

World Wide Views on Biodiversity (USA) Citizen Recommendations

Should the US Adopt a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan?

Four of the 34 sites in 25 countries where World Wide Views on Biodiversity was conducted on September 15, 2012 were in the United States, in Boston, Denver, Phoenix, and Washington, DC. At these sites, a session was added to the 4 sessions conducted worldwide to focus on an issue in the United States. Taking note of the current goal of the Convention on Biodiversity to establish an effective and participatory national biodiversity strategy and action plan in all countries by 2015, participants at these four sites were asked whether this should be done in the US, and to develop short statements providing a rationale and specific recommendations. These are included below.

Washington, DC

Table 1

The U.S. needs to have a national bio-diversity strategy that begins at the local level. Education of citizens from public schools to the local community with a focus on tangible results so people can see what works so it can be replicated. This can help to affect cultural change and how people think of how to be a global citizen. Technological innovations should be encouraged and shared to solve problems. The true costs of everyday products should be reflected in actual prices.

Start at the ground up with more visible effects that can be exported to help the nation, and world, as a whole.

Table 3

Incorporate biodiversity into a national education requirement.

This will be implemented in the following ways:

- National learning objectives
- Require volunteer service for graduation
- Leverage extension programs to provide the opportunities to volunteer & the curriculum

Table 4

A successful national biodiversity policy depends on a multi-faceted top-down & bottom-up approach, including:

- Congressional chairpersons of the pertinent committees & national agencies to develop a national policy
- Using traditional and non-traditional media to make biodiversity information readily available to heighten awareness and motivate across generations

-Preferably within a timeline for implementation and ratification tied to the next election cycle.

Table 5

We recommend a non-partisan and non-polarizing alliance or coalition be formed to specifically include non-indigenous and indigenous concerns and interests on biodiversity. This national alliance will engage in advocacy campaigns, political action, and encourage lifestyle transformation. An advocacy campaign could facilitate the creation and expansion of biodiversity habitat or other protected spaces and/or focus on education through ecoliteracy. Political action could entail engaging politicians who have voted against biodiversity action or creating a PAC. Target lifestyle choices could be reducing waste or reducing energy consumption.

Table 6

Table 6 recognizes the difficult political and economic climate in today's world. We still feel that a national biodiversity strategy benefits everyone. A healthy, beautiful, resilient community is our goal. Families and community & business leaders are the audience.

We lead with policy and recommend that decision-makers recognize formally that "biodiversity is important." Businesses & communities can follow with their own activities including gardens, events, and financial incentives.

Second, we focus on education and stewardship. A specific example is the Maryland Environmental literacy standard and a week-long program that incorporates "No Child Left Inside."

Finally, we see direct action as a way to include and engage our target audiences. Examples to consider:

- National Biodiversity Day
- National Day of Biodiversity Service
- National parks for Free Day
- Field trips
- Biodiversity gardens
- Business-oriented activities ("Disney Day")

As inspired by world Wide Views, we are recommending Sept 15 as "National Biodiversity Day."

Table 7

As the conservation of biodiversity is a very complex and multidisciplinary problem, with no one clear solution, it is necessary to invest more in basic research areas ranging from biology, ecology and energy, to sociology and economics. These results can be used to guide viable and effective strategies and improve education. Education and awareness is needed in the form of public outreach as well as formal education. Our two priorities are:

1. A national level mandate for environmental education starting at the elementary level and continuing on to higher education. One component would be the requirement of outdoors, hands-on learning.
2. To increase public awareness, a national grant program would be created for non-profits and community organizations encouraging outreach on biodiversity issues.

Table 8

We must enact a strategy that first and foremost provides a model for the rest of the world, takes national responsibility for damage we have caused and makes no exemptions for corporate interests. We suggest three specific actions:

1. Place all biodiversity protection under the EPA
2. Establish more marine protected areas
3. Introduce a consumer-friendly food labeling system that clearly shows the biodiversity impacts of each product (e.g. rainforest-friendly, ocean-friendly, biodiversity-farming-friendly). Labeling will not be voluntary.

