

Strategic Communications Plan



Prairie Pothole
JOINT VENTURE

2013-2017

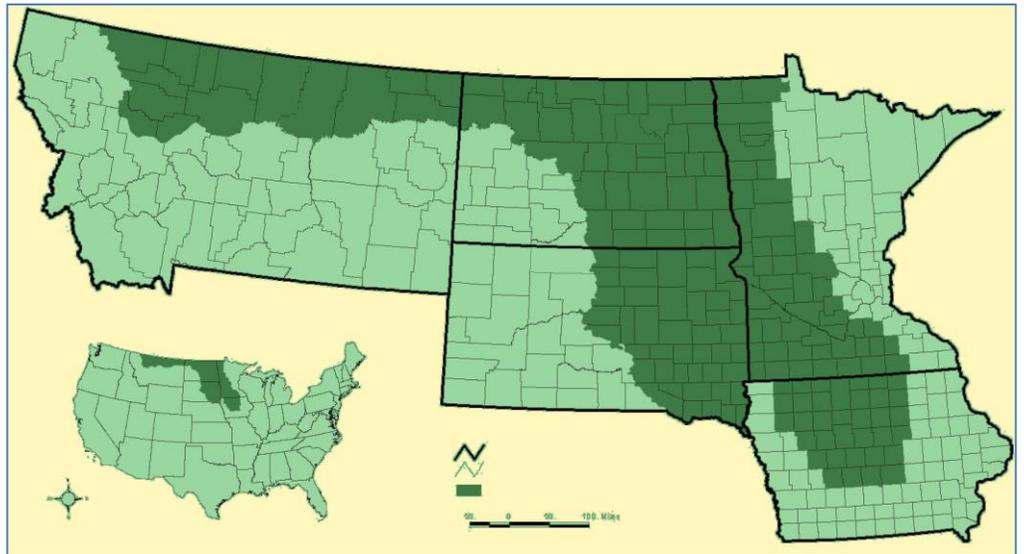
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The **mission** of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture is to implement conservation programs that sustain populations of waterfowl, shorebirds, other waterbirds and prairie landbirds at objective levels through targeted wetland and grassland protection, restoration and enhancement programs. These activities will be based on science and implemented in collaboration with multiple stakeholders.



The **vision** of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture is to have abundant populations of waterfowl and other wetland and grassland birds that can be sustained in perpetuity.

The following principles guide actions taken in support of the PPJV mission:

- Diverse partnerships are the primary vehicle for accomplishing PPJV objectives
- Long-term protection, restoration and management of wetland and grassland habitats requires development of conservation, economic and social policies and programs that sustain the ecological health of U.S. Prairie Pothole Region landscapes
- Biologically-based planning is refined through science-based research and evaluation

For more information: www.ppjv.org

Five-Year Strategic Communications Plan

This Strategic Communications Plan is designed to help promote, coordinate and deliver bird habitat conservation that is founded on Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) principles. The plan will guide PPJV’s efforts to implement innovative and targeted communications campaigns over the next three to five years. It will advance the PPJV’s efforts to build public and private partnerships for bird conservation by outlining the core components of effective communications campaigns and providing a path for implementation. Furthermore, the plan will foster the Joint Venture’s achievement of technical expectations content outlined in the “Desired Characteristics for Habitat Joint Venture Partnerships” for Communications, Education, and Outreach (see Appendix A).

Recommended Citation

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Summary of the Communications Plan

Following a strategic communications planning approach, the PPJV has developed a Strategic Communications Plan for 2013-2017. This plan will guide the communications efforts of the PPJV staff and communications contractors or new staff. It also aims to support activities by the PPJV Technical Committee, Management Board, and other partners.

Five goals are highlighted for the PPJV that form the basis for communications campaigns.

- Build and strengthen the partnership
- Ensure funding for conservation in the U.S. Prairie Pothole Region
- Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools through policy at various levels
- Integrate conservation into working lands
- Link conservation activities to societal benefits

Audiences are identified as those whose actions will influence achievement of a goal. These audiences are largely partner groups and require two-way communication efforts. Twenty-two audiences were prioritized for communications efforts.

Communications objectives are provided for each of the goals, grouped by segments of the audience that are similar. In order to achieve behavioral objectives, knowledge, attitudes, and skills objectives must be achieved. These communications objectives are written simply and can be applied to serve as the basis for messaging. Additionally, several over-arching messages are provided for each goal.

Tactics and tools are recommended for each of the goals and sets of communications objectives and their associated audiences. The tactics and tools span a variety of approaches to engaging audiences, including educational, informational, organizational, and scientific communications. Recommendations for how to design and deliver the tactics and tools, as well as timelines and who is responsible, are provided.

Evaluation allows for determination of whether communications objectives have been met and offers feedback for adapting further communications to be more effective. The evaluation metrics and evaluation tools for primary tactics and tools are outlined and should be developed in concert with the tactics and tools.

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Introduction

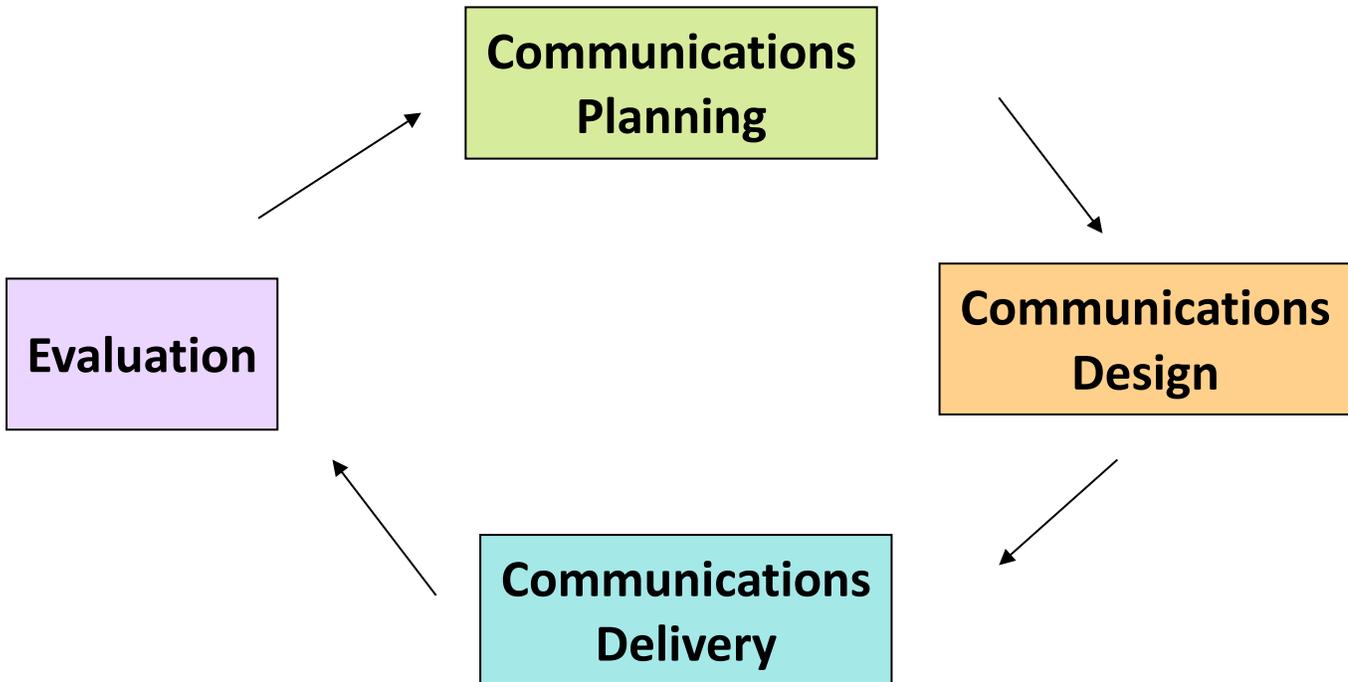
Background to Strategic Communications

Communications is a process of idea exchange and imparting information. In effective communications, others understand you and you understand others in return. The audience is defined as the receiver of the message a source wishes to communicate. Yet, the audience also becomes a source of messages back to the original source. Adapting to the feedback from an audience greatly improves communications efforts.

Communications plays a key role in the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) approach, which guides the work of Joint Ventures. This adaptive management approach includes biological planning, conservation design, conservation delivery, and monitoring and research. Communications can be considered a part of the conservation delivery activities of SHC. Further, the strategic communications approach itself can be thought of as following a similar process to SHC with the phases of communications planning, communications design, communications delivery, and evaluation.

Strategic communication integrates communication efforts with all of the work of the Joint Venture. In Strategic Communications, the planning process allows for prioritization of biological (or overall) objectives of the Joint Venture that should be addressed through communications efforts. Identification of the key audience(s) necessary to address the overall objective of the Joint Venture then allows for development of the communications goals and objectives. Developing appropriate communications objectives by audience often involves extensive audience assessment in order to fully understand the audience and the most effective means to communicate with them. These communications objectives lay the foundation for the messages of the communications campaign, as well as the tactics and tools, which together compose the communications design phase. The communications delivery involves the implementation of the tactics and tools, through the appropriate channel to the target audience. Evaluation is the monitoring phase for the communications campaign, providing information on results and how the effort might be improved, which adaptively feeds back into communications planning.

Figure 1: Strategic Communications. Adapted from Bogart, Duberstein, & Slobe (2009)



Capacity Building & Engagement Approach

The strategic communications approach employed for this plan’s development emphasized engagement and participation of staff and key stakeholders. In line with the Joint Venture’s culture of partner collaboration, the Management Board, staff, and Technical Committee members played a critical role in developing the plan. They attended workshops, participated in teleconferences and web-conferences, took part in informational interviews for audience assessments, responded to surveys for prioritization of goals, audiences, and tactics and tools, and reviewed drafts of the communications plan and its components. This “engagement” approach not only ensures a more relevant and useful communications plan, but also builds the communications and strategic planning capacity of the Joint Venture, and the technical communication skills of board, staff and partners.

History of PPJV Communications

The PPJV has been a leader in bird conservation for over 25 years. However, within the past few years, several sources have identified that in order to maintain such a leadership role, the PPJV should improve its communications efforts. The 2009 NAWMP Review was one such source, stating, “We might suggest expanded outreach opportunities to existing and new partners. The PPJV could increase its name recognition among partners and constituents. Communications can help recruit the partner support needed and this should lead to improved leveraging opportunities and related actions to enhance improved landscape scale conservation.” Following, in August 2010, the Management Board called for improved internal and external communications. A work group of volunteers (Steve Guertin, Skip Hyberg, Dale Garner, and PPJV Coordinator Casey Stemler) was charged with developing a

recommendation for Board consideration that identified the JV's communication need, form in which that need could be addressed, and the target audiences.

The workgroup produced a *PPJV Communication/Outreach Proposal* (Appendix B) in March 2011. In the proposal they reviewed the PPJV's history of communications, detailing key communications products produced and concluding that while the JV had historically produced factsheet and outreach materials, it currently lacked proactive communications and was falling short on sharing messages. The workgroup suggested that communications could be used to share collective messages about prairies, landscape conservation, and accomplishments. Additionally, a communications strategy could guide efforts to inform appropriate audiences about the PPJV and its accomplishments; its approach to habitat conservation, including scientific capabilities; the impact of grassland and wetland loss on biodiversity; need for increased/sustained funding for both the PPJV and habitat conservation programs; legislation that affects our ability to reach conservation goals; the PPJV approach to energy development; PPJV and PPP LCC interactions; and climate change. Given that the PPJV did not have a communications specialist on staff, three options for how to develop the communications strategy were considered. The Management Board decided on the option to hire a communication specialist to develop a plan and possibly retain the contractor thereafter to implement the plan.

