



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

WATERFOWL WORKING GROUP

Chair: Jeff Ver Steeg (CPW);

Vice Chair: Craig LeSchack (DU)

Staff: Dean Smith (AFWA)

Tuesday, September 11, 2018; 8:00 AM–12:00 PM

Grand Salon G / Marriott Waterfront, Tampa, FL

AFWA Annual Meeting 2018

Meeting Attendees: 40+ participants

2018-2019 Work Plan

- Dean Smith reviewed the draft 2018-19 work plan and asked for feedback within the next two weeks (September 25).

Legislative / Budget Priorities

- Jen Mock Schaefer and Margaret Everson provided an update on The Migratory Bird Framework and Hunting Opportunities for Veterans Act - actually two bills (S. 2942 Hyde/Smith and H.R. 6013 Bishop) pertaining to waterfowl hunting. There is a great desire by sponsors to pass the bills before the mid-term elections. It is thought that Congress is getting too far into the regulations-setting process and the Bills are too prescriptive. (A permissive approach is preferred if Congress must act.) January 31 framework ending date is the least contentious portion of bill.
- Conservation community partners encouraged maintenance of state authority and the comments/testimony heard and mark-up proposed in the House and Senate bill may address most of the issues (softens the Jan 31st date, better defines veterans, and eliminates the fixed bag limit text completely).
 - o USFWS feels the bill is palatable and that it doesn't violate the Migratory Bird Treaty wherein there is agreement that hunting shouldn't exceed 107 days;
 - o Texas is concerned that the youth and the veteran hunts should be able to be combined on the same two days, so not to take away from the regular season AND that the youth and veteran days must be within the current 107 days;
 - o AFWA feels that there is a lot of "micro-management" within the language of the bill, such as the days having to be on non-school days etc.; and
 - o States are concerned that zone/splits language, if added later, really takes away from the Flyway process and state authority and do NOT want this collaborative process to be taken away — Jeff summarized thoughts of states that the language, except the Jan 31 date, should be more flexible thus text using "should or may" and NOT "shall" would be more acceptable.

Action: Dean - send reminder for states to provide AFWA with information on their existing youth and veteran hunts

- M-opinion – reviewed pathways, summarized motion of BCC to work with FWS to encourage avoidance and outreach; to develop model legislation, and to be prepared to defend against codification of the opinion.

Action: Consensus was to support the motion that passed at the BCC-I

HDWG/PET/R3

- David Cobb provided an update on the HDWG-PET which is now operating as one committee, noting that the key group leaders are: Andy Raedeke, Rudy Schuster, Howie Harshaw, David Fulton, and Jennie Duberstein. The HDWG-PET has identified a need for an HD Coordinator and a proposal has been developed. The concept was endorsed by the PC, so now the PC is working through a revision of the proposal before it goes out to the flyways. It will then go back to PC for additional coordination.
 - o Question – what might be the process to influence flyways and others to improve the “people” element of JVs or the waterfowl management community overall? – D Cobb – this would be part of the role of the HD Coordinator; need more discussion on HOW to do this.
- A priority is to continue work on the HD surveys – hunters, birdwatchers and public, as there were always ideas to do deeper analyses and develop suggestions to be put into the 2018 Plan Update. USGS has secured funds for a 1-year postdoc; and Region 4 of USFWS came up with additional money so there is now \$150-\$160,000 dollars for the additional analysis of the data.
- When researchers drill down into the survey results, they see some surprises that are different than what the community has traditionally thought – such as the low level of contribution by even hunters to conservation
- What are the questions we need answered, and what are the audiences that need to be engaged? What is the goal for people – targets, etc.

2018 NAWMP Update

- Jerome Ford provided an overview of the status of the Update and gave a special “thank you” to Dale Humburg; Mike Anderson; Diane Eggeman and Dean Smith, and all the others involved.
- A challenge for the waterfowl community is the people element. The Plan is about waterfowl, but there are other birds that use the same habitats and we need to look at these and the benefits to other species and consider other interests.
- The discussion focused on Recommendation #8 of the Update, which is about the roles and responsibilities of the PC, its structure, integration, and technical working groups. Jerome noted that the PC has vowed to change; to be more engaged; to provide more regular communications to the community etc.
- Additionally, the PC is considering creating an Integration Coordinator, in addition to the HD Coordinator that David Cobb mentioned. May need to fundraise for the position.