Table 9

Emphasis of state-led development of:

1. Nation-wide standards for teaching biodiversity
2. Progress-dependent funding for local efforts
3. At the federal level, a “Joint Chiefs of Staff” for the environment
4. A public information campaign founded on consequences of inaction
5. Incorporation of the precautionary principle
6. An “environmental dashboard” of 5-10 indicators
7. Links biodiversity to the broader issue of sustainability

Table 10

A national biodiversity strategy is not just necessary, it's indispensable. Biodiversity affects all of us, in all aspects of our lives. We believe that food policy is the most relatable issue through which to reach people and change behaviors. We recommend partnerships between government agencies and food companies or local farmers that support sustainable food practices. By 2015, we want to have an education plan that teaches both children and adults about healthy meal planning and how to buy foods that support global biodiversity.

Table 11

We contribute 3 ideas/initiatives.

1. Use regional planning, especially land use, considering agriculture, regulations, and sustainable design with a social responsibility component, including public access to all EIS/EIAs.
2. A national campaign (e.g. littering/smoking) to raise awareness and feature critical biodiversity issues to also challenge to individual social responsibility
3. National education project

- a. Viral/internet based
 - i. “My biodiversity plan”
 - ii. Competition
 - iii. Idea sourcing
- b. Illustrate biology
 - i. Integrate into community projects
- c. Who? Multi stakeholder: NGO, gov agencies, business, citizens

Table 12

We support a National Biodiversity Strategy interpreted by local municipalities. This calls for a national focus on biodiversity conservation, preservation, and remediation. Local citizens and groups will work to inform and educate each other about the issues facing biodiversity. Business will be encouraged to practice corporate citizenship and will be offered the opportunity for incentives in return for funding education initiatives. At a national level, biodiversity assessments will be incorporated into planning, permitting and zoning processes already required by the EPA. Although the unification of the agencies responsible for biodiversity protection will be challenging to implement, the future of American biodiversity is at stake and worth the effort required.

Table 13

1. Education should be central in a national biodiversity strategy. Biodiversity should be included in national common core standards. Also, each state should develop biodiversity educational curricula, which includes field trip activities that connect students with local ecosystems and farmlands.
2. The fraction of protected land and sea area should be increased and should reflect diversity in ecosystems. Protected land can be used for designated wildlife preserves and educational purposes.

Action plan:

1. Ratify the CBD
2. Reverse subsidies that negatively impact biodiversity (for example, for intensive monoculture practices) to incentives for sustainable industries.

Table 14

We recommend the need for a national strategy that encourages and promotes:

1. A national K-12 environmental science curriculum
2. A new national narrative that recognizes the importance and value of biodiversity among those who haven't historically been motivated or understand the need for biodiversity
3. A national database for knowledge-sharing of best local practices that helps link value of biodiversity to creation of good green jobs

Table 15

Develop a national strategy that challenges states and counties to identify needs and challenges for biodiversity by a certain date. To do so, it will involve educational strategies at multiple age levels interconnecting and caring about the natural world using old ways and new technologies to make connections with our Earth. The purpose is to foster knowledgeable conversations about local/personal needs and challenges, and creation of innovative and adaptive solutions and understandings of our impacts.

Table 16

The federal government needs to set standards that apply across the country (may be adopted from CBD). At the Congressional District level, citizen advisory committees are formed to formulate strategies, state targets for biodiversity. These are presented to state governments who must formulate specific targets for states that go beyond federal standards. Initial money for this planning/organization would be taken from a reduction in farm subsidies. In the private sector, a business organization is created that would be given preferential treatment for government contracting that adheres to “exemplary” standards on biodiversity (must meet fed/state obligations)

Dissent over level of citizens’ advisory committee and what the standards shall be.

