



## Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee

[115th Annual Meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies](#)  
[Westin La Paloma Resort and Spa](#)  
[Tucson, Arizona](#)

**Chair: Eric Lobner (WI DNR)**  
**Vice-Chair: Dave Kay (Alberta)**

**Tuesday, September 23rd, 2025**  
**10:15 AM – 12:15 PM (Arizona Time Zone)**

### **Committee Charge:**

Advocate the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and promote the sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources at the international level.

### **Subcommittees and Working Groups:**

U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

## **Minutes**

- Agenda review, adjustments, and opening comments (Eric Lobner)
  - 45 committee members and guests attended the meeting
- Introductions (Eric)
- Resolution on Predation Management (Bryant White, AFWA)
  - The resolution on predation management was moved forward for a vote during the business meeting. The resolution was unanimously approved and can be found in the appendix.
- Update on CITES/IUCN (Deb Hahn, AFWA)
  - The meeting of the **Conference of the Parties (CoP20)** to the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)* will be held in **Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 24 November to 5 December 2025**, bringing together thousands of delegates to review international wildlife trade regulations and consider proposals to amend the CITES Appendices. Parties will examine more than **100 agenda items and 51 species-listing proposals**, addressing a wide range of conservation and trade issues including elephants, big cats, marine species, timber, enforcement, and emerging topics such as wildlife trade and zoonotic disease risk.

- The **United States participated actively**, submitting or co-sponsoring proposals to strengthen trade controls and improve implementation of CITES mechanisms, including efforts related to species protections, enforcement, and improvements to scientific tools such as **non-detriment findings and legal acquisition findings**, which are central to determining whether international trade is sustainable. U.S. proposals and interventions also focused on improving compliance, addressing illegal wildlife trade, and strengthening science-based decision making within the Convention. ([CITES](#))
- The US had no major proposals however some specifics included moving the Peregrin falcon to appendix 2 from appendix 1 because the species no longer meets criteria as an appendix one species. The proposal was rejected. The US is concerned about an EU proposal to list all eel species The US will challenge this motion because eel are well managed. There was also concern by the US regarding Mexico’s proposal to list all Crotalus species.
- There is growing concern that both CITES and IUCN are becoming more and more anti-sustainable use.
- Wild Harvest Initiative (Shane Mahoney, Conservation Visions)
  - **Conservation Visions** is an international conservation initiative led by wildlife conservationist Shane Mahoney that works with governments, NGOs, and conservation partners to advance science-based wildlife management and the sustainable use of wildlife resources. The organization promotes the concept of “**citizen conservation**,” emphasizing the role that hunters, anglers, and the broader public play in supporting wildlife conservation through stewardship, funding, and participation in management systems.
  - One of its most prominent projects is the **Wild Harvest Initiative**, which quantifies the amount and value of wild fish and game harvested annually in North America. The project analyzes the biomass, food value, and economic contribution of wild protein obtained through hunting and angling, helping demonstrate the importance of regulated harvest as a sustainable food source and reinforcing the conservation benefits of sustainable wildlife use.
- Report: Costs of Losing Hunting and Trapping (Lou Cornicelli, Southwick Associates)
  - The most recent version of the **Southwick Associates report titled “The Costs of Losing Hunting and Trapping”** examines the economic, ecological, and social consequences that could occur if hunting and trapping were no longer available as wildlife management tools in North America. The report concludes that hunters and trappers play a critical role in funding wildlife conservation and managing wildlife populations. Through license purchases, excise taxes on equipment, and direct participation in management activities, sportsmen contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to wildlife agencies and conservation programs. Without these contributions, state and provincial agencies would face major funding shortfalls and would likely need significant increases in taxpayer support to maintain current wildlife management programs.
  - The report also highlights the broader costs that could arise from eliminating hunting and trapping, including increased wildlife populations leading to greater agricultural damage, property damage, and human–wildlife conflicts. For example, wildlife damage to crops and livestock already costs hundreds of millions to billions of dollars annually in North America, and those costs could increase substantially if populations of species such as deer, beaver, and predators expanded without regulated harvest. The report concludes that hunting and trapping remain among the most cost-effective and practical tools available for wildlife population management, providing both ecological benefits and substantial economic support for conservation programs.
- Safari Club International (Chris Tymeson, Regina Lennox, Bee Frederick)
  - Please see the written report in the appendix
- Update: Conservation Briefs/Multistate Grants/BMPs (Bryant)

