



The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

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## FISH AND WILDLIFE TRUST FUNDS COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Jack Buckley (MA)

**Vice-Chair:** TBD

**Friday, March 30, 2018**

**8 am to 12 pm**

**83rd North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference  
Norfolk, VA**

Jack Buckley chaired the meeting. 26 participants in attendance, including 12 current Committee members.

### **Scheduled Discussion Items**

- Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements, and Agenda Review – **Jack Buckley**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00AM. The Committee Chair, Jack Buckley welcomed all the attendees and asked the participants to introduce themselves.

- Approval of the September 2017 Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from September 2017 in Utah were approved.

- Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife Update – **Sean Saville, AFWA**

Sean Saville gave an update on Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA).

- RAWA was introduced in December 14, 2017 by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Rep Dingell (D-MI) - Bill # HR4647
- Referred to House National Resource Committee (NRC) and dual referrals to subcommittees on Federal Lands, and Water, Power and Oceans
- Actively seeking co-sponsors — Alliance is providing good framework for major stakeholders to engage Members of Congress (MOC) and demonstrate the importance of this bill to their sectors...
- Bi-partisan support for the bill continues to grow in the House—hopeful we will see a hearing in NRC later this spring

NE Game and Parks staff and Congressman Fortenberry went on a field tour to conservation areas along the Missouri River back in October 2017.

Congressman Fortenberry points to this experience as an eye opening and transformational one. He has a great story to tell about the impressive conservation work that the state agency is doing and the importance to his various constituents of healthy fish and wildlife populations and speaks to American traditions, outdoor recreation economy, value of working with private landowners, etc. to prevent species from becoming endangered.

This is great illustration of the power of building relationships with your MOCs and their staff and can yield great results when prioritized and nurtured over time.

Currently we have 26 supportive resolutions and a number of other states that have sent letters of support to their congressional delegations. It would be helpful at this point to either pass resolutions for those states that have not yet, and to those that have, make sure to send copies of them to your House delegations to make sure they know how important this is to your state.

The new Alliance site is live, and we are promoting it--the main purpose of the site is to allow constituents to contact their Members of Congress in support of the legislation.

We will be adding more features in Phase 2:

- Alliance partners list and contact info
- Downloadable materials
- Video and social content

Next steps:

- Gather Co-sponsors of Recovering America's Wildlife Act in House of Representatives, and secure support for Senate introduction
  - Directors and policy staff meet with MOCs over Easter Recess
  - Alliance Partners and agency staff help to tell your state story
  - Directors are "closers"
- Utilize Alliance partner networks and communications vehicles to amplify our message and secure public support for bill
  - Alliance sign-on letter
  - Partner organizations can do grassroots advocacy and help reinforce messaging on importance of increased funding
  - Stakeholder Letters of Support
- Continue to promote campaign website [www.OurNatureUSA.com](http://www.OurNatureUSA.com) -- drive traffic to "take action" through social media channels
- Promote campaign video (produced by DU's team) on social media and to target demographics
- Look for strategic visibility opportunities to influence core audiences—and engage key stakeholders
  - Conferences, conventions, public forums, trade shows, field tours

- 2017 Fish and Wildlife Business Summit Industry/Agency Progress - **Jon Gassett, WMI**

The 2018 Fish & Wildlife Business Summit this year will be held August 28-29 in Springfield, Missouri at the White River Conference Center.

This year summit will focus on:

- A clear understanding by participants of the American System of Conservation Funding – specifically how license and permit fees merge with the FET to fund conservation, and how this funding is generated, spent, and accomplishments reported.
- A clear understanding by participants of the communication efforts currently underway and how these might be coordinated and leveraged for greater overall effect.
- A foundational communication strategy that incorporates the specific wants and needs of the major partners (industry, state agencies, USFWS).
- A process for incorporating existing research and conducting additional studies (if/as needed) to understand the messaging that will be effective and engaging with identified target audiences.
- A commitment by the R3 Community to use the products of this communication strategy to support and assist national recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts

WMI hired Renny MacKay who is working with Outreach and Diversity Committee on relevancy.

