



Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee Report

Chair: Sara Parker Pauley

Vice-chair: David Whitehurst

Meeting on September 11, 2018

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting

Tampa, FL

Committee Charge

Advocate for long-term dedicated funding and annual appropriations for the conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need, nature-based recreation and conservation education; support development, implementation and revision of State Wildlife Action Plans.

Participants

David Whitehurst (VADGIF), Jon Ambrose (GA DNR), Elsa Haubold (FWS), Richard Heilbrun (TPWD), Carter Smith (TPWD), Daren Riedle (KDWPT), Brian Branciforte (FL FWC), Joe Burns (USFS), Dan Kennedy (MI DNR), Jen Newmark (NDOW), Dave Klute (CPW), Rick Jacobson (CT DEEP), Wendy Weber (USFWS), David Palmeri (ODFW), Eric Gardner (WDFW), John Davis (TPWD), Norman Murray (MDOC), Sean Saville (AFWA), Rex Sallabanks (IDFG), Greg Wathen (TWRA), Pandy Upchurch (TWRA), Christy Vigfusson (USFWS), Drue Winters (AFS), Caroline Murphy (TWS), Virginia Seamster (NMDGF), Shelly Plante (TPWD), Jerrie Lindsey (FL FWC), Will Inselman (NGPC), Doug Austen (AFS), Maria Gladziszewski (AKGF), Steve Chadwick (MDNR), Todd Bishop (Iowa DNR), Jim Cogswell (HI DOFAW), Jason Sumners (MDOC), Justin Shannon (UT DWR), Andrew Wilkins (TRCP), Jennifer Cipolletti (ABC), Marc Smith (NWF), Becky Gwynn (VDGIF), Stasey Whichel (FL FWC), Paulette Nelson (NJDFW), Micah Holmes (ODWC), Julie Kempf (IN DNR), Ed Boggess (MAFWA), Claire Beck (MAFWA), Monica Tomosy (USFS), Kim Tripp (BLM), Mark Humpert (AFWA)

Scheduled Discussion Items

The meeting convened at 8:03am

Sara Pauley-Convened the meeting at 8:03 am, welcomed the group and asked participants to introduce themselves. She asked for a motion to approve the meeting report from the March 2018 meeting.

Wendy Weber offered a motion and Brian Branciforte seconded, the motion passed.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act/Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

Sean Saville-A companion to the House Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) bill (S3223) was introduced in the senate in July. The bill was similar to the House bill except funding is subject to annual appropriation. During negotiations we needed to have a seat at the table. We remain committed to dedicated funding and are confident this will be part of the negotiation. We have 87 co-sponsors for the House bill. In the lame duck there could be an opportunity to be part of another package. Directors and partners have been important to the effort. We held a fly-in in the spring. All the regional associations

have passed supportive resolutions and twenty-seven states have passed resolutions. Other states have sent up letters of support. Stakeholder letters of support have also been sent up to the Hill. There has been a lot of talk about the complementary nature of RAWA, a parks maintenance bill and Land and Water Conservation Fund reauthorization. We are not talking about making a bundled request with a parks bill at this point. There is no offset for the parks maintenance bill. We had media pieces in USA Today, Washington Examiner and good media out of Texas. USA Today produced a graphic showing species of greatest conservation need for each state. We also created a social media game. Ducks Unlimited created a 15 second video to help drive people to the Alliance website. Downloadable materials are available on the AFWA website. An online membership form has been effective. Next steps are to get traction on legislation, high visibility media to demonstrate support from the states, make case for dedicated and permanent funding, aggressive social media targeting, ramping up pressure on about 50 members of Congress. The State of the Birds report will focus on RAWA. We will be getting the work out at conferences and meetings.

Sara Pauley-Are there specific calls for actions in the next 6 to 8 weeks?

Sean Saville-Get high value partners to send letters of support, make personal phone call or pass supportive resolutions.

Jon Ambrose-Is the map of supportive resolutions on the website?

Sean Saville-No, but I can send to Mark.

Brian Branciforte-Are the Blue Ribbon Panel members engaged? Carter Smith and Connie Parker are working on that. We are trying to get them to weigh in.

John Davis-We keep getting a request for a central list of supporters. Can we get a merged list of supporters?

Sean Saville-We don't want confusion on what people have signed up to support. We can point people to the lists.

