



One Health Committee Report

Chair: Jason Sumners, Missouri Department of Conservation
Vice Chair: Dr Jen Ballard, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
89th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference
Grand Rapids, MI
March 28, 2024

Meeting Participants (21+) Jason Sumners (MDC), Jenn Ballard (AGFC), Mark Humpert (AFWA), Jay Osentowski (RIDFW), Jeff Davis (CPW), Sheela Johnson (USFS), Tricia Frey (MAFWA), Sonia Christensen (AFWA/MSU), Russ Mason (CIDRAP), Colin Gillin (ODFW), Camille Hopkins (USGS), Shane Mahoney (Conservation Visions), Craig Bruck (JAMMA International), Jessica Fantinato (USDA-APHIS-WS); Julianna Lenocho (USDA-APHIS-WS), Anne Kinsinger (USGS), Brad Feaster (INDNR), Diane Brusoe (WIDNR), Karl Malcolm (USFS), Sara Parker Pauley (MDC), Paul Johansen (WVDNR), Austin Booth (AGFC)

Scheduled Discussion Items

The meeting was convened by Jason Sumners at ~3:00pm. He thanked the participants for their attendance.

Overview of AFWA involvement in One Health-Jason said this meeting is about how we organize ourselves. Shane Mahoney drafted a white paper on the tail end of the pandemic at the request of Tony Wasley and Sara Parker Pauley. It was intended to start the conversation about AFWA's engagement in One Health.

Sara-At the start of the pandemic there were conversations about wildlife disease and human health and we were not invited to the big table. The fish and wildlife community was asked to respond to messaging that was already created. We were scrambling to make sure wildlife disease did not become dominant. We reached out to federal partners to say we all have a role in this. That began a discussion among AFWA's officers regarding how we increase our prominence as stewards of fish and wildlife. We began to see that our role was tied to relevancy. AFWA approved the white paper and passed a resolution. It's important that this effort originated from AFWA leadership.

One Health White Paper-Jason said the One Health White Paper recommended that a task force be created and the President's Task Force on One Health recommended that a One Health Committee be established. This is not intended to be a typical committee. We want to discuss how to engage with other partners. How can AFWA assume an indispensable role and be a One Health leader. The intent is to not infringe on the work of other committees like the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee or the Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.

Discuss Committee Charge, Vision and Initiate Charter Development-Jason asked, what is this committee's charge? How do we bring together other committees of interest? How do we facilitate conversations?

Jeff Davis-Do we need to discuss the name of the committee? Is One Health too charged? Do we need a name that captures what we want to do? Maybe we should ask the membership.

Jason-I've heard those concerns too.

Jenn-Maybe we need a survey of states to assess where they are on One Health. Maybe we could use that feedback.

Jason-We can use this committee to determine that.

Colin-The Fish and Wildlife Health Committee and Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative Steering Committee has the potential to reach out to other committees. This committee can evaluate all committee work tied to One Health. This committee needs to be broader, maybe less focused, bring concepts of One Health to everything we touch.

Anne-I like what you said. We can ask what value we bring to other committees. If we offer this, will it advance committee goals? Asking what value is added can mean different things. Environmental Health is underrepresented. Maybe we could tackle climate change or assist the Landscape Conservation Joint Task Force.

Jenn Ballard-Should we ask committees to come in or should we go out to them?

Jason-A little of both. Sara what are your thoughts on the Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee?

Sara-I'm curious what it would look like to bring in related committees and look at their missions and see where we can be value added. We should make sure there is no duplication. We could do a network analysis.

Colin-It's important to define who we are, or it will drift into wildlife health. We should look at the intersection of human and wildlife health.

Brad-There is fear of the unknown out there. Should we find out what those fears and uncertainties are?

Jason-We need to understand what the intent is and address this early on.

Jay-I think a name change would be cryptic and not the right approach. I like Jen's suggestion to poll states to see where they are. I'm not sure people know what One Health is or if they support it. We need to help people understand what One Health is. We need buy-in and to build it together.

Austin-I'm excited to be part of the group and I'm excited my staff is the vice chair.

Jason-How do we create awareness. The President's Task Force report tells us what to do. We need to develop a charter and have a facilitated discussion with other committee leaders.

Anne-Education is needed. Do we need to do that before connecting with committee leaders?

Jason-Maybe we should start with committee leads and ask them for input.

Anne-Sequencing is important.

