



ASSOCIATION *of*  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

---

**Staff Report**  
**Annual Meeting of the**  
**Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies**  
**Saratoga Springs, NY**  
**September 7-11, 2008**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Amphibian and Reptile Conservation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Automated Wildlife Data Systems (AWDS)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Communications and Marketing</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Farm Bill</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Federal-State Aquaculture Drug Approval Project</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Furbearer Resources and BMP Outreach Projects</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>International Affairs Project</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Joint Task Force on Federal Assistance</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Legal Report</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Legislation</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Management Assistance Team</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Migratory Bird Conservation</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Multistate Conservation Grant Program</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP)</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Science Partnership with USGS and USFWS</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Teaming with Wildlife</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Association Staff</b>	<b>41</b>

## INTRODUCTION

### Changes in Member Agencies

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

**Steve Ferrell** has been named Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

**Gordon Myers** has been named Executive Director of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

### Association Staff Updates

**Mark Humpert** started as Wildlife Diversity Director for the Association on August 12. With more than 20 years of experience in the wildlife conservation field, Mark was most recently the Wildlife Diversity Program Manager for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Mark has been involved with the Teaming with Wildlife coalition at the state and national levels for many years and has represented Nebraska on the Association's Teaming with Wildlife committee.

**Dr. Arpita Choudhury** started as the Association's new Science and Research Liaison on August 4. Before joining the Association, Arpita was working as a National Research Council Post Doctoral fellow at NOAA's Coastal Center of Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research in Charleston, South Carolina. Arpita received her PhD at the University of Rhode Island in Environmental Science with a focus on population genetics and fisheries science. She received a BS at the University of Miami in Biology and Marine Science with a minor in Chemistry.

**Brian Bohnsack** from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Program has begun a two-year detail with the Association to serve as the coordinator of the Industry-Agency Summit (see below). In addition to his work at the USFWS, Brian has worked for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

**Len Ugarenko** has accepted the position of President of Wildlife Habitat Canada effective July 1, 2008. Len will continue to assist the Association through the annual meeting and transition to his replacement as North American Waterfowl Management Plan Coordinator.

**Jacob Faibisch** has accepted the position as a Training Specialist with the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the Department of Agriculture. Jake's last day with the Association will be September 19.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee met by conference call on June 19 and took the following actions: 1) approved continued discussions between the Association and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in an effort to reach a consensus position on reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund; 2) approved the Association becoming an interim founding member of the American Wind and Wildlife Institute (AWWI) contingent on approval of the full AFWA membership in September so that the Association can participate in the initial meeting of AWWI in July; and 3) approved sending revisions to the Association by-laws to all Association members in anticipation of consideration of these changes at the Business Committee meeting in September.

The Executive Committee met by conference call on July 28 and approved a "Statement of Consensus Principles for Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund" that was developed jointly by the Association and NASBLA. These consensus principles will be presented to the Association's membership for approval during the Business Committee meeting at the Association's annual meeting.

The Executive Committee met in Executive Session by conference call on August 18 to discuss a personnel matter.

### **Industry-Agency Summit**

The initial meeting of the Industry-Agency Steering Committee took place on May 29 at the Association offices in Washington, DC. At that meeting, Doug Painter of the National Shooting Sports Foundation and **Glen Salmon**, Director of the Indiana Division of Wildlife, were elected co-chairs of the group. The Steering Committee is made up of two representatives from each of the four major industry groups (fishing, shooting, archery, and boating), four representatives from state fish and wildlife agencies (**John Frampton** (SC), **Jeff Vonk** (SD), **Glen Salmon** (IN) and **Carol Bambery** (AFWA) as well as **Dale Hall** (USFWS). The committee discussed and set goals in the areas of outreach, partner communications, state agency funding, and recruitment and retention. In addition, the committee scheduled the next full Industry-Agency Summit meeting for the week of December 15, 2008 in Washington, DC.

### **National Fish Habitat Action Plan Board**

The Board of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan met in Arlington, VA on May 13-14. At that meeting, the board elected **Kelly Hepler** from Alaska as the new Chairman. Kelly replaced **John Cooper** (SD) who stepped down following the board meeting. In addition, the board approved the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership as a Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP) and had considerable discussions on the guidance on the structure and function of FHPs. For more information about the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, please see that section in this report.

### **White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy**

In August 2007, President Bush signed Executive Order # 13443: *Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation* that calls for a comprehensive, ten-year Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan and

directs the federal agencies to convene a White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy to facilitate the exchange of information and advice needed to fulfill the purposes of the Order.

Two meetings have been held to lay the groundwork for the Conference: (1) a technical workshop in April that brought together top practitioners in the federal, state, tribal, industrial and academic fields to develop eight white papers with members of the Sporting Conservation Council and (2) a Policy workshop in June that brought together federal, state and tribal decision makers, along with leadership from the Sporting Conservation Council and the wildlife conservation community, to consider response options to issues and ideas discussed in the white papers. The White House Conference itself will take place October 1-3, 2008 in Reno, Nevada. The conference will begin with registration on October 1. The morning of October 2 will open with a large plenary session featuring keynote speakers, followed by break-out sessions to discuss the Conservation Plan development. Lunch with a speaker will be followed by additional break-out sessions to further discuss the development of the Conservation Plan. The morning of October 3 will continue with a general session and closing speaker ending around noon.

There are eight core issues of discussion for the October conference. They are: Funding for Wildlife Conservation; Management of Wildlife Habitat; Maintaining Access to Public and Private Land; Education, Recruitment and Retention; the North American Model; Federal, State and Tribal Coordination; Climate Change Impacts; and Energy Development.

All state fish and wildlife agencies directors will receive an invitation to the conference. Initial details, including information regarding hotel reservations, were sent to all directors on August 27.

### **National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)**

The Board of the National Conservation Leadership Institute met in July to approve the fellows for the 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of the NCLI. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort will have 34 fellows, including 22 from state fish and wildlife agencies; six from federal agencies; two tribal representatives and four fellows from NGO's.

The new cohort of fellows will begin the program in September with electronic pre-work followed by an 11-day highly, interactive residency in October at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia. After returning home, Fellows work for five months on individual leadership projects focused on a challenge facing their organizations, and the program culminates in the spring with a long-weekend session at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri.

The NCLI 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.

## **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), 443/822.0794, 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 Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell 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.

- Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell worked with the Subcommittee to formulate 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." This letter is available on via the Wildlife Resource Policy Committee description page at [http://www.fishwildlife.org/about\\_comm\\_wildlife.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/about_comm_wildlife.html).
- The Subcommittee met via an introductory conference call on May 23. At least one more conference call will be held before the Association's Annual meeting. State Wildlife Action Plan Implementation, regulatory issues (such as collection, possession, and commercial trade), and capacity-building for state wildlife agencies in the area of amphibian & reptile conservation will be key themes within this Subcommittee.
- ***Regulations pertaining to collection, possession, and trade of amphibians and reptiles*** — The Subcommittee has recognized that many states have been revisiting their regulations pertaining to amphibians and reptiles due to both completion of State Wildlife Action Plans and increasing demand for commercial turtle trade. We are tentatively planning to hold a Summit in Fall 2009 to discuss and address this pressing issue in wildlife conservation.

***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. Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell 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, Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell 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*** — Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell assisted the editors in facilitating 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 Fall 2008. For more information, please contact Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell at [pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org](mailto:pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org), 443/822.0794.

***Amphibian Declines & Chytridiomycosis: Translating Science into Urgent Action*** — In November 2007, more than 200 people, representing eight countries across four 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 U.S. states and one Canadian province participated; four 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.

- A final report is being prepared, and a summary will be published in the online journal, *Herpetological Conservation & Biology*.
  - Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell 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 2007 meeting, to formally end the AWDS initiative – it was concluded that the original purpose of AWDS had been successfully achieved. The AWDS web site has been “taken offline,” after first archiving data sets with some continuing value. In the 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.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Laura MacLean, the Director of Communications and Marketing for the Association, is settling in to the position since her hire six months ago.

### **Strategic Communications**

***Strategic Plan*** — Ms. MacLean has been working with Senior Staff to produce a one-page Association Strategic Plan document, which is being presented for approval at the Annual Meeting. Ms. MacLean is also updating the Association’s “About Us” PowerPoint presentation to reflect the strategic mission and objectives.

***Directors’ Line*** — Ms. MacLean continues to produce the bi-weekly “Directors’ Line” (DL) email highlighting current hot topics and Association progress. She is considering developing a modified version of the DL for greater audience availability on the Association’s web site.

***Branding & Media*** — Ms. MacLean assumed the role of overseeing Association materials and messaging to ensure consistent branding, fielding media calls and coordinating fish and wildlife community outreach as needed. She continues to work with agency leaders and information and education contacts to respond effectively and rapidly to national conservation issues including the recent reauthorization of the Farm Bill, ESA listings and guidelines, climate change, and lead poisoning. In July, the Association’s DC office was also featured briefly on an episode of Emeril Green on the cable channel, Planet Green.

