



ASSOCIATION *of*  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

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# Association HQ

## Highlights Quarterly

Activities of the Association  
for January, February & March 2009



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# Executive Director Notes

Are we relevant? This is a question that any organization, young or old, must constantly ask itself. I expect many organizations might have a difficult time answering this question honestly for fear of what it means for their future. However, at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, I think we can honestly say that the work we do is as relevant today as it was in 1902 when this organization was founded.

Unlike the bi-weekly *Directors' Line* that updates directors on current and pending issues, this document (*Association HQ*) is a summary of what this Association has been working on for the last quarter. As you may expect, the focus of this edition will be the work heading up to and culminating with the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March.

Following this narrative is an overview of some of the major issues and actions that the Association committees addressed at the North American meeting last month. It is far from a complete summary of all the issues our committees are currently considering but rather, a "quick and dirty" review of some of the major issues and the impact of these issues on the work of state fish and wildlife agencies. I hope that you will take a moment to review this summary and then ask yourself the question of whether or not you believe this Association is relevant to the work of your agency. And while I hope the answer is yes, I hope you will let me know if you disagree.

As an aside, I would like to address the continued functioning of our Association committees. As you know, our committees meet formally twice each year at the North American Conference and at the Association's Annual Meeting. State attendance and participation at the recently completed North American was down 30% from the previous year. State budget reductions and travel freezes are no doubt to blame.

However, as an Association, we need to figure out how our committees will continue to function through what we hope is a temporary interruption and not a long term trend in reduced meeting attendance. Ultimately the work of the committees and the products they produce will suffer without the diversity of multiple state perspectives. We hope that the summary below may help in your efforts to support travel for key staff to attend future AFWA committee meetings.

As always, thanks for your continued support of and participation in your Association.

*Matt Hogan*

**► Issues & Outcomes from the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference**

COMMITTEE	ISSUE	ACTION	IMPACT TO STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
Fisheries & Water Resources Policy	Reauthorization of Wallop-Breaux	1) Finalize a position 2) Continue to engage in collaborative discussions with federal and NGO stakeholders	Continued apportionment of approximately \$400 million to state agencies for fisheries conservation work
Agricultural Conservation	Expiration of Conservation Reserve Program acres	Prepare and send a letter to USDA requesting that landowners be provided a contract extension or the opportunity to re-enroll	Loss of approximately 4 million acres of Conservation Reserve Program land if no action taken
Climate Change / Teaming With Wildlife	Incorporating climate change into State Wildlife Action Plans	Create recommendations/ guidance document for SWAP coordinators	Efficiently modify SWAPs to include climate change to qualify for billions in potential adaptation funding
Legislative & Federal Budget	Congressional legislative strategy	Identify, refine and focus a legislative strategy	Advocate state agency interests before Congress to secure passage of favorable fish and wildlife policy and ensure existing and continued funding
International Relations	CITES impact on U.S. fur trade	1) Monitor CITES proposals 2) Gather feedback on proposals affecting state programs for furbearer, turtle and paddlefish management 3) Synthesize feedback, present and advocate for state positions on proposals, resolutions and decisions for CITES CoP15 4) Develop methods to relieve states of applying for CITES tags to bobcat pelts	Ensure that CITES does not impact the ability of state agencies to manage fish and wildlife
Fisheries & Water Resources Policy	Fish stocking/hatchery operations and federal NEPA/ESA	Conduct research and develop recommendations for consistency with national/regional policy guidance regarding fish stocking/hatchery operations	Ensure state fish stocking programs operate in compliance with NEPA/ESA
Fish & Wildlife Health	State agency involvement in APHIS-VS regulations regarding fish and wildlife disease	Continue to refine a process allowing government to meaningfully involve state agency staff in the drafting and development of USDA APHIS-VS rules and regulations relating to diseases	New USDA-VS rules regarding fish and wildlife disease consider state agency perspectives

COMMITTEE	ISSUE	ACTION	IMPACT TO STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
Teaming With Wildlife	Teaming With Wildlife Act	Refine legislative strategies to secure passage of the Teaming With Wildlife Act	Legislation would provide states with \$350M to implement State Wildlife Action Plans
Threatened & Endangered Species Policy	Climate change and ESA interface	Produce a draft issue paper analyzing the relationship between climate-affected species and listing obligations under the ESA	Ensure state agency management authority of climate-affected species
Federal & Tribal Relations	Fish and wildlife management in FS and BLM Wilderness Areas	1) Ensure implementation of the 2006 amended MOU 2) Continue to train federal land managers in the use of the minimum requirements decision process	Improved facilitation of state agency management objectives on federal lands
Wind Energy & Transmission	Wind Energy Incentives in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) increasing the pace of wind energy development	Develop a white paper to consider how the Production Tax Credit and Investment Tax Credit could impact the development of wind energy	Help states ensure wind development does not negatively impact wildlife
Wind Energy & Transmission	State agency involvement in transmission siting and development has been limited; recommendation by wind energy and solar associations that siting and permitting are accomplished at the federal level	Produce a draft guidance document on how state agencies could engage in transmission development	Protect state conservation authority Engage and cooperate in transmission development discussion
Agricultural Conservation	Agricultural producers' use of invasive species for biofuels crops and processes that are potentially hazardous and unsustainable to fish, wildlife and their habitats as well as other natural resources	Develop an Association Position Statement - <i>Biofuels Impacts on Fish and Wildlife</i> - for approval at Annual Meeting	Enable states to address the potential loss of native habitats across the country through conversion to energy crops
Amphibian & Reptile Subcommittee / Law Enforcement	Losses of amphibians and reptiles due to commercial harvest including unregulated or illegal take	Develop an Amphibian & Reptile Regulatory Summit to discuss associated management challenges and to formulate solutions	Address challenges and formulate solutions to manage states' amphibian and reptile losses

COMMITTEE	ISSUE	ACTION	IMPACT TO STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
Bird Conservation	International effort to conserve state-priority migratory bird species on their wintering grounds in Latin America and the Caribbean through the Southern Wings Program	Approved Southern Wings Program	Funding mechanism now available to interested states to partner with other state and federal agencies and NGOs to implement conservation projects
Invasive Species / Science & Research	Resource managers must make decisions about invasive species management in a scientifically defensible manner	1) Held an interactive workshop -- <i>Decision Making in the Face of Scientific Uncertainty: Adaptive Management of Invasive Species</i> 2) Develop similar workshop on climate change	Provided state agencies with tools and real-world examples on the structured decision making/adaptive management process Supports professional fish and wildlife management
Energy & Wildlife Policy	Balancing energy development and fish, wildlife and habitat conservation	Advocate to the DOI Secretary the utility of a "pilot office" concept to co-house state agency staff in a BLM office	Improved federal decision-making, especially for natural gas, oil and renewable energy development
Legal	State agency jurisdiction over wildlife in state statutes	Recommended proposed statutory language to be used by states to ensure wildlife is covered under the public trust doctrine or is considered a public trust resource	Support state fish and wildlife management jurisdiction Strengthen the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
Legal	Weak state recreational trespass laws	Draft proposed statutory language to solidify state recreational trespass statutes, which have been watered down by the courts	Enhance ability of state agencies to maintain access for hunters, anglers and wildlife recreation
National Grants	Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) 2010 cycle	1) Selected 7 NCNs for the 2010 cycle 2) Finalized schedule for soliciting proposals and funding projects 3) Expanded selection team for evaluating letters of intent	Enhance states' ability to address highest priorities and large-scale conservation issues
Wildlife Resource Policy	Feral swine management	Develop new databases regarding state management authority and feral swine management practices	Protect and support states' management authority for fish and wildlife
Education/Outreach & Diversity / Leadership & Professional Development	Gaps in academic preparation and the skills required for professionals entering the fish and wildlife agency workforce	1) Develop entry level professional competencies 2) Prepare a letter from the Association to universities/colleges	Better prepared candidates for state jobs Cost savings in providing on-the-job training
Education/Outreach & Diversity	Organization and scope of Information & Education departments within state agencies	1) Refine and distribute white paper about I&E 2) Create assessment tool 3) Produce "best practices" model	Improved effectiveness of I&E within state agencies

