

MEETING NOTES

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

Chair: Shelly Plante (TX); Co-Chair: Daren Riedle (KS)
Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 10:00am – 12:00pm Central Time
86th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference, Virtual Meeting

Agenda

- 10:00am Call to order, introductions, review of agenda, Shelly Plante (TX)
- 10:15am RAWA update, Sean Saville (AFWA)
- 11:00am Shovel-ready Project Template, Jenny Dickson (CT)
- 11:30am Other business and potential future opportunities for the group, all

RAWA update, Sean Saville (AFWA)

From last congress—185 bipartisan co-sponsors, past out of House Natural Resource Committee. Similar bill past with bi-partisan support in house. Committee leadership in both houses of Congress are supportive. Introduction of bill will be any day. 360 (approx.) organizations have signed on to letter of support. There is the potential that the bill will be included as part of a larger infrastructure package. Language in bill is a close to possible of what passed in House Natural Resource Committee last year, including wording on permanent funding. New, more diverse organizations are joining to rally around this common vision.

New RAWA promotional video will be launched as bill is introduced. Shorter “teaser” video and still images will also be made available. Thanks to Texas Alliance for creating this. T-shirts are also available for promoting effort.

Sean is available for giving RAWA presentations. If you know of an opportunity for a RAWA presentation, let him know.

The #ResponsibleRecreation Campaign has involved, among other efforts, use of signage to help people be safe outdoors. If you are interested in getting signs, let Sean know. See also interview video from Nevada for encouraging responsible recreation.

Next Steps for 2021:

- Legislation—Help educate your senators;
- Engagement & Outreach—continue to make the case for the funding need and immediate jobs creation. Demonstrate value of healthy wildlife and the 33,000 jobs the legislation could create annual. Use the #RecoverWildlife hashtag initiative to raise awareness and funding for the campaign to pass RAWA. Sean will send link to the Alliance Toolkit for agencies to use. Feedback on Toolkit is appreciated.

Online Resources:

- The Alliance for Fish & Wildlife website --> <https://ournatureusa.com/>
- 117th Congress Sign-on letter and list: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hnYIDRA_HtfQU1vYajaza6D4GEZDU7T
- Alliance Toolkit <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19oOPZlIjZtND4VO6aYxEyWQuc-E9g28T>
- Alliance page on the AFWA website <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-acts/alliance-americas-fish-and-wildlife>

Shovel-ready (or Implementation-Ready) Project Template, Jenny Dickson (CT)

Fact Sheets for shovel-ready projects:

To help demonstrate what conservation projects are on the ground and ready to go in the event of RAWA passing, fact sheets were developed previously, but this list will help with the next introduction of the bill. An

example template for the Shovel Ready Projects was displayed and discussed. Discussion on how template can be updated—what categories of information and what level of detail should the list/ fact sheet have? Categories of information could be. . . What projects are in key districts? How soon can the project be started on? What is the timeframe on the project? What is the status on projects already underway (ex. “Planning Completed, Need Funding”)?

Fact sheets did not address what jobs could be created, but this could be pulled in.

Sean provided list of states--NE, WV, NM, DE, MI, MD, SC, ME, NC, AR, MO, AZ, ID, OH—in which leadership from those states can provide project ideas to help show the importance of RAWA funding and advance effort.

The template for RAWA Shovel Ready Projects could be adjusted with input from those who would like to use them.

Fact sheets that have the key headers with a photo, all as a one pager is one suggested format.

Targeted audience and targeted purpose should be key in the development of any fact sheet. Suggestion to communicate benefits of RAWA that will resonate beyond wildlife—but benefits to people & unmet needs.

Examples of communicating about unmet needs from Connecticut include projects such as:

- Population augmentation of rare freshwater mussels through captive propagation
- Creation of a City Wings Program to engage urban residents in bird watching in local outdoor spaces
- Creation of an ADA compatible boardwalk and viewing blind to provide increased wildlife viewing opportunities
- Habitat restoration for wood turtles
- Dam removal for shad restoration
- Collaboration to address the need to house and assess the health of turtle seized through illegal collection

How can information and images be easily collected and organized in a spread sheet and then be coupled with use of a mail merge document (or similar tool) to help streamline the effort? John Davis will discuss with others with Texas Alliance to see what technology may allow this. Once concern is how graphics/ images would transfer if using a mail merge.

Lists & information will soon be needed from states--their priorities of types of projects. Watch for email on this. Start getting lists together of shovel-ready projects.

What is recommended timeframe for starting shovel ready project once legislation passes? Within six months. For some states, they might not have many projects they can implement on Day 1. Point was made that a state may need time to set up the proper grant process. Point also made that reasonable timeframes can be expected from the time the legislation passes and when funding recipients are able to start applying/ spending money. “Shovel ready” is meant to mean projects that are in general terms ready to go.

Consider what your organization’s priority projects are.

Sara Schweitzer (NCWRC) has an example of a spreadsheet of potential projects that can be shared:

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/RAWA/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act-2021-Lo-Res.pdf>

States will need consider and list what projects would NOT be possible in the event RAWA does not pass. This list can then be paired with efforts to approach key members of congress. By approx. March 26 lists of projects from key states will be needed by Jen Mock Schaeffer (AFWA’s Director of Government Affairs). The lists are to identify what projects will NOT be possible if RAWA funding does not occur. Email(s) requesting these lists will soon be coming.

Discussion of providing examples of species with conservation needs when developing communications and messaging—should states use a larger set of species for broader geographical relevance, or narrow it down. Answer—either way depending on intended audience and geographic scale of the communication.

Next monthly call for the committee: April 6 at 3:30 Eastern. Contact Shelly Plante to be added to TEAMS call.

Meeting adjourned