At a subsequent Management Board meeting, a facilitated discussion highlighted additional needs for communications. Comments addressed the need to "deepen" the message and get out the word the PPJV benefits more than ducks. Additionally, the needs for sharing HAPET science and strong advocacy for policy change were identified. Related to internal communications, contact throughout the year and more connection with the Technical Committee were discussed. Specific communications tools were also discussed, including improvement of the website, making it more interactive and offering news and file-sharing. Additionally, webinars and an e-newsletter were suggested.

As the first phase of the Communications Plan development process, communications consultant Ashley Dayer reviewed the written materials and PPJV website to identify their strengths and weaknesses. She found that the written materials were professional, attractive, covered a wide variety of topics, and included quality messaging. They focused on a few audiences: land managers and agriculturalists, along with funders and youth. The greatest weakness of these written materials was that they were outdated (most nearly ten years old). Problematically, their age was obvious given dates on the materials, the old logo, and the omission of the more recent, impressive science findings from the PPR. Additionally, the materials tended to lack calls to action and did not address a breadth of audiences. Dayer also reviewed the website, which she found to have strengths in its clear writing and thorough explanation of the JV as a partnership. Additionally, the color scheme (greens) spoke to the region, and the call-out quotes from landowners and land managers highlighted the role of these key audiences in the partnership. Again, the key weakness of the website was it was outdated. Both the old content and the clunky, antiquated web design were obvious. Given it was designed before easy to use content management systems were available, PPJV staff could not update the website without contacting an off-site developer to ask him to make changes. Additionally, four areas for improvement to the website were identified: design, navigation, content, and technology.

Finally, as part of the Discovery Phase, Ashley Dayer worked with Casey Stemler to assess the PPJV's communications, education, and outreach (CEO) characteristics in the Desired Characteristics Matrix for Joint Ventures (Appendix A). Nearly all CEO components for the PPJV were described as "needs serious attention".

Needs Assessment for Defining 5-Year Goals

To initiate communications planning, a 1.5-day workshop with Management Board members and staff was hosted in August 2012 in Bismarck, North Dakota. The purpose of the workshop was to define communication opportunities, goals, and key audiences. The outcome of the workshop was a needs assessment to serve as a foundation to the development of the Strategic Communications Plan.

Nominal Group: Opportunities for PPJV Communications

The workshop began with a nominal group process to define the opportunities for JV communications that are most important to take advantage of with the communication plan. A nominal group is a decision-making technique for groups that takes everyone's ideas into consideration and also allows for efficient decisions on priorities through a vote. The nominal process focused on the question of "What are the opportunities for communications for the PPJV?" The participants brainstormed brief responses to this question on their own and then shared them with the group to develop a complete list. The group then discussed the list to ensure there were no duplicates and everyone understood each item's meaning. In total 47 opportunities were identified and discussed. The opportunities were then ranked by the participants on an individual basis. Each participant was allowed six points total for his or her ranking of the top three priorities (number of points being 3, 2, and 1 to their top three priorities). Twenty-four of the 47 items were ranked by at least one person, as shown in Table 1 below. The two most prioritized items were "linking conservation programs to societal benefits" and "crisis on the prairies".

Table 1. Number of prioritization points given for opportunities for JV Communications efforts

Item	Score	Item	Score
linking conservation programs to societal benefits	20	how do we get more Americans outdoors?	0
crisis on the prairies	16	translating our science to lay audiences	0
finding more money	9	easements: fact vs. fiction	0
conservation and agricultural production can coexist	7	designated individual or person to get the news to the public	0
supporting conservation in the Farm Bill policy	6	factsheets for quick communication on important issues	0
our organizations can reach different audiences	5	supporting, celebrating, & recognizing what matters	0
news that is more landowner-centric	5	maximize social media outlets	0
voluntary incentive-based policies for private lands	5	performance reporting & needs justification	0
communicating the relevance of PPR to national bird conservation	5	landowners want conservation options	0
wetland drainage affects more than just your neighbor	4	the plight of grassland-nesting birds	0
landowners deciphering conservation options	3	success stories	0
increasing appreciation for natural amenities	3	it's an American value	0
proactive vs. reactive	3	what is a pothole?	0
nurturing Congressional champions	3	the value of joint ventures	0
electronic news like SFBJV	2	we're all part of NAWMP	0
connecting the country to the PPR	2	if not us, then who?	0
translating science to policy	2	greater than the sum of the parts	0
engaging society to support prairie wetland conservation	2	the joy of watching birds	0
FWS cross-program and cross-regional support	2	casual conversation	0
conveying JV benefits down to folks implementing program	2	wetlands - your flood protection infrastructure	0
connecting people to nature through birds	2	10000 year old grasslands	0
our outdoor heritage	2	shared responsibility	0
conservation - what's in it for you?	1	international	0
the best JV website in the country	1		

Goals

Next at the workshop, the overall Joint Venture goals to be addressed through communications were confirmed. Prior to the workshop, Ashley Dayer reviewed the Joint Venture's planning and outreach documents. From these documents, she compiled a goals list for the Joint Venture. The Needs Assessment participants reviewed the list, and the goals were edited. Following the workshop, the Management Board members prioritized which goals most needed communications support. Those starred below denote those addressed in this communications plan.

- ***Build and strengthen the partnership*
- ***Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist through policy*
- ***Integrate conservation into working lands*
- ***Ensure funding for conservation in PPR*
- ***Link conservation activities to societal benefits*
- *Develop strong science foundation by improving databases and scientific technologies that help target conservation & guide policy¹*
- *Leverage resources*
- *Address larger issues of bird conservation internationally*
- *Utilize communications to accomplish organizational goals*
- *Monitor and evaluate the efforts of the JV to ensure they are effective*

The participants then listed audiences that would influence (or be able to take action to aid in) the accomplishment of each of these goals. Thirty-five audiences were identified in total. Based on feedback from the larger Management Board in a follow-up online survey a subset of these audiences was later analyzed as part of the Audience Assessments.

Audience Assessments

Following the Needs Assessment workshop, Audience Assessments were conducted for audiences identified as key to the accomplishment of the priority goals, as indicated by Management Board ranking in an online survey. The audiences that received the highest importance ranking for audience assessments included: state fish and wildlife agencies, Congress, citizens in the region, Natural Resources Conservation Service, landowner associations (and landowners), hunters, USDA/Farm Service Agency, PPJV Management Board, game bird NGOs, PPJV Tech Committee, US Fish & Wildlife Service (Migratory Birds & Birds Habitat; Refuges; and HAPET), and non-game bird NGOs. Respondents also provided suggestions for who may be appropriate key informants for audience assessment interviews. Key informants were selected based upon their high level of knowledge about and experience with an audience, their familiarity with the Joint Venture, and their willingness to speak honestly to support the development of the Communications Plan.

The Audience Assessments were conducted as key informant interviews via phone with Dayer. Each audience assessment followed a semi-structured interview approach, with a script of 14 questions (Table 2) and follow-up prompts as needed. The script was designed to better understand the audience and their awareness, attitudes, motivations, norms, and behaviors. It also aimed to explore why the

¹ Please note that while the communications plan does not plan for communications to support the goal of “developing strong science”, this strong science foundation does contribute to communications of the other goals.

audience undertakes the conservation actions in line with the PPJV goals and how to best reach this audience with communications. Three audiences (Congress, landowners, and citizens) were assessed through secondary survey results and research, rather than interviews. They are addressed separately at the end of the interview results section.

Table 2. Audience Assessment interview questions

1. What is the mission and main activities of the organization?
2. What does your organization value? What else is important to them?
3. What are their attitudes towards birds? Conservation? PPJV?
4. Where/how do our interests overlap? Diverge?
5. Why do they do X behavior (motivations)?
6. Why don't they do X behavior (barriers)?
7. What would convince them to change behavior or attitudes (persuasion)?
8. What is their culture (norms)?
9. Who do they influence?
10. Who influences them?
11. Where do they get their information? How (sources)? Who do they trust?
12. How has PPJV reached out to them in the past?
13. How would it be best for the JV to share information and communicate with this group?
14. What type of information would they like to receive?

Each interview lasted 30-60 minutes. The interviewer typed the responses to each question as the interview was being conducted. An edited version of this raw data has informed the selection of audiences that are priorities for each goal (Table 3), the segmentation of audiences into groups with similarities for each of the communications goals, and the design of communication objectives, messages, and tactics and tools.

Summary of interview results. The interviews revealed a great deal of information about the audiences' values, attitudes, interests, motivations, barriers, and cultural information to consider in communications efforts. Most importantly, the interviews highlighted that nearly all of these audiences are concerned about conservation issues in the U.S. PPR. Yet, their definitions of conservation and approaches to conservation vary widely. Most of the partners conduct conservation activities of habitat delivery, science, and/or policy, as does the PPJV, but their relative emphases often differ. Many audiences emphasized habitat conservation, as opposed to species conservation, while others emphasized conservation for the benefit of game species. Additionally, some audiences highlighted private lands and on the ground conservation, while others focused on conservation science. These differences require consideration when developing communications strategies and messages for the audiences. The conservation approach that resonates most with an audience will be useful for the PPJV to keep in mind when preparing communications for that audience.

Importance. The audiences represented by the interviewees value a variety of conservation-related targets (e.g., birds, wildlife, habitats) as well as conservation success and public support for conservation. Various types of information (biological, technical, and economic) were also mentioned

as important, as were partnerships, coordination, and a common purpose. Some of the audiences appreciated private landowners being able to live off the land, and others valued a hunting tradition and access. There was also discussion of the regional significance of the U.S. PPR and the influence of the PPJV.

Attitudes toward birds. There was variation among the audiences in the degree to which birds are their emphasis. For some, like USFWS, birds are key to their mission; and, for others, birds are just a part of their conservation effort. For other audiences not focused specifically on birds, birds are thought of as excellent indicators of habitat quality or the effects of habitat management or they are seen as useful for education and fundraising. There were also audiences who focus on all birds and those who focus on a specific type of birds. For example, some NGOs focus on a specific bird and those that share its habitat. In contrast all migratory birds are considered a federal trust resource for the USFWS to focus on. The value of all-bird conservation was discussed by some interviewees, as they explained that such a focus broadens support.

Attitudes toward PPJV. Interviewees generally held positive attitudes towards the PPJV. The PPJV was described as being respected due to the work of the HAPET office, its long history, its partnership building, and its science. The JV was noted to be unknown by hunters, landowners, and a portion of JV partner organizations (members, field staff, or non-management level staff). Negative attitudes toward the JV were expressed related to the need for PPJV to connect better with nongame organizations, as some other JVs do, and conduct more outreach to landowner organizations.

Interest Overlap and Divergence. There were several areas where interviewees noted their interests overlap with the PPJV. Primarily these areas of overlap related to U.S. PPR threats (e.g., agricultural intensification, wetland drainage, habitat loss and conversion, and assessment of impacts), bird conservation, and habitat conservation (i.e., prairies and wetlands). Additionally, the emphasis of bird conservation plans (i.e., North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight plan, and Shorebird plan) on the importance of the PPR was noted. Finally, interviewees also mentioned their overlapping interest in partnerships.

When asked if their interests diverged from PPJV's, many interviewees acknowledged that their scope was broader than the JV, either related to geography, species, goals beyond conservation, more emphasis on private landowners, or more emphasis on "all birds". Others noted a difference in their thoughts on where to protect and conserve, as well as the appropriate role of science in defining these areas. They also mentioned differences in the appropriate mix of science versus immediate action, and different reasons for habitat conservation.

