

WATERFOWL WORKING GROUP AGENDA – SPRING 2016

Chair: Diane Eggeman (FWC)
Vice Chair: Craig LeSchack (DU)

Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown – Pittsburgh, PA
Ballroom 1 – Thursday, March 17 - 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

- 8:00 am **Welcome / Introductions / Review Agenda**
Diane Eggeman, FWC
Craig LeSchack, DU Inc.
- 8:10 **2016 Work Plan Review**
Craig LeSchack, DU Inc
- 8:20 **Legislative / Budget Issues**
Jen Mock Schaefer, AFWA
Margaret Everson, DU Inc
- 8:40 **Blue Ribbon Panel Update**
Mark Humpert, AFWA
- 8:50 **NAWMP 2012 Implementation Update**
Dale Humburg, IIC Chair
- 9:10 **Federal Duck Stamp – Response to AFWA’s Letter**
Ed Penny, MDWFP
Jerome Ford, USFWS
- 9:30 **Break (20 minutes) – 25th Anniversary of State Contributions to Canada**
- 9:50 **Task Force on State Contributions to Canada**
Ross Melinchuk, TPWD
Dan Forster, Georgia DNR
- 10:15 **Water Task Force**
Scott Yaich, DU Inc.
- 10:35 **PHJV Implementation Plan**
David Ingstrup, CWS - ECCC
- 10:55 **Nature Conservancy Canada – Canadian Program Overview**
Ian Barnett, NCC
- 11:15 **PPJV Implementation Plan Revision**
Casey Stemler - PPJV Coordinator, USFWS
- 11:35 **Action Items Review**
Diane Eggeman, FWC
- 12:00 **Adjourn**

ALL presenters are asked to **identify or recommend actions** that the WWG, BCC and/or AFWA should be taking to advance waterfowl and habitat conservation.

Action items from the Fall 2015 WWG meeting

Priorities identified 10/7/15 by Diane, Craig, & Dean. Low versus High is simply and indication of the relative order for working on the action items.

Low 1. Consider developing metrics to measure/evaluate each priority within the WWG Work Plan; decided that this needs to be contemplated by all the BCC Working Groups and thus elevated for discussion at BCC II.

Check with Judith about same initiative for all of BCC; but retain for WWG regardless

Med 2. Develop specific steps to increase state agency participation in the WWG.

3. Recommendation for WWG report to ask BCC to remind the Directors of the 2013 resolution to support the continued transfer of P--R interest to NAWCA. **complete**

High 4. Recommendation to BCC requesting a letter from AFWA to support having sequestered funds from MBTA Gines associated with the 2010 Macondo Oil Spill returned to NAWCA. **complete**

High 5. Scott Yaich and Karla Guyn volunteered to be part of the Task Team to examine water issues related to wetland habitat loss and conservation. They will work with Diane Eggeman (Chair), Craig LeSchack (Vice-Chair) and Dean Smith (AWFA) to fill the rest of the Task Team. *Requires a separate conference call.* **complete**

High 6. Request BCC to recommend that AFWA send a letter along with the report from the Duck Stamp Task Team to the USFWS Director and ask that the Service work with AFWA, its state members and NGOs to fully implement the recommendations within the report. **complete**

Done 7. Need to deal with the resident gamebird stamp efforts and potential impacts on the duck stamp efforts at BCC II meeting before taking recommendation to the AFWA business meeting. **complete**

High 8. Recommend that AFWA re-establish the Task Force on State Contributions to NAWMP/NAWCA Projects in Canada. Purpose is to review Program along with the progress on implementing the 2012 State Contributions Action Plan. Ross Melinchuk, TPWD, agreed to serve as co-chair again and also include former members from 2012 Task Force that are still part of AFWA. *Conference call held 10/7/15* **complete**

Other actions:

a) Dean to check with Cindy Delaney about cost for reception at AFWA Annual Meeting to celebrate 25th anniversary of AFWA program for state agencies contributing to Canada (1991 to 2016) **complete**

b) Dean to remind Diane about cake for 25th anniversary at WWG meeting in Sept 2016 **complete**



WATERFOWL WORKING GROUP MEETING NOTES – MARCH 17, 2016

Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown — Pittsburgh, PA

Chair: Diane Eggeman (FWC)

Vice Chair: Craig LeSchack (DU)

The meeting began with Chair, Diane Eggeman welcoming approximately 50 participants and having individuals introduce themselves.