## ► Changes in Member Agencies

*The following changes in fish and wildlife agency leadership have occurred in the past three months:*

**Marc Miller** appointed new director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on February 5, 2009.

**Ed Carter** was named the new Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency effective April 1, 2009.

Effective April 1, 2009 **Dave England** has been appointed Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division, Department of Sustainable Resource Development until a permanent replacement is named. ◀

## Fish & Wildlife Funding

### ► 111th Congress Report

The 111<sup>th</sup> Congress convened in early January at a quick pace with the Senate confirming several of the President's Cabinet – including Secretary Salazar for the Department of the Interior, and Secretary Vilsack for the Department of Agriculture – before the Inauguration. Congress followed about a month later with passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (HR1) designed to stimulate the sluggish economy. The President sent a framework (Department level) FY2010 budget with initiatives to Congress in early February, but the budget detail is not expected until late April. Congress has already started hearings on many initiatives of significant interest to the Association including a comprehensive energy bill and a comprehensive climate change bill. ◀

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### ► American Recovery & Reinvestment Act

In January, state agencies quickly identified nearly \$400 million in shovel-ready projects that could create approximately 10,000 jobs as part of an economic stimulus package. To help with direct outreach efforts to Members of Congress, the Association produced a two-page white paper entitled "Investing in State-based Fish & Wildlife Conservation: Stimulating the Economy, Creating Green Jobs, Conserving Species & Ecosystems."

As a result, Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM) drafted an amendment that included \$50 million for State Wildlife Grants. However, a compromise was reached before the amendment could be voted on the floor of the Senate and State Wildlife Grants funding was not included in the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (HR 1).

In spite of advocacy efforts by the Association, key state fish and wildlife directors and our colleagues in the conservation community, HR1 did not include any direct funding to the state fish and wildlife agencies.

There is, however, a significant amount of funding in the law for conservation and environmental programs. The federal natural resource, land and agriculture agencies are recipients of a significant amount and state directors have been encouraged to work with these agencies in their states to partner on projects that can conserve, enhance and restore fish, wildlife and their habitats.

Similarly, state forestry, transportation and environmental quality agencies are receiving significant stimulus funds and the state fish and wildlife directors should be working with those respective agencies to bring projects to them that will conserve and restore habitat while meeting the other objectives of the respective programs grants.

In the final legislation, more than \$3 billion was included in the bill that will directly benefit wildlife conservation.

Following is a list of funding amounts by agency:

Environmental Protection Agency	\$6.0B
Army Corps of Engineers	\$4.975B
US Forest Service	\$1.15B
Bureau of Reclamation	\$1.0B
National Park Service	\$735M
Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$340M
Bureau of Land Management	\$320M
US Fish & Wildlife Service	\$280M
Federal Highway Administration	\$240M
Department of Commerce	\$230M ◀

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## ▶ FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations

Congress concluded the FY2009 spending bills with a massive omnibus covering 11 appropriations subcommittee bills. In general, the federal natural resource, land and agriculture agencies received modest increases over FY2008 enacted, with the exception of USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services, which realized a 9% reduction. There are no statutory caps on Farm Bill conservation programs, meaning that USDA can spend up to the authorized level on all of the programs. In times of economic distress, these modest increases to conservation programs reflect renewed support for national conservation programs and their value to the nation. ◀

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## ► State Wildlife Grants Funding

The FY09 Omnibus Appropriations Act included \$75 million for the State Wildlife Grants Program, which provided \$7 million for a tribal grants program and \$5 million for a state grants program.

For FY10, Senators Blanche Lincoln (AR) and Mike Crapo (ID) circulated a Senate Dear Colleague letter and Congressmen Mike Thompson (CA), Ron Kind (MO), Frank LoBiondo (NJ) and Adam Putnam (FL) sent a similar letter to House Members. Both seek \$85 million for State Wildlife Grants in FY10. ◀

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## ► FY2010 President's Budget

In February, President Obama released a framework or "Cabinet-level with priorities" FY2010 budget with agency, program and line-item details to follow likely in late April. Although specific detail remains sparse, there are several conservation initiatives that reflect the Association's priorities such as increases to the NAWCA grants; increases to marine fisheries surveys and inventories; and robust funding for Farm Bill conservation programs.

There is \$40 million in the budget request to assist states in implementing adaptation programs for fish, wildlife and habitats affected by climate change; but no detail regarding delivery or other components. There is also \$50 million requested to assist states with hunter and angler recruitment and retention programs; but with no details yet as well. In addition, the President's budget sets aside money under protected budget status for both the USFS and BLM to respond to catastrophic fires without having to cannibalize other funds appropriated for conservation, etc. The Association has scheduled its annual federal agency budget review for May 11-12. ◀

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## ► Fire Suppression Funding Solution

The Association has long recognized and supported the need for an off-budget solution to catastrophic fire suppression costs, which, particularly in the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), have increasingly consumed more and more of its discretionary budget. Funds are borrowed from other accounts to pay for fire suppression and must await emergency supplemental appropriations to back-fill those borrowed funds.

As a result of this borrowing, significant programs such as fisheries, wildlife, watersheds, threatened and endangered species, and state and private forestry are compromised. The Obama Administration is supportive of a protected-budget solution and the Association has joined with several dozen forest industry groups, conservation organizations and environmental groups to advocate a solution.

In late March, the House passed HR1404 (the FLAME Act) by a wide bipartisan vote of 412 to 3. This bill would provide off-budget supplemental funding to the USFS and BLM to deal with catastrophic fires. The Senate has yet to take up a bill.

The President's FY2010 framework budget proposes an alternative solution by modernizing the 10-year average cost of catastrophic fire suppression and requesting \$1 billion-plus in the budget for the USFS for catastrophic fire suppression. The budget request also makes available several million dollars in a contingency fund to USFS and BLM to use if their appropriated funds for catastrophic fire suppression are exhausted. It appears that a resolution to this long-standing issue is well within reach. ◀

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## ▶ Farm Bill

### **New Leadership at the Helm of USDA**

On inaugural Tuesday, Governor Tom Vilsack was confirmed as the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (USDA), which the Association supported. On March 24, 2009, Secretary Vilsack named Dave White as chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A career conservationist with NRCS, he has provided technical and management expertise in Missouri, South Carolina, Washington, D.C. and Montana, where he served as State Conservationist from 2002 to 2008. White served in the Senate Agriculture Committee where he helped craft the Conservation Title for both the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills. He also served on the White House Task Force for Livable Communities during the Clinton Administration. White was named Acting Chief of NRCS on January 21, 2009. ◀

### **USDA Begins Implementation of 2008 Farm Bill**

During the last quarter of 2008, USDA began implementing the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) by issuing rules on enacted provisions and programs. However, there was a rush to publish interim final rules for conservation programs in the Federal Register before the Presidential Inauguration. Consequently, USDA successfully published seven (7) interim final rules the week of January 12, with most comments due the week of the North American Conference, March 16, 2009.

Comments were coordinated, compiled and drafted to reflect a national perspective and submitted by the Association on the following programmatic rules that affect state fish and wildlife agencies and/or the fish, wildlife and habitats they manage: State Technical Committees; Wetland Reserve Program; Healthy Forest Reserve Program; Regional Equity; Grassland Reserve Program; Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program; Technical Service Providers; a provision on farm program payment limitations and payment eligibility; and the Sodsaver provision (which modifies the Federal Crop Insurance Program).