- Recent efforts include a conservation brief on the sustainable use of black bears, a new science brief in progress describing the ecological, cultural, and economic benefits of trapping and sustainably harvested wild fur.
  - Renewal of the 5 year Non-detriment finding for bobcat in the United States was conducted in 2025. All states with bobcat populations responded to the survey. All states except one indicated that bobcat populations are stable or expanding
  - AFWA also contributed a national submission to the Convention on Biological Diversity describing best practices in sustainable wildlife management in the United States, emphasizing science-based decision making, public trust principles, and collaborative governance.
  - A major focus remains on the Best Management Practices (BMP) for Trapping Program, initiated in 1997 to evaluate traps and capture techniques to improve animal welfare, safety, and selectivity. The program involves wildlife biologists, veterinarians, university researchers, and trapping experts working across the U.S. to test traps for 23 furbearer species. To date, hundreds of field projects conducted across most U.S. states have resulted in necropsies of roughly 10,000 captured animals and the evaluation of more than 700 trap types. Results indicate that modern regulated trapping systems can meet rigorous welfare standards, with very high selectivity for furbearer species and minimal non-target captures. The BMP program continues to refine capture techniques through ongoing field research, veterinary assessments consistent with ISO protocols, and the publication of science briefs and peer-reviewed research.
  - Complementing the research program, AFWA conducts extensive outreach and education efforts supported through Multistate Conservation Grants. These include national surveys of trappers to understand motivations and BMP adoption, Trapping Matters professional development workshops for wildlife agency personnel, and multi-day Wild Fur Schools that provide hands-on training in trapping, wildlife management, and furbearer ecology. Since 2003, these programs have reached more than 6,500 wildlife professionals and students in nearly every U.S. state. Additional initiatives include updated trapper education programs, instructional videos, public perception research, and outreach campaigns designed to improve communication about trapping and recruit new participants. Together, these efforts support the continued use of regulated trapping as a humane, science-based wildlife management tool that contributes to conservation, wildlife damage management, and sustainable use of furbearer resources.
- Update: Canadian Trap Testing and Certification Program (Dave Kay)
    - Please find the written report in the appendix
  - Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program (Dave Windsor, Written Report)
    - Please find the written report in the appendix
  - Office of Conservation Investment (TBD, USFWS) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Office of Conservation Investment (OCI) continues to advance hunting and angling through major federal grant programs that fund state and partner conservation efforts. OCI administers the Wildlife Restoration (Pittman–Robertson) and Sport Fish Restoration (Dingell–Johnson) programs, which together distribute more than \$1 billion annually to states for wildlife and fisheries management, habitat restoration, hunter and aquatic education, and improvements to public access for hunting, fishing, boating, and shooting sports. These funds—generated through excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, fishing tackle, and motorboat fuel—have provided tens of billions of dollars for conservation since the 1930s, forming one of the most successful conservation funding partnerships in the world.
  - Recent OCI-supported projects include collaborative initiatives with state agencies and partners to improve wildlife habitat, expand public access to outdoor recreation, and increase participation in hunting and angling. Through programs such as the **Multistate Conservation**

**Grant Program**, OCI supports nationwide efforts related to research, habitat restoration, and recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) of hunters and anglers. OCI also works with landowners and partners through habitat restoration programs and new initiatives—such as investments addressing aquatic invasive species and large-scale habitat restoration—to ensure healthy fish and wildlife populations while maintaining opportunities for hunting and fishing across the United States.

- Roundtable Discussion with remaining time
  - No time remained

## Appendix

### Sustainable use of wildlife committee addendum and reports

- 1) AFWA resolution on predation management
- 2) Update from Safari Club International
- 3) Update from Canadian trap testing program
- 4) Update from the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program

**Resolution # xx**

**Title: Supporting Regulated Predator Hunting, Trapping, and Responsible Predation Management**

**WHEREAS**, balancing ecosystems is crucial for biodiversity and wildlife health; and

**WHEREAS**, native predators are important components of balanced ecosystems and are managed based on the best available science to achieve desired objectives for all species, ensure sustainable prey and predator populations, and fulfill agency public trust obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, predation is a natural component of balanced ecosystems, but can become temporally or spatially imbalanced and threaten the viability and sustainability of prey populations, and in some cases may necessitate local predation management guided by scientific principles and a public process; and

**WHEREAS**, responsible place- and time-specific predation management, guided by scientific principles and a public process, is a vital component of wildlife conservation and management; and

**WHEREAS**, efforts to mitigate predation may include habitat modification or the relocation or removal of predators; and

**WHEREAS**, managing predation can protect threatened and endangered species, as well as other native species, during sensitive times such as nesting and birthing seasons or when native prey populations are overexposed to predation risks due to other factors such as habitat degradation and weather-induced population vulnerability (e.g., severe winters, extreme drought); and