Motivations. The partners' motivation for working with PPJV varied. They saw great strength from the partnership as it enabled them to leverage funds, network, garner public and political support, prioritize, and work together on projects and land acquisition. They also appreciated the international connection of the JV. The value or need for conservation within the U.S. PPR was also emphasized.

Barriers. Some of the barriers described related to differences in organizational priorities and interests and competition for funds. Other barriers related to a lack of communications between the PPJV

participants and those on the ground, as well as lack of involvement of field staff with the JV. The issue of not enough JV staff or JV Management Board partner staff capacity was highlighted. Additionally, the issue that a group was not asked to participate stood as their barrier to participation. Lastly, for a couple interviewees the JV's stance on wind concerned them as they felt it ran counter to serving private landowners.

Persuasion. Many ideas were given for how to persuade others to partner with the JV. They included acknowledging that for some partners the JV is the source of their existence or their funding. The JV's focus on the "bigger picture" was also thought to be persuasive, along with the JV's leadership on the ground with the North American Wetland Conservation Act and North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Additionally, the JV's lack of staff emphasized the need for partner organizations to engage with the JV. One interviewee suggested offering success stories of the accomplishments of the JV partnership as opposed to an individual organization having limited success on their own. The JV's effort to keep species off the Endangered Species Act list was also mentioned as convincing.

Culture. Several interviewees described their organizations' sensitivity to ensuring landowner support, requiring them to be careful about their conservation activities. Additionally, the agricultural background and community emphasis was noted by these organizations and a couple more.

Communication delivery. Interviewees provided suggestions on *how* to deliver communications to their organizations – the PPJV audiences. Interview questions addressed how they obtain information in general, how they have heard from the PPJV in the past, and how they would prefer to receive communications and on what topics.

The existing ways they obtain information are through many sources, including other partners and organizations, scientists (HAPET, journals, and professional societies), the internet, listservs, news releases, and trainings. They trust science-based and internal information the most. Specifically, several interviewees mentioned the HAPET offices and the JV as the most trusted source. In the past, they have been reached by the PPJV through the Coordinator, Science Coordinator, Management Board communications, Technical Committee, and the HAPET office. They have participated in meetings and received emails. Several interviewees mentioned that the PPJV has not reached out to their organizations or mostly reached out just to high-level leadership. A couple interviewees also noted that there were more communications tools used in the past but not currently, such as factsheets and Coordinator participation at non-game bird initiative meetings.

Interviewees gave several suggestions for the best ways to communicate with their organizations. Several interviewees would prefer that the communications continue to come through the Coordinator, Science Coordinator, and Management Board, particularly if the Coordinator had more time to do so. A few interviewees also requested more interaction with the Management Board for two-way communications. The interviewees also recommended communications across geography and levels and divisions. Suggestions for communications tools included website, Facebook, email, end of year summary, ads on outdoor shows, journal articles, e-newsletters, invites, and factsheets. The need for tools for partners to use when working with the public or legislators was also mentioned.

Ideas were provided for what information the PPJV should communicate, including JV updates, successes, needs, and opportunities to collaborate. Other specific ideas included how and why the Board makes certain decisions, along with how the PPJV will address new NAWMP goals and new stressors in the U.S. PPR. Additionally, updates were requested on Farm Bill, Congress, and national news from federal agencies. Lastly, habitat issues, science information about results of conservation action, and messages for the public about the value of U.S. PPR conservation were recommended.

Congress as an audience. Guidance for Congress as an audience was gathered distinctly from the other interviews. It was noted that bird conservation is more palatable in good economic times. Key recommendations included the need for more regular communications to build relationships and for targeting members based on committee membership. Congressional members/staff appreciate messages regarding funding history, leveraging funds, job creation, and partnerships. Members/staff also like on-site visits, and it is perhaps best to have Board members and partners lead these coordinated efforts

Citizens as an audience. Information about the citizens of the PPJV was gathered from the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (http://asafishing.org/uploads/ASA_fhwu-nat.pdf). Within the West North Central region (containing all the states of the U.S. PPR except Montana, as well as Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri), 23% of residents 16 years of age or older fish, while 10% hunt, 33% watch wildlife at home, and 11% watch wildlife away. These stats include some of the highest rates of each type of recreation for any region in the country. Additionally, information was collected from the Wildlife Values in the West project by Colorado State University ([http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/docs/hdnr/hdnru/Wildlife Values in the West Final Regional Report 9-05.pdf](http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/docs/hdnr/hdnru/Wildlife%20Values%20in%20the%20West%20Final%20Regional%20Report%209-05.pdf)). The states of Montana, South Dakota, and North Dakota were included in this research, but not Minnesota or Iowa. In these three states, 46-49% of the public held utilitarian values towards wildlife, which was some of the highest percentages for any states in the west. Additionally, in these three states, the publics have a comparatively high trust for their state fish and wildlife agency (66-81% of the public trust the agency).

Communications Working Group

After the workshop, from October 2012 through March 2013, a Communications Working Group guided the creation of the remaining components of the Communications Plan. The Working Group was led by Ashley Dayer with Management Board members Tom Hinz (Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks), Barb Pardo (USFWS), Skip Hyberg (Farm Services Agency), Tom Kirschenmann (South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks), as well as Casey Stemler (PPJV Coordinator), Kevin Doherty (PPJV Science Coordinator), and Karen Kreil (North Dakota Natural Resources Trust). Through subsequent phone and web meetings they reviewed the results of the interviews, articulated communications objectives to serve as the foundation for messages, discussed what communications tools will be created, and determined how communications efforts will be evaluated. Additionally, the working group prioritized communications efforts and determined how to ensure adequate capacity.

Communications Campaigns

Goals

- Build and strengthen the partnership
- Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist through policy
- Integrate conservation into working lands
- Ensure funding for conservation in PPR
- Link conservation activities to societal benefits

Audiences

Audiences for PPJV communications are defined as those with influence over the goals for communications. From the original list of 35 potential audiences, the list was prioritized to the top 22 most influential audiences to goal achievement (Table 3). It should be noted that certain organizations within an audience group or certain individuals within an organization may vary greatly in influence over the accomplishment of PPJV goals.

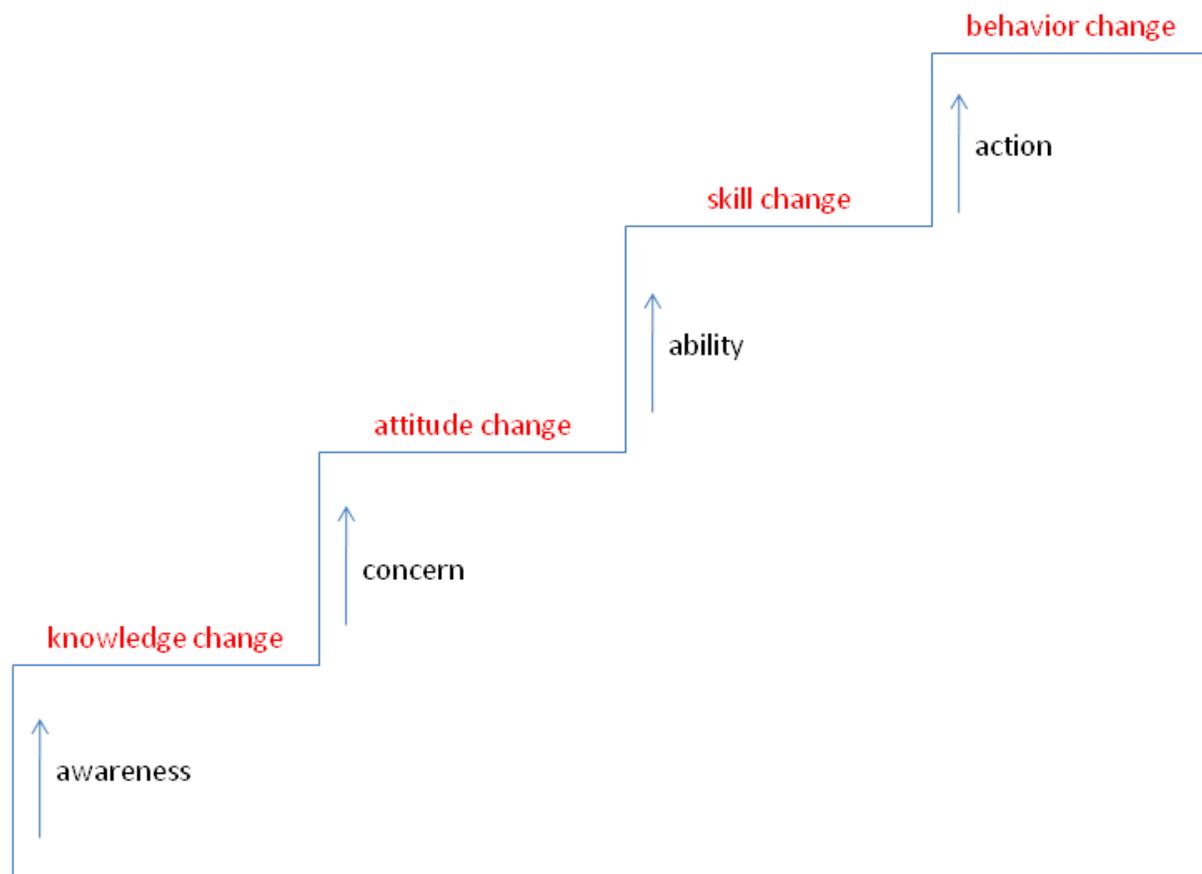
Table 3. Audiences for each of the goals and associated communications objectives.

Goals	Strengthen the Joint Venture partnership for bird habitat conservation within the US PPR and outside the US PPR.	Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.	Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.	Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist in the PPR	Integrate conservation into working lands	Integrate conservation into working lands	Link conservation activities to societal benefits	Link conservation activities to societal benefits
Objectives	1.1-1.5	2.1-2.8	2.9	3.1-3.5	4.1-4.4	4.5-4.7	5.1	5.2
Citizens in the PPR			X					
Congress		X						
Conservation districts						X		
Department of Interior		X						
Farm Services Agency		X		X		X	X	
Game bird NGOs			X	X				
Hunters			X					
Landowner associations			X		X	X		
Landowners			X		X			
Landtrusts (i.e. TNC, TCF, etc)				X				
LCC's							X	
Natural Resource Conservation Service		X		X			X	
Non-game bird NGOs			X					
Office of Management & Budget		X						
PPJV Management Board	X							
PPJV partners' communications staff						X		X
PPJV Tech Committee	X						X	
State fish and wildlife agencies						X		
US Fish & Wildlife Service - Birds		X						
US Fish & Wildlife Service - HAPET								
US Fish & Wildlife Service - Partners for Fish & Wildlife				X				
US Fish & Wildlife Service - Refuges						X		

Communications Objectives & Messages

A communications objective takes the broad JV goals selected for communications and relates them to a segment of audiences, making them SMART. SMART is an acronym for well-developed objectives that are Specific (address who, what, where), Measurable (address when, how many), Achievable (something the JV can do), Realistic (possible with the resources the JV has), and Timely (to be accomplished within the specified time). Ultimately, the main communications objectives are behaviorally related, given that an audience behaving in a certain way will allow for the accomplishment of the goal. However, it may not be possible to change an audience's behavior before first addressing their knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Each of these could serve as barriers if not sufficiently developed for the specific behavioral objective. Education and communications are often thought of as following a staircase of phases as shown in Figure 2, below. First, awareness must be raised (knowledge change), then concern increased (attitude change), then appropriate abilities developed (skill change), for ultimately action (behavior change). This is a simplified model of behavior change that is effective for thinking through communications planning.