Comment deadlines for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program were extended until April 17, 2009. The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Incentive Program rule was published on March 10, 2009, and comments were due by April 8, 2009. To date, no rules have been published on the Conservation Stewardship Program (formerly the Conservation Security Program) or the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). According to Farm Service Agency staff, the agency is in the process of conducting NEPA reviews prior to publishing Conservation Reserve Program rules.

The Association encourages all states to participate in submitting comments and helping draft a national response to conservation program rules that promote better on-the-ground program implementation for fish, wildlife and their habitats. The USDA evaluates problems and needed changes in the rules based on the number of individual comments received. Jen Mock Schaeffer, the Association's Farm Bill Coordinator, is coordinating the compilation of comments and responses for all these rules. If you have any questions or wish to receive a copy of the Association's comments, please contact Jen at [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org). ◀

#### **Agricultural Conservation Committee Action Items at the North American**

*BUSINESS MEETING ACTION: The Association to send a letter to USDA Secretary, Tom Vilsack, asking him to reduce habitat and carbon losses by supporting one-year extensions for CRP contracts expiring in September 2009.*

During his plenary remarks at the North American Conference in March, Secretary Tom Vilsack expressed his support for a strong CRP as part of our nation's agricultural landscape. Currently, almost four million acres of land enrolled in the CRP are due to expire September 30, 2009, and for the first time in history, USDA is not providing either a one-year extension for those contracts or the opportunity to re-enroll lands through a general sign-up.

Considering the drought, floods, increased production costs and decreased crop prices, many landowners would like the option of keeping their marginal lands enrolled in CRP but have no way to do so. State directors voted to send a letter to Secretary Tom Vilsack expressing the need and request for such action by USDA that would provide this conservation option for landowners. Staff contact: Jen Mock Schaeffer, [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org).

*COMMITTEE MEETING ACTION: The Committee submits its white paper and position statement for Association review: Impact of Biofuels*

Biofuels are a potentially important renewable energy source, especially for fuels used for transportation. The technology offers promise for supplying a significant portion of renewable energy portfolios for transportation fuels that are intended to reduce both conventional pollutants and greenhouse gas and carbon-based emissions.

The public and many decision-makers generally believe that biofuels are environmentally benign or even beneficial, without considering the significant detriments these fuels can present for fish and wildlife resources. The potential risks to fish and wildlife resources from biofuels need to be more clearly understood, and addressed.

State fish and wildlife agencies should be at the forefront of cooperative development and implementation of measures at regional, state and local levels to characterize, avoid, minimize and effectively mitigate the impacts of biofuels energy development on natural resources.

The Association's Agricultural Conservation Committee through its Biofuels Working Group has developed a white paper and position statement, which are slated for a vote and potential adoption at the Association's 2009 Annual Meeting. These documents have been forwarded to state directors for input and comments are due to Jen Mock Schaeffer by May 15, 2009.

The Biofuels Working Group will continue to engage industry, farmer and energy groups on these issues and to address concerns of the state fish and wildlife agencies. ◀

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## ► Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund

The *Angling and Boating Alliance* is an informal partnership of national recreational boating and fishing organizations, industry representatives, and state boating safety and natural resource agencies that is focused on securing reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. The work of the Alliance is guided by a Steering Committee comprised of 13 organizations and Ron Regan represents the Association's interests on it. The Association has had the benefit of a previously endorsed set of consensus principles with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators to guide its engagement of the issues.

The Steering Committee for the Angling and Boating Alliance began meeting last fall and continued to meet regularly during the past quarter. A great deal of time was spent reviewing revenue estimates, which are not very encouraging in this economic climate – the total dollars available to the states for Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) projects may decrease as much as \$50 million early in the reauthorization cycle before showing signs of a rebound in 2012.

The Steering Committee also expended considerable effort on discussing the desired amount of administrative funding for the Coast Guard and the USFWS and related set-aside costs and the allocation model (i.e., off-the-top versus a straight percentage like the program disbursements). There have been a variety of other issues on the table concerning the Clean Vessel Act; the Clean Marina Act; the Boating Infrastructure Grant program; industry oversight of state use of SFR funds; and linking SFR apportionments to recreational fishing closures for non-scientific reasons.

The Steering Committee has recently completed its deliberations, resulting in a consensus position supported by each of the member organizations. A full report will be forthcoming and work will begin on drafting the legislation to be included in the Transportation Reauthorization bill scheduled for Congressional action this year. ◀

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## ► Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

The Neotrop Act is a competitive, matching grants program that supports public-private partnerships carrying out projects in the U.S., Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean that promote the long-term conservation of Neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee, introduced bipartisan legislation to boost funding for the existing Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA). Cosponsors of the bill include Senators Mike Crapo (R-ID), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Bill Nelson (D-FL), and Joseph Lieberman (I-CT). The Senate bill, S. 690, reauthorizes the NMBCA, but at significantly higher levels. ◀

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## ► Teaming With Wildlife Act

On March 19, Senators Tim Johnson (SD), Debbie Stabenow (MI), Jon Tester (MT) and John Thune (SD) introduced the Teaming With Wildlife Act ([S655](#)). This bill seeks \$350 million for 2011-2016 for state fish and wildlife agencies to implement State Wildlife Action Plans. The source of the revenues is \$175 million through the Outer Continental Shelf Act and \$175 million from the Mineral Leasing Act. The money would be deposited into the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration subaccount. States and their partners currently are working on securing co-sponsors. ◀

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## Legislation/Policy

### ► Omnibus Public Lands Bill

By a vote of 285 to 140, the House on March 25 passed the Omnibus Public Lands bill, HR146, and the President subsequently signed it into law. The Association and, with a couple of exceptions, all fishing and hunting conservation organizations, supported passage. This concludes a two-plus year long and difficult process through two Congresses in which the bill traded back and forth between the House and Senate.

The bill is an accumulation of more than 150 individual public land bills that, among other provisions, creates three new NPS units and one National Monument; designates wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers in several states; protects the Wyoming Front Range National Forest lands from energy development; and more. The bill also authorizes the establishment of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) under the BLM, which had been established by Secretarial order, and explicitly in the statute affirms the authority of the state fish and wildlife agencies to continue to manage fish and wildlife on these NLCS lands. It also assures continued access to these lands for hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting.

While as in any piece of legislation of this magnitude there are some warts, overall this bill significantly benefits fish and wildlife conservation and fishing, hunting and wildlife-dependent recreation. ◀

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### ► Comprehensive Energy Legislation

The House and Senate Leadership and President Obama have prioritized a national energy policy, including a Renewable Portfolio Standard and a comprehensive climate change program, as must-do legislation. While the Congressional leadership are promoting one bill to include all of these initiatives, it seems more likely that the component parts will move independently, while acknowledging that all three components are a vital part of any national energy policy.

Association staff has initiated discussions with the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee on a set of recommendations for better balancing energy development on public lands with conservation of fish, wildlife and their habitats. The Association approved these recommendations, originating from the Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee, at the September 2008 Annual meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York. Both Congressional Committees have been provided with those recommendations.

Pursuant to these recommendations, **Joanna Prukop**, Secretary of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, and Chair of the Association's Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee, testified on March 17 before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee with recommendations for improving the balance between energy development on public lands and providing for conservation of fish, wildlife and their habitats on those lands. Further, **John Baughman**, former Association Executive Vice-President, reflected on overarching fish and wildlife conservation goals and priorities on March 3 before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife, giving contextual overview of the priority conservation needs and goals facing Congress, the Administration, the state fish and wildlife agencies and the conservation community.

