

**COMPILATION OF RESOLUTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE 110TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES (VIRTUAL)**

- 2020-01-03 Support for the Open Fields Doctrine in Inspections and Investigations by State Conservation Officers
- 2020-02-03 Support for Prioritization of State Fish and Wildlife Agency Private Land Technical Assistance Efforts
- 2020-03-03 Celebrating a Successful Virtual Annual Meeting and Acknowledging a Year of Unprecedented Challenges and Adaptation



RESOLUTION 2020-01-03

**SUPPORT FOR THE OPEN FIELDS DOCTRINE IN INSPECTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS BY STATE
CONSERVATION OFFICERS**

WHEREAS, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes the open fields doctrine is a necessary and significant tool for the protection of mobile and migrating wildlife and is key to accomplishing the conservation and management responsibilities of state and federal wildlife agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes that the open fields doctrine is a judicially recognized legal doctrine emanating from the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the open fields doctrine was established by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Hester v. United States*, 265 U.S. 57 (1924) and enhances the effectiveness of wildlife law enforcement officers in regulating the lawful harvest of fish and wildlife and in combatting the spread of infectious diseases and confronting illegal activities that harm wildlife resources held by the states in public trust for the benefit of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Association recognizes that the increasing variety and availability of technologically advanced surveillance devices requires continual review, due diligence, and training to ensure consistent constitutional application in deploying such devices; and

WHEREAS, the Association's Law Enforcement Committee desires to collaborate with the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, the Legal Committee, and state agency members to develop best practices to continue the judicious use of the open fields doctrine and to maintain public trust and support;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Association supports the continued availability of the open fields doctrine to state and federal conservation officers.

Resolution submitted by the Law Enforcement Committee.



RESOLUTION 2020-02-03

SUPPORT FOR PRIORITIZATION OF STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCY PRIVATE LAND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS

WHEREAS, private lands make up 61% of the landscape of the United States (USGS PADUS Version 1.4 2017) and make up most of the agricultural regions of Canada; and

WHEREAS, the majority of North American hunters utilize private lands for the bulk of their hunting experiences (USFWS National Survey of hunting, fishing and wildlife-associated recreation 2016); and

WHEREAS, most state fish and wildlife agencies focus attention more broadly on public lands management; and

WHEREAS, 12,000 species of conservation concern (AFWA 2019), which includes 75% of threatened and endangered species (Turner and Rylander 1998), and many economically important game species all require habitat on North America's private lands; and

WHEREAS, private land technical assistance for the delivery of conservation of fish and wildlife habitat is based on a one-on-one relationship with each landowner; and

WHEREAS, there are diverse sources of conservation financial assistance, however, the 2010 Congressional Research Service Report cited a lack of technical assistance as a barrier to the adoption of conservation and enrollment into state and federal conservation programs; and

WHEREAS, private land can be addressed through targeted geographies to make meaningful impacts on wildlife species and their habitats; and

WHEREAS, partnerships between state fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies, non-government organizations and joint ventures have proven effective in reaching landowners and conserving species habitat; and

WHEREAS, state fish and wildlife agencies can partner with University Extension and agricultural organizations to integrate conservation into agricultural operations; and

WHEREAS, maintaining relevancy with landowners and the non-hunting public has been a challenge for state agencies with limited staffing and reductions in funding opportunities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes the need to direct attention toward North America's private lands to address agency relevancy, economically important game species, threatened and endangered species, and species of conservation concern towards sustainability for future generations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that prioritization of private land assistance in partnership with conservation and agricultural interests is supported by State and Provincial members.

Submitted by the Agricultural Conservation Committee.



RESOLUTION 2020-03-03

CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING AND ACKNOWLEDGING A YEAR OF UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATION

WHEREAS, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies convened its 110th Annual Meeting virtually on September 9-11 and 14-15, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the once-in-a-century public health and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have profoundly affected the funding streams, operations, conservation programs, and scientific research conducted by conservation organizations and state, provincial, and territorial fish and wildlife agencies; and

WHEREAS, many of the Association's committees and partner organizations have collaborated to address emerging science related to prevention of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 and process the policy implications for international trade and sustainable use of wildlife resources; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has caused an abrupt shift in the ways that many of the Association's member agencies and organizations conduct their business, and many organizations have strived to adapt to social distancing needs and to promote the continued well-being of their employees, families, and constituencies; and

WHEREAS, the importance of the great outdoors and wildlife to maintaining physical and mental health has only increased since the Association adopted the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap in 2019 and agencies have responded to the management, personnel, and budgetary challenges associated with these trends; and

WHEREAS, the Plenary Session of the 110th Annual Meeting embraced not only the challenges and opportunities posed by the pandemic but also the challenges inherent in guaranteeing that everyone feels welcome in the great outdoors and ensuring that the diversity of the public is reflected in the staff of our agencies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Association extends its sincere appreciation and gratitude to its members for a successful and productive 2020 Annual Meeting and for continuing to advance the vital work of fish and wildlife conservation during a uniquely challenging time.