



Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee Report

Chair: Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri Department of Conservation

Vice-chair: Jonathan Regosin, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

Meeting on September 24, 2019

AFWA Annual Meeting

St. Paul, MN

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 and support development, implementation and revision of State Wildlife Action Plans.*

Participants

Wendy Weber (FWS), Caroline Murphy (TWS), Davia Palmeri (ODFW), Mike Leahy (NWF), Steve Williams (WMI), Brad Feaster (INDNR), David Hanni (TWRA), Sara Schweitzer (NCWRC), Matt Warnaer (AZGFD), John Davis (TPWD), Thomas Eason (FLFWC), Jen Newmark (NDOW), Dan Kennedy (MIDNR), Norman Murray (MODOC), Karen Kinkead (IADNR), Daren Riedle (KDWPT), Rex Sallabanks (IDDFG), Kendra Wecker (OHDOW), Julie Kempf (INDNR), Josh Avey (AZGFD), Christy Vigfusson (FWS), Mike Canning (UTDNR), Cynthia Osmundson (MNDNR), Jennifer Cipolletti (ABC), Kathy Hollar (FWS), Doyle Brown (MODOC), James Comins (NMDGF), Charlie Sperry (MTFWP), Rosezetta Bobo (FLFWC), Heather Kieweg (MNDNR), Samantha Hagio (HSUS), Dave Olfelt (MNDNR), Ed Sanchez (AZGFD), Chris Berens (KSDWPT), Allison Gratz (NatureServe), Melissa Panella (NEGPC), Date Parsons (OHDOW), Paulette Nelson (NJDFW), Paul Rauch (FWS), Elsa Haubold (FWS), Richard Heilbrun (TXPWD), Jim Cogswell (HIDFW), Jessica Wilkinson (TNC), Jim Giocomo (OPJV), John Rogner (ILDNR), Lori Scott (NatureServe), Meredith Landoria (TXPWD) Sean Saville (AFWA), Bob Currey (FWS), Sara Parker Pauley (MODOC), Mark Humpert (AFWA)

Scheduled Discussion Items

The meeting convened at 8:03am. Sara Parker Pauley asked participants to introduce themselves. Sara asked if there were any changes or additions to the notes from the March 2019 meeting. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the notes. John Davis offered a motion, seconded by Sara Schweitzer, motion was approved.

FY20 Funding for State & Tribal Wildlife Grants

Mark Humpert-The US House of Representatives has recommended a \$6 million increase for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program in fiscal year 2020. We had over 200 members of Congress sign on to Dear Colleague Letters supporting the program this year. A final appropriations bill is not expected to be passed until the end of the year. Next year will mark the 20th year for the program. The committee will work with State Wildlife Diversity Program Managers and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to commemorate the anniversary and compile success stories that can be used to communicate

accomplishments of the State Wildlife Grants program and the need for increased funding through the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

Sara Parker Pauley-We have a template for an anniversary celebration. There is still a need to increase funding for the program.

Jen Newmark-The joint working group is creating materials on success stories for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. This shouldn't be a lot of added work.

John Davis-Texas may have staff who can help with a logo and branding for the anniversary celebration.

Thomas Eason-We should do a report. Florida may be able to help provide resources.

Sara Parker Pauley-Missouri can help too

Mark Humpert-Resources would be helpful

Jen Newmark-The joint working group could help too.

Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources
Recommendation #1-Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Sean Saville-The State of the Birds Report was released yesterday. It includes an insert on RAWA and references the legislation as a solution to the bird crisis. HR 3742 was introduced in July by Congressman Fortenberry and Congresswoman Dingell. The bill was referred to the Natural Resources and Budget committees. So far, there are 122 bipartisan co-sponsors. More Republicans are needed on the bill. There were a number of changes to the bill (i.e. tribal title, 10% competitive grant program, 10% minimum for T&E species recovery, funding is no longer tied to oil and gas extraction). The sponsors thought these changes were important.

Josh Avey-Can you elaborate on the competitive grants?

Sean-The grant program will have an advisory committee made up of states and NGOs.