Both testimonies addressed the need to achieve a better balance between increased use of our domestic energy sources and conservation of fish, wildlife and their habitats. Increased use of domestic energy sources both traditional (as natural gas and oil) and renewable (as wind and solar) sources is vital to enhance the nation's energy security; but it must be done in ways that avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to fish, wildlife and their habitats. We also continue to advocate that an energy-derived source of funds is appropriate and necessary to assist the states in implementing comprehensive fish and wildlife programs that are consistent with energy development and other landscape-level uses of the land. ◀

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## ▶ **Climate Change**

There appears to be increasing support for a cap and trade regulatory protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which the President supports; but it still faces a long and tortuous road in Congress. While the House ultimately will likely have the votes to pass a cap and trade bill, it will take some time to raise many House Members' comfort level with it. And, the Senate clearly does not have 60 votes for a cap and trade bill. However, the House is taking the lead in drafting and moving a comprehensive climate change bill with the goal of having bills reported out of the several Committees of jurisdiction to the House floor by Memorial Day.

The Association continues to advocate that a portion of climate-derived revenue—most likely from the auction of carbon credits under a cap and trade regimen—be made available through direct funding (not subject to annual appropriations) for state and federal natural resource adaptation programs to remediate the effects of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats.

The House Energy and Environment Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on March 25, the first Congressional hearing specifically on natural resource adaptation needs, to take testimony on adaptation needs in response to climate change.

While the Association was not an invited witness, we submitted a statement for the record, making the case for climate-derived dedicated funding for state and federal natural resource adaptation programs.

Congressman Dingell (MI) made a strong case at the hearing for the need for this funding, pointing to draft legislative language in his discussion draft from the last Congress (which provision the Association supported) for funding natural resource adaptation programs.

Most recently, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Waxman released a comprehensive climate bill Discussion Draft containing the natural resources adaptation program construct that we support. We continue to work assiduously with the Hill and through state directors, and with the fish and wildlife conservation community, to ensure that any comprehensive climate change bill contains dedicated funding for state and federal natural resource adaptation programs. ◀

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## ▶ **Wild Horse and Burro Act Amendments**

On March 3, Larry Voyles, Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, testified before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands concerning HR1018, which would amend the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

Larry reflected on the concerns of the state fish and wildlife agencies with provisions of the bill which would expand wild horse and burro populations to all public land (defined as both BLM and USFS), and greatly complicate management of wild horse and burro herds by limiting the methods by which the federal agencies can conduct removals. These changes, if enacted, would have devastating impacts to the long-term sustainability of fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. State directors are encouraged to let their U.S. House Members know of the states' serious concerns with this bill. ◀

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## ▶ **National Fish Habitat Conservation Act**

The National Fish Habitat Conservation Act is still a work in progress. The Board Chair and the Legislation Team met with representatives of the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service to discuss concerns and possible improvements to the legislation. Final staff review by Senate and House sponsors continues, following which a bill will be introduced this Congress. We expect a Senate bill in April, with a Committee hearing to follow soon. The House bill will likely also be introduced this spring. ◀

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## ► Other Congressional Legislative Initiatives

The Association is working with the Hill on several other fish and wildlife conservation bills, some of which have been introduced, and some of which are still in draft.

With respect to several introduced bills, in summary, the Association supports the reauthorization of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act; reauthorization of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act; a bill to make permanent the enhanced conservation tax incentives to private landowners who donate a conservation easement on their property; bills to adjust the collection schedule for the firearms excise tax, and the tax rate for certain educational arrows; and a bill to increase the fee for the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp (aka the "duck stamp").

The Association also continues to work with the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife on a bill (HR669) from Subcommittee Chair Bordallo (GU) which would establish a federal screening program for importation, possession, sale, barter, etc. of non-native invasive fish and wildlife species. The Association's Invasive Species Committee has assembled a work group to inform this effort.

The Association continues to work with Congressional staff on draft language of a bill that would restore CWA jurisdictional status for intrastate, isolated wetlands and intermittent streams, to the pre-SWANCC (Supreme Court) decision level. We are also working with staff on a draft bill that would authorize Joint Ventures under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and give guidance to the establishment of new Joint Ventures. Finally, we are working with Hill staff on a bill that would give guidance and direction to the USFS and BLM to design and implement programs in cooperation with the state fish and wildlife agencies to monitor fish and wildlife populations under each National Forest Plan and Resources Management Plan, respectively, in the context of these agencies' other Congressionally mandated multiple-use obligations and responsibilities. ◀

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## ► Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy

The Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (JTF) met in Washington, DC on February 11-12, 2009 and discussed the following topics:

- Wallop-Breaux reauthorization
- 2011 National Survey
- WSFR administrative review
- Proposed rulemaking for 50 CFR 80
- Conservation Heritage Measures
- Use of federal funds for grant match, the "50% cap rule"

- Letters related to diversions
- Clarification of “outreach” activities

The next JTF meeting will be held August 12-13, 2009. More information including Director’s Orders, USFWS Manual Chapters, Policy Recommendations and Meeting Reports is available at: <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/Policy/JPTF.htm>. ◀

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## ▶ International Affairs

### **Paddlefish Management**

The CITES Technical Work Group organized a meeting at the North American Conference on Paddlefish issues. The meeting was attended by a majority of range state directors, USFWS Regional Directors from the Southeast and Midwest, Director of the USFWS Scientific Authority and the Assistant USFWS Director for International Affairs.

The current situation of paddlefish management represents a case of shared responsibility (international treaty obligations and state management authority), inter-jurisdictional resource management, increasing commercial demand on the resource both within the U.S. and internationally, and volatile allocation politics.

The meeting at the North American was a solid first step in developing an understanding of the range of issues associated with this species and a commitment to continuing a dialog. A coordinated and proactive solution to paddlefish management can effectively demonstrate to the international community the effectiveness of the U.S. approach to resource management and highlight the importance of state authority. ◀

### **International Events**

**Curtis Taylor** of West Virginia hosted his first meeting as new chair of the International Relations Committee this quarter. The meeting of the CITES Work Group held in Charleston, SC, dealt with the many pending issues being discussed in the Committee including alternative forms of tagging; planning for a possible meeting on the genus Lynx in Moscow with Felid experts from Europe and Asia; and proposed new CITES listings received from the public.

The CITES Work Group is registered for the upcoming CITES Animals Committee Meetings to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in the second quarter of 2009. **Bob Broscheid** (AZ) will be representing WAFWA; **Carolyn Caldwell** (OH) will be representing the MAFWA while the NEAFWA will be represented by **Jack Buckley** (MA). Don MacLauchlan of the Association staff will staff the states’ delegation and cover SEAFWA issues. Alligators, bobcats, river otters, black bears and paddlefish will be among the species being discussed. ◀

### **Preliminary species for inclusion by the USA in CITES Appendices**

A recent Federal Register Notice by the USFWS solicited public input concerning a preliminary list of species being considered by the U.S. for possible inclusion in CITES Appendices. Six turtle species were included in this list. The USFWS sought state agency input via the CITES Technical Work Group before developing an official position for the United States.

Our CITES Work Group developed a questionnaire, which was sent to the range states of the six turtle species proposed for CITES inclusion. The input solicited through the questionnaire directly related to the information needed to further assess the merits of the proposed species listings. The response rate (68% overall) from the states' was good considering a brief turn-around time for comments. The Work Group will be continuing to work with our federal partners concerning these reptiles for potential CITES Appendices listing. Other species of importance to the states will be considered in the coming months.

