

The AFWA Strategist

Update for Members and Partners of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Winter 2019

AFWA Executive Committee Updates

The Executive Committee met at the AFWA headquarters on December 3rd to conduct the official business of the Association. The following is a summary of decisions and discussions at the meeting:

- The 2019 budget was reviewed and finalized.
- Jen Mock Schaeffer and Sean Saville gave an update on the status of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.
- Carol Frampton discussed non-profit governance issues.
- Jen Mock Schaeffer gave an update on the Chronic Wasting Disease legislation and next steps.
- Curt Melcher gave an update on the National Survey.
- Ed Carter discussed the need to hold a Director's Orientation for Directors appointed in the last 12 months.
- Tony Wasley updated the Committee of the work on the Relevancy Road Map.
- The Committee voted to adopt two 2 new AFWA Awards: Stephen Kellert Award and the Gary Taylor Award.
- USFS Chief Vicky Christiansen gave an update.

Please contact Ron Regan (rregan@fishwildlife.org) if you would like more information on any of these subjects or if you have suggestions regarding the Executive Committee.

The next scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee will be at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Management Conference in Denver, Colorado, March 4th-8th (<https://wildlifemanagement.institute/conference>)



Save the date...

109th AFWA Annual Meeting
Saint Paul, Minnesota
September 22-25, 2019

www.fishwildlife.org



Legislative Updates

President Enacts the Agriculture Improvement Act

On December 20, the Agriculture Improvement Act (HR2) was signed into law. We were very successful in enacting many of the states' priorities such as: For EQIP, increasing the minimum amount of funding for wildlife practices to at least 10%; stepping up the funding over the 5-year authorization to \$2.025b; and allowing up to 10 year contracts solely for wildlife practices. The CRP increases from 24m to 27m acres; maintains 8.6m acres in continuous CRP; limits soil rental rates for general and continuous enrollment to 85% and 90% of the county average, respectively; and requires a CRP general sign-up not less than once each year. The VPA-HIP is reauthorized at \$50m; modifies the language so states may apply for funding (rather than grants); simplifies the application/reporting process; directs the Secretary to use \$3m to encourage public access on Wetland Reserve Easements, and report language clarifies that remaining funds are to be available for other purposes of VPA-HIP if unable to utilize the full \$3m for access on land in WRE. The easement programs increase by \$225m to \$450m/yr; allows any combination of cash, charitable donation, and costs associated with securing the deed to the easement to satisfy non-federal share of the easement; and removes the requirement of 50% cash match associated with charitable donations; and WRE county acreage cap increases to 15%, among other wildlife habitat friendly changes. It codifies the Working Lands for Wildlife Program; establishes a feral swine eradication program of \$75m; makes research on CWD a priority for Ag Extension Service grants for treating, mitigating, or eliminating chronic wasting disease; and provides AGI waiver authority for all conservation programs to "protect environmentally-sensitive lands of special significance." For a full account, see the January 2019 edition of the Directors Line.

Senate Fails to Pass Sportsmen's Conservation Provisions – PR Modernization Blue Slipped

The bipartisan, bicameral package of public lands and sportsmen's provisions expected to be attached to the appropriations bill and pass both chambers by unanimous consent (UC) failed on the Senate floor. It included the House's LWCF, PR Modernization, Target and Marksmanship, Open Until Closed, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Open Book on Equal Access to Justice, and many others of significance. Unknowingly, amendments made to the PR Modernization bill (HR2591) in the Senate to achieve UC violated the Constitution origination clause for tax bills which was objected to by law by the House Ways and Means Committee, triggering a "blue slip," and dropping the bill from the package before floor action. AFWA will work with our partners and bill sponsors on next year's strategy and hopefully avoid such an unfortunate technical fate.

Finally, the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017, was sent to the President's for enactment on December 20 (AFWA was neutral), and CVIDA passed in November in a much more palatable form, albeit still preempting states' authority.