2016 Work Plan Review

A brief discussion of the WWG Work Plan (Appendix A) concluded that it reflects the current needs of the working group and that it should be reviewed prior to the fall 2016 meeting in accordance with AFWA's existing process for work plans.

Legislative / Budget Issues

Jen Mock Schaefer provided highlights of recent legislative issues relevant to the Waterfowl Working Group's interests:

- *The Transportation Bill provided a permanent authorization for the use of conservation easements.*
- *Proposed amendment to Sportsman's bill was to authorize NAWCA at \$50 million, but it was ruled not germane. An amendment to provide the authority for the Secretary of the Interior to raise duck stamp price was withdrawn, however, there is very strong support for the Duck Stamp. Duck Stamp price increase was approved in 2015.*
- *President's Budget – AFWA's analysis identified complicating factors whereby every program was to absorb part of the facility rent costs, thus impacting what is available for actual work with states etc. This has essentially reduced funds for at least 1 FTE per program and reduced the funding for surveys which states work cooperatively on. Otherwise, budgets are essentially flatlined. AFWA will strongly recommend funds for bringing the surveys back up to better standard.*
- *Jen also noted that the budget line for administration of permits under Migratory Birds is flatlined in budget and should be increased.*
- *The transfer of interest on unallocated PR fund to NAWCA was reauthorized for 10 years.*
- *California drought bill – AFWA will not comment as California working with Governor to comment directly. AFWA will work with some other legislators regarding drought/water issues in the northwestern states.*

Question – John Devney (Delta Waterfowl) – regarding Region 8's migratory bird management capacity and impact on waterfowl and hunters—USFWS made a decision to divert funds and staffing to address energy development issues and it was a 6 month action, and then they were to would go back to normal funding allocations. However,

it doesn't appear any action has been taken to go back to the "traditional program" allocations.

ANS – Jen notes that only critical staffing being done and getting to the FWS is at a point of losing critical program capacity.

Jerome Ford – asked for clarification and stated he would reach out for clarification from the Region.

Others – indicated that Region 8 is just an example of a broader issue on capacity issues.

- *Sportsman's package has been split into two bills and now moving or partially moving. The EPW portion of the bill has NAWCA reauthorization – came out of committee last fall, but there are some complications.*

NAWMP 2012 Implementation Update (Dale Humburg)

Dale Humburg provided an overview of progress on the implementation of the NAWMP update, including a summary of the North American Duck Symposium held in February 1-5, 2016. The Friday plenary featured the NAWMP revision and discussed the following topics:

- **From coherence to integration: challenges of multiple scales, decision authorities, and processes** (*Anderson*); **Values translated into objectives: Engaging waterfowl stakeholders** (*HDWG*); **Modeling and Managing Linkages across Objectives: Beyond the JTG** (*Runge*); **Adaptive Harvest Management: Re-examining harvest objectives and approaches** (*Vrtiska, et al.*); **Integrating Human Dimension Considerations into Joint Venture Habitat Delivery** (*Carter, et al.*); **Focusing resources on important landscapes: A spatial framework for integrating NAWMP objectives** (*Brasher, et al.*); **Integrated annual cycle models of North American ducks: progress, pitfalls and prospects** (*Eadie, et al.*); and **Multi-Level Learning in Waterfowl Conservation** (*Johnson, et al.*)
- Humburg's powerpoint is available on the Waterfowl Working Group page of AFWA's website and provides a brief overview of these presentations.
- Next Steps
 - Formation of the Update Steering Committee (USC)
 - Assessment activities
 - Future of Waterfowl II workshop in Sept 2017 – culminating in the writing of the update by early 2018
 - Brief outline of preliminary concept for the assessment process:
 - Pre-FOW workshop survey
 - Opportunity for engagement in the review (multiple points)
 - End of 2018 the update would be complete and signed.

Questions – What determined the date for FOWII; as there are many potential conflicts in Sept and Flyway meetings in October.

ANS - Partly a practical issue of when the facility is available, but IIC/USC will review the decision and seek additional input.

