WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

2007

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

July 12, 2007
Flagstaff, Arizona

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Annual Business Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2007
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Flagstaff, Arizona

President Duane Shroufe called the meeting to order at 8:03 A.M. He asked Secretary Larry Kruckenberg to take roll call of member agencies. It showed the following:

Alaska	Kelly Hepler
Alberta	Ken Ambrock
Arizona	Duane Shroufe
British Columbia	John Thorton
California	Ryan Broddrick
Colorado	Mark Konishi
Hawaii	Absent
Idaho	Cal Groen
Kansas	Keith Sexson
Montana	Chris Smith
Nebraska	Kirk Nelson
Nevada	Ken Mayer
New Mexico	Bruce Thompson
North Dakota	Terry Steinwand
Oklahoma	Richard Hatcher
Oregon	Virgil Moore
Saskatchewan	Absent
South Dakota	Emmett Keyser
Texas	Ruben Cantu
Utah	Alan Clark
Washington	Bob Everitt
Wyoming	Terry Cleveland
Yukon	Absent

The Secretary advised that a quorum was present, with 20 of 23 member agency representatives in attendance. The meeting continued.

1. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Duane Shroufe asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Hearing none, the President advised that two items were being brought forward from the Directors' Forum and would be taken up as the first order of business.

The first item was a request for a director to serve on the National Fish and Wildlife Health Steering Committee. Terry Cleveland volunteered.

The second item dealt with whether there was something the Association should be doing in a coordinated fashion to address the Quagga mussel invasion. Since Jim Karpowitz, who had raised the issue and posed the question during the Forum, was absent, President Shroufe suggested the matter be taken up at the mid-winter meeting.

President Shroufe also used this opportunity to thank his staff for all their support and hard work in organizing the annual conference and the Association officers for their leadership and assistance.

In discussing these topics, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

1). ***That Terry Cleveland serve as WAFWA's representative on the National Fish and Wildlife Health Steering Committee.***

2). ***That the topic of a WAFWA coordinated approach to the Quagga mussel invasion be taken up at the 2008 mid-winter meeting.***

2. JANUARY '07 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

President Duane Shroufe asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 6-7, 2007, business meeting of the Association. Hearing none, it was moved by Terry Cleveland, and seconded by Kirk Nelson, that the January 6, 2007, business meeting minutes be approved as written and previously distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg stated the past six months had been extremely busy with a wide range of tasks and activities either accomplished or in process, and many other routine services provided to member agencies and partners. He underscored the ongoing, day to day communications that is required to address the business of the Association and keep things moving forward. The Secretary noted all this effort required 505 hours on his part to conduct Association-related business during the period January 1-June 30, 2007. A written Secretary's Report was distributed (see pages 28 - 29).

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg presented the Executive Committee report on behalf of Chair Jeff Vonk. Minutes of the meeting, as well as the Wildlife Chiefs' report, are found on pages 30 - 43. His oral report only addressed action items.

It was moved by Keith Sexson, and seconded by Chris Smith, that the Executive Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

3). *That the Association send a letter to AFWA urging AFWA to convey as part of its ongoing discussions with USGS on related matters, the importance of strong state partnerships as regards the operation and activities of university-based cooperative fish and wildlife research units, as well as the need for additional applied research which oftentimes has greater utility for state wildlife agencies.*

4). *That the Wildlife Chiefs be tasked with reviewing the wildlife-related WAFWA Sanctioned Workshops, and, in effect, help coordinate that function on behalf of the Association to ensure that the workshops are being organized and conducted in a manner consistent with established criteria and guidelines, and the ideals and priorities of the Association.*

5). *That the Association purchase Directors and Officers Insurance, and General Liability Insurance (@$1M) for an estimated cost of $1,500-$2,000/year.*

6). *That the Association move forward with creating an independent supporting 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation and that Carol Bambery's services be utilized.*

7). *That the Association send a letter to all sanctioned workshops that are in arrears with reporting and urge them to correct such deficiencies and report by or at the mid-winter meeting, or run the risk of having the directors revoke the "WAFWA Sanctioned" status of said workshop or workshops.*

8). *That the Association also send a letter to those sanctioned workshops that have not yet transferred funds they are holding to the WAFWA Treasury, where they will be held in a restricted fund for the future use by the respective workshop, but within the guidelines and fiscal practices established by WAFWA.*

9). *That the applications for contributing membership for ALL Consulting, (Tulsa, Oklahoma), and XONtv (partnership with Chris Chaffin Communications) be approved.*

10). *That the portion of the 2008 annual conference registration fee that is returned to WAFWA be increased from $20 to $40/head.*

11). *That the Association contract with Stephen Barton to provide Treasurer services for the period August 1, 2007, through July 31, 2008. Said agreement may be extended for up to two additional one-year periods upon mutual review and agreement of both parties. The rate of compensation is established at $57.50 per hour. For year one of the agreement a cap not to exceed $35,000 is established. The agreement to include language that a consumer price index (or other appropriate inflationary index) be used annually, thereafter, to establish compensation to ensure the hourly rate for services provided would be adjusted accordingly on an annual basis and not remain static.*

12). That the funding mechanism for securing such services be a combination special assessment in FY08 of $900 for U.S. members only and the Association begin charging a 7% overhead fee on federal and private grants, as permitted.

13). That a comprehensive discussion about the Association's long-term service needs including both Treasurer and Secretary be held at the January, 2008, mid-winter meeting.

14). That notice be served to the membership that a bylaws revision will be considered at the 2008 mid-winter meeting involving a potential dues increase.

5. TREASURER AND FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Stephen Barton presented the Association's financial report covering the period July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007, which showed a balance of $269,232.73 in all accounts. He explained that this amount did not include $220 in "open bills" – payments owed the Association for which invoices have been sent, but payments have not yet been received. Mr. Barton distributed a Statement of Financial Position (see page 44) and Consolidated Statement of Financial Income and Expense (see pages 45 - 47). He also distributed a written WAFWA Treasurer's Report (see page 48).

Treasurer Barton next presented the Association's proposed 2007-2008 General Operating Budget. He indicated projected income is anticipated to be $71,850, and the projected expenses are estimated to be $69,800 (see page 49).

It was moved by Richard Hatcher, and seconded by Ken Ambrock, that the Treasurer's report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

6. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Kelly Hepler presented the Audit Committee report on behalf of Acting Chair Ken Taylor. He stated the Committee had reviewed the 2006-2007 financial statements and supporting documents, in addition to the proposed 2007-2008 budget. Mr. Hepler indicated the committee found all financial reports for the past fiscal year to be in order.

It was moved by Kelly Hepler, and seconded by Virgil Moore, that the Audit Committee report be accepted as presented, including the proposed budget which included $71,850 in income and $69,800 expected in expenses. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following action was agreed to by the directors:

15). That the 2007-2008 budget for the Association reflect $71,850 in income and $69,800 in expenses.

7. AFWA REPORT

Matt Hogan presented the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) report. He referred the directors to the *AFWA Washington Staff Report* (see pages 50 - 85) which contains the status of various AFWA projects and activities and federal legislation.

Mr. Hogan went over several staffing changes including Ron Regan being hired as Resource Director, Naomi Edelson going on maternity leave for three months and Dave Chadwick serving as Acting Wildlife Diversity Director, and Mark Humpert from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission joining the staff on a two-month detail assignment.

Mr. Hogan stressed the importance of all the directors attending the Directors' Retreat in Louisville in September. He stated the session would be used to help update the elements of the AFWA *Strategic Plan*. Mr. Hogan also mentioned the plenary session at the Association's annual meeting will focus on climate change and the every day challenges facing state fish and wildlife agencies to manage resources in the face of uncertainty.

Mr. Hogan indicated AFWA continues to place priority on reducing the cost of the *National Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation Survey*. He said the Association is striving to attain a 40% cost savings in the out years.

Mr. Hogan outlined changes that are being pursued in development of what was previously called the "synthesis report" – akin to a roll-up of all the State Wildlife Action Plans. Great caution is being taken so that this doesn't detract from, or in any way direct, the activities of individual states, rather point out the opportunities that exist to undertake cooperative endeavors.

Mr. Hogan also drew attention to the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation and the National Marine Manufacturers Association new, joint marketing campaign that will marry the "Take Me Fishing" and "Discover Boating" campaigns. He noted that this could impact the future of the "Take Me Fishing" brand which many states have invested in.

Mr. Hogan announced that the second class of participants to attend the National Conservation Leadership Institute has been selected. It includes 36 individuals, of which 21 are from state wildlife agencies. He noted the inaugural session of the Institute was a tremendous success.

Mr. Hogan offered the legal services of AFWA to any member agencies wanting to trademark their logo(s).

It was moved by Terry Cleveland, and seconded by Mark Konishi, to accept the AFWA report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

8. COMMISSIONERS' COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Mike Golightly presented the Commissioners' Committee report. He indicated 28 members from 11 states were in attendance, in addition to other guests. Minutes of the meeting are found on page 86.

Mr. Golightly said commission/board members shared updates of major developments within their respective jurisdictions during the past six months and he urged the directors to review the various state and province reports (see pages 87 - 244).

Mr. Golightly thanked the states of South Dakota and Utah for spearheading presentations on the Farm Bill and Public Wildlife on Private Lands respectively, as part of the committee's ongoing series of issues important to the membership. He also announced that the committee had selected the topics of National Park Service Wildlife/Herd Management, Tribal Relations/Interactions, and Mule Deer Working Group Activities for discussion at the mid-winter meeting in San Diego. Mr. Golightly indicated that presentations on these topics would be made by South Dakota (coordinating with Jerry Williams, NPS Veterinarian, Fort Collins, Colorado), Washington and Arizona.

Mr. Golightly indicated commission/board members will convene in Louisville for a two-day meeting on September 17-18, in conjunction with the AFWA annual meeting. WAFWA is leading the effort to get participation, especially from outside the West.

Mr. Golightly noted that the Management Assistance Team – with Sally Guynn in the lead – completed the revision and update of the *Commission Guidebook*. Copies of this publication were distributed at the meeting.

