



# **AFWA Committee Handbook 2012**

Proudly celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

## Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to chair or participate in one or more of the Association's committees, subcommittees and working groups.

Long-term conservation success requires the active involvement of an assembly of agencies, organizations and individuals with diverse backgrounds, visions and values. Committees are the crucial mechanisms by which members and stakeholders are able to collaborate and coordinate on cross-cutting fish and wildlife conservation issues including funding, legislation, science-based management, species-based interests, public outreach and professional development. Indeed, Committees are *the* vital source of the collective views of the Association and the engine driving the future of natural resource conservation.

This Committee Handbook provides a concise look at the Association's Committee structure and responsibilities while offering some helpful hints based on past experience. The document is broken up into sections that should make it easy to find what you're looking for at-a-glance. Please note that the Handbook is intended primarily as a reference, and does not purport to cover all circumstances.

### *Did you know...*

Almost without exception, the accomplishments of which our Association are most proud, began within our Committees.

For example, the report of the Legislative Committee at the Annual General Meeting held in New Orleans in 1918, proudly reported our first legislative success with the enactment of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Act put in effect the Association's first international success of two years earlier — The Migratory Bird Convention with Great Britain.

## Committee Structure

The Association maintains 29 Standing Committees and approximately 35 Subcommittees, Technical Subcommittees and Working Groups, which are composed of more than 1,000 professionals from the United States, Canada and Mexico.

**Standing Committees** are those that are not expected to change much over time and are often responsible for the creation of important national conservation actions and positions. The Association's bylaws require that a list of all Standing Committees be made and published annually (Appendix).

Frequently, chairs appoint small work groups to address problems facing the committee. These groups often meet between regularly scheduled committee meetings and work on the committee's behalf. Use of **Subcommittees** or **Work Groups** is the prerogative of the Chair and is typically part of an efficient and successful committee. Only fish and wildlife agency members are permitted to chair a subcommittee or work group within a committee.

**Formal Subcommittees** or **Ad Hoc Committees** are the prerogative of the President. For the most part, these groups are established for a limited duration. Most Presidents avoid the proliferation of formal subcommittees, preferring to work within the established committee structure instead.

The **Technical Subcommittee** is a relatively new phenomenon. It is a small subgroup of a **Substance Committee**, comprised solely of state government members, and created to provide a venue to work with the federal government. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) specifically provides for pre-action consultation with state officials and Technical Subcommittees enable the Association to offer a way to facilitate this collaboration.

Currently, Technical Subcommittees exist within the Fur Resources Committee for trap testing and negotiations with Europe and within The International Affairs Committee on matters relating to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

A list of committees including links to specific committee descriptions can be found on the Association's web site at [www.fishwildlife.org/about\\_us](http://www.fishwildlife.org/about_us).

## Appointments and Committee Selections

Each committee is led by state fish and wildlife agency leaders appointed by the President of the Association. All appointments — Chair, Vice-Chair and Standing Committee members — serve for a term that is decided by the Executive Committee, usually one year.

### *It's a fact...*

The Association Bylaws require employment by a Governmental, Affiliate or Contributing Member; or status as an Associate or Life Member, as a prerequisite to obtaining appointment to a committee.

### *Selection Process*

The Association issues a request for nominations for committee assignments in late Spring to member agencies and organizations and for volunteer assignments by Associate members. From these nominations, the incoming President makes the selections shortly after the Association's Annual Meeting considering a variety of factors such as geographical representation and committee size. The goal is to ensure all committees are fully staffed and functional at the beginning of the new Association administration.

**State fish and wildlife agency directors** are asked to consider chairing or vice-chairing only one committee and to discuss priorities with the President. At the suggestion of the Executive Committee, and in the belief that each state director should be actively involved, directors without committee assignments will be assigned to a committee.

In addition, because committees should reflect the policy and position of **Governmental Members**, each governmental member is requested to nominate a policy-level person and a subject matter specialist to each committee with which they are concerned.

To keep the committees to a manageable size, **Affiliate and Contributing Members** are asked to officially assign only one person per organization to a committee, though additional representatives are welcome to attend meetings. Recognizing the value of their participation, **Associate Members** are invited to volunteer for committee work. Finally, **individuals** should not be nominated to more than two committees since members will be expected to spend time on committee work.