Federal Duck Stamp – Response to AFWA’s Letter

The Waterfowl Working Group’s report on the Federal Duck Stamp was forwarded to Dan Ashe in the fall of 2015 and identified the following six issues:

- *Issue 1: The conservation benefits of the Duck Stamp are poorly understood among the wildlife viewing community and the public, as well as among much of the hunting community.*
- *Issue 2: Revenue from sales of Duck Stamp has declined and is insufficient to meet conservation goals.*
- *Issue 3: Purchasing a Duck Stamp should be efficient and easy. a) Recommendation: Finalize plans and timeline for all states to sell electronic stamps through existing licensing systems*
- *Issue 4: Access to many National Wildlife Refuges is restricted or extremely limited for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing even when lands are acquired by MBCF dollars.*
- *Issue 5: The increased price of the Federal Duck Stamp may affect sales of the federal stamp and state-level waterfowl hunting privileges or state conservation stamp sales*
- *Issue 6: The current uses of the Duck Stamp are limited to only those engaged in waterfowl hunting, or access to a very limited number of National Wildlife Refuges.*

Recommendations were put forward in the report and Jerome Ford’s comments (Appendix B) provide the response from the Service. A few highlights of Jerome’s remarks follow, along with the ensuing discussion:

- *Lack of communication is a stumbling block and recommendations addressed this – need to find new and better ways to reach broader audience – Book Wild Duck Chase – “Million Dollar Duck” documentary have been picked up for TV and Theatre by Discovery (Duck Stamp Office working to be involved in the premiere)*
- *Revenue – over 6000 stamp consignees, and many other postal offices provide distribution – however, FWS doesn’t know who is buying besides hunters – not a simple calculation and not sure how many people buy multiple stamps*
- *eStamp causes additional issues, such as stamp bought in PA but hunt in Ohio; all Walmart sales reported to their HQ in Arkansas*
- *FWS cannot collect demographic information by law, but willing to work with others to collect and analyze*
- *States selling eStamp - 45 day issue would require legislative change and FWS not prepared to do that at this time; but will bring more states on to sell eStamps to 25*
- *In terms of Refuge access issue, 237 refuges are open for hunting, at least partially*
- *Raising the stamp price in accordance with inflation is part of 2017 budget request*
- *Change in “stamp rules” to require artwork to include a non-waterfowl species is intended to attract new audience, which is part of the AFWA request, and was proposed as part of the MBTA Centennial—also using the centennial to celebrate success.*

Questions

Paul S. – is there not some way the FWS can collect some data on who is purchasing?

ANS – if FWS asks for the data then the the seller becomes an agent of the government; but some other group may be able to ask and this may be the best approach.

Paul B – Amplex, sells most of e-stamps and someone might be able to make request for simple data; the Million Dollar Duck is about the Art not conservation

ANS – putting out a bid for company to manage some of the data issues.

MS Flyway (Russ) – concerned about the rule change without having analyzed the stamp data; we need the data before making changes. The “other species” should be one that a hunter would see from the blind

Paul S – timing of the proposal to change rule is later than expected and it is putting some artists in distress because it would shorten the time to do the artwork

ANS - will look at this at the end of the comment period

Paul S – raising the price – what is the impact on sales – heard that won’t be known before Jan 18th? What was effect of price increase?

ANS – won’t be able to account for all the revenue until Jan 2018; postoffice revenue will trickle in; eStamp data is starting to become available etc – total receipts not available until 2018. FWS will provide some data as it becomes available.

Paul S - indicated that hunter bought the most of the stamps in the fall of 2015 so can we not compare similar period sales from previous years?

MS Flyway – did the FWS consider a soft-launch of a voluntary inclusion of a secondary species vs a mandatory – FWS will wait and see what comments say as it’s only a “proposed rule” at this time.

NAWMP International Canvasback Award

The International Canvasback Award was presented to Dale Humburg by Jerome Ford (FWS) and David Ingstrup (CWS) and this was followed by cake and coffee to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of State Contributions to Canada.



