



ASSOCIATION *of*  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

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# STAFF REPORT

**64<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference**  
**Galloway, New Jersey**  
**April 27 - 30, 2008**

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## INTRODUCTION -- MATT HOGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Changes in Member Agencies

The following changes in state fish and wildlife agency leadership have occurred since the Association's Annual Meeting last September:

**Duane Shroufe**, Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department has announced his retirement effective March 31, 2008. **Larry Voyles** has been named as the new director effective April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Don Koch** has been named Director of the California Department of Fish and Game.

**Tom Remington** has been named Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

**Robert Barham** has been named Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

**Glenn Normandeau** has been named as Executive Director of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

**Carter Smith** has been named Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

**Robert Duncan** has been named Director of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

**Terry Cleveland** has announced his retirement as Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department effective June 30, 2008.

Among our federal members, **Ed Schafer** has been confirmed as Secretary of Agriculture. Prior to being appointed Secretary, Schafer served two terms as governor of North Dakota. In addition, **Lyle Laverty** has been confirmed as Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

### Association Staff Updates

Following the birth of her son, **Naomi Edelson** has elected to not return to her job as Wildlife Diversity Director. The Association is currently in the process of finding a replacement for Naomi and will accept applications until May 15. If you know someone who might be interested in this important position with the Association, please encourage them to apply.

In addition, **Dave Chadwick**, Wildlife Diversity Senior Associate and Acting Diversity Director, has accepted a job with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and will be leaving the Association in May. Both Naomi and Dave have done outstanding work on behalf of state agencies and will be missed.

The Association has hired **Laura MacLean** as our new Director of Communications and Marketing. Laura brings more than 14 years of experience in the field including work with the Department of Interior and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on climate change messaging and outreach. Laura replaces **Rachel Brittin** who accepted a position as Outreach Program Specialist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Habitat Conservation - Restoration Center.

**Amber Pairis** has left her position as the Science and Research Liaison with the Association to accept a new position working on climate change for California Department of Fish and Game starting in February. While we will miss Amber, we are happy that she will still be able to work with the Association in her new position in California. The Association is in the process of finding a replacement.

The Association has hired **Ryan Roberts** as the first Communications Coordinator for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The Association initiated this recruitment at the request of the National Fish Habitat Board, and it is funded with Board dollars. Ryan was most recently employed as the Director of Communications for the Bowie Baysox, a Minor League baseball team in Maryland.

**Priya Nanjappa Mitchell** officially joined the staff of the Association as the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) State Agencies Coordinator in January of 2008. Previously she was an employee of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

**Jen Mock Schaeffer**, the Association's Farm Bill Coordinator, is currently on maternity leave following the birth of her daughter Cora Yvonne Schaffer on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. While Jen is on maternity leave, the Association will be aided by three successive 30 day state details: **Sal Palazzolo**, from the Arizona Game and Fish Department; **Todd Bogenschutz** from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources; and **Don Larsen** from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Special thanks to the three of them and their host agencies.

The Association was also pleased to have **Tara Bergeson** from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on a 60 day detail working with the Teaming with Wildlife program.

In addition to our state details, the Association has been aided by three detailees from federal agencies. **Robert Ashworth** from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed a 60 day detail that ended in January working on the National Fish Habitat Initiative. **Steve Hodapp** from the Bureau of Land Management has concluded a 60 day detail working with the Association on our federal budget recommendations. **Margaret Connelly** from the U.S. Forest Service is currently in the middle of a 60 day detail where she is working on implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Special thanks to Bob, Steve, and Margaret and their sponsoring agencies.

Details with the Association are a great benefit to the Association and its staff and a great opportunity for the detailee to get a first hand look at the work of the Association and state fish and wildlife agencies. If you have someone who might be interested in doing a detail with the Association, please let me know.

#### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on March 26 and 27 in Phoenix, Arizona at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference and took the following actions: 1) approved changes to the by-laws that will be forwarded to the membership before the Association Annual Meeting in September; 2) approved Contributing Member applications for the National Marine Manufacturers, Trust for Public Land, XONtv, Resource Management Services, LLC, and National Trappers Association; 3) tabled a Contributing Member application for the North American Gamebird Association pending discussions with their new Executive Director; 4) rejected a Contributing Member application for ALL Consulting, Inc.; 5) directed continued work on the Association's Strategic Plan; 6) established a taskforce to review and

make recommendations on future office space needs for the Association; 7) reviewed and approved the future program direction for the Teaming with Wildlife program; and 8) re-chartered the task force reviewing the scheduling and length of the Association's Annual Meeting. In addition, the Executive Committee met with Mark Rey, Undersecretary of Agriculture to discuss the status of the Farm Bill and received briefings on the closeout of the Association's 2007 budget, recent industry summit meeting in Alabama, State Wildlife Grants competitive funding program, 2011 National Survey on Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Associated Recreation, the White House Conference on hunting and wildlife conservation, the strategic plan for the Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration programs, the Association's Conservation Education Initiative, reauthorization of Wallop-Breaux program, and the status of climate change legislation pending before the Congress.

#### Business Meeting at the North American Conference

The Business Committee for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies met on Friday, March 28 at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Phoenix, Arizona to receive reports from the committees of the Association and approve action items from those committees. A summary of all the action items and their status was sent to all agency members following the meeting. If you did not see this summary and would like another copy, please contact me or Angela Nelson.

#### Industry-Agency Summit

On December 13 and 14, leaders of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies met in Washington, DC with leaders of the hunting, shooting, fishing, archery and boating industries as well as representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Industry-Agency Summit. Among the topics discussed were recruitment and retention; data mining; hunter, angler and boater access; outreach and marketing efforts and federal excise tax issues. Attendees agreed to form a Steering Committee made up of industry and agency representatives, which will ensure that the joint work of the parties continues between annual summits. It was suggested that the Association should house a new position to focus on areas of mutual interest and concern to state agencies and the respective industry groups. The following week the Association Executive Committee approved this position as well as approving funding to help support the position.

Agency and industry leaders came together again on February 25-26 in a meeting hosted by **President Corky Pugh** in Alabama. At that meeting, agency and industry leaders further discussed more specifics on the steering committee suggested in December, including prospective membership of the committee. In addition, there was further discussion about the responsibilities of the new position also suggested in December, including a tentative agreement that the position will come from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Association under an IPA agreement. Discussions with the FWS continue on proposed IPA agreement and the position.

#### National Fish Habitat Action Plan Board

The Board met in Washington DC on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and approved the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP); the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture; the Midwest Driftless Area Restoration Effort; and the Matanuska-Susitna Salmon Conservation Partnership as the first four pilot fish habitat partnerships under the plan. More information on the board meeting can be found in this report under the National Fish Habitat Initiative section.

The Board met again in February 2008 and approved the Western Native Trout Initiative as the fifth Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP). A total of 14 additional FHP's have applied for consideration under Candidate status. In addition, the board approved project funding guidelines as well as draft federal legislation that would formally authorize and fund the Action Plan. The Board also approved new awards honoring exceptional individuals or partner entities who have demonstrated a commitment to fish habitat conservation, science, or education through programs or projects. Formal recognition will occur at the National Casting Call event on April 28, 2008 in Washington, DC.

#### Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and Take Me Fishing Campaign

The RBFF Board has approved an additional expenditure of \$765,000 on its State Outreach Marketing Program. Previously the RBFF had budgeted \$275,000 for this program in 13 states. However, following a presentation at the Association's annual meeting, 41 states expressed interest in this program. The

RBFF expects that 30 states will launch the program in 2008 and the additional expenditure approved by the board will allow the RBFF to include additional states. In order to be eligible to participate in the program, a state must have an electronic license system, at least one year of lapsed angler data and \$25,000 in state matching funds. For more information on this program, contact RBFF President Frank Peterson at (703) 778-5157 or [fpeterson@rbff.org](mailto:fpeterson@rbff.org).

#### National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort for the National Conservation Leadership Institute met in November at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC). The cohort includes a total of 36 fellows, including 21 from state agencies, 2 from the FWS, 5 from other federal agencies and 8 from NGOs and Industry. **Jen Mock Schaeffer**, the Association's Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst, is one of the fellows.

The nomination period for Cohort 3 of the [NCLI](#) is now open until **May 31, 2008**. I would encourage you to consider nominating someone from your agency whom you believe would benefit from this world class leadership training. It is an outstanding opportunity for a select group of conservation professionals – including someone from your organization. Fellows must be nominated by their agency director. Please visit [www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org) for further information on the nomination process and on-line forms.

## AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION

The Amphibian and Reptile Coordinator, a staff position created in January 2008, represents state interests on a variety of amphibian and reptile issues, advocates for state interests to federal agencies and NGOs, and coordinates capacity building workshops, trainings, and tools for state agencies through the Association and in collaboration with the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) network. The Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact for the Association with respect to amphibian and reptile issues, and encourages and facilitates interstate, regional, and national collaboration. The Coordinator reports directly to the Resource Director, and provides supplemental expertise to Association staff and committees for amphibian, reptile, and related habitat issues of importance to the state fish and wildlife agencies. The current Coordinator, Ms. Priya Nanjappa Mitchell ([pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org](mailto:pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org), 847.672.9275), works remotely from her home office in Illinois. If long-term funding is secured, she will relocate to the Association's DC offices in 2009.

#### **Current Projects:**

**Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee** – A new Amphibian and Reptile subcommittee has been created under the Wildlife Resource Policy Committee. Dave Erickson of the Missouri Department of Conservation and Eric Gardner of the Arizona Game and Fish Department will serve as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the subcommittee, respectively, with the Coordinator providing executive staff support. The subcommittee charge was approved during the Wildlife Resource Policy Committee meeting at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources (NA) conference in March 2008 in Phoenix, AZ. The first meeting of the subcommittee will occur during the Association's Annual meeting in September 2008 in Saratoga Springs, NY.

- The Subcommittee is formulating a response to the recent Federal Register information request with respect to adding certain constrictor snake species to the Lacey Act list of "injurious wildlife."

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) – The Association's Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee will serve as the State advisory board to PARC, represented by the subcommittee chair as a member of the PARC Joint National Steering Committee. The Coordinator ensures that State interests in all issues relevant to amphibian and reptile species and habitats are represented in, and/or accomplished through, the PARC network. In addition, the Coordinator provides assistance/auxiliary support as needed in state fish and wildlife agency related topics and projects brought to the Association's committees or the PARC Joint National Steering Committee (JNSC). The PARC JNSC will meet during the North American conference in March 2008.

- Habitat Management Guidelines – The Coordinator is assisting the editors to facilitate the peer-review by State Wildlife Agencies and other NGO partners for the fourth regionally-based publication in the PARC Technical Publication Series, *Habitat Management Guidelines for*

*Amphibian and Reptiles of the Northwestern United States and Western Canada.* The book will be in print by July 2008. For more information, please contact the Coordinator, Priya Nanjappa Mitchell at [pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org](mailto:pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org), 847.672.9275.

*Amphibian Declines & Chytridiomycosis: Translating Science into Urgent Action* – In November 2007 over 200 people, representing eight (8) countries across four (4) continents met to discuss the science and management needs related to the amphibian chytrid fungus implicated in declining amphibian populations worldwide. The conference was sponsored primarily by PARC and the USFWS Division of the National Fish Hatchery System as well as 19 other sponsors, including the Association. Representatives from nine (9) U.S. states and one Canadian province participated; four (4) of them delivered presentations on their own research and management experiences related to this deadly fungus. See [http://www.parcplace.org/Bd\\_conference.html](http://www.parcplace.org/Bd_conference.html) for additional information.

- The Coordinator was a key member of the conference planning committee, and continues to provide assistance in making the follow-up materials available to the States.
- With assistance from the Science & Research Liaison, the Association was able to partially sponsor the participation of three state representatives at the symposium.

## **AUTOMATED WILDLIFE DATA SYSTEMS (AWDS)**

The Executive Committee voted, at its December meeting, to formally end the AWDS initiative – it was concluded that the original purpose of AWDS had been successfully achieved. The AWDS website has been “taken offline,” after first archiving data sets with some continuing value. In the near future, the Association will provide some reimbursement dollars to states that made a contribution in support of AWDS in 2007. It is anticipated that the Association will continue to engage on data management issues through its partnership efforts with industry regarding angler and hunter recruitment/retention.

## **FARM BILL**

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill), which provided an 80% increase in funding for conservation programs and approximately \$3 billion annually to the nation’s farmers, ranchers and forest land owners under a variety of programs for conservation of our natural resources, is slated for reauthorization this year. Most provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill expire September 30, 2007. While the Association, its State fish and wildlife agency members and partner conservation organizations continue to work with the Administration to improve the conservation programs’ benefits for fish and wildlife, it is time to focus our attention on reauthorizing Farm Bill legislation that will promote a co-equal status for fish and wildlife with soil and water resources. The following is a summary of the current status of the 2007 Farm Bill reauthorization process followed by an update on 2002 Farm Bill implementation issues.