It was moved by Chris Smith, and seconded by Richard Hatcher, that the Commissioners' Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

16). ***That the Commissioners' Committee focus on National Park Service Wildlife/Herd Management, Tribal Relations/Interactions and Mule Deer Working Group Activities, at their January, 2008, meeting. South Dakota, Washington and Arizona to lead the presentations, respectively.***

9. WILD SHEEP WORKING GROUP REPORT

Chair Kevin Hurley gave the inaugural report for the Wild Sheep Working Group (WSWG). He provided an overview of the new group, organized in January, 2007, at the behest of the WAFWA directors. Mr. Hurley noted that the first charge of the group was to deal with the issue of domestic sheep and goat management in wild sheep habitat. This priority assignment was necessary because both BLM and USFS need to strengthen and update their guidelines on this subject and it is a serious matter throughout the West. Mr. Hurley stated the group that put together WAFWA's recommendations (see pages 245 - 271) consisted of 10 state and provincial wildlife agency representatives, the BLM and the USFS each had a representative, and Jim Karpowitz served as Director Sponsor. The group accomplished their first assignment in 150 days. He noted that BLM and USFS – in March, 2007, at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Portland – affirmed their cooperation while awaiting WAFWA to take action on the recommendations, and both indicated their willingness to review current agency policies, and revise as necessary.

Mr. Hurley noted there has been an increasing body of knowledge over the past 30 plus years on this subject, which served as the underpinning for this endeavor. The WSWG suggested it is time to get past the "dueling vets" stand off. Mr. Hurley said the situation with domestic sheep and goats in wildlife sheep habitat can be viewed as a mirror image of the issue surrounding brucellosis in livestock and wildlife where separation is imperative.

Mr. Hurley then discussed the details of the WSWG recommendations. He said the primary goal was to strive for effective separation – both temporal and spatial. Mr. Hurley mentioned the recommendations focus on conducting comprehensive risk assessments that are both qualitative and quantitative. He said the approach is predicated on adequate training to conduct effective risk assessments. Mr. Hurley stressed the importance of the risk assessment being collaborative and involving multiple stockholders. Finally, he stated that management actions should be commensurate with escalating degree of risk of contact.

Mr. Hurley indicated the recommendations are in five parts – directed at WAFWA agencies, federal land management agencies, wild sheep and other conservation organizations, domestic sheep and goat permittees, and domestic sheep and goat producers on private land.

Mr. Hurley then discussed plans for the Wild Sheep Working Group from this point forward. He said he anticipates a 2.5-3 year timetable for the entity to complete its work.

It was moved by Jim Karpowitz, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the Association endorse and accept the Wild Sheep Working Group report entitled *Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitat* – dated June 21, 2007; that the Association send a letter to BLM, USFS, and other appropriate federal land management agencies recommending WAFWA's report be used as the foundation for federal land management agencies to update their policy/policies on management of domestic sheep and domestic goats in wild sheep habitat; and further, that WAFWA member agencies be encouraged to participate in two risk assessment workshops – one in September, 2007, in Tucson, and the other in February, 2008, in Salt Lake City. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

17). ***That the Association endorse and accept the Wild Sheep Working Group report entitled Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management in Wild Sheep Habitat – dated June 21, 2007.***

18). ***That the Association send a letter to BLM, USFS, and other appropriate federal land management agencies, recommending WAFWA's report be used as the foundation for federal land management agencies to update their policy/policies on management of domestic sheep and domestic goats in wild sheep habitat.***

19). ***That WAFWA member agencies be encouraged to participate in two risk assessment workshops – one in September, 2007, in Tucson, and the other in February, 2008, in Salt Lake City.***

20). That the Wild Sheep Working Group report at the 2008 mid-winter meeting.

10. CITES UPDATE

Dale Toweill presented the CITES report. He distributed a two-page publication that highlighted issues of importance to WAFWA (see pages 272 - 273), as well as a report of the CITES' 14th Conference of the Parties in The Hague, Netherlands, in June, 2007 (see pages 274 - 288). He focused his remarks on the importance of the states being involved in these issues and expressed his disappointment at the bobcat not being removed from Appendix II.

It was moved by Virgil Moore, and seconded by Alan Clark, that the CITES report be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

11. MULE DEER WORKING GROUP REPORT

Chair Jim Heffelfinger presented the Mule Deer Working Group report. Detailed minutes of the meeting are found on pages 289 - 299.

Mr. Heffelfinger reported on the status of habitat guidelines for the various ecoregions. He said the Colorado Plateau, and California Woodland and Chaparral are completed. Six others remain. Of those, Mr. Heffelfinger distributed drafts of five.

Mr. Heffelfinger requested permission to use up to $2,000 from the recent Deer/Elk Workshop to scan all past deer and elk proceedings. He said the remainder unused would be deposited into the WAFWA account.

Mr. Heffelfinger discussed the status of standardized mule deer population monitoring guidelines. He termed this endeavor as the last major project that the working group will produce.

Mr. Heffelfinger reported that the AFWA white paper authored by Jim deVos on the effects of climate change on big game winter range has been completed. Although not a Mule Deer Working Group project, the group was given the opportunity to review the final product.

Mr. Heffelfinger stated the next meeting of the Mule Deer Working Group will be held February 7, 2008, in conjunction with the Mule Deer Foundation/Foundation for North American Wild Sheep annual convention.

It was moved by Ken Ambrock, and seconded by Cal Groen, that the Mule Deer Working Group report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this working group report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

21). *That the directors approve the Colorado Plateau, and California Woodland and Chaparral Habitat Guidelines and authorize their printing.*

22). *That agencies lend support for those individuals working on the remaining mule deer habitat guidelines to enable timelines to be met for completion.*

23). *That agencies review the drafts of the other habitat guidelines distributed at the business meeting and provide comments, questions or suggestions to the lead authors by August 20, 2007.*

24). *That the directors approve the use of up to $2,000 from the recent Deer/Elk Workshop to scan all past deer and elk proceedings. The remaining unused funds to be deposited into the WAFWA treasury Deer/Elk Workshop sub-account.*

25). *That the Mule Deer Working Group be allowed to proceed with development of Phase I of the guidelines dealing with data collection, storage and retrieval, and this project be closely coordinated with the Wildlife Chiefs as it progresses.*

12. WATCHABLE WILDLIFE, INC REPORT

Jim Mallman presented the Watchable Wildlife, Inc report. Inc is a 501(c)(3) non-profit working with communities across North America and around the world to help protect wildlife and wild areas. He stated Inc's three areas of focus include the Annual Watchable Wildlife Conference, publications and special project assistance.

Mr. Mallman reported that the most recent statistics indicate there are over 71 million wildlife watchers in the United States, accounting for over $44 billion in annual expenditures. He said that wildlife watching enjoyed a 19% increase in expenditures during the past decade, in comparison to hunting and fishing expenditures which showed declines of 14% and 16% respectively.

Mr. Mallman discussed Inc's wildlife viewing guide series and presented President Duane Shroufe and Commission Chair Mike Golightly with copies of the newly-released *Arizona Wildlife Viewing Guide*. He indicated Colorado, New Jersey and California's guides are also in the process of being redone. Mr. Mallman expressed interest and encouraged participation from all the western states in entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with Inc to handle, redesign and print their respective viewing guides. He said the process from beginning to end takes about 1.5 years, but features guides at a reduced price, with aggressive marketing and broader distribution.

Mr. Mallman discussed Inc's latest publication entitled *The Black and Brown Faces of Americas Wild Places* and indicated a viewing guide for National Forests will be out soon.

Mr. Mallman demonstrated a web-based business plan that will be online by mid-August for those people contemplating getting into some wildlife/nature-oriented business. He also indicated Inc's website (www.watchablewildlife.org) would launch its Wildlife Viewing Travel Plan later this summer enabling travelers to maximize wildlife viewing opportunities from their point of origin to their destination.

Mr. Mallman announced the next Watchable Wildlife Conference will be in Tucson on October 3-5, 2007. He again expressed Inc's desire to forge a strong and lasting partnership with state wildlife agencies.

13. WESTERN BIRD CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Ken Mayer presented the Western Bird Conservation Committee report. He referred the directors to the minutes (see pages 300 - 304) for additional details about presentations and discussions that took place at the meeting, and instead, only addressed action items. Those items involved the interagency sage grouse MOU, co-sponsorship of a workshop, contribution toward a workshop, and representatives to serve on the Cooperative Sagebrush Initiative Partnership Council.

It was moved by Ryan Broddrick, and seconded by Ken Ambrock, that the Western Bird Conservation Committee report be accepted as presented.

President Duane Shroufe requested a director volunteer in addition to San Stiver. Cal Groen volunteered.

The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

26). That the Association amend the 2000 Interagency MOU on Sage Grouse Conservation to extend the expiration date to January 31, 2008.

27). That WAFWA co-sponsor - in addition to the Society of Range Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Western Governors' Association - a joint workshop on State and Transition Models and Ecological Site Descriptions to be held in Park City, Utah, in late-October, 2007, along with a commitment of WAFWA member agency staff presentations and attendance.

28). That WAFWA contribute $2000-$3000 to support the above - referenced workshop in Park City.

29). That San Stiver and Cal Groen represent WAFWA on the Cooperative Sagebrush Initiative Partnership Council.

14. STATE/FEDERAL/TRIBAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

John Kennedy presented the State/Federal/Tribal Communications Committee report on behalf of Chair Jeff Hagener. Meeting minutes can be found on pages 305 - 307.

Mr. Kennedy discussed the status of Policies and Guidelines for Wildlife Management in Wilderness – the revision and clarification of which was accomplished in 2006, and transmitted to USFS and BLM staff, and the states, in early 2007. He indicated the committee was desirous of the directors supporting AFWA's Federal and Tribal Relations Committee drafting a letter to the state and federal agencies regarding the

importance of accomplishing the action items communicated in 2002, and also supporting AFWA, USFS, and BLM in developing a training module for the Policies and Guidelines.