Task Force on State Contributions to Canada

AFWA passed a motion last year in Tucson to re-establish the Task Force and to update the 5 year Action Plan for state contributions to Canada. In brief, the Task Force process is:

- **Review**
 - Sub-team review of accomplishments / recommendations
 - Task Force review of vision, principles, ALL action items
- **Survey**
 - Task Team member input via questionnaire
 - Task Team input on action items via 2nd conference call
- **Actions**
 - Draft Action Plan prepared, priority setting, responsibilities
 - Flyway Tech Section input / NFC input
- **Branding**
 - Marketing experts develop “brand”
 - Design/Layout of NEW Action Plan materials
- **Approval**
 - Presentation to Directors at 2016 AFWA Annual Meeting
 - Approval / Implementation * 2016—>2021

Additional details are available in the PowerPoint that is available on the Waterfowl Working Group site on AFWA’s web page.

There was a general consensus that there needs to be some input from non-game groups to better communicate and address these species through wetland programs/projects.

Water Task Force – Scott Yaich

- *Scott indicated that the concept for a special session at the 2017 NAWNRC and the proposed work of the Water Task Force fits with comments at this year’s Plenary.*
- *The immediate goal is to develop a proposal for a special session at the 2017 NAWNRC and to ultimately produce a white paper on water and its impacts on wetlands and related wildlife by Sept 2017.*
- *Additionally, the Intent is to be more relevant to a broader audience*
- *Task Force members from US & Canada, and include: Steve Rockwood, Al Hanson, Mike Carter, Jean Christie, Mark Vrtiska, and Dave Smith; along with coordination with Diane, Craig & Dean. There is still a need to add a communications expert.*
- *Draft Proposal for special session was discussed during the Task Force’s first conference call and proposes to address water quality & quantity, the key is that all presentations are about communications of the water issues (not the technical aspect of water management). The objectives of the special session are:*

(1) heighten the awareness and sense of urgency concerning the type and strength of connections that exist between wetland conservation and the increasing number of emerging water quality and quantity issues,

(2) identify instances, and their commonalities, in which the connections between water-based concerns and wetland conservation have been communicated in ways that created relevancy,

(3) highlight examples where there have been tangible conservation gains and solutions stemming from wetland conservation and acceptance among the public and policymakers that “wetland conservation is part of the solution,” and

(4) challenge the conservation community to focus increased attention on the connection between wetland conservation and the water issues that make it relevant to the public.

PHJV Implementation Plan — *David Ingstrup, ECCC—CWS*

- David acknowledged Dale Humburg's efforts, and others, on NAWMP Revision is having significant impact on the Canadian JVs.
- Dave presented at NFC and PPJV and the two JVs (PPJV and PHJV) are planning for a joint meeting of their Boards in the next year.
- Prairies are primarily ag land and private land; and 70% of NAWCA funds in Canada go to Prairie landscapes. The key challenges remain as: habitat loss, wetland loss, ag intensification and industrial expansion, but on the positive side there are new wetland policies developing or approved in each of the Prairie provinces.
- In Prairie Pothole Region drainage of wetlands continues to occur, especially in agricultural landscapes.
- Western Boreal Forest (WBF) has issues with cumulative impacts due to the area being a resource based economy, and the activities result in fires, oil & gas development, forestry cut blocks, and road network expansion — the regulatory process needs to evolve. Note the WBF is an area as large as Texas & California combined.
- Conservation status in the WBF is really determined by or regulated by government because the land base is predominantly government owned — very little private ownership.
- Joint Ventures and their conservation activities need to continue to improve their alignment with BCRs in order to make use of information on all birds.
- David's Powerpoint on the Prairie-Parkland and Western Boreal Forest is available on the Waterfowl Working Group site on AFWA's web page.

Nature Conservancy Canada: Canadian Program Overview — *Ian Barnett, NCC*

- Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC), along with DUC, are the primary conservation organizations in Canada.
- NCC has an annual budget ranging from \$80-\$100 million plus \$100M endowment for maintenance of conservation lands.
- NCC's conservation efforts have a significant impact because of their approach to target landscapes through conservation planning – primarily in Southern Canada, where the highest threats to biodiversity exist.
- Ian briefly explained the 18 ecoregions, 78 natural areas, etc. within their conservation planning approach and gave an example from the Red Deer River natural area, north of Calgary.
- Natural Area Conservation Program started about 9 years ago when NCC received \$225M from federal government and subsequently up to \$345M when additional funds added. These funds were shared with DUC and other small land trusts. Overall, the program can serve an area equal to 800 hockey rinks per day.