Figure 2. Education and communications – a stair-step process leading to behavior change.



Making objectives measurable. All of these objectives can be made measurable (currently they are listed generically as “increase the percentage of...”) by providing specific percentages to target for each of the knowledge, attitudes, skills, or behaviors. These objectives serve as the foundation for an evaluation following the implementation of the communications campaign to determine whether the objectives have been reached.

To do so in a way that will be achievable and realistic, baseline measures are necessary. Audience assessments through surveys or interviews should be conducted to determine the current percentage of the audience group with the given knowledge, attitudes, skills, or behaviors. Then, the appropriate measurable objectives for a communications campaign could be determined. Remember, it will be challenging to get all of the audience members all the way up the “stairs” to a behavioral objective, so be realistic. Likely the number of audience members with a given knowledge objective met will be highest followed by attitudes, skills, and then behavior. Note that in conducting an audience assessment, a random sample from the audience could be selected if it is a large audience (e.g., private landowners). It is strongly advisable to retain the services of a social scientist to determine the appropriate sampling scheme and survey design and implementation methods to ensure that the results are generalizable to the full population. The knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavioral objectives for groups of audiences for each goal are listed below in Table 4.

Table 4. Objectives by audience segments for each of the goals for PPJV communications efforts.

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
Goal 1. Strengthen the Joint Venture partnership for bird habitat conservation within the US PPR and outside the US PPR.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Management Board -Technical Committee -Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the mission of the PPJV is to implement voluntary, non-regulatory conservation programs that sustain populations of waterfowl, shorebirds, other waterbirds and prairie landbirds at objective levels through targeted wetland and grassland protection, restoration and enhancement programs. - JVs were created 25 years ago to serve as partnerships for habitat conservation. - JVs formed because partners realized they can achieve more conservation together rather than acting alone. - JV staff capacity and fiscal resources are designed to support the JV partnership in science-based habitat conservation. - the Technical Committee provides support to the JV partnership regarding scientific priorities, activities, and needs. - the PPJV is known for having world class science and landscape planning tools. - the PPJV will be updating its implementation plan starting in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the JV is a partnership and community that benefits bird conservation in the US PPR. - participation in the JV links you to conservation professionals and resources. - being part of the collective effort offers a better chance of conservation victories than working alone. - they are proud to be part of the JV partnership. - JV staff are available for you to turn to for bird conservation support in the region. - participation in the Technical Committee provides an important partnership opportunity for organizations. - participation in the implementation plan update is worthwhile because it will inform and guide conservation priorities and activities of PPJV partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explain what PPJV is. - speak to shared JV goals and activities. - identify ways they could partner in their own work to work toward shared JV goals. - turn to JV staff and request tools that can aid in their JV hat wearing. - direct interested and strong potential members to the JV. - participate in the implementation plan update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Actively involved & a champion of the JV internally and externally. (introduce themselves as part of JV; speak to what the JV is working on). 1.2 Communicate within their organizations (vertically and horizontally) about JV activities and meeting outcomes. 1.3 Participate in implementation plan updating. 1.4 Work together towards shared goals and activities, once defined in the implementation planning process. 1.5 Develop solution-oriented tools to implement bird conservation.

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
	<p>2013, taking information learned in the State of the Prairies to guide adaption of conservation strategies.</p> <p>-the implementation plan update will include new components (e.g., expanded focus on all-bird conservation, concepts of cost of land and risk of conversion, realistic goals in light of increased threats and stressors on the landscape, and possibly social science and ecosystem goods and services).</p>			

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
PPR Conservation Importance Objectives for Goals 2-5				
(see below for audiences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the PPR is named for the millions of shallow depressions left behind by glaciers thousands of years ago. These wetlands support globally significant populations of waterfowl. Yet, the wetlands are significantly declining from agriculture development. In addition, nearly 200,000 acres of native grasslands have been lost in the last 30 years. The region is now the most threatened breeding waterfowl habitat in the US. - just 18% of the grassland in PPR is protected (as of 2006), which equates to just 5% of historic grass area. -34% of the wetlands in the PPR are protected (as of 2006). -globally, grasslands are the most human-altered biome with the highest risk of biome extinction. -loss of grasslands has made grassland birds one of the most imperiled guilds in North America. - the rich soils of grassland areas make them attractive for agricultural production. The PPR is one of the most productive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -conservation action is urgently needed to address the crisis on the prairies. -losing grasslands in the PPR has global significance. -intensification of agricultural production in the PPR is threatening an already imperiled biome and the birds and wildlife that depend on it. -renewable and nonrenewable energy development provide an additional concerning threat to an already imperiled biome and the birds and wildlife that depend on it. -habitat loss is not only bad for wildlife but also hunting seasons and landowners concerned about loss of species diversity and clean water. 	-speak to the importance of conservation in the PPR.	(see below for the behavioral objectives)

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
	<p>agricultural regions of the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conversion will likely impact wildlife as research suggests that most grassland species do poorly on cropland relative to undisturbed land. -additionally, the crop types are changing across the PPR, introducing more intensive cropping systems. -demand for biofuels adds to the pressure for conversion of grasslands to cropland. -oil and gas development is growing rapidly in portions of the PPR. While research specific to the impacts in the PPR is just beginning, research elsewhere suggests there will be negative impacts on wildlife. - at current rates wind energy development has large potential in the PPR. 			

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
Goal 2. Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy-makers (Congress, OMB, DOI, FWS, USDA, FSA, NRCS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). - JVs are one of the most efficient programs when it comes to results relative to funding. Over their 25 year history these public-private partnerships leveraged every dollar of Congressional funds 35:1, helping to conserve 18.5 million acres of habitat. -the PPJV is known for having world class science and landscape planning tools. - federal appropriations are the primary funding source for JV offices. - NAWCA offers competitive grants to carry out wetlands conservation. Since 1989, 204 grants have been awarded in the PPR, resulting in 2,174,034 acres conserved and \$243,698,000 funds matched for \$100,798,000 in NAWCA funds. -the Duck Stamp provides essential funds fro the purchase or lease of wetland habitat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the PPR region is urgently in need of conservation funding. - these conservation funding sources are an efficient use of funds for bird conservation and the many other species that depend on wetland and grassland habitat. - many members of the public enjoy hunting and watching wildlife and birds and appreciate programs that benefit them. - the primary source of funds used to protect habitat via easements are provided by Duck Stamp revenue. - this conservation funding is a win-win for the people and the wildlife of the region. - these conservation funding sources are complementary and each provide essential funds to a distinct aspect of the conservation needs in the region. - these conservation funds play a vital role in protecting ecosystem services American people rely on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact the JV staff or partners to learn more about how conservation funding benefit their states. - justify their support of these conservation policies and programs to their constituents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Support for Interior appropriations bill with JV, NAWCA, and LWCF funding at agreed upon level. 2.2 Support for agricultural appropriations bill with FSA & NRCS conservation funding at agreed upon levels. 2.3 Support Farm Bill reauthorization and those Farm Bill programs/policies that directly/indirectly impact the PPR. 2.4 Support maintaining the CRP acreage cap at agreed upon level. 2.5 Support USDA bird habitat conservation initiatives. 2.6 Support for Interior & USDA budget requests. 2.7 Support for increased price of Duck Stamp.

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy-makers (Congress, OMB, USDA, FSA, NRCS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). - since 2007, CRP enrollment has decreased by 22% in the PPR, with a high of 47% decline in ND and 42% decline in MT. -these declines in enrollment are due to record commodity prices and limited ability of landowner to utilize the grass resource while enrolled. -agricultural policies that slow annual conversion rates, even by tenths of a percent, allow more time to achieve critical habitat protection goals. -modifications to CRP that allow increased management flexibility, such as more frequent grazing, may need to be considered to create another, non-monetary incentive to help generate and/or maintain landowner interest. -provisions to the Farm Bill, such as Sodsaver or Swampbuster that save soil and reduce nutrient runoff and flooding events, can ensure that wildlife and habitat values in the PPR are maintained by this policy. -producers within the region have high rates of participation in voluntary, incentive based, term conservation programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rapid changes are occurring in the PPR, which could be slowed by changes in agricultural policy. - it's important to ensure that the Farm Bill doesn't lead to conversion of grasslands/wetlands. - provisions to the Farm Bill that incentivize conservation stewardship instead are necessary. -broad based conservation policy outcomes have the best chance of achieving large scale landscape change which affect duck populations, other bird species and a host of other environmental benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -speak to the need for conservation-friendly modifications necessary in the Farm Bill 	<p>2.8 Support modifications to the Farm Bill that ensure that commodity programs don't incentivize conversion of grassland/wetland to cropland.</p>

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
Citizens Hunters Landowners NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). -staff of the JVs cannot lobby Congress. - the JVs visit the Hill each March and September. Those visits are more effective if partners and landowners are the leads for the visits and JV staff provides technical support to them during the visits. -developing a relationship with Congressional members and staff requires multiple contacts each year. - the participation of NGOs in Congressional visits demonstrates that JVs truly are public-private partnerships, leveraging a variety of resources to benefit the region. -hearing from their constituents is most important to Congressional members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the PPR region is urgently in need of conservation funding. - demonstrating benefits from the JV partnership and conservation program and policy funding is critical to Congressional support. - a coordinated message from many partners can have much more impact that single messages coming from single organizations. - having a relationship with Congressional members and staff can be valuable to the JV and JV partner organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulate the value of the sum of these programs to the partners in the JV. - explain what the JV is and describe its activities. - describe JV, Farm Bill conservation programs, and NAWCA grant program and how they benefit the PPR, wildlife, and people. - collaborate with JV partners on crafting and delivering this message. 	2.9 Share a consistent message with policy makers in the PPR about the importance of above programs and policies.

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
Goal 3. Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist in the PPR				
NRCS FSA State agencies NGOs Refuges Landtrusts USFWS PFW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). -85% of the land in the PPR is privately owned. -conservation easements make up of 25% of grassland and 50% of wetland protected in the PPR. -conservation programs that preserve habitat for shorter time periods (10-30 year) are more palatable to many landowners and oftentimes lead to permanent protection of these habitats. - USDA's voluntary, incentive-based programs are popular with many private landowners. However, during periods when agricultural markets are flourishing and/or federal budgets are stressed, these programs are unable to provide sufficient financial incentives to encourage conservation and discourage agricultural conversion. -other conservation organizations may need to step in and help fill the deficit or existing programs revised or new programs developed to provide other types of incentives that are attractive to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -conservation of species and habitats depends greatly on working with private landowners to conserve private lands. -all conservation programs are voluntary and therefore, landowners need incentives, financial or otherwise, that provide positive economic benefits to them and/or their agricultural operations. -successful private lands programs must be structured so that they are a win-win-win for landowners, wildlife, and your organization. -additional resources and/or conservation programs are needed to provide landowners an alternative to energy development, grassland conversion or wetland drainage. Payments for ecosystem services may be one such example. -PPJV scientific tools are valuable for targeting programs and easy to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulate the importance of private lands conservation for birds in the PPR. - evaluate existing private land conservation programs and consider, where necessary, changes that may better meet the current needs of private landowners and encourage enrollment. - identify landowners or landowner groups that may have the most interest in participating in particular conservation programs. - simplify conservation programs as much as possible so that they are easier for private landowners to understand and implement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Provide programs that benefit bird habitat conservation on public and private lands in the PPR 3.2 Make conservation easements available to landowners in key areas of the PPR 3.3 Develop new programs that are easy to understand and implement on private lands 3.4 Equally consider the needs of private landowners and bird habitat needs when designing private land conservation programs to maximize program interest. 3.5 Consider supporting and/or developing conservation programs that provide shorter-term conservation options as an additional conservation tool for private landowners.