Mr. Kennedy recapped the decade-long dispute that WAFWA and the National Park Service (NPS) have been having involving NPS Regulation of Public Use on Waterways. He stated the committee recommended the directors contact AFWA and request help in approaching NPS to resolve this long-standing conflict when NPS adopted regulations in 1996 expanding their jurisdiction to regulate activities in state waterways.

Considerable discussion followed among the directors concerning the overabundance of ungulates in places like Rocky Mountain National Park, Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Wind Cave National Park. Terry Steinwand suggested that perhaps a letter be sent to NPS urging them to support the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, though he fell short of making a formal motion to that effect. Burt Frost indicated that wasn't necessary since the use of volunteers to reduce animal numbers would be an alternative included in the respective park plans. That led to another extended discussion about use of the term "volunteers", as opposed to "public hunters, licensed and regulated by the state". The consensus was these terms project two very different images in the minds of the public and the latter is preferred by WAFWA member agencies. NPS representatives present agreed to revisit use of the word "volunteers" in the context of herd reduction efforts.

It was moved by Ken Mayer, and seconded by Chris Smith, that the State/Federal/Tribal Communications Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

30). ***That WAFWA support AFWA's Federal and Tribal Relations Committee drafting a letter to state and federal agencies regarding the importance of accomplishing the action items communicated in 2002 involving the USFS/BLM Policies and Guidelines for Wildlife Management in Wilderness.***

31). ***That WAFWA support AFWA, USFS and BLM in developing a training module for the Policies and Guidelines.***

32). ***That WAFWA contact AFWA and request help in approaching NPS to resolve the long-standing conflict created when NPS adopted regulations in 1996 expanding their jurisdiction to regulate activities in state waterways.***

15. PASS IT ON PROGRAM UPDATE

Mike Christensen presented the update on the Pass It On Program. He noted the outdoor mentor program had its origin in Kansas in 1999, when the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks teamed up with Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters. The program has now expanded to Big Brothers Big Sisters entities in Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Texas and Wisconsin, and now includes other partners like NSSF, RMEF, Pheasants Forever, NWTF, SFI, 4-H Shooting Sports and more.

Mr. Christensen reported that data indicates that two-thirds of program participants want to try and actively pursue an outdoor activity once mentored. He said there is a need for more mentors, citing a waiting list of 1,500 kids in Kansas City, three-fourths of them boys.

Mr. Christensen offered four take home messages: 1) outdoor activities are healthy for kids; 2) mentoring organizations need more help; 3) it is important that the outdoor heritage be passed on to the next generation and mentoring is a way to accomplish that; and 4) help expand the Pass It On Program to other regions of the country, especially the West.

16. HUMAN DIMENSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Duane Shroufe presented the Human Dimensions Committee report. Minutes of the meeting are found on pages 308 - 309.

Mr. Shroufe reported that letters and certificates were in the process of being distributed to all participants of the recently-concluded WAFWA/Colorado State University Human Dimensions Training Course. He also noted there was strong interest in additional human dimensions training and Colorado State University would prepare and present a proposal (including costs) to the directors at the mid-winter meeting.

Mr. Shroufe discussed the Human Dimensions Conference scheduled for Estes Park, Colorado, in 2008. He said $10,000 in volunteer sponsorships was being sought to support the conference, especially for a book that will published by Island Press and distributed at the conference. He noted several states had already expressed interest in financially supporting this effort and he urged any director that might have an interest to contact him directly.

Mr. Shroufe advanced the committee's proposed NCN for the FY 2009 funding cycle for consideration. It read as follows: "Programs that enable fish and wildlife agencies to better understand and manage the human dimensions of conflict with wildlife that is accompanying expanding development in the United States".

Mr. Shroufe indicated that three states – South Dakota, Washington and Arizona – are participating in a People in Places human dimensions demonstration project with Colorado State University, which will utilize place-based (GIS) information to develop models. He noted they would like to get another state involved and he urged directors to consider joining this project.

It was moved by Duane Shroufe, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the Human Dimensions Committee report be accepted as presented, including the proposed NCN. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

33). *That CSU develop an HD Training proposal (including costs) for the directors to consider at the January, 2008, business meeting.*

34). *That member agencies voluntarily contribute toward the $10,000 needed for sponsorship – especially the book to be completed prior to, and distributed at, the 2008 Human Dimensions Conference in Colorado.*

35). *That the Association's 2009 NCN submittal be the following: "Programs that enable fish and wildlife agencies to better understand and manage the human dimensions of conflict with wildlife that is accompanying expanding development in the United States".*

36). *That one additional state volunteer to be part of the People in Places human dimensions demonstration project involving CSU.*

37). *That Scott Gurtin assist Duane Shroufe in developing a federal budget recommendation on behalf of the Human Dimensions Committee to reflect the need for funding to support the www.H.D.gov effort, which is funded through NOAA.*

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The business meeting was suspended for a lunch break at 11:50 A.M.

The business meeting was reconvened at 1:00 P.M.

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17. TWS TECHNICAL REVIEW OF ALASKA'S PREDATOR CONTROL PROGRAM

Bruce Thompson requested time to read the following statement from The Wildlife Society Council (TWS) regarding an item of discussion that took place at the Directors' Forum: "TWS Council, in response to concerns raised by Alaska Commissioner Denby Lloyd, voted to expand the scope of the Predator Control Technical Review beyond the State of Alaska. The Technical Review will now examine case histories of control of carnivores to enhance ungulate populations. An eastern state and an eastern Canadian province have already agreed to participate as case studies. TWS President John Organ met with Alaska Department of Fish and Game Deputy Director of Wildlife Conservation Kim Titus and have agreed on an approach that will have Alaska Department of Fish and Game involvement. The goal of this Technical Review is to provide support for agency advocacy of science-based management".

18. HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Terry Cleveland presented the Human/Wildlife Conflicts Committee report. Minutes of the committee meeting are found on pages 310 - 313. In the interest of time, Mr. Cleveland only discussed action items originating from the committee, but he did indicate the meeting was well attended and interest in this subject area remains strong. The action items included authorization to proceed with application for a sanctioned

workshop on human/wildlife conflicts, and securing statutory authority for control over contraceptive drugs utilized to control wildlife populations.

It was moved by Terry Cleveland, and seconded by Ken Ambrock, that the Human/Wildlife Conflicts Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

38). That the Human/Wildlife Conflicts Committee proceed with making application to the Association for a human/wildlife conflicts sanctioned workshop to address a myriad of conflicts, etc.

39). That Directors be encouraged to secure the necessary statutory authority to assume state wildlife agency regulation control over contraceptive drugs utilized to control wildlife populations.

19. ALBERTA 6-DAY NON-RESIDENT ALIEN WATERFOWL LICENSE AND NAWMP FUNDING

Ken Ambrock requested time on the agenda to clear up a misunderstanding about Alberta's 6-day non-resident alien waterfowl license and its purported, albeit untrue, relationship to NAWMP funding.

Mr. Ambrock said that Alberta introduced a renewable 6-day non-resident alien waterfowl license in 2006. The objective is to provide data to deal with illegal activities related to the outfitting industry in Alberta. He said there is absolutely no intention to directly or indirectly discourage non-resident hunting in that province.

Mr. Ambrock said Alberta has always welcomed, and continues to value, non-resident hunting in the province, both guided and non-guided. He said the 6-day license does not restrict the length of time non-resident aliens can hunt in Alberta (renewable license); non-resident hunters are not required to contract the services of an outfitter – both guided and non-guided hunters are welcomed; and the 6-day license actually reduces the cost of a waterfowl hunt for the majority of non-resident aliens, more than 95% of whom hunt for one week or less ($77.08 for a 6-day waterfowl license compared to $107.30 for the former season long license game bird license or $77.09 for the former 3-day game bird license).

Mr. Ambrock noted that the introduction of the 6-day waterfowl hunting license has provided Alberta with valuable data on hunting practices of non-resident alien hunters. For example, less than 5% of non-resident alien waterfowl hunters purchased more than one 6-day license, less than 1% of non-resident alien waterfowl hunters purchased more than two 6-day licenses, and the elimination of the season-long license affects less than 5% of non-resident alien hunters and is not considered to be a significant issue.

Mr. Ambrock stressed that there is no relationship, and there should be no possible connection, between hunting license initiatives and the NAWMP program. He said the

goal of waterfowl hunter licensing initiatives is to provide data to combat illegal activities related to the outfitting industry within Alberta, while the goal of NAWMP in Alberta is to maintain, restore, and enhance habitat so that Alberta can produce an abundance of birds to send south to the United States each fall where the vast majority of waterfowl harvest occurs. Mr. Ambrock reiterated that the two initiatives are totally separate and should not be linked in any way, shape or form.

Mr. Ambrock remarked that the need for continued funding of NAWMP programs in Canada (and Alberta) is the same as it was when the NAWMP framework was first formed nearly 20 years ago. He said U. S. funding of NAWMP programs in Canada is recognition of the fact that the majority (75%) of birds produced in Canada are harvested in the U. S. Mr. Ambrock mentioned that response of duck populations during years of adequate water supplies show everyone that the habitat enhancements produced by NAWMP are working. He said there is still a lot of work to be completed to achieve NAWMP habitat goals, and the vision, goals, objectives and ongoing NAWMP initiatives should not be tainted by popular rhetoric surrounding unrelated hunting regulations.

Mr. Ambrock concluded by stating all regulations related to hunting, including licensing regimes, are reviewed periodically within overarching hunting opportunity and wildlife management objectives. He said hunter response to the 6-day non-resident alien waterfowl hunting license will be monitored to determine impacts on non-resident alien hunter participation and opportunity, and data obtained from license sales will be examined for any indication of potentially illegal non-licensed outfitting activities.

20. MOUNTAIN LION WORKING GROUP REPORT

Chair Russ Mason presented the Mountain Lion Working Group report. Minutes of the working group meeting are found on pages 314 - 318. Mr. Mason commented on the lack of participation from a number of states at the meeting and urged the directors to support staff participation in the future or run the risk of having this initiative falter or be delayed.

