

Launching the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team!

Abigail Ertel, Katie Koch, and Bill Rapai

No longer on the brink of extinction, the Kirtland's Warbler is well on its way to long-term sustainability. That population growth is allowing us to rethink Kirtland's Warbler conservation strategies and develop new goals and techniques to ensure conservation well into the future.

Therefore, on March 31, 2016, we marked the transition from the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team to the launch of a new Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team as the organization that will develop and guide strategy into the future.

Since March, the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team Steering Committee has been working to develop a full conservation team as the coordinating and information-sharing body for future sustainability of the species. We have been making definitive movement forward on key strategies of the Kirtland's Warbler Initiative, which is the program that has been put in place to successfully transition the species from recovery to long-term sustainability.

In March, seventeen members of the steering team participated in a day-long meeting at Camp Grayling that focused on:

- ✓ Generating a vision for Kirtland's Warbler (KIWA) Conservation.
- ✓ Identifying all potential elements in a fully developed KIWA Conservation Team.
- ✓ Identifying the various avenues for engaging with the broader KIWA Conservation Community.
- ✓ Agreeing on the purpose, role, and responsibilities of Steering Committee Members.
- ✓ Identifying and prioritizing milestones for achieving functionality of the KIWA Conservation Team by March 2017.



Wrapping up a great first meeting of the Initial KIWA Steering Committee (photo credit: Jill Scarzo)

What's Ahead for the Steering Committee?

The steering committee has been hard at work since its March meeting, conducting monthly conference calls and focusing on the following tasks:

- Reviewing recommendations from the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team (summer 2016)
- Identifying subcommittees and filling positions (summer – fall 2016)
- Developing a Conservation Team charter to guide decision making, priorities and planning needs (summer 2016)
- Planning and hosting a Spring 2017 Kirtland's Warbler Workshop open to the entire conservation community (fall 2016 – spring 2017)

How Can You Become Involved?

- Sign up for our new email distribution list
 - Provide your updated email/contact information to Abigail Ertel (abby@huronpines.org) and Katie Koch (katie_koch@fws.gov)
- Participate in our Fall 2016 interactive webinar (introducing the subcommittees and ways to “plug in”)
 - Notification will be widely distributed in early September
- Watch for announcements about a Kirtland's Warbler Workshop in Spring 2017

For more information, to ask questions, or share updates on Kirtland's Warbler conservation efforts YOU are involved in, contact the following:

- Abigail Ertel, Community Program Lead, Huron Pines, (989) 448-2293, ext. 14, abby@huronpines.org



Kirtland's Warbler found during the 2015 UP Census (photo credit: Katie Koch)