

The AFWA Strategist

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

Spring 2021

AFWA Government Affairs

President Releases Outline for Infrastructure Investment -- On March 31, President Biden unveiled the outline for the [American Jobs Plan](#), a \$2.3 trillion proposal that will shape the House and Senate Transportation and Infrastructure packages. The plan includes \$16 billion to address orphan oil and gas wells and reclaim abandoned mines, \$10 billion to fund and create a Civilian Climate Corps, \$56 billion in grants and low-cost loans to states and tribes for clean water infrastructure, and \$35 billion for research and development of climate solution technologies. The proposed funding mechanism is a 7% increase on the corporate tax rate to 28%. While negotiations will be contentious, House leadership is hopeful the return of earmarks will enable cooperation, and they are targeting mid-summer for potential passage. The current transportation bill expires September 30, 2021, and both chambers will attempt to pass bipartisan transportation reauthorizations before the July 4 recess.

Appropriations Testimony -- On April 16, AFWA submitted public testimony to the House Appropriations Interior, Environment, and related Agencies Subcommittee outlining funding recommendations for FY22. Priorities and requests were based on input from state directors, committee members, and coalition partners in order to provide complementary testimony. WAFWA and SEAFWA submitted testimony as well, highlighting many of the same priorities with greater emphasis on regional issues. Testimony regarding remaining agency programs is being developed, including for Energy and Water Development as well as Agriculture, Rural Development, and the Food and Drug Administration.

USFWS Requests Comments on HCP for Non-listed Species – On April 14, the USFWS issued a [federal register notice](#) requesting comment on a new Habitat Conservation Plan, covering renewable energy and transmission, for the lesser prairie chicken which is a non-listed species under state authority. While non-listed species have previously been included within HCPs for listed species, this may set a new precedent as no ESA species are covered under the plan. USFWS is currently reviewing whether listing the lesser prairie chicken is warranted, and if listing occurs the HCP the plan would take effect, pending approval. Comments on the HCP and requested incidental take permit are due by May 14.

EPA Releases Preliminary Decision on Rotenone – On March 17, the EPA released the [proposed interim decision](#) on reregistration of rotenone, the only registered piscicide. Rotenone is a critical tool for many states in the fight against invasive species, particularly for its usage in cold water and via aerial application – two areas of concern identified by the EPA that would be restricted should the decision hold. AFWA will submit comments and help coordinate comments from individual states, with a deadline of May 17.

FY22 Skinny Budget – On April 9, President Biden released his “[skinny budget](#),” or topline FY22 discretionary funding requests. The full budget request, with line item requests and justifications for each agency, is expected later this spring. The skinny budget proposes \$769 billion in non-defense discretionary funding in FY22, a 16% increase over the FY21 enacted level. The request includes a 16% increase for both USDA and DOI budgets to \$27.8 billion and \$17.4 billion, respectively. The budget request includes major new climate change investments of more than \$14 billion compared to FY21.

Strategic Planning Update

Under the leadership of President Pauley Parker and with the assistance of Timmons Group, AFWA is fully involved in implementing the [new Strategic Plan](#) (approved at the September 2020 Annual Meeting).

As a first step, teams of Directors, Agency and AFWA staff are focusing on objectives 1 (Advocacy), 2 (Relevancy) and 3 (Funding). Beginning in March three teams began working on strategies and metrics for each goal respectively. The end product at the next Annual Meeting, will be a prototype dashboard / web site where AFWA Members can monitor the Association’s progress toward these objectives.

All the major group meetings have been recorded on zoom and if you would like to view these recordings and give feedback, or otherwise provide suggestions or ask questions, please contact John Lord (jlord@fishwildlife.org).



Save the date...

111th AFWA Annual Meeting
Omni Providence Hotel
Providence, Rhode Island
September 12-15, 2021



www.fishwildlife.org

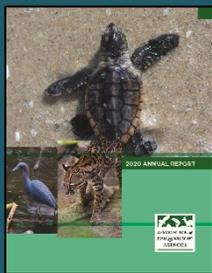
Annual Awards Call for Nominations

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
July 1, 2021**

For awards criteria and nomination details, go to:

www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-acts/annual-awards/nominations-criteria



2020 AFWA Annual Report

The Association recently released its 2020 Annual Report in which we focus on building resilience and the power of adaptation.

Download at www.fishwildlife.org

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
1100 First Street, NE
Suite 825
Washington DC 20002
info@fishwildlife.org
202-838-3474

Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

We are pleased to announce the Recovering America's Wildlife Act was introduced in the House on Earth Day, April 22nd by Reps. Dingell (D-MI-12) and Fortenberry (R-NE-01). What better way than Earth Day to launch this historic investment in proactive fish and wildlife conservation and signal a concerted effort to address our nation's wildlife and biodiversity crisis. See here the [Association's](#) and the [Alliance's](#) press releases on the bill introduction. We encourage all states and partners to issue their own releases as well. Now it really gets exciting! Please encourage your members and constituencies to generate contacts to their Members of Congress asking for co-sponsorship of the legislation. If you would like to use the action portal on the Alliance site that allows folks to send a quick email to their Representative, feel free to do that at www.OurNatureUSA.com. AFWA staff have prepared a number of helpful materials, including the Guidelines for States, the bill language, fact sheet and talking points on the bill changes, press materials, fact sheets, state resolutions, social media content, and more for your use and reference available on the [Alliance toolkit site here](#). Thank you for all your state agencies and organizations are doing to build support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. We look forward to working with you all to advance the bill toward passage this Congress. Please let us know what else we can do to assist, and don't hesitate to contact Sean Saville, Campaign Manager at ssaville@fishwildlife.org; (202) 441-4214.

Southern Wings 2021-2022 Project Proposals Available

Southern Wings 2021-2022 project opportunities document is available [here](#). More details about each project are available in the [full project document](#). The funding supports strategic, conservation action for many Species of Greatest Conservation Need such as cerulean warbler, golden-winged warbler, wood thrush, long-billed curlew, a host of grassland species, and more. Southern Wings can also provide non-federal match to SWG and PR funds.

1. Protection of Wintering and Stop-Over sites in the Conservation Coast Birdscape, Guatemala
2. Protection of Desert Grasslands Migratory Bird Habitat in the El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area (in the Saltillo BirdScape)
3. A Sustainable Grazing Network to Protect and Restore Grasslands on Private and Communal Lands in Mexico's Chihuahuan Desert
4. Protecting stopover and wintering habitat for key priority species of shorebirds and waterbirds in Laguna Madre, Mexico
5. Migratory Bird Wintering Grounds Conservation in Nicaragua and Honduras
6. Conserving Critical Piping Plover and other Shorebirds Wintering Sites in the Bahamas
7. Conservation and Management of Neotropical Migratory Birds and Thick-billed Parrots in old-growth forests of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Mexico
8. Neotropical Flyway Project: 2021-2022 Season
9. The Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey: Identifying Threats and Conservation Hotspots in Northwest Mexico
10. Restoration of Migratory Bird Habitat in Ecuador
11. Improving Migratory Bird Habitat in Colombia
12. Conservation of Neotropical Migratory Birds in the Dry Tropical Forests of El Salvador: Assessing and Addressing Threats to Overwintering Habitat and Bird Populations