**DRAFT Meeting Notes**

**Fisheries & Water Resources Policy Committee**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER**

**Chair: Jason Olive (AR)**

**Vice-Chair: Robert Caccese (PA)**

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023**

**1:00PM CT – 3:00 PM CT 88th**

**North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference**

**St. Louis, MO**

**Majestic B – Conference Center Upper Level**

* Fall 2022 SOW Meeting draft Minutes Review and Approval -
  + Motion to Approve – Gary Whelan and Lance Hebdon – Approved with minor housekeeping typo corrections (approved version attached)
* Governmental Affairs Updates - David Lind, Legislative Liaison, AFWA
  + RAWA
    - Clean omnibus bill -- left it out
    - Ready for next session
    - Senate will go out soon and to the floor
      * Lock in pay-for
    - House will be looking for changes with Westerman
  + FY2024 Appropriations
    - Most of agency green books out
    - Briefings will be done with AFWA and TRCP in next few weeks
    - Testimony went in
      * Priorities
        + Wild Horse and Burro
        + Safe Travel Wildlife Grants
        + USGS CRU
        + Gaging

Gaging funding

Next generation

Cooperator

* + - * + SWG funding is up to 120 signatures
    - Senate comments will go around April 7
  + MS River Basin Fisheries Commission
    - Final confirmation for endorsement – All but two have fully approved
    - Voluntary
    - Joint Strategic Plan
    - $30 million to start then goes to $50 M in 2028
  + BIL and IRA
    - Biweekly calls with AFWA – Joint working group
    - Working to develop a full group
    - Draft engagement plan for federal agencies is soon to be delivered
    - EPA - $2.8B for state revolving
    - NFWF - $118M using a pre-proposal due April 20 – July full proposal – November approvals
  + Hunt-Fish Rules
    - Phase out of Pb ammo and tackle on 8 refuges proposed
      * Science analysis – settled matter from USFWS perspective
      * Draft position statement by TWS and finalized – Coming from David Lind
        + Not settled in statement
    - Collaborative process for the future
    - Access and season frameworks
  + Federal Fishery Summit
    - 14 agencies attended
    - A range of others attended
    - Collective vision and how to proceed
    - FW to estuarine fish species
    - Developed a relationship network
    - Much thinking captured for a final report to support collective recommendations
      * Will be shared by AFWA – David Lind
    - Too difficult to have all 50 states
    - NFHP IOP mentioned by Chris E
      * Water Subcabinet noted
      * Was not discussed
  + NRDA Comments due today
    - Not many state project requests
      * Can get state specific items into the bill
    - Needs
      * Recreational Use of USACOE projects
      * PPA changes
      * Brandon Road Lock and Dam
  + Invasive Species Issue
    - Crayfish showing up in PA, ID, NE, and WI from 1 supplier in feeder fish (GOS)
    - ID not known yet
    - Test of stress system
    - Pet Advisory Network has been involved
  + PFAS
    - EPA rule in drinking water – Parts per trillion
    - Need to have a PFAS platform
  + WOTUS
    - Rolled back to Obama era
    - 26 AGs from red states filed against
    - House and Senate are moving legislation to roll back and will be vetoed by White House

Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) – (Governmental Affairs ICWP Supplement) Beth Calloway, Exec Dir

* + ICWP 2023 Annual USGS Priority Stream Gage Coalition Funding letters submitted to House and Senate
    - Request to fully fund gaging network requests
      * Only $2M more than last year due to inflation adjustment
        + Federal Priorities Streamgages = $32.0 M
        + Cooperative Matching Funds Program = $68M

(includes $33M streamgage support and studies)

* + - * + NGWOS/data modernization = $35 million
      * 96 signatories to coalition letter to US Senate/House (includes AFWA)
        + [*https://icwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/USGS-Streamgage-Letter-FY2024\_Senate-Approps\_2.28.23.pdf*](https://icwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/USGS-Streamgage-Letter-FY2024_Senate-Approps_2.28.23.pdf) and

[*https://icwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/USGS-Streamgage-Letter-FY2024\_House-Approps\_2.28.23.pdf*](https://icwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/USGS-Streamgage-Letter-FY2024_House-Approps_2.28.23.pdf)

ICWP – Water Issues Roundtable will be held in April in DC -- Jason Olive/David Lind invited -- Jason will attend