WMI continues to work with the State Director's/Industry database, which allows fish and wildlife agency administrators to have ready access to contact information for hunting, shooting, angling and boating industry representatives within their states in order to develop and/or improve state/industry relations. If you don't have access please send us an e-mail and we will take care of it.

WMI started working on Agency/Industry relations in 2005. For last five years, MultiState Conservation Grant Program has supported the initiative. Last year this initiative did not make it with MultiState Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) but since we still have an extension from last grant we are covered for 2018. We are applying for next MSCGP cycle and if we don't get approval again we need to start looking at alternative funding.

Mitch King is working as contractor on excise tax coordinated efforts to ensure uniform applicability of the Federal Excise Tax across all manufacturers. WMI is working with industry representatives, Internal Revenue Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to develop strategies to provide fairness and equity among taxpayers while also ensuring state fish and wildlife agencies receive the accurate amount of PR/DJ dollars.

Mitch will be working with AFWA on creating a site on AFWA website under Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Committee page that includes a clear language for all aspects of excise tax and other related information.

- Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Update – **Paul Rauch, Bob Curry, Steve Klein (PPT)**

Paul in behalf of Fish and Wildlife Service thanked Director Jack Buckley for leading the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Committee as well as Joint Task Force Committee.

Every year we try to identify some management priorities that we need to focus on.

### ***Update on 2017 WSFR Priorities***

- Substantially reduce the backlog of open state audit findings
  - Nearly Done: Backlog reduced 78% from 263 to 59 open state audit findings
- Collaborate with States to complete an evaluation of administrative funding needs for the WSFR program (we will talk about this later in the agenda)
  - Program Management Analysis completed
- Finalize agreement with States on WSFR program performance and TRACS, and initiate a TRACS enhancement that is responsive to this agreement
  - TRACS fields/metrics adopted by JTF in Nov 2017
  - Enhancement programming ongoing
- Develop a strategic communications plan for the WSFR program that identifies key audiences, desired results, and strategic approaches
  - Ongoing and 2018 Priority

### ***Strategic Communication Plans***

Purpose is to ensure:

- Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs are Relevant to the public
- Key Audiences Support Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs
- Funding for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs is stable and sufficient

In 2016, WSFR received clarification on ability to use administrative funds for outreach and communications activities.

- November 2016, WSFR Senior Management met to begin initial scoping of development of a Strategic Communications Plan by defining the project's purpose and desired outcomes.

### ***2018 WSFR Program Priorities***

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) will continue to promote a safe and welcoming workplace in support of an engaged, enthusiastic and knowledgeable workforce that effectively administers grants in accordance with our core values and applicable laws, policies, and regulations. In addition, WSFR will strive to implement the following priority actions in support of our FY2018 Program Goals:

- Strengthen the WSFR Partnership by:
  - Working with stakeholders to utilize the Program Management Analysis to develop a shared vision for administration of the WSFR program;

- Actively engaging with state and industry partners on issues of joint interest through informed participation on and leadership of: summits, committees, task forces, workgroups and trade shows; and
- Supporting partner efforts to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters and anglers.
- Improve effectiveness and customer service of WSFR Program
  - Initiating specific management actions that will improve the effectiveness of the WSFR program;
  - Effectively managing the TRACS enhancement, including the evaluation of opportunities for outside income;
  - Developing a program-wide strategy for improved internal communication; and
  - Participating on the Service's Joint Administrative Operations Project Team as the Financial Assistance Lead.
- Enhance WSFR Partnership's funding, support and relevance by completing strategic communications plan, assessing cost effectiveness, and implementing plan if appropriate
  - Completing the strategic communication planning process initiated in 2017 to include an outcome based implementation plan that will guide effective communication and messaging to various audiences;
  - Assessing the cost effectiveness of the plan; and
  - If cost effective, committing the necessary time and resources to implement the plan.

