

Focus Team Orientation Talking Points
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The Focus Teams are being asked to help develop a vision of a healthy baylands ecosystem. This should stand alone as a vision of what the regional community of wetlands scientists thinks should be the distribution and abundance of baylands habitats, based upon the best available scientific information about baylands wildlife and their habitats.

The effects of human operations on the ecological functions of the baylands may be considered as the goals are established, but the goals should primarily be based upon the natural history of target species and their habitats. Whereas the limitations of ecological functions change slowly through evolutionary time, human operations and their ecological effects vary greatly and more rapidly. Goals based upon natural history can therefore help guide adjustments in human operations as necessary to achieve the goals.

However, the Focus Teams should not burden themselves with political or administrative concerns about how the baylands are governed, or what will be the institutional or public responses to the goals. The Focus Teams should recommend what should be the distribution and abundance of baylands habitats for a healthy baylands ecosystem, regardless of the financial or political aspects of implementing these recommendations.

In their deliberations, the Focus Teams may recommend changes to the scientific process of Project. The RMG intends to be very responsive to such recommendations. It is likely that the process will evolve through ongoing discussions about how the goals should be used, and the Focus Teams should be a part of those discussions. But the goals should reflect what scientists think should be the goals, not what scientists think may be the political problems of implementing the goals, or what might be done to prevent such problems.

Much has been discussed already about whether or not there should be any public maps of goals. The Focus Teams should make maps if they choose to, based upon scientific needs for visualization or quantification. The RMG can choose whether or not to use the maps, or to show the maps to the public. What is needed is a long view of what is possible. Think in terms 100 or 500 years. As yourselves, what are the ecological potentials? What should we aim for? As the science coordinator for this project, I strongly recommend that you focus on the science of ecosystem restoration, and not dwell on the administrative or political aspects of ecological restoration or management. Don't get scared. Help each other over gaps in expertise or knowledge. Provide a vision of what the agencies should do if they could. One thing we can accept as certain: if you do not provide the vision, then it will not be achieved.