* + - Policy summit – 8 organizations on resiliency
    - Jason will participate on the water data and science panel
    - ICWP Interest in revisiting BIL and IRA
      * AFWA has a new updated list of grant opportunities to send to Beth
    - Reauthorization of Integrated Drought Information Network – NIDIS: https://www.drought.gov/about
      * Flash droughts emphasis
      * NOAA National Integrated Flood Information System (NIFIS) was also funded for flooding ---S558
    - WRDA 2024
      * Looking to assist on state and interstate water agencies issues
      * Agreement issues noted, particularly indemnification
    - Permitting Issues
      * Planning assistance projects with USACOE
        + Issues with permitting process – Water permits not being requested
* USGS National Gaging Gap Analysis and Hydrography Update – Christopher Estes, AFWA Life Member
  + - Project is done with first analysis and posted online *https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/5f6b982482ce38aaa2454dc3*  and *https://www.usgs.gov/centers/washington-water-science-center/science/analysis-usgs-surface-water-monitoring-networks*
  + - These products represent updates to [*https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2013/5013/*](https://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2013/5013/)
  + From here on, USGS is looking to move to the outreach phase that will enable regional USGS Water Research Center to generate new system outputs at national, regional and temporal scales
    - Goal – Water Research Centers nationwide should be able to provide future annual or other analyses at regional and national scales upon request by stakeholders (updates will no longer be automatically generated and must be requested)
    - Other updates and new information posted to be provided at Fall 2023 AFWA meeting
  + Climate analysis/resiliency needs to be included in these assessments, especially in particular high-risk locations
    - Looking for more input from fish and wildlife community re: variables
    - Increased stream temperature gaging is a key need to compliment stream gaging requested by various water stakeholders, especially fish and wildlife stakeholders-

CO River Basin Watershed groups represent a specific example of stakeholders that have pushed for more of these types of analyses

* + National Hydrography Database Conversion Status Updates – Christopher Estes, AFWA Life Member
    - NHD+ to 3DHP conversion is still in progress:
      * [*https://www.usgs.gov/media/videos/next-generation-hydrography*](https://www.usgs.gov/media/videos/next-generation-hydrography) *&* [*https://www.usgs.gov/national-hydrography/3d-national-topography-model-call-action-part-1-3d-hydrography-program*](https://www.usgs.gov/national-hydrography/3d-national-topography-model-call-action-part-1-3d-hydrography-program) *& https://www.usgs.gov/national-hydrography/news*
    - Goal is for 3DHP conversion data to be completed by end of September 2023
      * Updated existing NHD data decision was made (based on stakeholders feedback/input) Revision is to include majority of all prior NHD+ data in the new 3DHP system without updating pre-existing NHD+ data from here on
      * NHD+ data variables that will be retained only include hydrologic features such as moving water, not swimming pools and lakes
    - AK map attachment is 1st example map displaying 3DHP progress status . Other US location status maps to be generated in future. (see map attachment)
* Instream Flow Council Updates – Christopher Estes, AFWA Life Member
  + MSCG Instream Flow & Water Level Conservation Training Center Project
    - Draft Instream Flow and Water Level Conservation Center draft Assessment report was circulated globally to water stakeholders and posted online for public review in January for a 1 month review. Public comments on the draft received on a web form and by email are in the early processes of being analyzed and integrated into the draft assessment to produce a final version. Request was made and approved by AFWA/Fed Aid to make a no-cost extension for completing project from Summer 2023 to Summer 2024 to allow business plan completion based on final assessment update and initiate preliminary marketing.
    - Many entities expressed interest to host the Training Center
    - As a supplement to and result of their review of the proposed Center, the 9 regional USGS Climate Centers requested a briefing be provided to their key regional staff and post doc researchers by the IFC ExCom. They requested the IFC to provide an overview of the IFC and summaries of key regional instream flow and water level conservation related water issues.
    - The draft assessment report review process also developed new networking relationships between project Steering Committee members and other stakeholder groups including the USACOE/TNC – Sustainable Rivers Program
  + IFC Public Trust Doctrine (PTD) Case Histories Project Update to the 1996 PTD online video series (funded by TN Wildlife Resources agency)
    - Background - The original PTD historical background and case histories online video series was produced in 1996 as part of a MSCG National Instream Flow Program Assessment PTD Project which also lead to the formation of the Instream Flow Council. The original 1996 video materials are posted on the IFC’s public website: [*https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/the-public-trust-doctrine/*](https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/the-public-trust-doctrine/)
    - This recently completed IFC PTD case histories project update supplements the original PTD case histories knowledge base for the period 1996 to 2022.
    - Access to the resulting copyrighted report materials will be made available to all IFC member agencies.
    - Access instructions will be circulated to all IFC Governing Council member agency representatives (member agency’s designated lead representative) in the near future.
    - The PTD product updates must be used adhering to the accompanying cover project cover instruction guidelines included with the product
    - Contact your agency’s IFC designated Governing Council member lead for access.
  + The next IFC Biennial members only meeting will be held in the Spring 2024 in Gulfport, MS – reminder that in addition to your agency’s designated IFC Governing Council member designee, other staff from IFC member agencies can also attend IFC biennial meetings as member agency General Council non-voting members - reminder to please, at a minimum, support attendance by your agency’s designated IFC agency Governing Council representative to the IFC.
* National Coop Coalition Update
  + Information sheet will be sent out
  + Directory of expertise
* Multistate Conservation Grants Update - David Lind
  + New – Strategy Priorities
    - Updated Priorities – Nov 2022-Feb 2023
  + One step process
    - Going back to full grant proposals as they are now six teams of 70 people total
    - Timeline
      * April 14 – NOFO
      * June 15 – Full proposal
      * July 28 – Review done
      * Aug 15 – Notification and asked to address tech questions
      * Aug 21 – Draft priority list and summary sent to Grants Comm
      * Sept 5 – Grant Solutions upload
      * Oct 1 – Priority list to USFWS Director
      * Approval by end of year
  + Micro Site (is this in wrong loca)
    - Intern digitizing information from AFWA and WSFR
      * Search by group or topic
    - Worked to get missing reports from 2010-2021
    - Annual Report available at main desk
  + Priorities
    - Funding Principles
      * Mgt Assistance Team
      * MSCFP Program Mgt
      * CITES
      * National Conservation
      * National Survey
    - R3
    - Budget
      * $3.145M - Wildlife
      * $3.006M - Fish
      * $5M – R3
* Liquid Rotenone Needs and Availability
  + Company producing rotenone has large USEPA violations
    - Looking for another contractor to make the chemical
  + Maybe options for states to assist others at this time
    - Many Great Lakes state have stored amounts
  + USFWS as stored amounts
* Permitting Reform
  + BIL and IRA implementation issue
    - Big House issue
      * NEPA reform package from Westerman
        + Builder Act – Graves