Currently, Ms. MacLean is collecting logos from all state and provincial agencies to include on signage, in materials and on the Association’s web site. This Fall, she plans to update the database of member agency communications, marketing, education and media contacts.

She is also working with Deb Hahn, the Association’s Migratory Bird Coordinator, to produce a four-page document highlighting NABCI bird conservation accomplishments. The piece will be complete by the end of September 2008.

***100 Years of Conservation*** — She is working with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to bring the “100 Years of Conservation” video up to date as a tool for educating new staff at state fish and wildlife agencies about the Association’s legacy of conservation. The work is expected to complete by early 2009.

***Annual Report*** — In late Fall/early Winter, she will begin preparing the 2008 Annual Report for distribution by the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

### **Working on Behalf of the State Agencies**

***Conservation Education*** — Ms. MacLean serves as the staff person for the multistate conservation grant-funded Conservation Education Working Group. She stepped in to fill the role as coordinator and managed contract negotiations when an agreement could not be reached with the former coordinator and before a new contractor was hired. She also helped prepare the proposal for the 2009 grant application, release new Conservation Education materials and fulfill other tasks as needed.

**Communications Liaison** — Ms. MacLean serves as the communications liaison on a number of Association committees and on special projects between federal agencies and members. For screening at the Annual Meeting, she wrote and produced with funding from the USFWS a five-minute+ video “Measuring Success” spotlighting the accomplishments from state-use of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Funds. Thanks go out to the states contributing footage and to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for video editing support.

She also contributes to communications and marketing-focused working groups for the Association’s new Industry/Agency Steering committee, National Fish Habitat Action Plan as well as on the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Conservation Policy media team.

Moreover, she has been working with the Climate Change Committee to develop approved talking points and with the Invasive Species Committee to build an invasive species awareness campaign. The campaign will feature Cogongrass as a starting point. She continues to manage the Teaming with Wildlife list servs until a new program associate is hired.

Finally, she has been a member of a development team to produce a climate change educational toolkit for the U.S. EPA. In August, Priya Nanjappa Mitchell was interviewed on camera as an Amphibian and Reptile expert for a video targeted at middle schoolers to explain the impacts of climate change on wildlife and their habitats. The project is expected to be complete by end of 2008.

**Regional Meetings** — To help build relationships with state agencies and get to know the issues affecting members, Ms. MacLean attended the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Resource Agencies Annual Conference, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Conference and the Association of Conservation Information Annual Meeting.

### **Annual Meeting**

Ms. MacLean has been a key team player in preparing for the Association’s 2008 Annual Meeting. She helped plan the plenary session “*Beyond The Boundaries: Meeting the Challenge of Landscape Conservation*” and coordinate speakers as well as develop the Conservation Education lunch presentation. In addition, she oversaw the development of materials and updated the Meeting web pages. For the Awards ceremony, she helped with the launch of the new Fallen Heroes tribute to those who lost their lives while carrying out their duties to enforce conservation laws and regulations and manage fish and wildlife resources. Following the ceremony, the heroes’ names will be listed on the Association’s web site and on a plaque in the Association’s Washington, DC office.

### **Web Site**

In Fall 2008, the Association will begin the process of updating its web site in two major areas. First, the “public” site will be updated with streamlined navigation, new graphics and enhanced functionality. To facilitate communication between committees and among committee members, the Association plans to add collaborative online workspaces. The Association issued a short survey to member agencies and committee chairs and vice-chairs to identify needs. The results will be shared at the Annual Meeting’s Directors’ Workshop. Following, the Association will issue an RFP to secure the services of a contractor.

In the meantime, Ms. MacLean has been bringing the existing site up to date and adding new sub-sections including Multi-state Conservation Grant previous projects, All Bird Workshops’ reports, previous Annual Award winners, a list of past presidents and more. She also posts new items on the Conservation News site frequently. These items feature state news, Association news and information from partner fish and wildlife organizations. She also re-established the Careers section with current listings. Members are welcome to submit news and job announcements by emailing her at [lmaclean@fishwildlife.org](mailto:lmaclean@fishwildlife.org).

## FARM BILL

The 2002 Farm Bill was reauthorized in May and June 2008 by both Congressional chambers overriding two presidential vetoes to enact the new Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (originally HR 2419, now HR 6124, P.L. 110-246), which increases total spending on conservation programs by approximately \$4 billion to about \$7.9 billion through 2012. The Association's state fish and wildlife agency members and partner conservation organizations worked together to improve the conservation programs' benefits for fish, wildlife, and their habitats. A special thanks to all of you who spent time, energy, and political capital to assist. Your time and dedication is deeply appreciated.

### **2008 Farm Bill**

*How did fish and wildlife fare in the 2008 Farm Bill? It's all politics.* The fish and wildlife conservation community was in a difficult position going into reauthorization of the farm bill. The Wetland Reserve Program and Grassland Reserve Program had zero funding in their budget baselines, and the budget baseline for the conservation title was about \$500 million less than the 2002 Farm Bill. Consequently, new money was needed to continue these programs and grow other programs above and beyond the funds currently expended. Furthermore, current PAYGO rules require any increase in spending to be offset by program reductions or tax increases elsewhere. In addition to difficult budget conditions, membership of the Agriculture Committees was not weighted toward conservation interests (even though both Chairmen strongly support conservation) which made interesting political considerations and negotiations.

The 2008 Farm Bill Conference Report passed the House of Representatives and the Senate by veto-proof margins. Both House and Senate individually passed bills contained language that would advance and improve fish and wildlife conservation in USDA conservation programs, and our community may have seemed to be in a good position going into the conference committee to move forward on many fish and wildlife initiatives and priorities. Unfortunately, the conference report reflects the power of the conference committee, particular interests of its membership and the complications that can arise from jurisdictional conflicts between committees (i.e., Senate Agriculture and Finance) not to mention the interesting negotiations among members that occurred behind closed doors.

Politically, the deck was not stacked in favor of conservation in the conference committee with many House and Senate members advancing the interests of production agriculture and pushing back on Chairman Harkin and Chairman Peterson on conservation in general, including fish and wildlife conservation benefits. For example, many members of the conference committee were opposed to Sodsaver. Beneficial Sodsaver language to reduce prairie conversion was included in both House and Senate bills, but opposition from conferees relegated Sodsaver in the final conference report to a provision that may not work and affects only a handful of states. Witness the power of the conference committee membership that over-ruled both Ag Committee Chairmen and their desire to conserve native prairie and reduce conversion rates.

Additionally, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was reduced from 39.2 million acres to 32 million acres at a time when millions of acres are leaving the program through the re-enrollment and extension process and others are petitioning USDA for early release from CRP contract obligations in order to bring those acres back into production to take advantage of high commodity prices. Furthermore, there is a growing interest across Capitol Hill and seemingly the nation to shift the focus of conservation programs to working lands and ranches through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program (formerly the Conservation Security Program), both of which received increases in funding authorization in the 2008 Farm Bill. Unfortunately for years, CRP county rental rates have not kept step with current cash rates making the program less financially competitive under current market conditions. This is significantly to blame for the lost enrollments, but the new farm bill strives to correct this problem requiring annual rate adjustments. Fortunately, the Manager's Report is very clear that conferees fully support the CRP, and the program will continue as one of USDA's key conservation programs. It also directs USDA to work with state wildlife agencies and NGOs on CRP implementation and promotion as well as priority and opportunity to roll expiring/leaving CRP acres into other conservation programs to facilitate continued conservation benefits.

While our community did not accomplish everything we set out to do, we did make some progress with provisions such as Open Fields, new funding for GRP and WRP as well as fixing the WRP appraisal problem, and luckily, we were able to keep all conservation funding within the conservation title of the bill. Furthermore, several conservation programs are to address issues raised by state, regional, and national conservation initiatives such as the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy, and State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies. Now that the bill is enacted, we have much work to do with the Administration to improve fish and wildlife benefits through the new farm bill conservation provisions, and the last provision of the conservation title instructs USDA to issue interim rules within 90 days of enactment. Fortunately, the Manager's Report provides direction to USDA to work with state wildlife agencies to improve fish and wildlife benefits from various conservation provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill, but we will have to continue our quest and diligently fight for progress and program benefits for fish and wildlife as the rules and regulation processes proceed. Our challenge still remains: to work with USDA and the agriculture industries to implement wildlife friendly and beneficial practices across the country through the conservation provisions in the farm bill.