Jenn-There are two processes. What do the states need from this committee and how does this committee interact with other committees. This may require an assessment of training, but we also need to assess the overall pulse.

Jay-You may find, that as people become more aware, they may move from one side to the other. If we are not informing those affected, we are not doing our job.

Brad-This must be woven into our culture. Instilling this notion in our culture will be hard. As Indiana works to build our strategic plan around One Health, there is uncertainty. I want to alleviate people's fears, but I don't know how to do it.

Jason-There is a paradigm shift in how we do our work. One of the fears I hear is that this will create a new work. How can we meet other communities where they are? We need broader engagement to achieve our purpose.

Jenn-Are we doing it the same way but defining success differently?

Colin-Do you see this committee being part of larger One Health groups? I sat in on a NOAA effort. After I left, I was not sure anyone remembered who AFWA is. It would help the states if we were involved in other efforts.

Jason-I don't want to wait to be asked to join the table, we should create the table. We need to decide what that is. What is the core thing we need to do first. Do we provide a hub for communication?

Shane-We need a horizon scan to determine relevancy.

Jenn-We talked about engaging at multiple levels (state, local, national). There are lots of One Health Initiatives. We have to pick one, that will be hard to do. Do we have the street credibility, or do we need to build that?

Colin-Probably not. I tried that before and was not successful.

Jenn-Do we need to build a platform first?

Anne-It's been hard for USGS to sit at the table. AFWA comes to the table with the authority to manage fish and wildlife. We could be the voice for that. The CDC has a One Health framework. We should say we belong at that table and come to the table together. They are going to move ahead with or without us.

Jenn-I agree it's hard to get a seat at the table.

Anne-It's often more about pet health.

Sheela-Having a unifying voice is critical. We should have consistent messaging.

Jason-We need to figure out how we consider the total health of the system. We need to describe what we want to accomplish.

Jay-The general theme or belief is that animal, people, and environmental health are connected. Value orientations are key to this. We are shifting away from traditionalist values to one where there is equity between animals, people, and the environment. At a meeting yesterday, they were trying to make a connection between mussel health and aquatic health, but it's not clear how to do that. One Health seems like a philosophical discussion.

Paul-I suggest we look at the white paper. It clearly defines One Health. I like that definition. This is hard but we need to get it right. If some are not comfortable, that's fine. What Shane Mahoney crafted was clear. We need to be willing to share differences.

Jason-How do we do that? How do we create awareness and understanding?

Paul-If a state can't agree, that's OK. We are not telling anyone what they should do.

Sara-We wrestled over the words used for One Health. Words do matter. If it triggers something you don't want, let's figure that out. Isn't this just about the Leopold Land Ethic? We either thrive together or we don't. I suggested we call it the Land Ethic Committee.

Shane-I don't think we should walk away from the term One Health. It is established worldwide. Part of this is about enhancing relevancy of state agencies. We should not let the concerns of some cripple us. Management of wildlife is the most fundamental responsibility we have, it's the basis of human civilization. There is no way for state fish and wildlife agencies to stay outside this. Maybe we need better communication. What is it we fear and not fear? We can never bring everyone together, there will always be detractors. We should stay this course. AFWA has been agile to get to this point. I agree, words do matter.

Juliana-Which circle are we in, wildlife and animals or the environment?

Jenn-We are in both.

Jason-We don't talk about all the things we do that contribute to environmental health.

Julianna-If AFWA or wildlife managers are fearful, where do they see this fitting into the triangle?

Jason-Sometimes it takes time for staff to see that they are not just working in the wildlife circle.

Anne-Half of diseases start in wildlife. Maybe our role is to put those other rolls to bed. Our homework is to see if we can coalesce around the white paper definition.

Colin-For those not on board yet, it may be hard to change because they don't have resources and money. Maybe we should point to some examples. For example, sea star wasting disease is wiping out urchins, which is resulting in the loss of kelp, which is changing water temperature, etc. There is a cascade effect.

Jeff Davis-My vision is that this is flexible, like the Relevancy Roadmap. You don't have to use it. Relevancy is connecting with everyone. Experiencing wildlife has health benefits. We should build off the relevancy roadmap. The product must be something that people can take pieces of and use.

Jason-There are two scales. Create awareness within agencies. There is a broad need to help the executive committee and work with our partners. There are defined buckets.