Trump like package

Issues with scope of review

Judicial review of analysis and decisions

Excluding CATXs

* + - * + Has moved on party line votes – House Interior Committee
        + Tap America’s Resources Act
      * Looking for permitting reforms from AFWA
        + Cottonwood fix

USFS and BLM – Restart consultation with USFWS on project level

2018 adjustment made and expires on 3/23

HR200 and Daines Bills

* + - * Focus on supporting items
      * Not likely to go anywhere
* Other Items - David Lind
  + AFWA/IFC Sponsored Webinar on hydropower act – Uncommon Dialogue
    - Link to email will be provided
    - Bill to be reintroduced
    - Waterpower Tech Office in DOE completed analysis
      * Selected Uncommon Dialoguer application for funding projects related to:
      * Technology Group
      * Dam Safety Group
      * River Restoration Group with offsite mitigation
      * Hydropower flexibility
    - Working on hydropower licensing, relicensing, and surrender
    - Licensing reform package updates to include AFWA and tribal engagement
    - AFWA will keep tracking
* SOW Workplan for coming year (similar to prior) Jason Olive
  + - Request USGS Gaging GAP Analysis updates from USGS
    - Sign annual USGS gaging letter support and emphasize addition of temperature data to be collected at all gage locations
    - Track PFAS – Water quality issues
    - Track Hydropower licensing
    - Track Drought mitigation fish and wildlife habitat related water issues per AFWA 2015 Drought Action Plan
    - Track WOTUS updates
    - Track other fish, wildlife and habitat water related federal and tribal issues
    - Update SOW website: members names, past agendas, webinars, and notes

***AFWA FWRPC SubCommittee on Water Charge:***

*Focus Areas and Goals:*

* *Identify, support, and communicate science, legal, policy and public involvement issues related to water that are of importance to fish and wildlife.*
* *Support and build on recommendations from AFWA Drought Forum.*

**SOW Historical Background**

**Slides**: [*https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/download/virgilmoore\_slides\_flow2018- pdf/?wpdmdl=11389&ind=5ccff16ab72bd*](https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/download/virgilmoore_slides_flow2018- pdf/?wpdmdl=11389&ind=5ccff16ab72bd)

**Dialogue**[***https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/download/virgilmoore\_dialogue\_flow2018-pdf/?wpdmdl=11387&ind=5ccff167db4da***](https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/download/virgilmoore_dialogue_flow2018-pdf/?wpdmdl=11387&ind=5ccff167db4da)

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A map of the state of alaska

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