

Note: Below is the agenda and an AI generated summary of the virtual meeting of the Wildlife Diversity Conservation & Funding Committee held on September 12th, 2024.

Agenda (ET)

- 1:00PM Welcome-Jenny Dickson (Chair)
- 1:05PM Work Group Updates (10 min each)
- Bat Working Group-Trina Morris, GA DNR
 - Pollinator and Invertebrate Working Group-Ross Winton, WDFW
- 1:25PM General Updates
- State & Tribal Wildlife Grants-Mark Humpert, AFWA (5 min)
 - Recovering America's Wildlife Act-Kurt Theide, AFWA (5 min)
 - State Wildlife Action Plans (10 min)-Mark Humpert & Paul VanRyzin, USFWS
 - USGS Cooperative Research Units-Caroline Murphy, USGS (10 min)
 - Biodiversity Information Network/KBA's-Anne Bowser, NatureServe (10 min)
 - Removing Barriers to the Outdoors for People with Disabilities (connections with AFWA Nature Tourism Working Group)-Ashley Dayer/Freya McGregor, Virginia Tech (10 min)
- 2:15PM Discuss Agenda for September In-Person Committee Meeting-Jenny Dickson
- 2:30PM Adjourn
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Meeting Summary for WDCF Committee Meeting (Virtual)

Sep 12, 2024 12:35 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 862 7080 5689

Quick recap

The Wildlife Diversity and Conservation Funding Committee meeting covered various updates, including the Bat Working Group, State & Tribal Wildlife Grants, Recovering America's Wildlife Act, State Wildlife Action Plans, USGS Cooperative Research Units, Biodiversity Information Network, and removing barriers to the outdoors for people disabilities. The committee also discussed the agenda for the upcoming in-person committee meeting and the discussion-oriented format.

Next steps

Mark to send out meeting transcript and update agenda link with transcript.

Jenny and Mark to discuss trigger questions for in-person meeting discussions over dinner in Madison.

Philip to email survey questions from Northeast wildlife diversity visioning process to Mark or Jenny for distribution.

Committee members to provide feedback on virtual meeting format and in-person meeting agenda to Mark and Jenny.

Mark to determine approximate attendance percentage for virtual meeting.

Ron to discuss with incoming President Judy Camuso about appointing new vice chair for the committee.

Committee members interested in pollinators to attend DOI Pollinator Task Force meeting on September 23rd at AFWA annual meeting.

States with Republican co-sponsors on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act should look for outreach template from David Lind regarding Dear colleague letter.

Committee members invited to attend workshop on increasing inclusion for disabled wildlife viewers at AFWA National meeting.

Summary

Wildlife Diversity and Conservation Funding Committee Update

Jenny Dixon, the Wildlife Division director in Connecticut, introduced herself as the new chair of the Wildlife Diversity and Conservation Funding Committee. Sara Parker Pauley, the previous chair, retired and stepped down. The meeting was a virtual edition, with a proposed agenda for the in-person meeting to be discussed. Trina Morris from Georgia reported on the committee's activities, mentioning that they were still looking for representation from Canada and a tribal representative. She also mentioned a change in the committee's membership, with Malia Bayless from Bat Conservation International passing on her role to Amanda Adams. The committee had successfully passed a resolution a year ago and was working on updating resources on their website.

Na Bat Monitoring Program Progress and Challenges

Trina discussed the progress and challenges of the Na Bat monitoring program, highlighting the development of standard operating procedures, guides, and data sheets. She reported positive feedback from regional meetings and the growth of the Bat Conservation Newsletter's subscriber base. Trina also mentioned the ongoing work on the Swap learning series, bat and wind guidance, and communication with tribes. She highlighted the need for national standards for wildlife control operators and bats, and the ongoing work with the White Nose Syndrome Response Team. Trina acknowledged a significant issue raised by Rita regarding the variability in the application of guidelines for rabies testing across different regions.

Pollinator Working Group Progress and Grants Update

Mark discussed the progress of the pollinator and vertebrate working group, which had not met recently due to Ross Winton's agency change and loss of work group staffing. He mentioned that Kerry Wixted of AFWA would now serve as the workgroup staff and that Ross and Kerry would meet soon to kickstart the work group. Mark also informed the group about a DOI pollinator task force meeting at the AFWA annual meeting in Madison on September 23rd. He then moved on to general updates, discussing the delay in state and tribal wildlife grants apportionments due to the lack of a final budget for next fiscal year. He mentioned that the program had seen a 2% cut and that the funding was at \$72.3 million

dollars. Despite a strong letter and engagement, the funding remained at the FY 2023 level. Mark discussed the importance of the State Wildlife Action Plan, a program funded by the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program, in addressing the global biodiversity crisis. He emphasized that despite the program's success, it is underfunded and needs more support. Dan raised a concern about the decrease in the program's spending power due to inflation since 2001. Mark acknowledged this issue, noting that many conservation grant programs face similar challenges. He encouraged further questions and promised to answer them via email.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act and State Action Plans

David provided an update on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, stating that a dear colleague letter is being prepared, which could help position it for potential consideration in the lame duck session. The Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife plans to recirculate a letter and hold a post-election briefing.

State Wildlife Action Plans

Mark discussed the upcoming revisions to the statewide action plans required by Congress every 10 years. Resources, including guidance and a template, have been developed to assist coordinators. Paul proposed using a database or dashboard to facilitate data sharing between states and agencies. Updates were given on the national species database, a prototype swap dashboard, and the monthly Swap Learning series.

Cooperative Research Units Expansion and KBA Updates

Caroline discussed the Cooperative Research Units program, its expansion, and the introduction of new areas of expertise. She also mentioned the availability of an expertise directory and the work of one of their series scientists, Anna Shelfun. Caroline noted the current state of vacancies within the unit program and their budget for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

Key Biodiversity Areas and Biodiversity Information Network Updates

Anne provided an update on the nature serve and partner work in key biodiversity areas, focusing on the global standard of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) published by IUCN. She highlighted the potential for cross-boundary cooperation and regional planning efforts, and the need for consistent access to high-quality information. Anne also announced a workshop to be held on Monday to understand the challenges faced by state wildlife agencies in accessing high-quality biodiversity information.

Accessible Nature Tourism for All

Freya, a research associate at Virginia Tech's Human Dimensions Lab, emphasized the importance of making nature tourism more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. She discussed the work of the wildlife viewing and nature tourism working group in developing resources for state agencies. Freya shared insights from a survey of over 4,000 wildlife viewers and a report comparing urban and rural viewers. She also highlighted her background as a disabled birder and the barriers faced by

disabled people in wildlife viewing activities. Freya announced an upcoming free workshop at the AFWA meeting, where she and Ashley Jr. will share their research and facilitate a working group meeting on increasing accessibility and inclusion. Freya expressed her excitement to meet attendees in Madison, while Mark thanked her for her presentation and encouraged attendees to ask questions

Discussing the Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee Meeting Agenda

Jenny then led a discussion about the upcoming meeting's agenda, focusing on discussion about the Recovery America's Wildlife Act, State Wildlife Action Plans and a wildlife diversity visioning process. She asked for feedback on the agenda. Jenny also said there will be a presentation on Wisconsin's wildlife diversity program and a discussion on the 2025 committee work plan. Phillip shared that the Northeast wildlife diversity Tech Committee was meeting to discuss a visioning process for their region. Jenny thanked everyone for their participation in the virtual meeting.