### **Major Changes to Conservation Programs in the 2008 Farm Bill**

Here is a condensed summary of the major changes to conservation programs in the 2008 Farm Bill that you may find interesting. For additional information please contact Jen Mock Schaeffer, the Association's Farm Bill Coordinator, at 202-624-3688 or at [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org).

#### ***Conservation Reserve Program***

- Reauthorizes CRP through 2012. Enrollment is maintained at an overall acreage cap of 39.2 million acres for 2008 and 2009; however, for 2010, 2011, and 2012, the overall enrollment cap is lowered to 32.0 million acres (with additional acres expiring, CCRP and CREP will continue).
- Adds as an additional program purpose the issues raised by state, regional and national conservation initiatives (see Manager's Report language below for intent of this provision).
- Eligibility for the Farmable Wetland Program is expanded to include, with appropriate buffers, constructed wetlands designed to provide nitrogen removal, land devoted to commercial pond-raised aquaculture and intermittently flooded prairie land.
- Participant required to undertake management as needed throughout the term of the contract to implement the conservation plan. Additional cost-share assistance is authorized, up to \$100 million, for thinning of trees necessary to improve the condition of resources on the land.
- Routine grazing of eligible land replaces managed grazing and includes prescribed grazing for the control of invasive species under appropriate vegetation management requirements, stocking rates and frequencies.
- Requires annual surveys of per-acre estimates of county average market dryland and irrigated cash rental rates for cropland and pastureland.
- Includes a provision giving the Secretary authority to exceed the 25% CRP county cap with county government's concurrence.

#### ***Wetland Reserve Program***

- Increases acreage cap to 3,041,200. No annual enrollment goal. Includes Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP), but removes payment limitation exception for state WREP agreements. Limits payments under restoration cost-share agreements to \$50,000 annually.
- Eligibility restricted to private and tribal lands, eliminating state and local government participation. Land ineligible because of an ownership change is increased from 12 months to seven years.

- Grassland and cropland flooded due to natural overflow of a closed basin lake or pothole along with functionally dependent adjacent land is eligible.
- Fair market value determined by USDA using one of three options that results in lowest amount of compensation paid by Secretary (Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices or area-wide market analysis; geographical cap; landowner offer).
- Method of compensation based on value of easement. Below \$500,000, payments may be in a lump sum or in equal amounts not to exceed 30 annual payments. Above \$500,000, payments in at least five, but not more than 30 annual payments, but allows lump sum if Secretary determines it is in the public interest.
- Retains requirement for consultation with Secretary of Interior at the local level to determine WRP land eligibility.

### ***Grassland Reserve Program***

- Reauthorizes GRP to enroll an additional 1.22 million acres during FY 2009 through 2012 through 10-, 15- or 20-year rental contracts or permanent easements (or an easement for maximum duration allowed by State law). 40-acre minimum contract size removed.
- 40% of the funding is allotted for rental contracts and sixty percent for easements. Fair market value determined same as WRP. Rental payments limited to \$50,000/year.
- Haying and seed harvest are permissible uses.
- Otherwise eligible land that is enrolled in CRP may be enrolled in GRP, up to 10% of acres enrolled in a calendar year, if the land is of high ecological value and under significant threat of conversion to uses other than grazing.
- Additional eligible land includes land that would address issues raised by state, regional and national conservation priorities (see Manager's Report language below for intent of this provision).

### ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program***

- Adds forest management, organic transition and energy conservation to program purposes.
- Reauthorized through 2012 at the following levels:
  - \$1.2 billion – FY 08
  - \$1.337 billion – FY 09
  - \$1.450 billion – FY 2010
  - \$1.588 billion – FY 2011
  - \$1.750 billion – FY 2012
- 60% of funds allocated for livestock practices.
- Application evaluation criteria will ensure that national, state and local conservation priorities are effectively addressed.
- Authorizes \$37.5 million annually for air quality improvements through Conservation Innovation Grants Program.
- Payments can include 75% cost-share for practice implementation and 100% for income forgone with great significance accorded to practices that promote pollinator habitat and invasive species management.

- Includes Agricultural Water Enhancement Program authorized between \$60 and \$74 million annually through grants based on partnership proposals.
- Program payment limit dropped from \$450,000 over six years to \$300,000 over six years.

#### ***Conservation Security Program***

- Renamed the Conservation Stewardship Program to be implemented nationwide with a goal of enrolling 12.7 million acres/year at a national average rate of \$18/acre.
- Five-year contracts available to eligible producers that meet the stewardship threshold for at least one resource concern and will meet or exceed stewardship threshold for at least one priority resource concern by the end of the contract.
- Additional criteria for evaluating applications can include criteria necessary to ensure national, state and local conservation priorities are effectively addressed. Local conservation priority could be fish and wildlife.

#### ***Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program***

- Reauthorized through 2012 at the following levels:
  - \$97 million – FY 2008
  - \$121 million – FY 2009
  - \$150 million – FY 2010
  - \$175 million – FY 2011
  - \$200 million – FY 2012
- For land eligibility includes a provision for “the protection of which will further a state or local policy consistent with the purposes of the program.”

#### ***Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program***

- Reauthorized through 2012 at \$85 million annually.
- Restricts eligibility to private agricultural and non-industrial forest lands. Previous eligibility was all landowners.
- Allows habitat development on pivot corners and irregular areas.
- 25% of total funding reserved for long-term contracts. Creates an annual payment limit for the program of \$50,000.
- Adds priority for projects that address issues raised by state, regional and national conservation initiatives

#### ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program***

- A new program to assist producers in implementing conservation activities on agricultural lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. New budget authority is authorized as follows:
  - \$23 million – FY 09
  - \$43 million – FY 10
  - \$72 million – FY 11
  - \$50 million – FY 12
- Conservation activities include improving water quality and quantity and restoring, enhancing and preserving soil, air and related resources. The program is implemented through existing conservation programs.

- Special consideration is afforded to the Susquehanna, Shenandoah, Potomac and Patuxent Rivers.

#### ***Forestry Title — Healthy Forest Reserve Program***

- HFRP authorized through 2012 at 9.75 million/year. Uses 10-year cost-share agreements or 30-year and permanent easements (or easement for maximum duration allowed by state law).
- No more than 40% for cost-share and 60% for easements. Repooling of funds by April 1.
- Within two years each state will develop a Statewide Assessment and Strategies for Forest Resources — a similar process to the State Comprehensive Wildlife Strategies. \$10 million/year funding.
- Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program — allows grants to local entities to acquire and preserve private forest land that are threatened by conversion or provide public benefits to communities
- Emergency Forest Restoration Program — provides for restoration of private forests damaged by natural disasters.
- Illegal Logging Practices — implements program to prevent illegal logging overseas.
- Secretary shall establish a national Forest Resource Coordinating Committee, which includes a representative of a state fish and wildlife agency.

#### ***Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program***

- Adds new authority for states and tribal governments to apply for grants to encourage owners and operators of privately-held farm, ranch and forest land to voluntarily make that land available for access by the public for wildlife-dependent recreating including hunting or fishing under a program implemented by state or tribal governments. \$50 million is authorized for the period 2009 through 2012.
- Priority for awarding grants includes those grant applications that propose to maximize participation which would meet with widespread acceptance by landowners, land with appropriate wildlife habitat, strengthens wildlife habitat improvement efforts on land enrolled under the CRP's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, uses additional federal, state, tribal or private resources, and makes locations of land enrolled public.
- State or tribal government law regarding liability is not pre-empted.
- Amount of grant for a state is reduced 25% if opening dates for migratory bird hunting for residents and non-residents are not consistent.

#### ***State Technical Committees***

- Adds state wildlife agencies to the list of statutory representatives on State Technical Committees.
- USFWS removed from list of statutory representatives on state technical committees. However the Managers Report includes the statement that "The Managers expect that other relevant Federal Agencies will also be invited to participate as needed."

#### ***Conservation Compliance***

- HEL and Swampbuster violations require second level of review by FSA with concurrence by NRCS. Creates a system of graduated penalties based on severity of the violation.
- Sodsaver provision limited to Prairie Pothole National Priority Area and requires affected state governors to opt-in to the provision. Loss of benefits applies only to crop insurance for first 5 years. Covers conversion of native sod not planted prior to enactment of the Farm Bill and includes a five-acre exemption.

### ***Energy Title***

- Biomass Crop Assistance Program provides assistance to producers in designated project areas to grow renewable biomass feedstocks. Includes assistance in storage, harvest and transportation. All references in previous versions regarding wildlife conservation were removed. Funding amount not specified.
- Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels — allows contracts with producers to grow advanced biofuels feedstocks. Authorizes \$55 m in 2009 and \$105 m in 2012.
- Biorefinery Assistance assists in the development of advanced biofuels from agricultural forestry and agriculture waste.
- Repowering Assistance assists existing refineries to replace fossil fuels used for heat or power.
- Forest Biomass for Energy provides research and development to encourage use of forest biomass for energy.
- Community Wood Energy Program provides grants up to \$50,000 to develop community wood energy plans and competitive grants to acquire or upgrade community wood energy systems.