Denver, Colorado

(table facilitator notes of recommendations)

Table 2 wants a national policy on biodiversity. The priorities should be as follows:

- Educating our public should be the primary focus of spending at this point - we should include biodiversity targets in public education for school age children, as well as in adult education through public campaigns. We would like to encourage direct government action as well as funding for private groups to spend on biodiversity education
- Maintaining and developing additional preserved lands
- Placing importance and value on biodiversity in future planning
- Supporting other nations in protecting their biodiversity.

Table 3

The US should NOT sign the treaty; it is the wrong time to launch a new, expensive program given budget constraints. Instead, there should be a national policy that adds biodiversity to the K-12 curriculum, developing public education programs with Public Service Announcements, and funding for scholarships for graduate education and research on biodiversity. There is a need for public education about the problems facing biodiversity on the planet.

Table 4

Though of course it is politically difficult, a push should be made by the UN and other actors to encourage the US to revisit and ratify the Convention on Biodiversity. The attempt itself could be enough to restart American interest in preserving biodiversity -- or at least would bring the subject back into public view.

Biodiversity initiatives should come from the highest levels of government -- both national and international. But if that is the sole source of action, such initiatives will certainly fail. Actors at all levels -- from small citizen groups to local governments to NGOs -- must be involved. World Wide Views on Biodiversity itself provides a model for such consciousness-raising. Very few participants in that effort come away without a greater appreciation for biodiversity preservation. How can other similar events be initiated? How can people be given the encouragement and opportunity to get involved?

Table 5

The recommendations formulated by the group were the following:

1. Implementation of biodiversity education in K - 12 schooling, with a special emphasis on the impact of human activity on biodiversity.
2. Expansion of protected lands and ocean areas.
3. Encouragement of agricultural practices which really do (not just nominally) sustain or even improve local biodiversity.
4. Empowerment of communities with respect to LOCAL decision-making regarding energy & resource policies.
5. Poverty must be addressed effectively and productively nationwide.

Dissenting Opinion:

A national biodiversity strategy should be rejected on the following grounds:

1. Any agreement regarding the actual issues can never be reached.
2. Personal freedoms should not be curtailed.

Table 6

We strongly urge the United States Senate to ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as soon as possible and to ensure that the United States sends a delegation to participate in the October, 2012, conference of the 11th Conference of Parties that will take place in India. We

strongly encourage the delegation to make a commitment to meet 50% of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020. The United States, as the world's only superpower, can play a key leadership role by implementing many of the Aichi targets and encourage other countries to take their cues from American leadership.

We also want the U.S. Department of Education to provide and earmark funding to provide teachers and schools from K-12 to educate and raise awareness about biodiversity and how to prevent biodiversity loss on the planet. Finally, our delegation encourages public television networks to produce public information ads to raise more awareness among the general population about issues surrounding biodiversity.

Table 7

- We recommend that the US government “take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity.” [CBD’s Strategic Plan]
- We recommend that defined goals with specific provisions and clear accountability measures be presented in order to facilitate this efficacy.
- On the subject of ***Biodiversity on Land***, we recommend the US expand the percentage of protected areas and create incentives for decreasing meat consumption. In addition we recommend that urban planning include planting native plants and increased urban greenery.
- On the subject of ***Biodiversity at Sea***, we recommend that the US government take a leadership role in cleaning up trash in coastal waters as well as high seas trash and further ensure the protection of important highly biodiverse coastal areas.
- We recommend that ***sustainability ratings*** be established or endorsed by the US government or affiliated institutions.
- On the subject of ***Education***, we recommend the establishment of mandatory classes for students and representatives on the subject and importance of biodiversity and related fields.
- We recommend that the US government ratify the Kyoto and Nagoya Protocol and uphold the provisions laid out in CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and Millennium Development Goals.

Table 8

To address biodiversity loss, we need to confront three areas: citizen knowledge and involvement, enforcing and expanding current laws, and creating incentives and subsidies for protection of important areas. Citizens need to be educated through public service announcements about the urgency of biodiversity loss and through improved curriculum in schools that engages students, and we need to encourage involvement in service programs and community gardens to help people reconnect with nature. We must strengthen and enforce the Endangered Species Act, Fish and Wildlife, and preservation of national forests, parks, and wilderness areas. Increasing funding for research in best practices for restoration and preservation will also improve our approach. We should provide incentives and subsidies at local, state, and federal levels for businesses and organizations that work to achieve goals of biodiversity preservation. When we identify the most endangered hot zones for biodiversity loss, we must ban use of these areas by people until we can restore their health.

