



# THE TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY

## STRATEGIC PLAN

**2010-2014**



*Photo: Jess Lee*

The Trumpeter Swan Society  
County Road 9, Suite 100  
Plymouth, Minnesota 55441-1248  
[www.trumpeterswansociety.org](http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org)

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*Photo: Alan Sachanowski*

## FOREWORD

*The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS) has been operating under its initial Strategic Plan, approved in December 2003, for the past 6 years.*

*The reasons we have undertaken the current update of the Strategic Plan are:*

- *To specify and prioritize the areas of work and specific actions to which Society resources will be dedicated during the next 5 years.*
- *To provide a clear synopsis of the Society's priorities and strategies to the members, Board of Directors, staff, donors, and partners.*
- *To aid decisions as we make a major transition in reducing our administrative dependence upon Three Rivers Parks, Hennepin County, MN, and adjust operations to cope with the current world-wide economic decline*

*Key steps needed to put the ideas of this Strategic Plan into action include:*

- *Identify and secure the resources and talents needed to accomplish the goals and action items;*
- *Annually review and if needed modify the plan to better fit the current working environment; and*
- *Annually prepare a work plan that identifies annual priorities and tasks, timelines, measures of success, resource needs, and responsible parties.*

*Approved by The Trumpeter Swan Society Board of Directors, March 17, 2010.*

## MISSION

**The mission of The Trumpeter Swan Society is to assure the vitality and welfare of wild Trumpeter Swan populations in North America.**

## VALUES

TTSS believes that the restoration, conservation and security of Trumpeter Swans in North America are very important for the intrinsic value of the species, for its role in natural systems, and for the inspiration and beauty that the swans bring to human existence. TTSS also values Trumpeter Swans as a symbol of hope for the restoration of imperiled species and as a high-profile ambassador for the conservation of North American wetlands.

***The Society's paramount task is to assure that wild populations of Trumpeter Swans attain numbers and distributions that will keep them strong and resilient as habitats are increasingly modified by the impacts of human population growth.***

TTSS strives to serve as an effective advocate for Trumpeter Swans by sharing its collective expertise and comprehensive knowledge of the species' biology, history, and management, providing an inclusive forum for identification, discussion and resolution of swan issues in North America, and through using and promoting sound science and collaboration. The Society shall strive to increase public knowledge, appreciation, and participation in the conservation of this magnificent bird. Whenever possible, TTSS will work in partnership with others to advance its goals.

## **FIVE-YEAR OPERATING GOALS**

### **POPULATION SECURITY/RANGE EXPANSION:**

1. Help maintain or restore all breeding groups above the minimum population goals in approved management plans
2. Promote the restoration and/or expansion of Trumpeter Swans into suitable habitat
3. Develop secure winter and nesting distributions

### **HABITAT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT:**

1. Stimulate and support Trumpeter Swan habitat conservation, restoration, development, and effective management
2. Work to provide the additional winter habitat necessary to enable the expansion of Trumpeter Swan populations to continue

### **ADVOCACY AND AGENCY**

#### **COORDINATION:**

1. Promote the integration of Trumpeter Swan conservation needs into federal, state, provincial and local planning efforts and programs
2. Work to ensure that actions are implemented effectively and adequately evaluated
3. Strive to develop and strengthen the next generation of swan managers



Photo: David K. Weaver

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT:**

1. Build a public constituency for the conservation and restoration of Trumpeter Swans and their habitats
2. Facilitate the exchange of information among swan researchers, managers, and all who care about their future

### **RESEARCH:**

1. Stimulate and support important Trumpeter Swan research.
2. Work to ensure that knowledge of research results is integrated into Trumpeter Swan management

### **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

1. Be an internationally, nationally, and regionally recognized and respected organization that is prudently governed and efficiently operated
2. Develop a sufficient funding base to hire adequate staff to achieve operating goals.