### ***Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative***

- Allows for cooperative agreements for up to five years to enhance conservation on nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land through WHIP, EQIP or CSP where 6% of funds and acres will be set aside annually for initiative. 90% of funds and acres will be expended on projects in states and 10% will be available for national projects. Overhead by partners are not covered by funds.

### ***Additional Provisions in Conference Report***

- State, Regional and National Conservation Initiatives — This terminology is used in CRP (new program purpose), GRP, WHIP and CSP. The intent of the provision as described in the Managers Report is to consider the goals and objectives identified in relevant fish and wildlife conservation initiatives, such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, the Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy, the State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies, the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative and state forest resource strategies.
- Tax Provisions
  - Tax Credit for Endangered Species Recovery Expenditures — Allows a tax credit for expenditure paid or incurred for the purpose of achieving site-specific management actions recommended in recovery plans under the ESA.
  - Increased and enhanced tax credits for donations of conservation easements by private landowners is extended for two years.
  - Tax exclusion for CRP payments from self-employment tax for some individuals.
- County Acreage Cap — Acreage devoted to continuous CRP and CREP would be excluded from 25% county cap provided the county government concurs.
- Technical Assistance — Definition of technical assistance includes monitoring and effects analysis. Nonprofit entities, state or local governments or agencies and other Federal agencies with technical expertise can be approved third party providers of technical assistance.
- Environmental Service Markets — To facilitate development of markets for environmental services provided by agricultural producers, the bill requires development of technical guidelines that outline

science-based methods to measure environmental services benefits from conservation and land-management activities. Guidelines will be developed for a procedure to measure environmental services benefits, a protocol to report environmental services benefits, and a registry to collect, record and maintain the benefits measured. It also requires development of guidelines for a process to verify environmental services benefits. No funding identified.

- Conservation of Pollinator Habitat — The Conference Report encourages the development of habitat for native and managed pollinators and use of conservation practices that benefit pollinators in all conservation programs.

2008 Farm Bill Side-by-Side Comparison is now available from USDA-ERS is available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/FarmBill/2008/>. It is a side-by-side comparison of the new Farm Bill Titles with previous legislation.

### **FY2009 Agriculture Appropriations**

The House Committee on Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee met Thursday, June 19, 2008 to mark-up the agriculture appropriations bill. Full committee consideration of the bill was scheduled for June 25, 2008 but then indefinitely postponed by Chairman Obey. Due to the upcoming elections, there is a slim chance Congress will complete all of the appropriations bills before the November elections, and we will likely continue to operate under a continuing resolution.

*USDA Requests Public Comments on Climate Change Strategic Planning Priorities and Goals* — The Association is drafting comments in response to a Federal Register Notice published August 6 by USDA regarding their climate change strategic planning priorities and goals for research, education and extension. Because this notice comes from USDA and involves Farm Bill conservation programs, lands and activities, the Association needs a few volunteers from the Agricultural Conservation Committee to assist with drafting our comments. Suggestions will be coordinated with those from the Association's Climate Change Committee through collaboration between Dr. Arpita Choudhury, Association Science & Research Liaison, and Jen Mock Schaeffer, Association Farm Bill Coordinator.

In summary, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a member of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) and has undertaken research on issues related to climate change and natural resources over the past two decades. USDA recently prepared a major scientific assessment of the effects of climate change on agriculture, land resources, water resources, and biodiversity in the U.S. for the CCSP. USDA is requesting input from the public on its effort to prepare a Strategic Plan for Climate Change Research, Education and Extension. This request was published in the Federal Register for a 45-day public comment period. Public comments will be considered during the preparation of the Strategic Plan. The final version of the Strategic Plan will be published on USDA's Web site. Public comments received in response to this request will be made available upon request. The deadline for comments is September 19, 2008.

The four goals identified in the notice are: (1) understand the effects of climate change on natural and managed ecosystems; (2) develop knowledge and tools to enable adaptation to climate change and improve the resilience of natural and managed ecosystems; (3) develop knowledge and tools to reduce the contributions of agriculture, forestry and other land management practices to the build up of green house gases in the atmosphere, and (4) deliver climate change science and technology to USDA agencies, stakeholders and collaborators for improved decision making. For more details and to volunteer your assistance, please contact Ms. Schaeffer at [jenmock@fishwildlife.org](mailto:jenmock@fishwildlife.org) or Dr. Choudhury at [achoudhury@fishwildlife.org](mailto:achoudhury@fishwildlife.org).

*National Wildlife Federation and Farm Service Agency Settle Lawsuit over Voluntary Modification of Contracts for Critical Feed Use on Conservation Reserve Program Lands* — NWF and six of its affiliates filed suit in early July in the Western District of Washington challenging USDA's decision to open up 24 million acres of the Conservation Reserve Program to haying and grazing. District Judge Coughenour issued a temporary restraining order which restrained USDA processing or approving any additional CRP contract modifications

allowing haying or grazing and further ordered USDA to inform all CRP participants who have already received CRP contract modifications that the modifications permitting haying or grazing are enjoined. The lawsuit alleged that USDA could not be allowed to make decisions affecting millions of acres without any consultation with other agencies and nongovernmental organizations and without compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

During a hearing Judge John Coughenour determined that FSA had violated NEPA in approving the Critical Feed Use Program, and on July 28, the Court issued the permanent injunction and final order into the record. The Judge:

- 1) Approved NWF's proposal that farmers who had approved contract modifications could move forward immediately;
- 2) Approved NWF's proposal that FSA should process pending applications;
- 3) Found that no additional applications could be accepted unless a producer could show reliance on CRP-598 and investment of at least \$4,500;
- 4) Found that all critical feed use of CRP lands should end by Nov. 10 for approved contract modifications and Oct. 15 for pending applications; and
- 5) Held that all producers who elect to hay or graze this year pursuant to CRP-598 cannot hay or graze again except pursuant to the managed haying and grazing schedule that was established in the haying and grazing lawsuit of National Wildlife Federation v. Johanns.

Essentially, the settlement reduced the acres affected by this provision from 24 millions acres to 1.8 million and reconfigured the provision to make it part of the managed haying and grazing schedule which has wildlife friendly haying and grazing frequencies. Furthermore, it reminded USDA that CRP is a conservation program and that government agencies must comply with NEPA. Fortunately, the order doesn't penalize any producer who relied on CRP-598 and many will benefit from the provision.

***USDA Does Not Release CRP Contracts Early Without Penalty*** — On July 29, Secretary Ed Schafer announced USDA would not allow the early release of acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve program (CRP) without penalty to land owners. Secretary Schafer cited recent positive crop reports and favorable weather conditions for crop production as well as declining commodity prices as the reasons not allow an early release. Additionally, the Secretary cited acres expiring in 2008, 2009 and 2010 which are 1.1 million, 3.4 million, and 4.4 million, respectively, as another reason for his decision. These acres will expire and potentially go back into production because USDA is not planning to hold another general sign-up in the near future. New acres enrolled in CRP will be through continuous practices only. However, the Secretary reserved the right to revisit the decision should conditions change and warrant another review. This spring more than 288,000 acres are being withdrawn early by landowners who are willing to pay the penalties and bring those acres back into crop production — that's over 50% higher than in 2007. Incidentally, the Secretary claims that the recent lawsuit settlement with the National Wildlife Federation over the Critical Feed Use of CRP had nothing to do with his decision on early releases because it was a completely separate, unrelated issue.

***\$390 Million Available for Natural Disaster Recovery Assistance*** — On July 25, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced \$390 million is available through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program for landowners and communities to cope with the aftermath of recent floods, fires, drought, tornadoes and other natural disasters.

The \$390 million is included in a \$162 billion supplemental spending bill that helps the Midwest states with areas affected by flooding and about \$140 million in EWP projects from earlier natural disasters, such as tornadoes and wildfires.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the EWP program, which provides technical and financial assistance to address public safety and restoration efforts on private, public and tribal lands. Through sponsorships, NRCS can pay landowners and communities up to 75% of the cost of removing debris from stream channels, road culverts and bridges; protecting eroded streambanks; correcting damaged drainways; and reseeding damaged areas. NRCS also can purchase floodplain easements on land that qualifies for EWP program assistance.

*Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance through the EWP program, but they must be represented by a project sponsor. Local sponsors include any legal subdivision of state or local government, including local officials of city, county or state governments, Indian tribes, soil conservation districts, U.S. Forest Service and watershed authorities. Sponsors must secure 25% of the costs in cash or approved in-kind contributions. However, in some cases, the EWP program can cover up to 90% of the construction costs for projects in limited resource areas.*

***Schafer Announces an Additional \$202.5 Million for Two Voluntary Conservation Programs*** — On July 15, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced an additional \$200 million available through the 2008 Farm Bill to help farmers and ranchers nationwide to solve natural resource problems through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). An additional \$2.5 million will be available for Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) in 16 states.