On a second matter, the CITES Technical Work Group also sought input from the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) Joint National Steering Committee. PARC was asked to generate a list of the top three to five native reptile and/or amphibian species for further consideration as potential CITES Appendix III listings. The list generated by PARC and its rationale for CITES inclusion will be discussed with the state wildlife agencies before recommending any further action be considered by the USFWS. ◀

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## Programs/Projects

### ▶ Agency-Industry Partnership

#### Agency-Industry Spring Retreat

The Association's member states are increasing efforts to reach out and coordinate with several key outdoor industries and trade associations. Association President, **Rex Amack** (NE), and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission hosted 17 industry leaders from the hunting, shooting sports, fishing and boating industries and government agencies in a facilitated retreat at Mahoney State Park. The retreat focused on three main topics – outreach efforts to industry on the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson programs; accomplishment reporting needs of industry from these grant programs; and a facilitated discussion on the development of a hunting and shooting sports foundation similar to the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. **Dale Hall** (USFWS, retired) led the discussions on the potential of the new foundation. A follow-up meeting to discuss the potential foundation will be scheduled for late June or early July and will include representatives from the state fish and wildlife agencies. ◀

#### State/Regional Outreach Efforts

Association staff provided support information for the Colorado Division of Wildlife's first ever Sporting Goods Manufacturers Conservation Partnership Dinner in late January. The Division of Wildlife invited outdoor manufacturers from throughout Colorado to attend the event including representatives from several fishing, hunting and shooting sports manufacturers. At the meeting, the Division of Wildlife also played its new "Sportfish & Wildlife Restoration Cycle of Success" video that can be viewed on the web at <http://wildlife.state.co.us/NewsMedia/Videos/TheCycleofSuccess.htm>.

The dinner was a success with one industry attendee commenting, "As a recent resident to the state of Colorado, prior to this meeting I had little knowledge of the various activities in which the Division is involved. As you can imagine, I am intimately familiar with the amount of excise tax dollars my company contributes each year, and it was very refreshing to see how some of that money is spent."

Several states are increasing outreach efforts to industry in cooperation with regional USFWS offices including Massachusetts and all of the southeastern states. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is currently planning on an event in the fall. ◀

### **Agency-Industry Marketing Team**

The Industry/Agency Coalition's Marketing Team provided footage and information for a series of one-minute segments featuring Doug Painter of the National Shooting Sports Foundation that will be shown on the television show "Step Outside" focused on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. ◀

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## ▶ **Amphibian & Reptile Conservation**

### **Amphibian and Reptile Regulatory Summit**

The Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee will hold an Amphibian and Reptile Regulatory Summit in November 2009, in partnership with the Law Enforcement Committee, to examine some of the challenges state agencies are encountering with respect to regulating the collection/possession, commercial harvest and trade/movement of both native and non-native amphibians and reptiles in their states and to discuss potential solutions.

A "State of the Union" of current regulations for amphibians and reptiles will be compiled in advance of the meeting, and case studies from states in both Law Enforcement and the development of new regulations will be presented, along with a discussion of applying the North American Model for wildlife management to amphibians and reptiles. ◀

### **Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC)**

2009 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year of PARC! A commemorative publication has been developed to acknowledge the progress, projects and people that were instrumental to PARC's successes to date. The document was made available via the web on Earth Day 2009 and a copy will be sent to each state. The Association's Amphibian and Reptile Coordinator, Priya Nanjappa, served as an editor on the document. ◀

### **Request from CITES Workgroup for Input re: Appendix III Listing**

The PARC Joint National Steering Committee (JNSC) received a request from the CITES Work Group, which includes representatives from the four regional associations, to provide information on three to four native U.S. amphibian and/or reptile species that would benefit from Appendix III listing (see [www.cites.org/eng/disc/how.shtml](http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/how.shtml) for information about CITES and various listings).

Members of the PARC JNSC, with input from regional steering committees, agreed on two species for consideration: hellbenders (all subspecies, *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis* sp.) and

spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*). These were merely recommendations from the PARC leadership based on expert input; the CITES Work Group has made final determinations, which they have communicated with states in the affected species' distribution range. ◀

### DoD Legacy Funds

In January 2009, three of three proposals the Association, PARC and members of the Department of Defense (DoD) submitted related to Amphibian and Reptile Conservation were funded in full through the DoD Legacy Program. Of the total request of nearly \$200,000, approximately 6% will go toward the Coordinator's time to assist on the projects, which include:

- Development of a DoD-PARC Strategic Plan (modeled after the DoD-Partners in Flight Strategic Plan) to facilitate future amphibian and reptile conservation projects on installations.
- Disease sampling (in particular for the amphibian chytrid fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) on military installations along the Route 66 corridor (as a cross-country transect).
- Support toward the production costs of the upcoming PARC technical handbook, *Inventory and Monitoring: Recommended Techniques for Reptiles and Amphibians with Application to the United States and Canada* (currently in review and scheduled to be in print by Fall 2009). ◀

### Petitions from the Center for Biological Diversity to Eight States re: Commercial Harvest of Freshwater Turtles

In February 2009, the Association learned that the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) intended to submit state regulatory petitions regarding the commercial harvest of freshwater turtles to fish and wildlife and public health agencies in several Southeast and Midwest states. The affected states – AR, IA, KY, LA, MO, OH, SC and TN – were notified in order to begin determining their responses as well as all state directors as there is a good chance that CBD could pursue similar actions in other states at a later date. The states received CBD's petitions on March 11, 2009. The Coordinator has offered her assistance in preparing responses. ◀

### Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee

At the 2009 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources conference, the Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee held its second official meeting. Seventeen people were present representing six states, four federal agencies and two NGOs. The report will be posted at [www.fishwildlife.org/about\\_comm\\_wildlife.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/about_comm_wildlife.html). ◀

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## ► Bird Conservation

### North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)

The U.S. NABCI Committee spent January, February and March developing its strategic intent for the next three to five years; completing the State of the Birds Report; and promoting the conservation programs of the Farm Bill by developing a "Wildlife Conservationist's Guide to the Farm Bill."

At its latest meeting in January 2009, the Committee honed its vision and future direction. The Committee felt it was timely to reflect on where it has been and where it wants to go because NABCI turned 10 years old in 2009. ◀

#### **NABCI Accomplishments Brochure**

To honor the 10-year anniversary of NABCI, a four-page brochure entitled, *A Decade of Integrating Bird Conservation* was developed. The piece was distributed at the North American Conference and is available on NABCI's website ([www.nabci-us.org](http://www.nabci-us.org)). ◀

#### **NABCI Committee Update**

The Committee's next meeting will be in Arlington, Virginia on August 4-5, 2009. The focus of the meeting will be on finalizing the strategic intent and supporting the Joint Ventures. ◀

#### **Private Lands Subcommittee**

The Private Lands Subcommittee is looking at how the U.S. NABCI Committee can improve the conservation of birds on private lands across the country. The subcommittee is advancing the concept of strategic habitat initiatives with NRCS leadership, state conservationists and biologists. The concept is to use the biological foundation available within the bird community to help NRCS focus conservation program delivery – in other words, how working with the bird conservation community can help NRCS.

Part of this effort is to determine the biological capacity available on the ground. Strong consensus exists among the wildlife community and NRCS that the level of biological capacity at the local level (e.g., cost-shared Farm Bill Biologists and other partnership-based biological TA) is strongly correlated with the wildlife conservation results achieved through the Farm Bill.

NRCS found that since 2007, NRCS has lost about 30 biologists. The Association is going to do a similar survey to determine the current status of partner biologists. A subset of the subcommittee is meeting on May 7 to advance these concepts.

The subcommittee also updated the "Wildlife Conservationist's Guide to the Farm Bill" developed in the late 1990s. The audience is the wildlife conservationist. A PDF of the Guide is available for download on NABCI's website ([www.nabci-us.org](http://www.nabci-us.org)). A web-based version will be updated as rules are finalized and the conservation programs are implemented. ◀

#### **NABCI State of the Birds Report Subcommittee**

A subcommittee of NABCI developed the State of the Birds report. The report is the first of its kind in the U.S. and was developed by a myriad of partners in the bird conservation community, including the Association, with the USFWS facilitating its completion. The report showed that nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline due to habitat loss, invasive species and other threats.