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
	<p>private landowners (e.g., additional grazing flexibility).</p> <p>-work is underway to identify and quantify ecosystem services provided by prairie wetlands and grasslands, which could provide additional financial incentives for private land conservation.</p> <p>-PPJV scientific tools help conservation partners target limited financial resources towards landscapes that provide the most conservation benefit for target species. Additionally, these tools are valuable because funding inputs can be tied to conservation outputs in the PPR.</p>			

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
Goal 4. Integrate conservation into working lands				
Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). -85% of the land in the PPR is privately owned. -conservation practices and programs can provide significant economic benefits to private landowners and enhance their financial bottom line. - some farming practices are more compatible with wildlife habitat, such as no-till, minimum till and fall-seeded small grain crops, and opportunities to work with the agricultural community in these areas should be explored. - conservation programs should be developed or modified with the needs of both private landowners and bird conservation given equal consideration. Programs must be attractive to private landowners if they are to be widely utilized. -conservation programming can aid individual producers by optimizing investment on high quality lands while receiving support for other services on more marginal lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -private lands programs, if properly structured, are a win-win for landowners and wildlife. - conservation programs on private lands can improve the soil, water, and wildlife resources and be value added to a producer's operation. - private landowners can make a difference in addressing the crisis in the prairies. - those who deliver private land conservation programs have established credibility with private landowners and have developed a level of trust with private landowners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact agencies or organizations that can provide funding for conservation programs, technical assistance, equipment etc. - articulate the value that protection instruments (e.g., conservation easements) provide for their operation and deliver that message to elected State and Congressional officials. - articulate concerns over conversion of grassland and wetland habitats and what that means for the future of the ranching industry and be willing to deliver that message to elected State and Congressional officials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Undertake conservation activities on their land 4.2 Pursue voluntary habitat protection instruments (e.g., conservation easements.) 4.3 Advocate for conservation programs that are a benefit to the farm and ranch community. 4.4 Work with conservation community to improve or develop conservation programs or practices that better meet the needs of farmers and ranchers while still providing significant benefits to migratory birds.

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
<p>Landowner associations State agencies NRCS USFWS Conservation districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). - some farming practices are more compatible with migratory bird conservation, such as no-till, minimum till and fall-seeded small grain crops, and opportunities to work with the agricultural community in these areas should be explored. - conservation success in the PPR hinges on developing and nurturing strong personal and working relationships with private landowners and building trust. Agencies and organizations need to consider outreach as a critical component of conservation program delivery. -certain landowners or landowner groups may feel more comfortable with some organizations rather than others and therefore, it's important that organizations and agencies communicate and work together to ensure access to a wide range of landowners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a sincere and shared message is much more effective. - sharing and demonstrating the message that ranching/farming can be compatible with conservation is critical to ensure that private landowners are interested and willing to implement conservation actions. - a coordinated message from many partners can have much more impact than single messages coming from single organizations. Likewise, including private landowners or landowner groups in development of the message is an effective means of gaining support and interest. -landowners will adopt conservation practices if they are viewed as being practical, understandable and make financial sense so it's important to target limited financial resources at conservation practices that fit these criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collaborate with JV partners on crafting and delivering this message. - provide technical assistance to landowners to encourage participation in conservation programs and to assist them with the enrollment process (i.e., farm bill biologists, private lands biologists, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.5 Conduct outreach and provide technical assistance to support landowner participation in programs 4.6 Share a consistent message that conservation and ranching/farming can be compatible 4.7 Work with interested landowner groups to design programming that will have desired conservation outcomes with high acceptance amongst individual landowners

Strongly Influential Audiences	Knowledge Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) knows that...	Attitudes Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) believe that...	Skills Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations) is able to...	Behavioral Objectives Ensure that XX% of audience (with an emphasis on strongly influential organizations)...
Goal 5. Link conservation activities to societal benefits				
Technical Committee LCC's FSA NRCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). - quantification of social benefits from conservation can help justify their value to decision-makers and policy-makers and serve as a guide for payment for ecosystem services programs. -PPJV partners are conducting research in this area, including Colorado State University, FSA, USGS, and Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. -the Tech Committee has discussed collaborating with USGS and others to incorporate such research into the new implementation plan. -this research is called for in the 2012 NAWMP Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being able to explain the value of conservation activities in the PPR will increase understanding and appreciation and allow for justification for much needed conservation support in the region. - for the PPJV to continue to be a leader among JVs in conservation planning, it is necessary to take a lead in quantifying social benefits from conservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - justify conducting such research. - gain funding for such research. 	5.1. Provide science to clarify benefits of conservation activities to society
PPJV partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the PPR importance stats (see above). - according to social science research, communicating with the public about nature's values can be effective, but values must be easy to understand and also acknowledge intangible benefits. -the 2012 NAWMP Action Plan calls for JV's to take a lead in communications of this type. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a shared message is much more effective. - we must work together to address the crisis on the prairies. - a coordinated message from many partners can have much more impacted that single messages coming from single organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collaborate with JV partners on crafting and delivering this message. 	5.2 Share a consistent and appropriate message of conservation benefits to Congress and citizens, landowners, and hunters.

Messaging. Each of the objectives has been written so that it can easily provide the basis for messaging. The primary message may be more simplistic than secondary messages that iterate the specifics in the objectives. For examples of potential primary messages for each of the goals, see Table 5, below. Knowledge and attitude objectives can generally be used as message themselves. PPJV communicators may wish to supplement them with secondary messages that provide examples or simple facts or statistics. Additionally, persuasive elements can be employed to make messages play on humor or excitement or empathy or, when appropriate, fear. For skills and behaviors objectives, the message may also need to include tertiary information on how to build the skill or how to do the behavior.

Table 5. Overarching messages by goal.

Goals	Overarching messages
1. Strengthen the Joint Venture partnership for bird habitat conservation within the US PPR and outside the US PPR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You, the partners, are the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV) • A strong PPJV partnership will benefit all partners and bird and habitat conservation in our region. • The strength of the PPJV partnership comes from the active participation in the Management Board, Technical Committee, and projects throughout the region. • Active participation of all partners in updating the Implementation Plan will ensure we have shared goals and activities moving forward, which is essential for conservation in the PPR.
PPJV importance messages for goals 2-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of wetlands and grasslands in the PPR has made it the most threatened breeding waterfowl habitat in the US. • Loss of grasslands has made grassland birds one of the most imperiled guilds in North America. • Intensification of agricultural production and energy development in the U.S. PPR is threatening an already imperiled biome and the birds and wildlife that depend on it. • Conservation action is urgently needed to address the crisis on the prairies.
2. Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal conservation programs and policies benefit bird conservation and people in the U.S PPR. • These federal programs efficiently use funds, leveraging millions of dollars of matching funds. • Each federal conservation program addresses a distinct (and complementary) component of conservation needs in the region. • The people of the U.S. PPR – whether hunters, bird watchers, land owners, or conservation organization members – appreciate Congress’s support of these programs. • Provisions to the Farm Bill that incentivize conservation stewardship are needed to slow the rapid and devastating conversion of habitat in the U.S. PPR.
3. Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist in the PPR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private lands conservation in the U.S. PPR is essential with 85% of the land privately owned. • Private lands programs are win-win-win for landowners, wildlife, and conservation organizations. • While quality private lands programs are available, additional resources are needed for conservation to provide landowners as an alternative to habitat conversion or alteration.

Goals	Overarching messages
4. Integrate conservation into working lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private landowners in the U.S. PPR play a critical role in conservation, with 85% of the land privately owned. • Private lands programs are win-win for landowners and wildlife. • Conservation programs are available to support landowners. • Landowners and organizations need to work together to ensure programs are desirable to landowners and benefit birds and habitats.
5. Link conservation activities to societal benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking conservation activities to societal benefits is a way to expand the message about the importance of conservation to a wider audience. • Science is underway in the PPR to quantify the social benefits from conservation activities. But, more is needed. • Strategic and coordinated communications will be necessary to present this new information to the right audiences in the most effective manner.

If working with a specific audience, think about how you can make the message even more impactful. Consider how the message relates to the audience and their goals. Play on their motivations. Address their barriers. Highlight your overlap in interests. Think about what will persuade them. (All of this content has been provided to the PPJV staff in a database of audience assessment interview notes).

When considering which objectives you will focus on for your messages, consider where the audience member is on the stairsteps for communications (Figure 2). Should you be emphasizing knowledge? Or are they already knowledgeable and aware? If so, should you be addressing attitudes? Or are they already concerned? If so, should you be addressing skills or actions? Think about their level of technical knowledge and how complex you can be with the message. Are the audience members primarily scientists, managers, or not members of the conservation community at all? Also, provide an example of others they trust (for example, an organization like them) that is proof of this action resulting in value for them.

Tactics & Tools

A variety of tactics and tools exist to contribute to achieving the JV's communications objectives. Tactics and tools may include those from these categories:

- Educational: In-depth approaches of instruction to transmit knowledge, attitudes, and skills
- Informational: Approach of straight-forward message delivery, emphasizing basic facts, figures
- Organizational: Approach strengthening the organization and partnership and its leadership role
- Scientific: Approach of communicating scientific results and findings

In considering the appropriate tactics and tools for this Strategic Communications Plan, the PPJV Communications Working Group reviewed their current use of tactics and tools and also recommended whether tactics and tools would be appropriate for the PPJV to use in the future. We then linked the

tactics and tools that the Working Group felt would be most appropriate with each of the goals and its objectives and key audiences (Table 6). Still, when implementing this plan and selecting the tactic or tool for delivering messages for a given audience, the JV should consider:

- Will it reach the audience? And likely lead to achieving the goals and objectives?
- Will it transmit the message(s) well?
- Is there already a tactic or tool available for our needs that we could use or edit?
- Is it cost effective and affordable?
- Will it take a reasonable amount of time?
- Does the JV have the experience or skill for this type of communications? Or does a partner?

Additionally, we created recommendations for the design and delivery of each tactic and tool necessary to achieve a goal and its communications objectives.

