

The AFWA Strategist

Update for Members and Partners of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Spring 2017

AFWA Government Affairs

Discussions Heat Up on Infrastructure

As the House regroups on Healthcare after failing to advance legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act members have shifted the focus of their conversations to another Presidential campaign promise, a comprehensive package to address the nations' deficient infrastructure. Over the last month, House and Senate committees have hosted a number of hearings to gain insight on infrastructure needs directly impacting fish and wildlife resources ranging from challenges surrounding the management of water in the west to ESA. We continue to work with the community, Congress, and the Administration to dedicate 5% of the \$1 trillion infrastructure package to natural resources.

Murkowski Introduces Sportsmen's Package

On March 29th Chairwoman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) along with Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) Jim Risch (R-ID), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) introduced S. 733, the Sportsmen's Act of 2017. The provisions within S. 733 focus on expanding and enhancing sportsmen's access by making federal lands "open unless closed" for fishing, hunting, recreational shooting, and other outdoor activities. This bill does not include many of the provisions from the bipartisan sportsmen's package last session.

Endangered Species Act: Improving Recovery of Species

The Western Governors' Association and Governor Matt Mead's (WY) Endangered Species Act (ESA) Initiative continues to work with workshop participants, including close coordination with AFWA staff and members, to identify and refine potential improvements to the ESA. AFWA staff anticipate specific legislative and regulatory recommendations that improve implementation of the ESA will be presented for adoption by the Governors in June. AFWA staff continue to work with Governor Mead's office to closely coordinate AFWA's efforts to proactively prepare for Congressional ESA discussions, hearings and other opportunities to improve the recovery of listed species under the ESA and enhance the states' role recovery of species and improves the down-listing and delisting of species.

Finalizing Results of the Directors' Survey

We only have a couple of states who have not fully completed AFWA's Directors' Survey distributed in December 2016, and we will seek 100% completion over the next couple of weeks. Results from the 87 question survey are being analyzed and text for the various reports is being outlined and written. The results will be summarized and incorporated into state/regional and national reports about state-federal relationships to help inform conversations with and possible priorities of the Trump Administration. The survey is nonpartisan, and reports generated will be used to inform the Beachhead Team members, Department and agency leadership and key Administration officials. We anticipate the completion of these reports by early May 2016.

JOIN US IN UTAH FOR THE 2017 ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES ANNUAL MEETING



SEPTEMBER 10-13, 2017 • SNOWBIRD RESORT • SANDY, UT



snowbird
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afwaannualmeeting.org



NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED THROUGH APRIL 15, 2017 • WWW.CONSERVATIONLEADERSHIP.ORG

We encourage nominators from federal agencies, state fish and wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations, natural resource related industry organizations, and tribal organizations to submit up to three individuals to compete for one of 36 spaces in this world class leadership development program.

Applicants to the NCLI must be nominated by their agency director.



www.fishwildlife.org



Annual Awards- Call for Nominations

Please take a minute and think of a team or individual within your agency as well as private stakeholders who are deserving of national recognition for their outstanding work to advance fish and wildlife conservation.

**Nominations are due
Friday, June 30, 2017.**

For awards criteria and nomination details, go to:

fishwildlife.org/annual_awards

The Strategist Briefly

- Marc LeFebre, Kelly Reynolds and Julie Clary have joined the AFWA staff from Project WILD and are based out of Texas.
- Elena Takaki-Moschelle has joined the AFWA staff as the new Project WILD Director.

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Blue Ribbon Panel Campaign

Blue Ribbon Panel Campaign gets a Makeover

The Blue Ribbon Panel came together to make recommendations on how to address the need for sustainable wildlife conservation funding. Since then, we've mounted a campaign to implement those recommendations and pass legislation to dedicate funding to states to do proactive conservation. Just before the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, the newly created campaign steering committee in coordination with a professional PR firm agreed on a new name for the campaign moving forward. So from here on out, we'll refer to this broader effort as the *Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife*. A new campaign logo and other branding are being developed and will be available for your use very soon once we have officially launched the campaign. We are honing in on a date, likely in mid-June, for a director-level advocacy fly-in and other events in DC. We hope to have a House bill reintroduced by then and will look forward to working with you all to advocate for co-sponsors of that legislation soon.

*We request that the campaign name, strategy, and timing of legislation not be shared with external audiences at this time. This will all be sequenced with the campaign launch later this spring.

Project WILD

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies is proud to announce that Project WILD has joined the Association. Project WILD was previously run by the Council for Environmental Education (CEE). The Project WILD brand (Project WILD, Aquatic WILD, Flying WILD, and Growing Up WILD) brings conservation education through more than 30,000 educators per year, promoting responsible stewardship of natural resources in the United States and several other countries.

Southern Wings

Montana becomes the 30th state to participate in Southern Wings

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks purchased a conservation easement on 2,778 acres of native prairie and shrublands in Montana. The conservation easement is located on important breeding and migration habitat for birds that spend the winter in Northern Mexico. In order to protect Montana's investment in bird conservation on the breeding grounds, they allowed the value of the easement to be used as match for a Bird Conservation of the Rockies project in Northern Mexico. The project is part of a long term conservation effort supported in part by the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Southern Wings is a partnership of state wildlife agencies conserving state priority birds on their wintering grounds in Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean. For more information on Southern Wings or to participate, contact Deb Hahn (dhahn@fishwildlife.org, 202-838-3458).

2018 Farm Bill

The AFWA **2018 Farm Bill Platform** was formally adopted at the AFWA Business Meeting during the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Spokane, WA. This platform will guide the Association's work advocating for a strong Farm Bill for wildlife conservation and state fish and wildlife agencies, and staff has already begun disseminating and discussing the Association's priorities with Congressional staff and other organizations and coalitions working on Farm Bill reauthorization.

You can view the 2018 Farm Bill Platform on our website at www.fishwildlife.org