## SYNOPSIS OF PRIORITY PROGRAMS

### I. INTERIOR/ATLANTIC POPULATION SECURITY

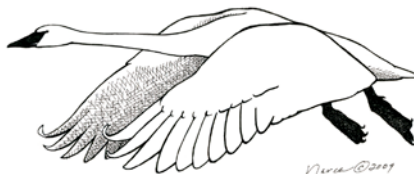
**Objective:** *Increase the security of the breeding flocks by increasing their use of suitable diverse wintering sites, particularly in areas south of the current breeding range.*

**Objective:** *Increase public and agency interest and involvement in establishing more diverse and secure winter distributions*

**Objective:** *Encourage and assist managers in efforts to monitor and protect extant nesting sites.*

Tasks:

- a) Work with state, federal, tribal, and private partners to develop a well-coordinated regional approach to management of the Interior Population and incorporate this approach in planning documents.
- b) Determine the abundance and winter destinations of southward migrating Trumpeters and identify potential future wintering sites through strong public involvement in our ***Trumpeter Watch*** program.
- c) Through ***Trumpeter Watch***, develop an enthusiastic network of avid bird watchers and nature enthusiasts who are knowledgeable about Trumpeter Swan restoration, historic swan distribution in the southern states, the changing status and distribution of southward migrating swans and who will speak out in support of Trumpeter Swan restoration.
- d) Work with state, federal and private partners to explore ways to foster increased winter use of southerly areas by migrant Trumpeters.
- e) Work with partners to create a management plan for Trumpeter Swans in the Atlantic Flyway that will improve their numbers, distribution, and long-term sustainability and minimize potential conflicts with existing sport hunting programs.
- f) Work with partners to create a management approach for the Monticello feeding area that will ensure adequate involvement by the legally responsible agencies and will provide a wintering situation that is safe and sustainable
- g) Assist with public education at winter viewing areas.
- h) Work with utility companies, wildlife officials, and the public to address the impacts of power lines on swans within breeding and staging locations.
- i) Work with agencies and private land owners to detect and correct threats to extant nest sites.



## II. ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION SECURITY

***Objective: Increase the security of the Canadian and US breeding groups by encouraging increased use of suitable diverse wintering sites outside of the Greater Yellowstone region.***

Tasks:

- a) Determine the abundance and winter destinations of southward migrating Trumpeters assisted by increased public involvement, particularly along the Snake River in southern Idaho.
- b) Work with state, federal, Tribal, Flyway Council, and private partners to explore ways to increase winter use of sites outside of the Greater Yellowstone region where migrant Trumpeters are pioneering.
- c) Support the Canadian Wildlife Service, Provincial wildlife agencies, and other organizations in enhancing the security of breeding, migrating, and wintering swans.

***Objective: Prevent the further decline of the Greater Yellowstone nesting population and achieve Pacific Flyway objectives of at least 540 adults with a substantially broader nesting distribution.***

Tasks:

- a) Through our **Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Initiative (GYTSI)**, work with all regional National Wildlife Refuges and state waterfowl management areas to achieve the nesting potential of each area, with particular emphasis on Red Rock Lakes NWR.
- b) Encourage USFWS to highlight Trumpeter Swan management on key refuges in RMP range and re-instate the Refuge Trumpeter Swan Concept Planning process to coordinate Trumpeter Swan management among refuges and across regional boundaries.
- c) Work with private landowners, resource agencies, and Tribes to increase the abundance and productivity of crucial pre-nesting habitats and to improve nesting habitat quality where possible.
- d) Participate actively in the interagency Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Working Group and the Pacific Flyway RMP Subcommittee.
- e) Work with the Intermountain West Joint Venture to develop a strategic habitat conservation plan for Greater Yellowstone (Tri-State) Trumpeter Swan breeding habitat to help achieve Pacific Flyway objectives.

***Objective: Help rebuild the Oregon Flock to at least the approved Pacific Flyway minimum population level of 15 nesting pairs and 75 adults.***

Tasks:

- a) Enhance Trumpeter Swan breeding in central and eastern Oregon through translocations of captive raised swans of RMP stock and Malheur NWR cygnets to Summer Lake WA.
- b) Encourage wintering of Trumpeter Swans at Summer Lake WA and other suitable areas.
- c) Work with Malheur NWR refuge staff to enhance Trumpeter breeding habitat at Malheur NWR and encourage migration of Malheur swans to Summer Lake WA.

***Objective: Help restore viable nesting flocks in western Montana.***

Tasks:

- a) Support efforts by the Salish-Kootenai Tribes, USFWS, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Blackfoot Valley landowners to restore Trumpeter Swans in western Montana.