Dan Kennedy-Have there been conversations on packaging RAWA?

Sean Saville-There were early talks about a transportation bill or a broad energy package. There are several potential packages, it depends on what is moving. We are looking at all options.

Jen Newmark-If you package with something else, can we make sure we are including dedicated funding. We should be letting members know that we have a problem with the Senate bill.

Sean Saville-I would not call it a problem.

Davia Palmeri-Can you clarify the talking point on dedicated funding?

Sean Saville-Talking points are on the back table.

Richard Heilbrun-When will the State of the Birds report come out?

Sean Saveille-It was originally planned for October, but has been delayed. I will circle back on the date. If we don't get it by then we may want to wait until next year.

Jennifer Cipolletti-The American Bird Conservancy is working on the State of the Birds report. There is so much data we are probably going to wait until next year and maybe make it a spring event so it does not get lost in the election cycle.

Sean Saville-It will be a great report.

David Whitehurst-This is a huge effort, it will be impactful. Please express appreciation to the leaders of the State of Birds report.

Carter Smith-It is nice to be back here in the committee. We need resources to support this work and need to strategically engage partners. The end game is to get the legislation passed, we need to singularly focus on that. To help support this effort we have created a small fundraising team. I am working with Connie Parker and have set a short term fundraising goal of \$350K by the end of the year to bring in extra lobbying power and support strategic communication. We have raised \$200K so far. The executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation is helping to raise funds. Greg Hill of Hess, kicked off the campaign with a \$50K contribution. We received another \$150K from a Texas supporter to bring in a lobby firm. I will bring a request to Directors to identify partners and foundations. We need 3-5 potential donors in each state. Support at any level is needed. Agency foundations can contribute. A request will be going to directors. We will ask for support for strategic relationships. Tony Wasley is working to get support from the mining industry. Other partners like cattle growers can provide support on the legislative front. We are looking for help from the states to identify foundations, individuals or corporations that we can reach out to.

Sara Pauley-Should directors reach out to you?

Carter Smith-Yes reach out to me with names.

John Davis-Is it useful for wildlife diversity program managers to identify networks?

Carter Smith-Yes, any help to identify potential supporters would be helpful. Great suggestion.

Joe Burns-Are there any federal coalitions? Has there been support by agencies?

Sean Saville-There are some official channels where they could register support. We can help with that.

Davia Palmeri-We reached out to retired employees. Maybe we could reach out to retired federal employee associations.

Carter Smith-Great idea, we should leverage this support through political connections or resource support.

Joe Burns-This is more a funding issue than a legal issue.

Blue Ribbon Panel Relevancy Working Group Report & Proposed Resolution

Jen Newmark-The EOD/WDCF joint working group was stood up several years ago to make sure we were coordinating on the Blue Ribbon Panel. We have not met recently. There are many moving pieces and it's hard to keep up. I think there are still areas where we can help with RAWA. On Sunday there was a joint meeting between State Wildlife Action Plan coordinators and Nature Tourism and we discussed how to collaborate. The meeting was well attended and some great ideas came out of the meeting. This is one area where we could do some work. The other opportunity is to help with fish and wildlife

relevancy. There is overlap between the two committees on these issues and I recommend we maintain the working group but refocus on work other than RAWA.

Sara Pauley-Let's hold this discussion until Tony Wasley can be here.

Steve Williams-Steve Kellert, who recently passed was a giant in the field of social science. During Blue Ribbon Panel discussions he brought up that the lack of funding for state fish and wildlife agencies was a symptom of something else. The first recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel dealt with the funding need. The second recommendation related to the need to increase the relevancy of fish and wildlife and get more people to engage. There has been an evolution of conservation from enforcement to propagation, to restoration, to game and nongame conservation to habitat and landscape conservation. We accomplished much by employing individuals with education and skills in biological survey, disease, and other disciplines. Agency structures that were created decades ago still persist today but the world has changed. Societal change has happened (e.g. increased urbanization) and we need to ask ourselves is conservation still relevant and how do we define relevancy? If we were relevant, we would have the funds we need. Part of problem is that we identify relevancy through terms of population management. Social research shows that society defines relevancy differently-through air and water quality and other services that are provided. We have not talked much about that. How have we as profession adapted to this world. John Morris of Bass Pro Shops started his business selling hooks and bobbers but he saw how society was changing. You don't see hooks and bobbers in the front part of his stores, you see clothing and kayaks and home products. John Morris has capitalized on customer demand but he did not turn his back on hunters and anglers either. How do we expand our base without alienating hunters and anglers? If Bass Pro did it, we can do it. We need to bring in other disciplines such as public health, business/industry, economics etc. and use their expertise. The goal is to increase the population of those who are engaged. At a meeting last summer in Denver, we identified 30 barriers to greater engagement and used a logic model to explore strategies and outcomes to overcome barriers. A resolution to build a roadmap to relevancy will be considered by Directors tomorrow at the Business Meeting. The roadmap will allow states to take the path and drive the speed that they want. This would be the first time we have structured a model like this. If the resolution is passed, this will unleash a group of experts (who think about this every day) to develop the roadmap. To get sustainable funding we need to be able to talk about how our work improves the quality of life for people.