Boston, Massachusetts

Table 1

Our national strategy for biodiversity should include the following elements:

1. Both school-based education and public awareness campaigns
2. Reduction of existing subsidies for consumption and encouragement of sustainable lifestyles
3. Encouragement of local food production and distribution and reduction of use of oil and other resources
4. Active promotion of economic growth that does not harm biodiversity

Table 2

Our strategy would include a biodiversity census in order to identify areas of greater concern. It would also incorporate a review of economic incentives, disincentives, and subsidies. We recommend additional disincentives for those who degrade biodiversity within the US. Further, our strategy aims to heighten awareness of biodiversity issues and conflicts. We hope to empower citizens and instill a type of environmental patriotism – not only through education, but also through citizen engagement. Lastly, we recommend enforcement of regulations through an advisory board.

Table 3

A US biodiversity strategy and action plan must include the following aspects:

- Leadership at every level
- Education for awareness, participation, and ownership:
 - Public
 - In schools
 - Articles
- Financial incentives to transition from current practices to ones that promote biodiversity:
 - Jobs
 - Transportation
 - Land use – current and future planning
 - Business practices
- Infrastructure to increase and facilitate biodiversity and environmental practices

Table 4

The recommendation of our group is to include biodiversity conservation as an organizing principle within all public, private, and governmental organizations. As the conceptual framework for decision-making, a policy that is simple and easily enforceable will be the most effective. This policy includes improved fiscal accountability and responsibility of private environmental actors. We would also include this policy within the common core standards of public education to increase the

education of biodiversity for future generations. Ways to accomplish this policy would be to implement fines, tax credits, and federal funding for environmental actors. We would also update the endangered species act to be consistent with our current biodiversity goals. Future investments would include domain certification for all teachers and future funding for the development of an engaged community of citizen scientists. Also, ratifying the CBD would encompass much of our policy proposal as an alternative to our own proposal.

Table 5

We believe that the US should adopt a national biodiversity strategy and action plan envisioned in Aichi Target 17 implemented by educational and outreach activities such as:

- Native Plant Exchanges,
- Land Trust Watershed Projects,
- Mentors for Science for Preschool to College Students,
- Garden Clubs,
- Puppet Shows and Stories,
- Community Groups,
- Outreach to All via Media, Social Media, PBS, Radio, Facebook, Youtube
- Sponsorships of Educational Forums

Table 6

Incorporate biodiversity and how its parts interrelate into our public education system through the core curriculum and critical thinking skills. In addition, the education should continue to be prioritized in the greater communities through public awareness days, similar to Earth Day. At the same time, these principles of biodiversity should be integrated into EPA's mission statement.

Dissent: No national policy because our 50 states have differing priorities, concerns, and needs.

Table 7

Create broad-based support for biodiversity goals in the U.S. through education programs, job training, promotion, and advertising.

Adopt selected Aichi targets and charge the EPA to take the lead in coordinating efforts of federal and state agencies as well as private business to achieve them through a combination of regulation and incentives.

Table 8

In support of a national biodiversity strategy, we agreed that education—early, consistent, and long-term—is an important place to start—education of both youth and adults. Utilizing structures already in place, we thought there could be a great collaboration between agencies like the EPA, National Parks Service, Endangered Species Act, etc. To foster innovation, government and private

grants could be made available to develop technology and research that furthers biodiversity efforts. Finally, there could be a biodiversity trading scheme similar to the carbon trading scheme.

Table 9

Educational Strategy—National campaign: using (National) Social Marketing.