### **2007 Farm Bill Update**

**2002 Farm Bill extended a second time**–Due to the inability to reach agreement on offsets needed to fund program increases recommended in the 2008 Farm Bill and conflict with the Senate Finance Committee on control of certain programs, Congress was forced to pass a second extension of authorization. This extension will maintain the 2002 Farm Bill until April 18, 2008. It appears that the House Agricultural Committee will attempt to craft a new Farm Bill during this period that would fund farm, conservation, energy and nutrition programs into the bill with the feeling that they will receive the \$10 billion in offsets that the Congress and Administration have agreed upon.

*Senate Passes Farm Bill by Record Margin of 79-14* – The Senate Agriculture Committee passed its version of the 2007 Farm Bill (HR 2419, The Food and Energy Security Act of 2007) on October 25, 2007 by a quorum vote, providing a Sodsaver provision and additional funding to continue WRP and GRP along with other policy improvements. Chairman Harkin had hoped to take the bill straight to the floor for debate and passing, but momentum stalled for over a month after Senate Majority Leader Reid tried to

limit the amendments debated and was met with strong opposition from Republicans. Much debate and a failed cloture vote pushed bipartisan negotiations to address over 280 amendments filed to alter the Senate Agriculture Committee's Farm Bill. Ultimately, an agreement was reached with each party bringing 20 amendments to the floor, not including the Manager's Amendment. After accepting the Manager's Amendments, the Senate passed the legislation with a record margin of 79-14 on Friday, December 14, 2007. Sources indicate that the Senate's Farm Bill provides an additional \$4.8 billion to conservation programs. The final legislation is not yet available, but upon receipt Association staff will analyze it and prepare recommendations and priorities for consideration by the Conference Committee. The Manager's Amendment and the amendment to it includes many of the 280+ amendments filed (both germane and not), several of which were once stand-alone bills in need of a legislative vehicle. Because some of the non-germane amendments may affect management responsibilities of state fish and wildlife agencies, Association staff also will address these issues in our recommendations to the Conferees.

Anticipation of Farm Bill Conference Committee –Members of the Farm Bill Conference Committee are not yet named, but we hope to know who is seated at the table by early January. While some of our recommended policy improvements may go smoothly during conference, we will need to be vigilant with high priorities such as Sodsaver. Furthermore, the largest stumbling block the committee faces is how to pay for a Farm Bill that the President will sign. The House and Senate chose very different pay-for mechanisms, and neither likes the other's selection. Both bills are under veto threats by the President, but this might be reconciled by the Administration's participation in conference. One major concern is that conservation or possibly the entire Farm Bill could see across-the-board cuts in funding in order to satisfy the House's, Senate's and Administration's pay-for needs and in order to enact the bill. As discussions progress, we will keep you informed of progress and any needed action that would be helpful during the process.

Omnibus Appropriations Bill Extends 2002 Farm Bill – The monstrous, 3,000+ page omnibus appropriations bill passed by Congress also includes a provision to extend the 2002 Farm Bill to March 15, 2008. Both the House and Senate Agriculture committees want the extension to enable Farm Bill conferees to complete work on the bill early next year without having to worry about policy complications resulting from potential reductions in the budget baseline coming from the Congressional Budget Office in February 2008. Additionally, the extension provides the authority for some Farm Bill programs to continue that would otherwise expire December 31, 2007 (i.e., CRP). After closer examination of the bill, Association staff will distribute more details about appropriated funding levels for Farm Bill conservation programs in FY08.

Fishing and Hunting Conservation Groups Voice Support for Increasing Conservation Funding – On October 18, 2007, 34 fishing and hunting conservation groups expressed their support for increasing Farm Bill conservation program funding by \$6 billion through an advertisement in Roll Call – a Capitol Hill publication regularly read by members of Congress and their staff. The ad was targeted at the Senate in anticipation of action by the Senate Agriculture Committee who was scheduled to mark-up a committee Farm Bill. The budget and finance situation for the 2007 Farm Bill remains extremely difficult and contentious, and the conservation community felt it important for all Senators to know our commitment, desires and goal for conservation program funding because there is still a risk that others will try to divert conservation funding to other titles and priorities.

House Passes Farm Bill Before August Recess -- On July 27, 2007, the House passed HR 2419 (Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007) with a recorded vote of 231:191. Although the bill had strong bipartisan support and passed out of committee with unanimous consent, the debate quickly turned into a partisan floor debate over the Majority's selected funding offsets. The Majority offered to close a loophole in the tax law for foreign-based companies and use some of the funds resulting from the increased income taxes to offset \$4 billion of increases in the Nutrition Title. Although the tax loophole was identified by the Administration in 2002 as a source of tax abuse, the Republicans deemed the loophole a "tax increase" which they could not support. The Farm Bill usually passes the House with bipartisan support, but unfortunately history did not repeat itself this year.

### *Farm Bill Fly In Day a Huge Success!*

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies hosted a Fish & Wildlife in the 2007 Farm Bill Fly-In Day on May 15-17, 2007. Those participating were from 26 state fish and wildlife agencies and 23 conservation partners for a total of 96 individuals. Hill visits made on May 16 were extremely timely and came the day prior to the House Agriculture Committee releasing its discussion bill for the Conservation Title of the 2007 Farm Bill. Hill offices visited were receptive to fly-in participants and support the conservation programs as well as increases in conservation funding.

*Conservation Coalition Releases Blueprint for Growing Conservation in the Farm Bill* – The Agriculture and Wildlife Working group (AWWG) of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership released recommendations on February 22, 2007, for the conservation programs in the 2007 Farm Bill. The report titled “Growing Conservation in the Farm Bill” recommends conservation program and policy improvements as well as funding and acreage allocations. Co-chairs of the coalition are Jen Mock Schaeffer of the Association, Dave Nomsen of Pheasants Forever and Bart James of Ducks Unlimited. Together we will work with other members of the conservation community to broaden the coalition and build community support for robust conservation provisions in the next Farm Bill. Additionally, the AWWG recommendations are consistent with those of the Association.

### **2002 Farm Bill Update**

USDA Announces FY08 Sign-up for Up to \$20 Million in Conservation Innovation Grants—On December 17, 2007, Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Arlen Lancaster announced the request for proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) for FY08. The CIG program is designed to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Three CIG categories are available in FY 2008: Natural Resource Concerns, Technology, and Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Applicants should explain how large a geographic area that the project would benefit. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-State, or nationwide in scope. Applications should describe the use of innovative technologies or approaches, or both, to address a natural resource conservation concern(s). Applications must be received in the NRCS National Headquarters by 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), on Wednesday, February 20, 2008.

*No New WHIP Contracts?* – It was brought to my attention that NRCS headquarters has given direction to State NRCS offices to not sign any new WHIP contracts or provide any funding for WHIP technical assistance. The explanation provided was concerns with not enough funding because of the Continuing Resolution and uncertainty with the program’s structure once the 2007 Farm Bill is passed since the Administration continues to seek consolidation of WHIP with EQIP in the Farm Bill. If you have ANY information or are being affected by this, please let me know ASAP by contacting me at 202-624-3688 or at [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org). Thanks!

*MOU among Association-FWS-NRCS for Species At-Risk is Final!* – The Association signed an MOU with FWS and NRCS to strengthen cooperation to proactively conserve plant and animal species at-risk and their habitats on private lands and through Farm Bill conservation programs. The intent is to identify and create more opportunities to work together to preclude the need to list additional species under the ESA, foster the recovery of species already listed, and address similar needs for State species of conservation concern identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. If you have any questions, please contact Jen Mock Schaeffer at [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org) or at 202-624-3688.

*MOU among Association-FWS-NRCS for Collaboration on Habitat Credit Trading Signed April 13, 2007* -- The Association, FWS, and NRCS signed a partnership agreement to collaborate and evaluate habitat credit trading markets and tools that will result in net conservation benefits for listed and other at-risk species and their habitats. Through cooperative conservation efforts, the signing agencies will explore the mechanics and benefits of habitat credit trading markets as well as ways to coordinate related programs and activities that will increase conservation at-risk species while providing net conservation benefits from such market systems. Please contact Jen Mock Schaeffer or Gary Taylor at 202-624-7890 if you have any questions about this MOU.

NRCS Hires Ms. Terrell Erickson as New NRCS National Biologist -- Ms. Terrell Erickson, former NRCS State Biologist for Hawaii, is the new NRCS National Biologist in Washington, DC, as of August 2007. The Association and the state fish and wildlife agencies welcome Ms. Erickson and look forward to working with her on Farm Bill conservation programs and expanding our cooperative conservation efforts with NRCS.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) –**

**States Propose New Customized Wildlife Conservation Practices under SAFE Initiative** – On March 22, 2007, at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Portland, OR, USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced a new 500,000-acre CRP practice to improve habitat for state-priority wildlife species throughout the United States. The State Areas for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative seeks to enroll 500,000 acres in new CRP contracts and allows conservation practices currently offered under CRP to be fine-tuned to improve, connect or create higher-quality habitat and promote healthier ecosystems in areas identified as essential to effective fish and wildlife management. SAFE will enable the public, producers, state and federal agencies, non-profit conservation organizations and others to propose areas where new CRP acreage may be established to address the specific habitat needs of priority fish and wildlife species. Successful proposals must comply with CRP eligibility requirements, may come from any of the 50 states, and FSA state offices started accepting proposals in August which will go through a review process that includes FSA and the USDA state technical committees. FSA headquarters is reviewing SAFE submissions to ensure the proposal criteria are met and whether additional information is required from applicants before approval. **As of March 14, 2008 FSA has approved 75 proposals in 34 states. If you have any questions or problems with your SAFE proposal, please contact Jen Mock Schaeffer at 202-624-3688.**

Millions of Acres to Leave the CRP between 2007-2010 – According to July 2007 statistics from FSA, current enrollment in CRP is 36.79 million acres which includes General, Continuous and CREP contracts, but the exodus will begin September 20, 2007. Of the 5.6 million acres scheduled to expire in 2007, FSA predicts that 2.5 million acres will not be re-enrolled through Re-enrollment and Extension (REX), Continuous or CREP contracts. Fortunately, 2.6 million acres will immediately begin new 10- or 15-year contracts at new rental rates under REX on October 1, 2007. Although FSA anticipates 86% and 78% of eligible acres in 2007 and 2008-2010, respectively, to stay in the program (~23 million acres), total expected loss of acres through the REX process is about 4.8 million acres. This number could increase if the Secretary of Agriculture decides to allow landowners to get out of their contracts early without penalty in order to meet the country's food, fiber, feed, fuel and export needs. Such actions may not take into consideration the environmental and landscape-level effects that millions of acres going back into production could have on fish, wildlife, their habitats and the state fish and wildlife agencies' conservation efforts. The Association and their conservation partners continue to press the Secretary of Agriculture to not allow early-outs of CRP contracts.

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) – The Association will continue to work with the conservation community and Congress to fix problems associated with the appraisal process through the Farm Bill Conference Committee. All information on this subject is greatly appreciated. Please send information to Jen Mock Schaeffer at [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org). Thanks.

Johanns Announces Additional Conservation Security Program Activities – On August 7, 2007, Secretary Johanns announced more funds for CSP implementation will be available. Funds will be made available for both the completion of payments on FY2007 CSP contracts as well as to prepare for a future program signup. Specifically, \$35 million has been made available to complete payments to producers who received only partial funding for their FY2007 payment. In addition, \$2.93 million is being made available to help producers and Natural Resources Conservation Service field staff prepare for a future program signup in 51 watersheds in 50 states, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean Area.

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP): Assessing the Fish and Wildlife Benefits of Farm Bill Programs -- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in partnership with others, is making a concerted effort to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation program practices. CEAP is scheduled to proceed through mid-2008; however, USDA is expected to continue to monitor the effectiveness of conservation programs beyond that date.

- The objective of the Wildlife Component of CEAP is to quantify the benefits that Farm Bill conservation programs and practices provide to fish and wildlife resources. Outcomes will enable more effective implementation of the existing programs and inform the Congress and the public in the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization process.
- *Your expertise is needed!:* We invite any state fish and wildlife agency staff with experience in Farm Bill conservation programs to participate in the regional work groups. Jen Mock Schaeffer (Association Farm Bill Coordinator) and Ray Evans are leading the effort for the Association and working closely with regional work group members to facilitate development of regional work plans. Work groups are assembled through regional meetings and conferences. Please contact Mr. Ray Evans at 573-896-4836 if you are willing to participate in this important effort. Thanks!

## FEDERAL-STATE AQUACULTURE DRUG APPROVAL PROJECT

After over 12 years of work, this project is moving rapidly toward conclusion. The Federal-State Aquaculture Drug Approval Partnership Project (known as the Association Project) and the continuing efforts on the part of its participants have made great progress and are close to having limited approvals from the Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) for seven of the nine Association Project drugs. With the extensive base of existing data, it is anticipated that some additional effectiveness data will be required to develop the broad “all freshwater-reared fish” approvals envisioned in the original Association Project proposal. These broad approvals will allow the widespread, legal use of these drugs for fish management and aquaculture.

