

Recommendation: The Committee has considered whether AFWA should sign the Edinburgh Declaration since 2020. In 2021, the interim decision on whether AFWA should sign the Edinburgh Declaration was postponed because Committee members wanted to see a final copy of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and to find out what the U.S. Government thought about the Edinburgh Declaration.

Since that time, we engaged the U.S. State Department. They do not have any concerns about the Declaration or AFWA signing it. The GBF remains in draft form. The intent is to conduct final negotiations on the text of the GBF and approve it at the Conference of the Parties (CoP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December 2022. With the unknowns around the language of the GBF and considering the input received over the past two years on whether AFWA should sign the Edinburgh Declaration, the co-chairs of the International Relations Committee recommend that AFWA does not sign the Edinburgh Declaration. If you have additional input, please reach out to Deb Hahn (dhahn@fishwildlife.org). We will advance this recommendation at the September 19th International Relations Committee meeting.

Background: In November 2018 at CBD CoP14, they initiated development of the GBF. The intent was to adopt a final draft of the GBF in October 2020 at CBD CoP15. However, due to the COVID pandemic the CoP was postponed until December 2022. AFWA has participated in dialogues around the GBF and submitted comments on numerous drafts. AFWA developed input with state agency staff, the AFWA Executive Committee, and through the International Relations Committee. AFWA became a partner in the CBD's Advisory Committee for Subnational Governments in September 2019. The state of California is now an observer to the CBD.

The GBF is not finalized or approved yet. That will occur in December 2022 at CBD CoP15. The GBF "...aims to galvanize urgent and transformative action by Governments and all of society..." "The framework will be implemented primarily through activities at the national level, with supporting action at the subnational, regional and global levels." "It also assumes that a whole-of-government and society approach is necessary to make the changes needed over the next 10 years as a steppingstone towards the achievement of the 2050 Vision." The CBD 2050 vision is "living in harmony with nature."

To better engage subnational governments, the government of Scotland hosted *the Edinburgh Process for Subnational Governments, Cities and Local Authorities on the Development of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*. Deb Hahn participated in the process. One output of the meeting was the Edinburgh Declaration. The intent of the Declaration is to set out the aspirations and commitments of the Scottish Government, Edinburgh Process partners, and the wider subnational constituency of the CBD in delivering for nature over the coming decade. They are asking for governments and organizations to sign the Declaration by the end of October 2022. Current signatories to the Declaration can be found [here](#). They include over 50 subnational governments, NGOs, and local authorities and Mexico.

What do we know?

- The GBF:
 - is not finalized yet so we do not know exactly what the final targets and recommendations will be.
 - The current draft GBF goals are to increase the area, connectivity, and integrity of natural systems; reduce the number of species that are threatened; increase the abundance of species; improve nature's contribution to food security; include the value of nature in financial systems; and increase the shared benefits and access to what nature has to offer. The framework will include targets such as protect and conserve at least 30% of the planet; achieve a 50% reduction in invasive species introductions; and integrate biodiversity values into policies,

regulations, planning, development, etc. The GBF and CBD contains language around supporting sustainable use. For example, the current 2050 goal 5 is “Nature’s contributions to people have been valued, maintained or enhanced through conservation and sustainable use supporting global development agenda for the benefit of all people.” Also, target 4 is “by 2030, ensure that the harvesting, trade and use of wild species of fauna and flora is legal, at sustainable levels and safe.”

- The Declaration:
 - recognizes the need for “transformative change.” This include stronger international cooperation, correcting perverse incentive structures, applying a more holistic approach to decision-making and strengthening implementation of environmental laws and policies. It also calls for an “evolution of global financial and economic systems to build a sustainable economy within ecological and social boundaries.”
 - emphasizes the key role that subnational governments, cities, and local authorities play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
 - supports the 2050 vision “living in harmony with nature” and the Mission of the GBF ‘To take urgent action across society to put biodiversity on a path to recovery for the benefit of the planet and people.’
 - welcomes the inclusion of subnational governments as implementors of the GBF.
 - recognizes that subnational governments are “uniquely and most effectively positioned to deliver the outreach, awareness, and uptake of the framework across the whole of society, facilitating engagement with key stakeholders to implement the framework at subnational, city and local levels.”
 - provides a list of commitments from those that sign it:
 1. Implement appropriate actions that deliver on GBF targets.
 2. Align subnational strategies with the NBSAPs (CBD Country reports): The U.S. is not a party to CBD so we do not produce this report. Canada does produce this report.
 3. Increase resource mobilization.
 4. Mainstream biodiversity across public, private and business sectors: The intent of mainstreaming is to make sure biodiversity is considered in and integrated into decisions made in these sectors such as agriculture.
 5. Raise public awareness.
 6. Implement nature-based solutions: “Nature-based solutions involve working with nature to address societal challenges, providing benefits for both human well-being and biodiversity. They are actions that involve the protection, restoration or management of natural and semi-natural ecosystems; the sustainable management of aquatic systems and working lands such as croplands or timberlands; or the creation of novel ecosystems in and around cities.”
 7. share knowledge and best practices
 - includes a Call for Action. It calls on the Parties (or Countries) to the CBD to:
 1. Take action for transformative change.
 2. Recognize the role of subnational governments, cities, and local authorities.
 3. Support better inclusion of subnational governments, cities, and local authorities in CBD through decisions at the next CoP.
 4. Establish a multi-stakeholder platform where subnational governments, cities, and local authorities can support implementation of the GBF (It is unclear exactly what this means.).

Considerations for signing:

1. Under the commitment section, #3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are all things AFWA and its members already do.
2. Commitment #1 would require implementation of appropriate actions based on the GBF. However, some of these are already being addressed by states, Provinces and Territories and it is our understanding that signing doesn't require us to "agree" to or work toward all of the targets.
3. Commitment #2 could be done by demonstrating how the State Wildlife Action Plans align with national and international goals.
4. In the Call to action for CBD Parties, #2 and #3 seem easy to support.
5. In the Call to action for CBD Parties, #4 seems positive but we don't know exactly what a multi-stakeholder platform would entail or mean.
6. In the Call to action for CBD Parties commitment #1 is asking countries to support transformative change? We do not know whether our federal government supports this. We have not discussed this issue in AFWA to know whether we want to support it. We also don't have a specific definition of what this would mean other than what has been discussed in the IPBES report etc. It is our understanding, this concept would not entail ending the sustainable use of wildlife.

Input from 2020/2021 from Committee Members on Signing the ED: There were mixed opinions about AFWA signing the Declaration.

- Vote count if that is useful:
 - CO, AR, Nathan Roberts (former WI DNR staff, now individual member), USDA – unsure
 - AK – no
 - Wild Sheep Foundation, Ontario, TN - yes
- Questions about U.S. Federal government support for the GBF and what they might think about us signing on to it.
- Questions about whether either the Canadian or US the Federal government would use our signing to try to push for actions. As an example, would they change the SWAP requirements to align with international targets etc.
- Uncertainty about what it really means for AFWA to sign
- The question Why would we sign? Not seeing benefits
- USDA Comment: As an NGO that includes the non-government affiliates, it seems like a gray area for AFWA