

The AFWA Strategist

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

January 2015

AFWA Legislative Priorities for the 114th Congress

With new Congressional leadership often comes change, such as a change in committee priorities, member composition, staff and subcommittee organization. Of note, Rep. Rob Bishop (UT-1st) is the new chairman for the House Natural Resources Committee and Rep. Michael Conaway (TX-11th) takes the helm as Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture. In the Senate, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK) is the new chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; Sen. James Inhofe (OK) takes over as chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee; and Sen. Pat Roberts (KS) was selected to chair the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

AFWA's priority in the 114th Congress is to educate new staff and Members and help them understand the roles, responsibilities, authority and conservation impacts of state fish and wildlife agencies as well as the interests of state constituents and the priorities of our fish and wildlife conservation community. Some of AFWA's top state fish and wildlife legislative priorities over the coming year include:

- Reauthorizations: Sport Fish and Boating Trust Fund in the Transportation bill; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; Land and Water Conservation Fund; NAWCA and some of its funding components
- Bipartisan Sportsmen's Package
- National Fish Habitat Conservation Act and other fisheries/hatcheries legislation
- FY2016 Appropriations and Wildlife Disaster Funding
- Amendment to the Controlled Substances Act
- ESA reform

AFWA Legal Strategy

AFWA's Legal Strategy team, led by Carol Bamberg and Parks Gilbert, continue to visit law schools to raise awareness about the Association's educational opportunities for law students. In mid-December, they visited the University of South Carolina and connected with a natural resources law professor and an assistant dean to discuss AFWA's internship opportunities as well as the wildlife law classes Carol has developed.

AFWA's legal team also continues to assist member agencies when they need support in litigation. In December, the Association's Executive Committee approved a request from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for AFWA to file an amicus brief in support of the department's appeal of an unfavorable decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. The case involves Wisconsin's regulation of night hunting of deer by resident tribes.



Idaho Fish & Game

Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In: Feb. 24-25

Your voice is needed on Capitol Hill to help communicate the vital importance of the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants program and State Wildlife Action Plans to Members of Congress. This year's Fly-in has increased urgency:

- 13 new Senators and 58 new Members of the House of Representatives don't know why fish and wildlife diversity and state-based conservation are important to our nation's natural security.
- Many longstanding champions for SWG including Senators Johnson, Landrieu, Levin, Harkin, Chambliss and House members Waxman, Miller, Holt, Dingell, etc. are no longer in Congress. We must build the next generation of supporters.
- The Senate is now under Republican leadership. The previous Democratic-controlled Senate has been a firewall when the House has proposed large cuts to SWG or elimination. We have Republican support in the House and Senate, but we need more and stronger champions.
- A new round of sequestration is in the offing and some members want to shift nondefense discretionary spending to the defense side of the ledger. This will increase the pressure to cut grant or even eliminate programs like SWG.

We know that SWG is successfully working to prevent endangered species listings in every state and territory, but we need communicate its worth. Showing Congressional Members that your state cares enough about this program to send someone to Capitol Hill is powerful and can influence their support.

To register for the Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In, go to www.teaming.com.



Blue Ribbon Panel Update

Leadership from state fish and wildlife agencies and AFWA staff members met with Blue Ribbon Panel Co-chairs John L. Morris and Dave Freudenthal in late November to set the course forward for convening the Panel in 2015.

In addition to the co-chairs, meeting participants included AFWA President Larry Voyles (AZ), Dave Chanda (NJ), Dan Forster (GA), Bob Ziehmer (MO), David Whitehurst (VA), Norman Murray (MO) and Ron Regan, Mark Humpert, Laura MacLean and Mary Pfaffko from AFWA.

AFWA thanks Mr. Morris and Martin MacDonald for their hospitality at the Big Cedar Lodge, Bass Pro Shops' premier wilderness resort near Branson, Missouri.



The Blue Ribbon Panel now numbers 24 with the recent additions of Michael Nussman, President and CEO of the American Sportfishing Association; Steve Sanetti, CEO of the National Shooting Sports Foundation; and Jeff Trandahl, CEO of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. To view the full list of Panelists, go to www.fishwildlife.org/blueribbonpanel.

The purpose of the Blue Ribbon Panel is to provide a forum for business and conservation leaders to discuss the future of fish and wildlife conservation and to review and agree on the best option for sustained and dedicated funding.

The desired outcome is to broaden investment in state-based fish and wildlife conservation to support proactive voluntary conservation on public and private lands to ensure sustainability for all species.

Combatting Aquatic Invasive Species

To address the unintentional spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)—a growing concern among both the natural resources management community and recreational boating industry—The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) will host the “Aquatic Invasive Species Summit: Boat Design and Construction in the Consideration of AIS” in Las Vegas, January 27-28.

The purpose of the summit is to engage industry representatives, state agency leadership and AIS coordinators, and other experts in an in-depth dialogue surrounding prevention, inspection and decontamination of boats with the ultimate goal of improving boater experience and satisfaction while reducing the spread of AIS. This will include identification of opportunities related to improved boat design and construction, component/system and engine/propulsion design and installation, and trailer design and construction. (www.proboat.com/boatbuilders-to-join-fight-against-invasive-species.html)

Moreover, on January 29, the National Sea Grant Law Center will host a small-group discussion with Western state AIS coordinators, law enforcement personnel and Assistant Attorneys General toward development of model regulatory approaches, which will complement AFWA-approved model legislative approaches (<http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/projects/model-legal-framework/index.html>).

AFWA Lynx Survey

The Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) has been listed as “Threatened” under the U. S. Endangered Species Act for nearly 15 years, yet a formal recovery plan has never been developed for the species. AFWA’s Fish and Wildlife Science Coordinator, Dr. Jonathan Mawdsley, has been surveying lynx managers and biologists in the western and northeastern states, in order to identify opportunities where the state fish and wildlife agencies can collaborate to conserve this species.

Promising areas for cooperation include multi-state recovery planning, range-wide genetic studies and improved Best Management Practices for state furbearer harvest programs. Most excitingly, some state lynx managers have suggested that it may be time to evaluate whether Canada lynx needs continued protection under the federal Endangered Species Act, and whether the conservation needs of the species could best be met through coordinated action by the individual state fish and wildlife agencies.

Winter Leadership Courses from MAT

Registration is now open for AFWA’s Management Assistance Team Winter 2015 online leadership development courses. MAT is excited to offer three new or revised classes including the highly anticipated *Emotional Intelligence* by Dr. Tom Kalous. Other courses include *The Adaptive Leader I*, *Disorder to Order: Leading in Chaos*, *Power* and *What Great Managers Know*. For more information, go to www.matteam.org.

AFWA Operations

The Association welcomed John Lord as our new Operations Director in December. He will focus on business and investment planning, budget and contract oversight, administrative policy, funding opportunities and more. John also will oversee AFWA’s office relocation to the NoMa neighborhood of Washington, DC in Spring 2015, including coordinating with DC-based architecture firm – BLDG – to design the space.

In early January, the Association will say goodbye to Allison Vogt who will be joining The Nature Conservancy and Mary Pfaffko, who is heading to the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division. We thank them both for their many contributions to AFWA.