Sean-There is new science on the need to conserve at-risk species. States have a track record of success, but more capital is needed. We need to focus on the cost saving benefits of the bill. State Wildlife Grants has been important but insufficient to implement State Wildlife Action Plans. Birds illustrate the importance of investments in wildlife conservation. Waterfowl and raptor numbers have increased because there has been funding for conservation. Tennessee and Colorado put out materials on how they would invest RAWA funds. The State of the Birds report speaks to the critical importance of funding. Three billion birds have been lost since the 1950s. Twenty-seven states and all for regional associations have passed resolutions. Other states have written letters of support. Priority actions for September and October include getting more co-sponsors on the bill, completing state fact sheets, passing supportive resolutions, building statewide coalitions, gaining governor support, engaging business and scientists through a sign on letter and deploying communication plans.

Dan Kennedy-The Wildlife Society and AFWA are circulating a scientist sign-on letter. A business sign-on letter is also being circulated. Colorado and Maine governors have signed letters of support. Nevada and Montana are also working on letters and the Michigan governor is working on a letter of support from Great Lakes states.

Sean Saville-There is a growing list of partners. You can contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Mike Leahy-The National Wildlife Federation is offering its assistance in coordinating efforts on RAWA. This is NWF's top legislative priority. We are working on supportive editorials and have circulated a letter that has 1100 businesses and organization signed on. We are doing joint meetings with state sportsman caucuses and legislatures. In Montana we are coordinating with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks on a field tour. The Missouri Conservation Federation hosted a summit and New Jersey has highlighted examples of work that affiliates are doing. Tribes are very engaged and active. They passed a national resolution and are helping with some key members of Congress.

Dan Kennedy-What are the next steps in the House of Representatives?

Sean Saville-We are working on getting a hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee. We don't have a lead in the Senate yet but are working on that.

Jon Regosin-I believe everyone has the resolution. There is one change that was agreed to in the Federal Budget Committee. Take a look, is there discussion or comments? Do we need a motion?. John Davis offered a motion to accept the change, seconded by Jen Newmark. Motion was approved.

Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources
Recommendation #2-Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap

Steve Williams-Relevancy-I won't go into all the history but during the Blue Ribbon Panel, I had a conversation with Steve Kellert in the airport after one of the meetings. We discussed the importance of conservation and during the second to last meeting we brought up relevancy with the chairs. The Panel ultimately adopted a recommendation on relevancy. The Relevancy Roadmap is a plan to help agencies increase their relevancy. We identified categories of barriers that included agency capacity, agency culture; constituency capacity, constituency culture and political and legal constraints. We did some brainstorming and identified 19 barriers and associated strategies. We based this on experiences but also academic research. Agency Directors discussed these in their retreat and passed a resolution last year to develop the Roadmap. I would like to thank those who helped and Steve Kellert. The real work was done by Jen, Elsa, Mark, Jason, Chris, Ann and Matt. They spent time on calls every week with their teams. States are in different places with relevancy and this is not intended to be prescriptive. We want to envision a future desired condition. The roadmap is a living document that provides agencies with new ideas and approaches to help them engage with broader constituencies. The roadmap recognizes the important role of hunters and anglers. I hope you take some time to review the roadmap and talk to your colleagues. Ask where you are now and where you would like to be. The goal is that more people know why fish and wildlife is relevant in their life and the role of fish and wildlife agencies. Thanks to all of those who helped with the roadmap.

Davia Palmeri-I was on one of the tams. The roadmap has already triggered conversations in my agency.

Steve Williams-This is a big deal.

Charlie Sperry-Will there be a 2.0 of the Roadmap. Will there be case studies or success stories?

Steve Williams-There are success stories in the Roadmap. The Wildlife Management Institute was approved for a Multistate Conservation Grant that will allow us to test implementation of the roadmap. We will develop a portal or database that compiles lessons learned.

Jon Regosin-The joint working group is also gathering examples of case studies.

Elsa Haubold-The team would like to thank state Wildlife Diversity Program Managers and the 60 reviewers who sent comments on the draft. This added significantly to the document. We hope this committee will be a forum to exchange information.