■ **IMPORTANT: Committee members must reaffirm their interests by re-nomination or re-volunteering annually.**

The Executive Director of the Association will assign Association staff to each committee. Committee chairs should feel free to engage assigned staff members in any process of committee work when staff can be of assistance.

In general, staff can assist with developing meeting agendas, minutes and reports; creating email lists; setting up conference calls; and facilitating communication between the Chair and the committee.

### *Committee Notifications*

Once an incoming President appoints the committees for his or her year in office, Chairs receive a list of members from the Association's Washington office. This list contains available phone numbers, addresses and ideally e-mail addresses. Most Chairs find that taking a few minutes at the beginning to set up group e-mail and fax programs are a great way to begin their Chairmanship.

As Chair, your first responsibility is to review the committee's charge and to understand and prepare to implement it. This is a good time to review the personnel assignments and make additional recommendations as appropriate.

Once you receive the master committee list, you should send a welcome note to members acknowledging their selection, confirming their contact info and encouraging them to provide input on pertinent issues in the committee's focus area. The Committee charge that was sent to you by the President with your appointment is useful for all and is an appropriate attachment to your letter of welcome.

### *Effective Committees Communicate...*

The best way to ensure that your committee is committed to its charge for the long haul is to get in touch as soon as the annual committee list is available to welcome members on board.

■ **IMPORTANT: There is no single mailing from the Washington office to all committee appointees although the list is posted on the web site. Many Federal and Affiliate Members will not receive a notification unless you contact them. It is the state directors' responsibility to notify their employees of committee appointments; however, the note provides a personal welcome as well as a notification back-up.**

### *Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee consists of the three elected officers of the Association, eight additional members and the previous year's or immediate past President. The eight additional members are elected to the Executive Committee at the Association's Annual Business Meeting by the voting members present or by proxy. The President of each regional association serves as an ex officio, voting member of the Executive Committee as well as one representative from Canada and one from Mexico.

The Executive Committee (Board of Directors) manages the affairs of the corporation. All matters not especially provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws are determined by the Executive Committee, until specially passed upon at a regular meeting. The Executive Committee is also responsible for approving the Association's annual budget.

# Committee Meetings

Committees meet when the Association convenes for its Annual Meeting in September, and again in conjunction with the North American Wildlife Conference convened in March of each year by The Wildlife Management Institute. Some committees, however, meet quarterly while many Chairs find a call-in teleconference several times a year helpful in keeping members current or to provide a venue to sound out the committee on a pending issue. Use of fax, e-mail and list-servs is increasingly used to involve Committee members. Convening extra meetings is the sole prerogative of the Chair.

## *Meeting Planning*

Several months prior to a regularly scheduled meeting, Chairs are contacted by an Association representative, member of the hosting state or province or the Wildlife Management Institute to determine your meeting needs. You will be asked for five pieces of information – a request that should receive immediate attention:

- ❶ Do you plan on holding a meeting at the upcoming Meeting?
- ❷ How many persons are expected to attend?
- ❸ How you would like the room configured?
- ❹ What are your audio-visual requirements?
- ❺ What is the duration of your meeting – 2 hours, 4 hours, other?

When planning a meeting, Chairs should be sensitive to the other obligations of committee members. This is especially true of coordination issues when one or more committees need to be contacted. Chairs are also responsible for keeping in contact with the President and Executive director and keeping them updated.

## *Meeting Agendas*

It is standard practice for each Committee to provide members with a copy of the agenda, a draft is fine using the Association's template (Appendix), for the upcoming Meeting at least 30 days in advance. In addition, Association staff assigned to the Committee will ensure that the Agenda is posted on the Association's web site.

### *Call your meeting to order...*

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**It is up to Committee Chairs to determine how formal or informal to conduct meetings. Consistency is key and making sure everyone knows the rules.**

Past practice has shown that a "Call for Agenda Topics" from the Chair several weeks in advance is helpful in creating this agenda. Alternately, some Chairs assemble a proposed agenda

and circulate it for comment and amendment. The choice of procedure is the prerogative of the Chair.