Table 6. Communications tactics and tools for each goal and set of objectives

Goals	Strengthen the Joint Venture partnership for bird habitat conservation within the US PPR and outside the US PPR.	Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.	Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.	Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist in the PPR	Integrate conservation into working lands	Integrate conservation into working lands	Link conservation activities to societal benefits	Link conservation activities to societal benefits
Objectives	1.1-1.5	2.1-2.8	2.9	3.1-3.5	4.1-4.4	4.5-4.7	5.1	5.2
Audience (brief summary)	Man Board, Tech Comm, Coord's.	Polymakers	NGOs, Landowner groups, Citizens	Agencies, NGOs, Landtrusts	Landowners	Landowner groups, agencies, landtrusts	Tech Comm, agencies, academics	PPJV partners
Educational								
Workshops					X			
Tours/Demos		X	X		X			
Face to face	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Informational								
Websites	X		X	X		X	X	X
e-Newsletter	X		X	X		X	X	X
JV brochure	X	X						
JV Elevator talk	X	X						
Factsheets		X		X	X	X		
Year end report	X			X		X		
Press releases/media relations		X	X		X			
Popular magazine articles			X		X			
Landowner pocket guides					X			
Organizational								
Committees	X (Tech, MB)	X (Policy)	X (Policy)			X (Comms)	X (Tech)	X (Comms)
Scientific								
Participation in conferences/meetings				X			X	
Conservation & implementation plans	X						X	X

Designing & Delivering Tactics and Tools

Strengthen the Joint Venture partnership for bird habitat conservation within the US PPR and outside the US PPR. Objectives 1.1-1.5

- **Face to face communications** between and among Management Board, Technical Committee, & the JV Coordinator and Science Coordinator are essential. At a minimum, these should occur as bi-annual meetings, with one of the meetings including interaction between the Management Board and Technical Committee. Additionally, one-on-one meetings will be important with both current and new Management Board and Technical Committee members, particularly as they shift with agency or NGO staffing changes, to ensure roles are understood.
Timing: Ongoing
Taskee: JV Coordinator and Science Coordinator
- **Website** will clearly explain the role of Management Board and Technical Committee and who sits on these committees, offer up to date information about the priorities and activities of the JV (e.g., implementation plan revision approach and timeline), house all essential resources for JV partners (e.g., plans, articles, maps, year end report, elevator talk), archive all newsletters and other announcements, and provide an newsletter sign-up and contact information for staff.
Timing: FY 2013- FY 2014
Taskee: JV Communications
- **eNewsletter** will be sent on a quarterly basis (4 times/year) with up to the date information about the priorities and activities of the JV. It will be an important place to communicate about the implementation plan revision and science findings and activities. Additionally, messaging should always clearly articulate the importance of the partnership and the partners' activities, as opposed to focusing on the JV staff as the JV. If an article highlights a project, lists of partners involved should be included. Partners should be asked to author articles to highlight their successes and activities.
Timing: Template & process FY 2013; then ongoing
Taskee: JV Communications
- **JV brochures** will be developed and then provided to staff, Management Board members, and Technical Committee members. They can share this tool within their own organizations or when they are championing the JV in other contexts. It will aid them in remembering key talking points about the JV (i.e., the elevator talk). Also, it will serve as a reminder to those who they meet to visit the JV website and learn more. The brochure should have limited text, include compelling imagery, and focus on encouraging readers visit the website and learn more there.
Timing: FY 2014
Taskee: JV Communications
- **JV elevator talk** will highlight key talking points about the JV mission, shared goals, structure, and value for staff, Management Board members, and Technical Committee members. They should all be able to deliver it to others when asked, "what is the PPJV?"
Timing: FY 2013
Taskee: JV Communications with Coordinator and Board

- **Year-end report** will highlight the successes of the JV partnership. In addition to providing summary statistics to emphasize the strength of partnership activities, it should highlight example projects where a strong partnership was necessary to get the work done (include quotes from partners in this manner). For each example project, lists of partners involved should be included.
 - Timing:** Template and process and first one FY 2014; then ongoing
 - Taskee:** JV Communications with Coordinator and Science Coordinator
- **Committees** currently exist to strengthen the partnership, including Technical Committee and Management Board. Need for other committees to enable the partnership to work together effectively (e.g., Policy or Communications) is addressed under other goals. Tele-conferences will be utilized by committees or their working groups to maintain communication on projects (e.g., implementation plan revision) as needed.
 - Timing:** Ongoing
 - Taskee:** Coordinator and Science Coordinator
- **Conservation & implementation plans** of the JV will provide articulation of a shared vision, goals, and activities. The upcoming revision of the implementation plan will be essential as it has been over 7 years since the partnership worked together in this way.
 - Timing:** FY 2014-2017
 - Taskee:** Science Coordinator with Coordinator & JV Communications

Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.

Objectives 2.1-2.8

- **Tours** for Congressional members and their staff, as well as agency leaders, will be offered to highlight the value of JV, NAWCA, LWCF, FSA, NRCS, and/or Farm Bill conservation funding. These tours will be offered within the home states or districts of key Congressional members (based on their committee membership associated with these policies). The organization of these tours will be led by (non-federal agency) JV partners. All partners within the region, as well as media, should be invited to participate. For more information on how to conduct a tour, see the San Francisco Bay JV's handbook.
 - Timing:** FY 2014-2017
 - Taskee:** Policy Committee with JV Communications
- **Face to face communications** will occur between JV partners and key Congressional members (based on their committee membership associated with these policies), both on the Hill as well as at home office. Regular communications and relationship-building are essential. Ideally, landowners and members of a Congressional person's district will be involved. Additionally, communications will occur with agency leaders in national and regional leadership roles with both staff and JV partners.
 - Timing:** Ongoing
 - Taskee:** Policy Committee with JV Communications & Coordinator

- **JV brochures** can be provided to Congressional members, staff, and professional staff who are unfamiliar with the JV. It will aid them in remembering key talking points about the JV (i.e., the elevator talk). Also, it will serve as a reminder to those who they meet to visit the JV website and learn more. The brochure should have limited text, include compelling imagery, and focus on a call to action.

Timing: FY 2014-2017
Taskee: JV Communications
- **JV elevator talk** will highlight key talking points about the JV mission, shared goals, structure, and value for staff. Those participating in Congressional visits and tours should be able to deliver it to members and staff when asked, “what is PPJV?”

Timing: FY 2013
Taskee: JV Communications with Coordinator and Board
- **Factsheets** will be created to accompany tours or face to face communications with key Congressional members and, when necessary, agency leadership. Factsheets will include a map of the state or district and where JV projects are located. Summary stats will be provided about JV’s accomplishments (including acreage conserved and dollars leveraged). Partners within a given state or district will be listed to demonstrate the public-private partnership. Key projects and locations will be mentioned. Photos from the state or district (including those of people) will be highlighted. Messaging may emphasize the benefits to local economies, farmers, sportsmen, or other key constituencies. Messaging will also utilize scientific findings from the State of the Prairies paper. Factsheets will also include a call to action to support relevant policies and programs. Additionally, the national JV factsheet created by the JV Communications, Education, & Outreach Team might be used.

Timing: Annually starting FY 2014
Taskee: JV Communications with Coordinator and Policy Committee
- **Press releases/media relations** will highlight the importance of these policies. Partners may wish to write letters to the editor in key districts or states. When tours are given, the press will be invited. JV partners with media relationships will take the lead on sending press releases and inviting media participation. Policymakers follow the national news as well as the news for their state or district.

Timing: With events starting FY 2014
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Policy committee** will be created, including partners and landowners interested in Congressional communications. This committee will strategize about and plan for tours and face-to-face communications necessary. Additionally, a member of this committee will participate in the Association of Joint Venture Management Board’s bi-annual meetings and serve as a liaison for the PPJV. For models of such committees, other JVs (e.g., IWJV, ACJV) Policy committees might be considered. Tele-conferences and email will be utilized by the committee to maintain communication on efforts.

Timing: FY 2014-2017
Taskee: JV Coordinator and Board

Ensure funding for conservation and conservation-friendly policies in the Prairie Potholes Region.

Objectives 2.9

- **Tours** for Congressional members and agency leaders, that highlight the value of conservation policies, programs, or funds can also serve to train the local citizens, hunters, landowners, and NGOs on how to communicate effectively with a shared message. Those less familiar with Congressional communications will view first-hand how others communicate messages about the JV and the policies and programs.
Timing: FY 2014- 2017
Taskee: Policy Committee with JV Communications
- **Face to face communications** will be necessary to engage and prepare key citizens, hunters, landowners, and NGO partners for participating in Congressional communications.
Timing: FY 2014-2017
Taskee: Policy Committee with JV Communications
- **Website** will explain the importance of these policies and programs for conservation in the PPR, as such it will outline a shared message. Additionally, it will include a call to action for those interested in participating in Congressional communications to contact a PPJV partner who chairs the Policy Committee.
Timing: FY 2013- FY 2014
Taskee: JV Communications
- **eNewsletter** articles will highlight the value of the policies and programs to the partners in JV (suggested: one/issue with strategic rotation of which policy or program is the focus depending on policy activity and schedules). These articles can be authored by partners who serve on the Policy Committee or who have benefited from the policies or programs.
Timing: Template & process FY 2013; then ongoing
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Press releases/media relations** will highlight the importance of these policies or programs. They will include quotes from these audience members about how they value these policies or programs and encouraging others to get involved in ensuring they are supported by policymakers.
Timing: FY 2014-2017
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Popular magazine articles** will be targeted to newsletters and magazines that reach these audiences. If the newsletter or magazine is national in readership, the pitch and content may be coordinated with other JVs' communications staff through the JV Communications, Education, & Outreach Team.
Timing: Starting FY 2015
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Policy committee** will be created, including partners and landowners interested in Congressional communications. They can serve as conduits to this broader audience that they

represent. Tele-conferences and email will be utilized by the committee to maintain communication on efforts.

Timing: FY 2014-2017

Taskee: JV Coordinator and Board

Ensure effective landowner conservation programs/tools continue to exist in the PPR. Objectives 3.1-3.5

- **Face to face** communications will occur between JV partners and staff and key agency leaders in national, regional, and state leadership roles.

Timing: FY 2015

Taskee: Board with Coordinator

- **Website** will explain the importance of private lands conservation for birds in the PPR. Additionally, it will highlight programs that benefit bird habitat conservation on private lands in the PPR. The DST for determining which areas are the most important to target private lands conservation will be linked.

Timing: FY 2013- FY 2014

Taskee: JV Communications

- **eNewsletter** articles will highlight the importance of private lands conservation for birds in the PPR (suggested: one/issue). These articles can be authored by partners who have provided the program or are working on new programs.

Timing: Template & process FY 2013; then ongoing

Taskee: JV Communications

- **Factsheets** will be created to accompany face to face communications with key agency leadership. Factsheets will articulate how landowner programs are accomplishing conservation in the PPR, the unmet need, how to determine where to focus the programs, and how new programs could be designed that are easy to understand and implement on private lands.

Timing: With start of face to face communications in FY 2015

Taskee: JV Communications with Coordinator

- **Year-end report** will highlight the successes of private land programs and tools in the PPR. In addition to providing summary statistics, it should highlight example efforts where the program or tool addressed conservation needs that weren't being met otherwise.

Timing: Template and process and first one FY 2014; then ongoing

Taskee: JV Communications with Coordinator and Science Coordinator

- **Participation in conferences/meetings** will allow JV staff to connect with audience members interested in private lands conservation.

Timing: Ongoing

Taskee: Science Coordinator and Coordinator

Integrate conservation into working lands. Objectives 4.1-4.4

- **Workshops** for landowners will focus on enhancing landowner knowledge about conservation activities they might conduct on their land and voluntary habitat protection instruments available. These workshops can also provide an opportunity for landowners to meet those who implement these private lands programs. They should be conducted in key areas where more landowner participation is needed or a new program is available
Timing: FY 2015
Taskee: Partners with JV Communications
- **Tours or demos** of lands where other landowners are conducting habitat conservation activities can be part of workshops or stand alone events. Again, partners who implement the private lands programs should be available as well as landowners who have had positive experience. These too should be conducted in key areas where more landowner participation is needed or a new program is available.
Timing: FY 2015
Taskee: Partners with JV Communications
- **Face to face communications** will be necessary to encourage landowner participation. In key areas, it is worthwhile for JV partners to focus their face to face communications on key landowners who are opinion leaders in the community. If these landowners become supporters of the program it is more likely to be utilized by other landowners.
Timing: FY 2015
Taskee: Partners
- **Factsheets** will be created to accompany workshops, tours or face to face communications with landowners. They should highlight why habitat protection instruments can offer value to landowners and their operations and include contact information for agencies and organization that provide funding, easements, equipment, or assistance. They might also include tips for how to aid landowners in the sign-up process.
Timing: FY 2015
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Press releases/media relations** will highlight the importance of landowners participating in conservation and/or using the habitat protection instruments. They can be released before a workshop, when a sign-up deadline is coming up, when a new program is available, or when a key landowner decides to take part (if they are interested in publicity). The releases will include quotes from landowners about how their experience taking part in conservation and what value it has brought to their operation.
Timing: Ongoing starting FY 2014
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Popular magazine articles** will be targeted to newsletters and magazines that reach landowners (e.g., landowner associations or land trusts). If the newsletter or magazine is national in readership, the pitch and content may be coordinated with other JVs' communications staff through the JV Communications, Education, & Outreach Team.

