



FISH AND WILDLIFE TRUST FUNDS COMMITTEE

Chair: Bryan Burhans (PA)

Vice-Chair: Mike Fowlks (UT)

September 11, 2018

8:15 AM – 12:00PM

Bryan Burhans chaired the meeting. 31 participants in attendance, including 11 current Committee members.

Scheduled Discussion Items

- Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements, and Agenda Review – ***Bryan Burhans***

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

- Approval of the March 2018 Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from March 2018 were approved.

- 2019 Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program – Proposed Changes to Scoring Criteria – ***Rex Sallabanks***

The Association's Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee created a working group to examine eligibility criteria and scoring factors and recommended changes to the committee that could help make the program even better.

The AFWA Business Committee subsequently approved the recommendations of the working group on September 12, 2018.

- Expansion of the allowance for individual state (Currently, only Alaska, Hawaii and/or territories are able to)
 - Some states have large geographies and cover all or a significant portion of the range of a species, making interstate collaboration unnecessary or burdensome.
 - In addition, the authorities over certain taxa (e.g. invertebrates) and habitats can vary between states sometimes making collaboration impossible.
- Maximum for grants be raised - A higher award ceiling will allow states to do larger-scale projects and reduce administrative inefficiencies.

Alaska, Hawaii, the territories and the District of Columbia could individually apply for up to \$500,000, while single states in the contiguous US could apply for a maximum of \$250,000, two states \$500,000, three states \$750,000 and four or more states up to \$1,000,000.
- Requirement for match to be removed as scoring factor and simply be part of the eligibility criteria - Giving greater consideration to projects that have a higher proportion

of non-federal match does not necessarily result in better projects or outcomes and can put states who have challenges acquiring match at a disadvantage.

- A number of detailed changes are recommended for the scoring criteria. A sliding scale for points is proposed to give grant reviewers greater discretion and the scoring criteria are reorganized and reweighted to make expectations clearer to grant writers. Other proposed changes are intended to do the following:
 - improve alignment to State Wildlife Action Plans;
 - make it easier for emerging issues to be addressed;
 - address concerns in the FY18 omnibus spending bill (Public Law No: 115- 141) report by giving some increased weight to projects targeted at federal candidate species, but clarifying that state priorities should still carry substantial weight;
 - clarify/change weights of scoring criteria for objectives, procedures, data management, timeline, compliance, organizational roles, outcomes and benefits, communicating results and budget.

Question: Did you consider legislative language for ESA? - Yes

- Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Update – ***Paul Rauch/ Bob Curry***

Some of the priorities that WSFR worked on this year:

- Shared Vision
- TRACS Enhancement: In late July and early August, WSFR hosted two national webinars to preview the TRACS Enhancement with State and Federal system users. The webinars were a tremendous success, with over 150 separate log-ins to the webinar and several hundred viewers. Comments received were overwhelmingly positive and questions from participants were highly informed. WSFR looks forward to continuing this collaborative approach as we build and implement the TRACS Enhancement over the next year. We plan to have a beta system available by Spring 2019 and the TRACS Working Group will participate in early testing. We will then expand access to additional groups/states as the summer progresses.
We will offer national webinars throughout 2019 at key intervals to raise awareness of the Enhancement and provide previews as the beta system unfolds.
- R3 – The Service is developing guidance on the Service’s role in supporting State-led efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate participants in outdoor recreation activities. Including, but not limited to, archery, birdwatching, boating, fishing, hiking, hunting, and shooting sports in support of our mission to enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the benefit of the American people.
 - FWS Issued R3 Guidance Memo to Employees
 - FWS role is to support state led R3 efforts
 - Cooperate with other federal agencies
 - Cooperate with other organizations (RBFF/CAHSS)
 - Access
 - Guidance
 - Outreach

- Strategic Communication Plan: Through interviews and discussions with state directors, along with our industry partners over the last months, we have learned a great deal about the types of messages and methods we can best use to help ensure
 - Why? - No more “random acts of outreach”
 - What? - Funding, Support, Relevance
 - Who? - States, Industry, FWS
 - When? - Final Report June 2019
 WSFR has the funding, support, and relevance it needs to be successful.