Jen Newmark-It is exciting to see what our future could be like. A lot of work went into this, more work will need to be done to implement. There are things for every one of us to do. There are opportunities to increase our relevancy and build personal relationships.

Jon Regosin-We sent the roadmap to the committee. Have you thought about how your agency will use the roadmap?

Steve Williams-The roadmap is scalable. An agency could take on a single barrier, you can pick your own route. Its not reasonable to tackle all the barriers at once and some barriers may not apply to an agency.

Jon Regosin-As I looked at it, we've made progress on some barriers and others not so much.

A resolution to adopt the Roadmap was circulated to the committee.

John Davis-I offer one minor editorial change.

Josh Avey-I would like to offer a motion to approve the roadmap, Cynthia Osmundson seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

Report from EOD/WDCF Joint Working Group

Brad Feaster-This group has been meeting the last 7-8 months and met yesterday. We are collecting conservation success stories. One of the priority actions for RAWA is to create fact sheets for each state. This is our priority. Twenty-five states have fact sheets, some need to be updated, others need to be created. We've also been working on content for a webpage for the RAWA campaign. The success stories we are gathering will help with the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants 20th anniversary report.

Jon Regosin-Should we add development of a story map to the workplan?

Jen Newmark-Yes, it is the work plan.

Sean Saville-I would like to thank the work group for their flexibility, patience and help.

Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program Update

Christy Vigfusson-The US FWS has a digital photo library that includes many species of greatest conservation need. Funding for State Wildlife Grants has slowly increased over the last few years. AFWA does an annual fly-in to talk about successes. This has had a major effect on funding for the program. The recommendations by the AFWA working group for the competitive State Wildlife Grants recommendations were reviewed by the FWS and nearly all the recommendations were accepted verbatim and incorporated into the Notice for Funding Opportunity. Changes included an increase in funding caps, allowance for single states to apply and less preference for physical restoration. We

appreciate the work by the working group. For this funding cycle, we received 27 proposals, more so than in the past. The proposals were scored in August and the awards package will be sent to DOI in October or November. We expect awards to be announced in the next few months. We just approved the last update to State Wildlife Action Plans. All 56 plans are now updated. Florida has recently submitted its revised plan. The team that is reviewing the State Wildlife Grants effectiveness measures met in July to develop a matrix to translate the recommendations in the AFWA effectiveness measures report. The matrix shows how intermediate outcomes will be evaluated for each TRACS strategy. There will be a survey to gather comments on the matrix. We will use the TRACS communications protocol. We will ask Mark Humpert to send the matrix to Wildlife Diversity Program Managers. The TRACS enhancement will be released in April 2021. The FWS is interested in helping with the 20th anniversary report for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

State Wildlife Action Plans

Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan Conservation Opportunity Area Tool

Tim Schaefer-Pennsylvania wanted to make sure data from their State Wildlife Action Plan is being used. The state has both regulatory and nonregulatory tools and the State Wildlife Action Plan has data that can be useful to industry. In the past, if a pipeline was being planned, the state would review species that may be impacted. Now industry can pull up a map with State Wildlife Action Plan data to avoid impacts. We also wanted a tool that landowners can use. We worked with conservation districts so the tool would be useful to them. The tool has piqued the interest of legislative staff.

Lori Scott-There are two tools, this is the first version of the tool for SWAP. Partners include the Game Commission, Fish and Boat Commission, Natureserve, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The purpose of the tool is to support implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plan and to get information to citizens. The tool provides a range of information on nearly all Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Lists can be produced by county or watershed.

John Davis-Are the ranges predicted?

Lori Scott-Yes, known occurrences and predicted ranges. We use citizen science to inform locations using known or likely occurrences. The tool evaluates selected areas against several data layers. It identifies known and likely occurrences. If you create a user account, you can get a report. Different users are assigned different user roles. Some sensitive data is hidden.

John Davis-What is the cost?

Lori Scott-I don't know, I can follow-up. The data was already processed so it was a less exhaustive project.

John Davis-Is there a paywall?

Lori Scott-It is available for free to the public. The environmental tool is required which has the same backend user interface.