- Ian's full presentation is available on the Waterfowl Working Group site on AFWA's web page.

PPJV Implementation Plan Revision — Casey Stemler - PPJV Coordinator, USFWS

Changes from the 2005 Plan

- Focal species now include 4 game birds and 3 diving ducks
- Includes 5-year habitat objectives for protection, restoration, and enhancement and habitat objectives for term-limited protection to complement perpetual protection objectives
- State Tactical Plans included as step-down plans
- Risk of conversion has been assessed for all grasslands and can be used to refine priority habitats.
- Waterfowl thunderstorm map is now inclusive of entire PPJV area
- Conservation estate GIS layer will include all federal, state and NGO easements, fee lands, and term-limited protection (e.g., CRP, WRP).

PPJV Priority Habitats

- Priority Grasslands - unprotected grassland patches exceeding 55 acres in landscapes that support over 25 duck pairs per square mile
- Priority Wetlands - unprotected small and shallow wetlands totally or partially embedded in cropland that exist in landscapes that support > 25 duck pairs per square mile AND wetlands in priority grasslands

State Tactical Plans

- Details planned for conservation actions:
 - 5 year tactical plans tie entire Implementation Plan sections to the state level; compiles existing state-level plans; identifies spatially explicit locations for actions; quantifies expected biological outcomes; identifies funding sources; identifies needs (staff, research, funding, policy); and quantifies monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Making it Happen

- Recognize we must do more than direct habitat conservation
- Focus on public policy initiatives that influence habitat loss rates
- Determine what is necessary for increasing landowner acceptance of conservation programs

Action Items: Waterfowl Working Group Meeting — Craig LeSchack

1. *Jerome Ford's official response on the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group report and AWFA letter will be included in the meeting minutes and a copy will be sent to AFWA President, Dave Chanda.*
2. *WWG members have the opportunity to provide feedback and ideas to the Water Task Group on the working draft proposal for a Special Symposium for the 82nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.*

3. *We will distribute the eight question survey to WWG members to provide feedback and thoughts to the State Contributions Task Force.*
4. *The Waterfowl Working Group recommends that the Bird Conservation Committee request AFWA and its member states to work with the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group to investigate how to best collect data from state agencies and/or Amplex (vendor that sells the electronic Federal Duck Stamp) to analyze who is buying the duck stamp and to develop a comprehensive marketing plan.*
5. *In light of the importance of waterfowl and other migratory birds to Americans in all communities (urban, suburban and rural), and the apparent erosion of funding for the migratory bird conservation and management in the USFWS, the Waterfowl Working Group recommends that the Bird Conservation Committee request AFWA to identify the erosion of funding in the migratory bird program and request an increase in funding for the program (additional funding sources and/or reallocation or existing funds) for migratory bird conservation and monitoring, NAWCA and Joint Ventures. This request should be included in AFWA's comments on the President's 2017 budget.*
6. *In light of the 2015 increase in the price of the Federal Duck Stamp and the AFWA recommendations on the Federal Duck Stamp, the Waterfowl Working Group recommends the Bird Conservation Committee request the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group to work with the USFWS to provide a preliminary report on the impact of the price increase on Federal Duck Stamp sales and revenue at the September 2016 AFWA meeting.*

Adjourn

Appendix A

Waterfowl Working Group Work Plan 2015-16

Focus Areas and Goals:

1. Contribute to the implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) 2012 Revision to conserve priority landscapes for waterfowl habitat and to advancement of the human dimensions aspects of the Plan;
2. Advance policies, legislation, and funding initiatives (i.e. NAWCA) in support of wetland protection and restoration, with consideration of drought, water quality, and climate change issues;
3. Fully implement the *AFWA Action Plan for State Contributions to Waterfowl and Wetland Habitat Conservation Projects in Canada*, and
4. Initiate and/or support wetland and waterfowl habitat information sharing with Congress, state, federal, and NGO partners, and the public.