- Review of Financial Assistance (FA)
 - The Department will continue reviews of some FA programs in 2019.
 - 6 WSFR grant programs exempted or waived - We have been very effective at working with the Secretary’s Office to exempt or obtain waivers for 6 of our grant programs. This eliminates the months long review process so states can get money on the ground to manage resources and improve access and infrastructure

Sport Fish Restoration

Wildlife Restoration and Basic Hunter Education

Enhanced Hunter Education and Safety

State Wildlife Grants (formula)

Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG) & Clean Vessel Act (CVA) - Big and CVA received a waiver from the review process in August. Special thanks to the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) and the Sport Fish and Boating Partnership Council for their efforts to obtain these waivers.

Competitive grant programs for all amounts of funding (NCW, SWG-C, TWG, MSCG) will still require some level of Service or Department review.

Land acquisition grants > \$50K will also require Office of the Secretary review.

Reviewer level :

Less than \$100K = FWS Director

\$100K up to \$250K = Assistant Secretary, DOI - Fish, Wildlife and Parks

\$250K or more - Senior Adviser to the Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget

- 50 CFR 80 Updates - Updates to 50 CFR 80 include a simplified approach to license certification, new and updated definitions, and added eligible activities. Received 37 comment submissions in response to the proposed rule from 15 States representing 6 Regions, several fish and wildlife-related organizations, and the public. The comments were reviewed and final rule to route to the Federal Register by October 1. Comments reflected high support for new license certification standard. Some topics received comments that indicated need for further development and those topics will be delayed for future rulemaking.

- Improved Guidance

- Guidance for State grants to Canada issued June 4, 2018 -Guidance issued to assist States and Regions for projects that include passing through WSFR funding to Canadian entities for work that supports fish and wildlife in that State.
- Guidance in development for using the cost-sharing method for program income, costs of automated licensing systems that are eligible for WSFR funding, R3 eligibility, and BMPs for Third-party agreements.
- WSFR reexamined current authorities and notified States that effective this year we support States’ projects that include using the cost-sharing method for program

income. Guidance assists States to better utilize the cost-sharing method and job aids help in preparing fiscal reporting.

- Updating the current guidance that supports State's R3 efforts. WSFR is also working to issue guidance for assessing if costs associated with automated licensing systems are WSFR-funding eligible.
- Updating Best Management Practices for Third-party agreements that provide support for WSFR projects on land not owned by the State.

Question: Will WSFR share a summary of comments with JTF? – I will have to check with WSFR staff but our intent is to send those comments through JTF.

○ Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Funding Information - FY 2018
Apportionments are based on FY 2017 Receipts.

- WR apportionments doubled since 2012 from \$400 M to approximately \$800M.

Wildlife Restoration Receipts FY 2017

Pistols and revolvers = 31.6%

Other Firearms = 30.6%

Ammunition = 31.6%

Archery = 6.2%

Over last 10 years, there were gains across all categories, levelling off somewhat in the last 5 years and likely to decline in FY 2018 based on receipts through the 3rd quarter.

- Firearms revenues through Q3 down 23.48%
- Archery Revenues through Q3 down 0.89%
- \$650 = Office of Tax Analysis (OTA) estimate for 2018
Decrease is of concern, and we will all be looking closely at receipts from 3rd quarter onward

- Sport Fish Restoration State Apportionments - 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

- Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund Receipts

- Big driver for SFR is gas taxes, which provided approximately 68% of the 2017 receipts
- Excise Taxes and Custom Duties = 30%
- Interest = 2%

Motorboat gas tax receipts in the Sport Fish and Boating Trust Fund are based on # of registered recreational motorboats, not fuel consumed, compiled from State data by the U.S. Coast Guard

FY 2017 motor boat registrations were up about 85,000 (0.72 percent) from 2016 to 11,090,600. About 95% of Boat registrations are boats < 26'

During 2017 registrations for 40-65 foot motor boats declined by ~2,900 while all other sizes increased in number.

- Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund - Comparing Receipts through 3rd Quarter (\$M)

- Domestic Fishing Tackle Excise Tax Revenue through June increased by 26.27%
- Total Revenue through June increased by 8.5%
- OTA estimate is up 1% from last year

- State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Budget (SWG)

The Administration's FY 2019 proposed budget reduced SWG Program funding by more than \$20 million from FY 2018 levels. H.R. 6147 was passed in the House on 7/19, restoring level SWG Program funding from last year (\$63.571 M). The Senate voted on HR 6147 as amended, which retained the increase, on 8/1. It has not yet been signed into law.

All State Wildlife Action Plans have been submitted. 52 have been approved and 4 have been conditionally approved (Numbers include the states and the territories).

More info: H.R. 6147 (Interior, Environment, Financial Services, and General Government Appropriations Act, 2019) passed in the Senate by roll call vote on August 1, 2018.

- WSFR Shared Vision for Program Administration

With WSFR Improvement Act of 2000 assigned the FWS, through Assistant Director (AD) for WSFR AD responsibility for:

- Administration
- Management
- Oversight

of Federal Assistance program for State WSFR programs under PR/DJ. A key drive of the successful FWS and State Partnership has been the ability to utilize available coordination tools of:

- Trust Funds Committee
- Joint Task Force
- Federal Aid Coordinators WG
- TRACS WG

The WSFR Improvement Act established specific funding caps for program administration that were allowed to be adjusted based on CPI. Multiple analyses have demonstrated that the CPI adjustment have not kept pace with the cost of current operations. Even in the near term, the current organizational/ operational model has not been sustainable with available funding.

A program review from an outsourced contractor was launched in late 2016 with the purpose of thoroughly assessing WSFR's current state, desired future state, and areas for improvement. Key characteristics of WSFR's desired future state included:

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

Shared Vision for Program Administration – After North American Conference we decided to create a small Vision Team to look at the report and come up with a Shared Vision for Program Administration. The team included 4 state directors, representatives from each trade associations, and 4 FWS representatives. The Vision Team recommends a shared vision focused on the following principles:

- Promote efficient grant review, approval and monitoring process that support the effective delivery of conservation;
- Standardizing processes in support of improved efficiency and cross-regional resource sharing;
- Prioritizing program integrity/accountability through effective training, data management, financial and performance reporting, policy and adequate capacity
- Providing stakeholder visibility/input on priorities and value propositions; and
- Enhance strategic communication

Implementation Cycle – FWS will use Shared Vision Principles to guide its decision-making as it pursues change initiatives starting in FY 2019. FWS commits to the following process:

- Fall Chiefs Meeting (November)
 - Establish priority initiatives
- North American Conference (March)
 - Brief Trust Funds Committee
- Spring Chiefs/FAC Meeting (April)
 - Resolve impacts to States
- AFWA Conference (September)
 - Brief Trust Funds Committee

FWS will continue to honor established collaboration tools:

- Trust Funds Committee
- Joint Task Force
- Federal Aid Coordinators WG
- TRACS WG

Action Item: FWTFEC voted to move forward with Wildlife and Sport Fish restoration Shared Vision for Program Administration Document

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

Jon Gassett from Wildlife Management Institute gave a short update on Industry/Agency progress.

- The 2018 Fish and Wildlife Business Summit was held August 27-29, 2018 at the White River Conference Center, adjacent to the Bass Pro Shops Wonders of Wildlife Museum in Springfield, Missouri. For the past 12 years, partners from state and federal wildlife agencies, industry, and conservation organizations have gathered annually to focus on the excise tax program that provides a major source of funding for wildlife conservation. Our challenge at this year's Summit was focused on telling the story of conservation in our country. In the past decade, we have examined the issue and have delineated the several obstacles that must be overcome before we can truly spread the word of conservation as a collaborative endeavor – requiring customers, manufacturers, retailers, state agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and conservation non-profits to all do their part.
- Working on State Director's Industry Database that will allow 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. It has been really successful.