Jen Newmark-Is there any follow-up with those who are doing the actions?

Lori Scott-Not yet, this may be a next step. Nebraska is using the tool.

Melissa Panella-Agency staff and partners are using it for environmental review and it lists conservation actions.

Christy Vigfusson-How reproducible is this?

Lori Scott-This is easy to do through tech. The tool can be configured to State Wildlife Action Plans. Configuration is easy once data is in the plan.

Mark Humpert-How many states have these tools.

Lori Scott-Nine states have something like this and a tenth is in development. There could be 12 to 15 in a couple of years.

State Profile: Minnesota DNR Wildlife Diversity Program

Cynthia Osmundson-Our State Wildlife Action Plan is the center point of our nongame program. It guides our research, management, restoration, partner involvement and monitoring. We do outreach, education and social media. We have eagle and falcon cams and do fundraising and grant writing. Our annual budget of \$3.5M comes from donations, license plate sales, a nongame tax check-off, and outdoor heritage and lottery funds. The nongame program is not in the Fish and Wildlife Division but in the Ecological and Water Resources Division. We manage a network of lands and waters which is tool for landscape scale conservation and use conservation focus areas to target actions and monitoring. We do rare butterfly surveys, mussel propagation, head-starting for turtles and monitoring and management of common terns, northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawks, Richardson's ground squirrels, pollinators and rare fish like the Topeka shiner. We are looking at the relevancy roadmap and want to examine how we can better connect with Minnesotan's who love wildlife.

Sara Parker Pauley-Thank you. You are doing a lot. Where does the \$1M in donations go?

Cynthia Osmundson-It goes into a state account. About \$450K is donated to the tax check-off we also get donations from estates and companies. It is very Minnesotan to donate to the Loon.

Sara Parker Pauley-Can you explain the loon?

Cynthia Osmundson-The loon is the symbol we use for the nongame program.

John Davis-How do you market you license plate?

Cynthia Osmundson-We send posters to car dealers and to the DMV. We will be issuing a pollinator plate which should boost sales. Minnesotans love their wildlife.

Other Topics

Mark Humpert-Work on the State Wildlife Action Plan Implementation Best Practices document has slowed. We've lost some of our capacity. We want to try and finish this up by the North American.

Sara Parker Pauley-The AFWA Executive Committee will be leading an effort to develop a new strategic plan for the Association. We want to look at things like the Multistate Conservation Grant program. We will be hiring an outside consultant and committee members will be surveyed. We are putting thought into the process, more about this in the future.

Jon Regosin-We want to examine the charge of the committee. The current objectives are support advocacy for State Wildlife Grants and the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

Jen Newmark-Our objective should be to get the Recovering America's Wildlife Act passed.

Davia Palmeri-Could we do an action item to have committee members talk to their members of Congress.

Sara Parker Pauley-I support communicating to Directors that they should talk to their members of Congress.

Jon Regosin-We will keep the State Wildlife Action Plans best practices as an objective. We should have an action item related to relevancy. It could be as simple as supporting implementation of the relevancy roadmap.

Sara Parker Pauley-Is there anything for the joint committee on communications to do?

Jen Newmark-There will be a huge role for the joint working group on relevancy. The immediate need is to work on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and then we will transition to relevancy. We don't want to splinter the group.

Jon Regosin-The Wildlife Management Institute will be implementing and testing the Roadmap using funding from the Multistate Conservation Grant program.

Elsa Haubold-We could do a series of videos on roadmap implementation.

Jon Regosin-We can reach out to the Wildlife Management Institute to see if we can help them with the roadmap grant. Are there other objectives?

Meeting Adjourned at 11:18am

Action Items

The committee requests that Directors approve an updated resolution on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and that they work with their members of Congress to support the Act. In addition, the committee requests that Directors adopt the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap.

Progress and Opportunities

The committee continues to support passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, development of the Relevancy Roadmap and increased funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program.

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified

None identified.

New Opportunities Identified

The committee supports development of a report on successes of the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the program.

Submitted By: Sara Parker Pauley