The report was released at the North American Conference on March 19. It has generated more than 700 media stories, including a New York Times editorial, worth an equivalent, estimated "ad value" of more than \$1 million.

A second print run is being initiated. The Coordinator is sending a few copies to each state fish and wildlife agency. The report can also be downloaded from the web site [www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org). ◀

### **Bird Conservation Committee and Working Groups**

The Association's Bird Conservation Committee, Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group (WG), Resident Game Bird WG, Waterfowl WG and Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird WG met at the North American Conference in March. The Bird Conservation Committee and its working groups discussed a number of key issues. Most importantly at this meeting, the Committee initiated implementation of the Southern Wings Program and received endorsement for the program at the Association's Business meeting. Working with the Regional Associations the program's Leadership Team will collect money from interested states and begin implementation of the program. The Committee also discussed upcoming legislation including restoring the Clean Water Act and potential changes to the Duck Stamp.



### **State Wildlife Action Plans**

The Association is helping the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture develop a prototype for extracting bird conservation information from the State Wildlife Action Plans. If interested, you can explore the pilot of the database at

[http://fishandwildlife.wik.is/3\\_Pilot\\_installations/FWS\\_Initial\\_Pilot](http://fishandwildlife.wik.is/3_Pilot_installations/FWS_Initial_Pilot). When you click on the URL on that page, you will be asked to enter a user name and password and you can enter "user" and "psswr" respectively. Contact Melanie Steinkamp at [Melanie\\_steinkamp@fws.gov](mailto:Melanie_steinkamp@fws.gov) with any comments and questions. ◀

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## **▶ Climate Change**

### **Climate Change-Wildlife Action Plan Workgroup**

In 2008, the Climate Change and Teaming With Wildlife Committees joined forces to create a Climate Change/Wildlife Action Plan Workgroup to guide states on how to integrate climate change into State Wildlife Action Plans by the creation of a guidance document. Individuals from state and federal agencies and private conservation organizations were chosen to participate on the working group, which has drafted a formal charter and created subcommittees to focus on various aspects of the guidance document for the States. The document will be presented at the Association's 2009 Annual Meeting with a possible accompanying workshop. It will be a living document that will be available online and updated as new information arises. ◀

### **Natural Resources Adaptation Strategies Survey**

The Association collaborated with The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation and Defenders of Wildlife on a survey of state and federal agencies and academic institutions on natural resources adaptation strategies. Gerry Barnhart (NY, retired) surveyed state participants for this endeavor.

Survey results were incorporated into a white paper that was presented at the February 2009 WHPRP Adaptation Workshop in Washington DC. Climate change committee members, Rocky Beach (WA), Mike Harris (GA), Dennis Figg (MO) and Association staff member, Dr. Arpita Choudhury, served on the steering committee for the workshop. An adaptation literature review accompanied this white paper along with the workshop products into a single document that is available online at: <http://ncseonline.org/WHPRP/NWF/Adaptation2009/>.



## Climate Change NCN

The Climate Change National Conservation Need was accepted for the 2010 Multistate Conservation Grant Program cycle. The Climate Change Committee, along with MAFWA, submitted this NCN for regional workshops natural resource management techniques for climate change. ◀

## Climate Change Committee Meeting at the North American

During the conference, the Science & Research Committee held the first in a series of workshops on Structured Decision-Making and Adaptive Management. The workshop focused on the use of these processes on invasive species management. Speakers from both state and federal agencies spoke on the topic. Representatives from the Adaptive Management course at NCTC guided the workshop participants through an invasive species management scenario using these processes. The committee plans to work with the Climate Change Committee on a 2010 workshop focusing on Climate Change. ◀

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## ▶ Education, Outreach & Diversity

### North American Conservation Education Conference

From January 26-29, 121 Conservation Education professionals representing 35 states, one Canadian province, NGOs and federal agencies came together at the CA Vines 4-H Center near Little Rock, AR to share in the remarkable progress that has been made in the last three years to develop a robust, research-based national strategy for building an educated, informed and involved citizenry that spends quality time outdoors.

Attendees participated in hands-on sessions to learn how to use the CE strategy and apply the tools now available to them, such as the Association's *Conservation Education Core Concepts; Field Investigations: Using Outdoor Environments to Foster Student Learning of Scientific Processes* guide; and the just-released *K-12 Scope and Sequence*, which translates core concepts into both content standards and performance expectations for students over the course of their education from kindergarten through grade 12. Electronic copies of all products were provided to conference participants on a flash drive courtesy of the USFWS.

Participants also worked collaboratively to identify how the conservation education community will take it to the next level and go from strategy to implementation and results. Breakout sessions focused on *Improving Conservation Education in State Agencies; How to Connect Agency Programs to the No Child Left Inside Movement; Aligning Conservation Education with Formal Education; and Communicating Your Agency's Message*.

Sally Guynn of the Management Assistance Team developed a white paper on the topic of guidelines for Conservation Education Program Excellence entitled, *"Education, Outreach, and Diversity—Alias: Information and Education"* that was presented at the meeting for review. (The paper was also discussed at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.)

Guest speakers included Dr. Mamie Parker, USFWS retired, who told stories of the lessons she learned from her mother growing up in Arkansas; Mark Duda, Responsive Management, presented the latest survey research about the public's knowledge of America's wildlife resources; Jan McLaughlin, Science Education Consultant for the New Hampshire Department

of Education, discussed national environmental education trends; and **Jeff Rucks**, Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, talked about marketing conservation education. Conference proceedings are at [www.fishwildlife.org/consed\\_summit2009\\_Proceedings.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/consed_summit2009_Proceedings.html).

Post-conference, the planning committee conducted an online evaluation and of those responding: 83% were from state fish and wildlife agencies, 98% rated the conference good to excellent and a total of 81% would like to see a similar conference at least every three years. The conference planning committee extends its thanks to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for going above and beyond in hosting the event. ◀

### **North American Conservation Education Strategy Facilitation**

In January, the CE workgroup prepared and issued a Request for Services to coordinate the work of the new CE grant through the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. The group received 11 applications and interviewed four candidates. The team selected DJ Case and project manager, Ginny Wallace after a thorough review. Ginny had been facilitating the grant since August 2008. ◀

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## ▶ **Furbearer Resources**

### **New “white paper” on Modern Snaring Technology**

The Association’s Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group, in conjunction with trapping experts from the National Trapper’s Association, The Fur Takers of America and several U.S. trap manufacturers, produced a white paper on the state-of-the-art of modern snaring technology.

Snaring is probably the oldest method of trapping furbearers, but it has come along from its ancient roots. This paper details and explains the many components used in modern snaring, and provides guidance about how they can be used to produce the best animal welfare results for captured furbearers. **Dr. John Erb** of the Minnesota DNR spearheaded the effort on writing this document. It is available on the Association’s Web site at [http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html). ◀

### **Web-based Trapper Education**

The Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group and the Northeastern Fur Resources Technical Committee, primarily being led by **Tom Decker** (VT) and **Susan Langlois** (MA), worked with D.J. Case and Associates to produce a web-based Trapper Education Program. The new web-based program is based on Best Management Practices for Trapping in the United States and the AFWA National Trapper Education Program. The goal of the web-based program is to provide an online method for trapper education in the United States that will instruct students in consistent content standards and learning objectives.

The program will provide a mechanism for all state agencies to certify trappers. Trappers will simply be directed to the Web site by state agencies and be allowed to take the course online. Students who pass the quizzes by answering at least 80% of the questions correctly will be issued a voucher that they have successfully completed the course. Students will then

be required to attend a field day, hosted by the state agency, to get “hands-on” instruction from agency trapper/hunter education instructors.