- We are happy to report that our 3 grants through the MultiState Conservation Grant Program were included in the priority list for the Directors' approval.
 - The first grant "Improving the understanding of excise-tax based funding for conservation" aims to:
 - clarify the role that industries partners play in fish and wildlife conservation,
 - promote the benefits of conservation to our customers, and
 - raise awareness of key influencers about the role that states, manufacturers, and the sporting public play in what has long been our greatest kept secret and our greatest conservation success story.
 - "The Missing Link in R3" will develop actionable recommendations and guidelines for the successful implementation and marketing of hunter mentoring programs. This project will be led by the four regional associations' R3 committees. The targeted benefit is to increase participation and conservation funding by elevating the capacities of state and NGO mentoring programs.
 - The third grant "Creating Millennial – Conservationist" will use state-of-the-art market research to undergird development of high-quality, short-form videos designed specifically for this consumer segment to:
 - inform them about the importance of conservation funding,
 - emotionally connect them to the cause, and
 - engage them to participate through recreational shooting, hunting and fishing.

- National Survey Update – ***Kelly Hepler***

Kelly Hepler thanked John Arway on his leadership as a chair of National Survey Technical WorkGroup.

President Virgil Moore has created a President's Task Force to determine the shape of the 2021 National Survey. The task force is looking for a simpler, more streamlined survey that focuses primarily on tier 1 data from the FWS document.

Key Outcomes:

- Simplify
- High-level data for participation and expenditures
- Consider increased frequency if practical
- Comparability with previous surveys not critical
- Attention needs to be paid to costs
- Limit to only national level data – not state level
- Industry understands that detailed shooting sports data may not be practical
- Need to balance expense against on the ground conservation

Essential Data:

- Numbers of Anglers, Hunters, and Wildlife Watchers
- Trips and Days of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Watching
- Salt Water vs. Fresh Water Fishing
- Expenditures for Trips, Equipment, and Other Items
- Selected Characteristics of Participants (Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Race, Household Income, Residency: Urban/Rural, Census Geographic Division and Metropolitan Area Size)

Question: Was there an evaluation for both surveys conducted by different vendors?

We conducted in-depth evaluation of two surveys, which has been reviewed by the Executive Committee. The deliverable is a very detailed evaluation report that will be released publicly.

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

CAHSS hosted couple of events to address R3 in US:

- National R3 Symposium in Lincoln, NE, which focused on resources and partnerships, needed to secure the future of hunting, angling, and target shooting, and boating in the United States. The event occurred on May 21-23, 2018 in Lincoln, Nebraska, and attracted over 325 individuals representing more than 40 states and 100 different organizations. The response to the National R3 Symposium was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrates that a broad diversity of people and organizations are invested in the future of outdoor recreation and conservation. The event provided an unparalleled opportunity for agencies, industries, and NGOs to share, learn and develop possibilities the conservation community now has to accelerate the current state of R3 effort and impact.
- As organizations keenly interested in promoting wildlife conservation, the Wildlife Management Institute and the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports are developing an action plan to reverse the decline in participation among hunters and target shooters. Stakeholders who adopt the plan will increase participation among likely hunters and shooting sports participants, and see a groundswell of support from unlikely allies in the community. The action plan represents a make-or-break moment for the future of wildlife conservation. Never before have the available talents, resources, volunteers and funding been strategically aligned.
- The Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports has developed a National R3 Community website. This site will allow R3 professionals all over the country to share ideas and discuss what their state agency, NGO or industry organization is doing to help recruit, retain, reactivate hunters and recreational target shooters.

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

- **50 CFR 80 Revisions** - At the Spring 2018 FACWG/WSFR Chiefs Meeting and the Spring 2018 JTF Meeting, WSFR stated that their top policy priority for the remainder of FY2018 was to move this phase of 50 CFR 80 revisions to final rule. During these meetings, WSFR had not yet determined which comments, if any, would be taken into consideration for revision of the final rule. This prompted further discussion as to whether or not States would have further opportunity to comment on the final rule. Since the Spring JTF Meeting, the FACWG has not received any update on this topic.
- **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 launch will impact the administration of WSFR-funded grant activities over the next few years, particularly regarding submission of grants and subsequent reporting.