Expected Actions / Activities:

Goal 1 – NAWMP Implementation

- i. Facilitate discussions to identify and promote ways to better understand and incorporate user / supporter desires (human dimension elements) in planning and delivering waterfowl management actions and assist in the coordination of NAWMP human dimension efforts with other BCC bird working groups, NABCI, Flyway Councils, etc.
- ii. Identify priority actions to assist states, NGOs and others can take to affect waterfowl conservation at state and national levels and to achieve the new NAWMP objectives.
- iii. Continue to provide overviews of NAWMP implementation, including reports from IIC, PET, HDWG, etc. and discuss the direction and needs of the waterfowl community to advance the implementation of the 2012 NAWMP Revision.
- iv. Seek ways and means to encourage increased integration of waterfowl management elements through discussions and contribute to a potential review of the efficiency of existing waterfowl management processes and structures.
- v. Encourage participation in NADS and future efforts to advance NAWMP implementation.

Goal 2 – Wetland Conservation / Protection

- i. Establish a team to assess the impacts of Federal Duck Stamp price increase on license sales, recruitment and retention of hunters and other issues and to develop recommendation for AFWA's consideration at the Annual Meeting in September 2015.
- ii. In 2015, develop a concept (e.g. establish a Task Team, organize a special session at WMI's NWNRC; employ a research intern) to examine and report on water-based issues emerging across the states that have a relationship to wetland habitat loss/conservation (e.g., increasing algae outbreaks, municipalities with increased treatment costs due to nitrogen). In 2016, implement the recommended concept and report findings at 2016 fall meeting and/or prepare compendium document would identify examples of actions where state wetland conservation is a part of the answer to current habitat challenges.
- iii. Continue to share policy/legislative information and strategies to support state and NGO. Ensure efforts to increase NAWCA appropriations and to ensure the legislation or its companion programs (i.e. PR Interest, coastal funding) are re-authorized by Congress.

Goal 3 – State Contributions to Canada Action Plan Implementation

- i. Establish a team in September 2015 to review the status of implementing the Action Plan for State Funding of Wetland and Waterfowl Habitat Projects in Canada and in March 2016, provide an overview to the WWG along with recommendations for implementing priority actions to increase state contributions to Canada.

Goal 4 – Information Sharing

- i. WWG will engage with the NAWMP Public Engagement Team to identify opportunities to broaden support for wetland habitat conservation and wetland management by creating a greater understanding of the value and impacts of wetland conservation on human (societal) health and welfare.
- ii. Inform members about wetland conservation issues affecting waterfowl, including the Deepwater Horizon oil spill fund and its focus areas and future direction of the program.
- iii. Inform legislative leaders (state/national) about wetland and waterfowl issues and accomplishments of state and NGO actions, using normal AFWA governance procedures (e.g. committee recommendation for action or annual resolution and approval at business).

Appendix B

Comments by Jerome Ford in Response to AFWA's Task Force on the Federal Duck Stamp

Chair Eggeman, task Group, and members of the committee, Thank you for the opportunity to update you on the Service's work in relation to the issues and recommendations contained in the Federal Duck Stamp Task Group Report.

In quick summary, the 5 issues identified in the report focused on awareness of the stamp, cost, availability, declining sales, and access to National Wildlife Refuges.

Like many other problems we face in the conservation world, lack of communications is major stumbling block so it was no surprise that many of the recommendations provided in the report focused on improved communications.

Yes, the Duck Stamp's message is not as well-known as it should be, especially after 83 years.

- Is it the best kept secret in the conservation world?
- Is it that our changing populations have led to a public that is no longer is aware of something that once was more commonly known?
- Is it our perception that there are fewer people who know about the stamp than previously because we have expanded our own ideas of who our audience should be? In other words, do we believe more people SHOULD know about the stamp?

In any case we clearly need to find new and better ways to effectively get our message out.

The recommendations stressed reaching out past our traditional audiences. So I will give you one quick example where some of this new communication is happening.