The idea behind this program is to bring trapper education up to speed with hunter education. Ideally, the program will be recognized by states to allow for reciprocity in licensing among states at some point in the future, similar to the way hunter education is recognized now. But, it will be up to the states to make that decision. The web-based Trapper Education Program is set for launch in the second quarter. ◀

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## ▶ Invasive Species

The Invasive Species Committee will be working with the Biofuels Working Group on issues involving invasive weeds used as a source of Biofuels. The genetically modified species *Miscanthus giganteus* and its use as a biofuel began that discussion. The collective group might collaborate on a roundtable discussion or a forum with the biofuel industry and state and federal agencies.

The committee is also planning regional workshops on how to incorporate invasive species control into State Wildlife Action Plans. ◀

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## ▶ Multistate Conservation Grant Program

To date, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) has directed more than \$56 million to 152 national and regional priority projects of the state fish and wildlife agencies.

In March at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, the National Grants Committee met and selected the National Conservation Needs for the 2010 MSCGP Cycle, which were also approved by state directors at the Business Meeting. Letters of Intent will be solicited to address these NCNs starting March 30 with deadline to submit by May 6. Seven NCNs were selected of the 13 submitted:

### *Agricultural Conservation Committee*

Subject 1: Integration of Fish and Wildlife Needs as the Conservation Provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill are Implemented

### *Angler/Boating Participation and Hunting and Shooting Sports Participation Committees*

Subject 2: Outdoor Heritage - Participation, Recruitment and Retention in Hunting, Fishing and Conservation-related Recreational Activities

### *Climate Change Committee and the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies*

Subject 3: Regional Climate Change Workshops for State Fish & Wildlife Managers on Current Information and Tools for Management of Fish and Wildlife

### *Executive Committee*

Subject 4: State Fish and Wildlife Agency Coordination and Administration

### *Fish & Wildlife Health Committee*

Subject 5: A National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative

### *Fisheries/Water Resources Policy Committee*

Subject 6: Formation and Operations of Fish Habitat Partnerships to Facilitate National Fish Habitat Action Plan Implementation

### *International Relations Committee*

Subject 7: Protect State Wildlife Agencies' Authority to Sustainably Manage Wildlife Resources in Concert with Federal Actions Required by International Treaties and Conventions

The next steps in the annual MSCGP cycle include: Submitted Letters of intent (LOIs) will be reviewed by appropriate Association Committees and the National Grants Committee. The National Grants Committee will select the most competitive LOIs to invite to submit full proposals. Applicants will be notified if their LOI has been selected by June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Please visit [http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate\\_grants.htm](http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate_grants.htm) for more information about the MSCGP. ◀

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## ▶ **National Fish Habitat Action Plan**

### **Board Meetings**

The National Fish Habitat Board has met twice this year, first via a conference call and the second time in Harrisburg, PA as the guest of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Board members participated in a facilitated strategic vision session and some outcomes of the session included:

- The Board's overall assessment of the progress made on the Action Plan over the three years since its adoption averaged about a "B" grade.
- Many noted that the initiative was still going strong, without any dedicated sources of funding, as a major achievement.
- The interest and enthusiasm of the Fish Habitat Partnerships was also noted as an important measure of success.
- Major areas for improvement identified included getting the legislation passed, using communications more effectively, especially with regards to promoting the Action Plan identity (i.e., what makes it different), and supporting the National Fish Habitat Assessment effort. ◀

### **Fish Habitat Partnerships**

The Board approved the applications of the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership, the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership and the Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership – bringing the total of approved Partnerships to nine. Guidance was provided to the Hawaii FHP to broaden its area of interest to include nearshore marine areas. ◀

## Outreach

The 2009 list of 10 “Waters to Watch” has been approved by the Board:

- Agulowak River, AK (Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership)
- Meramec Watershed Basin, MO (Fishers and Farmers Partnership)
- Teton Creek, ID (Western Native Trout Initiative)
- Pine Creek, WI (Driftless Area Restoration Effort)
- Jockey’s Ridge State Park, NC (Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership)
- South Fork Little Conemaugh River, PA (Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture)
- Lake Houston, TX (Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership)
- Whitethorn Creek, WV (Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture)
- Lower Flint River, GA (Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership)
- Maggie Creek, NV (Western Native Trout Initiative) ◀

## National Fish Habitat Awards

The Board reviewed nominations for four categories and made selections as per below:

- The Jim Range Conservation Vision Award: Yvon Chouinard of the Patagonia Corporation.
- Extraordinary Action Award: Project SHARE (Salmon Habitat and River Enhancement) of Maine
- Outreach & Education Award: The Lake Leaders Institute, University of Wisconsin Extension Lakes Program
- Scientific Achievement Award: Stephen J. Jordan, Lisa M. Smith, and Janet A. Nestlerode, U.S. EPA

The awards will be presented on Monday, April 27, at the Jim Range National Casting Call in Washington, DC. ◀

## One-Year-Out Workshop

A One-Year-Out Workshop is confirmed for June 23-25, 2009 at the National Conference Center near Dulles Airport. This will be an opportunity to assess and prioritize actions for completion of major commitments by 2010 including a condition analysis of fish habitats in the United States, a “Status of Fish Habitats Report” for the United States and the establishment of 12 Fish Habitat Partnerships. After the workshop concludes, the Board will hold a half-day meeting (the afternoon of Thursday, June 25). ◀

## Project Funding

The USFWS, in consultation with the National Fish Habitat Board, has allocated \$2.71 million from its FY09 budget to support the completion of aquatic habitat improvement projects within the boundaries of approved Fish Habitat Partnerships. These federal dollars will enable the completion of about 50 projects in 26 states and will leverage \$4.75 million in partner match. ◀

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## ► National Survey

Advance work on the 2011 National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation is underway. All state fish and wildlife agencies have been asked to provide data on the number of licensed hunters by county of residence. This will hopefully enable the Census Bureau to sample hunters more efficiently, thereby saving costs.

Meanwhile, the USFWS is planning to host four technical work group meetings during the next three months in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Denver and Minneapolis to discuss survey data and reporting considerations for the 2011 survey. Following these meetings it will be possible for the Service to develop a draft list of survey questions. ◀

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## ► Teaming With Wildlife

### 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Teaming With Wildlife Fly-in

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Teaming With Wildlife Fly-in was held on February 24-25. More than 100 participants representing 30 states and the District of Columbia took part. The advocates' outreach focused on three messages:

- 1) Support for \$85 million for State Wildlife Grants in FY10;
- 2) Support for the Teaming With Act; and
- 3) Support for adaptation funding in climate change legislation.

At the Fly-in's annual Reception attended by more than 175 guests, the Teaming With Wildlife coalition presented awards to Congressman Todd Tiahrt (KS) for his support of State Wildlife Grants funding and Congressman Lloyd Doggett (TX) for his support of wildlife adaptation funding in climate change legislation. Senator Tim Johnson was also scheduled to receive an award for his support of sustained funding through sponsorship of the Teaming With Wildlife Act, but was unable to attend. He will be presented with his award at a later date. ◀

### Teaming With Wildlife Coalition Reaches #6,000

The Teaming With Wildlife coalition reached 6,000 members, a major milestone! An award presentation is being planned for the 6,000<sup>th</sup> member, located in Hawaii. The Association is planning to issue a press release in April and more information is available at [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com). ◀

### Teaming With Wildlife Committee Meeting at the North American

During the North American, the Teaming With Wildlife Committee on behalf of the greater coalition presented Representative Mike Thompson (CA) with an award on March 19 for his leadership in championing federal funding for state-based wildlife conservation under the State Wildlife Grants Program. The Committee also drafted a letter to Senator Tim Johnson (SD) thanking him for his support of sustained wildlife funding. ◀

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## ► Wind Energy

At the Association's Annual Meeting, membership agreed to become founding members of the American Wind and Wildlife Institute (AWWI). The mission of AWWI is to facilitate timely and responsible development of wind energy while protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. Jeff Vonk (SD) is the Association's representative to AWWI.