Mr. Mason said the biggest issue discussed at the meeting was whether there would be a second edition of the *Cougar Management Guidelines* published or whether a WAFWA handbook based on the *Guidelines* should be pursued. At the center of the controversy is the apparent objection on the part of some of the co-authors to a statement in the prospectus that has been developed for the second edition which indicates the *Guidelines* were meant to be suggestive rather than prescriptive. Mr. Mason said he would personally contact as many of the original co-authors as possible to potentially revise the prospectus to everyone's satisfaction and report back at the January, 2008, business meeting.

Mr. Mason also recommended that whichever course of action is pursued, that either the second edition or the WAFWA handbook be produced and ultimately distributed under the auspices of the Western Mountain Lion Workshop, which the working group hopes will continue to be sanctioned by the directors.

Mr. Mason stated that either way – second edition or handbook – the deadline of 2009 would be adhered to. He also reviewed the suggested content and group leaders and indicated the writing for these chapters could move forward as originally planned.

There was considerable and intense discussion that followed with regard to the merits of staying the course and producing a second edition of the *Cougar Management Guidelines* or going a different direction and producing a WAFWA handbook based on the *Cougar Management Guidelines*. Bob Hernbrode was especially vocal on taking the latter action and indicated that was the preference of the Commissioners' Committee. Ken Mayer and others suggested the Association continue to work with the original co-authors until all avenues have been exhausted.

It was moved by Virgil Moore, and seconded by Ken Mayer, that WAFWA withhold a final decision on whether to produce a second edition of the *Cougar Management Guidelines* or produce a WAFWA handbook based on the *Guidelines* until the 2008 mid-winter meeting to see if Russ Mason can iron out differences of opinion among the original co-authors. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this working group report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

40). That a final decision whether to produce a second edition of the Cougar Management Guidelines or a WAFWA handbook based on the Guidelines be delayed until the 2008 mid-winter meeting.

41). That Russ Mason contact as many of the original co-authors as possible to determine whether differences of opinions concerning the prospectus for the second addition can be ironed out and that he report back at the 2008 mid-winter meeting.

42). That the suggested group leaders and chapters for either the second edition or handbook be approved and work commence immediately.

21. INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Virgil Moore presented the Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee report. Detailed minutes of that meeting are found on pages 319 - 335.

Mr. Moore noted that both the Fish Chiefs' meeting and the Western Native Trout Initiative meeting are internal functions of the committee and he suggested the directors review the minutes from both those venues found on pages 336 - 345 and 346 - 348, respectively.

Mr. Moore indicated the issue of marine angler registry/survey was discussed and the committee's recommendation was that this be elevated to AFWA. He said the angler registry/survey may be very similar to the HIP program relative to the survey aspect for migratory birds.

Mr. Moore recommended the Association support the AFS position and recommendation on Re-registration Eligibility Decisions (REDs) published by EPA, and to use the AFS response as a model for state responses and provide those responses to EPA prior to deadlines identified in the respective *Federal Register* notices. He further urged the directors to have their staff respond to the *Federal Register* notices, including a copy of the AFS letter and recommended areas of concern.

Mr. Moore indicated that the committee recommended that Greg Gerlich (CO) serve as WAFWA's representative to the Western Regional Panel of the ANS Task Force.

Mr. Moore briefly discussed a proposal involving an outreach partnership between WAFWA, FFF and Coleman (now owner of Pure Fishing) involving ANS education and awareness. He requested permission to continue discussion with FWS and other potential corporate sponsors to determine the nature of the relationship and expectations of WAFWA. Mr. Moore indicated he would return to seek the directors' approval should this proposal prove to be a mutually beneficial relationship.

Mr. Moore stressed the importance of the states being involved in development of the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan. He said the concern is that APHIS is more accustomed to coordinating with state veterinarians than fish health professionals of state wildlife agencies. Mr. Moore indicated this would be taken up at AFWA's Fisheries and Water Resources Committee meeting in September.

Mr. Moore recommended WAFWA enter into future discussions with the NPS to define joint State/NPS coordination processes to reach decisions about fish and wildlife management activities (fish stocking/non-native fish stocking) on National Park units.

Mr. Moore stated the committee was interested in holding a joint session with the Nongame and Endangered Species Committee next year for a portion of its meeting to discuss coordination and preparation for upcoming reviews and revisions of State Wildlife Action Plans.

Mr. Moore said the committee was also recommending that the review process of WAFWA/AFWA budget priorities be conducted sooner to communicate programmatic priorities to the FWS and federal partners earlier in their budgeting process. He also noted the committee was recommending use of the words "fish and wildlife" in place of "wildlife" in the Association's federal budget recommendations to re-emphasize to non-wildlife professionals, and members of Congress and their staff, that such requests are inclusive.

It was moved by Virgil Moore, and seconded by Bruce Thompson, that the Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee report be accepted as presented, including all recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

43). That the Association support the AFS position and recommendations on REDs published by EPA and encourage member agency review and comment to related notices appearing in the Federal Register.

44). That Greg Gerlich (CO) serve as WAFWA's representative to the Western Regional Panel of the ANS Task Force.

45). That the Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee continue to explore a potential outreach partnership including ANS education and outreach and advise the directors if and when it appears such a partnership with other entities would be mutually beneficial.

46). That WAFWA enter into further discussions with NPS to define joint State/NPS coordination processes to reach decisions about fish and wildlife management activities on National Park units.

47). That a joint session be held at the 2008 annual conference between the Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee and the Nongame and Endangered Species Committee to discuss coordination and preparation for upcoming reviews and revisions of State Wildlife Action Plans.

48). That the Association determine whether there are ways to streamline the process of communicating programmatic priorities to the FWS and other federal partners earlier in their budgeting process.

49). That to the extent possible, the Association use the word "fish and wildlife" rather than "wildlife" when conveying federal budget recommendations to ensure said recommendations are understood by all to be inclusive.

22. HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Keith Sexson presented the Habitat Committee report. Detailed minutes from the committee meeting are found on pages 349 - 352.

Mr. Sexson stressed the importance of the Association and its member agencies to continue to support Farm Bill funding and for the directors to engage themselves with State NRCS and FSA directors.

Mr. Sexson advanced the draft charter involving restoration of aspen ecosystems in the West that would be overseen by the Habitat Committee. He stated firm recommendations on how to proceed would be advanced at the January, 2008, business meeting for the directors' consideration (see pages 353 - 354).

Mr. Sexson indicated energy-related topics are now second only to the Farm Bill in matters discussed at the Habitat Committee meeting.

Mr. Sexson reported there would be another joint meeting with the Private Lands Access and Conservation Committee in January, 2008, in Arizona. Alan Clark requested that the agenda be widely distributed well in advance of the meeting to ensure agency representation matched the topics to be discussed.

Mr. Sexson announced Bill VanPelt is serving as interim Grasslands Coordinator for the Association following the resignation of Deb O'Neill, and he will serve in that capacity until it can be determined how best to hire someone to carry out these responsibilities over the long-term.

It was moved by Keith Sexson, and seconded by Virgil Moore, that the Habitat Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

50). That the draft charter entitled Restoring Aspen Ecosystems in the West be adopted and the Aspen Restoration Subcommittee of the Habitat Committee present its recommendation if and how the Association should proceed with some type of initiative to address this concern at the January, 2008, business meeting.

51). That the agenda for the January, 2008, joint meeting of the Habitat Committee and Private Lands Access and Conservation Committee be widely circulated in advance to ensure agency representation matches the topics to be discussed.

52). That Bill Van Pelt serve as the Interim Grasslands Coordinator.

23. PRIVATE LANDS ACCESS AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Terry Riley presented the Private Lands Access and Conservation Committee report. Minutes from the meeting can be found on page 355.

Mr. Riley indicated the committee recommended dissecting its charter at the winter meeting and suggested rewording to clarify that the access focus of the committee includes both private and public lands.

Mr. Riley stated a sub-group will offer suggested revision language for the charter to committee members in advance of the winter meeting.

Mr. Riley said the committee recommended the Association send the letter that was drafted by the Commissioners' Committee in support of the Farm Bill and Open Fields.

Mr. Riley noted the committee supported the current MOU on the National Shooting Sports Roundtable, but suggested review to address the issue of federal land management agency notification to state wildlife agency prior to the closure of any lands to hunting. He said the committee recommended each director designate a point person to identify two or three problem areas within each state to be forwarded to the Roundtable. Mr. Riley noted the areas should be land area specific with the access issue clearly spelled out.

It was moved by Bruce Thompson, and seconded by Kelly Hepler, that the Private Lands Access and Conservation Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

53). The Private Lands Access and Conservation Committee charter be revisited and revised and brought back to the Executive Committee following the joint meeting with the Habitat Committee in January, 2008.

54). That a subgroup of the Private Lands and Access Committee draft and circulate to committee members suggested revision language for its charter well in advance of the January, 2008, meeting.

55). That the Association send a letter supporting the Farm Bill and Open Fields, as drafted by the Commissioners' Committee.

56). That the National Shooting Sports Roundtable MOU be reviewed to address the issue of federal land management agency notification to state wildlife agencies prior to the closure of any lands to hunting.

57). That each director designate a point person to identify 2 or 3 problem areas within each state to be forwarded to the Roundtable.

24. LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Richard Hatcher presented the Law Enforcement Committee report. The committee meeting minutes are found on pages 356 - 359. Mr. Hatcher also distributed a summary of the committee's Game Warden Fact Sheet (see pages 360 - 361) the Association's officer exchange schedule for the coming years (see pages 362 - 365) and the summary of the Law Enforcement Workshop held in Flagstaff (see pages 366 - 367).

Mr. Hatcher then described each of seven committee recommendations – not including federal budget priorities which are automatically moved forward with the adoption of the committee report.

Hearing no questions, it was moved by Richard Hatcher, and seconded by Chris Smith, that the Law Enforcement Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

58). That Nancy Foley (CA) compile the 2008 state/province law enforcement reports.