### *Running Meetings*

Reasonable formality and decorum are important in conducting committee meetings. The Association prides itself on the professional and business-like way our meetings are conducted, the careful manner in which decisions are made, and ultimately the soundness of committee recommendations.

Committee Chairs do have great discretion in running the meeting; but, they must be convened promptly when scheduled and conducted according to rules of procedure. While some meetings are informal, others, because of the size of the group or the contentiousness of the issues to be

discussed, are kept very structured. Some meetings are guided by Robert's Rules and others are quite informal, relying on discussion and consensus to reach positions.

In the meeting space, always make sure committee members get priority seating around the table. Once members are assured of priority seats, you may invite visitors to sit at the table or not if you feel that the members' interests are best served by maintaining a clear distinction between members and other attendees. Some committee chairs make name tags for each member thus subtly, but clearly, identifying members. Proper action is a function of the size of group and potential debate.

While the Association has established these guidelines, generally the procedure for the conduct of committee meetings is left to the individual Chair. This is a decision you can make based on what best suits your committee. Your responsibility as Chair is to provide the opportunity for all members to participate and that recommendations reached reflect the view of the majority of the members present. If there are a lot of visitors present and a vote is necessary, you may want to have a roll call vote to verify that only members vote. What is most important is that everyone in attendance knows, at the beginning of the meeting, the rules by which your meeting will operate.

#### ***Meeting Attendance List & Handouts***

At the start of each meeting, you should circulate an attendance list (Appendix) to log who participated in the meeting and the capture current contact information. The list is important for Association records and of great help to staff trying to keep information up to date.

Chairs should bring copies of the agenda and any other handouts to the meeting. If you require copying assistance, contact your assigned staff person. Often Chairs will include in the room configuration a table for attendees to place materials of interest to committee members.

#### ***When You Can't Be There***

Occasionally, Chairs have to miss a meeting due to other important commitments. However, it remains the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the Committee has a productive meeting. This makes it of great consequence for the Vice-chair to be fully involved in the committee's activities so that someone is ready and able to stand in.

Vice-chairs are appointed by the President, but usually nominations are discussed with would-be Chairs during the selection process. The Vice-chair is a very important person to the committee, not only as a stand-in; but, as someone who assumes leadership for special projects that occur between meetings of the Committee.

#### ***Post-Meeting Duties***

After the meeting, the Chair or an assigned committee member is responsible for drafting and

### ***Meeting Tasks...***

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- 1. Solicit and determine meeting agenda.**
- 2. Send Resolutions Committee any items to go before the membership.**
- 3. Send Association staff person final agenda.**
- 4. Arrange to have someone take meeting minutes and type up the minutes post-meeting.**
- 5. Chair meeting and direct discussion.**
- 6. Present proposed Resolution and/or committee report at Business Meeting if appropriate.**
- 7. Submit meeting minutes to Association staff person.**
- 8. Follow and complete Action Items.**

distributing meeting minutes/the committee report (Appendix). Your staff person can coordinate to have the minutes posted online in the Committee section of AFWA's web site.

## Committee Functions & Reports

The function of each committee is to consider carefully the merits of every proposal brought before it — a project, program, position, resolution or other type of action — and to judge whether or not the proposal should be submitted to the full Association membership for consideration.

The committee's responsibility is to create a report stating the members' standpoint that may include a strong endorsement or a mild recommendation, but should highlight enough factual data, pro and con, to permit other fish and wildlife directors to make a fair and responsible independent judgment about the proposal. Chairs are also encouraged to make recommendations to guide future committee activities.

Committee reports should contain the following (Appendix):

- ❶ Introductory statement briefly listing the committee charge
- ❷ Section listing deliberations and substantive conclusions
- ❸ Progress and opportunities made toward achievement of goals in Association's Strategic Plan
- ❹ Conclusion or recommendation section (if appropriate) outlining necessary steps or action to be taken by the Association to implement the committee's recommendation

### *Types of Committee Actions & Reports*

Committees typically make recommendations and pass motions, or draft letters adopting certain positions. All of these types of committee actions go to the members' business meeting for adoption before they become official action on the part of the Association. The Association's Bylaws also provide that the Executive Committee has authority to act for the Association until the matter is specially passed upon at a regular meeting of the Association. Committees should use a motion when formally proposing that an action be taken.