To date the project has helped gain expansions and extensions of the New Animal Drug Applications (NADAs) for two label claims for formalin and one supplemental label claim for immersion marking with oxytetracycline. Two pharmaceutical sponsors for formalin and three for oxytetracycline have stepped forward to add the new label claims to the labeling of their products.

It is anticipated that NADAs will be submitted in 2006 for three broad label claims for hydrogen peroxide. In addition, final data packages are projected to be submitted in late 2006 or 2007 to CVM for the following drugs with the number of label claims in parenthesis: chloramine-T (2), copper sulfate (1), florfenicol (4), formalin (1), hydrogen peroxide (1), oral oxytetracycline (2), and immersion oxytetracycline (1). From 2008 to 2009, copper sulfate (1) and potassium permanganate (1).

The submission of these NADAs should lead to approvals for nine drugs and 20 label claims. All of this progress will have been made as a result of the efforts that were funded in large part by 38 state natural resources agencies, three federal agencies, and 10 company sponsors over a 15-year period. The total public sector contribution as of 2005 is more than \$25 million; drug sponsors have also contributed a significant, but for confidentiality reasons, unknown amount. To put this effort in perspective, pharmaceutical companies usually expect to spend \$12 million over a ten-year period on one drug, one label claim and one species.

To help realize these potential outcomes and to finish the Association’s commitment to this project a new National Conservation Need was selected for the 2006 MSCG cycle to solicit proposals specific to approval requirement for AQUI-S, a zero withdrawal anesthetic drug. In cooperation with the national coordinator and other project partners, the Association’s Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee submitted a successful proposal under that NCN to conduct critical studies and related activities necessary to complete national coordination of this project and obtain approval for AQUI-S use. All studies, however, related to AQUI-S target animal safety were temporarily suspended in 2007 until the National Toxicology Program completed its review of the active ingredient (Isoeugenol) in AQUI-S. **That review was recently completed, and it was concluded there is clear evidence of carcinogenicity. Therefore, AQUI-S in its present formulation is no longer a candidate as an anesthetic for fisheries field use.** The Drug Approval Working Group will evaluate options for using remaining MSCG dollars for a replacement candidate drug for testing.

## FURBEARER RESOURCES AND BMP OUTREACH PROJECTS

Furbearer Research Program – While all 50 states support the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping in the United States, to date, 38 states have participated in and assisted with trap testing projects to evaluate traps and trapping methods. All regions of the US have directly participated including states in the Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, West, and Alaska. More than 80 different restraining and body-gripping trap types have been evaluated. Data have been collected on 16 of the 23 species of furbearers prioritized for testing.

As wildlife management agencies across the nation continue to face impediments to managing furbearer species through trapping, it is critical that agencies have the type of science based information on trapping, provided by BMPs, to allow them to maintain regulated trapping as a viable wildlife management tool. Likewise, the BMP project work is an important component of the U.S. understanding with the European Union (USA/EU Agreed Minute and Annex) for improving the welfare of trapped animals, and continues to effectively sustain the USA/EU trade in wild fur.

The purpose of the Best Management Practices process is to scientifically evaluate the traps and trapping systems used for capturing furbearers in the United States. Trapping BMPs are based on scientific research and professional experience regarding currently available traps and trapping technology. Trapping BMPs identify both techniques and traps that address the welfare of trapped animals and allow for the efficient, selective, safe, and practical capture of furbearers. These guides are intended to be a practical tool for trappers, wildlife biologists, wildlife agencies, and anyone interested in improved traps and trapping systems. BMPs include technical recommendations from expert trappers and biologists, and a list of specifications of traps that meet or exceed BMP criteria. The results of this research serve as a reference guide to wildlife management agencies, conservation organizations, tribal nations, researchers, trapper organizations, individual trappers, and others interested in the continued improvement of traps and trapping systems. Trapping is an element of many wildlife management programs. State fish and wildlife agencies must continue to take a lead role by establishing a practical and effective plan for the improvement of trapping systems in order to maintain trapping as a valuable wildlife management practice.

BMP Development – Best Management Practices for Trapping documents for mink, marten, weasel, and skunk will be produced during 2008. To date, thirteen trapping BMPs have been produced including BMPs for beaver, muskrat, fisher, river otter, nutria, eastern coyote, western coyote, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, raccoon and opossum, along with a general Introduction. These are now available on the website at [www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html). CDs containing these BMPs have been distributed to state agency directors, I&E chiefs, state furbearer biologists, federal fish and wildlife agencies, and trapper associations.

National Furbearer Harvest Database -- This new database will be administered by the U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group and supported by Association staff. It will provide an outlet for all states to collect furbearer harvest information in one concise location. Information such as the number of licenses sold, amount of revenue collected from license sales, average pelt value, harvest estimates, and harvest status of species will be collected. This database is expected to be on-line for state use this summer.

Ownership and Use of Traps by Trappers in the United States Survey -- A survey of trappers in the United States was conducted to provide a better understanding of trappers, their equipment and techniques used for capturing furbearers, and to provide information to those in furbearer management which will allow them to make informed decisions on trapping matters. More than 4000 trappers from 46 states were surveyed. Results of the survey have recently been provided to all state fish and wildlife agencies via CD. The report is also available at [www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html). The survey was conducted on behalf of the Association by Responsive Management.

Summary of Trapping Regulations for Fur Harvesting in the United States -- The U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group conducted a survey to summarize state furbearer trapping regulations in 1995. A similar survey was conducted in 2007 and is now available on the website at

[www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html). Results represent the current conditions and restrictions within existing laws for the harvest of 26 species of furbearers by regulated trapping throughout the United States. The body of regulations set forth by state and provincial wildlife agencies for the harvest of furbearers is among the most complex and comprehensive of all laws concerning wildlife today. The information within this report will be very useful to furbearer managers to help examine technologies and initiate and make furbearer management decisions. Results have been provided to state and federal fish and wildlife agencies via electronic format as well as being available on the Association website.

Technical papers on “Modern Snaring Technology” and “Ethical Use of Bodygrip Traps” on dry land – These papers are currently being written by members of the U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group for use by state agency wildlife managers and other user groups. These papers will provide wildlife managers and other user groups with information on the state-of-the-art in these trapping technologies as well as giving suggestions about their proper use. These documents will be provided to state and federal fish and wildlife agencies in electronic format. They will also be available via the Association website.

#### Train the Trainers Workshops

Based on requests by state agency personnel, the Association has received a grant to present “Train the Trainers” workshops to support state agency hunter/trapper education coordinators and instructors in the use of these newly developed trapper education materials. The workshop has three main components – use and customization of the student manual and workbook; presenting a skills/field program; and use of the authentic assessment method for student performance evaluation. Numerous workshops were held around the country but workshops are no longer available. A website is now being developed which will continue to provide states with the instructor training needed to administer the National Trapper Education Program.

National Trapper Education Curriculum -- In 1979, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies passed a resolution recommending and supporting the development of trapper education course materials. These materials were distributed to state agencies following an 18-month development period that included extensive evaluation. Designed for trappers of all experience levels, developed using trapping best management practices and using the standardized approach that has made hunter education so successful, the program is very flexible and can be adapted to the needs of each state. The curriculum provides content standards, learning objectives, student manuals, student workbooks, a student exam, and an instructors guide and evaluation forms. Educators, furbearer biologists, expert trappers, and representatives from the International Hunter Education Association were consulted in the development of this program. Because each state implements hunter/trapper education differently, we have sent this CD to the following state agency personnel: Director, Public Affairs/I&E chief, Hunter/trapper coordinator, Furbearer program contact, and Law enforcement chief. Additionally, the CD was shared with the Canadian provinces/territories and the state offices for USDA-Wildlife Services. The education curriculum is also available at [www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html).

These materials are especially timely, as many state agencies have recently begun the process of revising trapper education materials. It is our hope that by adopting and customizing these materials, states will be able to save valuable time and expense. The curriculum will not only inform trappers about Best Management Practices, but it will also provide consistent information to trappers in every state. As a result, the program will provide for the potential for licensing reciprocity through content standards. *If states choose to customize the materials, please note that the content standards should be maintained to promote consistency among the states. At the March 2005 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies business meeting, a recommendation was passed by the agency Directors that state agencies voluntarily adopt the content standards developed for this program.*

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROJECT

The work of this project is split between domestic and international projects. **International activities have been pretty much focused on CITES, while domestic activities have been focused on Trap Testing work where significant gains have been made (see Trap Testing report).**

During the last few months, a sizeable percentage of project time (presently funded and staffed at the 50% level) has focused on CITES work – **in this case preparing for upcoming meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees.** The entire CITES Team -- Dale Towell (ID F&G), Carolyn Caldwell (Ohio DNR), Jack Buckley (MA) and Buddy Baker (SC DNR) – are involved. **When the Regional Association representatives met in Louisville, KY in the Fall with the Federal CITES leaders, consensus was reached that our first priority would be working to make this CITES control system more efficient for our member agencies.** CITES Team Leader Carolyn Caldwell, the MAFWA CITES coordinator, set a time-table for the group's work to carry this agenda forward. **This whole effort at de-coupling bobcat management from CITES is a good example of how our endeavors free up state agency resources being wasted on unnecessary tracking, tagging and reporting on an abundant resource with robust populations.** Buddy Baker (SC), the SEAFWA CITES coordinator, is one of the leaders working with the FWS to resurvey states here and countries around the world on the status of Lynx species in their areas of the world. This is but one of the efforts underway to wrest control of bobcat management from the protectionists.

**The revised CITES regulations (CFR 50 CFR) are finally in place and working! These regulations update the way CITES is administered in the USA and the regulations had never been updated!**

Our CITES representatives and our Furbearer Technical work Group have been assisting the EU as they pursue required research under our mutual understanding. Our contacts believe that the EU will honor the understanding with respect to maintaining trade as long as we maintain an active testing program and carry out our own commitments. The next meeting of the Joint Management committee (JMC) of the Parties and cooperators to the understanding will most likely be held in Brussels on July 1, 2008.

Wildlife without Borders -- Plans are underway for this year's US/Canada/ Mexico Trilateral Conference in Mexico. The Association will provide funding to each Mexico border state to send a representative. The Fish and Wildlife Health and Bird Conservation Committees will also be represented

## JOINT TASK FORCE ON FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

**The Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (JTF)** was established in September 2002 to review issues identified by State and Service personnel in the administration and policies of the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. The Office of the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a state fish and wildlife agency director, as designated by the Association, serve as the co-chairs of the JTF. The Service names six additional federal employees as members and the Association names six additional state fish and wildlife agency employees as members.

### **Current members include:**

State Representatives: Glen Salmon (IN), Co-Chair; Ed Parker (CT), Lisa Evans (AK); John Frampton (SC); Kelly Hepler (AK); Tom Niebauer (WI); Keith Sexson (KS)

FWS Representatives: Rowan Gould, Co-Chair; Tom Barnes; Joyce Johnson; Steve Barton, Robyn Thorson; Chris McKay; John Organ

JTF Staff: Carol Bambery (Association Counsel); Kim Galvin (FWS); Larry Mellinger (DOI Attorney); Christina Zarrella (Association)

**If determined to be necessary, the JTF recommends policy clarifications to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).** Starting in late 2005, the USFWS began issuing policy clarifications as new Service Manual Chapters rather than issuing Director's Orders (DOs), which are only in effect for one year and must be renewed. To date, 16 clarifications have been issued, including five Manual Chapters, six DOs (which are being converted to Manual Chapters), three Director's memorandums, and two memorandums from the JTF Co-Chairs. These policy clarifications are used by USFWS's regional staff in administering grant programs.

**The JTF is exploring the applicability of policy clarifications to not just the two Federal Aid programs, Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration, but also ten other programs whose funds come from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (WR) and/or Sport Fish Restoration Account (SFR).** The 10 include (1) Clean Vessel Act Pumpout Grant Program; (2) Boating Infrastructure Grants; (3) Section 10 Firearm and Bow Hunter Education and Safety Grants; (4) Multistate Conservation Grant Program; (5) Landowner Incentive Program; (6) State Wildlife Grants; (7) National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants; (8) North American Wetlands Conservation Fund; (9) Boating Safety Financial Assistance (DHS and US Coast Guard), and (10) Priority Louisiana Coastal Wetland Restoration Projects.

The last JTF meeting was held February 11-12, 2008 in Arlington, VA. Items on the Agenda included: Cooperative Farming (policy language was finalized and approved), Climate Change Legislation Review (for potential impacts to the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Programs), Status of SWG Program Review, White House Conference on North American Model, USFWS Staff and Budget Update, and Review of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Draft Strategic Plan and Draft Conservation Heritage Measures.