Several years ago a fellow named Martin J. Smith wrote a book about the Duck Stamp contest called "The Wild Duck Chase". About 2 years ago an independent film maker picked up the book and has made it into a documentary movie called the Million Dollar Duck. That movie has been shown at several venues and was selected as the best documentary film at the 2016 Slamdance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. It has since been picked up for theatrical distribution by Discovery Communications, Lions Gate Entertainment and Animal Planet. This is the first time ever that a theatrical distributor and television distributor have worked together to do a simultaneous release, which will be held in the Fall of this year... the film will play in theaters in Washington DC, Los Angeles, and New York City and be followed by the television premiere. The television event will be part of a new series on Animal Planet that showcases four independent films a year highlighting the role of conservation and the environment - this will be the first film in the inaugural series.

We are working with Discovery Communications to find opportunities to tie into this movie's premiere.

Another issue that was identified focused on revenue from Duck Stamp sales. Recommendations focused on improved marketing, which encompasses communications and branding and advertising expertise. Specific recommendations however focused on demographics of duck stamp sales and this is and always has been problematic.

Once upon a time when Duck Stamps were only sold at Post Offices, the local postal worker might have had a chance to ask people why they were buying a stamp, but those days are long gone. Today there are over 6000 individual stamp consignees and approximately 32,000 Postal units see

over 919 million retail customer visits. Any survey of our customers would have to be carefully designed and administered in order to provide meaningful data.

We don't know who is buying stamps other than "hunters" and "collectors". We don't know how many stamps each of these groups buy. It is not as easy as taking all the stamps sold and subtracting the number of waterfowl hunters we estimate (based on license sales/HIP) and assuming the rest were bought by collectors, birders, or other conservationists. Many hunters purchase more than one stamp to keep in their collections; others purchase them in bulk for gifts for those who may use them for hunting, or birding or collecting.

We can't even be certain where the people are buying them actually live. Through the E-stamp program you can go on line in Pittsburgh at midnight and buy your Duck Stamp electronically from Colorado Parks & Wildlife so you can go hunt in Ohio tomorrow. All of the 175,000 Duck Stamps sold at Wal-Marts across the country get attributed to their headquarters in Arkansas, because that is where Wal-Mart reports their sales from.

We do not currently collect, and never have collected information on who buys Duck Stamps, and really we can't. Why can't we collect this information? Well to begin with, we are required by law to get OMB's authorization to collect any information from 10 or more people. Then there is the challenge of how we would collect that information. For example, everyone who purchases an electronic Duck Stamp must provide a name and mailing address where the physical stamp will be sent. The state transmits that information to fulfillment contractor to send out the actual physical stamp. We, the Fish and Wildlife Service cannot receive that data, including names or addresses. Finally, there is the cost of collecting that data. The Duck Stamp Office runs on a very, very lean budget. We do not receive enough in appropriations from Congress to do more than maintain the Program as it currently exists.

We would welcome the suggestions and assistance of any of our partners – states, NGOs', whomever that could help find a way to collect this type of information and be able to analyze it in a meaningful way.

Speaking of the e-Stamp and its fulfillment, there were some recommendations regarding the 45-day expiration. Currently our contractor has a policy of getting the stamp out within 3 days of receiving the files from the states. Ninety-nine percent are sent out within 1 day of receiving the data from the states.

The 20 states that sell e-stamps are supposed to transmit that data at least 5x per month, so there should not be an issue with a stamp not arriving within the 45 day window. To get the 45 days changed would require a change to the law and that is not something we are able to pursue at this time.

The Federal Duck Stamp has never been easier to obtain. While many individual Post Offices no longer carry them, over 6,000 locations nationwide such as Wal-Marts and Bass Pros shops, as well as mom-and-pop bait and tackle stores carry them. In addition, as of last year, 20 states were able to sell electronic Duck Stamps to anyone from anywhere almost instantaneously. If you don't live in a state that currently sells the e-stamp you could log onto your computer and buy one from a state that is authorized, and it is good nationwide.

Again this year we are planning to authorize an additional 5 states to sell e-stamps, bringing the total number of states authorized to 25 for the 2016-2017 stamp year. We will continue to enroll states in this program annually until all states that are able to meet the requirements and wish to participate are able to.

About the recommendations regarding National Wildlife Refuges, I can tell you that our Refuge Program continues to address the access issues and the opening up of new lands for public use and recreation. Since 2008, the Service has opened 17 new refuges to hunting and/or sport fishing opportunities and increased hunting and sport fishing activities at 85 other refuges. In total, 237 National Wildlife Refuges and 37 Wetland management Districts are open to hunting and/or fishing.