Timing: Ongoing starting FY 2015

Taskee: JV Communications

- **Landowner pocket guides** will be created to accompany workshops, tours or face to face communications with landowners. These guides are easy to use and carry around, highlighting 10-20 of the common birds of a specific habitat or region. The guides will provide conservation tips and natural history notes on each bird as well as guidance on how to enhance its habitat. They will also offer contact information for agencies or organizations that can support landowners' conservation activities. For examples of these guides, see Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory or PRBO Conservation Science.

Timing: FY 2015

Taskee: JV Communications

Integrate conservation into working lands. Objectives 4.5-4.7

- **Website** will explain the importance of landowner conservation and support by partners in conducting outreach or technical assistance to support landowner participation. Additionally, it will include a call to action for those interested in partnering to contact the Communications Committee chair.

Timing: FY 2013- FY 2014

Taskee: JV Communications

- **Enewsletter** articles will highlight the importance of private lands conservation for birds in the PPR (suggested: one/issue), as well as the role of organizations who connected landowners to these programs. These articles can be authored by partners who have provided the programs.

Timing: Template & process FY 2013; then ongoing

Taskee: JV Communications

- **Factsheets** will be created to aid organizations in conducting outreach. They will highlight key messages and provide tips for supporting landowners and directing them to the right programs.

Timing: With start of face to face communications in FY 2015

Taskee: JV Communications

- **Year-end report** will highlight the successes of private land programs in the PPR as well as the key role of landowner outreach. In addition to providing summary statistics, it should highlight example efforts where landowner outreach made a program more known by landowners and increased participation.

Timing: Template and process and first one FY 2014; then ongoing

Taskee: JV Communications with Coordinator and Science Coordinator

- **Communications committee** will be created, including partners interested in reaching out to landowners, determining best practices for outreach and shared messages that will be successful. Tele-conferences and email will be utilized by the committee to maintain communication on efforts.

Timing: FY 2014

Taskee: JV Communications and partners

Link conservation activities to societal benefits. Objectives 5.1

- **Face to face communications** will be necessary to encourage scientists to collaborate with the JV on this research area.
Timing: Ongoing
Taskee: Science Coordinator
- **Website** will explain the importance of science tied that links conservation activities to societal benefits. It will provide a description of such research underway as well as links to the organizations conducting the research. Updates will be made as research findings are released.
Timing: FY 2013- FY 2014; then ongoing
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Enewsletter** articles will highlight the importance of this research area (suggested: one/year). These articles can be authored by partners who are conducting the research.
Timing: Template & process FY 2013; then ongoing
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Tech committee** will address this area of research and explore whether collaborations on research may be necessary.
Timing: FY 2013
Taskee: JV Science Coordinator
- **Participation in conferences/meetings** will allow JV staff to connect with scientists who may be interested in conducting this type of research in the PPR.
Timing: Ongoing
Taskee: Science Coordinator
- **Conservation & implementation plans** will allow for an opportunity to incorporate this line of research and demonstrate its importance for guiding the work of the JV and partners.
Timing: During development of plan
Taskee: Science Coordinator with Coordinator & JV Communications

Link conservation activities to societal benefits. Objective 5.2

- **Website** will explain the importance of communicating about the link between conservation activities and societal benefits. It will detail some examples of the societal benefits from wetlands and grasslands that can serve as shared messages.
Timing: FY 2013-2014
Taskee: JV Communications
- **Enewsletter** articles will highlight the importance of this research area (suggested: one/year). These articles can be authored by partners who are conducting the research. Each article can include suggestions for partners about how the research findings translate into key messages.
Timing: Template & process FY 2013; then ongoing

Taskee: JV Communications

- **Communications committee** will be created, including partners interested in collaborating on communications efforts. The committee will strategize about best practices for communications on this topic and shared messages that will be successful. Tele-conferences and email will be utilized by the committee to maintain communication on efforts.

Timing: FY 2014

Taskee: JV Communications and partners

- **Participation in conferences/meetings** will allow JV staff to connect with other communicators interested in developing shared messaging. Key meetings include regional communications meetings and the national JV Communications Education and Outreach Team.

Timing: Ongoing

Taskee: JV Communications

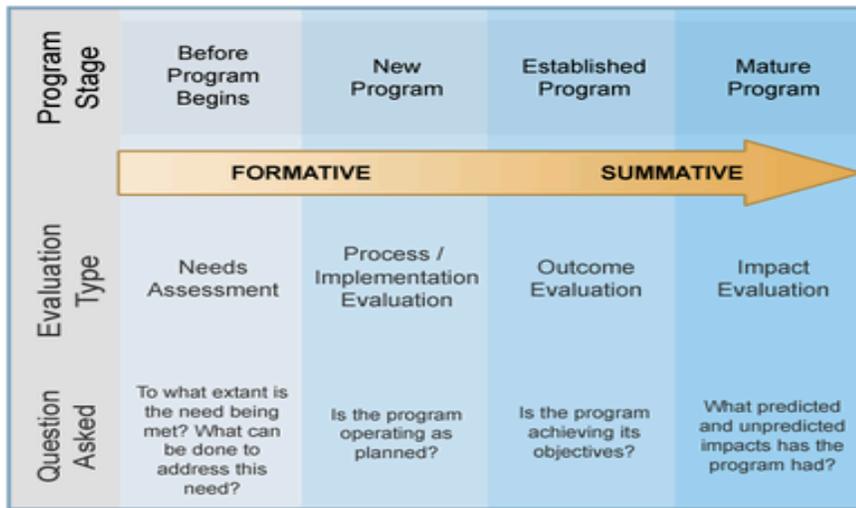
Evaluation

Evaluation is a process of critical examination. Information about a communications tactic or tools, its characteristics and its outcomes, and/or the audience it is intended to reach is collected and analyzed. Then well-informed judgments about the communications tactic or tool can be made.

Evaluation need not only be conducted at the end of a program or activity. Instead, it should be conducted before, during, and after development. Audience assessments are often a part of a needs assessment for communications, such as conducted to inform this Communications Plan. Needs assessments for specific tactics and tools or one of the communication campaigns may provide more information on how to undertake the communications efforts. As another step of formative evaluation, before implementation of an extensive campaign or investing a lot in a communications product, it should be pilot tested with the audience.

Each tactic and tool should also be evaluated to assess its effectiveness, leading to improvement of the tactic and tool or to guide the development of new products. The evaluation should include proximate (e.g., how many audiences reached, how many news articles published, how many web site hits, etc.) as well as ultimate (e.g., change in attitudes/behavior, increase in knowledge, decrease in bird disturbance in nesting area) measures. Evaluation may include formal and informal surveys, focus groups, interviews, and observations before, during and after the communications campaign.

Figure 3. MEERA’s schematic for the phases of evaluation aligned with the phases of program development.



An evaluation plan is necessary before undertaking communications efforts. Evaluations specific to the communications objectives can be conducted as well as communications tied to the tactics and tools. The objectives table in this plan can guide evaluations with given audiences, and Table 7 below can guide evaluations of key tactics and tools that will address multiple goals.

It is recommended that the JV work with a professional evaluator on their evaluation activities. Quality evaluations require social science training and skills. The evaluator may be able to develop evaluation tools for PPJV to implement on their own, monitoring the progress of JV communications.

Table 7. Suggested proximate and ultimate evaluation measures and associated tools for the primary communications tools.

Tools	Proximate	Ultimate	Evaluation Tools
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of website visitors increases each month. - Amount of time website visitors spend at website increases each month. -Number of pages website visitors view increases each month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x% website users report finding information they are looking for. - x% website users believe website to be easy to use. - x% website users report increased knowledge about PPJV and its activities after visiting website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Analytics (proximate). -Online survey on website (ultimate).

E-newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of e-newsletter readers increases each month. - x% of e-newsletter recipients open e-newsletter. - x% of e-newsletter recipients read more than 1 article. - x% of e-newsletter recipients read x% of the articles. - Requests to be added to e-newsletter distribution list increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x% e-newsletter readers report finding interesting information and well-written articles. - x% e-newsletter readers sign up for other activities listed in the e-newsletter and report reading about it there. - x% e-newsletter readers report increased knowledge about PPJV and its activities after reading newsletters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e-newsletter program tracking function or Google Analytics (proximate). - Online survey of e-newsletter email list (ultimate).
Brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x% of attendees at presentations opt to take home an PPJV brochure. - Staff, Board members, and Technical Committee members each distribute more than 50 brochures/year. - More than 2,000 brochures are distributed in first year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff and Board report receiving follow-up contacts from x% people who received brochures. - Staff and Board notice those receiving brochure reading it closely and asking follow-up questions. - x% new partners who receive brochure report increased knowledge about the PPJV and its activities after receiving the brochure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tracking spreadsheet (proximate). - Informal interviews with staff, Board members, SCPs and new partners (ultimate).
Year-End Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x% of report distribution list opens report within two weeks of emailing report link. - Staff, Board members, and Technical Committee members each distribute more than 10 reports/year. - x% of partner organizations respond to solicitation for content in annual report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x% report readers report finding information useful to their work. - x% report readers indicate report is easy to read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Analytics to track who receives and opens email with report, who clicks on link to read it (proximate). - Online survey of email distribution list that received report (ultimate).
Elevator Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x % Staff, Board members, and Technical Committee members learn the elevator talk and deliver it regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x% staff and Board report that those who hear the elevator talk seem interested and ask follow up questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observation of Staff, Board members, and Technical Committee members (proximate). - Informal focus group of staff and Board members (ultimate).

Implementation Budget

In order to design and deliver the communications tactics and tools described above and conduct necessary evaluations of efforts, the PPJV will need support of communications professionals. A recommended budget was developed for FY 2013, 2014, and 2015 communications efforts, if such funds are available. It includes the costs for tactics and tools by year. It presents two options for communications capacity: 1) communications contractor or 2) a part-time Communications Specialist staff member. With either option it is likely that a web design and graphic designer will be needed in addition on a contract basis. Estimated costs were created for the communications contractors based upon typical costs of skilled professionals that have been hired by other Joint Ventures for similar work.

Table 8. Recommended implementation budget.

	Communications Contractor Option	Communications Staff Option	Web Designer	Graphic Designer (& Print)	TOTAL
FY 2013					
Website	8000		6000		
Enews Template & Process	2250				
1st Enews Issue	1500				
TOTAL	11750	Not possible given hiring freeze.	6000	0	17750
FY 2014					
Website	10000		4000		
Enewsletter Issues (4)	6000				
Brochure	3000			3000	
Congressional factsheets (4)	3600			4000	
Year end report	2250			4000	
Press releases (2)	1050				
Support impl plan	2250				
Comms committee	2250				
Evaluation	4500				
TOTAL	34900	1/3-1/2 time	4000	11000	49900
FY 2015					
Sustain above functions	26250		2000	7000	
Tours (2)	6000				
Popular Magazine (2)	3000				
Landowner workshop	6000				
Landowner tour (1)	3000				
Landowner factsheet (1)	2250			800	
Landowner pocketguides	9000			6000	
Travel	4000	4000			
TOTAL	59500	1/2-2/3 time	2000	13800	75300

Resources

Bird Education Alliance for Conservation. www.birdedalliance.org

Bogart, R.E., Duberstein, J.N., & Slobe, D.F. (2009). Strategic communications and its critical role in bird habitat conservation: Understanding the social ecological landscape. In Rich, T.D., C. Arizmendi, D. Demarest and C. Thompson [eds.]. *Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats and People. Proceedings of the 4th International Partners in Flight Conference, 13-16 February 2008*. McAllen, TX. University of Texas-Pan American Press. Edinburg, TX. [online: http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/pif/pubs/McAllenProc/articles/PIFo9_Education_Communication/Bogart_PIFo9.pdf]

Jacobson, S.K. (1999). *Communications skills for conservation professionals*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Jurin, R.R., Roush, D., & Danter, J. (2010). *Environmental communication: Skills and principles for natural resource managers, scientists, and engineers*. New York: Springer Science+Business Media.