**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>.

## LEGAL REPORT

### Constitutional Right to Hunt in Virginia

James Lewis et al v Reston Association, Circuit Court, Fairfax County, Virginia, case no. CL 2007-550

The Plaintiffs in this case are property owners that want to bow hunt on their property. Reston Homeowners Association changed the homeowner restrictions to include a provision against discharge of bow and arrow on property within the homeowners association. Virginia has a constitutional provision guaranteeing the right of its citizens to hunt. The trial court found against the Association which sought to prohibit them from deer hunting on their own land under this restrictive covenant. An order entered Dec. 15, 2007, found that no claim existed under Virginia's Right to Hunt provision because no state action was involved, but that enforcement by the court of the restrictive covenant would be state action, and unreasonable restrictions are not enforceable. Further, the court held that the restrictive covenant against deer hunting did not apply to plaintiffs because they are grandfathered. Any use of the property which is being carried out on the effective date of the deed shall be permitted if by the same person on the same lot.

The court rejected plaintiffs' alternate ground for relief alleging that denial of their application to hunt was arbitrary and capricious. The evidence showed a need to cull the deer population for reasons of health and safety and that no safety concern existed from bow hunting from tree stand. However, there was evidence that a wounded deer may go onto another's property and may present health and safety problems. Also there was evidence that this limited hunting would not appreciably affect the deer population. The court could not say that the board had no rational basis for its decision, so it was not arbitrary and capricious.

However, as noted previously, plaintiffs' hunting activity predated the restrictive covenant and they have been engaged in the activity continuously. They were thus grandfathered, and are entitled to judgment. The case is now on appeal. The Archery Trade Association has been very helpful in advancing this case.

### **Exclusive Jurisdiction of State Agency to Manage Bobcat Population Upheld**

Michigan Bear Hunters Ass'n v. Michigan Natural Resources Com'n, 2007 WL 4124266 (November 2007)

Plaintiff Michigan Bear Hunters Association (MBHA) and intervening plaintiffs Michigan State United Coon Hunters Association, Michigan Hunting Dog Federation, and Upper Peninsula Bear Houndsmen Association filed a cause of action to enjoin a bobcat trapping season in the Northern Lower Peninsula (NLP) implemented by defendants Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC). After a bench trial, Ingham Circuit Judge Beverley Nettles-Nickerson reversed defendants' decision implementing a bobcat trapping season in the NLP and permanently enjoined the bobcat trapping season. Defendants appealed and the Michigan Court of Appeals reversed the trial court.

Plaintiffs argue that defendants violated Michigan law by failing to use principles of sound scientific management when issuing an order permitting bobcat trapping in the NLP. The court concluded that the circuit court did not have jurisdiction to hear this cause of action. Michigan law (MCL 324.40113a(2)) states:

"The commission of natural resources shall have the exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game as defined in section 40103 in this state. The commission of natural resources shall, to the greatest extent practicable, utilize principles of sound scientific management in making decisions regarding the taking of game. Issuance of orders by the commission of natural resources regarding the taking of game shall be made following a public meeting and an opportunity for public input...."

This case is important because it recognized the Michigan Natural Resources Commission's exclusive jurisdiction to regulate taking of game in Michigan and did not permit plaintiffs to challenge that authority.

### **Western Great Lakes gray wolves**

Humane Society of the United States, et al, v Dirk Kempthorne, DOI, case no. 07-CV-00677.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies thanks the Michigan DNR for an important amicus curie brief written by Michigan Attorney General's office in the lawsuit filed in the district court for the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C. against the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by the Humane Society of the United States. The lawsuit challenged the Service's decision to remove the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes states from the endangered species list under Endangered Species Act. Based upon the documented recovery of the wolf population in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the Service determined that the gray wolf no longer met the definitions of threatened or endangered under the ESA. Michigan's brief supported the Service's decision to delist.

Through the leadership of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the States of Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, as well as both the Association and the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies signed onto Michigan's state brief. Michigan's brief argues that the Service's action is consistent with law, the protection of the gray wolf, and represents an appropriate allocation of wildlife management responsibility between the federal and State governments and should be upheld.

### **Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolves**

Defenders of Wildlife v Dale Hall, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director, CASE NO cv-08-14-m-dwm

FWS published a proposed revision of special regulation for the Central Idaho and Yellowstone area nonessential experimental populations of gray wolves in the Northern Rockies in order to protect big

game from wolf predation. The Service completed a FONSI for the section 10(j) rule, stating the 10(j) rule revision was not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment with the meaning of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The new 10(j) rule permitted take of wolves having an unacceptable impact on wild ungulate populations.

Plaintiffs filed suit in the U. S. District Court for District of Montana, Missoula Division, claiming FWS had violated NEPA, asking the court to enjoin the Service from authorizing any take of gray wolves under the revised 10(j) rule.

Since filing of this lawsuit, the Service has delisted the Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolves from the Endangered Species Act which may serve to moot this lawsuit but trigger a subsequent suit on the delist decision.

## LEGISLATION

The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, with the Democrats holding the majority in both the House and Senate by slim margins, is fully experiencing that, like their predecessors, a narrow majority makes legislating challenging. Bipartisan support is essential, and cloture has been and likely will be required for any significant vote in the Senate. Farm Bill reauthorization remains a high priority for the Association, as does seeking assured funding for state comprehensive wildlife programs, and furthering private lands conservation through tax incentives. Finally, while there has been much legislative attention devoted to and progress on climate change proposals, it still remains unlikely that a significant and comprehensive bill that regulates greenhouse gas emissions can pass this Congress which would be signed by the President.

**Farm Bill:** The Farm Bill expired September 30, 2007 and Congress remains heavily into reauthorization activities. Both Agriculture Committee Chairs, as did their predecessors, have indicated their strong support for the Conservation Title. The House Agriculture Committee reported a bipartisan Farm Bill out of the full Committee which was subsequently passed by the House in late July of 2007. Just before they recessed for the end of the year holiday, the Senate passed its Farm Bill largely reflecting the work of the Senate Agriculture Committee. See details on each bill content elsewhere in this report. **While deliberations on reconciliation of the bills between the House, Senate and White House continue, Congress has passed 3 short-term extensions of authorization, the latest lasting until April 25. Funds available for the Farm Bill could significantly decrease in the next budget resolution which is a compelling reason driving the need for agreement between the parties. It appears that the House, Senate and White House have agreed to spend approximately \$10 billion over baseline in the new Farm Bill, but the biggest difference between the House and Senate bills is not in policy, but rather how each chamber pays for the additional money made available to conservation and other programs. Revenue raisers acceptable to the White House will have to be concluded in bill conference.** Both the House and Senate did identify funds in their bill for WRP and GRP, both of which have no budget after September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Assured Wildlife Funding:** We continue to seek assured and dedicated (direct spending, not subject to annual discretionary appropriations) funds for state comprehensive wildlife programs (the WCRP account under the Pittman-Robertson fund). Many income sources remain potentially viable, from Outer Continental Shelf gas and oil lease receipts; onshore gas and oil lease receipts; cap and trade revenue from a potential regulatory emissions protocol for greenhouse gases; or others. Several bills have been introduced on climate change and many have a title which would provide potential funds from climate change derived revenue to wildlife programs.

Other proposals relating to capture of potential OCS receipts are also maturing and we continue to advocate state comprehensive wildlife funding also from those proposals.

**Climate Change Bills:** Several bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate addressing climate change and many have identified direct-spending funding (not subject to appropriations) to be made available to state and federal agencies to remediate impacts to fish, wildlife and their habitats.

Amounts, delivery mechanisms, and other details differ widely. However, it is very favorable that many of the bills recognize the need for wildlife funding at the state and federal level. In general, we favor a design that would allocate funds to the state fish and wildlife programs using the existing Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux and/or Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (under PR) accounts as delivery mechanisms, with the appropriate sideboards on program expenditures to ensure that the funds are used to remediate impacts from climate change to fish, wildlife and their habitats. Our preference is a 90:10 federal:state match. The source of anticipated funds would most likely be revenues accruing to the federal government from the auction of carbon credits to industry that enable them to satisfy the carbon emission allowances imposed on them by legislation. Of course, some of that money will also go to research and development; remediation of impacts on infrastructure; assistance to under-privileged communities, etc.

It is still most likely that a comprehensive regulatory based climate bill that could pass Congress and would be signed by the President will not occur until after the 2008 Presidential election. From a substance perspective, a comprehensive legislative approach that would address all energy media (electricity, transportation, manufacturing, etc.) in an equitable manner that is economy-wide is as daunting a task as Congress has recently faced. Thus, there will continue to be many hearings preceding the construction of a bill, and much deliberation in both chambers.

We will continue to work with key Committee leadership and House and Senate leaders on both sides of the aisle on proposals that best meet our objectives.

In December 2007 the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, by a vote of 11-8, reported S2191 (from Senator Lieberman and Senator Warner) to the floor for consideration. While the ultimate fate of the bill has a long and arduous road ahead of it, this is the first significant legislative action taken by this Congress on a comprehensive Climate Change bill that would impose allowances economy-wide on GHG emissions and establish an auction of carbon credits, the revenues from which would be dedicated under direct spending (not subject to annual appropriations) for remediating the effects of Climate Change on natural resources; for public infrastructure; for research and development of new technologies; for assistance to underprivileged communities, etc. Most significantly, under S2191, 18% of those auction credit revenues would be dedicated to state and federal activities to remediate the effects of Climate Change on fish, wildlife, their habitats and other natural resources through state and national strategies and other existing programs. By some estimates, that could mean ultimately up to several billion dollars each year for fish, wildlife and other natural resources programs. The bill would direct 35% of that revenue to state fish and wildlife agencies using the WCRP Account under Pittman-Robertson as the delivery mechanism, for activities to assist fish and wildlife adaptation and habitat resiliency in response to Climate Change. Any and all species of fish and wildlife affected by Climate Change are eligible and spending would be driven by a state developed strategy which would be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. In addition to the 35% going to the state fish and wildlife agencies, the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, EPA, Corps of Engineers, and NOAA would receive funds to be spent on Climate Change remediation according to a national strategy to be developed with input from a Science Advisory Board.

We worked very closely with our colleagues in the hunting and fishing conservation community and at NWF, TNC and DoW in particular on the construction of the language that is represented in the natural resources adaptation title. We are very appreciative of their interest in and support for the role of the state fish and wildlife agencies in the Climate Change arena, and our mutual commitment to protecting both the funds and substance of this title will be imperative as the bill furthers its legislative progress.

Conservation Tax Incentives: We are working closely with Congressional champions in the leadership of the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee on a bill to make permanent the tax credit to private landowners who donate conservation easements on their property to the government or a qualified conservation organization. This provision, passed last Congress after many years of work by the fish and wildlife, land and agriculture conservation community, is good only for tax year 2006 and 2007. There is broad support for making this permanent and it could happen on any of a number of larger tax bills, or the Farm Bill.

Senator Crapo (ID) and Senator Lincoln (AR) recently reintroduced (from the last Congress) a bill with broad bipartisan support which would give landowners a tax credit for either entering into an easement or a habitat restoration agreement for conservation of threatened or endangered species and their habitat on their property. The bill amends the IRS code and not the ESA. It has the support already of the leadership of the Senate Finance Committee and a House companion bill has also been introduced.

Energy Bills: Last fall, the House passed and sent to the Senate a much slimmed-down energy bill which would raise CAFÉ standards, impose taxes on energy development, and set a renewable fuels standard. No provisions relating to public lands energy development that were in the previous House-passed bill are included. However since the Senate and White House continued to object to some of the House provisions, the Senate stripped out the tax provisions and renewable fuels standard, and passed a bill which only raises CAFÉ standards, which was subsequently passed by the House and signed by the President.

Endangered Species Act: ESA reauthorization is not a high priority for either Congressional Committee of jurisdiction. The House Natural Resources Committee leadership has indicated that it will likely hold oversight hearings, and is seeking more robust funding for ESA implementation. However, it appears unlikely that any significant ESA reauthorization bill will move in this Congress.

Clean Water Act Jurisdiction: Congressman Oberstar (MN) and Congressman Dingell (MI) introduced a bill that seeks to clarify the jurisdictional reach of the CWA as it relates to isolated wetlands and intermittent streams, in the context of the post Rapanos-Carabell Supreme Court decision of last year. Senator Feingold (WI) has introduced the companion Senate bill. The bill would also seek to restore wetlands protection to the pre-SWANCC (2001 Supreme Court decision) jurisdictional status. While we are supportive of their effort, we are hesitant to support their explicit bill language. While we share their objective, we continue to look at alternative bill language which we (and others) believe is more explicit in grounding Congress' authority (to protect these waters) in the Constitution, and less subject to judicial interpretation. We will continue to work with Congressman Oberstar, Congressman Dingell, Senator Feingold and others as their bill legislatively progresses. It is still unclear though what scope of a legislative clarification (if any) could pass this Congress and be signed by this President.