With this extra funding, USDA has provided a total of \$1.2 billion available to producers in fiscal year 2008 for EQIP. To date, approximately 38,000 producers signed contracts covering nearly 14 million acres valued at almost \$745 million for EQIP.

AMA offers farmers and ranchers cost-share of up to 75% and incentive payments to address risk management concerns to their agricultural enterprises linked to water management, water quality and erosion control. The program is available in the following 16 states where participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low:

Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. Hawaii was added this fiscal year when Congress authorized the 2008 Farm Bill.

***USDA Awards \$14 Million in Conservation Innovation Grants*** — On June 23, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced \$14 million in Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to fund 45 projects in 40 states to develop and refine cutting-edge technologies and approaches that will help farmers conserve and sustain natural resources on their operations. CIG targets innovative, on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Grants go to state and local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals.

Approved CIG projects address traditional natural resource issues such as water quantity, water quality improvement, livestock nutrient management, grazing lands and forest health and soil resource management. The projects also address emerging natural resource issues, including agricultural air emissions, energy conservation and market-based approaches to conservation.

On June 10, USDA announced \$5 million in Conservation Innovation Grants to fund 11 innovative projects in six states to protect water quality, recycle nutrients and improve wildlife habitat in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

For more details on multi-state and individual state awards, go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/2008awards-details.html>.

## FEDERAL-STATE AQUACULTURE DRUG APPROVAL PROJECT

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. Other NADAs in the queue include 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).

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 10-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 suspended in 2007 until the National Toxicology Program completed its review of the active ingredient (Isoeugenol) in AQUI-S. That review was completed earlier this year, 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 Association’s Drug Approval Working Group is now evaluating other candidate drugs for testing using remaining MSCG dollars.

## 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 U.S., to date, 38 states have participated in and assisted with trap testing projects to evaluate traps and trapping methods. All regions of the U.S. 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 U.S. 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**

To date, 15 trapping BMPs have been produced including BMPs for American marten, beaver, muskrat, fisher, river otter, nutria, eastern coyote, western coyote, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, raccoon, opossum and weasels along with a general Introduction. These are now available on the Association's web site 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 fall.

### **Ownership and Use of Traps by Trappers in the United States Survey**

A survey of trappers in the U.S. 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 4,000 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 web site 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 U.S. 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 web site.

### **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 web site.

### **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 web site 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**

International activities have been focused on CITES for this reporting period, while domestic activities have been focused on Trap Testing work where significant gains have been made (see Trap Testing Report Page 11).

During the last few months, a sizeable percentage of project time (presently funded and staffed at the 50% level) was focused on CITES work – preparing for the then pending meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees in Geneva. It should be noted that state management of bears, bobcats and otters was raised as an issue in those meetings in Geneva. The regional representatives who were present were splendid in their defense of state management of these species; thankfully they were present!

At this time, the project work is directed to preparations for the upcoming CITES Standing Committee meeting in Geneva which follows closely on the heels of the EU Fur Understanding meeting in Brussels. All items on the

agenda for the CITES meeting have been reviewed, working with the Regional representatives and positions or “watch” tags attached to each item.

When the Regional Association representatives met in Louisville, KY last 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 timetable 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 can free up state agency resources presently 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 who coordinated the National bobcat survey. Canada and Mexico participated as well. We are presently negotiating with one of the students at a State Cooperative Unit to assimilate our data into a comprehensive North American document. This is but one of the efforts underway to wrest control of bobcat management from the protectionists. This project continues and we have scheduled an October meeting in Brussels with EU Authorities to share our information and better understand trade flow.

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 be held in Brussels in July 2008.

**US/Canada/ Mexico Trilateral Conference** — The four US/Mexico Border States representatives were funded by an Association Grant to attend this year’s U.S./Canada/Mexico Trilateral Conference in Veracruz, Mexico. The Association annually provides funding to each U.S. Mexican border state to send a representative. The Fish and Wildlife Health and Bird Conservation Committees, and the CITES Work Group of the International Relations Committee were 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 (USFWS) 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**

**State Representatives:** **Glen Salmon** (IN), Co-Chair; **Ken Elowe** (ME); **Lisa Evans** (AK); **John Frampton** (SC); **Kelly Hepler** (AK); **Tom Niebauer** (WI); **Keith Sexson** (KS)

**USFWS 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** (USFWS); **Larry Mellinger** (DOI Attorney); **Christina Zarrella** (Association)

If determined to be necessary, the JTF recommends policy clarifications to the Director of the 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 Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, but also ten other programs with funding from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (WR) and/or Sport Fish Restoration Account (SFR). The 10 programs 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 August 12-13 in Albuquerque, NM. Items on the Agenda included: Hunting License Certification Regulation (and related issues raised with the review of 50 CFR 80,) Status of SWG Program Review, USFWS Staff Update, Review of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Draft Strategic Plan and Draft Conservation Heritage Measures, Discussion of Carbon Sequestration on PR lands, Update on Steering Committee Meeting, Strategic Habitat Conservation, Vesting of Title with Third Party Subawardees and H.R.6767.

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

### **Western Great Lakes Gray Wolves**

*Humane Society of the United States, et al, v Dirk Kempthorne, DOI, case no. 07-CV-0067.*

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and 11 individual Midwestern states, recently signed onto an amicus brief prepared by Michigan in the lawsuit filed in the district court for the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C. against the USFWS 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 and argued 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.

District of Columbia federal court heard arguments on our case on August 4. The arguments went exceptionally well. Judge Friedman had read the briefs and zeroed in on why DPS could not be used as a tool to delist. Department of Justice did a great job representing the USFWS and on several occasions responded well to the court's questions on the states' wildlife management plans. The court took the case under advisement.

### **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*

USFWS 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 USFWS had violated NEPA, asking the court to enjoin the Service from authorizing any take of gray wolves under the revised 10(j) rule. The Court granted a preliminary injunction to reinstate the gray wolves on the endangered species list holding that the criteria USFWS set in its 1994 Environmental Impact Statement had not been met and the state's regulatory mechanisms for managing the gray wolves were insufficient.

USFWS argued the importance of genetic exchange between the wolf subpopulations of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Without genetic exchange, USFWS said, inbreeding would cause wolf mortality to be high and a viable wolf population could not be sustained. There have been studies showing that there is still no genetic exchange between the wolves. The Court held that the delisting, which will inevitably lower the total wolf population, will almost assure that genetic exchange will not occur. It also ruled that Wyoming's depredation control laws were more lax than ESA standards making it harder to sustain a viable wolf population and exacerbates the issues raised above.

### **Minnesota Trapping Program**

#### ***Animal Protection Institute v. Holsten, Civil No. 06-3776***

The issue in this case concerned the incidental taking of lynx by Minnesota trappers. The Minnesota DNR was ordered to (1) apply for an incidental taking permit ("ITP) from USFWS and (2) prepare a proposal that seeks to curb or eliminate incidental lynx takings. DNR did both, providing the Court with a copy of its permit application and its proposal. Plaintiffs Animal Protection Institute and Center for Biological Diversity still had problems with the plan and DNR agreed to make modifications, including a prohibition on the use of fresh meat as bait and agreeing to notify the parties of any takings during the pendency of the Court's Order. The Court found that DNR was now in compliance with the Court's Order and must now implement the programmatic changes it set forth in its proposal. These changes must remain in effect until (1) DNR receives an ITP from USFWS, (2) USFWS promulgates a rule addressing the incidental taking of lynx, (3) the lynx is removed from ESA protection, or (4) further order of the court.

### **Constitutional Right to Hunt**

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

The plaintiffs in this important case were property owners that wanted to bow hunt on their property. They were members of the Reston Homeowners Association. The 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 Homeowners Association which sought to prohibit them from deer hunting on their own land under this restrictive covenant. 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. The court awarded the plaintiff bow hunters \$50,000 in attorney fees. Attorney fees had been advanced by the Archery Trade Association (ATA). The appellate court in Virginia last month refused to take the case so the lower court's ruling stands.