Austin-I agree. To the extent that the Relevancy Roadmap is implemented, varies by state. Things Colorado can do would hurt my state. One Health implementation in Arkansas will be different. We need to define how we do One Health.

Jason-It doesn't have to be either or. We need to see the connection between the Relevancy Roadmap and One Health.

Jay-There needs to be clarity in what One Health means. It seemed too sudden. There was angst and fear during the roll out. I'm concerned with jurisdiction. One Health is a global initiative. During a pandemic, states could lose their sovereignty. I'm concerned about the end point. Do we relinquish our sovereignty? I did not know this when the resolution was passed. It's a major philosophical change. We need to know where we are going.

Jason-I think about this as a mental model. I get the concern.

Paul-If we are not at the table with the animal people we risk a lot. This is not the first time we've tried to get in involved in One Health. John Fischer tried and gave up. During the pandemic, things changed. The timing is right now. Let's go in with our eyes wide open.

Jay Osentowski-I hesitate, but I think we need to be engaged.

Paul-If there is another pandemic, we may lose our authority. Human health will dominant every time. We can bring the science; we can bring a lot to the table. We should think about creating BMPs, like we did with CWD.

Jay-This got started with AFWA post pandemic, we had the ability to respond. States did not respond to the pandemic in the same way. All states should be able to react in the way they like. We should understand One Health before we get too involved. Are we being asked to conform globally?

Jason-I disagree. This is not binding us to something outside of our state.

Paul-If this were the case, I would sound the alarm. I think the risk of not doing anything is greater.

Jason-I like the Relevancy Roadmap as a model, take a barriers approach. The sense of urgency is real.

Paul-If you think we rushed this, then blame me. We were under a tight timeframe.

Jenn-I like tying One Health and the roadmap together. One Health is intended to work nation to nation. The state agency is foreign to many governments. Representation is in another bucket. How do we sit at the table versus keep our own house. We should push back and focus on our own house first.

Jeff-My agency is involved in outdoor recreation. That is what we do for our own relevancy. There are differences between states. I think about One Health as getting people outdoors and off their phones. It is tied to relevancy.

Julianne-Jeff, do you do One Health?

Jeff-We are doing One Health. We have people who we don't know who should provide services.

Jay-Aren't we already doing One Health? I struggle with the concept; we are already doing it by providing outdoor recreation. Maybe we can help make more connections, but do we need to call it as One Health?

Karl Malcolm-This has been a thoughtful conversation. It's important to define what we are talking about. I have more concepts to share about the triangle. The Forest Service has put a lot of thought into safeguarding cultural resources. Traditional activities are important too. We are in this business because of human well-being. When we care for places, we do that. Another value is the food element and wild harvest. This message can resonate. I don't think of One Health as being tied to global health initiatives. Every state will continue to wrestle with the split of wildlife value orientations. As the shift occurs, are the wildlife value orientations mutually exclusive? There is still immense common ground. The world will continue to shift around us.

Jay-Yesterday at two talks I heard about a philosophy that we need to rethink where we place ourselves as humans. I think this is going into a knot. Its critical for us to understand where we are going.

Austin-I agree with that. How we talk about this really matters. I've heard that this is revolutionary, but it's what we are already doing. This is a different permutation of our work. This looks different in each state. How do partners talk about One Health? They may use the same term but we must define One Health.

Sara-You all have to agree what it means. You get to define what it is.

Diane-We have got to know the audience, showing examples could help.

Sara-We need to show how One Health is value added.

Jason- This has been an important conversation to help us all get to the same place. For the next step, we will discuss the definition, vision, and charter. Mark, Jen, and I will meet and discuss what we do next. I'll get an email out about the next meeting. If you have any further thoughts let me know. This is not easy, and progress is not linear.

Jessica-People who work in the health field don't think about this as part of the health system. There is strength in having a definition for messaging purposes. How do we make this a more inclusive conversation?

Meeting was adjourned.

Action Items

Starting with the definition that Shane Mahoney suggested, we will modify as needed and bring to the

next meeting for input and consensus. We will also gather input on the scope, charter, and committee composition and identify examples of approaches and success stories. We will discuss how to seek input from AFWA committees and state directors.

Progress and Opportunities

Progress was made in hearing different perspectives and concerns.

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified

The committee needs to move cautiously and ensure states are comfortable with the approach and assured work in this area is optional.

New Opportunities Identified

None

Submitted By:

Jason Sumners