#### *Association Approval...*

Committee recommendations or positions must be brought to the membership if they are to be adopted as the Association's position.

**Resolutions** are used when the committee wishes to formally express an opinion. All resolutions must be submitted to the Resolution Committee before the membership acts on the resolution.

The Resolution Committee is responsible for soliciting resolutions from other Association committees or for developing resolutions from other appropriate sources. All proposed resolutions must be reviewed by the appropriate subject matter committee. The subject matter committees make recommendations to the Resolutions Committee. Resolutions should be aimed at establishing Association policy accomplishing a specific purpose and be designed in such a way as to permit follow-up by the Washington office. The membership only considers resolutions during its annual business meeting. It does not consider resolutions during the March North American Wildlife Conference meeting.

Committees making **requests for approval of programs or projects requiring funds** must first seek the approval of the Executive Committee prior to voting by the membership during

the Association's business meetings. The Association's Bylaws give the Executive Committee oversight of budgetary matters and all funding requests must have a cost estimate attached to the proposal or recommendation.

**■ IMPORTANT: Any Committee recommendations to instruct or direct Association staff must be coordinated with the Executive Director who is responsible for staff supervision under the Bylaws.**

A Committee may *draft a letter or propose language for a piece of legislation* that is to be considered by members during the business meeting. While input from nongovernmental members may be considered, it is important to remember that only a letter drafted by a fish and wildlife agency committee member may be used as a proposed position of the Association.

### *Submitting Reports*

Generally, committee recommendations or positions must be brought to the membership if they are to be adopted as the Association's position. Committee reports, if any, are presented at the annual business meeting in September (also to the March meeting if appropriate). If there are sensitive or controversial issues requiring attention by the Executive Committee or the general membership, the Chair is responsible for requesting agenda time. With either group, brevity is always appreciated since those meeting agendas are so full. When the report is fairly routine, written reports suffice.

Committee reports should be made available either at the end of a meeting, or shortly afterward for submission to the Executive Director and the Association Proceedings editor. Reports from committee meetings are published annually in 'The Proceedings of Annual Meetings.' As such, it is not uncommon for the Washington office to receive requests for information from long past meetings. This makes coherent and well-drafted committee reports very important.

## **Publications & Finance**

Some committees author reports and studies or sponsor publications. In the world of furbearer management for instance, the definitive work in the testing of traps is in the process of being developed by the Fur Resources Committee (FRC). The FRC has published several works that have been seminal in their area of expertise and are widely sought for reference and guidance.

Activities like publications and research require dollars and committees are encouraged to apply for grants from a variety of available sources. Committees occasionally seek appropriated dollars as well. The FRC for example is currently working with a budget of close to a million dollars for the current triennium and has staff support of 1.75 FTE's for the period. Committees are not allowed to pursue outside funding, however, without the approval of the Executive Committee. Ask your assigned for guidance.

## **Other Committee Chair Responsibilities**

As a Committee Chair, you have become a part of the Association's leadership. In the period between annual meetings... the Executive Committee and Committee Chairs *are* the Association!

In addition to the obvious responsibilities within the assigned area of your committee, it is not unusual for a Chair to be asked by federal agencies or non-government organizations for reactions

or advice on various issues. You may also be contacted by the Washington office to help respond to a media inquiry surrounding a fish and wildlife conservation issue. Be mindful that in these situations that your “opinion” could be misinterpreted as an official position of the Association. If you are unsure in any of these situations, ask or refer the query to the President or the Executive Director.

If you would like to send a request for information to the states or respond to a request for comments from members of Congress, Governors or by federal agencies, contact your assigned staff person first. The Washington office will coordinate such correspondence and obtain required policy clearance if necessary.