**WHEREAS**, regulated predation management practices include hunting, trapping, and the permitted or authorized removal of predators by professionals to address management objectives for prey species under temporally or geographically limited conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, state fish and wildlife agencies exercise primary authority for management of species within their borders across all types of land, including those lands owned by the federal government;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (“Association”) reaffirms its commitment to the responsible use and understanding of predation management techniques guided by scientific principles; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Association recognizes the importance of regulated predator hunting and trapping as legitimate and important components of science-based wildlife management under the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Association will continue to prioritize the conservation of wildlife to ensure the sustainability of prey and predator populations, and safeguard biodiversity and the health of ecosystems; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Association encourages U.S. federal agencies to recognize the importance of managing predation and State authority to use these tools, including on federal public lands under appropriate conditions; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Association's President, by written communication to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other appropriate Federal officials, shall urge all federal land management agencies to take measures to ensure that the jurisdictional authority of the States regarding predation management, as primary managers of wildlife within their borders, is recognized in all applicable federal policies and regulations.

**Submitted by the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee**

SCI's mission is to protect the freedom to hunt worldwide and promote sustainable use conservation

In house legal team and an international government affairs team and an office just steps from Capitol Hill. Staff on the ground in Europe, Africa, Canada and the US.

### **Litigation**

SCI continues to litigate gray wolves.

In one set of cases (three separate cases), plaintiffs challenged the 2020 Fish and Wildlife Service rule removing gray wolves in the lower 48 States, except for Mexican wolf, from the Endangered Species Act. A California district court vacated that rule. The case has been on appeal for a long time but is fully briefed and waiting for the Ninth Circuit to pay attention to it.

Separately, SCI has appealed a terrible decision from the U.S. district court in the District of Montana, Judge Donald Molloy. Three sets of plaintiffs petitioned the Service to create a "western distinct population segment" and put wolves in the delisted areas of the West, particularly Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, back under federal management. The plaintiffs alleged that changes in state laws in Idaho and Montana that seek to increase offtakes from hunting and trapping would endanger these wolves. The Service denied the petitions. The plaintiffs sued, and SCI, along with Sportsmen's Alliance and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, intervened to defend the Service's decision. The State of Idaho was granted leave to file an amicus brief. The States of Montana and Utah also intervened to defend their management of gray wolves. In August, a Montana federal district court judge ruled for plaintiffs. The judge tipped his hand as being incredibly against state management, explicitly finding that after the Service recovers wolves, "states will deplete them" and the cycle will start over. While the judge's decision leaves the current ESA delisting in place, the Service must reconsider whether wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains should again be listed. One day after the ruling, SCI, Sportsmen's Alliance, and RMEF appealed the flawed decision. We hope that the Service will also appeal.

Protecting a Brand-New Black Bear Hunt: In August, the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission approved the first black bear hunt in the State in a decade. Without hunting, Florida has an expanding bear population and the highest number of human-bear conflicts in the country. It also sees about 300/bears per year die from vehicle strikes, which is extremely high and has basically been the limiting factor on exponential population growth. The Commission took note of these facts and opened a season in four Bear Management Units with large populations and high conflicts. Take is managed through a "hard tag" system where the maximum number of bears harvested matches the number of tags issued. Bear Warriors United has sued to challenge the Commission's decision. SCI is intervening to defend that decision and support the Commission's science-based rationale.

Notably the Service opened an additional 80,000+ acres of National Wildlife Refuges to hunting and fishing in the annual Hunt Fish Rule. We expect a lot more to come, as this rule was basically prepared by the prior Administration and the criteria of not allowing use of lead ammo or tackle limited the potential openings. SCI is hopefully that during this Administration, all National Wildlife Refuges will be open to hunting, in alignment with State law unless there's a really good reason to deviate.

SCI sued two Commissioners on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission for colluding to publish an op-ed in support of a voter initiative to ban mountain lion hunting, in violation of the state Open Meetings Law. The op-ed also included demonstrably false statements about legal mountain lion and bobcat hunting. SCI settled the case, requiring training for the Commission on their legal obligations and hunting regulations. This suit has helped constrain the actions of several anti-hunting Commissioners and demonstrated that sportsmen and women will not ignore misstatements about legal, regulated hunting.