59). That Rob Buonomici (NV) update recruitment retention survey for 2008 to include a column on general types of laws enforced by wildlife officers.

60). That Rob Buonomici (NV) update the game warden facts report for 2008.

61). That the Law Enforcement Committee request the Legal Committee to compile state laws regarding officer access to private lands prior to 2008 meeting.

62). That the law enforcement account balance be sent to South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks for the IMPACT project, and that the WAFWA Treasurer be notified there is no further need of a law enforcement account.

63). That the Law Enforcement Committee pursue the development of wildlife officer forecasting models to determine future personnel needs, and report progress at the 2008 meeting.

64). That the law enforcement workshop agenda be forwarded to the WAFWA Secretary for inclusion in the minutes.

24. DIRECTORS' ESA/SARA WORKING GROUP REPORT

Terry Johnson presented the Directors' ESA/SARA Working Group report on behalf of Chair Duane Shroufe. Minutes of the meeting can be found on pages 368 - 370.

Mr. Johnson quickly reviewed the topics that were presented and discussed during the breakfast meeting which included Mexican wolf management, state issues pertaining to polar bear listing, FWS/State Working Group for ESA Implementation, update on prairie dog and black-footed ferret issues, and ESA settlement agreements between FWS and private parties.

It was moved by Terry Johnson, and seconded by Ken Ambrock, that the Directors' ESA/SARA Working Group report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

25. NONGAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Terry Johnson presented the Nongame and Endangered Species Committee report. Due to the detailed nature of the committee meeting minutes (see pages 371 - 377), Mr. Johnson limited his remarks to the action items and recommendations involving the following topics: white-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dog conservation strategies; and black-footed ferret recovery.

It was moved by Terry Johnson, and seconded by Ken Ambrock, that the Nongame and Endangered Species Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

65). That the Association accept the Gunnison's Prairie Dog Conservation Plan addendum to the White-tailed and Gunnison's Prairie Dog Conservation Strategy.

66). That the Association reaffirm that Bill Van Pelt will continue to serve as WAFWA liaison to the black-footed ferret recovery planning process.

26. WILDLIFE HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

Alan Clark presented the Wildlife Health Committee report on behalf of Chair Keith Aune. Minutes of the meeting are found on pages 378 - 381.

Mr. Clark indicated the committee had extensive discussions about brucellosis in elk and bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area and heard an update on the National Fish and

Wildlife Health Initiative. He said the committee also heard several presentations on Domestic Sheep/Wild Sheep issues and APHIS' draft plan for Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS).

It was moved by Alan Clark, and seconded by Kelly Hepler, that the Wildlife Health Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

67). That the Wildlife Health Committee draft a letter for the AVMA relative to concerns for a news article published in JAVMA in May. The letter will be drafted by Dr. Collin Gilin and Dr. Kristin Mansfield and submitted to the WAFWA president for approval and signature.

68). That the Wildlife Health Committee develop standard protocols for monitoring sheep health, testing for transplant and investigating disease events or mortalities. The committee to assemble existing guidance and extract relevant information to be put into a standard set of protocols for Director approval in the summer meeting, 2008. These protocols to be developed to support management guidance developed by the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group.

69). That the Wildlife Health Committee update and review the existing WAFWA model protocol for pharmaceutical distribution and use. This should include recent updated information on appropriate withdrawal periods for various biologics and consider new and emerging immobilizing agents appropriate for wildlife. The protocol should comprehensively address human health and safety consideration.

27. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Bruce Thompson presented the Awards and Recognition Committee report. He thanked everyone for taking the time to nominate so many deserving individuals and entities for the various Association awards. He also thanked Ken Ambrock, Jim Karpowitz and Alan Clark for assisting with the selection process. As has become customary, because of the prestigious nature of these awards, Mr. Thompson took time to read the recipients for 2007. They included the following:

Phillip W. Schneider Lifetime Achievement Award	Bruce McCloskey, (CO-former director) Wayne Regelin, (AK-former deputy commissio
President's Award	Terry Mansfield, (ID-former deputy director)
Professional of the Year	M. Jeff Hagener, (MT-current director) David Propst, (NM-current employee)
Pogue-Elms Award	Kyle Kroll, (CA-current employee)
Outstanding Citizen Wildlife Contributor.....	Jan Hayes, (NM) John Koleszar, (AZ)

Commission of the Year.....	Wyoming
Special Achievement Award.....	Mike Golightly, (AZ-current commission chairman) New Mexico Wildlife Federation, (NM)
Honorary Lifetime Membership	James Bowns, (UT-former commission member) McKie Campbell, (AK-former commissioner) Don Childress, (MT-former administrator) John Cooper, (SD-former director) Steven Huffaker, (ID-former director) Al Martin, (BC-former administrator) Bruce McCloskey, (CO-former director) Miles Moretti, (UT-former deputy director) Bruce Morrison, (NE-former administrator) Tim Mulligan, (MT-former commission member) Peter Pino, (NM-former commission member) Wayne Regelin, (AK-former deputy commissioner) Allen Smith, (UT-former commission member) Tod Stevenson, (NM-former deputy director)

Mr. Thompson also indicated that because of the number of awards presented and the need to progress through the program in an orderly and timely manner, he had fully scripted this year's awards ceremony. He also indicated he had received many favorable comments and Mr. Thompson recommended this approach become the standard operating procedure for this important event.

It was moved by Bruce Thompson, and seconded by Virgil Moore, that the Awards and Recognition Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following action was agreed to by the directors:

70). That a scripted approach be used at future awards banquets when announcing the recipients and presenting the awards.

28. RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg presented the Resolutions Committee report on behalf of Chair Ken Ambrock. He announced that those resolutions that were approved by the committee for consideration by the directors had previously been distributed and action would be taken following a reading and discussion of the "Now therefore be it resolved" section of each resolution.

It was moved by Richard Hatcher, and seconded by Chris Smith, that the resolution entitled *Leadership in Reduction of Carbon Footprints* be accepted as presented (see page 382). The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Virgil Moore, and seconded by Ken Mayer, that the resolution entitled *Recognition for the State of Alaska for Its Leadership and Support of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan* be adopted as presented (see page 383). The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Larry Kruckenberg that the resolution entitled *Expression of Gratitude to the Arizona Game and Fish Department* be adopted by unanimous consent (see page 384).

The latter motion resulted in a standing ovation characterized by hoots, hollers, cheers, claps, whistles and other joyous gestures from the audience assembled, all meant to convey to President Duane Shroufe and his entire staff how deeply appreciative they were for the tremendous job they did in hosting the 2007 annual conference of the Association.

In adopting these resolutions, the following action was agreed to by the directors:

71). That copies of the resolutions be included in the business meeting minutes and also be presented to the appropriate entity by the Secretary. Furthermore, that a copy of the Arizona gratitude resolution be forwarded to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for distribution to all agency personnel.

29. LEGAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg presented the Legal Committee report on behalf of Acting Chair Ann Bright. Meeting minutes can be found on pages 385 - 386. He only reported on two action items involving the Open Fields Doctrine and the Use of Pittman-Robertson and Dingall-Johnson funds for Law Enforcement.

It was moved by Larry Kruckenberg, and seconded by Ruben Cantu, that the Legal Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

72). That the Legal Committee gather survey information from the various state wildlife agency attorneys concerning the application of the Open Fields Doctrine in each state and report the findings to both the Legal Committee and Law Enforcement Committee in July, 2008.

73). That Carol Bambery provide the Legal Committee with the FWS Directive on the topic of the use of Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds for law enforcement, and if the directive does not adequately address the issue, then it be presented to the Joint Task Force on Federal Aid Issues.

74). That the Legal Committee convey its findings regarding Action Item # 72 to the Law Enforcement Committee prior to the latter's July, 2008, meeting.

30. NOMINATING, TIME AND PLACE COMMITTEE REPORT

Kelly Hepler presented the time and place portion of the Nominating, Time and Place Committee report on behalf of Acting Chair Ken Taylor. Meeting minutes appear on pages 387 - 388. He indicated it was a very productive meeting and extremely helpful for those states preparing to host the mid-winter meeting and annual conference in the next several years. Mr. Hepler thanked Arizona's staff for providing useful planning material.

Mr. Helpler reported that the committee was recommending the normal rotation schedule for hosting the annual conference. That schedule included the following places and times:

2008 – South Dakota (Rapid City – July 10-16, 2008)
2009 – California (unknown, July, 2009)
2010 – Alaska
2011 – Montana

It was moved by Kelly Hepler, and seconded by Virgil Moore, that the time and place portion of the Nominating, Time and Place Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this portion of the committee report, the following action was agreed to by the directors:

75). That the Association's rotation schedule for hosting the annual conference reflect the following times and places: 2008 – South Dakota; 2009 – California; 2010 – Alaska; and 2011 – Montana.

31. RESOURCE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Kelly Hepler presented the Resource Information and Education Committee report. Minutes of the meeting are found on pages 389 - 392. He indicated the committee's primary focus at this meeting was to focus on developing strategies related to the suggested actions contained in the 2006 Association resolution on the Public Trust Doctrine. In that regard, Mr. Hepler reviewed five related recommendations for the directors' consideration.

It was moved by Kelly Hepler, and seconded by Virgil Moore, that the Resource Information and Education Committee report be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting this committee report, the following actions were agreed to by the directors:

76). That the Association member agencies purchase and distribute a copy of the "Opportunity for All" DVD to every hunter education instructor within their jurisdiction. To accompany the DVD, Resource Information and Education Committee will develop a cover letter and lesson plan encouraging its incorporation into the hunter education course. Lead states for this effort are Arizona and New Mexico and a draft product to be available in early fall, 2007.

