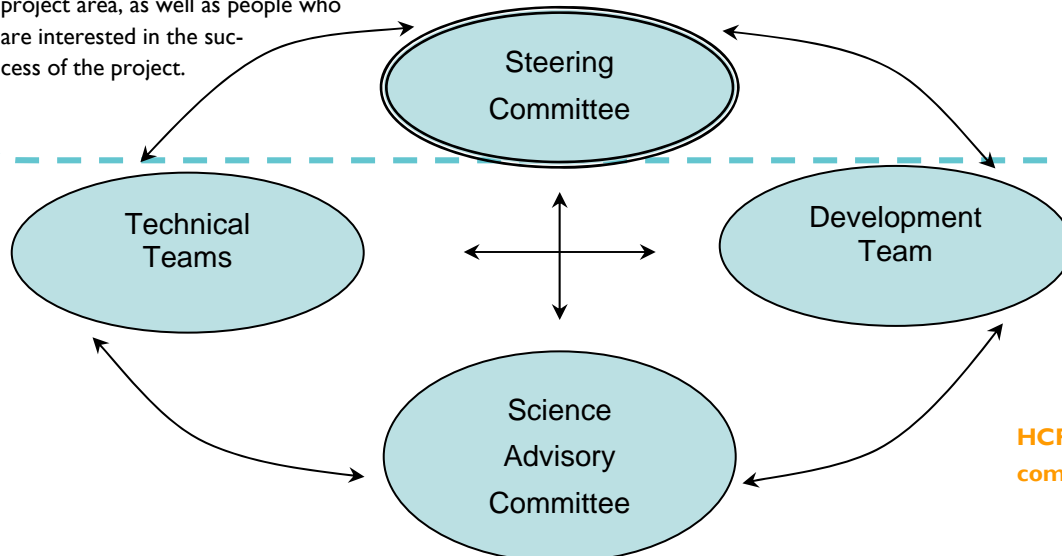
## HCP Project Organization

The Cumberland HCP project is developing two separate HCPs—one for Forest Resources on TWRA lands and one for Water Resources covering Cumberland, Morgan and Scott counties and the cities of Crossville and Wartburg. Each HCP has a steering committee (SC) and technical team (TT). The SC and TTs are made up of volunteer participants from within the project area, as well as people who are interested in the success of the project.

The Science Advisory Committee is a large group of experts who are working to develop the science for both HCPs. They meet annually at Cumberland Mountain State Park.

The Development Team is comprised of HCP staff and advisors all working to develop two HCPs. Development Team members include: Alex Wyss of The Nature Conservancy who is the project

director, Dr. Hayden Mattingly, Trisha Johnson, Dr. Sean Blomquist and Rebecca Anderson from Tennessee Technological University who organize the Science Advisory Committee, and Dr. Dave Ostermeier, Emily Woodle and Dr. Karen Lannom from the University of Tennessee who organize outreach, communication and GIS for the project.



HCP project organization and communication flow.

# Upcoming HCP Meetings & Events

## Water Resources:

- October 29 and December 4, 2008 all day meetings of the Residential and Commercial Development Technical Team—focus on post-construction best management practices.

## Forest Resources:

- January 27, 2009 Steering Committee meeting

## Featured Species: Blackside Dace

The Cumberland River drainage of Kentucky and Tennessee is home to a small minnow known as the blackside dace. Characterized by a dark stripe on its side, golden colored back, and red and yellow markings on the mouth, fins, and gills, the blackside dace is an important species to the Cumberland Plateau region. Blackside dace are considered “threatened” by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and will be covered by the Forest Resources HCP.

Blackside dace exhibit how even the smallest of species are significant to the overall health of our magnificent natural systems of the Cumberland Plateau. “Declines in

their population tell us that we are damaging our soil, forest, and streams” (The Kentucky Logjam 2005). The blackside dace, as a useful environmental indicator, can be a valuable asset in detecting changes within the watershed of the Cumberland HCP project area.

Ongoing blackside dace research projects are being lead by Dr. Hayden Mattingly, a fisheries biologist at Tennessee Technological University. Some of the main researching goals include determining distribution, reproductive behavior, movement activity, and habitat preferences. Data collected has indicated that blackside dace populations continue to persist in at

least 43 streams across their native range, but there is a pattern of low population densities.

Blackside dace and landuse activities can coexist. Best management practices or other guidelines can be implemented and followed to ensure the progress of landuse activities and the survival of rare fish like blackside dace. The Cumberland HCP is being designed to assess the needs of rare species while also encouraging economic growth and development.



### For More Information about the HCP Project contact:

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Let us hear from you!

The Cumberland HCP Project is a coalition of state and local governments, organizations, landowners, and other private citizens who are working together to address issues of growth and conservation of the forests and waters of the Cumberlands of Tennessee.

Check us out on the web: [www.cumberlandhcp.org](http://www.cumberlandhcp.org)