Sara-This is important stuff. Are there any questions for Steve? Does everyone have a copy of the draft resolution and have you had a chance to review it? The resolution will go before Directors tomorrow. The roadmap will focus on barriers and information sharing. It is equally important to see where things are working and why. Are there any comments on the resolution?

Eric Gardner-I suggested a punctuation change.

Rick Jacobson-Will a fiscal note be attached to the resolution?

Sara Pauley-No, there will not be a fiscal note.

Davia Palmeri-Does the resolution encourage all AFWA members to participate?

Sara Pauley-We did include a statement related to state involvement.

Sara Pauley-Is there a motion to adopt the resolution?

Carter Smith-I offer a motion to adopt, seconded by Rick Jacobson and passed unanimously.

Sara Pauley-This is a joint resolution with the EOD committee. The EOD committee will vote on Friday.

Jen Newmark (continuation of joint working group discussion)-I mentioned that the workshop on Sunday included wildlife diversity program managers and State Wildlife Action Plan coordinators. I recommend we continue the joint working group and work on issues that overlap.

Tony Wasley-There were early discussions that there would be value in having each state identify barriers and there is a conceptual model that categorizes the barriers. A lot of effort is needed to develop barrier specific strategies and present as a toolbox. There is a desire by the members of this joint working group to identify strategies and barriers. There is an opportunity to give some of that work back. We could have the working group help with the conceptual model.

Sara Pauley-Are there other thoughts on how the working group could evolve?

Joe Burns-I am willing to help with the working group.

Sara Pauley-Is there a motion to continue the working group with development of a new charge that includes fish and wildlife relevancy and other priorities?

Rick Jacobson-I offer a motion, Joe burns seconded

David Whitehurst-It is timely and appropriate to bring a new charge and statement of work to the North American.

Sara Pauley-The motion is approved.

Tony Wasley-The resolution is exciting. I'm glad there is much interest.

Sara Pauley-Thanks for your support.

State & Tribal Wildlife Grants

Mark Humpert-The Administration is recommending a 50% cut for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program in fiscal year 2019. The House is recommending level funding and the Senate a \$2M increase to \$65.571 million. The administration is proposing zero funding for state competitive and tribal grants and the House and Senate are recommending the same level of funding as last year \$6.3 million and \$4.2 million respectively. The House bill includes language to target work on candidate species but the wording has been moderated a bit from last year. There are less than two dozen candidate species and AFWA remains concerned that an emphasis on candidate species reduces flexibility to the states. With a new Congress next year, it will be important to meet with new members of Congress to continue to build support for the program. Work continues on incorporating the State Wildlife Grant Effectiveness Measures into Wildlife TRACS and the State Wildlife Action Plan Implementation Best Practices working group continues to make progress on their document.

Rex Sallabanks-I attended the Trust Funds committee and briefed them on our recommendations for the competitive state wildlife grants program. Paul Rausch (FWS) brought up the issue of candidate species. He recommended we give points to candidate species. The FY19 budget includes \$6.362M for competitive State Wildlife Grants. The Competitive State Wildlife Grants Working Group reviewed criteria and scoring factors used by the Fish and Wildlife Service to award grants. We developed