77). *That the Association develop an agency resource guide that will assist resource personnel with understanding, applying and communicating the basic concepts inherent to expressing the NA Model in their daily activities. This resource to articulate the core concept message and include strategies for internal deployment, a collection of existing resources, examples of how it can be used, templates for common tasks (i.e., public meetings, legislative presentations, news releases) and reasons why this is relevant to what we do. Lead states for this effort are Arizona, Montana, Oklahoma and Wyoming and a draft product will be available for committee review in March 2008.*

78). *That the Association develop K-16 curriculum that conveys the principles of the North American Model and is consistent with state educational standards. Lead states for this effort are Arizona and California and a status report will be provided at the WAFWA mid-winter meeting.*

79). *That the Association develop a communication plan for conveying the principles of the North American Model and its relevance to the public. This includes utilizing both electronic and written media, inter- and intranet resources. Lead states for this effort are Alaska, Wyoming, and California and a draft product will be provided to the committee by October 2007 and a final draft to the committee chair by the WAFWA mid-winter meeting.*

80). *That the Association RI&E Committee solicit the Human Dimensions Committee for information about public awareness and attitudes to help craft messages and evaluate outcomes related to the efforts above. Lead state for this effort is Arizona.*

32. PROJECT WILD STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg announced that Steven Huffaker was interested in relinquishing his role as WAFWA's representative on the Project WILD Steering Committee. He reminded the directors that Mr. Huffaker had agreed to continue in that capacity only until a replacement director could be found.

President Shroufe asked if there were any volunteers. Hearing none, Mr. Shroufe offered that while this was an okay arrangement in the short-term, as time went on it would become less and less attractive as Mr. Huffaker lost day-to-day contact with member agencies. He indicated he would press incoming President Jeff Vonk to make it a priority to name a replacement for Mr. Huffaker to serve as WAFWA's representative on the Project WILD Steering Committee.

In hearing this request, the following action was agreed to by the directors:

81). *That incoming President Jeff Vonk search far and wide to find an interested replacement for Steven Huffaker to serve as WAFWA's representative on the Project WILD Steering Committee.*

33. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Kelly Hepler presented the nomination portion of the Nominating,, Time and Place Committee report on behalf of Acting Chair Ken Taylor. He submitted the following slate of officers for 2007-2008:

President..... Jeff Vonk (SD)
First Vice President..... Loris "Ryan" Broddrick (CA)
Second Vice President..... Denby Lloyd (AK)
Third Vice President..... Jeff Hagener (MT)
Secretary..... Larry Kruckenberg (WY)
Treasurer..... Stephen Barton (ID)

It was moved by Kelly Hepler, and seconded by Virgil Moore, and passed by acclamation to elect the slate of officers as presented.

In passing this motion, the following action was agreed to by the directors:

82). That the Association's officers for 2007-2008 include the following individuals: President – Jeff Vonk (SD); First Vice President – Loris "Ryan" Broddrick (CA); Second Vice President – Denby Lloyd (AK); Third Vice President – Jeff Hagener (MT); Secretary – Larry Kruckenberg (WY); and Treasurer – Stephen Barton (ID)

34. CLOSING REMARKS AND GAVEL EXCHANGE

Outgoing President Duane Shroufe thanked his colleagues for all their support of him and the Association over the past year. He indicated it had been a special year for him, especially since this was the second time he had served as the Association's President.

Mr. Shroufe stated that the traditional handover of the gavel to the incoming President would have to wait until the mid-winter meeting, since Jeff Vonk had to return to South Dakota before the business meeting concluded. For the record, however, Mr. Shroufe noted Mr. Vonk's tenure as Association President would commence immediately.

With all business completed, Outgoing President Shroufe declared the meeting adjourned at 3:05 P.M. and wished his colleagues safe travels home.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry L. Kruckenberg
Secretary

WAFWA SECRETARY'S REPORT

JANUARY – JUNE, 2007

The past six months have been extremely busy for the WAFWA Secretary, with a wide range of tasks and activities either accomplished or in process, and other routine services provided to member agencies and partners. Highlights for the year, to date, in no particular order of importance, include the following:

- Completed and distributed the mid-winter business meeting minutes.
- Completed most of the action items emanating from the mid-winter business meeting.
- Participated in two Executive Committee teleconference meetings and subsequently completed and distributed minutes from those meetings.
- Submitted one National Conservation Need to AFWA.
- Participated in AFWA Legislative and Federal Budget Committee working session in Washington, D.C. to ensure WAFWA federal budget priorities got incorporated in AFWA's Recommendations to Congress on the FY2008 Federal Budget.
- Updated and distributed copies of the "Yellow Books" for Committee and Working Group Chairs to aid them in preparing for meetings at the 2007 annual conference.
- Coordinated with all the Committee Chairs, President, and Program Chiefs to develop and finalize all the agendas for the 2007 annual conference in Flagstaff, Arizona.
- Updated rosters of WAFWA wildlife and fisheries program chiefs and made all necessary distribution of same.
- Completed update of Director and Commission/Board Member Rosters.
- Issued on news release during the period announcing the completion and availability of the Association's *Greater Sage Grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy.*
- Assisted the Awards and Recognition Committee in the announcement and follow-up reminders to solicit nominations for the various award categories. Ordered all the awards for 2007 recipients and notified all recipients about the details of their respective award(s) and the Awards Banquet.
- Participated in two teleconference and one regular meeting between the regional association coordinators and AFWA's leadership including the Executive Director, President and President-Elect to discuss priorities, communications, and the changing role of regional associations.
- Participated in two teleconference meetings with other regional association coordinators and AFWA's legal counsel involving the merits, of and process for securing, Directors and Officers insurance

for regional associations, as well as copyrighting and incorporation procedures.

- Had numerous communications with South Dakota officials regarding hosting the 2008 Annual Conference in Rapid City.
- Worked extensively with WAFWA leads for the Prairie Ecosystem and North American Mule Deer Conservation Plan Memorandums of Understandings to facilitate procurement of outstanding agency signatures.
- Helped revise, finalize and distribute the vacancy announcement for WAFWA Treasurer.
- Worked extensively with chairs of two new working groups – wild sheep and mountain lion – appraising them of WAFWA protocol, other committee/working group reporting requirements, and assisting with working group member recruitment.

In addition, since the mid-winter meeting, as part of the day-to-day conduct of business, based on extensive tracking over the past two years, the Secretary would have averaged over 1000 Association-related e-mails, and initiated or responded to over 700 e-mails that involved information dissemination about the Association. Likewise, he would have initiated or received over 125 phone calls involving Association business since the beginning of the year. During this same period, the Secretary also drafted or assisted with the drafting of 47 individual letters that required the signature of the President or Secretary, and handled all distribution. In sum, the Secretary spent 505 hours in the conduct of Association-related business during the period January 1 – June 30, 2007.

The Secretary wishes to thank all the directors, committee and working group chairs, commission/board members, and other volunteers for all their hard work and attention to getting Action Items completed. During the past year, 95 actions were approved by the directors, of which at least 73 (76%) were accomplished. It's been a great year. Everyone's support of WAFWA is really appreciated!!

Respectfully submitted,

Larry L. Kruckenberg
WAFWA Secretary

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeff Vonk at 1:33 PM, July 10, 2007. Nine members of the committee and 10 other guests were in attendance.

Leonard Ordway presented the Wildlife Chiefs' report. Two major issues that surfaced during their meeting was a concern on the part of some state wildlife agencies that they are not engaged with their respective university-based Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, nor help direct the research being conducted; as well as a belief that some of the WAFWA Sanctioned Workshops are not in compliance with reporting requirements.

Actions:

1). *It was moved by Terry Cleveland, and seconded by Bruce Thompson, that the Association send a letter to AFWA urging AFWA to convey as part of its ongoing discussions with USGS on related matters, the importance of strong state partnerships as regards the operation and activities of university-based cooperative fish and wildlife research units, as well as the need for additional applied research which oftentimes has greater utility for state wildlife agencies. The motion passed unanimously*

2). *It was moved by Duane Shroufe, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the Wildlife Chiefs be tasked with reviewing the wildlife-related WAFWA Sanctioned Workshops, and, in effect, help coordinate that function on behalf of the Association to ensure that the workshops are being organized and conducted in a manner consistent with established criteria and guidelines, and the ideals and priorities of the Association. The motion passed unanimously.*

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg reviewed ongoing discussions with AFWA Legal Counsel Carol Bambery and the other regional associations concerning the need for these entities to secure Directors and Officers Insurance and General Liability Insurance. He stressed that given the amount of funds being handled annually, independent contractors, and the nature of activities the Association is involved with, this would be a prudent, albeit relatively inexpensive, action to take.

Action:

3). *It was moved by Ryan Broddrick, and seconded by Duane Shroufe, that the Association purchase Directors and Officers Insurance, and General Liability Insurance (@$1M) for an estimated cost of $1,500-$2,000/year. The motion passed unanimously.*

Treasurer Stephen Barton outlined the functioning of, and benefits that could be derived from, the Association establishing an independent supporting 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation.

Action:

4). *It was moved by Terry Cleveland, and seconded by Stephen Barton, that the Association move forward with creating an independent supporting 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation and that Carol Bambery's services be utilized. The motion passed unanimously.*

Treasurer Barton voiced additional concern about the tardiness of reports from some sanctioned workshops. He encouraged stronger action be taken.

Actions:

5). *It was moved by Stephen Barton, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the Association send a letter to all sanctioned workshops that are in arrears with reporting and urge them to correct such deficiencies and report by or at the mid-winter meeting, or run the risk of having the directors revoke the "WAFWA Sanctioned" status of said workshop or workshops. The motion passed unanimously.*

6). *It was moved by Stephen Barton, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the Association also send a letter to those sanctioned workshops that have not yet transferred funds they are holding to the WAFWA Treasury, where they will be held in a restricted fund for the future use by the respective workshops, but within the guidelines and fiscal practices established by WAFWA. The motion passed unanimously.*

Secretary Larry Kruckenberg advised that the Association had received two contributing membership applications – one from ALL Consulting of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the other XONtv (in partnership with Chris Chaffin Communications), based in Mississippi. He recommended approval of both.