The last board meeting was held in January 2009. The next Board meeting will be held April 30 - May 1, 2009. AWWI just received its 501(c)3 status and hired its Executive Director, Kraig Butrum. The organization is currently interviewing for the position of Research Director. It also issued an RFP for wind/wildlife mapping. The leadership will announce the contractor and status of the project after its April/May board meeting. ◀

### **Federal Advisory Committee Update**

The Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee met in January and March in Arlington, VA. ([www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/windpower/wind\\_turbine\\_advisory\\_committee.html](http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/windpower/wind_turbine_advisory_committee.html)). The state agency representatives – Keith Sexson (KS) representing the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Kathy Boydston (TX), Greg Hueckel (WA) and Scott Darling (VT) – have participated in all the meetings with the exception of the March 2009 meeting in which Scott and Greg were unable to participate due to travel restrictions.

Prior to the March 2009 meeting, a draft Guidelines document was distributed to the state fish and wildlife agencies. About 13 states commented on the document. The next draft will be released in the first week of May. On May 20, the committee will hold a webcast for state agencies to discuss the draft document with the FAC state agency representatives. The next FAC meeting will be held in Austin, TX from June 28-July 1, 2009. For more information on the webcast or to provide a wind energy contact for your state, contact Deb Hahn ([dhahn@fishwildlife.org](mailto:dhahn@fishwildlife.org)). ◀

### **National Wind Coordinating Collaborative**

The Association participated in the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative (NWCC) Steering Committee meeting in March 2009. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to discuss wind farm siting and transmission development issues with wind energy and transmission development industry representatives. ◀

### **Wind Energy and Transmission Subcommittee**

The Association's Wind Energy and Transmission Subcommittee met at the North American Conference. The subcommittee's top issues were the USFWS FAC, the impacts of the federal stimulus package and addressing transmission development. The subcommittee identified some specific concerns regarding the direction of the wind energy guidelines being developed by the FAC and will carry those forward to the state agency members of the FAC. They also reiterated the need for state agency participation in the review of FAC documents. States are welcome and encouraged to send a wind energy contact to Deb Hahn if they have not already.

The stimulus package contained programs that will impact wind energy development, including an investment tax credit program for industry. For industry to qualify, they must begin construction at a site by the end of 2010. This could put pressure on state agencies to approve projects more quickly. The package also contained money for BLM to open renewable energy offices in the west. The subcommittee would like to see BLM coordinate with state fish and wildlife agencies as they advance wind power development of BLM lands. Regarding

transmission, the subcommittee decided to develop draft guidelines for state fish and wildlife agency involvement in transmission siting and development. A draft will be available by the September meeting. ◀

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## Member Services

### ▶ 2009 Annual Meeting

The Association invites you to join us at the 2009 Annual Meeting from September 13 - 16 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Austin, TX. Note, the meeting is shortened by one day due to concerns about state travel budgets. Conference registration and agenda updates will be available in April at [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org). For information about sponsoring an event at the meeting, contact Cindy Delaney at 802/ 865-5202. ◀

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### ▶ Communications & Marketing

#### Strategic Planning

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission invited Association representative, Laura MacLean, to participate in the third of four strategy sessions to hone its overall five-year plan and provide synergy between state and national mission, goals and actions. ◀

#### 2008 Annual Report

The Association released its 18-page 2008 Annual Report at the North American Conference. The stunning cover image was provided by Georges Andrejko of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The Annual Report is available online at [www.fishwildlife.org/pdfs/2008-Annual-Report.pdf](http://www.fishwildlife.org/pdfs/2008-Annual-Report.pdf) and additional print copies are available upon request. ◀

#### Materials & Media

Though the Annual Report was the main publication focus during the first quarter of 2009, the Association produced six issues of the Directors' Line e-newsletter, posted six press releases and continued to update the Conservation News page at <http://fishwildlife1.blogspot.com/> on a weekly basis. The Association also responded to more than 15 media inquiries with a significant number asking about the impact of the economic crisis on state fish and wildlife agency budgets.

In collaboration with Ollie Torgerson and the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Association is helping to develop an online hub for retired leaders in the field of fish and wildlife conservation to stay up-to-date on important issues of the day, and to continue as an advocate for conservation. The Organization of Retired Conservation Administrators (ORCA) will launch in the second quarter of 2009. ◀

## Web Site

To kick off the New Year, the Association issued an RFP to contract web design and development services. From 33 proposals, the Association selected award-winning, New York-based JesseJames Creative to update the site's content organization, navigation, timeliness and visual appeal via a content management system. Work is currently underway. ◀

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## ► Management Assistance Team

### Conservation Learning Campus

MAT offered six online courses with a total of seven sections—this was the first quarter that demand was so great that a second section had to be opened for *Creative and Critical Thinking* after being filled in less than one day. ◀

### Conservation Leadership Program of Study

The Conservation Leadership Program of Study (CLPS) set a milestone this quarter as it awarded its first Certificates of Completion to **Jason DeCoskey** (PA) and **Stephen Perry** (NH). The CLPS has 45 students enrolled and six currently working on their final project. In an effort to meet this increasing demand, MAT trained one additional national faculty to help deliver online courses to states. The new online course entitled "Leader as Supervisor," which addresses supervisory skills of the leader-manager, ran a beta testing section this quarter and is ready to be offered in full next quarter. ◀

### Face to Face Workshops

MAT began work on a new two-day leadership course entitled "Team Leader Skills" in the first quarter. The course is scheduled for delivery to Arizona in May and Wyoming in June. MAT staff delivered a Franklin Covey "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" workshop to Maryland and a "Mastering Agency Change" workshop to New Hampshire. ◀

### MAT Consulting with States

MAT staff consulted with fish and wildlife agencies in seven states (CO, DE, MT, NH, UT, WV, and WY) during the last quarter. Subjects ranged from development of state leadership programs to comprehensive agency effectiveness reviews. MAT:

- Conducted an all-employee electronic survey and scheduled individual staff and constituents interviews for Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife as a continuation of a comprehensive agency review.
- Engaged in an initial conference with West Virginia Director, Curtis Taylor, on conducting a comprehensive agency effectiveness review; a proposal was developed and sent.
- Spent a day in Wyoming to help plan the second tier of Wyoming's leadership development program.
- Began consulting with Dan Decker and other personnel from Cornell University regarding the possibility of collaborating to offer a human dimensions course for state fish and wildlife professionals through MAT's online learning campus. ◀

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## ► National Conservation Leadership Institute

MAT continues its lead role in planning, managing and staffing the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI). Nearing the final stages of cohort 3, MAT continued to manage online labs for ongoing small group work and peer consulting. Additionally, MAT prepared for the final component of the NCLI – the culminating experience at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri where Fellows will report on application of their learning and leadership project progress.

Looking forward to cohort 4, MAT coordinated an NCLI Board meeting, which voted to allow three nominations per state/organization in the coming 2009-2010 cohort. Additionally MAT continued to develop curriculum and speakers for cohort 4 and managed the online process for accepting nominations and applications for the next cohort of Fellows. Additional information is available via the NCLI website ([www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org)). ◀

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## Association Staff

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Estelle Green	Administrative Assistant
Dwight Guynn	Management Assistance Team Project Leader (USFWS)
Sally Guynn	Management Assistance Team Project Leader
Deb Hahn	Migratory Bird Coordinator
Mark Humpert	Wildlife Diversity Director
Don MacLauchlan	International Resource Director
Laura MacLean	Communications & Marketing Director
Gina Main	Management Assistance Team Junior Project Leader
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Christina Zarrella	Multistate Conservation Grants Coordinator