



SECAS Purpose Statement

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.

Background

SECAS emerged in response to unprecedented challenges facing sustainability of Southeastern natural and cultural resources, including increasing urbanization, energy development, and climate change. Recognizing these challenges as too vast for any one organization to overcome alone, conservation partners from every sector are working collaboratively through SECAS to sustain natural and cultural resources in a changing and uncertain future. This ambitious partnership is deeply rooted in a culture of innovation, creativity, and reliance on the application of sound science.

SECAS was also established to ensure that individual subregional conservation planning efforts, initially developed through the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), contributed to a coordinated regional strategy to define the Southeast's landscape of the future.

Vision

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.

Goal

SECAS partners work together to design and achieve that connected network for the benefit of ecosystems, species, and people. Regional ecosystem metrics are tracked and reported to document progress toward achieving the [SECAS Goal](#) of **a 10% or greater improvement in the health, function, and connectivity of Southeastern ecosystems by 2060.** Annual assessment of these shared measures of progress toward the SECAS Goal provide an essential evaluation that helps to focus conservation action and track resulting impact.

Functions

Decision Support

SECAS delivers value as an information hub for science delivery and decision support. 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. The Blueprint stitches together smaller subregional plans into one unifying map for achieving the SECAS vision and goal. SECAS staff provide technical assistance for Blueprint users and receive input and feedback to support ongoing Blueprint improvement. The [SECAS in Action story map](#) describes how partners are using the Blueprint to make a difference on the ground for conservation.

Collaboration Forum

SECAS also functions as a forum for voluntary collaboration, bringing together state and federal agencies and nonprofit conservation organizations around a collective vision for the future. To foster collaboration and information sharing, SECAS facilitates workshops and trainings, hosts symposia, webinars, and other technical forums, and manages a website, blog, and newsletter.

Organization

Five SEAFWA directors and the southeast regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) form the SECAS Steering Committee to provide oversight and strategic direction to the partnership. Each state agency director of SEAFWA, each SENRLG agency principal, and three conservation nonprofit organizations formally designate SECAS Points of Contact (POCs), who work collaboratively to identify priority actions, provide technical input, and focus the work of the partnership. The SECAS Coordinator and additional technical support staff, who are full-time FWS employees, provide the technical coordination, facilitation, and communication capacity for the partnership.

Additional technical support and coordination functions are established through collaboration with the SEAFWA Wildlife Diversity Committee and the Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center. These groups, along with the SECAS POCs and the FWS SECAS support staff, collaborate across sectors and among a variety of organizations, including numerous conservation partnerships throughout the Southeast. This breadth of collaboration among a diversity of partners and sectors is a hallmark of the partnership.

Guiding Principles

In providing a forum for collaborative landscape conservation and serving as an information hub for science and decision support, SECAS conducts its operations guided by the following principles:

- Recognize and respect each participating organization's individual responsibilities and authorities;
- Emphasize building upon existing conservation accomplishments and avoiding duplication;
- Engage with a diversity of partners to identify shared priorities and collaborative actions that will achieve broader accomplishment than can be achieved individually;
- Emphasize reliance on best available science;
- Address strategic and conservation outcomes by providing capacity for landscape conservation planning and implementation, and by supporting the coordination, technical, scientific, and communication roles of SECAS.