

# NBCI Coordinated Implementation Program

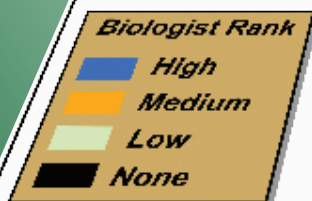
# S U M M A R Y



**FOCAL AREA**

**LANDSCAPE**

**REGION**



**NBCI 2.0**

## Key Elements

Each partner state will:

- 1) Select a focal area with the highest probability of building bobwhite habitat in 5 years. The habitat goal should be no less than 25% of the total area and the total amount of habitat must be at least 1,500 acres.
- 2) Select a reference area that is representative of “normal” prevailing land uses (row crop production, grazing or hay lands, etc.) in the region.
- 3) “Nest” the focal area within a larger focal landscape and within an even larger focal region (not required, but strongly encouraged).
- 4) Focus personnel and funding in the focal area over the next 10 years.
- 5) Track populations of bobwhite, songbirds, and habitat conditions within the focal area and reference area over the 10-year period.
- 6) Also over the 10-year period, work to build collaborative bird and habitat monitoring at the focal landscape and region levels. Target broad conservation programs to the larger focal geographies as well.

## Background

Northern bobwhite restoration may represent the single greatest wildlife restoration challenge state wildlife agencies have ever faced. Past wildlife restoration successes focused on trans-locating wildlife to existing habitat and protecting them so populations could recover. White-tailed deer, wild turkey, elk, otters, antelope, and host of other species followed this paradigm. The major exception was the success of North American waterfowl. Harvest regulation was a key part of that success, but habitat protection and enhancement also paved the way for population growth.

The National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC) routinely examined the waterfowl community for strategies to advance bobwhite restoration. Their organizational structure and connection with habitat provided a template for the bobwhite community to follow. Yet the bobwhite task is much different and more complicated. Federal law and international treaties with a clear leader identified (US Fish and Wildlife Service) foster waterfowl collaboration. Unlike bobwhites, waterfowl are migratory and can travel from patches of habitat scattered across the flyways. The value of working together was easily recognized as the breeding grounds produced birds for all the partners across the flyway.

*‘This collaborative program sets the framework for making the impossible possible ... by working across state lines at levels never seen before in habitat and species conservation. And the time to act is now!’*

On the other hand, bobwhites are resident game birds solely managed under the sovereignty of the states. Collaboration is purely voluntary with no laws in place formulating compromise and action. The quail community had to build its own leaders (NBTC and the NBCI Management Board). Bobwhite habitat must be well connected across broad landscapes. Decades of state habitat projects have demonstrated the folly of scattered habitat efforts. The value of collaboration must be sold and was not always inherently obvious to all parties. “Daunting” best describes the effort to restore bobwhite.

An unprecedented restoration challenge must be met with an unprecedented collaborative effort. In 2002, the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) catalyzed the future of bobwhite restoration. It brought states together with clear conservation targets. As any first step, it was monumental, but it was far from perfect. It favored a more piecemeal approach to the task, with states encouraged to build “step-down” plans based on Bird Conservation Region habitat and bobwhite covey targets. After more than a decade, progress has been limited.