Over the past year, the JTF has approved, after minor revisions, the TRACS Enhancement Matrix which serves as the backbone for how projects are constructed in the TRACS Enhancement and conditionally approved the Standard Performance

Reporting Questions which will enable the States to provide the additional information required by WSFR based on governing regulations (e.g. 2 CFR 200 and 50 CFR 80). Subsequently, the JTF requested to review the final version of the Standard Performance Reporting Questions again at the Fall JTF Meeting. In addition to the core functionality of TRACS, the TRACS WG is also developing related modules that will be included in the enhancement – including lands and facilities. These modules are currently under development and will be disseminated for national review.

- **National Webinar** - On July 25 and August 1, the TRACS WG and WSFR hosted national webinars available to all potential users of the TRACS Enhancement. These webinars were the first opportunity for many State staff to see a walk-through of the TRACS Enhancement framework that will be used for entering WSFR grants in the future. The webinars were recorded and have now been made available for download.
- **National Federal Aid Coordinators Meeting** - After discussion at the April 2018 Meeting of the FACWG/WSFR Chiefs, the FACWG voted 9-1 to forego the National Meeting. This decision was made based on the fact that States were becoming hesitant on the overall benefits that would be achieved from a National Meeting. Additionally, none of the WSFR Chiefs spoke highly of the potential benefits of a National Meeting in comparison the annual Regional Federal Aid Coordinator Meetings. Finally, there were likely to be budgetary constraints that would significantly impact attendance by both State and Federal partners. Since WMI was the grantee on behalf of the FACWG for this Multistate Conservation Grant to fund the National Meeting, the FACWG worked with Jon Gassett to close the grant via the National Grants Committee.
- **Freshwater/Saltwater Split Subgroup** - In response to concerns raised regarding the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation and the potential impact it may have on States' allocation of their Sport Fish Restoration apportionments, 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. At the Spring TFC Meeting, it was clear that further discussions regarding the National Survey would occur at higher levels between AFWA, State Directors, and WSFR Leadership.
- **Federal Assistance Wiki** - At the Spring Meeting of the FACWG/WSFR Chiefs, WSFR Training Branch provided an update on the Federal Assistance Wiki website, commonly known as the FA Wiki. For the past several years, the FA Wiki has served several purposes regarding information sharing and communication from the WSFR Program to the States. In an effort to improve the content and usability of the FA Wiki, WSFR announced that it was committed to the continued use of the site but planned to revamp its design and content. WSFR requested input from the FACWG on ways to improve the next iteration of the FA Wiki. The FACWG distributed the request for feedback to Federal Aid Coordinators in each region.
- **FACWG/WSFR Meetings and Invitational Travel** - At the Spring 2018 FACWG/WSFR Chiefs Meeting, the structure of future meetings and the nexus to the JTF Meetings were discussed. For several years prior, the JTF meeting overlapped with the FACWG/WSFR Chiefs Meeting to identify issues that could be brought to the JTF's attention during the overlap. Previously, the meeting had included a half day of overlap with all three groups which facilitated communication of current issues of importance to all parties. In an effort to facilitate continued

communication amongst all parties, WSFR HQ provided invitational travel to the Chair and Co-Chair of the FACWG to attend the Spring JTF Meeting to provide the FAC perspective from the Spring FACWG/WSFR Chiefs Meeting.

- WSFR Shared Vision Team - At the Spring 2018 TFC Meeting, Joint Meeting of the FACWG/WSFR Chiefs, and the Spring JTF Meeting, WSFR Leadership provided an overview of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) analysis of the WSFR Program. In an effort to develop a shared vision for the WSFR program moving forward, WSFR Leadership proposed to form a team comprised of WSFR Leadership, State Directors, and Industry Partners to develop a shared vision for the WSFR Partnership. After discussions at these spring meetings, it was requested that a representative for the FACWG participate in this group. Doyle Brown (Region 3) offered to participate in this effort as it was short in nature and would be completed before his term on the FACWG ended (September, 2018). During this time, the working group has had two teleconferences which produced a “stand alone vision document” that provides a brief background and why WSFR undertook the PwC analysis. The vision document provides the revised shared vision principles and how WSFR plans to use these principles to guide its decision making as it pursues change initiatives during Federal FY2019.