Director Orientation



We continue to see large numbers of new leaders step into the role of Director every year. One of

President Carter's priorities this year is to help new state directors learn about AFWA as a resource and how AFWA serves as the collective voice of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. To this end we will be holding a Director's Orientation for Directors appointed in the last 12 months, at our headquarters in Washington, DC on February 3-4. A detailed agenda is being developed. If you have suggestions for issues what we should address please forward them to John Lord (jlord@fishwildlife.org). President Ed may be inviting some of you to help us with this training.

More information is posted on our AFWA website – schedule of events.



With mixed emotion, we said goodbye to Carol Frampton as our General Counsel in December. Carol will be moving over

to the National Wild Turkey Federation in her home state of South Carolina to serve in a like role. Carol will continue to work on the Legal Strategy initiative that AFWA launched several years ago. This work includes bringing an awareness of the role of the state agencies in wildlife management, the public trust doctrine and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation in our universities and law schools. Her new email is cframpton@nwtf.net.

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Recovering America's Wildlife Act- Update

Thanks for a great year with the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife campaign to pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA). We pushed ever closer to realizing this historic and innovative solution to the fish and wildlife funding shortfall we face, and built durable bipartisan support for the legislation in Congress. We had aspired to find a way to have the bill included in the final spending package passed by this Congress, but ultimately the appropriations deals broke down and the legislative vehicle enabling passage of the bill did not materialize. However, we finished out the year with 116 bipartisan cosponsors in the House and 6 in the Senate, and had positive hearings on the bill in both committees of jurisdiction. We also more than doubled the [membership](#) of the Alliance over this past year, and have brought on influential partners in many major sectors of the American economy, across the conservation community and beyond. So with this solid foundation of support for increased fish and wildlife conservation funding, we will double down and work to introduce the bill early in the 116th Congress and look for opportunities to advance RAWA then in both House and Senate.

Check the Alliance website at www.OurNatureUSA.com for membership information, and our [Alliance page](#) on the AFWA site updates.

International Updates

The signatory parties to the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS), along with the United States (US), a permanent observer, met at the Joint Management Committee meeting on December 14 in Brussels, Belgium. Tom DeLiberto, USDA APHIS, and Deb Hahn, AFWA, represented the US. They reported on US activities related to AIHTS and on activities referencing international trap testing standards and implementing the trapping Best Management Practices (BMP). The US committed to developing BMPs for twenty-three species of furbearers in the Agreed Minute and Annex that was signed in 1997. Since the start of the US program in 1997, over 600 types of commercially available traps have been evaluated. Reports and resource material are available at the AFWA website. <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management>.

The Ramsar Convention, which the US is a signatory to, held its 13th Conference of the Parties (CoP) in October 2018. They adopted important resolutions on the conservation and wise use of wetlands including intertidal wetlands, the intersection of agriculture and wetlands, etc. More information can be found on their [website](#).

The fourteenth CoP to the Convention on Biological Diversity met in November 2018. Although the US is not a signatory, the decisions adopted create opportunities and challenges for wildlife management. 2020 is the deadline to meet the Aichi Targets for biodiversity conservation and protection, sustainable use, invasive species management, incorporation of traditional knowledge, etc. They are starting to develop the post 2020 framework and new targets. More information on the decisions adopted at the meeting can be found [here](#).

Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap

Five strategy teams made up of over fifty individuals from state and federal agencies, NGOs and business are developing a road map to fish and wildlife relevancy to enhance conservation through broader engagement. A draft roadmap with barriers and strategies will be vetted with fish and wildlife agency directors at the upcoming North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference. The teams will develop tactics this spring and summer and the full roadmap will be presented to Directors at the AFWA annual meeting next September. Development of the roadmap is being led by Tony Wasley and Steve Williams. More information about the roadmap is available at <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/resources/blue-ribbon-panel/relevancy-roadmap>.