**Thank you again for your contribution to the Association and its mission to protect and support state, provincial and territorial authority for fish and wildlife conservation in the public interest!**



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### *Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Standing Committees*

Agricultural Conservation	International Relations
Angler/Boating Participation	Invasive Species
Annual Meeting/Awards/Nominating	Law Enforcement
Audit	Leadership/Professional Development
Bird Conservation	Legal
Budget	Legislative & Federal Budget
Climate Change	National Grants
Education, Outreach & Diversity	Ocean Resources Policy
Energy & Wildlife Policy	Resolutions
Executive	Science & Research
Federal & Tribal Relations	Sustainable Wildlife Use
Fish & Wildlife Health	Teaming with Wildlife
Fish & Wildlife Trust Funds	Threatened & Endangered Species Policy
Fisheries & Water Resources Policy	Wildlife Resource Policy
Hunting & Shooting Sports Participation	

### *Subcommittees & Working Groups*

Amphibian & Reptile Subcommittee	Conservation Stewardship Program Working Group
Biofuels Working Group	Diversity Working Group
Coal Energy Subcommittee	Drug Approval Working Group
Conservation Compliance Working Group	Education Working Group
Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Working Group	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Working Group
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Working Group	Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact
	Farm Bill Strategy Working Group

Federal Assistance Policy Task Force  
Federal Assistance Working Group  
Federal Lands Access Working Group  
Forestry Working Group  
Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group  
Grasslands Reserve Program  
Human/Wildlife Conflict Working Group  
Landowner Incentive Program Working Group  
Lead and Fish and Wildlife Health Working Group  
Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group  
Onshore Oil & Gas and Oil Shale & Tar Sands Subcommittee

Outreach Working Group  
Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group  
Public Access Working Group  
Resident Game Bird Working Group  
Waterfowl Working Group  
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Working Group  
White Nose Syndrome in Bats Working Group  
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Working Group  
Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working Group  
Wind Energy and Transmission Subcommittee



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## *Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Membership Levels*

### **Governmental Membership**

Eligible Government Members include:

- 1) Each state of the United States;
- 2) Each agency of the United States Government;
- 3) Each small province or territory of Canada and each large province of Canada;
- 4) Each agency of the government of Canada, the Republic of Mexico, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

### **Regional Association Membership**

Currently, we have four Regional Association Members — The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Association of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Resource Agencies and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

### **Affiliated Organizational Membership**

An Affiliated Organizational Member must be an *organization* of international, national, regional or statewide origin whose objectives are similar to, or supportive of, one or more of the objectives of the Association and whose membership is made up of individuals officially engaged in conservation of natural resources through their employment in public agencies.

### **Contributing Membership**

A Contributing Member requires that you must be a non-governmental organization, institution, foundation, society, corporation or person that supports the objectives of the Association.

### **Associate Membership**

To become an Associate Member, as an *individual*, you must be a past or present state, provincial, or territorial game and fish or conservation official; any federal, state, provincial or local game, fish or conservation official or employee regularly employed and under salary. You can also become an Associate Member if you are a delegate, officer or staff member of national, regional, state, provincial or local game, fish, wildlife or forest protective and conservation association or organization devoted to the conservation of renewable natural resources.

### **Life Membership**

To become a Life Member, you must already be an Associate Member.

### **Honorary Life Membership**

Honorary Life Members are elected by the Association and represent life members or persons who have rendered distinguished service in the cause of conservation administration. Honorary life member status is awarded during the Association's Annual Meeting.



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**[Committee Name]**

Chair: [Name]

Co-Chair: [Name]

**[Date]**

**[Time]**

**[Venue Location]**

**[City, State]**

## **Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
	Call to Order	
	Reading of Minutes from Previous Meeting; Corrections to Minutes; Vote Minutes Stand	
	Reports	
	Unfinished Business and General Orders	
	New Business	
	Announcements	
	Adjournment	





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**[Committee Name] Committee Report**

Chair: [Name]  
Meeting of [Date]  
[Venue Location]  
[City, State]

**Committee Charge**

Meeting convened during (insert start and end times), chaired by (insert name). (insert number) participants in attendance, including (insert number) current Committee members:

**Scheduled Discussion Items**

(Provide bulleted list with brief annotation about nature of each discussion item and substantive conclusions)

**Other Discussion items**

(Provide bulleted list with brief annotation about nature of each deliberation and conclusion)

**Progress and Opportunities**

Progress made toward achievement of goals in Association's Strategic Plan (identify specific goal and progress):

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified:

New Opportunities Identified:

**Action Items**

(Include brief specific action statement in bold type and briefly describe the action requested and outline the necessary steps)

Submitted by: (insert Committee Chair name)