Moving forward, the review of the final document will follow this process:

- Fall WSFR Chiefs meeting in November: Establish priorities and initiatives for the current year that are consistent with the Shared Vision Principles and when implemented, will move the WSFR program closer to the desired future state;
- North American Conference in March: Provide an in-depth briefing to the Trust Funds Committee on the current year initiatives including how they relate to the Shared Vision and achieving the desired future state;
- Spring Chiefs meeting in April: Discuss progress on current year initiatives and propose future year initiatives for consideration in November;
- Spring Chiefs/FAC joint meeting in April: Discuss ongoing or proposed change initiatives that will be impactful to States;
- AFWA Conference in September: Provide an in-depth briefing to the Trust Funds Committee on current year progress and initiatives under consideration for the upcoming fiscal year, along with an assessment of the Administrative funding available to support the proposed initiatives.

WSFR will continue to honor the established mechanisms embodied as the JTF, FACWG, TRACS Working Group, and AFWA Trust Funds Committee, to address any policy, guidance or operational changes arising out of a change initiative that would have otherwise been vetted and/or approved through one or more of these mechanisms.

- Legislative Updates – ***Jen Mock Schaeffer***

- ***Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife Update*** - The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647), would provide \$1.3 billion in dedicated annual funding to state fish and wildlife agencies. The funding would largely go toward conserving and monitoring state-identified at-risk species, known as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The dedicated funds would come from revenue generated by energy and mineral extraction royalties currently collected by the federal government at about \$5 billion to \$12 billion annually.

Our partners agree that this is a positive step in the right direction and will create opportunities for us to include fish and wildlife in the national conversation about

conservation funding priorities as Congress continues this debate. We look forward to working with you all to advance this legislation now on two legislative fronts. The House bill (H.R.4647), continues to gather bi-partisan cosponsors, now totaling 79. The upcoming August recess period will afford some good opportunities to educate congressional offices on the benefits of RAWA to your state in a setting a little closer to home.

The bill that was introduced in the Senate differs from the House version in one distinct way in that it includes language that would make the funds subject to annual appropriations, whereas the House bill includes the original permanent mandatory funding language. We remain committed to the ultimate goal of including dedicated funding in the end product as the two bills are considered and make their way through the legislative process. We will continue to advocate strongly for the much needed certainty that the dedicated funding would bring to states to continue to do proactive fish and wildlife conservation for those species in greatest need.

- ***PR Modernization*** - This bill amends the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make it one of the purposes of the Act to provide financial and technical assistance to the states for the promotion of hunting and recreational shooting.

This bill is scheduled to be in the House tomorrow and we are working to get a hearing in the Senate in October.

- ***PR Parity for the Territories Act (HR 5875)*** - On May the House Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on HR 5875, a bill introduced by Rep. Bordallo (R-Guam) that will create parity among and between the US territories and the states regarding the amount of funds apportioned for Section 4c, basic hunter education, of the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program.

While none of the territories is member of AFWA, it is our understanding that recreational target shooting is an important activity on Guam, and Rep. Bordallo seeks to provide equal treatment and opportunity among the territories for hunter education activities, shooting range facilities, and the associated benefits. The bill and its possible implications were discussed during a State Directors' call on Congressional legislation hosted by AFWA staff on May 25. State Directors raised questions about the bill's fiscal impacts to the state agencies as well as the bill's reach. HR 5875 lifts the cap restrictions on the percent of PR and DJ funds the Secretary of the DOI can send to the territories and makes it a discretionary decision. The bill also increases the minimum amount of Section 4c funds that the territories can receive to not less than 1% in any given year, which would create parity with the 50 states. On June 5, AFWA staff obtained from the FWS this file, to which AFWA staff added a column that clearly depicts the fiscal impacts of enactment of HR 5875 to each state's Section 4c apportionment based on FY2018.