- Education—Create awareness to
 - Public officials
 - High school students
 - Universities
 - The community
- Alliances with existing environmental NGO's (local, regional, and national) to use adds on TV and other media
- Funding by polluters using the tobacco model

Table 10

- 1) Education on the importance of biodiversity through public awareness campaigns and school curricula, including financial, cultural, and global impacts.
- 2) Define responsibility with an existing government agency to be accountable for preservation of biodiversity, and act as a liaison for public and private sectors.
- 3) Reallocate subsidies and symbiotically integrate biodiversity-friendly programs into industry

Table 11

We see the National Strategy to consist of a two-pronged approach on biodiversity.

- 1) From the top down in terms of setting national guidelines and information on campaigns of recycling, etc.
- 2) And bottom-up in terms of small, local, and achievable projects, especially directed to and with school age children.

Table 12

We at table 12 hereby declare that the U.S.

- Ratify the CBD and develop a biodiversity strategy at the national level
- Craft a high level guiding principle at national level, requiring all new policies to consider biodiversity at both state and national level
- Create a forum like today's to create opinions and recommendations for state policies. Membership should include public, private, and government participation. These state level forums should elect representation for a national level forum, to form opinions and recommendations to inform national policy decisions.
- Create metrics to measure and analyze impact of actions/policies
- Develop statewide biodiversity curriculum (with standards) for K-12 science education

Phoenix, Arizona

Table 1

Create a Policy that:

- Incorporates in curriculum K-12 with an emphasis in social responsibility.
- Developing activities and projects with the focus on biodiversity sustainability
- Sanctions, etc; for overfishing
- Create social awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the impact of our individual actions
- Create a national policy that regulates the compliance of these laws and compromise at a national and global level
 - Generate good strategies, to market biodiversity
- Businesses, government and citizens should be accountable, therefore all need to work together
- We ALL have to live together in this world and should work together to do the things that provide sustainability for the biodiversity

Table 2

Action plan priorities

- Urban gardens
- Meatless Mondays
- Home gardens
- Local sustainability
- Permaculture
- Make sustainability the focus (rather than only economics)

Table 3

Biodiversity action plan

- Implement biodiversity into the current school curriculum and across all subjects
- Create an incentive program for community biodiversity and involvement
 - Examples
 - Subsidies for alternative energies university service learning grants
- Collaboration
 - Local business
 - Local govt
 - Citizens
- Increase or charge the users of items affecting biodiversity
- Tax or fine businesses that outsource
- Consider taxing “necessary” resources
 - Electricity
 - Gas

Table 4

At the national level the U.S. Should sign international treaties on biodiversity and increase incentives that promote biodiversity and gradually decrease incentives that harm biodiversity. At the local level, there can be space for deliberation that links to state and federal levels, and include biodiversity research in state education standards as well as community outreach.

Table 5

Agrees there should be national strategy

- Education – a three prong approach
 - K-12 standards include biodiversity across the curriculum
 - Adult/community education informal (encourage grassroots movement)
 - Educate government functionaries on how they can include biodiversity into their policies.
- Local development
 - At the planning level have informed planning that includes and increases to limit local biodiversity loss of encourage native species growth of better manage local resources
- Federal Policy
 - Create national regulations that support BD
 - Ensure trade rules consider limiting biodiversity loss
 - Create a national policy surrounding land use that increases our overall land size of national protected areas.

Table 6

- Ratify CBD
- National policy
 - All states territories, nations within, including all citizens, entities doing business within the US
 - Support: global, national, local
 - Deals and goals established on national level and implemented at state and local levels
- Goals and research
 - Education on BD
 - Citizen stakeholders
 - Emphasize incentive and more than sanctions
 - Preservation of resources

Table 8

- Citizens should lead
- Get documents implemented at the state level, take to national level
- Reproduce the process in other states; invite other states not yet far along
- Educate the farms and ranchers, large (and owners developers (commercial)) on their activities and impacts on biodiversity

- Do grass roots education and organizing and develop written, detailed resolutions with support of experts in academia, professions and organizations.
- Implement educational content at the national and state levels
- Educational outreach at the community bodies and comm. (illegible) + vocal levels
- Then take it to education communications and state board of education

Table 9

The national strategy for biodiversity will consist of each state developing a unique plan of action on biodiversity that includes state and local government, citizens and prominent private sectors in the local area. The plan of action should include an implementation plan with specific targets and timelines each state will comply with mandatory annual reporting revision and review.