### **Federal Policy Work**

Wolf Delisting

Grizzly Bear Delisting

ESA reform

No predator hunting ban reintroduced yet

Bear baiting bill on federal lands

Government shutdown looming

### **State Policy Work**

Rabbits to Rhinos, Elk to Elephants

Anti-hunting fights are there every day

Sunday hunting bans continue to get overturned-PA and CT

Louisiana Black Bear season expansion. SCI used litigation, advocacy and education to help delist the LBB and start a hunting season

Commission "reform"-continued attempts to modify commissions to have less emphasis on take-Washington-open meetings violations

IP 98-Colorado Re-Wildling and alternative wildlife commission ballot measure, 3<sup>rd</sup> rendition

IP 3-Oregon-ban on hunting, fishing, trapping, animal agriculture, pest control-61K signatures

Nebraska-mountain lion season-anti hunters at commission

NY Big 5 Trophy Import Ban

### **Threats to hunting**

Predator/Carnivore Management – Bears, Mountain Lions, Wolves, Coyotes, etc.

Ballot Box Biology –Arizona hounding ban, Oregon IP3, Colorado IP 98,

Commission/Board Makeup – Washington, Colorado, New England

Anti-Gun Legislation – California, New York, Colorado, Maryland, Canada announcement today

Access – Ammunition Bans, Sunday Hunting, Physical Restrictions

Trophy Import Bans – New York, Canada, United Kingdom, France, European Parliament right now

**New-Furbearers-Beavers** in particular-South Dakota last year, Washington, Colorado, Oregon

## **An update on Canada's Humane Trap Testing Program**

- The Canadian Furbearer Management Committee (CFMC) coordinates implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) among Canada's provinces and territories
- Our Trap Research and Development Program provides the scientific credibility in satisfying our obligations under the AIHTS
- This program is critical to maintaining public acceptance of trapping in Canada, which is constantly being challenged by the non-sustainable use community
- Since inception, we have invested over \$40M in trap research and development; evaluating about 640 trap models and certifying 240 to be humane against the standards, or about 40% of those tested
- Trap testing protocols have evolved considerably since the inception of this program, with the intent to minimize the need for the use of live animals in research trials.
- Species-specific computer simulation models and Reference trap comparison protocols have now virtually eliminated the need for live animal testing for the certification of manufactured traps

### Current status of AIHTS Implementation

- All certified traps are currently regulated as mandatory for use in all jurisdictions in Canada, except for certified restraining traps for Coyote and for Raccoon (Box and cage traps).
- The CFMC has begun the 3 year phase-in period for mandatory use of Raccoon Box and Cage traps, effective 2026/27 trapping season and for Coyote restraining traps (Leghold) effective 2027/28

### 2025/26 workplan for the Trap Research and Development Committee (TRDC)

- Establishment of a best configuration for killing neck snares for both coyotes and wolves is being finalized for implementation
- These configurations incorporate specific short-arm torsion springs and modified locks, which consistently produce complete occlusion of both carotid arteries, which is the proxy for humane death established by our veterinary pathologists
- Best Practices documents for these snare designs have been developed and a series of videos, focused on minimizing incidental harvest of non-target animals, have been produced
- Development of standardized testing protocols for common models of break-away devices used in snare configurations
- Development of a best design for relaxing cable restraints or restraining snares, specifically to determine minimum loop diameters
- Certification of 10 leghold restraining traps for coyote and 1 rotating jaw killing trap for river otter, Canada lynx and bobcat
- As certified humane traps are now commonly in use across Canada the trap testing program will continue to shift to research and development of devices and practices to minimize incidental catch of non-target animals, particularly with killing traps



David L Windsor, Director  
Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow  
Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation  
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Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee,

I want to provide just a quick update on the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program.

October 2025 marks our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our first workshop was held October 5-9, 2005, at our home facility, the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, with students from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Penn State. 20 years of success and a continued need for the program says a lot about our curriculum and the instructors presenting the material.

As we look ahead to our 2025-2026 workshop season, we currently have 8 in-person workshops, and 2 online cohorts scheduled starting in November 2025 with our online cohorts and ending in March 2026 with our last in-person workshop of the season. To date 24 State and 2 Federal agencies have confirmed their participation.

Workshop registrations began on Thursday Sept 4<sup>th</sup> with emails being sent to all registered participants. Workshops are filled on a first-come basis. Workshop assignments will be confirmed with registered participants in mid-September. The online cohort registrations started September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Agencies that may have missed the initial participation sign-up are always welcome to participate. Workshop availability options may be limited; however, we can usually accommodate late sign-ups with the flexibility we have at most of our venues.

Should anyone have any questions please reach out to me via email at [dave@clft.org](mailto:dave@clft.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David L. Windsor'.

David L Windsor, Director  
Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow  
Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation