

The AFWA Strategist

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

July 2017

AFWA Government Affairs

Update: Modernizing the ESA

On June 28, the WGA adopted bipartisan recommendations from Year Two of Governor Mead's (WY) Species Conservation & ESA Initiative, outlining 18 statutory, regulatory, and funding recommendations which would enhance the role of the state fish and wildlife agencies and improve recovery of species. These recommendations are consistent with AFWA's General Principles for Improving the ESA and our ongoing redline work. AFWA staff continue to review Directors' feedback and desired outcomes and identify subsequent needed changes to the redline. Once fully assimilated, we will reach out to the Directors for further engagement. Staff: Gary Taylor (gj_taylor@comcast.net) or Jen Mock Schaeffer (jenmock@fishwildlife.org).

Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2017

The House Natural Resources Committee, by a 22-12 vote on June 27, reported the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017 HR2936 to the House floor. Chairman Bishop intends it to pass the House before the August recess. The bill remedies the fire borrowing problem in USFS and BLM; reduces NEPA process burden for plans developed by a collaborative; establishes binding arbitration as an alternative to litigation of plans; expedites ESA sect.7 consultation; expands acreage qualification for Categorical Exclusions under NEPA; remedies the Cottonwood decision re ESA sect.7 project v programmatic consultation; and other process relief to expedite approval and execution of NFPs and RMPs.

AFWA's Policy Priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill

In addition to [AFWA's Policy Priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill](#), AFWA staff is participating in other coalitions seeking to develop consensus on Farm Bill priorities and recommendations, including TRCP's Agriculture and Wildlife Working Group and the Forests in the Farm Bill coalition, as well as working with agriculture and crop insurance organizations to find areas of common ground. Because AFWA's platform was adopted and released earlier this spring, we have been well-positioned throughout the process to advocate for our priorities, which are reflected in the draft recommendations of these coalitions. Several hearings have already been held in Congress, with more scheduled for the near future, and AFWA staff will continue to engage with Congress and our partners as we advocate for a strong Farm Bill for conservation in 2018.

USFS Discusses Revamp of 30 Year Aquatic Resource Strategy

AFWA recently hosted a call with the USFS and the state fish chiefs to discuss the USFS Draft National Fish and Aquatic Stewardship Strategy. When finalized the Draft Strategy will replace the Rise to the Future strategic plan that was implemented 30 years ago and seeks to provide a USFS framework for objectives such as; conserving fish and aquatic resources, increasing water dependent recreation, and facilitating collaboration, communication, and cooperation with states, tribes, and non-governmental partners. The USFS plans to review comments on the plan and roll out the updated strategy this Fall.



AFWA Annual Meeting

- Registration is now open for AFWA's 2017 Annual Meeting in Sandy, Utah at www.AFWAAnnualMeeting.org
- Please make your hotel reservation at the Snowbird Resort by August 9, 2017.



The NCLI

- Congratulations to the graduates of the National Conservation Leadership Institute's Cohort 11!
- Cohort 12 Fellows will be announced in early August.



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2017 National State Wildlife Action Plan Meeting

Seamless State Wildlife Action Plans
SAVE THE DATE
October 23-26, 2017

Callaway Gardens • Pine Mountain, GA

Contact Mark Humpert for more info at:
mhumpert@fishwildlife.org

International Union for Conservation of Nature

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) established an IUCN U.S. National Committee to facilitate cooperation among all country Members and with other parts of IUCN, and to support the participation of Members in the Program and governance of IUCN. Currently the U.S. has just over 100 members. The inaugural meeting of the IUCN U.S. National Committee was held in Warrenton, Virginia, located outside Washington, DC on June 14-15, 2017. About 70 U.S. IUCN Members attended the meeting. Ron Regan represented AFWA at the meeting. He sat on a Panel that discussed the challenges and opportunities of engaging with the Trump administration. AFWA also was nominated to sit on the Executive Committee. Voting will be held in the next 2 weeks to determine membership on the Executive Committee.

PR Modernization Update

Please continue your efforts to secure House co-sponsors for the Pittman-Robertson Modernization Act (HR 2591) so that we can move this bill to a House Natural Resources Committee hearing. We expect the leadership of the Senate Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus to introduce a companion bill after they return next week.

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The Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

Thanks to the good work of Jen Mock Schaeffer (AFWA), and leadership by Jeff Crane (CSF) we are now in the final stages of the process with Congressman Don Young's office



for reintroduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the House. Mr. Young is committed to leading the charge for this legislation and is ready to work with his colleague, Debbie Dingell of Michigan again to push the bill toward passage in the House. We believe we could have a scheduled introduction as early as later this month, but certainly before August recess. We also felt it was important to have a more formalized campaign governance structure to provide strategic advice and overall guidance to the campaign, so we've created a campaign steering committee made up of the co-chairs of the Blue Ribbon Panel working groups, and a couple state directors as well as AFWA President Wiley. We wanted to maintain continuity and oversight from members of the Blue Ribbon Panel and provide good opportunities to engage those organizations/entities represented by the panelists more directly. Thanks to continued leadership and financial support from the states, a new *Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife* campaign logo has been developed and a new campaign website and other branded materials are in production and will be available for use very soon once we have officially launched the campaign (to coincide with the reintroduction of the bill in the House this summer). We are looking to early fall for a director/CEO level advocacy fly-in and a meeting of the Blue Ribbon Panel other events in DC. We are sure that we will have a House bill reintroduced by then and possibly a Senate bill as well, and will look forward to working with all partners to advocate for co-sponsors of that legislation soon.

WMI Final TRACS Review

Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) conducted a review at the request of the Joint Federal / State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (WSFR-JTF), identifying several challenges to the continued development and implementation of TRACS. The challenges include: (1) Developing a communications plan for the WSFR Program, (2) Developing and memorializing a process for amending TRACS, (3) Integrating strategies and objectives into TRACS reporting, (4) Defining the level of detail for TRACS reporting, (5) Resolving outcome-reporting issues in TRACS and its impacts on WSFR grants, (6) Determining ability for non-state entities to access TRACS data, (7) Resolving workload issues caused by duplicative components of TRACS, and (8) Various technical challenges. As the result of this review, WMI has made several specific recommendations that the (WSFR-JTF) and WSFR partners can adopt that will resolve these challenges.

CITES Updates

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Animals Committee will meet from July 18-22, 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The CITES Technical Work Group members (Buddy Baker (SEAFWA), Rick Jacobson (NEAFWA), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), Jim deVos (WAFWA) and Deb Hahn (AFWA)) will attend to represent the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies. The agenda and related docs can be viewed at <https://cites.org/com/ac/29/index.php>. Items of the highest interest to the states include the potential U.S. native species that could be included in a Significant Trade review; discussions on captive bred and ranched species, traceability of wildlife, tortoise and turtle conservation, and sturgeon and paddlefish conservation; and next steps on potential assessments of American Eel and coral species. The Technical WG will provide a meeting report to the Regional Associations.

Founded in 1902, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to advance science-based management and conservation of species and their habitats for the public's long-term benefit and use.

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