My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant (MEERA). <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/>

Appendix A. PPJV's status on the Desired Characteristics of JV Matrix for Communications, Education, and Outreach.

Sub-Element or Product	Minimal Content	Comprehensive Content	Minimal Content as of July 2012	Comprehensive Content as of July 2012
Coordination/Partnerships	Appropriate joint venture partners or staff represents the Joint Venture mission to the local, regional, national, and international conservation community.	The JV has identified optimal roles for the Management Board, JV office, and the JV partners in furthering its biological objectives through communications, education, and outreach activities and products. As deemed appropriate, the JV has identified gaps in capabilities and fortified those gaps to raise awareness, change attitudes, and change behaviors to support bird habitat conservation.	Met	None
Priority Audiences and Objectives	Joint venture partners have evaluated the efficacy and applicability of communications, education and outreach activities in achieving Joint Venture conservation objectives. Joint Venture Management Board has identified priority internal and external audiences and key messages.	A JV Communications Plan, guided by information from biological planning, conservation design, habitat delivery, monitoring and research, is developed to set communication, education, and outreach objectives and target activities and products geographically, programmatically and to the highest priority conservation needs. The JV has identified and prioritized all relevant audiences and correlates audience objectives with bird habitat conservation goals and objectives to determine how much and where increases in audience awareness and what changes in attitudes/behaviors are necessary to reach bird conservation objectives. The JV has established appropriate means of engaging priority audiences.	Met needs and audiences. Priority messaging not defined.	None

Sub-Element or Product	Minimal Content	Comprehensive Content	Status as of July 2012	Activities and Progress in Past 3 Years
Tactics and Products	Mechanisms exist to facilitate communication between Management Board, joint venture office, and the joint venture partners. The Joint Venture maintains an up-to-date website.	Each tactic and/or product (Examples include, but are not limited to: partner newsletters, public website, news releases, project tours, meetings, presentations and workshops) is evaluated to assess effectiveness and guide development of future communications products and activities.	Met internal communications through meetings and email. Website outdated.	None
Audience Assessment	Joint venture partners conduct informal assessment of priority audiences to determine their baseline level of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors affecting bird conservation in the Joint Venture region.	JV conducts regular, formal assessments of priority audiences to measure change in awareness, attitudes and behaviors over time. Assessments may be in the form of focus groups, surveys, interviews or other systematic means of gathering audience data. The results are used to improve future JV activities in support of bird conservation objectives.	None	None

Appendix B. PPJV Communication/Outreach Proposal from March 2011.



PPJV COMMUNICATION/OUTREACH PROPOSAL

DRAFT

March 16, 2011

Background

An issue was brought before the PPJV Management Board at their summer 2010 Board Meeting in Bozeman, Montana regarding the need to improve internal and external communications (see pgs 17-18 in the August 2010 Summer Management Board meeting notes). Historically, the PPJV produced fact sheets, outreach materials, and other types of communication documents (Attachment 1). However, more recently the partnership has lacked a proactive communication approach. The PPJV is long recognized as a “leader” among joint ventures, yet we are falling short while other joint ventures are making significant strides sharing their message. Perhaps we need to consider the consequences of resting on our laurels and become more aggressive sharing our collective message about the prairies, our sophisticated level of landscape conservation, and our impressive accomplishments.

The action taken by the Board to address the communication discussion was to establish a work group of volunteers (Steve Guertin, Skip Hyberg, Dale Garner, and PPJV Coordinator Casey Stemler) and charge it with developing a recommendation for Board consideration that identifies our communication need, form in which that need is addressed, and the target audiences.

Current Communication Need

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture partnership could benefit greatly by developing a communication strategy that informs appropriate audiences on: “The PPJV;” our accomplishments; our approach to habitat conservation, including our scientific capabilities; the impact of grassland and wetland loss on biodiversity; need for increased/sustained funding for both the PPJV and habitat conservation programs; legislation that affects our ability to reach conservation goals; our approach to energy development; PPJV and PPP LCC interactions; and climate change. This is not an exhaustive list, yet it provides a general idea of our communication needs. Provided below, are four selected examples that express additional need for improved/expanded PPJV Communication.

- Leadership and other relevant positions (i.e. NAWCA Council staff, staff at the Office of Management and Budget, etc) in Federal and State agencies and non-governmental organizations continue to experience turnover. Additionally, we have witnessed large-scale change in our elected officials. We can not assume these new people understand and appreciate, and hence support, the activities of the PPJV and the challenges we face in the U.S. Prairie Pothole Region. We have a PPJV website (www.ppjv.org) and partner organizations communicate their activities and plight of the prairie pothole region, yet we do not communicate as a “partnership.”
- In 2009, at the request of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Plan Committee, the PPJV gave a presentation to the committee on progress we have accomplished to date. Shortly thereafter, the Plan Committee issued a formal letter to the PPJV providing their feedback on the presentation. An excerpt for the letter states, “We might suggest expanded outreach opportunities to existing and new partners. The PPJV could increase its name recognition among partners and constituents. Communications can help recruit the partner support needed and this should lead to improved leveraging opportunities and related actions to enhance improved landscape scale conservation.”
- The Joint Venture program uses a tool for self-assessment called the “Joint Venture Matrix.” This tool identifies desired characteristics of habitat joint venture partnerships. The matrix is structured around seven elements including Communication, Education and Outreach. Despite the fact the matrix was developed as a self-assessment tool, joint ventures are asked to include links to the matrix in our annual funding justification (or in justifications expressing impacts of budget reductions) to determine progress on each of the seven elements.
- On page 41 of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture 2005 Implementation Plan, we identify our standing committees: Technical Committee, Farm Bill Committee, and Communications Committee. The only standing committee currently in place and functioning is the Technical Committee. As defined in the Implementation Plan, the Communications Committee’s responsibilities include: Guide and assist the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of a communication/education program (including development of such materials as accomplishment reports, newsletters, and surveys for internal and external audiences of the PPJV).

To Address the Need

A communication plan will help facilitate efficient and effective communications among PPJV partners and external parties who impact our ability to succeed, and it will allow us to address recommendations and expectations. The PPJV is long recognized as a forefather of strategic habitat conservation – selecting priority species, conducting scientifically sound biological planning and conservation design, delivering conservation actions and conducting monitoring and research. An effective communication strategy has similar elements of communication planning, communication design, communication delivery, and evaluation - each functioning in a feed back loop. Since we understand and acknowledge the success of our landscape level approach to conservation, we can use a similar thought process when considering a communication effort.

There are a number of approaches to developing a communication plan, yet the elements of a plan are largely similar. Below, we provide an example of what a plan should include:

Example

- Executive Summary (overview of what plan seeks to accomplish)
- Goals/Objectives (what you want to accomplish with your communications)
- Strategy and tasks (ways in which those objectives can be accomplished)
- Key messages (messages you ultimately want to convey)
- Audience (people you're trying to inform, educate, influence)
- Tools and timetable (how you will accomplish your objectives)
- Estimated costs to implement actions
- Evaluation (how you will measure the results of your effort)

Target Audiences

Our target audiences are best defined thorough the communication planning process. The planning process would employ partner workshops (in person or teleconference) to help, in part, define target audiences. Nevertheless, in response to the charge given this group by the Board, we provide the following list of potential target audiences:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| - PPJV Board and Technical Committee Members | - State and Federal Agency Staff |
| - NAWCA Council and Staff | - State and Federal Legislators/Staff |
| - Landowners | - Media outlets (print, radio) |
| - NGOs | - Bird Plan Coordinators |
| - PPP LCC | - NABCI |
| - Private Corporations | - Foundations |

Recommendation

Option A – Establish a PPJV Communications Committee with the charge of developing a communication plan that incorporates the common elements outlined in the example above. Hire a contractor to implement plan actions.

Option B – Hire a communication specialist to develop a plan that incorporates the common elements outlined in the example above. Establish a PPJV Communications Committee to implement contents of the Plan.

Option C - Hire a communication specialist to develop a plan that incorporates the common elements outlined in the example above. Upon completion of the plan, we would retain the contractor to implement plan actions.

Attachment 1

Short History of PPJV Communication Products

- Historically, the PPJV developed and transmitted a news letter called, “Progress Notes.” The document was a compilation of relevant news, partner accomplishments and other items of interest to the PPJV.
- At appropriate intervals the PPJV issued progress reports (i.e., “Partnerships in Progress – U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Accomplishments 1987-1993,” and “PPJV 15: 1987-2002, The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture.” Specifically, a section in the “PPJV 15” report covered the topic of “Communication and Outreach” wherein it states in part, “...A comprehensive communication and outreach initiative is spreading the word on many fronts, targeting landowners, decision makers, natural resources professionals, students and funding partners. The PPJV employs a variety of media, from printed materials and training programs to education videos and websites.” Further, it covered the topics of “Advancing Research and Training, Educating the Public, Promoting Partnerships, Informing Decision Makers, and Utilizing New Media.”
- In 1996, the PPJV, in association with Ducks Unlimited, developed a publication titled, “The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture: Cultivating Cooperation for Wildlife and Agriculture.” The purpose of this document was to introduce the reader to “prairie potholes,” the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, and most importantly to provide PPJV state-by-state examples of how both wildlife and agriculture can thrive on the same landscape.
- In 1997, the PPJV developed state specific fact sheets that discussed work locations of PPJV partner projects; programs for habitat conservation (protection, restoration and enhancement); and a solicitation for new partner participation within that respective state.
- In 1998, the PPJV, in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited and the North Dakota Wetlands Trust, developed a 13 page brochure titled, “The Prairie Pothole Region: Land of extremes....landscape of change.” This outreach tool provided the reader with an ecological lesson of the Prairie Pothole Region, covering topics such as climatic conditions, native prairies and other grasses, birds of the region, and other wildlife of the region.
- In 1999, the PPJV released a document titled, “Prairie Pothole Joint Venture 1999-2000 Project Catalog – Funding Requests for Conservation Projects Benefitting Waterfowl and Other Prairie Birds.” The publication described some 12 projects, each having a funding request, project objectives, brief project description, and contact name and address.

In 2000, the PPJV, in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, developed a “flashy” multi-page document titled, “The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture: A Partnership for Migratory Bird Conservation in the 21st Century.” The

publication addressed the fact that the PPJV expanded its primary focus beyond waterfowl conservation to include other wetland/grassland migratory birds. More pointedly, the tab-driven publication covers how the PPJV conducts its business: “Regionally based,” “Biologically driven,” “Landscape oriented,” “Partnerships,” “Integrated bird conservation,” and “Hemispheric perspective.”

Publication date unknown – the PPJV produced a publication, “Grassland Easements: Conservation Benefits that Keep on Growing” that served as both an educational and outreach tool. The document covers topics that include, “What is a Grassland Easement?,” “Why Protect Grasslands?,” “Easements are Effective Conservation,” “Easements are Cost-Effective,” “Landowners Welcome Easements,” and “Easement Program is based on Sound Science and Conservation Objectives.”

Lastly, the PPJV has produced a variety of one-to-multi page Fact Sheets. The fact sheets covered a range of topics including species specific issues to general information about the PPJV.