



**JOINT WORKING GROUP: EDUCATION, OUTREACH, & DIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE DIVERSITY
CONSERVATION AND FUNDING COMMITTEES**

Chairs: Shelly Plante (TX)

Chair: Daren Riedle (KDWP)

Thursday, March 23, 2023

10:00am – 12:00pm

88th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference

Agenda:

Call to order, introductions

- Overview of how the Joint WG formed and some of the products over the past year
 - Story map to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA); fact sheets, and other products
 - Having the wildlife diversity staff work with communication staff to get the story out in an affective way to support state agency work as well as support RAWA and its hopeful passage
 - Also work together on the Relevancy Road Map as well as other projects
- Round robin introductions

RAWA update, *Sean Saville (AFWA)*

- Very much alive; still use the factsheets and story map all the time and find them extremely helpful when talking with congressional staff
- Came very close during last session; a lot of momentum at the end of last session that has transferred into this session (esp on the senate side)
- Senators Henrick and Tillis are the leads on the Senate side; reaching out to 10 of the previous senators that had signed on to the bill to be original co-sponsors
- There is a pay-for identified that is being flushed out
- Looking more likely that it will be introduced after the April recess
- Setback this week on the payfor...another senator has designs on that payfor for another project
 - They are negotiating and have a path forward
- There aren't significant changes in this version of the bill, so will be able to go straight to the floor and not have to go through committee—will speed up the passage process
- House side of the RAWA bill will be a little different and it will need to go through committee again. Chair of the committee has some changes he may want to see.
 - Started negotiations with Dingell's office to get things moving in a positive direction

- Partners are lined up and ready to promote RAWA once it gets introduced; media opportunities
- Need to convey the importance RAWA is to states to have on the ground funding
- #RecoverWildlife
- We are looking for ideas to help get the word out beyond what we've already done
- Stories with a human focus tend to gain traction; if anyone has any stories, please share

Open discussion for additional actions/support we could provide and future of this Joint Working Group

- Connection of outdoors (and biodiversity and health of the outdoors) to mental/public health
- There was a push along these lines with #ResponsibleRecreation campaign
- Look for specific (small) stories that highlights how improved wildlife populations and nature health and directly affected a community and their (mental and physical) health
- Possible creation of a dashboard that would have ex) quotes from doctors or pediatrician as to the benefits of nature for people
- Maybe look at creating factsheets for strategic states that highlights 2 projects for species and 1 project for people
- Nature doesn't have state boundaries
- Stories gathered need to be living stories that can be updated; nature has a voice
- Start to promote videos as appropriate on social media
- What are the missing pieces?
 - Updating fact sheets with a people component
 - What is the economic impact of passing vs not passing the bill
 - Social posts that include a people component- how it not only helps nature/wildlife but helps people → tangible stories
 - Make a connection with the One Health efforts [talk with Sara about making that connection]
- Start 'spelling out' specifically how RAWA will help wildlife and their state; specific examples
 - What are 'hot button' issue that we can positively connect RAWA to?
- TXwildlifealliance.org → lots of helpful fact sheets there that is helpful beyond TX
- Tap into the past and current NCLI fellows to see if they can come up with some ideas
- 'Regulatory Certainty' is a positive buzz work for congressmen/women
- Showing that it can be used in conservation law enforcement when it comes to protecting imperiled and at-risk species (ex. Stopping illegal turtle trade)
- Need to work on relevancy (state FW agencies); beyond RAWA
- After RAWA is passed, we need to tell the success stories the state have because of RAWA; especially the first few years
- Should we have 1-2 events (field outing) with congresspeople to highlight the importance of the state agency work and how RAWA would help
- Doing a boxed lunch with a partner agencies for staffers on the Hill would be a possible strategy
- Look at connecting the (future) rebranded Making It Last campaign with RAWA communication and how to best communicate with Hill staff and the general public
 - Showcasing how we are being good stewards of this money
- Look at mobilizing state agency volunteers and use them as ambassadors

Our call to order: stay alert! Once we know who will be original co-sponsors then we can move forward with a strategy.

Action: request for anecdote from states now, so we can start getting ready for RAWA introduction

- Sean will create a template to help people put together these stories in an organized way
- Will put the stories in one place for a reference to be used as needed

Action: help update the contact list of POC people at state agencies with RAWA

- Kelly Simon with Texas Alliance has volunteered to wrangle that information

Important to lay groundwork before you get the RAWA money, strategize with comms people to help tell the story, and help forecast when you'll start seeing results...the process and create understanding as to what happens next. Help with expectations.

Adjourn