FY2009 Appropriations: As always, there are winners and losers in the President's FY2009 budget request, but in this economy constrained by war-time and national security spending, maintaining level funding has to be considered a success. **Each Director has been provided a copy of the Association FY2009 Budget Recommendations, which appears in toto elsewhere in this report.**

## MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Management Assistance Team (MAT) provides, free of charge to state fish and wildlife agencies, expertise focused on leadership development, in the form of consulting, employee training, and other related services in the area of organization and human resources development, management systems, change management and agency effectiveness. Because MAT is funded by a Multi-state Conservation Grant, MAT's services are provided at no additional cost to states. MAT's current funding runs from January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2010. MAT also receives funding from the National Conservation Leadership Institute, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service pays the salary for project leader Dwight Guynn.

### State Leadership Development Program

Per directions from the Association's Executive Committee and Leadership and Professional Development Committee, MAT is focused on implementing leadership development programs for state fish and wildlife agencies. Using input from a survey with participation from all state fish and wildlife agencies, MAT completed the *States' Toolbox for Leadership Development*. The *Toolbox* is a comprehensive approach to integrating a leadership development program within any state fish and wildlife agency and includes strategies necessary for implementing the program as well as a comprehensive set of resources to develop leadership at all levels in an agency: online and face-to-face

workshops, evaluation methods, and facilitator resources. MAT provides train-the-trainer workshops so that state agencies can have their own staff deliver the MAT workshops at will.

In September 2007, the directors voted to approve MAT's implementation of the Conservation Leadership Program of Study (CLPS). This program would permit states without the resources to develop and manage their own, comprehensive leadership development program to involve key personnel in a significant leadership development program resulting in a certificate of completion. MAT designed the CLPS curriculum to encompass the key knowledge areas and competencies required by an individual to successfully exercise leadership and mid- and senior-levels in a state fish and wildlife agency. The CLPS would combine online courses with face-to-face workshops over a 1-3 year period.

In 2007 MAT provided the Conservation Learning Campus to deliver leadership development opportunities to all state fish and wildlife agencies through an online learning system. Visit [www.conservationlearning.org](http://www.conservationlearning.org). MAT has contracted with eCollege to provide the platform for MAT to offer select leadership courses in an instructor-led, asynchronous learning environment. The eCollege software used by MAT uses research supported ([www.sloan-c.org](http://www.sloan-c.org)) best practices to economically deliver learning to geographically dispersed professionals in a way that can *improve* learning in many cases.

MAT provides 6 online leadership classes and 5 face-to-face leadership classes as part of the *Toolbox*. MAT also continues to train a National Faculty to assist with course delivery. MAT's online courses have been a success by providing increased accessibility to leadership development opportunities with fewer time, travel, and cost restrictions. Online courses are available through open registration to Association member agencies on a quarterly basis.

#### Online Courses Available:

- Creative & Critical Thinking
- The Adaptive Leader
- Visionary Leadership
- Power
- Secrets to Agency Assessment & Development
- Going from Good to Great

MAT will add a new online leadership course: Leader as Supervisor in spring 2008.

Face-to-Face Courses Currently Available (MAT focuses on train-the-trainer so states can deliver their own courses):

- Emotional Intelligence
- Mastering Agency Change
- Leadership Ethics
- Publics, Problems, and Politics
- National Faculty Certification for Online Courses

#### National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)

The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) is a world class leadership development program focused specifically on the conservation organizations. The Association joined with a number of like-minded conservation organizations to develop the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) to prepare future leaders in fish and wildlife conservation. This initiative has been integrated into the Association's leadership initiative under the guidance of the Management Assistance Team and the Leadership and Professional Development Committee. Beginning in 2006 the NCLI provides an annual opportunity for state, federal and private fish and wildlife professionals to attend a top-rate leadership development program. Developed to help conservation organizations meet the challenge of continued leadership as current leaders retire from the workforce, the Institute combines leadership and management development training with exposure to the history and current challenges of fish and wildlife conservation in North America.

MAT worked with faculty from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the Association, USFWS, The Conservation Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, WMI, the Boone and Crockett Club, and others to design and successfully implement the NCLI. MAT created the NCLI curriculum and website and is responsible for program coordination and management.

The first cohort of the NCLI concluded at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri on May 2, 2007 with 35 Fellows completing the 9-month experience. The second cohort concluded their experience on April 22, 2008. In all, 36 Fellows participated in the second cohort coming from state fish and wildlife agencies, conservation-focused federal agencies, and the non-governmental community. Selection of Fellows for the third cohort is underway.

One goal of the NCLI is to create a network of conservation leaders. At the conclusion of the first NCLI program, the Fellows created the NCLI Alumni Association (NCLIAA). MAT is working with the NCLIAA to facilitate their network building efforts, and has built a website for the NCLIAA to enhance their networking opportunities.

The NCLI is accepting nominations for the third cohort through May 31, 2008.

Additional information is available via the NCLI website ([www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org)).

#### Consulting and Training

MAT provides ongoing consulting and training for state fish and wildlife agencies primarily focused on leadership development. States most recently helped by MAT this year regarding leadership development include TX, MT, AZ, AK, and SD. MAT also conducted an assessment for NJ regarding their organization structure, and consulted with MN on workforce planning and with DE on licensing and funding regarding saltwater license implementation. In addition, MAT worked with WAFWA to update the Commission and Boards Guidebook produced by MAT. Also MAT conducted a workshop at the WAFWA commissioner's forum and has been requested to provide another workshop for commissioners at the annual AFWA meeting.

As approved by the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, MAT will develop and begin to offer regional workshops to help states address their workforce planning needs. These workshops will be held at accessible locations designed to attract the highest number of states possible. Participating states would send a small team of people who would learn how to create a workforce planning framework and begin to work on their state's workforce planning needs. The first regional workshop is scheduled for July 23-24, 2008 at the National Conservation Training Center.

#### Staffing

Melissa McCormick has moved to Florida – the new location for her husband's employment. Sally Ann Hardy joined MAT as the new training services coordinator responsible for working with all of our program participants.

For more information on MAT and their services offered to state fish and wildlife agencies, please visit [www.matteam.org](http://www.matteam.org) or contact Dr. Sally Guynn at 304-876-7395, Dr. Dwight Guynn at 304-876-7387 or Jake Faibisch at 304-876-7915, [sallyg@matteam.org](mailto:sallyg@matteam.org), [dwightg@matteam.org](mailto:dwightg@matteam.org) or [jacobf@matteam.org](mailto:jacobf@matteam.org).

## **MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION**

**North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) – The U.S. NABCI Committee met on February 4-5, 2008 to discuss progress and make decisions about its work plan that includes coordinated monitoring, private lands management, conservation design/landscape planning, international cooperation, and communications. Eighteen of its 21 member were in attendance. The National Park Service is the newest member of the NABCI Committee. Terrell Erickson, NRCS, Bob Ellis, Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries, and David Goad, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, are**

the new representatives for NRCS, the National Flyway Council, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, respectively.

The Private Lands Subcommittee is looking at how the US 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 purpose 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. The Subcommittee met with the Regional Assistant Chiefs and will be speaking with the biologists and other NRCS staff also. The discussion of strategic Farm Bill habitat initiatives was framed by a series of examples of bird conservation planning from the FWS Habitat Assessment and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET) in North Dakota and Minnesota, PRBO Conservation Science in California, and the Rainwater Basin JV. The examples helped illustrate the type of planning/modeling being conducted by the bird conservation community and how these products might be used by NRCS. Also, the Subcommittee will present to NRCS Wildlife Biologist in June on the concept of strategic habitat initiatives for birds. The June issue of The All-Bird Bulletin (<http://www.nabci-us.org/news.html>) highlighted some of the great partnerships that are ongoing on private lands that the bird conservation community is a partner. The Subcommittee is updating the Farm Bill User's Guide developed in the late 1990's. The audience is the wildlife conservationist. The updated User's Guide will be available as soon as possible after the Farm Bill is reauthorized. A Table of Contents has been developed and Randy Gray, retired NRCS national biologist, will be assisting with development of the guide. The Subcommittee is working with Jen Mock Schaeffer and the Agricultural Conservation Committee on the Guide. The Committee also discussed the idea of developing a farm bill user's guide for the landowners. The purpose of the guide would be to help landowners understand the bottom line economic benefits of conservation practices and how/what conservation practices can help them solve specific problems. There are some resources available now that can help advance the discussion. They include work done in Missouri and Arkansas, the NRCS Agricultural Wildlife Conservation Center, and by Kansas State University.

The Tri-national NABCI Committee is advancing international conservation efforts on various fronts with a focus on promoting regional alliances (joint venture-like partnerships) in Mexico; securing new and innovative funding sources for bird conservation by promoting and soliciting funding for Continentally Important Proposals. The Continentally Important Proposals have been developed from five priority sites in Mexico (Janos, Yucatan, Marismas Nacionales, Laguna Madre, and El Triunfo) and linked to sites and Joint Ventures in the US and Canada through common priority species. **Two documents, one summarizing the projects, and a second providing details on each project, have been completed. In order to advance these and other international priorities, the US NABCI Committee met jointly with the Mexican NABCI Committee in August 2007 in Mexico City. The US and Mexico NABCI Committee continue to visit their priorities that were identified and determine how best to advance them. There will also be a meeting of the NABCI Tri-national Committee on May 12, 2008.**

**The Committee is developing briefing packages and conservation messages for discussion with the transition teams that will be in place in Federal Agencies in early 2009. The purpose is to inform the new administration about the priority needs for bird conservation. These messages will most likely also be used at the North American Conference in March 2009.**

The Conservation Design Subcommittee helped develop three sessions at the Partners in Flight Conference in McAllen, Texas in February 2008. The sessions addressed population objectives; the current status of evaluation of bird-habitat relationships; and the greatest existing challenges in the science of bird conservation including issues of detectability, vital rates, continental connectivity, measuring environmental variables, determining population limiting factors, data management, and applications. Based on the sessions' outcomes, one or more workshops will be developed to help advance the science of landscape scale planning.

**See below for information on NABCI's Monitoring Subcommittee.**

Farm Bill – As the Association’s Farm Bill Coordinator addresses the reauthorization of the 2007 Farm Bill, the Migratory Bird Coordinator will assist where necessary on bird related issues in the Farm Bill. Both Coordinators will work as liaison between the Bird Conservation Committee and the Agricultural Conservation Committee.

Bird Monitoring – **The Coordinator continues to help facilitate the development of products on coordinated monitoring through the US NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee and the NE Coordinated Monitoring Partnership. The Subcommittee held its latest meeting in October 2007 and last two conference calls in January and February. The discussions focused on finalizing and reporting out about the monitoring sessions at the PIF International Bird Conservation meeting; the proposal to assess monitoring programs; developing real world examples of integrating monitoring and management; developing workshops that focus on certain aspects of monitoring program design and development; and providing managers with a tool that will help them determine how well their current and future bird monitoring programs are meeting their conservation and management needs.** The report published in March 2007 is called the *Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring*. The report lays out key ideas and actions to improve monitoring. Although we are in a time of tight budgets, the US NABCI Committee feels that there are efficiencies and improvements that can be made to the design of surveys, the storage of data, and the link between monitoring and conservation/management action that can occur with little new resources. A final report is available on NABCI's website at <http://www.nabci-us.org/aboutnabci/monitoringreportfinal0307.pdf>. **The US NABCI Committee members have signed an MOU among the member organizations and agencies that support the goals and objectives of the Report. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies passed a Resolution supporting the goals of the report at the September 2007 meeting.**

**The Coordinator helped develop and presented at two sessions on monitoring at the December 2007 Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting and the February 2008 PIF Bird Conference.**

The Migratory Bird Coordinator and the Association’s Science and Research Liaison partnered with the USGS, NPS, and other partners to develop the NRMP that includes a Monitoring Protocol Library and a Monitoring “Locator.” They include an Internet accessible, searchable database that provides information on monitoring protocols and ongoing and past monitoring programs. The library and locator can be found at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/MonitoringPartnership.htm>.

Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team – The Migratory Bird Coordinator is a member of the Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team developed under the provisions of the proposed *American Bald Eagle Recovery and National Emblem Commemorative Coin Act* (H.R. 4116). The US Mint released information in early December on the Bald Eagle Commemorative Coins. **The Team has begun developing a grant program through the American Eagle Foundation to support Bald Eagle conservation efforts. The Coordinator has reviewed and provided comments on the draft recommendations for the program.**

Nongame Migratory Bird Consultation between the States and the USFWS – The Flyway nongame technical sections met in March 2008. The Coordinator assists the nongame technical sections as needed on an issue-by-issue basis.

State Wildlife Action Plans – As the States completed the development of the State Wildlife Action Plans, the Coordinator has shifted her support from development to implementation. Currently the Coordinator is working on support for the implementation of monitoring and on the implementation of regional projects developed as a result of the Duke Foundation grant. Extracting the regional and national priorities from the Strategies will be critical for identifying the priority issues. A first stage of this is the development of a workshop for the states within the Atlantic Flyway to identify priorities and develop a means of pulling bird conservation information out of the plans and putting it in a useful format. This project is being done in conjunction with the USFWS and is funded by NBII. A second workshop was held on May 1, 2007 to work with application developers to define what the application will look like. Follow-up tasks from that workshop are being addressed.