***Improve Effectiveness and Customer Service of WSFR Program – Steve Klein, WSFR***

- Navigating through Office of the Secretary of the Interior Review of Grants
 

We have been very effective at working with the Secretary's Office to obtain waivers for our 3 biggest grant programs. This eliminates the month+ long review process so states can get money on the ground to manage resources and improve access!!!

  - Competitive grant programs > \$100K (BIG, CVA, NCW, SWG-C, TWG, MSCG) will require OS review
  - Land acquisition grants > \$50K require OS review
  - OS will continue reviews of FA programs in 2018
  - WSFR has developed strong working relationships with OS
  - As a result, 5 FWS non-discretionary programs exempted:
    - Sport Fish Restoration
    - Wildlife Restoration and Basic Hunter Education
    - Enhanced Hunter Education and Safety
    - North American Wetlands Conservation Fund
    - State Wildlife Grants (formula)
  - WSFR employee dedicated full-time to facilitate review
  - Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
 

Another area we are striving to minimize WSFR review times are the Notice of Funding Opportunities

- Training state and federal staff

Training is one of our biggest strengths, and our Training Center and Regions are actively engaged in providing training, a high priority need by States\

- 126 State staff trained at 5 Project Leader Courses (PLC) and 367 completed on-line PLC
- 56 staff trained in Basic Grants Management
- 46 staff trained in Advanced Grants Management
- Provided training at 3 Federal Aid Coordinator's Workshops for 190 participants
- Provided training at States Organization for Boating Access Conference for 52 participants

- Policy Development

- License certification provisions of 50 CFR 80: WSFR is ready to publish a proposed simplified approach to counting license holders. The draft proposal must be published in the Federal Register before going final. It is included in phase 1.

- Regional Operations

The Regions is where most of the on-the-ground work is done, and like States, we have dedicated professionals moving the needle. This is a huge workload involving environmental compliance, fiscal review, eligibility determinations and state-federal collaboration

- During the PMA, State Directors and FACs were interviewed in 8 FWS Regions, where strong WSFR customer service was demonstrated in all Regions
- During 2017, Regions reviewed and approved 1,381 grants (\$804 M) and 2,042 amendments (\$460 M)
- Also in 2017, Regions monitored 6,056 grants valued at over \$4.4 B
- 1,682 Awards were closed in 2017

- Accomplishment Reporting: TRACS

- Data Fields/Metrics Adopted by JTF - Nov 2017
- 12-18 month TRACS Enhancement began in December 2017
- User Training and "Go Live" planned for summer/fall 2019 (includes public viewer)
- TRACS Enhancement anticipated to be valuable tool to document accomplishments and tell WSFR Story

- Status and Trends: National Survey

- Final 2016 National Survey Report released recently
- 102 million Americans fished, hunted or wildlife watched
- Spent over \$156 B, equal to 1% of the Gross Domestic Product
- First time estimating recreational target shooters (32 M), and recreational archers (12 M) in U.S.

Over the past 25 years, our National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Associated Recreation reveals that the number of anglers has remained flat around 35 million anglers. Hunters have declined over the past 25 years from 14 to 12 million, an 18% decrease. Wildlife Watching has ranged from 63 to 86 million participants. Numbers have increased since 1996, with a 13% increase since 1991. In terms of % of U.S. population 16 YO and older, we see declines in all 3 recreational groups, including 15% in wildlife watching, 26% in Fishing and a 43 % decrease in Hunting over the past 25 years.

***Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Funding Information – Bob Curry***

- WR / SFR Program Funding 2017/2018
  - WR saw 2.2% increase in 2018, and with matching funds, WR > \$1 B
    - WR apportionments doubled since 2012 from \$400 M to \$800 M last few years
  - SFR saw 1% increase in 2018, and with match, SFR almost \$ .5 billion
    - Over the past 9 years, SFR Apportionments flat around \$350 M
    - 58% of SFR and Boating Trust Fund receipts from the previous year are apportioned to States
  - Together, \$1.5 B program, just from apportionments and State match
- Wildlife Restoration Receipts
  - Comparing over last 10 years, we see gains across all categories, particularly Pistols / Revolvers (\$50 M to \$250 M) and Ammunition (\$100 M to \$250 M). But again, levelling off in last 5 years
- Wildlife Restoration Account Comparing 1st Quarter Receipts (\$M)
  - Firearms revenues through Q1 decreased by 35.3%
  - Archery Revenues through Q1 decreased by 6.24%
  - \$849 = Office of Tax Analysis (OTA) estimate for 2018
  - First quarter decrease is of concern, and we'll all be looking closely at receipts from 2nd quarter
- Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund Receipts (\$ M)
  - Big driver for SFR is gas taxes, which provide 72% of receipts
  - Motorboat gas tax receipts in the Sport Fish and Boating Trust Fund are based on number of registered recreational motorboats, not fuel consumed, compiled from State data by the U.S. Coast Guard
  - Over last 13 years, boat registrations decreased 10%
  - 95% of Boat registrations are boats < 26'
  - The Coast Guard does not have complete data for 2017 as of yet, therefore it was not included in the graph.
- Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund - Comparing 1st Quarter Receipts (\$M)
  - Domestic Fishing Tackle Excise Tax Revenue through December increased by 2.36%
  - Total Revenue through December increased by 4.96%
  - OTA estimate is -1% from last year
- State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Budget (\$M)
  - Overall, program reduced 51% in 2019 President's Budget

- SWG Competitive and TWG Competitive zeroed out
  - The House and Senate have restored reductions in the past, including 2018 CR
- State Wildlife Action Plans
  - 4 Plans under review by Regional Review Teams/Headquarters or awaiting revisions: Illinois, Guam, Puerto Rico, & U.S. Virgin Islands
- Legislative Updates – **Jen Mock Schaeffer, AFWA**
  - Last week the Congress released the Omnibus FY 2018. Overall, spending for conservation programs across the board were improved from prior levels, and significantly higher than what the Administration had proposed. We saw some good funding flow into some other programs that our State Agencies and Partners care about.
  - Starting 2020, the agencies will be able to access some disaster funding to fight the wildfires similar to other natural disaster funds. This huge improvement will mean millions more in funding every year for the important restoration and conservation work.
  - State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, the nation’s core program to fund states and tribes to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered, increased by \$1 million a year. An interesting language tells the states to prioritize funds to prevent species from being listed. It’s still unclear how that might affect the states that are in current grants and current research or monitoring processes with certain high priority species and what kind of changes do we need to make so looking forward to figuring that out.
  - Looking at FY 2019 Budget there were difficult decisions to be made. We will be working with appropriators to make sure we have sufficient and robust funding where we need across all the programs.
  - ***Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA)***
    - On February 15 we had a hearing on “Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow’s Needs Act of 2017” and “Recovering America's Wildlife Act”.
    - CSF hosted a breakfast on “Recovering America's Wildlife Act”
    - Fly-In event
    - Lots of interest on the bill and we are up to 40 sponsors.
    - Next Step-simulating more sponsors
    - Met with senate. We are optimistic that we will see a bill there soon.
    - Working on some final language so we can raise the comfort level. The offset has been a bit of challenge. \$1.3 Billion are being redirected from Oil Offshore and Onshore Energy Development projects. \$6 -\$12 Billion are coming in.
    - Reporting – how are states reporting to Congress how the funds are spent? There is not any reporting requirement how the states are using funds to prevent the species from being listed. But through the conversations they are interested on:
      - Outcomes (no outputs)
      - Conditioning money based on outcome reports
      - Oversight and transparency
      - Every 5 years
    - Suggestions:
      - Benchmark – how do you create an enlisting constant approach to measure against
    - Ongoing discussions on how to report outcomes.

