

Explicit goal for the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS)

Background

In Fall 2017, the SEAFWA Directors charged the SECAS lead coordination team to work with the SECAS Points of Contact (POCs) to develop explicit common goals for the initiative. The POCs were selected by the SEAFWA Directors and the Federal Principals of the Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group (SENRLG). Over multiple conference call discussions, the POCs reviewed a synthesis of existing ecosystem assessments, discussed multiple options for an explicit goal, and recommended the following for adoption. At the 2018 SEAFWA annual meeting, the SEAFWA Wildlife Diversity Committee approved the final goal and passed it on to the SEAFWA Directors, who adopted it in official action at their business meeting.

SECAS Goal

Long-term

- 10% or greater improvement in the health, function, and connectivity of Southeastern ecosystems by 2060

Near-term

- 1% improvement in the health, function, and connectivity of Southeastern ecosystems every 4 years
- 1% increase in conservation actions within the Southeast Conservation Blueprint every 4 years

Basis for goal numbers

The long-term goal is intended to be both ambitious and achievable. It is based on a synthesis of 12 regional and subregional ecosystem assessments covering the Southeast (e.g., Everglades Report Card, State of the South Atlantic, Chesapeake Bay Report Card, State of the Birds, etc.). The near-term goals identify minimum progress needed to stay on track with meeting the long-term goal.

Intended uses for goal

- **Provide a simple description of what SECAS is trying to do:** This will complement the broad SECAS vision of designing and achieving a connected network of landscapes and seascapes that supports thriving fish and wildlife populations and improved quality of life.
- **Attract additional sources of conservation funding to the Southeast:** A shared goal and measurement system can help communicate the need for additional funding.
- **Identify new opportunities for collaboration around shared interests:** A shared goal and understanding of Southeastern ecosystem condition can help reveal new ways to work together that may not be obvious when looking at species and ecosystems in isolation.
- **Improve connections with “non-traditional” partners:** A shared goal can help improve communication with private landowners, urban planners, forestry/agricultural interests, the Department of Defense, and other organizations shaping the lands and waters of the Southeast.