**The Coordinator is working with State Fish and Wildlife Agencies to discuss how States are prioritizing bird conservation objectives when implementing the Action Plans. Initial discussions were held at the September meeting in Louisville and led up to a more comprehensive discussion at the PIF Conference in 2008. At the PIF Conference, Idaho and Nevada led a discussion on bird conservation objectives and the Action Plans.**

NBII – Bird Conservation Node – The Bird Conservation Node’s Strategic Plan is complete but the Coordinator continues to work with the Node to make sure state interests are represented on the Node Guidance Team that is being created.

National and International Bird Conservation Initiatives – The Association’s Migratory Bird Coordinator continues to be an active member of the WSHRN Hemispheric Council and the National Ramsar Committee and participate in Partners in Flight, and the shorebird, waterbird, and waterfowl conservation initiatives. For example, the Coordinator is keeping up to date on State issues surrounding the Red Knots and horseshoe crabs in the Mid-Atlantic. **The Coordinator attended the National Ramsar Committee meeting in November 2007. The meeting focused on increasing the awareness about the Ramsar Convention and the connection between the National Committee and the local representatives at the Ramsar sites. The Coordinator attended the Midwest Fish and Wildlife meeting to discuss various bird conservation topics. She also attended the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Hemispheric Council and Partners in Flight meetings in January and February 2008. The meetings were very successful. The WHSRN Council, lead by the chair Marshall Jones, acted on new site nominations; red knots and horseshoe crab harvest; and the activities of the Executive Office. The Coordinator helped develop and presented at numerous sessions for the 2008 international bird conservation conference. The session topics included climate change, private lands, monitoring, conservation design, and State agency participation in international conservation.**

Bird Conservation Committee – The Committee met in Phoenix, Arizona to discuss bird monitoring, the Southern Wings Program, Farm Bill, the Birding Bird Lab, and other topics. Hot issues in the Committee that are being addressed include the Southern Wings Program and post delisting monitoring of the bald eagle.

The Southern Wings Program is being considered to provide a mechanism for States to easily engage in projects that help conserve their priority species on the wintering grounds in Latin America and the Caribbean. The State Fish and Wildlife Agencies spend millions of dollars conserving migratory birds each year. The economic significance of migratory birds is well known. To protect millions of dollars worth of States’ investment in migratory birds and to maintain and increase the millions of dollars in revenue that flow into the States from bird watching, States should consider engaging in partnerships that conserve migratory bird species on their wintering grounds. A presentation was given to the Directors of each State Regional Association in the summer of 2006 to begin the discussion of how to develop a flexible, transparent mechanism that would make it easy for States to engage in conservation of migratory birds throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and also to leverage State money with other partners’ resources and potentially the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. The Directors expressed support for moving forward with the development of a mechanism to make this a reality. To facilitate the initial stage of this process, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, American Bird Conservancy, the National Audubon Society, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are partnering in this effort. **The Coordinator helped develop two sessions to discuss the conservation of birds throughout their entire lifecycles at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting and the PIF Conference. The Bird Conservation Committee asked that a Task Force be developed to present recommendations on the development of the Southern Wings Program at the North American in March 2008. The Coordinator pulled together key state and partner representatives for the Task Force. The Task Force presented its report in March. The recommendation was for the Bird Conservation Committee to send the report along with a few key questions to State Directors for input and comment. Based on the input the Task Force receives they will update the report and provide a final recommendation at the Bird Conservation Committee meeting in September 2008.**

Wind Power Development – The Coordinator is engaged with the Wind Subcommittee of the Association’s Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee. Currently the Subcommittee has decided to address a number of topics including updating the USFWS Draft Guidelines through the FAC process, development of the American Wind and Wildlife Institute (AWWI), transmission line impacts, and increasing communication with federal agencies in the US, Canada and Mexico on wind energy guidance development. The Subcommittee met in March to discuss all these issues. They continue to debate what the level of state fish and wildlife agency involvement in AWWI should be. They also are putting together a brief workshop on transmission and wildlife as it relates to wind energy at the September meeting. The Subcommittee intends to use this workshop to determine if and how they will approach the transmission corridor issue. The Subcommittee is also engaged with the National Wind Coordinating Committee (NWCC). The Association’s new representative to the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative is Celia Greenman from the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

In cooperation with the USFWS, we compiled state energy guidelines, legislation and related information that will be useful to States as they address wind energy. Part I of the compilation was completed in the summer of 2007. Part II of the compilation was completed in October 2007. It has been merged with Part I to create one document and is available on the Association’s website.

The Coordinator is also engaged with the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) as they develop the American Wind and Wildlife Institute (AWWI). The AWWI will support wind wildlife research; plan for sustainable growth; try to develop biodiversity banking for wind; and assist with education, outreach and training on wind wildlife issues. Currently, the Coordinator is planning to meet with representatives to discuss the future of AWWI and what it could potentially do for the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and also to discuss the concept of using mapping to place some key wildlife areas off limits to wind energy development. Industry has committed \$2.5 million to the development of AWWI and they are asking for financial support from NGOs and states. They will be presenting to the Wind Subcommittee and Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee at the North American meeting.

On October 27, 2007 the Department of the Interior announced that 22 individuals were appointed to the Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee. The Committee was created to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on developing effective measures to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitats related to land-based wind energy facilities. There are three representatives from state fish and wildlife agencies. They are Keith Sexson representing the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Kathy Boydston, Texas Parks and Wildlife; and Greg Hueckel, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Committee feels that this effort is critical in order for us to address the myriad of issues surrounding wind energy development at a national level. Having national guidance that the States help craft will help us address wind energy development more effectively. The Coordinator is working to support the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ members on the Committee through a number of avenues. One way is the creation of an informal working group of state agency representatives that can provide technical information and support from across the United States. Any state who would like to participate in the information working is welcome and should contact Deb Hahn. This group helped the Coordinator develop a presentation that she gave to the Advisory Committee at their first meeting in February 2008. The presentation summarized where the states are in regards to wind energy siting and provided details on some of the guidelines that have been developed at the state level. The presentation also provided ideas for topics that the states would like to see the Advisory Committee address. The next meeting will be held on April 23-24, 2008 in Arlington, Virginia.

Avian Influenza – The USDA and USGS were recently given mandates to develop a management plan for avian influenza that includes a continental survey. The Migratory Bird Coordinator, in coordination with other Association staff, participated in the development of the plan to make sure States’ needs and concerns were addressed. Currently, implementation of plans is being implemented through the Flyway Councils.

## MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

To date, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) has directed over \$50 million to 138 national and regional priority projects of the state fish and wildlife agencies.

**At The 73<sup>rd</sup> North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Phoenix, AZ in March, the National Grants Committee selected nine national conservation needs (NCNs) from the eighteen proposed for the 2009 grant cycle. Their selection was approved by the State Directors at the Association's Business Meeting held during the conference. The selected NCNs include:**

1. Subject: Incorporating the effects of climate change into North American fish and wildlife habitat planning at regional and statewide scales. (Submitted by the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies and the Bird Conservation Committee)

2. Subject: Outdoor heritage - participation, recruitment, retention and access to public lands in hunting, fishing, and conservation related recreational activities (Submitted by the Angler/Boating Participation, Hunting and Shooting Sports and Wildlife Resources Policy Committees)

3. Subject: A National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative (Submitted by the Fish & Wildlife Health Committee)

4. Subject: Formation and Operations of Fish Habitat Partnerships to Facilitate National Fish Habitat Action Plan Implementation. (Submitted by the Fisheries/Water Resources Policy Committee)

5. Subject: Integration of fish and wildlife needs as the conservation provisions of the Farm Bill are implemented. (Submitted by the Agricultural Conservation Committee)

6. Subject: Actions in support of implementing the Association's North American Conservation Education Strategy (Submitted by Education/Outreach/Diversity Committee)

7. Subject: Implementation of the AFWA Mourning Dove and Lead Toxicosis Working Group Recommendations and research (human dimensions or scientific) that relates to lead toxicosis and its impact on mourning doves (Submitted by the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies)

8. Subject: Multistate Conservation Grant Program Coordination (Submitted by the National Grants Committee)

9. Subject: Research for and Coordination of the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (National Survey) (Submitted by the Executive Committee)

**The next steps in the annual MSCGP cycle include:** On April 1, 2008, Request for Proposals was released for the 2009 MSCGP to solicit Letters of Intent (LOIs) to address the nine selected NCNs. LOIs will be reviewed by the National Grants Committee in May. In June the most competitive will be invited to submit full proposals. In late July/early August, full proposals will be reviewed and ranked by appropriate Association committees. At the Association's Annual meeting in September, the National Grants Committee will use the committees' input as a starting point for selecting a recommended list of projects. Once the state directors approve this priority list, it will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service by the mandated October 1 deadline. The USFWS can only fund projects on our list; we expect grant awards to be issued in December and funds will be available starting January 1, 2009.

**For details on projects being conducted by the Association using Multistate Conservation Grant funds,** please refer to other sections in this report, such as National Fish Habitat Initiative, Furbearer Resources and BMP Outreach Activities, Public Affairs, and Management Assistance Team. For information on other current and past Multistate Projects, please visit <http://faims.fws.gov>.

Please visit [http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate\\_grants.htm](http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate_grants.htm) for more information about the MSCGP. If you have any questions, please contact Christina Zarrella at [czarrella@fishwildlife.org](mailto:czarrella@fishwildlife.org).

## NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN (NFHAP)

The 22-member National Fish Habitat Board (NFHB) includes state agency representatives **John Cooper (Chair), Gary Myers, Ed Parker, Kelly Hepler (Vice-Chair), and Rich Leopold and Association Executive Director Matt Hogan. The full membership and additional information can be viewed at [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org).** To date the NFHB has adopted a charter, endorsed draft national enabling legislation, approved a five year staffing and budget plan, approved interim national conservation strategies, targets, and definitions, and adopted a communications strategy. The four interim conservation strategies focus on protecting intact and healthy waters, restoring river flows and lake levels to natural patterns, establishing connectivity of fragmented aquatic systems, and producing reductions in sedimentation, and phosphorus and nitrogen runoff.

At the October 2007 NFHB meeting, four "pilot" Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHP's) -- **Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, Midwest Driftless Area Restoration Effort, and the Matanuska-Susitna Salmon Conservation Partnership (Alaska)** received formal endorsement from the Board, based on successful completion of application materials. **At the February 2008 NFHB meeting, the Western Native Trout Initiative was formally recognized as the fifth FHP. A total of 15 additional FHP's have applied for consideration under Candidate status. At the latest NFHB meeting, project funding guidelines were approved, draft legislation was approved, and Chairman Cooper appointed a work group to assess how the partnership model was developing.**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to make a significant investment in National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Plan). The Bush Administration requested \$5.2 million in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) FY09 budget for the Plan. This is the same amount as in the FY08 enacted budget and compares to nearly \$3 million and \$1 million, respectively, for FY07 and FY06. The Association is recommending a FY09 appropriation of \$6 million. A combination of Board members, NFHB staff, and USFWS employees reviewed project funding recommendations from the five approved FHP's. At the February meeting the NFHB concurred with the recommendation that will result in the delivery of \$2.4 million to support 63 projects in 28 states.

The Association's efforts on behalf of Plan implementation continue to be primarily funded by Multistate Conservation Grants, a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for coordination services, a USFWS cooperative agreement for two years, and the ongoing support of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. NFHB Chairman Cooper has sent a letter to the four regional associations requesting direct stateside funding assistance for the next three years. **It is likely the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will offer the banking services for the stateside funds.**

The NFHB has hired Ryan Roberts as Communications Coordinator for the Habitat Action Plan. Ryan joins NFHAP from the Bowie Baysox Baseball team, where he served as the Director of Communications for the past 4 seasons. **In addition a brand new website for the Fish Habitat Action plan is being launched in late April 2008. The NFHB requested nominations for one of three awards honoring exceptional individuals or partner entities who have demonstrated a commitment to fish habitat conservation, science, or education through programs or projects. Formal recognition will occur at the DC-based National Casting Call event on April 28, 2008.**

A Science and Data Partners Workshop to address the national fish habitat assessment and the role of fish habitat partnerships was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society in San Francisco on September 2, 2007. **The Science and Data Committee met in February and is closer to releasing its framework report for consideration by the NFHB. USGS/BRD hosted an invitation-only workshop regarding future science and data needs in early March.**

Staff support to the NFHB includes Christopher Estes (Alaska Department of Fish and Game), Tom Busiahn (USFWS), Susan-Marie Stedman (NOAA Fisheries), Janet Cushing (USGS) and Ron Regan (the Association). Tim Zink (Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership) chairs the Communications Committee. Gary Whelan (MI DNR) and Doug Beard (USGS/BRD) are serving as co-chairs of the Science and Data Committee. During November and December 2007, the Board benefitted from the work of Bob Ashworth, of the USFWS, who was on detail at the Association as part of his leadership program training.