Table 10

Establish a National policy to protect and sustain, wherever possible, the species diversity within US borders. The importance of establishing a baseline is paramount. Federal agencies should cooperate to identify the biodiversity assets of our nation (i.e., an inventory of species and their eco-systems).

- Identify the class of species and eco-systems at risk
- Instruct the National Science Foundation to fund R&D program in biodiversity
- Instruct the USDA to develop an action plan on the impact of agricultural policies and practices on biodiversity
- Instruct Dept of Interior to collect data on species stress and loss, including fish and wildlife
- Instruct the Dept of Energy to lead a public awareness campaign on the benefits of biodiversity.

All Americans need to understand and adapt to the new appreciation for the importance of biodiversity, and consider consuming fewer resources.

Table 11

- Starting in K-6 educating on impacts of depleting biodiversity [illegible]
- Shift subsidies from monoculture AG to small, organic, multi-crop farms.
- Hold corporations and their executives responsible for the depletion of biodiversity
- Promote community forums to raise awareness of biodiversity issues
- Allocate funds to purchase land and make it a protected area
- Revitalize cities through urban agriculture and landfill diversion of food waste
- Exploring and promoting alternative fuels i.e. Hemp, solar, renewable wind, algae, geothermal

Table 12

- Strategies
 - Inform public about biodiversity- education strategies empirical information
 - Set a research target for documenting biodiversity

- Entice people to learn about why care for biodiversity. Why it's a threat in local communities.
- More nature reserves/ yearly targets.
- Establish new environmental protection laws/strengthen existing laws
- Establish harsher penalties for serial polluters
- Strategy for making agriculture industry more biodiversity friendly
- Strategy for making production systems less wasteful- more biodiversity friendly
- Action Plan
 - Use PSAs and social media
 - Video and documentaries on biodiversity (benefits and consequences of loss)
 - Use partnerships with PBS, XIGOS, e.g. Nature conservancy, National Geographic etc...
 - Inc. Financial support for biodiversity research to universities, organizations, e.g. NSF
 - Develop K-12 programs with environment education associations
 - Create a panel of experts to develop biodiversity needs and priorities
 - Local community support
 - Biodiversity energy star label
 - Positive financial incentives incorporated into farm support program

Table 13

- Shift
 - Views beyond one human life span
 - Views on connection (instead of individualism)
- Method
 - use social media
 - Town halls
- Shift
 - From monocultures to polycultures
 - (social media)
 - (Agriculture)
- Shift
 - (national policy)
 - From institutions focused on one kind of species to biodiversity
 - Equitable exchange information, techniques, technology, money organic/natural capital/resources

Table 14

- We the table of 14 have come together in consensus to address the issue of biodiversity. We have urged that a national policy is necessary to set basic requirements (for example 8% of land preserved, or x% of funds towards action and research by each state) but the direct actions need to be state specific with the input of the expert scientists.
- For our development aid that the United States gives out, we agree that a separate fund should be established to acknowledge our responsibility as the stewards for our world's oceans, forests, and life on this planet.

Table 15

- Goal- What

- Know appreciate build awareness and protect U.S. Species
- Connect national with [local, global strategy]
- Goal- How
 - Biodiversity curriculum led grade school
 - Biodiversity inventory- with civic science component to increase awareness and “buy in”
 - “Big read” - national network of local groups reading and conversing
 - Local points of contact- for valid info at species- coordinated across government levels
 - Policy and program inventory- national strategy earns what works and fills gaps

Table 16

- Actions education Policies
- NEPA
- CWA
- CAA
- ESA
- Research
 - Inventory
 - Threats
 - Existing resources
 - Technologies
 - Conservation
 - Clean energy
 - State laws
- Restoration
- Improved waste management
- Reduced toxicity technologies
- Educational program