It is unclear to AFWA staff whether or not the territories are able to meet the required non-federal match necessary to obligate the increased Section 4c funds they would receive as a result of HR 5875 and discussions with committee staff are ongoing about how the bill affects the states associated with cutting Section 4c funds at a time of increasing R3 efforts and managing potential reversions that may occur as a result of this change.

Question: Will AFWA have a position on this? Anytime the funds change AFWA must take a position.

Executive Committee has to look at this either to take a position or not.

- ***Preparing for reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Fund (2020 Transportation bill)*** - The House Transportation and Infrastructure

Committee and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee took action recently to advance respective Water Resources Development Act bills. The Act is on the schedule for reauthorization this year and is a priority of Congress and we expect it to be passed prior to the end of the 115th session, if not before to the November elections.

Both pieces of legislation H.R.8 and S.2800 are bipartisan and enjoyed quite a bit of debate in the respective jurisdictional committees. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee reported S. 2800 as amended on May 22nd. The House reported HR. 8, as amended, on May 23rd after defeating any amendments related to the CWA. Both bills include provisions that AFWA and our partners have been advocating for over the last few months. The House bill includes authorization of select projects including those specific to the Lower Mississippi River, language directing the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to undertake research toward the management of AIS, and language directing a study on the use of natural and nature based infrastructure. The Senate bill also includes authorization of select projects, direction to the ACOE to consider natural and nature based infrastructure in their projects, language directing a study on the adequacy of the cost-benefit ratio equation the ACOE utilizes when assessing water resource projects, among others.

AFWA will continue to advocate for provisions related to the consistent application of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, consideration and authorization of funding for hydrologic monitoring, development and implementation of policies that support hydro connectivity and fish passage, development, implementation, and support of policies that increase consideration of recreational opportunities in ACOE projects, and refinement of the ACOE ecosystem restoration project partnership agreements (PPAs) by allowing for more shared approach to liability and removing the requirement for partners to indemnify the ACOE in perpetuity. The Senate plans to consider S.2800 in the coming weeks.

- ***Airguns and Airbows*** - The airbows and airguns (unlike archery equipment) are not subject to federal excise tax, the basic funding mechanism for state wildlife agencies, which means no portion of the proceeds from airbow/airgun purchases contribute to the state wildlife conservation activities supported by Pittman Robertson funds.

As advances in technology continue, legislators are generally encouraged to work alongside their state fish and wildlife agency to ensure that the laws and regulations related to new technologies are clearly stated; and, more specifically, to consider the inclusion of Airbows and airguns in their state's existing firearms seasons.

Some Suggestions:

- States need to start to be open with new technologies.
- Work with State legislatures.
- A resolution from AFWA
 - Resolutions are typically drafted by committees and they are introduced at North American Conference (March), they go out for review after that and come back at AFWA annual meeting (September) for adoption.
- WSFR FA Joint Task Force Update (***Kelly Hepler, SD & Paul Rauch, WSFR***)
 - Maximizing benefits of using the Cost Sharing method for Program Income - States are facing increasing challenges in securing sufficient matching funds, especially considering the increased Federal funds available during recent years in the Wildlife Restoration Program. Therefore, WSFR is updating the policy and allowing States to propose using the cost sharing method for program income for current and future awards.

- Hunter Ed match – Resolution in next JTF meeting
- Using WSFR funds for projects in Canada and clarifying administrative requirements for grants that include Canada sub recipients - These projects typically occur within the boundaries of the U.S., but projects in Canada may also benefit the fish and wildlife resources of a U.S. State. Regional WSFR Divisions asked the WSFR Policy Branch to develop guidance explaining how WSFR staff may have to alter existing financial assistance procedures for projects in Canada.
- TRACS - How are we going to look at SWG measurements and integration into TRACS
- How are we going to solicit input on the agenda development for the JTF meetings?
- Reversions and how to use that information.
- Publishing FA regulations and agencies can issue their own guidance.
- New Business – ***Bryan Burhans***
- Review of Action Items
 - Approval of the Meeting Minutes from North American Conference, March 2018
 - FWTFC voted to move forward with Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Shared Vision for Program Administration Document
- Wrap Up/Adjourn