**The NFHB will next meet in Washington, DC during May 13-14, 2008.**

**For more information, contact Ryan Roberts at [rroberts@fishwildlife.org](mailto:rroberts@fishwildlife.org). For web-based background materials see:**

- National Fish Habitat Initiative Home Page <http://www.fishhabitat.org>
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) document: [http://fishhabitat.org/plan/National\\_Fish\\_Habitat\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://fishhabitat.org/plan/National_Fish_Habitat_Action_Plan.pdf).
- FAQ (we are in process of updating this information): [http://fishhabitat.org/documents/NFHAP\\_QandA.pdf](http://fishhabitat.org/documents/NFHAP_QandA.pdf).
- National Fish Habitat Board (NFHB) Charter: [http://www.fishhabitat.org/board\\_documents/Charter.pdf](http://www.fishhabitat.org/board_documents/Charter.pdf).
- NFHB Membership <http://www.fishhabitat.org/about/leadership.htm>
- NFHB Meeting Information and Notes <http://www.fishhabitat.org/nationalboard.htm>
- NFHB Partnership Guidance Summary: <http://www.fishhabitat.org/partner/guidance.htm>
- Science and Data Report and Status: <http://fishhabitat.org/science/>
- Partners Coalition and Sign-up: <http://www.fishhabitat.org/contact/index.htm>.

## **NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN (NAWMP) COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

It is a pleasure to report to you on my activities as the Association's NAWMP Coordinator. I would like to thank all of you for your assistance and support. I would also like to thank the Canadian provinces, Canadian Wildlife Service and the NAWMP partners in Canada for continuing to **financially** support the coordinator position at the Association. A number of NAWMP and NAWCA (North American Wetlands Conservation Act) activities have taken place in Canada, the United States and Mexico since my last report. This report will cover some of the major items.

### North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)

NAWCA provides funding for cooperative public-private wetland conservation projects throughout North America which support the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. NAWCA allocates to Canada and Mexico between 30-60% of available funds and currently Canada receives 45%.

All states have benefited from NAWCA standard and small grant programs. Thousands of projects have been put on the ground in North America, including a total of more than 23 million acres of wetlands and associated uplands in the U.S. and Canada. Partners in more than 1,600 projects have received more than \$770 million in grants. Indeed, the partners have also contributed \$2.3 billion in matching funds. There has been at least one NAWCA funded project in every state, including Alaska and Hawaii.

In July 2008, the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture will host the US North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) for their meeting on Prince Edward Island.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee will also meet at that time. Four Joint Ventures, Eastern Habitat, Atlantic Coast, Black Duck and Sea Duck, will be reporting to the Plan Committee on their implementation plans and other matters.

In June 2008, representatives from across the Canadian NAWMP/NAWCC program will meet with the U.S. NAWCC staff who are coming to Canada for the first joint council staff meeting.

*Appropriations* – The Association supports the President's FY 2009 budget request of \$42.6 million for NAWCA and recommended that Congress try to eventually achieve full funding at \$75 million. If agreed to by Congress this would mean an increase of \$666,000 over the FY 2008 enacted budget for NAWCA.

The President's budget recommended funding for Joint Ventures is \$14.8 million, which is an increase over previous year's funding and supported by AFWA.

AFWA has also recommended that the funding for the National Wetlands Inventory be increased by \$5 million to \$9.8 million annually.

As you know, Congress reauthorized the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act (NMBCIA) for five years and increased the level of authorization. The NMBCIA now provides for projects in Canada. Of the 12 Canadian proposals submitted in 2007 for NMBCA funding, 5 were approved including one that was a joint proposal with the United States. Congress appropriated \$4.5 million for neotropical migratory bird conservation for FY 2008.

#### Canadian NAWMP/NAWCA Initiatives

The NABCI/NAWCC Canada Secretariat has been integrated into the Canadian Wildlife Service and now is located at the Environment Canada headquarters. Cynthia Wright, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Environment Canada is the Chair of the NABCI/NAWCC Canada. Richard Pratt is the Executive Secretary. Virginia Potter, the new Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service, is Chair of NAWCC Canada.

The Canadian program is so successful that it has expanded to include waterbird, shorebird and landbird interests through the Canadian NABCI Council. Canada has achieved 69% of its NAWMP goals since 1986 which translates into 5.9 million acres that have been secured. During that period, Canada has spent over \$612 million on NAWMP and wetland and wetland-associated habitats.

The Western Boreal Forest Initiative covers over 2 million square kilometers containing a mosaic of wetland complexes, flood plains and river deltas from the Yukon Territory to Manitoba. The region supports a significant component of the continental population for some waterfowl species of concern such as scaup and scoters. Furthermore, waterfowl produced in this region use all four Flyways. As work continues, the full importance of the Boreal Forest to other bird species is just beginning to be understood. The overall objective of this program is to conserve wetland and upland habitat based on priority areas to sustain western boreal water bird populations. Agreements have been signed with Aboriginal people, industry and Ducks Unlimited. Progress continues on expanding the program into eastern Canada while aligning it within existing joint ventures.

While the Boreal Forest is the second most significant breeding ground in Canada, it should be noted that the focus of NAWMP activity will remain on the Prairie Provinces. The priorities of the PHJV are integrated landscape management, biological foundation, policy leadership, governance of the PHJV, marketing, communications and education, and developing a viable resource base/PHJV capacity.

The PHJV has produced a set of five "fact sheets" on policy, conservation partnerships, science, achievements and the PHJV as a strategic investment. Contact the PHJV at [phjv@ec.gc.ca](mailto:phjv@ec.gc.ca) for copies of the fact sheets or for more information. The PHJV has also published its Strategic Plan 2006-2011 and the Alberta NAWMP partnership has published its 2005-2006 progress review on science-based implementation.

The PHJV has also completed NAWMP Implementation Plans for 2006-2011 for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They will also host a Science and Policy forum in April 2008.

An action plan for the recovery of pintail has been completed and distributed. The Northern Pintail Action Group (PAG) has established as its highest priority the reduction of cultivated land and spring tillage in

key pintail breeding areas. The Alberta NAWMP partners are using both direct habitat securement and policy initiatives to meet this priority.

The PAG has identified several topics to address immediately: pintail population status and dynamics, assessment of band recovery data, and a harvest strategy and recruitment. In addition, they will also conduct research on migration and breeding ecology.

A Scaup Action Team Prospectus has been developed. The Scaup Action Team Mission, briefly stated, is to reverse the decline of scaup populations. They have identified the following management needs: scaup harvest management, improved estimates of annual survival, Joint Venture Habitat initiatives and evaluation of biases in annual breeding population and winter surveys. Efforts are underway to secure separate funding specifically directed toward surveys, banding and monitoring scaup.

All Canadian Joint Ventures continue to move ahead with finalizing their implementation plans. The PCJV and CIJV are planning from a "focus area" basis while the EHJV is undertaking provincial implementation plans. The PHJV is drafting a plan which will examine the suite of deficit and recovery targets compared against current levels of funding.

The Canadian NAWMP Committee membership now includes M. Anderson and I. Barnett (DUC), R. Milton (NS), and Wm. Gummer (CWS). David Brackett, former Director General of the CWS will be retiring as the President of Wildlife Habitat Canada later this year.

You may wish to explore the website of the NAWMP in Canada for more information, including the annual Canadian NAWMP report entitled "Habitat Matters" at [www.nawmp.ca](http://www.nawmp.ca).

#### Association President's Task Force

I would like to thank all of the states and organizations who generously provide NAWCA "match" money to support Canadian NAWMP projects. We need to continue our work on the prairies and elsewhere in Canada to provide good quality habitat for waterfowl populations. While most duck species have recovered to well above their normal levels, some species (for example, sea ducks, pintails, and scaup) either continue to decline or they are recovering very slowly.

Since there has been a substantial increase in NAWCA funding over the past few years, we will need additional support in raising the non-federal U.S. "match" money for Canadian NAWCA grants. Without your assistance we will not be able to achieve the goals set by the NAWMP. We must not lose sight of the fact that the goals of the NAWMP have not all been accomplished. There is a significant amount of work that needs to be done in Canada to ensure the fulfillment of the NAWMP.

An Association Task Force was formed under the Bird Conservation Committee to develop strategies to increase state contributions to Canada as non-federal U.S. match for NAWCA/NAWMP projects.

The Report of the Association Task Force on State Contributions to Canada is available on the Association web site [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org). The Report contains six recommendations related to maintaining the \$10 million Association funding goal: apportionment among the States; use of State/NAWCA relationship as consideration in evaluating state contributions; establishing a minimum partnership level; developing five year plans; and a review process for the draft recommendations. We have met with each of the Regional Associations; all endorsed the Report and its recommendations. A resolution was passed in support of the Report and its recommendations at the Association's Business meeting in September 2005. We would like to thank those states which have increased their support, as well as the states that have started or resumed providing match to Canada. If you require any assistance in preparing a five-year plan, please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### Continental Assessment

With the completion of the first comprehensive continental assessment of progress in achieving the biological goals of NAWMP, the Plan Committee and NSST met in Memphis in January to review the activities of the four workgroups, policy, science, communications and funding.

### North American Bird Conservation Initiative

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) continues to move forward in Canada, the United States and Mexico. All three countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

Canada is also involved in the Arctic to Argentina Initiative, a science and conservation strategy for bird species and habitat in the Western Hemisphere. It focuses on action for science, habitat partnership and leadership.

### Other Matters

- a. Canada has passed legislation to more effectively protect migratory birds and the marine environment from the negative effects caused by the discharge of harmful substances, such as oil, into marine waters. The Birds Oiled at Sea Bill directs any fines to Environment Canada.
- b. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has developed a "National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries."
- c. The MBCA has been changed in Canada to provide for a regulatory framework that could address the incidental take of migratory birds.
- d. Canada is renovating its migratory bird program and also developing a coordinated bird monitoring program which will be complementary to the U.S. program.
- e. Canada has developed a number of environmental stewardship programs such as Environmental Farm Planning and the National Farm Stewardship Program under its Agriculture Policy Framework which is modeled after the Farm Bill in the United States.
- f. Based upon the February 2007 report of the Joint Task Group, which looked at clarifying population objectives for waterfowl habitat and harvest management, there will be a workshop in August, 2008 on the future of waterfowl management. The workshop is sponsored by the National Flyway Council, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee and AFWA. The purpose of the workshop is to identify and elaborate the institutional needs and policy decisions necessary to improve the coherence of waterfowl habitat and harvest management.
- g. A cooperative assessment of the non-breeding ecology of mid-continent mallards will attempt to refine the understanding of their habitat needs to support NAWMP goals and improve conservation and management efficiency.

I look forward to working with you.

## **SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP WITH USGS, USFWS AND NPS**

**For the past two years, Dr. Amber Pairis served as the Association's Science and Research Liaison** – a position that works to coordinate the science and research needs of state fish and wildlife agencies with key federal resource agencies. **Amber left the Association in February to begin work as the Climate Change Advisor for the California Department of Fish and Game. The Association is in the process of recruiting a new Liaison.**

Salary is provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Discipline (USGS), and operational support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. National Park Service (NPS), and USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services. The Liaison identifies high priority science and research information needs and facilitates communication among state and federal partners on science and research topics of mutual interest. The Liaison works to collaboratively identify and develop initiatives and programs with fisheries and wildlife benefits that are highly relevant to resource managers on a nationwide basis. The Liaison provides scientific support to individual states and the regional associations by creating capacity-building events and activities, compiling scientific information, representing and advocating for state interests, and responding to and supporting state efforts to address emerging issues.

Current priorities include:

#### Cervid Immunocontraceptive Vaccine

- Since September 2006, the Association has been working with USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services on the Gonacon registration. The Association maintains regular communications with USDA-APHIS-WS to insure that state agency concerns are addressed prior to this product being submitted for registration. While no final decision has been made regarding the date for submitting this vaccine for registration, USDA-APHIS-WS anticipates that GonaCon™ will be registered as a “Restricted Use” product for use by state wildlife or natural resource management personnel or persons working under their authority.
- Report of recommendations, best management practices, a summary of preparedness survey, model statute or regulations for fertility control, examples of draft legislation, and label language was compiled and is available as a resource at [http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency\\_science\\_GONACON.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency_science_GONACON.html).
- **In conjunction with USDA-APHIS-WS, outreach materials are currently being developed for state agencies to use to communicate with the hunting community and the media on the appropriate use of immunocontraceptive tools such as Gonacon in wildlife management.**

Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee – The Science Liaison serves as the staff support on the climate change and wind power and wildlife subcommittees.

#### Climate Change

Climate Change is a challenging issue for the Association that requires input from the State Directors and members on how to best approach the issue in order to provide support and guidance to the states.