Action:

7). *It was moved by Duane Shroufe, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the applications for contributing membership for All Consulting, (Tulsa, Oklahoma), and XONtv (partnership with Chris Chaffin Communications) be approved. The motion passed unanimously.*

Secretary Kruckenberg discussed the practice of the Executive Committee annually establishing that portion of the next year's registration fee that must be returned to the Association's treasury. He recommended it remain at $20. Much discussion followed and centered on the fact that additional fiscal resources will be needed to secure Treasurer and Secretary services in the future, and the Association should garner more return from the annual conference.

Action:

8). *It was moved by Stephen Barton, and seconded by Terry Cleveland, that the portion of the 2008 annual conference registration fee that is returned to WAFWA be increased from $20 to $40/head. The motion passed unanimously.*

Jeff Vonk reminded Executive Committee members of the actions the committee had taken at its June, 2007, meeting regarding advancing a recommendation to the business meeting to allow Stephen Barton to continue to provide Treasurer services to the Association as an independent contractor. Specifically, the recommended actions by the Executive Committee follow:

Actions:

9). *That the Association contract with Stephen Barton to provide Treasurer services for the period August 1, 2007 through July 31, 2008. Said agreement may be extended for up to two additional one-year periods upon mutual review and agreement of both parties. The rate of compensation is established at $57.50 per hour. For year one of the agreement a cap not to exceed $35,000 is established. The agreement to include language that a consumer price index (or other appropriate inflationary index) be used annually, thereafter, to establish compensation to ensure the hourly rate for services provided would be adjusted accordingly on an annual bases and not remain static.*

10). *Further, the funding mechanism for securing such services be a combination special assessment in FY08 of $900 for U.S. members only and the Association begin charging a 7% overhead fee on federal and private grants, as permitted.*

There was additional discussion – which was a follow-up to a similar discussion that surfaced at the June, 2007, Executive Committee meeting – about the likely transition that needs to occur in how the Association secures its Treasurer and Secretary services in the future. Chair Vonk and others reiterated that given the time demands for these functions that it is unlikely and impractical to think these services will come from agency volunteers in the future. This became readily apparent in the recent search for Treasurer. With Secretary Kruckenberg's announcement that he would not serve as a volunteer beyond July, 2010, perhaps earlier, Chair Vonk advised the committee of the other action they had agreed to at their June meeting, that being the following:

Action:

11). *That a comprehensive discussion about the Association's long-term service needs including both Treasurer and Secretary be held at the January, 2008, mid-winter meeting.*

Additional discussion followed, with there being broad consensus that planning needs to start sooner rather than later and funding options need to be explored as well. In that regard, Denby Lloyd inquired about the dues structure and how the process works to amend the Association bylaws. The Secretary explained that depending upon the outcome of discussions in January, 2008, if a dues increase were among a menu of options being looked at it couldn't be acted on until the July, 2008, business meeting because of the notification requirements for amending the bylaws.

Action:

12). It was moved by Stephen Barton, and seconded by Denby Lloyd, that the Executive Committee serve notice to the membership of a bylaws revision to be considered at the 2008 mid-winter meeting involving a potential dues increase. The motion passed unanimously.

With all business completed, Chair Jeff Vonk declared the meeting adjourned at 3:38 PM.

WAFWA Wildlife Chiefs' Meeting Minutes

Kaibab Room
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 8, 2007

PRESENT:

Leonard Ordway	Arizona
Ken McDonald	Montana
Kim Titus	Alaska
Jim Unsworth	Idaho
Jay Lawson	Wyoming
Alicia Hardin	Nebraska
Steve Riley	Nebraska
Amber Pairis	AFWA, Washington, D. C.
Russ Mason	Nevada
Ron Anglin	Oregon
Tony Leif	South Dakota
Tom Remington	Colorado
Clay Brewer	Texas
Mike Mitchner	Kansas
R. J. Kirkpatrick	New Mexico
Craig McLaughlin	Utah
Clayton Wolf	Texas
Gene DeGayner	USFS
Alan Clark	Utah
Marty Vavra	Oregon
Tim Holt	Arizona
Tristana Bickford	Arizona
John O'Dell	Arizona
Brian Wakeling	Arizona
Rick Langley	Arizona
George Vandel	South Dakota
Norris Dodd	Arizona
Miles Moretti	Mule Deer Foundation
Curtis Herbert	Arizona
Scott Fischer	Arizona
Jen Mock Schaeffer	AFWA, Washington, D. C.
Richard Remington	Logan Simpson Design
Rocky Beach	Washington
Chasa O'Brien	Arizona
Ruben Cantu	Texas
Lori Faeth	Arizona Governor's Office

Action Items:

- Use AFWA Science and Research Liaison as a resource when needs develop.
- (From federal budget priorities discussion) **Leonard Ordway** will discuss with WAFWA Executive Committee the need for better research needs coordination between USGS Cooperative Research Units and several member states.
- **Leonard Ordway** will talk with **Larry Kruckenburg** about structure for Sage Grouse Technical Committee.
- Discuss at next Wildlife Chiefs' meeting formal oversight of working groups and workshops. **Tony Leif** will acquire charters/bylaws for each working group and workshop along with the WAFWA Workshop Guidelines and distribute all to other Wildlife Chiefs prior to next meeting.

Welcome:

Leonard Ordway opened the meeting at 8:04a. Everyone introduced themselves.

Agenda Review:

The agenda was reviewed.

A few agenda items were added at the request of **Miles Moretti** with Mule Deer Foundation (MDF). Miles will address the group to provide an update on MDF. Discussion on predator management program review in Alaska by The Wildlife Society was added **Kim Titus**. Wildlife Chiefs function discussion was added by **Jim Unsworth**.

Copies of the state reports were distributed.

Specific items of interest were discussed:

Utah bear incident. **Craig McLaughlin**, Utah, provided a briefing on a bear-caused fatality on a boy camping in Utah. The boy was killed on June 17, 2007 by an evidently healthy bear. The bear had been in the same camp site during the previous night. Wildlife services tracked and killed the bear within 24 hours. First bear caused fatality to humans recorded in Utah. Utah's bear incident policy was followed. General discussion followed concerning dangerous encounters with humans and the need for up to date policies.

Kim Titus offered to discuss Alaska's wolf control program with anyone interested.

Jay Lawson noted Wyoming recently hosted a human-wildlife interaction workshop.

2006 Minutes:

Minutes from the July 22, 2006 meeting in Bismarck, North Dakota were provided to all and reviewed. No changes to the minutes were necessary. There was a question regarding the action item that indicated Mike Johnson's chapter from the Snow Goose Direct Control Guidelines

would be distributed. **Alan Clark**, Utah, indicated he had a copy with him at this meeting and could provide a copy to anyone interested. Copies were made and distributed to all in attendance.

FY 2009 Federal Budget Priorities:

The group reviewed last year's budget priorities pertinent to the Wildlife Chiefs program needs and recommend the following be submitted or continued for the next fiscal year.

- Provide adequate funding to the U.S. Forest Service to implement and enforce the Designated Motorized Route Rule.

- Financing associated with the National Invasive Species Council similar to that submitted last year, with the addition of avian and terrestrial (e.g., cheat grass and rats).

- Consistent with the Western Governors' Association June 22, 2006, letter, provide sufficient funding within the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to support on-going conservation efforts in sagebrush country, including beginning implementation of key measures in the WAFWA "Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy."

- Provide $2 million per year within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget to fund the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project adaptive management processes and NEPA compliance (including an Environmental Impact Statement, if needed) associated with revising the existing nonessential experimental population rule for the Mexican wolf.

- Provide base funding ($710,000 per year) for operation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center. Funding is needed to ensure adequate Service support of state and federal agencies, Tribes and other parties undertaking cooperative black-footed ferret recovery efforts across several western states, Canada and Mexico.

- Provide sufficient funding within the Bureau of Land Management budget to fully fund state wildlife agency assessment and mitigation work associated with expediting permitting of oil and gas exploration and extraction.

- Increase funding within the Department of Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Department of Agriculture budgets to provide grants to states for development and implementation of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative for the United States.

- Redistribute USGS funding from Science Centers and NBII to support expansion of the Cooperative Research Unit program and move administrative control of the Cooperative Unit program from USGS to the Fish and Wildlife Service to assure that the practical and immediate science needs of state fish and wildlife agencies are met.

- Provide supplemental funding within U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the U.S.-arctic polar bear research in cooperation with Alaska and North Slope Borough.

- A $1 million addition to the base budget of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist with research and monitoring efforts of grizzly bears in all four northwestern states for the purpose of advancing recovery and delisting of that species.

- Increase funding within the Interior Department, NRCS, and U.S. Forest Service budgets for multi-state conservation strategies to benefit at-risk species in the Western Grasslands, Shrub-Steppe, Hawaiian Islands, and Sierra Nevada Foothills.

- Increase funding within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program to enable valuable annual waterfowl populations surveys and related harvest services (i.e., HIP payments to states) to be accomplished. Additional funding to expand waterfowl surveys in the West, particularly British Columbia, and establishment of designated funds for goose depredations in Oregon and Washington is necessary.

- Provide sufficient funding in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget for state wildlife agencies to carry-out post-delisting monitoring and management of the bald eagle for a minimum of the required monitoring period.

- Establish a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service trust fund and provide funding to that trust to enable predictable, long-term monitoring and management of wolves and grizzly bears by state fish and wildlife agencies in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming (especially post-delisting). Until a trust fund is established, annual appropriations should be provided.

- Continue opposition to any level of funding the National Park Service's Natural Resource Challenge Program.

- Further reduction of that portion of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Program budget devoted to listing of species, and increased funding for recovery efforts.

- Increase funding for Interior and Agriculture agencies to implement plans directed at avian influenza surveillance, monitoring, and emergency response with provisions for state assistance.

- Increase funding for state wildlife grant program and reauthorize LIP to place priority on implementation of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies-Wildlife Action Plans, including use of funds for education-outreach.

- Increase support and funding for conservation side of Farm Bill programs.

- Increase funding within the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget for traditional Section 6 state grants as well as related competitive grants.

