

Joint EOD/WDCF Working Group

March 27, 2024

Attendees: 32

Call to Order, Introductions

Background

- Original purpose of working group was to connect communication staff with biologists and others to help find out what stories need to be told in conservation
- It currently focuses on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act- communication needs, etc

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) Update- Sean Saville

- Most of the work currently is on the Senate side
- The RAWA bill has been introduced on the Senate side, but not in the House (yet) in this congress cycle
- They could likely pass the bill in the Senate at this point; have enough sponsors and support; almost all democrats are in support, and have reached a critical amount of republican support to 'guarantee' passage
- Westermen's Habitat bill is NOT RAWA and does not go far enough for dedicated, sustainable funding that the states need.
 - AFWA supported this bill because it still sends funds to the states to do needed conservation work; with a note that AFWA is in full support and working toward the passage of RAWA
- Overall, nothing is really passing in Congress due to gridlock. Therefore, RAWA will likely not pass during the 118th Congress
- Will be looking at a renewed focus during the 119th Congress to pass RAWA; it's a top legislative priority for AFWA
- Looking to keep partners engaged as we prepare for the 119th Congress
- We have contracted with Southwick to do an economic analysis on RAWA to make the business case for the financial benefits if RAWA passes
 - Looking at the human side: jobs and economic benefits
- Internal talking points ([found HERE](#))
 - Looking at making some of these talking points as communication assets
- People in congress now know about and the importance of State Wildlife Action Plans
 - No one on the Hill is asking 'Why' we need RAWA; the only sticking point is the payfor
- Important for states to continue to message on the importance of long term sustainable funding.
- Look at rebranding the Making It Last campaign to create messaging for continued sustainable funding
- Many of the states are going through their SWAP revisions → good time to incorporate this messaging
- RAWA soundbites created by the [Southwick research](#); can be used to help create social media content
- Looking for volunteers to help create content for messaging about the importance of long term sustainable funding for state fish and wildlife agencies/tribes
 - Help figure out the best way to package this information

- The Southwick work helps our industry partners see themselves in RAWA and the benefits to this bill for them
 - Use this data as a bridge to reach out to those industry partners
- Might be good to start highlighting the passion of the work we do; showing the human component (the bottom half of the iceberg) to make that connection with our intended audience and get their support; not always just about the critters and the habitat
- Look at highlighting certain people in conservation (staff)/the human story
- Look at Partner with a Payer campaign and see if we can use that formula to connect what we're doing with industry
- If we can make the connection with young people, that would be greatly beneficial to our agencies
- Need to identify our target audience (fine tune)
- Need to link where conservation actually happens; the state FW agencies are the main conservationists→ the public isn't aware of this...
- When telling the people story—they need to see people's faces so they can see the emotion

- How can we address the icebergs of people? And then meet them where they are with our messaging.....