- In order to increase the visibility of the issue, the Liaison helped develop the **climate change general session for the 2007 annual meeting in Kentucky**. In addition to presentations, the general session was followed by a forum for state directors to discuss climate change and provide guidance and input to the climate change subcommittee and Association staff. In addition, a forum was held for federal and NGO partners to address the subcommittee and identify opportunities to work with the state agencies on climate change challenges.
- **All materials from the session including PowerPoint presentations were distributed to Directors and are also available online at [http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency\\_science\\_climate.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency_science_climate.html).**
- **The Liaison is working with the USFWS and USGS to include the state fish and wildlife agencies in regional level workshops on climate change that are being organized around the country.**
- **On November 30, 2007 Dave Schad (MN), chair of the climate change subcommittee, participated on a panel that provided a briefing to congress on “Climate Change Science: Helping Wildlife, Water, and Energy Managers Respond”. The Liaison worked closely with Dave Schad to prepare comments and a presentation on how state agency leaders are using USGS science and working with partners to address challenges posed by climate change.**
- Climate Change State Agency Panel Discussion – George Wright Society Annual Meeting. The Science Liaison organized a panel of state wildlife agency representatives titled “State Agency Responses to the Challenges of Climate Change Impacts on Fish and Wildlife Resources” in St. Paul, MN. The panel featured State agency representatives from AZ, NC, ND, MN, OR and the state representative for Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC).
- The Liaison serves on an advisory committee for a project through the Wildlife Habitat Policy Research Program (National Council for Science and the Environment) looking at climate change impacts on wildlife habitat.

#### Integrated Wildlife Inventories and Monitoring

The Liaison works to identify and coordinate inventory and monitoring projects on a national scale that support state efforts to manage natural resources including identifying opportunities for collaboration and increasing communication with partners. Current projects include the Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership and Wildlife Action Plans Issues and Opportunities Synthesis which are collaborative efforts

to improve the accessibility of monitoring information, support effective evaluation and decision-making, and identify opportunities for regional and national programs to support implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

- Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership -- The Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership (NRMP) is a collaborative effort by the natural resource management community to improve the accessibility of monitoring efforts in order to support effective evaluation and decision-making. NRMP has developed two Internet-based tools that provide information on current monitoring activities at a variety of spatial scales and serve as a reference and clearinghouse for monitoring protocols and resource assessment methodologies. The library and locator (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/MonitoringPartnership.htm>) was showcased by an Open House at the 72<sup>nd</sup> annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Portland, Oregon. A second open house took place at The Wildlife Society meeting in September 2007 in Arizona, and an oral presentation was given by **Tara Bergeson (WI-DNR) at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' meeting in December 2007.**
- At the business meeting in Portland, the Science and Research Committee recommended that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorse the Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership and that the State Wildlife Agency Directors identify appropriate personnel in their state to become familiar with the tools and participate in its use. This recommendation was also supported by the Bird Conservation Committee and the Invasive Species Committee and was passed unanimously by the directors. A letter was sent out by the Association President to encourage directors to identify someone in their staff to become familiar with the NRMP tools.
- The Science Liaison serves on the NRMP steering committee along with other representatives from the States, USGS, USFS, NPS, and other partners and is the leader of the Outreach Committee that organizes the NRMP Open House events.
- Coordination with TWW -- The Science Liaison is working with TWW by serving on a steering group for the Issues and Opportunities Synthesis of State Wildlife Action Plans. The Science Liaison is particularly interested in identifying priority research and monitoring needs and regional opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between State and Federal Agencies.

#### Invasive Species

The Liaison focuses on increasing communications and working to coordinate action among state and federal agencies and conservation organizations to address invasive species issues. This includes representing state interests to partner organizations and providing input on federal interagency committees, promoting coordination among partners, identifying and creating resources and capacity-building activities, and providing recommendations and guidance on invasive species legislation. **Interim Staff Contact for the Invasive Species Committee is Ms. Priya Nanjappa Mitchell ([pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org](mailto:pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org); 847.672.9275).**

- **A forum was held in conjunction with the 73rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March 2008. Sponsored by the Association's Invasive Species Committee, "Communicating and Coordinating Collective Action on Invasive Species Challenges" was designed to enhance communication and collaboration on invasive species issues across the work of various Association committees with input from regional representatives on emerging or priority needs.**
- The Science Liaison is involved in a project with the USDA-FS and Wildlife Forever on the creation of informational videos/DVDs on controlling invasive species spread and supports the involvement of State representatives (WI DNR) on this project. This project is being created for the hunting and angling community and is focused on activities that might halt the spread of invasive species.
- Aquatic Nuisance Species Communications Workshop -- The Science Liaison helped plan a day-long workshop and poster session to share the results of the 2003 Multistate Conservation Grant project with other State Agencies and partners at the 72nd annual North American Conference in March 2007 in Portland, OR. Materials, PowerPoint presentations, and proceedings from the workshop have been compiled and are available at [http://www.fishwildlife.org/science\\_ANSworkshop.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/science_ANSworkshop.html). **As follow up a presentation on the outcomes of the workshop and recommendations was delivered to the AFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee and the Invasive Species Committee in Kentucky. The Invasive Species Committee endorsed the ANS workshop follow-up and**

**recommendations. A list of those recommendations and the PowerPoint can be found at the web address above.**

- The Liaison attends the meetings of federal interagency working groups including the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF), Invasive Terrestrial Animal and Pathogens (ITAP) Committee, the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Nuisance and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW), and the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) of the National Invasive Species Council (NISC).
- The Liaison is also working with representatives from USGS, NBII, and DOD on early detection rapid response projects for invasive species that could be beneficial to State Agencies' management efforts.

#### Science and Research Committee

The Science and Research Committee is focusing on identifying State priority research and monitoring needs based on input and presentations from State representatives. In addition, a representative from each of the regional associations has been present to participate in the committee meeting and represent regional needs. **Interim Staff Contact for the Science and Research Committee is Ms. Priya Nanjappa Mitchell ([pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org](mailto:pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org); 847.672.9275).**

- Based on the discussion and member feedback, priorities have been compiled into themes which serve as the foundation for the committees activities. Members discussed the role of the Science and Research Committee with a focus on identifying ways in which the committee can identify mechanisms for elevating priorities to the Association leadership. Discussion included coordination among other AFWA committees, how to help guide our partners to do research in areas that are important to the state agencies, and how to act as a catalyst for cooperative action through encouraging cooperation and dissemination of information.
- **In Kentucky the committee voted on the top three priorities and made plans to follow up with a workshop at the next annual meeting. Following the North American conference in March, the committee assembled a planning committee in March with the intent of having a workshop in September. This workshop will be focused on decision-making in the face of scientific uncertainty, with Invasive Species as the specific topic. The committee hopes to make this type of workshop a regular occurrence with a different topic of coverage each time.**
- **In addition, the committee recognized the importance of having regional representatives on the committee and wishes to broaden that representation to include both an aquatic and terrestrial component (i.e. two representatives per region). The Liaison provided a presentation at the SEAFWA fish chiefs meeting to request the participation of a fish chief on behalf of the region. The same request will be made to the MAFWA fish chiefs.**

Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee – The Science Liaison worked with NatureServe to compile a list of State listed species to be used for a project being undertaken by the Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee.

National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) -- Current NBII coordination is managed on a project-by-project basis. Areas of interest include collaboration with the USGS Status and Trends program, NBII, and key individuals in a host of other agencies to develop a searchable, geospatially explicit reference library of monitoring efforts and protocols under the Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership. Additionally, the Science Liaison is engaged in several activities with the Invasive Species Node.

Fish and Wildlife Health Committee – The Science Liaison stays up to date on wildlife disease issues including Avian Influenza, Chronic Wasting Disease, and amphibian chytrid fungus (Bd). The Liaison remains focused on making sure that State Agencies are informed of current activities and try to facilitate information exchange.

The Science Liaison is also a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Directorate Science Advisory Committee.

## TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

### State Wildlife Grants Appropriations:

#### **FY 08:**

- In late December, Congress passed an “omnibus” appropriations bill which included \$73.8 million for the [State Wildlife Grants Program](#). In this challenging budget climate, an increase of \$6.3 million is a tremendous victory and it wouldn't have happened without hard work from the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition.
- After subtracting administrative expenses, \$6.2 million for Tribal Wildlife Grants and a \$4.9 million carve-out for a to-be-determined competitive grants program, there will be only a slight increase in formula grants to the states. We are working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to ensure this new competitive grants program is a constructive addition.

#### **FY 09:**

- President Bush submitted his FY 09 budget proposal with \$73.8 million for State Wildlife Grants. In a tight budget climate, level funding is a relative victory. The President's budget also again includes a \$5 million carve-out for a competitive grants program.
- It will take another concerted effort to protect funding for State Wildlife Grants in the face of budgetary pressures.
- Dear Colleague Letters in both House and Senate are requesting \$85 million for State Wildlife Grants in FY 09. The House letter attracted more than 150 signatures. The deadline for the Senate letter is March 27, 2009. We are working to attract at least 60 signatures on this letter.
- The Teaming with Wildlife Fly-In Day on February 27, 2008, was an enormous success, bringing more than 150 people from 41 states to Washington, DC to discuss the importance of State Wildlife Grants, the wildlife action plans, and the need for assured funding to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

### Long-Term Funding

#### **Teaming with Wildlife Act:**

On February 27, Senators Tim Johnson (South Dakota) and Debbie Stabenow (Michigan) introduced the Teaming with Wildlife Act of 2008 (S. 2670). This bill would provide \$350 million a year for five years to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program. The Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program is the account under Pittman-Robertson that exists to fund the activities currently funded on an annual basis through State Wildlife Grants. While authorized in 2000, the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program has been unfunded since that time. Funds provided through this bill would flow to states on an assured basis for five years without the need for annual appropriation by Congress. Funding would be allocated according to the current formula used by State Wildlife Grants. However, in contrast to the 50-50 match for State Wildlife Grants, the program would operate with the standard Pittman-Robertson 75-25 match. The funding source in the Teaming with Wildlife Act would be a combination of existing federal oil and gas revenue from the Outer Continental Shelf and from onshore activities on federal lands.

**The Association is working with our coalition partners to build awareness of this bill. This new bill presents an opportunity to energize our coalition and keep the ball moving forward for dedicated funding to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. Even though the Teaming with Wildlife Act is unlikely to see substantial action on its own, we should expect to see benefits for our entire legislative agenda.**

#### Climate Change:

The Association has worked in partnership with the National Wildlife Federation and other members of the Teaming with Wildlife Steering Committee to secure dedicated funding for the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program in all the climate change bills. As the profile of this issue rises, we hope it will become increasingly likely that a bill will pass which generates revenues for wildlife potentially through the sale of emissions credits under a cap and trade system for greenhouse gases.

- In the fall of 2006, the Association helped to gather support from 375 organizations for a letter urging Congress to include funding for wildlife in all global climate change bills.
- **On December 5, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved the [Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act \(S.2191\)](#), including provisions that would provide substantial dedicated funding for the [Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program](#), as much as \$3 billion/yr. The bill aims to reduce CO2 emissions to 57% below 1990 levels by 2050 and addresses the wildlife impacts of climate change through funding for the state wildlife action plans and other landscape-scale conservation initiatives.**

#### Teaming with Wildlife Public Outreach Initiative

**The Association's grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation ended in December 2007. The communications campaign undertaken over the last three years has been highly successful in that coverage of the state wildlife action plans has been positive and on message. The messaging, reports, templates and other products developed under this grant will continue supporting wildlife action plan communications efforts and the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition for years to come. These new Teaming with Wildlife materials include several displays (which are loaned to state agencies and others on a frequent basis), a Teaming with Wildlife brochure, and two new websites: [www.wildlifeactionplans.org](http://www.wildlifeactionplans.org) and a completely revamped [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com).**

**The Association has produced a report highlighting wildlife action plan implementation success stories provided by every state. Copies of this report will be distributed to Congress and to partner organizations. In addition it will be made available on the web at [www.wildlifeactionplans.org](http://www.wildlifeactionplans.org).**

#### Teaming with Wildlife Coalition

The Association has been working with Teaming with Wildlife coalition leaders in the states to energize the more than 5,700 member organizations to support increased funding to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered and help implement the state wildlife action plans.

- **The Teaming with Wildlife Coalition has reached a new record of over 5,700 organizations and businesses. More than half of these organizations are new members from the past year.**
- Regular emails continue to keep coalition leaders up to speed on the latest tactics and resources for strengthening their coalitions.
- Outreach through the Teaming with Wildlife Steering Committee has brought the number of national organizations in the coalition to more than 150. Already these new members have helped contribute to record Fly-In Day fundraising and in the months ahead they will be further engaged in coalition outreach, communications and advocacy.

- The newly revamped [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com) includes a completely updated “Coalition Tools” sections integrating the old “Message Kit” and “Coalition Toolkit” with an extensive collection of new and updated outreach templates and examples.

For more information on the Teaming with Wildlife initiative, contact Dave Chadwick at (202) 624-7890 or [Chadwick@fishwildlife.org](mailto:Chadwick@fishwildlife.org).



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