recommendations. The working group included a great mix of perspectives. The recommendations were discussed at the annual Wildlife Diversity Program Managers meeting in February. The working group held regular conference calls and draft recommendations were sent to Wildlife Diversity Program Managers for review. Pending committee action today, the recommendations will be sent to the FWS for their consideration. Some back and forth with the FWS is expected. We hope that some of the recommendations can be included in the next notice of funding opportunity. We tried to tie scoring factors directly to State Wildlife Action Plans. The most notable changes were the following: 1) Allow states to apply for grants individually using a tiered approach; 2) raise the ceiling for grants to \$1M for multiple states and \$500K for Alaska, Hawaii and territories individually (the rationale for this is to address endemic species and acknowledge that not all states have authorities for all taxa); 3) Remove match as a scoring criteria; 4) remove the preference for on-the-ground projects (survey and inventory projects should compete on equal basis with on-the-ground projects); 4) give increased weight for candidate species; 5) overall changes to the organization and weighting of scoring criteria.

Brain Branciforte-One of the concerns I have about a single state receiving an award is what keeps a state from using competitive State Wildlife Grant funds to do projects that formula grants did in the past.

Rex Sallabanks-It enables you to apply but it does not ensure you can compete.

David Whitehurst-As the liaison, I would like to commend the working group and I move to approve. Jen Newmark, seconded. The motion was adopted with Maria Gladyszewski and Brian Branciforte dissenting.

Results from the America's Wildlife Values Survey

Mike Manfredo-The purpose of this survey was to explore wildlife value shift as a major trend affecting fish and wildlife management in the US. We also looked into agency culture. We used three sources of data-wildlife values in west survey, 2018 wildlife values survey and a survey of agency culture. Values are deep seated and don't change over your life. Value shifts are due to immigration or generational change. There are four value types (mutualist, traditionalist, pluralist and distanced). The wildlife profile differs amongst the states. In California traditionalist make up 17% of the population and 46% in Wyoming. Values are the basis for conflict.

David Whitehurst-In the east the data seems to show that agencies need to be comprehensive to cater to mutualist.

Sara Pauley-Is distrust by traditionalist inherent of where we are or is it about mistrust of the agency.

Mike Manfredo-Social re-enforcement is declining in mutualist states. There are typically more traditionalists in lower income states. There has been an overall decline in traditionalists, except for Wyoming and North Dakota. In a survey of agencies we found that agencies have a strong set of core values and are unified. They are experts, enforcers of law, protectors of wildlife, advocates, uphold the values of agency (agency is a being), protectors and have model employees. We distinguished states that used an expert model versus a clientele model. Massachusetts uses an expert model and Ohio a clientele model. Hispanic and Latino populations are 50% mutualist and African American populations are 27% distanced. A full report will be available at the end of the month.

Sara Pauley-What findings most surprised you?

Mike Manfredo-The data that showed modernization is causing a value shift.

David Whitehurst-What about R3 efforts?

Mike Manfredo-It does not appear R3 will be successful in the long run.

Mike Manfredo-The more threats occur from the outside the more you cling to the past. The solution is not to try and create hunters, you can create a small number, but to embrace the multiple interests of stakeholders. Agencies are on the right track.

Monica Tomosy-What factors increase trust? Is it consistency between agency and public values?

John Davis-Does it say in the report that we won't be able to make many new hunters?

Mike Manfredo-No, we are still finishing the report. We want to use it to start a conversation.

Davia Palmeri-Lets link this back to fish and wildlife relevancy.

Elsa Haubold-This is such good information.

Sara Pauley-I look forward to the national and state report.

Christy Vigfusson-At this meeting last year the committee approved a revision to the guidance for State Wildlife Action Plan revisions which was signed in December 2017. In early May, the Arizona Game and Fish Department informed the FWS of a change to their plan. It took about a week to implement the change. In the past, this would have taken months. The FWS is saving hundreds of hours of time. This is an excellent example of success by working together. There was language on candidate species in the appropriations report. We get requests from Congress on how money was spent and on what. In addition to candidate species, Congress is interested in down listing and delisting species. We need more success stories, we need those to trickle over to the FWS. Tell those good stories. The FWS is happy to be working with the states on changes to the competitive State Wildlife Grants program. It can be a challenge without input from states. The FWS will review the recommendations, do internal review and respond and try to incorporate into the next notice of funding opportunity.

David Whitehurst-Give me a picture of the review process and timeline?

Christy Vigfusson-We don't have it framed out yet. We will come up with a draft review process that will include regional grant reviewers, regional chiefs and the Washington Office. If there are points of disagreement, we will circle back with the committee.