- Canada has signed the NAWMP Update and Jerome will initiate the surname process for the US later this week.
- Communication – who — when — where — why — how. We have a great story, in that ducks are doing good, but they weren't when it was dry. We need to take advantage now and need to talk, get others on our side, so when the numbers of ducks decline, we have the support to rebuild the habitat, the populations, etc. As a community and as communicators, we need to think progressively; think about who needs to be on our side; figure out how to sell more duck stamps; talk about conservation – not just ducks. People that buy a Duck Stamp don't see the “results or accomplishments” of all the acres that benefit bird species beyond ducks.
 - o In Nebraska they have a conservation roundtable; and the next issue they will take up is wetlands – they host a breakfast for Senators to do education from a broader, more integrated perspective with diverse partners.

State Contributions to Canada

- Dave Kustersky handed out a 2-page summary of annual program accomplishments and noted that State agency partnerships are the foundation to the program.
- 41 states contributed and the number is expected to grow in the coming year. Most states are contributing at a constant amount and some are growing their contributions, while others are using year-end dollars to top-up and to try to reach their state goal.
- The most important message for states/commissions is the leveraging or multiplier effect.
- Efforts are on-going to develop a Brand for the Program and the name will be confirmed as soon as possible. A potential tag line could be “Giving wings to cross-border conservation.
- PR funding for State Contributions to Canada:
 - o AFWA endorsed the use of PR funds for conservation and a Guidance document has been approved by WSFR Program administrators and the Joint Task Force
 - o North Carolina is the first to sign a contract for using PR funds to top-up their contributions. NOTE: PR dollars are not to replace the state dollars that are matched by NAWCA; rather they are to supplement the state program dollars.

USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services 2018 Canada goose management efforts

- Dionne Mendoza provided an excellent overview of the 2018 goose management program in the US.
- The program is to protect human health and safety; agriculture; aviation; and they have tools such as: nest removal, egg addling, etc. State activities can include nest removal, egg removal, harassment, lethal removal (mainly airports).
- It was noted that community involvement – city/county parks; golf courses, airports is important
- USDA-APHIS donated over 11,300 lbs of meat from March to July FY 2018; much of this went to raptor centers, zoos, etc.
- There are also longstanding Cooperative Agreements with a number of agencies for harassment issues and habitat issues. For example, VA has a resident Canada Goose Ag Depredation Order and UT has an urban/nuisance goose population reduction initiative. Note: ~15,000 relocated and only 1% return to urban area.

New Canadian Provincial (AB & MB) Wetland Policies

- Tim Sopuck (MHHC) and Travis Ripley (Alberta Government) combined forces to provide overviews of their respective provincial wetland policies.
- Alberta began developing an interim wetland policy in 1992 and completed it in 2013. The focus is on wetlands of highest importance, conservation and restoration where losses are highest, implements policy of “avoid minimize, replace” and includes regional perspective.
- The policy’s purpose is safe, secure drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable, quality water supplies.
- Implementation of the policy employs Practice Standards for Authenticating Professionals, it centralizes the wetland replacement program, and permits greater oversight, transparency and accountability.
- MHHC is a provincial crown corporation that has influenced over 350,000 acres and is one of three Canadian NAWCA Grantees. Tim noted that ducks don’t drive policy, but “too much water” and “eutrophication of surface water” do, along with agriculture.
- Tim acknowledged DUC’s work on water quality and quantity and that they have developed much of the science and have influenced policy makers and the public, such that in Manitoba many people understand the relationship between flooding and water quality.
- Manitoba recently passed the Sustainable Water Act, which has included a no net loss provision, a degree of compensation; functional wetland assessment; and permitting will run through MB government. Compensation is the main activity in agricultural areas, so IF permitted to drain, they would have to pay a fee or mitigate on farm.
- Also new in Manitoba is the formation of the Conservation Trust Fund – \$100 M which MHHC will manage the distribution.