### III. PACIFIC COAST POPULATION SECURITY

***Objective: Attain long-term protection of winter habitat to allow for continued growth of the population***

Tasks:

- a) Finish Felburn grant obligations in 2010 and continue efforts aimed at long-term provision of winter habitat.
- b) Make Johnson/DeBay Swan Reserve a model viewing and winter habitat management area.
- c) Work in partnership with agricultural interests, resource agencies, land managers, other conservation organizations and the Pacific Coast Joint Venture for long-term conservation of agricultural-based winter habitat for swans.
- d) Work with agricultural interests to address impacts from wintering swans.

***Objective: Assist in efforts to reduce mortality from lead poisoning.***

Tasks:

- a) Provide relevant data and technical assistance to involved and responsible agencies.
- b) Help involve volunteers in data gathering and carcass disposal and generate public involvement in the resolution of the lead problem.
- c) Help agencies obtain adequate funding for data gathering, analysis, and remediation efforts.
- d) Increase public support for eliminating lead shot use in swan wintering areas

### IV. CONTINENT-WIDE ADVOCACY AND AGENCY COORDINATION

***Objective: Ensure that the needs of Trumpeter Swans are addressed adequately in agency management plans, actions, and decision processes.***

Tasks:

- a) Participate in all key planning processes for Trumpeter Swan management.
- b) Coordinate with flyway, federal, and state Trumpeter Swan management efforts to achieve common goals whenever possible.
- c) Attend key Flyway meetings.
- d) Engage on issues that degrade breeding or winter habitat quality and quantity.
- e) Ensure that Trumpeter Swans are thoroughly considered in the Comprehensive Conservation Plans of key National Wildlife Refuges.
- f) Strive to pass on our collective knowledge of Trumpeter Swan restoration, management, habitats, successful nesting establishment practices to the next generation of swan managers in clear and useable formats.
- g) Work with diverse partners to ensure that important surveys, including the 2010 and 2015 Rangewide Trumpeter Swan Surveys, are efficiently organized and adequately funded.
- h) Participate on the American Bird Conservancy Policy Council to increase awareness of Trumpeter Swan issues in the ornithological community.

## IV. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT

***Objective: Increase public understanding and support of Trumpeter Swan conservation and management***

Tasks:

- a) Publish *Trumpetings* at least 3x/yr and *North American Swans (NAS)* when adequate material exists.
- b) Maintain an engaging website that informs the public of the goals and activities of TTSS and is the best source of Trumpeter Swan information on the Internet.
- c) Engage the public in swan conservation efforts whenever possible and cost-effective
- d) Experiment with web/electronic ways of expanding public education and involvement.
- e) Hold biennial conferences, with one conference in 2011-12 and one in 2013-14; explore changes in format to increase relevancy, cost-efficiency, and adapt to economic conditions and travel limitations.

## V. RESEARCH

***Objective: Stimulate and support important Trumpeter Swan research.***

Tasks:

- a) Work with managers to identify high priority research needs and explore funding possibilities including our North American Swan Fund.
- b) Advocate for increased agency and university commitment and funding for Trumpeter Swan research.
- c) Disseminate key research findings to increase their use by managers

## VII. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### A. Fiscal

***Objective: Implement a Transition Plan to address the need to reduce our administrative dependence upon Three Rivers Parks and to cope with the current serious economic problems.***

Tasks:

- a) Clarify the extent to which Three Rivers Parks District wishes to remain a future partner with TTSS and establish agreed-upon terms by Board-approved contract.
- b) Identify staffing needs to accomplish our Operating Goals and develop a budget.
- c) Ensure that all key administrative tasks have been re-assigned with methods in place to ensure they are completed effectively and within legal deadlines.

***Objective: Build adequate fiscal resources to maintain budget reserves equal to core program costs for one year.***

Tasks:

- a) Approve the subsequent year's budget and program priorities at the December Board meeting.