### **Hunting in National Refuges**

#### ***Fund for Animals v U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, et al***

This case has been pending for a couple years. On August 31, 2006, Judge Ricardo Urbina ruled in *Fund for Animals v Hall* that the USFWS violated the National Environmental Policy Act by issuing six rules that collectively opened or expanded hunting opportunities on 36 refuges within the wildlife refuge system without first analyzing the cumulative impacts of those rules. Refuges involved in the litigation are: 10,000 Islands (FL), Balcones Canyonlands (TX), Key Cave (AL), Trustom Pond (RI), Canaan Valley (WV), Bond Swamp (GA), Currituck (NC), Julia Butler Hansen (WA), Plum Tree Island (VA), Cameron Prairie (LA), Mandalay (LA), Lower Rio Grande (TX), Lake Umbagog (NH), San Andres (NM), McNary (WA), Mackay Island (VA), Arid Lands (WA), Grand Bay (AL), Big Oaks (IL), Clarks River (KY), Petit Manan (ME), Deep Fork (OK), Bayou Teche (LA), Black Bayou Lake (LA), Cat Island (LA), Catahoula (LA), Occoquan Bay (VA), Okefenokee (GA), Marais des Cygnes (KS), Lost Trail (MT), Washita (OK), Trinity River (TX) and Whittlesey Creek (WI).

The court asked for further briefings on the appropriate remedy which has now been completed. USFWS has asked the court not to close any of the hunting programs while it reassesses its NEPA compliance. The Service had voluntarily offered to delay additional hunting openings and/or expansions until May 2007 when the USFWS projected it would be able to meet its NEPA obligations.

The Association believes that hunting on refuges should not be made vulnerable to NEPA challenges.

## LEGISLATION

The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress has fully experienced that a narrow majority makes legislating challenging. Bipartisan support is essential but elusive, and cloture has been and will be required for any significant vote in the Senate. The Farm Bill reauthorization was finally concluded and enacted after Congress overturned the President's veto. And while there has been much legislative attention devoted to and more progress than expected on climate change proposals, a significant and comprehensive bill that regulates greenhouse gas emissions will wait to be enacted until a future Congress.

### **Farm Bill**

After four, short-term extensions and a Presidential veto, Congress enacted a Farm Bill with somewhat mixed outcomes for conservation. Funding for conservation programs was continued although not at levels advocated by the conservation community; an "Open Fields" program was authorized and funded; and increased deductions for donation of conservation easements by private landowners was continued for two years. However, the cap on CRP was reduced to 32 million acres, forecasting a shift from conservation focused on land retirement to conservation on working lands through EQIP, CSP, WRP and GRP. See more details on pages 9-14 in this report.

### **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.

### **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.

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 sectors (electricity, transportation, manufacturing, etc.) in an equitable manner that is fair 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. This was 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.

The Senate attempted to come to cloture in order to substantively debate S3036 (the revised S2191) in June, but failed on the cloture vote, thus effectively ending the consideration of a climate bill in the Senate in this Congress. While House Committees continue climate-related hearings, no comprehensive bill will be considered by the House this year.

We worked very closely with our colleagues in the hunting and fishing conservation community and with the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy and Defenders of Wildlife 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 climate bills advance in a future Congress.

### **Conservation Tax Incentives**

We worked 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 deduction 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. As part of its enactment of the Farm Bill, Congress extended this provision to tax years 2008 and 2009.

Senator Crapo (ID) and Senator Lincoln (AR) 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 Endangered Species Act. A bill of reduced scope was also included in the enacted Farm Bill.

### **Endangered Species Act**

ESA reauthorization is not a high priority for either Congressional Committee of jurisdiction. The House Natural Resources Committee leadership has held oversight hearings and is seeking more robust funding for ESA implementation. However, no 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.

### **Ballast Water Legislation**

Congress is as close to passing federal ballast water standards as it has been in several years, but it remains uncertain if they will conclude a bill or not. The Senate Commerce Committee has agreed on a bipartisan bill that makes significant improvements to the House-passed bill (HR2830) particularly with regards to adopting stricter standards and deference to state regulatory authority. However, whether the Senate can pass this bill and successfully conference it with HR2830 in the short period of time before they recess for the national elections remains to be seen.

### **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. Budget recommendations have been provided in the Association's FY2009 Budget Recommendations, supplied to each Director. FY2009 Appropriations bills will not pass before the Presidential election or perhaps even the Presidential Inauguration. However, Committees will construct the bills, so Directors need to get their priorities to their members of Congress as soon as possible.

## **MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM**

The Management Assistance Team (MAT) provides 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. All MAT services are provided at no additional cost to state fish and wildlife agencies because MAT is funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant. MAT's current funding runs from January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2010. MAT also receives funding from the National Conservation Leadership Institute, and the USFWS pays the salary for project leader, Dwight Guynn.

### **State Leadership Development Program**

Per direction from the Association's Executive Committee and Leadership and Professional Development Committee, MAT is focused on assisting state fish and wildlife agencies to implement their own leadership development programs. 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 an 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 at mid- and senior-levels in a state fish and wildlife agency. The CLPS combines 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 seven online leadership classes and six 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 of Agency Assessment & Development
- Going from Good to Great
- Leader as Supervisor (new in 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
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- Leading at the Speed of Trust

#### **National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)**

The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) is a world-class leadership development program focused on rising stars within 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 benefit from a world-class 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 web site and is responsible for program coordination and management.

The third cohort of the NCLI consists of 34 high-potential conservation professionals from state, federal and non-governmental organizations, and they will begin their experience with prework beginning in September 2008. They will spend 11 days at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV as part of their initial residency. This will be followed by a five-month leadership project and a culminating three-day event at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri.

The first cohort of the NCLI concluded at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri on May 2, 2007 with 35 Fellows completing the nine-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.

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 web site for the NCLIAA to enhance their networking opportunities.

Additional information is available via the NCLI web site ([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, UT, FL, AL, DE, NJ and SD. MAT facilitated an all-employee meeting for Delaware Wildlife Section to help them develop a clear mission, vision and values. MAT made a plenary presentation on workforce planning at the 2008 WAFWA conference and delivered a plenary presentation at the NEAFWA conference on workforce planning and leadership development. MAT is scheduled to offer another plenary presentation at the American Fisheries Society annual meeting. MAT is currently working with Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, and Alabama to meet their requests for providing on-site leadership training.

As approved by the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, MAT delivered a regional workshop in late July at the National Conservation Training Center to help states address their workforce planning needs. Twenty-eight individuals from nine states participated. If there is need, MAT will offer more regionally focused workshops on workforce planning at a later date. 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 two to five people who would learn how to create a workforce planning framework and begin to work on their state's workforce planning needs.

As directed by the Association Directors at their March 2008 business meeting, MAT has conducted a telephone survey of all state and provincial fish and wildlife agency directors to assess their perceptions of the problem of fish and wildlife agency needs and the training received by wildlife and fisheries biology students at universities. The report on the survey results will be presented at the Association 2008 annual meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY.

### **Staffing**

MAT project leader **Jake Faibisch** accepted a position with USDA-APHIS to work on its leadership development programs. He will finish his service to MAT and the Association on September 14, 2008. In July, MAT's training services administrator, **Sally Hardy** left MAT to spend more time with her two daughters and help with her family's business. **Amanda Myers** was hired as the new training services administrator.

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, [sallyg@matteam.org](mailto:sallyg@matteam.org) or Dr. Dwight Guynn at 304/876-7387, [dwrightg@matteam.org](mailto:dwrightg@matteam.org).

## MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION

### North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)

The U.S. NABCI Committee met on August 11-12 to discuss progress and make decisions about its work plan that includes coordinated monitoring, private lands management, international cooperation, and communications. Eighteen of its 22 member were in attendance.

There are a number of new Committee members since the current priorities were developed, the current priorities were developed three-and-a-half years ago and 2009 marks the 10-year anniversary of the Committee. The Committee feels that NABCI accomplished what it originally intended to accomplish — laid out a framework for integrated bird conservation, developed a common planning unit called Bird Conservation Regions, helped influence wall-to-wall Joint Ventures (JVs), provided a forum for cross initiative and cross partner discussions, etc. However, there are plenty of challenges and issues left to address including assessing populations level, increasing our knowledge of limiting factors, increasing the fiscal and human resources dedicated to bird conservation, promoting cross border conservation and many others. With that said, it is important to reevaluate where the Committee should focus their leadership in the next three to five years and keep the Committee energized and engaged. The meeting focused on the future priorities and direction of the Committee. It was the beginning of a strategic planning discussion that will continue over the next four to eight months. **Dale Hall** is stepping down as Chair because he is retiring in January. **John Hoskins**, Missouri Department of Conservation is the new Chair.

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 concept is to use the biological foundation available within the bird community to help NRCS focus conservation program delivery; in other words, how working with the bird conservation community can help NRCS. The Subcommittee met with the Regional Assistant Chiefs, the Chief and his staff, and conducted a webcast in August for NRCS biologists on the topic. The discussion of strategic Farm Bill habitat initiatives was framed by a series of examples of bird conservation planning from the USFWS Habitat Assessment and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET) in North Dakota and Minnesota, Sage Grouse conservation between NRCS and the Wyoming Fish and Game 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. The Subcommittee is updating the Farm Bill User's Guide developed in the late 1990's. The audience is the wildlife conservationist. A Table of Contents has been developed and **Randy Gray**, retired NRCS national biologist, has been hired to assist with development of the guide. He will begin work in December 2008 after the rules have been published. The Subcommittee is working with Jen Mock Schaeffer and the Agricultural Conservation Committee on the Guide. The Committee is also keeping on top of interim and final rules as they are published.