Canadian Wetlands Roundtable

- Pat Kehoe presented a summary of the new Canadian Wetlands Roundtable
- The CWR was formed to fill a void for influencing policy, among other things, and to allow industry, NGOs, and government to sit at the same table — Government is ex-officio to avoid “lobbying issues”
- CWR is looking at wetlands as an industry and a National Framework and Leadership is needed to advance sustainable management of Canada’s wetlands — Canada is home to 25% of world’s wetlands, hosting 1/3 of at-risk species.
- The CWR is working to expand membership, as it desires to be the go-to organization for wetland science and policy in Canada.
- More information about the Roundtable and the workshops on wetland-related topics it has held over the past two years can be found at: <https://wetlandsroundtable.ca>

American Wildlife Values

- Dr. Michael Manfredo (CSU) provided a brief summary of the national Wildlife Values study they have undertaken with a Multi-state Grant, sponsored by MAFWA and WAFWA. Detailed results are being provided in individual state reports.
- There are varying levels of trust for fish and wildlife agencies, and this is dependent on the variations in mutualism – as a state has more mutualistic views, the trust by traditionalists for

the agency declines. Additionally, there is a cultural shift that is making citizens less supportive of hunting.

- In terms of peoples' views on funding preferences for fish and wildlife agencies, they would like to see equal funding from licenses and taxes
- Wildlife Values Change
 - o Modernization makes a life change, and a move away from being a traditionalist toward mutualism
 - o As average income goes down in a state, there is a greater tendency for citizens to be traditionalists, whereas, more mutualism is associated with higher urbanization
 - o Comparative analysis was only able to be done between 2004 and 2018 for the 19 western states and it can be noted that the rate of change for traditionalists in CA and AZ was a decline of 35%, while many other states declined by 17-20%, however ND and WY were exceptions and traditionalists increased.
- Agency Culture
 - o Strong unifying mission and commitment
 - People saw themselves as experts, protectors, enforcers, advocates, etc.
 - High percentage felt need to uphold values or be model employees
 - Difference between the states –the Expert Model or the Clientele Model
 - o Value orientations – public vs agency
 - Large difference of traditionalists and mutualists
 - Value gap on mutualism – the more mutualists in the state; the less the agency changes
 - o Diversity in fish and wildlife agencies (race)
 - Profiles are different for the different groups
 - 50% of Hispanics are mutualists; interested in wildlife though
 - African Americans are in the group called 'distant' and often have little interest in wildlife
- Questions:
 - o Can analysis be done on geological boundary rather than states? Yes at national scale
 - o Was analysis done of actual ecological knowledge? No, but have information on climate change for example

Canada's Nature Legacy

- *Basile van Havre provided an overview of Canada's new nature agenda, which includes funding of \$1.3M over 5 years, including \$800M for the Canadian Wildlife Service and \$500M in grants from Government to be matched at least 1:1 by applicants, creating a \$1B fund for Protected Areas and Species*
- Quickstart projects – 170 applications to the fund that will:
 - o Subscribe to Biodiversity Convention and Canada's target of 17% protected area —Quick Start projects will hopefully add 2%, or the size of MN
 - o The next step will be an application-based process (yet to be established)
- A component of the program will be targeted toward Indigenous issues to:
 - o Create meaningful employment
 - o Locate conservation around protected areas
- There will also be a component for Migratory Species Conservation

Other Funding

- Climate mitigation – gray infrastructure - wetlands should be included but implementation is difficult due to challenges in minimum project size and who can hold title; these issues are expected to be corrected

Action Items Review & Other business

- 1. Send out Work Plan for comments, give 2 weeks for response.**
- 2. *Send reminder for states to provide Dean and Jen information on their existing youth and veteran hunts***
- 3. *Consensus to support the motion that passed at the BCC-I relative to the M-opinion***