- We have talked to Congress and mentioned that we support accountability and transparency and we are happy to work with them and get the product they are looking for. In addition, we are realizing that there are 50 different states that will be reporting in 50 different ways. The states have identified the species of greatest needs and that will be their focus and for some states it's going to be all about those species that are not listed under the ESA. Other states may have the interest or ability/capacity to take on recovering or delist. However, that is not required or it's not the focus of that, it is an allowable use of funds, we built it in as a "may" while implanting the SWAP is a "shall" based on current laws. However, the reporting is going to be very important, because if you do not produce it, you are not going to get your funds.
- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and an ounce of prevention comes in with RAWA in preventing species from being listed in first place and keeping common species common. Therefore, you do not have to spend funds in ESA.
- ***Pittman Robertson Modernization Act***
  - Great conversation on the need to focusing on R3 and communicate with the public.
  - 27 cosponsors in the House and 5 cosponsors in the Congress.
  - There is strong interest on moving this forward

- **WSFR FA Joint Task Force Update - Kelly Hepler, SD**

JTF met in November 2017 in Springfield, MO. Few things that we discussed:

- Memorandum of Understanding
  - Communication Strategies went through 5 revisions, got finalized and was approved by the Executive Committee. This will be discussed at the Business Meeting.
- 5 year report - it was decided to put it on hold pending a finalized WSFR strategic communications plan.
- Communication Chart will be modified, so we have consistency and a structured discussion, as well as transparency.
- Pheasant Stocking - JTF decided to discuss with the Ex Com in Dec. 2017, and then I believe sometime between meetings Director Buckley's proposed grant to do this was approved, so the JTF no longer had to discuss the issue.
- Apportionments – when apportionments go out they need to be broken by states.
- Wildlife Damage Management –ongoing discussions.
- Spending WSFR funds in Canada
  - AFWA was strongly supporting about spending those funds in Canada projects
  - NY has questions
  - More discussions in JTF
  - Executive Committee agreed to that.
- 50CFR80
  - Phase 2 was put on hold; working on the final rule for phase 1 this year
  - The FACWG requests that WSFR actively engage with the CFR Review Scheduling Group and/or the FACWG to preliminarily discuss any additional proposed revisions to 50 CFR 80 and other regulatory reviews prior to publishing

the content in the Federal Register. Doing so will increase transparency and strengthen the WSFR Partnership.

- The Council to Advancing Hunting & Shooting Sports – **Samantha Pedder, CAHSS**

- National R3 Symposium
- It will be hosted in Lincoln, NE from May 21-23, 2018. This will be the first nation-wide event solely focused on resources and partnerships needed to secure the future of hunting, angling, target shooting, and boating. It will try to bring together agencies, industries and NGO's to share, learn and develop the limitless opportunities our community now has to accelerate the current state of R3 effort and impact.
- We started on planning this even in May 2017 in cooperation with the actors mentioned above and it has been a lot of planning going on.
- Samantha played a video about the event and walked the meeting participants through the event website.
- On the first day of the event we have included presentations on Data & R3, headlined by Mark Duda and Rob Southwick. The second day will be dedicated in two specific topics activities designed to capture insights from the audience and provide feedback to the R3 Community, which will be used to define future national and regional R3 efforts, "R3 in 21st Century Business Practices", and "Elevating R3 Impact through Strategic Partnerships". Outcomes from those questions will be reported out. Finally, all four R3 committees from the regional associations of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and a cohort of mentoring organizations will meet during the last hours of the Symposium to chart a path forward in R3 at the regional level and discuss the important topic of mentoring. Future efforts of the collective R3 Community will continue to support structure and encourage growth in these areas.