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 U.S. 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 U.S. 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. The NABCI Tri-national Committee met on May 12 with representatives from CONABIO, SEMARNAT and CONANP of the Mexican federal government; the Canadian Wildlife Service; and USFWS and TNC from the U.S. A meeting was held on August 12 to discuss opportunities for funding through the World Bank, GEF, UNEP and others.

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. The Coordinator, Deb Hahn, had the opportunity to present key bird conservation messages at the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Deputy State Director meeting. It was an excellent opportunity to talk about potential partnerships between the state fish and wildlife agencies and BLM. NABCI is also participating in the development of the USFWS's State of the Bird Report that is anticipated to be out in early to mid 2009.

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, Ms. Hahn 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**

Ms. Hahn continues to help facilitate the development of products on coordinated monitoring through the U.S. NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee and the NE Coordinated Monitoring Partnership. 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 web site at <http://www.nabci-us.org/aboutnabci/monitoringreportfinal0307.pdf>. The U.S. 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. On the Subcommittees latest conference calls in June and July, they discussed the importance of long term security of key migratory bird databases. Many of our most critical databases do not have long term security or the necessary resources to keep them up to date and functioning. The NABCI Committee would like to see a strategy developed to secure the highest priority databases.

### **Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team**

Ms. Hahn 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. In late 2009 or early 2010, we anticipate grant money being available.

### **Nongame Migratory Bird Consultation between the States and the USFWS**

The Flyway nongame technical sections will be meeting in the summer. Ms. Hahn 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, Ms. Hahn has shifted her support from development to implementation. Currently, she 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. Currently, we are developing the prototype for review by the state fish and wildlife agencies.

Ms. Hahn 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 Ms. Hahn 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. Ms. Hahn hosted the National Ramsar Committee meeting in May 2008. 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. Ms. Hahn attended the Tri-lateral meeting to represent state fish and wildlife agencies on bird conservation issues.

### **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 Bird Conservation Committee asked that a Task Force to present recommendations on the development of the Southern Wings Program at the North American in March 2008. 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. Ms. Hahn received comments from 21 fish and wildlife agencies and compiled those responses to inform the Task Force's June 30 conference call. The Task Force has developed a final recommendation that will be presented to the Bird Conservation Committee and the Executive Committee.

### **Wind Power Development**

Ms. Hahn 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 U.S., Canada and Mexico on wind energy guidance development. The Subcommittee met in March to discuss all these issues. A work group of the Subcommittee is pulling a 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 workshop will be held on Monday September 8, 2008. 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. Ms. Hahn attended the Steering Committee meeting of NWCC. It was a great opportunity to interact with and learn from Public Utility Commission, State legislature, wind industry and wind consultant representatives.

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 web site.

Ms. Hahn 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. Ms. Hahn met 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 presented to the Wind Subcommittee and Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee at the North American meeting. A discussion was held with the Executive Committee in June to determine how we should proceed in regards to AWWI memberships. The Executive Committee agreed to interim membership pending final approval by the Association's membership at the September Association meeting. **Jeff Vonk** agreed to be the Association's representative to AWWI. With that approval, Ms. Hahn has participated in discussions with industry and NGO on the development of AWWI.

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. Ms. Hahn 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 U.S. Any state who would like to participate in the information working is welcome and should contact Ms. Hahn. This group helped her develop a presentation that she gave to the Advisory Committee at its 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 third meeting was held in July 2008 in Washington, DC. The state agency representatives are highly engaged and were strong participants at the meeting. They also intend to participate in the upcoming meetings in October 2008.

### **Avian Influenza**

The USDA and USGS were recently given mandates to develop a management plan for avian influenza that includes a continental survey. Ms. Hahn, 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 more than \$50 million to 138 national and regional priority projects of the state fish and wildlife agencies.

Full proposals were due Wednesday July 9 and all 20 applications invited to submit were received. Currently the full proposals are being reviewed by appropriate Association committees. Reviews are due Wednesday, August 27 and will be the starting point for the National Grants Committee's deliberations at the Association's Annual Meeting in September.

The next steps in the annual MSCGP cycle include: The National Grants Committee meets Wednesday, September 10 at the Association's Annual Meeting to select a recommended list of projects. Once the state Directors approve this priority list at the Business Meeting, it will be submitted to the USFWS 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 to be available starting January 1, 2009. The 2010 MSCGP Cycle will begin in November.

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

The new web site for the Fish Habitat Action plan is now up and running. Go to [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org) and check out all the latest news and accomplishments.

**John Cooper** (SD) has stepped down as Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board (Board). John was the Board's first Chair, and he did an outstanding job of leading the Board in many important, foundational decisions. His successor is **Kelly Hepler** from Alaska. Doug Austen (PA) and Jeff Koenings (WA) have recently been appointed to the 22-member Board, joining three other state agency representatives — **Gary Myers** (TN), **Rich Leopold** (IA) and Hepler.

To date the Board 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. Good progress has been made with drafting Action Plan legislation, in coordination with Hill staff, and there is a reasonable expectation that legislation will be formally introduced this session.

At the October 2007 Board 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. In 2008, two additional FHP's have been officially endorsed to date by the Board, and they are the Western Native Trout Initiative and the Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership. There are a total of 14 Candidate FHP's.

The Board has spent considerable effort this year reviewing and discussing the structure and function of FHP's. The Board, at its May meeting, adopted new recommendations that will be reflected in revised guidance to the FHP's in the next few months.

The Board's work continues to be primarily funded by Multistate Conservation Grants, a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for coordination services, a USFWS cooperative agreement and the ongoing support of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Board is also soliciting funding support from the states for the next three years. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will offer the banking services for the stateside funds.

The USFWS continues to make a significant investment in the Action Plan. The Bush Administration requested \$5.2 million in the 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. Some of these dollars are supporting the delivery of on-the-ground projects. The Board for example, concurred with a joint Board/USFWS team recommendation to deliver \$2.4 million to support 63 projects in 28 states within the scope of five FHP's. An additional \$600 thousand was later approved by the Board for demonstration projects within the scope of the Candidate FHP's.

A Science and Data Partners Workshop to address the national fish habitat assessment and the role of FHP's 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 Board. USGS/BRD hosted an invitation-only workshop regarding future science and data needs in early March.

The Board honored three exceptional organizations and an individual for their commitment to fish habitat conservation, science, or education at the DC-based National Casting Call on April 28, 2008. They are:

- Outreach and Education Award: The Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Scientific Achievement Award: The Fish and Aquatic Ecology Unit of the U.S. Forest Service and Trout Unlimited
- Exceptional Vision Award: **Steve Perry**, NH Fish and Game Department

The Board has hired **Ryan Roberts** as Communications Coordinator for the Habitat Action Plan. Mr. Roberts joins NFHAP from the Bowie Baysox Baseball team, where he served as the Director of Communications for the past four seasons. Other staff support to the Board 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). **Gary Whelan** (MI) and **Doug Beard** (USGS/BRD) are serving as co-chairs of the Science and Data Committee.

The Board will next meet in Washington, DC during October 7-8, 2008.

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

Len Ugarenko is pleased to report on his activities as the Association's NAWMP Coordinator. Mr. Ugarenko would like to thank all of you for your assistance and support. He 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 U.S. and Mexico since his 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. Currently Canada receives 45%, the U.S. 50% and Mexico 5%.

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 hosted the U.S. North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) for their meeting on Prince Edward Island.

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

In June 2008, representatives from across the Canadian NAWMP/NAWCC program met with the U.S. NAWCC staff who came to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada for the first joint council staff meeting. The Canadian NAWMP partners gave presentations on the habitat joint ventures in Canada as well as conducting a tour of some of the NAWMP/NAWCA projects in Saskatchewan.

**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 the Association.

The Association 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, five were approved including one that was a joint proposal with the U.S. 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**, former Executive Secretary, retired at the end of June. **Virginia Poter**, 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 two 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 completed NAWMP Implementation Plans for 2006-2011 for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. A Science and Policy forum, hosted by the PHJV, was held 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.

You may wish to explore the web site 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**

Mr. Ugarenko thanks 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.

### **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 to 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 U.S.
- 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 was a workshop in August 2008 on the future of waterfowl management. The workshop was sponsored by the National Flyway Council, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee and the Association. The purpose of the workshop was 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.