- b) Develop a clear annual fundraising strategy for the following year by December 1 that identifies a diverse mix of potential foundations and major donors, membership targets, annual appeal focus, and responsibility for accomplishment.
- c) Look for opportunities in which mitigation funding from damaging development projects can be utilized to benefit Trumpeter Swan habitat.
- d) Avoid deficit spending of unrestricted funds and aim for at least a 5% annual surplus until adequate reserves are achieved.
- e) Establish an active Board Fundraising Committee that assists staff in identifying potential donors/foundations, making solicitations, and increasing Board involvement in fundraising.
- f) Prepare an Annual Report for distribution in the Feb/March *Trumpetings*, on the website, and to targeted donors.

***Objective: Follow sound fiscal policies and have clear written descriptions of policies.***

Tasks:

- a) Identify all mandatory reporting requirements and clearly document each required process, annual due dates, and person responsible.
- b) Develop and adopt clear, legal policies to ensure adequate checks and balances in handlings and tracking receipts and expenses.
- c) Develop and adopt clear, legal policies for Board and staff travel and expense reimbursement, and for compensation when Board members serve in a staff-type capacity on projects.
- d) Clarify policy for support of TTSS core programs from grants received by working groups or for special projects.

***Objective: Increase Board involvement in management of the North American Swan Fund.***

Tasks:

- a) Establish a Board committee that will monitor investment strategy and performance, recommend use of funds to the Board, and help increase awareness of the Fund and opportunities for planned giving among potential donors.

## **B. Membership Development**

***Objective: Increase membership to provide fee income equal to at least 25% of our annual core budget.***

Tasks:

- a) Use all TTSS publications, website and other outreach tools to clearly explain what TTSS is doing to benefit Trumpeter Swans, who the Society is, why new members are needed, and how people can help Trumpeter Swans through TTSS.
- b) Increase awareness of TTSS, particularly among the birding community by involving the public in meaningful volunteer activities, such as Trumpeter Watch and GYTSI.
- c) For each population, develop at least one project that provides opportunity for member involvement.
- d) Seek to develop or strengthen Trumpeter Swan Working Groups in appropriate geographical areas.

## C. Board and Staff Development

**Objective:** *Develop a diverse and energetic Board with the skills and involvement needed to carry out the Society's mission.*

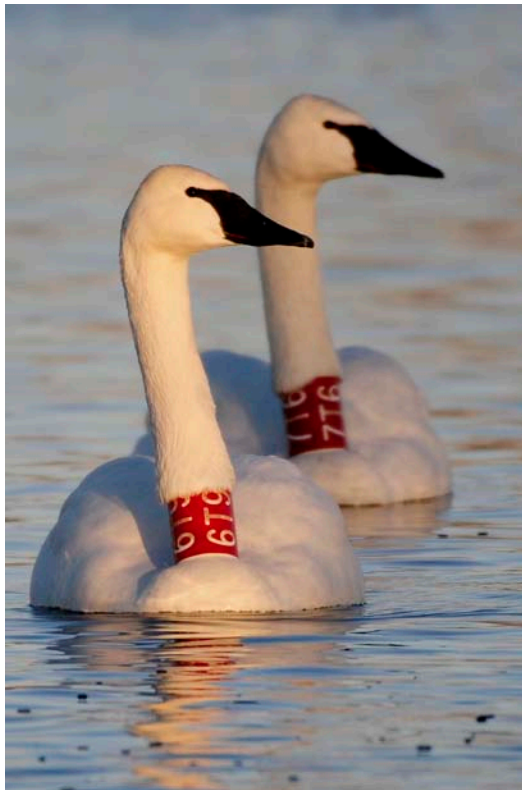
Tasks:

- a) Identify needed skills and diverse geographic representation, develop a list of potential candidates, get to know them, determine their interest, and seek ways to involve these people in TTSS.
- b) Review the current Board election process and modify to separate the process from the biennial conference process and ensure compliance with Article of Incorporation and Bylaws.
- c) Develop procedures and policies for the Board of Directors to increase Board involvement and ensure that each Board member has specific responsibilities that match their skills and interests.

**Objective:** *Provide staff resources, training, and support adequate to handle the Society's program workload.*

Tasks:

- a) Adopt and implement clear and legal personnel policies.
- b) Determine staffing, training, and support needs to accomplish 5-year goals and objectives and prioritize within budget constraints.



*Photo: Ryan Askren*