

Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS)

Organizational Charter

August 2023

1. Background

The Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS) is a regional conservation initiative spanning the Southeastern United States and Caribbean. It was started in 2011 by the states of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and includes the federal agencies of the Southeast Natural Resources Leaders Group (SENRLG). These organizations expressed their intention to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century through effective collaboration among agencies and organizations responsible for the region’s natural and cultural resources - while honoring differing agency responsibilities and authorities.

SECAS emerged in response to unprecedented challenges facing sustainability of Southeastern natural and cultural resources, and serves as a regional forum for collaboration and as a science and information hub to help inform conservation decisions transcending jurisdictional boundaries. The primary science and decision product of SECAS is the Southeast Conservation Blueprint, a living, continually updated spatial plan that identifies important areas for conservation and restoration across the region.

2. Vision and Mission

SECAS brings together state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, tribes, partnerships, and universities around a shared vision for the future: a connected network of lands and waters supporting thriving fish and wildlife populations and improved quality of life for people. SECAS also recognizes that each participating organization will use its respective authorities and resources in pursuit of that shared vision. The mission of the SECAS partnership is to work collaboratively to design and achieve the connected network of lands and waters to benefit ecosystems, species, and people.

3. Goal

In support of the vision, the [SECAS Goal](#) is directed toward achieving a 10% or greater improvement in ecosystem health, function, and connectivity by 2060. Regional ecosystem condition metrics are regularly tracked in the SECAS Goal Report to document progress toward achieving the SECAS Goal.

4. Governance

The initial governance structure of SECAS was based on the six Southeastern Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and their networks of steering committees and partnerships. In 2019, SEAFWA Directors established an interim steering committee to oversee the actions of SECAS, and in 2021 SEAFWA approved Joint Party Committee status for the SECAS Executive Steering Committee.

4A. Membership – Executive Steering Committee

The SECAS Executive Steering Committee comprises five (5) SEAFWA Directors, appointed by the SEAFWA President, each to serve a two-year term following appointment. The SEAFWA President shall appoint one of the five members as Committee Chair. Steering Committee members may serve unlimited consecutive terms. In addition, the Committee shall include one (1) *ex officio* member, the Southeast Regional Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), who represents the Service’s landscape conservation priorities and shall also serve as liaison from SECAS to the federal Southeast Natural Resources Leaders Group (SENRLG).

The Executive Steering Committee provides oversight and strategic direction to SECAS to strengthen collaboration for landscape-scale conservation while honoring differing responsibilities and authorities among the participating agencies and organizations. The Steering Committee works with the SECAS Coordinator and other SECAS staff to provide strategic direction to the designated SECAS Points of Contact working to support, promote, and improve the products, services, and accomplishments of SECAS. Steering Committee members will communicate the priorities and actions of SECAS among SEAFWA agencies, federal agency partners, and other partner organizations.

4B. Meetings – Executive Steering Committee

Meetings of the SECAS Steering Committee shall be held in conjunction with the Annual SEAFWA Conference, the Annual SEAFWA Spring Directors meeting, and at other times and places as necessary and called for by the Committee Chair. Participation in meetings by telephonic or other electronic communications means will be allowed and encouraged. A majority of the Steering Committee will constitute a quorum.

4C. Decision Making – Executive Steering Committee

The Committee’s charge extends to providing oversight and strategic direction for the SECAS partnership. Decision making shall be by consensus of the quorum, with consensus defined as acceptance that all can live with and will support the decision.

5. Designation of SECAS Points of Contact

Each state agency director of SEAFWA, each SENRLG agency principal, and selected conservation nonprofits or other organizations selected by the Steering Committee will formally designate SECAS Points of Contact (POCs), who work collaboratively to identify priority actions, provide technical input, and focus the work of the SECAS partnership. SECAS POCs will convene regularly through electronic and in-person meetings, workshops and conferences.

6. Funding

Coordination, staff and technical support for SECAS is funded by the Service in recognition of the value and importance of SECAS initiated by SEAFWA states and collaboratively supported by federal participation through SENRLG. Other funding through grants, appropriations or other means may be administered to SECAS through the SEAFWA administrative processes.

7. Adoption and Amendments

The initiating Charter was adopted by official action of the SECAS Steering Committee on (August 28, 2023). The Charter was also officially adopted by the SEAFWA Board of Directors on (October 17, 2023).

This charter may be amended by consensus of the Steering Committee and adoption by the SEAFWA Board of Directors. Amendments will be noted and documented as revisions to the initiating Charter.

8. Reference Information

Related historical documents and other information regarding SECAS are available for reference through the links provided below. This Charter supersedes any potentially conflicting information provided in the historical records.

1. [SECAS Steering Committee Operational Guidelines \(SEAFWA\)](#)
2. [SECAS Statement of Shared Purpose](#)
3. [SECAS Organizational Structure](#)
4. [SECAS Futures Report 2020](#)
5. [SECAS Fact Sheet](#)
6. [FWS letter of support for SECAS 02-02-2021](#)