Regarding the request of the Service to seek legislative authority for the Secretary of Interior in consultation with the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to raise the price of the Duck Stamp in line with inflation, this is something we have included in our budget request to Congress for the past 3 years. We believe it would be a good thing considering we just went almost 20 years without a stamp price increase, the longest in the history of the stamp. During those years we lost considerable buying power and opportunities for conservation. Do I think the proposal will be accepted...I will just say this is the third time we are asking so it has not met with favor yet.

You also asked about the proposal we currently have in the Federal Register to change the Duck Stamp contest beginning this year requiring a second, non-waterfowl bird species to be included in the stamp.

Our purpose in proposing these changes is to attract a new audience to the Duck Stamp, something the task group report supports. We have heard for years that birders don't buy the stamps because they don't like the hunting aspect associated with it. We have also heard that if it featured more than just ducks they would be interested in it. These proposed changes are an opportunity for the bird community to see themselves in the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp and support the stamp and all the good work it does.

We proposed these rule changes beginning this year to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the treaty signed between the U.S. and Canada to protect all migratory birds. We will also highlight that centennial on both the FY16-17 stamp and at the Art Contest in September. Again our desire is to have the stamp resonate with the larger bird conservation community. As an aside, we are also using the occasion of the Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial to highlight both the Federal and Junior Duck Stamps, and their contributions to bird habitat conservation and nurturing the conservationists of the future. This year is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put the spotlight on these two very successful programs – among others.

We extended the comment period on this notice by one week to give the Flyway Councils who were meeting here this week an opportunity to discuss and provide comment if they so wish. The Notice closes next Monday March 21st at 11:59 Eastern time. We will make a final decision on the proposed rule after we have reviewed all the comments.

Appendix C

Status of Action items from the Fall 2015 WWG meeting

Priorities identified 10/7/15 by Diane, Craig, & Dean. Low versus High is simply an indication of the relative order for working on the action items.

- Low 1. Consider developing metrics to measure/evaluate each priority within the WWG Work Plan; decided that this needs to be contemplated by all the BCC Working Groups and thus elevated for discussion at BCC II.
Check with Judith about same initiative for all of BCC; but retain for WWG regardless
- Med 2. Develop specific steps to increase state agency participation in the WWG.
- Med 3. Recommendation for WWG report to ask BCC to remind the Directors of the 2013 resolution to support the continued transfer of P--R interest to NAWCA. **complete**
- High 4. Recommendation to BCC requesting a letter from AFWA to support having sequestered funds from MBTA fines associated with the 2010 Macondo Oil Spill returned to NAWCA. **complete**
- High 5. Scott Yaich and Karla Guyn volunteered to be part of the Task Team to examine water issues related to wetland habitat loss and conservation. They will work with Diane Eggeman (Chair), Craig LeSchack (Vice-Chair) and Dean Smith (AWFA) to fill the rest of the Task Team. *Requires a separate conference call.* **complete**
- High 6. Request BCC to recommend that AFWA send a letter along with the report from the Duck Stamp Task Team to the USFWS Director and ask that the Service work with AFWA, its state members and NGOs to fully implement the recommendations within the report. **complete**
- Done 7. Need to deal with the resident gamebird stamp efforts and potential impacts on the duck stamp efforts at BCC II meeting before taking recommendation to the AFWA business meeting. **complete**
- High 8. Recommend that AFWA re-establish the Task Force on State Contributions to NAWMP/NAWCA Projects in Canada. Purpose is to review Program along with the progress on implementing the 2012 State Contributions Action Plan. Ross Melinchuk, TPWD, agreed to serve as co-chair again and also include former members from 2012 Task Force that are still part of AFWA. *Conference call held 10/7/15* **complete**

Other actions:

- a) Dean to check with Cindy Delaney about cost for reception at AFWA Annual Meeting to celebrate 25th anniversary of AFWA program for state agencies contributing to Canada (1991 to 2016) - **complete**
- b) Dean to remind Diane about cake for 25th anniversary at WWG meeting in Sept 2016 - **complete**