David Whitehurst-I want to understand the timeline. Is it necessary for each of the regions to weigh in?

Christy Vigfusson-If the budget passes, a notice of funding opportunity will go out in November. This review process could move that back several months. Are there things that can be incorporated this year and other things next year?

David Whitehurst-It would be nice to implement this round rather than wait, if FWS agrees.

Christy-Outcome measures are important. We got some pushback on reporting measures for traditional programs under Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration. The TRACS working group said they need a translation or crosswalk to see what the data would look like to enter into TRACS.

David Whitehurst-The State Wildlife Grants effectiveness measures were done some time ago. Hannibal Bolton talked about the need and urgency for these measures. It is frustrating how long this has taken. It's not clear that we need to review the measures. Why do these need to be revisited? If I was a member of Congress I would think TRACS may not happen. It is frustrating that we cannot make this happen. Everyone needs to be focused on outcomes. The need is great to push this forward. There has not been much progress in the last six years. The effectiveness measures were a good piece of work.

Christy Vigfusson-I appreciate your point of view and your frankness and honesty. We reached a turning point for the development process for TRACS with the meeting of the parties in the Fall of 2016. We have been on a positive trajectory since. I have high hopes for TRACS enhancement. One of the challenges, is we won't start programming effectiveness measures until the fall of 2019.

David Whitehurst-I hope we are past the power struggle and infighting.

Christy Vigfusson-We will support what the states agree to.

Stasey Whichel-It's been frustrating, it may not ever make sense to put the measures in TRACS. We should look at other options. Maybe we can do a parallel track.

Christy Vigfusson-Revisions have been approved for 53 State Wildlife Action Plans.

Mid America Monarch Conservation Strategy

Ed Boggess/Claire Beck-The Mid America Monarch strategy was finalized in June. A 20 year timeline has been set with regional habitat goals and regional coordination. A goal of establishing 1.3 billion stems of milkweed has been set. Governance is being led by the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) and they will use adaptive management. The species status assessment was sent out for peer review. This should be completed this winter. A monarch conservation database has been created and listing decision is expected in June 2019. Next steps for MAFWA include a partner conference in Nebraska to discuss implementation. Updates of the plan will be based on the species status assessment and listing session. Workshops with state agency technical staff will be set up to implement the strategy to meet south core habitat goals. Western states are also working on separate strategies. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and US Fish and Wildlife Service have provided funding for this project.

Mark Humpert-I'm having discussions with the US Forest Service about a MOU on State Wildlife Action Plans.

Review 2018 Committee Work Plan

David Whitehurst-The State Wildlife Action Plan Best Practices and MOU are two newer items. This committee has accomplished a lot despite challenges. In the early stages it was felt this committee was not working on things important to traditional constituencies. Carter and Sara are some of the best minds in conservation and we've been successful. We have established a beach hold, but there are still challenges. We have to help lead the agencies. I am glad we are continuing the joint working group

between the two committees. The State Wildlife Grants effectiveness measures, led by Chris Burkett and Wendy Connolly was a great piece of work, we need to continue that work and drive it to conclusion. The data is still needed, we should focus on that. We need to continue the Fly-in to support State Wildlife Grants and continue to support RAWA. There have been some gaps in communication on RAWA and we had some discussions at the North American. I think communications has picked up. John Davis has been leading weekly calls on RAWA with wildlife diversity staff. I am concerned about the group, they might be spending time on issues that increase confusion. A shout out to Kristal Stoner, hopefully she can encourage the National Audubon Society to become more involved. I will be retiring at the end of the year. I have not set a date yet but I will be burning leave soon. Ron Regan, Naomi Edelson and I are the longest standing members of this group. It has been a privilege to serve.

Sara Pauley-The reason I stepped in as chair is because of staff and David Whitehurst. I would like David to stay involved. Thanks for your leadership and for being a role model.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:53AM

Action Items

Recommend adoption of a resolution supporting development of a fish and wildlife agency roadmap.

Recommend approval of recommendations to improve scoring factors and eligibility criteria for the competitive State Wildlife Grants program.

Progress and Opportunities

Progress made to advance dedicated funding legislation for at-risk species and maintain State and Tribal Wildlife Grants funding and changed to competitive State Wildlife Grants.

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified

None identified.

New Opportunities Identified

None.

Submitted by: Sara Parker Pauley