- The Federal Aid Coordinators Working Group – **Mike Sawyer, MA**

- ***50 CFR 80 Revisions and CFR Review Scheduling Group***
  - From April - August 2016 a team consisting of WSFR and State members developed a schedule for a phased approach to rulemaking. The phases were designed to divide topics for review over four rounds of rulemakings. However, the CFR Review Scheduling Group did not address any content of the proposed regulatory revisions – only the timing of the reviews. In December 2017, WSFR published a proposed regulatory revision to 50 CFR 80 that included license certification and other matters described as "minor technical changes" (82 FR 59564).
- ***TRACS***
  - The TRACS Enhancement continues to dominate conversations among the FACWG and Federal Aid Coordinators across the country. As the performance reporting platform for WSFR-funded grant activities, TRACS will significantly impact the administration of the WSFR Program in all States. The timeline of the TRACS Enhancement roll-out will impact the administration of WSFR-funded grant activities over the next few years, particularly regarding submission of grants and subsequent reporting.

- The TRACS Enhancement Matrix was approved by the JTF with minor changes at their November 2017 meeting. The matrix will serve as the backbone for how projects will be built in the TRACS Enhancement. The TRACS Enhancement schedule will impact the timing of the National Federal Aid Coordinators Meeting, but it is anticipated that this meeting will be held Fall 2019.
- ***Freshwater/Saltwater Split Subgroup***
  - The 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation included a considerable change to the estimated proportions of freshwater and saltwater anglers. In many cases, these estimated proportions are used to allocate Sport Fish Restoration Act Funds in the States. Given the changes in the 2016 Survey, several States expressed concern to the FACWG regarding the proportions and the potential impact on their programs.
  - During the FACWG's January 2018 Conference Call, the issue of the Freshwater/Saltwater split was discussed and the FACWG formed a subgroup to address the concerns raised by some Coastal States. In March 2018, the FACWG sent a preliminary survey to Coastal States to determine if there were widespread concerns with the 2016 Survey Freshwater/Saltwater splits, if any States had conducted their own surveys, and any implications for the allocation of their Sport Fish Restoration Act funds.
- ***Changes to Spring Meeting***
  - For the past two years, the Joint Meeting of the FACWG and WSFR Chiefs has taken place during the same week and location as the JTF meeting. The meeting had included a half day of overlap with all three groups that facilitated communication of current issues of importance to all parties. In February, 2018, it was determined that the JTF would meet separately from the FACWG and WSFR Regional Chiefs. While the entire FACWG will not be present, the JTF has proposed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the FACWG attend the Spring JTF Meeting. In the explanation provided to the FACWG, WSFR believes that having the two leadership positions of the FACWG, in combination with the two WSFR Chiefs on the JTF, will be able to provide perspectives from the April Meeting of the FACWG and WSFR Chiefs to the JTF.
- ***Other Matters***
  - Several Regions selected the next State representatives to the FACWG. These new representatives have already become actively engaged in the FACWG.
- Airgun Sporting Association – **Mitch King**

One of the roles that Mitch King took under the contract with WMI has been the tradeshow and trying to orchestrate a better presence and productive presence with federal agencies, state agencies and promoting the excise tax. IRS was present at the ATA show as well as representative from the FWS and we worked to reach to new manufacture members to make sure they understand where taxes are going and how they are computed.

We are working on the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund site to be hosted under AFWA webpage. Lori Bennett is helping on collecting information. Most of the information that will be included in that site will be easily accessible in one place. Some of the information will include

- all things related to funding,
- finding your industry partners is equally important and we need to think more about how to improve this section to make it more accurate and user-friendly - adding an “NGO” partner piece to this as well,
- summaries of previous year Summits and information on the upcoming summit
- collection of written pieces for the AFWA Director’s Line, WMI’s ONB and others, as well as other related articles of interest.
- Other sections may come to mind as we work through this process, but I would hope that this expansion of the website would allow future expansions as they are identified.

