



APPALACHIAN  
MOUNTAINS  
JOINT VENTURE



## FOCAL LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE



The Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV) partnership is focused on preserving, managing, and restoring diverse, healthy forest habitats in the region to benefit not only birds, but the diversity of Appalachian plants and wildlife.

### OBJECTIVE

Our objective with this initiative is to achieve landscape-level benefits for our priority birds, demonstrated by stabilizing or increasing populations within the focal landscapes.

Our Focal Landscape Initiative **strategically targets our capacity and resources** to high-priority regions established by our partners within the AMJV geography.

This approach maximizes our conservation impacts and make concrete steps towards improving habitat for our priority species.

We are developing this initiative in parallel with American Bird Conservancy's [BirdScapes](#).



## WHY?

The geology of the Appalachian Mountains and size of intact forests provide unique environments that make the region a biological hotspot and an outdoor recreational oasis. But the diversity of forest structure and age classes in Appalachian forests has greatly diminished over the last century. After mass deforestation occurred in the late 19th and early 20th century across the Appalachians, the forests that returned have been impacted by other pressures, such as continued poor forest management, an influx of invasive plants and insects, and suppression of natural disturbances such as fire. As a result, today's Appalachian forests face a variety of challenges that reduce their health, resiliency, and ability to provide quality habitat for a variety of plants and wildlife.

## GOALS

- Enhance the diversity and health of habitat in the landscape using a holistic approach that considers the entire system, versus individual species or habitat types, over a long time-span (e.g. 10-20+ years).
- Enhance forest health and structure – from young to old growth, from high elevation spruce to oak-hickory to open pine communities – to benefit a diversity of wildlife.
- Focus limited capacity and resources in strategic locations, working across public and private lands and enhance forest structure and species diversity.
- Improve the integration of forest restoration efforts with bird conservation objectives.
- Establish stable or increasing populations of bird species that represent the range of forest types and habitats present in the Appalachian landscape.



# THE PROCESS

This is a “bottom-up” effort, with AMJV partners leading the development of individual focal landscapes across the AMJV geography and AMJV staff supporting and advising these efforts as needed. We are treating each landscape as a holistic system and leaning heavily on partners to identify the overarching objectives for each landscape, including priorities that are not bird-centric.



**Each focal landscape is developed based on the following criteria:**

## LOCAL PARTNER EXPERTISE AND INPUT

Existing partners working in the focal landscape, especially private and industry sector; funding prospects; needs of stakeholders; non-bird priorities.

## IMPORTANCE TO PRIORITY BIRDS

Concentration and trends of priority species; identification of priority species habitat or focal areas; current research; connectivity to wintering grounds; existing conservation plans.

## CONTAINS A MIX OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LANDS

## EXTENT/CONDITION OF FOREST

Representative of types and conditions across the Appalachians; ability to achieve long-term desired conditions given initial forest composition; forest connectivity and level of fragmentation.

## LAND USES AND THREATS

What are major threats to birds and their habitat; what are drivers of threats; climate vulnerability/resiliency of the landscape.

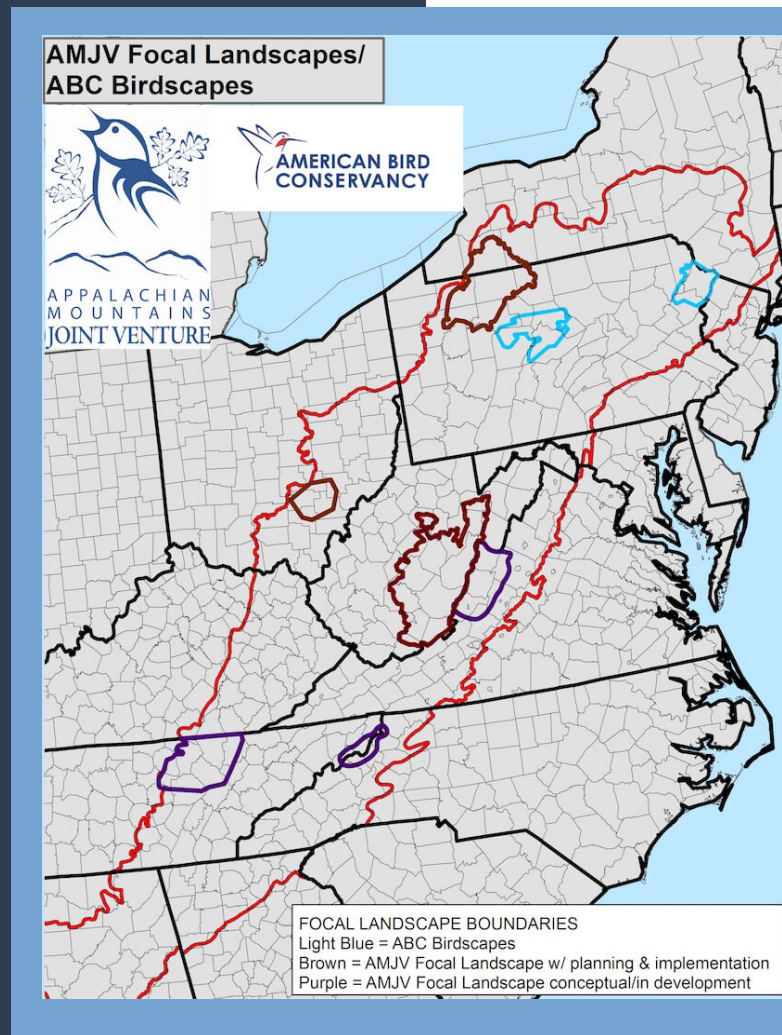
## CHANCE OF SUCCESS AND BARRIERS TO CONSERVATION

Ability to establish long-term framework for operating in landscapes; ability to monitor and evaluate results; public attitudes towards management; commodity interests and influence (e.g., forest products market).

# LONG-TERM VISION

Effectively restoring, managing, and protecting our Appalachian forests is not a short-term exercise, but will require long-term planning and corresponding actions on the ground. For each focal landscape identified, AMJV partners will set specific long-term (e.g., ten-year) conservation goals that address active habitat management, protection and restoration activities, reduction of key threats, and influencing practices on working and commercial lands.

Such activities – along with focused outreach strategies to target key stakeholders – will enhance the health and resilience of forests and wildlife to future changes.



Our mission is to restore and sustain viable populations of native birds and their habitats in the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture region through effective, collaborative partnerships.

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