Mr. Ugarenko has accepted the position of President, Wildlife Habitat Canada ([www.whc.org](http://www.whc.org) ) and will be returning to Canada. He will be working at the Association on a part-time basis until the end of this year. He conveys that it has been a pleasure serving, on behalf of the Canadian NAWMP/NAWCA partners, as the NAWMP Coordinator at the Association for the past 12 years.

## 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. Dr. Pairis left the Association in February to begin work as the Climate Change Advisor for the California Department of Fish and Game. Priya Nanjappa Mitchell stepped in as the Interim Liaison until the Association has hired Dr. Arpita Choudhury. Dr. Choudhury began in August 2008 and is available to assist you at [achoudhury@fishwildlife.org](mailto:achoudhury@fishwildlife.org), 202/624.5853.

Salary is provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Discipline (USGS), and operational support from the USFWS, U.S. National Park Service (NPS), and USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services. Dr. Choudhury identifies high priority science and research information needs and facilitates communication among state and federal partners on science and research topics of mutual interest. Dr. Choudhury 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. Dr. Choudhury 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.

### **Climate Change**

***Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee*** – Dr. Choudhury now serves as the staff support on the climate change and wildlife subcommittee. In July 2008, the Executive Committee agreed to elevate the Climate Change Subcommittee to full Committee status due to its importance in the states at this time.

Climate change is a challenging issue for the Association that requires input from 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, Dr. Pairis 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 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).
- Dr. Choudhury 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.” Dr. Pairis worked closely with Mr. 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.
- In 2008, the Teaming With Wildlife Committee and the Climate Change Committee will join forces to create a Climate Change/Wildlife Action Plan Workgroup to improve communication and information dissemination on climate change to strengthen State Wildlife Action Plans.

### **Integrated Wildlife Inventories and Monitoring**

Dr. Choudhury 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 which is a collaborative effort to improve the accessibility of monitoring information, support effective evaluation and decision-making. Dr. Choudhury will 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.
- Dr. Choudhury will serve 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.

### **Invasive Species**

Dr. Choudhury 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.

- During the vacancy of the Science & Research Liaison position, Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell, assisted the committee Vice-Chair **Larry Riley** (AZ) to prepare testimony on the Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act for delivery at a hearing before the House Committee on Natural Resources on June 26.
- Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell also coordinated and compiled comments from the Invasive Species, Angler and Boating Participation, and Fisheries and Water Resource Policy Committees on the National Governor’s Association (NGA) revised Cooperative Management of Invasive Species policy. Comments were provided to the NGA on behalf of the Association.
- 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.

- Dr. Choudhury 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.
- Dr. Choudhury 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).
- Dr. Choudhury 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 & Research Committee**

The Science & 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.

- 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 & 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 Association 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 2007 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 2008, the committee assembled a planning team 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 structured decision-making/adaptive management workshop a regular occurrence with a different topic of coverage each time.
  - During the vacancy of the Science & Research Liaison, Ms. Nanjappa Mitchell organized a conference call on May 28 among the workshop planning team, and development of the workshop is well underway.
  - A second conference call was held on June 24. Members of the workshop planning team, with support from Science & Research Committee Chair, **Terry Steinwand**, agreed to postpone this inaugural workshop until March 2009, during the North American. A rough agenda has been developed, with speaker selection in progress. Further discussion will occur at the Science & Research meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY.
- 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). Dr. Pairis provided a presentation at the 2007 SEAFWA fish chiefs meeting to request the participation of a fish chief on behalf of the region. The same request was made to the MAFWA fish chiefs. Representation has now been secured for both SEAFWA and MAFWA.

### **Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee**

Dr. Pairis 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, Dr. Choudhury is engaged in several activities with the Invasive Species Node.

## **Fish and Wildlife Health Committee**

Dr. Choudhury stays up to date on wildlife disease issues including Avian Influenza, Chronic Wasting Disease, and amphibian chytrid fungus (Bd). Dr. Choudhury remains focused on making sure that state agencies are informed of current activities and try to facilitate information exchange.

Dr. Choudhury is also a member of the USFWS Directorate Science Advisory Committee.

# **TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE**

## **Staff Changes**

Naomi Edelson, Teaming with Wildlife Director and Dave Chadwick, Teaming with Wildlife Associate both left the Association this past spring. A national search was held for the Teaming with Wildlife Director and **Mark Humpert**, Wildlife Diversity Program Manager for Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, was selected as the new Director. Mr. Humpert started work in mid-August. A search is currently underway to fill the Teaming with Wildlife Associate position.

## **State Wildlife Grants Appropriations**

A total of 62 Senators and 155 Representatives signed “Dear Colleague” letters supporting \$85 million for the State Wildlife Grants Program for fiscal year 2009. An Interior appropriation bill was not approved before the start of the fiscal year and it’s likely the Department will be operating under a continuing resolution through the end of the calendar year.

## **Long-Term Funding**

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

The introduction of the Teaming with Wildlife Act (S.2670 in late February by Senators Tim Johnson (SD) and Debbie Stabenow (MI) was a major milestone in the effort to secure dedicated funding for wildlife conservation. This bill would provide \$350 million a year for five years to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program. In contrast to the 50-50 match for State Wildlife Grants, the program would operate with the standard Pittman-Robertson 75-25 match and allow for funding of conservation education and nature-based recreation. 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. Because of staff vacancies at the Association, efforts to secure co-sponsors of the bill were curtailed. Mr. Humpert has met with staff in Senator Johnson’s office and is developing a strategy to move this important legislation forward next year.

### ***Outer Continental Shelf Drilling***

Over the summer, there has been considerable debate within Congress and between presidential candidates regarding the need to open up additional areas of the Outer Continental Shelf for petroleum and gas drilling. The desire to provide relief to consumers for record high energy prices is motivating Congress to find common ground on the issue. A bipartisan group of 16 Senators (known as the Gang of 16) is promoting a compromise that would include opening up new areas of the eastern Gulf of Mexico and Eastern Seaboard to drilling as part of an energy package. This could create an opportunity to include language in proposed legislation to provide dedicated funding for wildlife. Staff are working with Directors in states with members in leadership positions and with Directors in the Gang of 16 states to get letters to key congressional members asking for their support for wildlife funding. Meetings with Congressional staff will take place in September and the Teaming with Wildlife coalition will be activated if it appears there is a chance to secure dedicated funding.

## **Climate Change**

Work is occurring on several fronts with Climate change legislation. The [Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act \(S.2191\)](#) was debated on the Senate floor in June representing another significant milestone to secure dedicated funding for wildlife. If passed in its current form, it would provide billions in new revenue to state fish and wildlife agencies. The debate on the bill was shorter than was hoped for, but it further moved climate change into the public spotlight. Presumed presidential nominees for both major parties support a cap and trade system that would generate revenue that could be used to wildlife adaptation activities for wildlife. Association staff are working with conservation partners on several current and potential grants to acquire new and better information to help states address climate change in their state. A new workgroup on climate change and state wildlife action plans is being proposed so that experts on climate change and wildlife action plans are brought together to provide guidance to states interested in incorporating climate change into their state wildlife action plans.

## **Teaming with Wildlife Coalition**

The Association continues to lead the effort to grow the Teaming with Wildlife coalition. The coalition now stands at 5,842 members, making it one of the largest and most diverse coalitions ever assembled on behalf of wildlife. Planning is underway to prepare for and streamline activation of the coalition when it is needed.

For more information on the Teaming with Wildlife initiative, contact Mr. Humpert at [mhumpert@fishwildlife.org](mailto:mhumpert@fishwildlife.org).

## **ASSOCIATION STAFF**

Matt Hogan	Executive Director
Carol Bambery	General Counsel
Arpita Choudhury	Science and Research Liaison
Jacob Faibisch	Management Assistance Team Project Leader
Estelle Green	Administrative Assistance
Dwight Guynn	Management Assistance Team Project Leader
Sally Guynn	Management Assistance Team Project Leader
Deb Hahn	Migratory Bird Coordinator
Mark Humpert	Wildlife Diversity Director
Don MacLauchlan	International Resource Director
Laura MacLean	Communications and Marketing Director
Gina Main	Management Assistance Team Projects and Creative Manager
Amanda Myers	Management Assistance Team Training Services Administrator
Priya Nanjappa Mitchell	Amphibian and Reptile Coordinator
Angela Rivas Nelson	Executive Assistant
Ron Regan	Resource Director
Donna Reeves	Management Assistance Team Office and NCLI Grants Administrator
Ryan Roberts	NFHAP Communications Coordinator
Jen Mock Schaeffer	Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst
Liz Skipper	Administrative Assistant
Gary J. Taylor	Legislative Director
Len Ugarenko	North American Waterfowl Management Plan Coordinator
Bryant White	Furbearer Research Coordinator
Christina Zarrella	Multistate Conservation Grants Coordinator