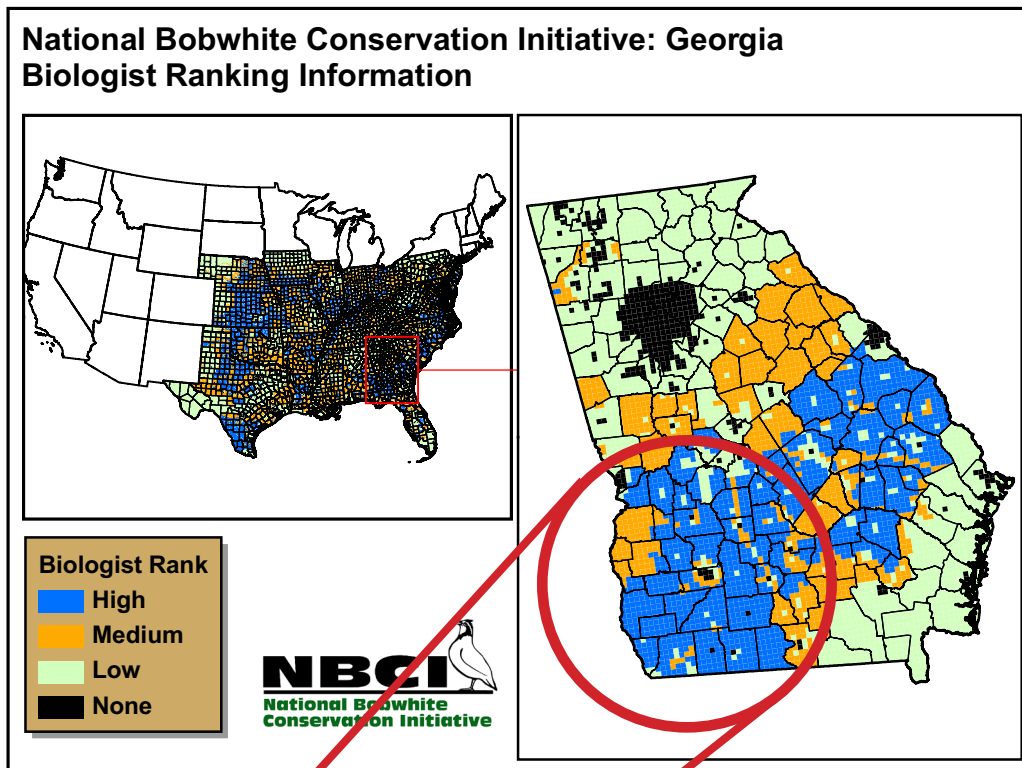
The revised NBCI (2.0) took collaboration to yet another level, solidifying and simplifying the task for state partners. Range-wide workshops involved over 600 biologists charged with mapping key areas and opportunities for bobwhite restoration. The original NBCI did a great job of providing big picture goals, but it lacked a clear description of where to put habitat. The NBCI 2.0 standardized on-the-ground targets across the range putting all states on equal footing.

Still, the task of stepping down the NBCI 2.0 to the ground remained too daunting for many states. State agencies lacked the human and financial resources to manage all “high” and “medium” restoration opportunities across the bobwhite range. Yet another barrier for bobwhite restoration!

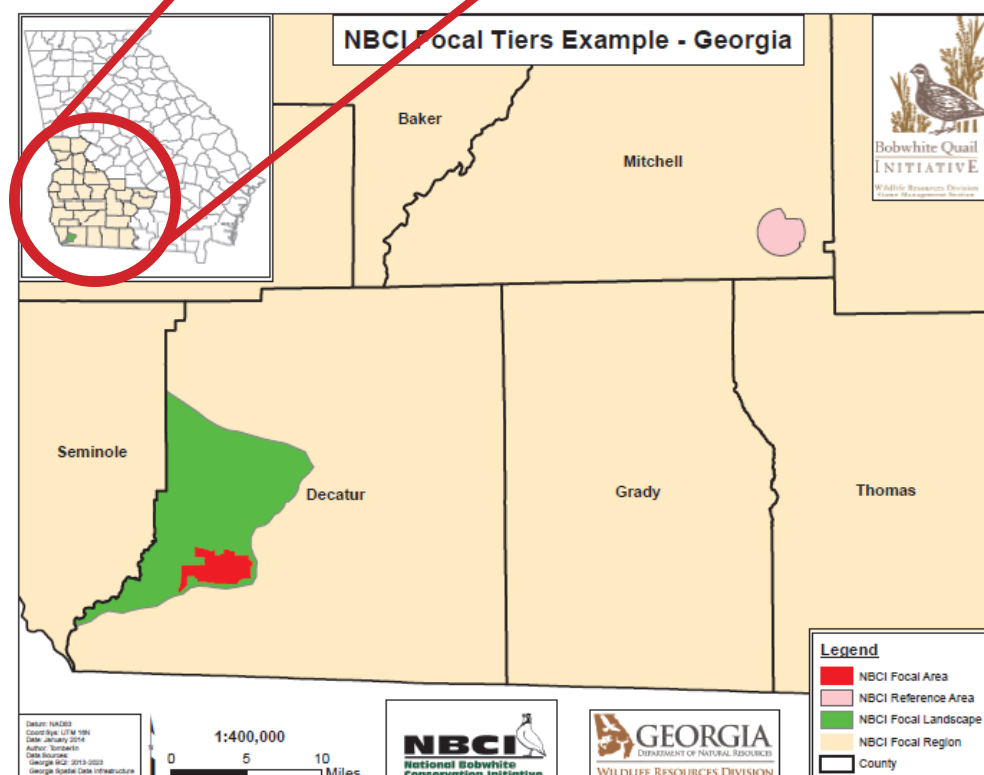
The NBTC rose to the challenge, developing the NBCI Coordinated Implementation Plan (CIP), founded on the vision that the power of collaboration can take modest state-based commitments and leverage them across the country to yield powerful success stories.