Mitch talked about Airgun Sporting Association – a new organization. He was approached by the organization to help them with hunting regulations and legalizing airguns in as many places as possible as legal methods of take for big and small game. Few states allow airgun use for small game and not many allow airgun use for big game. The airguns technology has changed tremendously in last few years. Precharged Peumatic (PCP) use compressed **air** cylinders to launch pellets downrange with incredible accuracy and consistency. The Industry is advocating that 35-50 caliber guns with PCP platform are capable of taking down deer and they add other values such as youth recruitment.

Question – Do they pay excise tax for the Airguns?

Airguns are not taxable under the excise tax program. It is the States responsibility to bring this issue up. The only contribution that they make in conservation funding is the custom duties. There has been a hesitancy by the Industry to engage in excise tax payment because they question if they pay excise tax everywhere and only 30 states legalize airguns are we losing out on that.

So let’s have an open dialog on how the Airgun Industry can support the American model for conservation funding and the Industry is willing to have that dialog.

- New Business – **Jack Buckley**
- Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Management Analysis (PMA): Next Steps – **Paul Rauch, WSFR**

WSFR convened the PMA Team, comprised of WSFR employees and contractor support, to complete this effort.

- 2016 - WSFR Leadership launched the PMA to:
  - Assess the current state of WSFR’s program administration
  - Identify attributes of a desired future state
  - Identify focus areas for improvement
- 2017 - PMA team conducted a collaborative process with stakeholders to solicit feedback and inform key elements of the analysis
  - Hosted meetings in all 8 FWS Regions
  - Interviewed:
    - Representatives from 48 States/Territories
    - 24 individuals representing 8 Industry Associations / NGOs
    - 65 WSFR employees

- Early 2018 - Data analysis completed and summary report distributed
  - Analysis of the data identified:
    - Key Drivers in Increasing Complexity and Workloads
      - Significant increases in grant volumes without corresponding increases in administrative funding
      - Increased focus on fiscal-based activities associated with grant management
      - Increased workloads associated with Government-wide reform of financial assistance laws and regulations
      - Challenges and learning curves associated with changes to technology and reporting responsibilities
    - Overarching Functional Areas
      - Provide guidance and training on laws, regulations and policies
      - Complete grant awards
      - Monitor the financial health and performance of awarded grants
      - Support program-wide coordination and information exchange
      - Monitor program-wide financial health and integrity
      - Develop and deliver strategic communications

Similar to the approach to gathering and validating the core functions, the Analysis Team worked with WSFR stakeholders to identify the key characteristics of the desired future state: the WSFR team's goals for the program that make change worth the effort. After completing interviews with Regional and HQ's staff and leadership, the Analysis Team synthesized input on the desired future state into a set of draft characteristics. The result of the effort is a set of five organizational characteristics that WSFR staff and leadership in the Regions and HQ feel should be the "north star" for WSFR change initiatives.

- A clearly defined national program identity
- Strong relationships based on a high degree of trust
- A high degree of transparency into how and how well administrative resources are used
- Seamless internal coordination
- Effective, engaged, and supported WSFR staff

Getting there through a Shared Vision for Program Administration that will:

- Create a consistent set of expectations
- Establish a set of principles for identifying change initiatives
- Provide a framework for making needed changes

The WSFR Program will be administered in a way that:

- Promotes efficient grant review, approval, and monitoring processes that support the delivery of effective conservation
- Standardizes processes in support of improved efficiency and cross-regional resource sharing
- Prioritizes program integrity and accountability through effective training, data management, performance reporting, policy, and capacity
- Provides stakeholder visibility and input on priorities and value propositions
- Enhances strategic communications

- Next Steps – Achieving the Vision
- Establish a visioning team comprised of State, Industry, and Federal partners
- Team will work collaboratively to refine the principles and define a shared vision
- Present draft vision at Fall AFWA Meeting
- Vision will guide FY19 change initiatives
  
- Wrap-up Discussion / Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.