The first phase of success is proving that bobwhite can be restored through well managed habitat across the range. The CIP outlines a course of action that minimizes a state’s investment in bobwhite restoration while maximizing the value

# From NBCI 2.0 Habitat Potential Analysis Maps ...



... To a methodological  
roadmap for success.



of the product.

- It calls for each state to create at least one NBCI focal and reference area.
- It encourages states to identify focal areas within larger landscapes and regions with high potential for bobwhite restoration.
- It provides guidance on how to identify focal projects to minimize effort.
- Specific coordinated monitoring procedures are outlined to guarantee maximum value from a state's investment and consistency across the range.
- Most importantly, it will afford an unprecedented opportunity to learn about and adapt 21st century bobwhite management.

The CIP is part of a "strategic habitat conservation" approach. NBCI 2.0 provides a foundation of biological planning and conservation design, agencies and partners guide on-the-ground management, researchers answer difficult questions, and the CIP providing feedback on quail and grassland bird population response. The CIP increases credibility of

each state's quail management program, positively affecting the perceptions of resource managers, administrators and constituents, including hunters and birders.

Implementation will soon become NBTC's focus, driven by high levels of collaboration through NBCI staff. Work will begin at the focal area level with an eye toward scaling up in the years ahead. The CIP was the result of extensive input through members of the NBTC over 2 years of work. It will be up to the NBTC, the NBCI Management Board, state wildlife agencies and their conservation partners to commit to this new era of bobwhite restoration.

The momentum required to spawn the environmental renaissance required to bring back bobwhites can only be accomplished through a shocking array of successes across numerous states. The bobwhite restoration challenge is too great for any one state to do alone. This collaborative program sets the framework for making the impossible possible ... by working across state lines at levels never seen before in habitat and species conservation. And the time to act is now!

### How can you help?

- Engage your state wildlife agency, challenge them to participate in the CIP, and offer to help the cause any way you can.
- Join those private conservation organizations supporting the CIP and demand funding investments are targeted toward focal areas (even if it's not in your backyard).
- Commit to learn about bobwhite. Few landowners and bobwhite enthusiasts truly understand what factors make up a quail's "home".
- Tell the bobwhite story to friends and family. In today's society, bobwhite habitat is often considered "messy" or "unkept." Local champions for the cause can begin to change the culture of "clean" land management.
- Tune in to and engaged in national conservation and agricultural policy. The future of bobwhites will depend on visionary environmental policy.
- Recognize that bobwhite restoration is far more expansive than birds. Grasslands represent one of the world's most endangered natural places. Habitat enhancement will benefit water, soil, and air quality; it will re-define a land ethic and a spirit of conservation, leaving the land better than we found it.

For more information about the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, visit  
[www.bringbackbobwhites.org](http://www.bringbackbobwhites.org)  
or check us out on Facebook, YouTube and SlideShare.