- Increase funding for Interior and Agriculture agencies to implement the National CWD Plan and assist the state wildlife agencies.
- Reestablish and fund base wildlife program needs within respective federal agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service).

John Fischer from the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study provided the group with an overall funding needs assessment and provided the group with a copy of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative for the United States.

AFWA Science and Research Activities Update:

Amber Pairis, AFWA Science and Research Liaison, gave a briefing on her activities and role. She shared an overview of current activities, including two handouts intended to be working documents outlining priority projects developed from surveys of Wildlife Chiefs. She encouraged the Wildlife Chiefs to use her as a resource. Amber will also carry the message to AFWA concerning USGS Cooperative Research Unit relations with state wildlife agencies and deviation from applicable research.

Hunter Recruitment and Retention Initiatives:

Tristana Bickford, Arizona Game and Fish Department Hunter Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, provided a PowerPoint briefing on Arizona's program.

Jay Lawson – Wyoming has identified individual herds for "quality" management. Others managed for "recreational" opportunity. Recreational opportunity may be provided through antlerless tags.

Steve Riley – Need to be careful about all the pressure we receive regarding managing for quality. There is much publicity constantly in circulation to the public that emphasizes the concept.

Alicia Hardin – Use strategic approach. Need a handle on other issues like hunter crowding.

George Vandel – use phased in approach, eliminate subdivided units or hunt areas to the extent possible. Look for ways to develop hunting decision-making skills (e.g., shoot, don't shoot) through mentored situations.

Kim Titus – opportunity is very available in Alaska. Local advisory committees opposing specific hunts for juniors. Commission is not supportive of special hunts. Archers, muzzleloaders, and general hunters compete during same season. Mandatory reporting penalties have been incredibly expensive and counter to recruitment and retention. We want educated compliance, not enforced restriction. Have implemented full curl restrictions on some sheep hunts. Turned into a bit of a problem situation, and now many are being managed for limited entry with much more success.

Jay Lawson – Wyoming tried to implement recruitment opportunities in a distributed fashion so that limited income or young hunters could participate close to home. Private landowners have been receptive to ideas for youth opportunities because they have better control with limited cross section of public, rather than a wide open anyone-can-participate situation.

Ron Anglin – Oregon has a program by which a hunter, with one firearm, and one mentored youth, either can use the tag. No transfer needed ahead of time.

Jim Unsworth – Idaho is getting a lot of pressure to manage for quality.

Kim Titus – Alaska is being pushed to go to a preference system.

Jim Unsworth – Suggested the concept of developing a list of WAFWA sanctioned "these were really bad ideas" that could be shared with Commissioners and the public.

Tom Remington – Colorado efforts at recruitment and retention does not seem to be as effective as hoped. Fifteen percent of deer tags set aside for youth, and they are not being used entirely. Prices lowered on some pheasant hunt areas, and left underused. Decline in pheasant hunters stopped, but did not turn around. Our efforts seem to be effective at giving people a good opportunity for those that would be recruited anyway. Targeting new residents may be a good approach.

Mule Deer Foundation (MDF):

Miles Moretti – MDF twentieth anniversary is next year. MDF is making changes and becoming more functional. MDF's goal is to partner with the agencies on habitat projects and management issues for mule deer. MDF will be reinstituting their national projects funding again next year. Miles extended an invitation to all to attend the annual convention. He also solicited articles from biologists for their magazine.

ATV-Game Retrieval-Travel Management Issues:

Ron Anglin – Oregon is seeing an impact as a result of increased ATV-OHV use. Seeing distribution of wildlife changing as a result of this disturbance. Some ongoing studies of ATV use at the Starkey Experimental Range. Project will be seeking funding for more study.

Marty Vavra gave a PowerPoint presentation on the ongoing studies on the Starkey Experimental Range (25,000 acres with game proof fence surrounding). Off road recreation study. Elk are much more influenced by recreational activity than deer. ATVs had highest impact on elk, followed by mountain bikers, horseback riders, and hikers. Deer may hide rather than run.

Designing a study to test effects of ATVs during hunting seasons, which has not yet been evaluated on Starkey. All studies on disturbance by ATVs to date have been during seasons when hunting was not ongoing. No planned allowance for game retrieval capabilities with ATVs. Do not yet know how scouting activity will be allowed or monitored.

Leonard Ordway brought up the issue that is being faced in Arizona with changes in vehicle use restrictions, specifically game retrieval issues on Forest Service lands. Arizona has been told this is only an expressed issue in Arizona. Some other states expressed concerns as well as Arizona.

Jim Unsworth – Idaho treated ATV as a method of take. During season, ATV could only use on four wheel drive roads. But use was allowed before and after hunting hours or to move camp, which effectively gutted the rule. The restriction on game retrieval is part of the vulnerability picture for elk. Hunters are less likely to take an elk in an inaccessible location if they cannot retrieve with a vehicle.

A number of states indicated that ATV use is affecting elk distributions.

There are many issues associated with these new travel management regulations. Plainly, ATV use needs to regulated, but game retrieval may be a legitimate use. Many existing rules are routinely violated now.

Wildlife Linkages:

Norris Dodd – Arizona Game and Fish Department Research Biologist provided a PowerPoint presentation on highway permeability and elk. Norris has several of these papers recently published in the Journal of Wildlife Management. He can be reached at doddnbenda@cybertrails.com for electronic copies or reprints.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) – Review Current Status, Management Approach, and Carcass Import-Export Regulations:

Tom Remington provided a PowerPoint update on Chronic Wasting Disease in the west. No treatment effort to date (i.e., culling) has been shown to be effective. Prions are persistent in the soil, so there may be limited success or effect by eliminating positive CWD animals. Treatment may ultimately be more damaging to the population than the disease. Intensive harvesting of deer and managing for low buck to doe ratios may remove animals before they develop clinical symptoms of the disease.

At least 32 states and 3 provinces currently have restrictions on importing parts. Two other states and 1 other province are considering restrictions. Typically these states and provinces will allow packaged meat without bone to be imported, however we now know that prions occur within this tissue.

Hunter harvested animals are the least effective and most expensive way to detect presence of CWD. Use of roadkilled animals or targeted surveillance is much more effective and less expensive to detect CWD in a population. Males tend to have greater prevalence as age increases to about 5, whereas female prevalence is fairly flat across age classes.

Bans on feeding are a method by which we can manage concentrations and probably effect spread.

Avian Influenza Monitoring Update:

Kim Titus – Avian Influenza (AI) monitoring still ongoing, with some changes to protocols, driven by likely transmission species and funding. Alaska is a primary state because of proximity and likelihood of Asian connection to migratory birds with highly pathogenic AI. No H5N1 detections from over 21,000 samples.

Predator Management in Alaska

Kim Titus – The Wildlife Society (TWS) Council has initiated a review of predator management policies and actions used in Alaska. **John Organ** with TWS has been contacted a number of times regarding this proposed review, which was initiated without consultation with the Alaska wildlife agency. A letter was provided to TWS, but no response has yet to be received. The state chapter of TWS was involved with the issue.

Mountain Lion Working Group Update:

Russ Mason – Duane Shroufe authored a publication in the Wildlife Society Bulletin to initiate concern about previous Cougar Management Guidelines. There have been 2-3 meetings with original authors to discuss new draft. Two sets of minutes from these meetings have been provided to the group. There remains substantial disagreement about the new draft to serve as a second edition or the WAFWA guidelines. At the meeting held yesterday, the outline of the next draft was developed. There will be a document scheduled for publication in 2009.

Mule Deer Working Group Update:

Brian Wakeling – Jim Heffelfinger is the chair of the Mule Deer Working Group. The group is reprinting several previous publications, including the popular version of the issues paper that addresses the many challenges facing mule deer in the west. The habitat guidelines for the Southwestern Desert Ecoregion is also in a reprinting stage. Orders should be coordinated through the work group to assure adequate delivery and funding for your state.

The group expects final approval of the Colorado Plateau and California Chaparral Ecoregion habitat guidelines, thanks to the efforts of lead authors **Bruce Watkins** of Colorado and **Mary Sommers** of California. Orders for these two sections are also being coordinated through the working group.

Four other habitat guideline ecoregion sections will be presented to the Directors at this meeting as initial review drafts. The four remaining sections should be completed and ready for printing after the 2009 WAFWA meeting.

The Mule Deer Working Group borrowed $5,000 from WAFWA to reproduce several additional Wallmo Award Bronzes. The fund raising efforts of the group have made it possible to repay that loan already.

The Mule Deer Working Group provided input and assistance to the deer-elk workshop recently held in Estes Park, Colorado. Colorado did an excellent job hosting this WAFWA sanctioned workshop.

Wild Sheep Working Group Update:

Leonard Ordway – Kevin Hurley is chair of this work group. An initial subcommittee of the group has developed a draft "Recommendations for domestic sheep and goat management in wild sheep habitat." This draft is currently under review by the Directors.

Russ Mason asked about a wildlife veterinarian meeting planned in conjunction with TWS annual conference in Tucson during September. **Jay Lawson** agreed to ask **Kevin Hurley** to make contact with meeting organizers to determine potential cooperation.

Cervid Baiting Issues:

Leonard Ordway – As noted during Tom Remington's CWD presentation, Twenty-three states and provinces ban baiting, 8 restrict baiting, 7 ban feeding, and 10 regulate feeding. Arizona is considering some regulation on baiting because it seems to be effective in increasing hunt success for archers particularly, although it helps all hunters. Other concerns include hunting ethics, disease transmission, and introduction of invasive species.

Craig McLaughlin – Noted that it didn't seem to be much of a visible problem in Utah.

R. J. Kirkpatrick – New Mexico is starting to see a greater issue with baiting.

Ruben Cantu – Texas has some rather unique issues with baiting and feeding, since much of the state is privately owned and managed at high deer densities.

Other Discussion Items and Agenda Items for Next Year:

Sage Grouse Committee – There was some apparent confusion within the Sage Grouse Committee as to there direct report line. The Committee was originally created under Bird Conservation Committee of AFWA, but due to the elevated status of the issues with which they are working they have been reporting directly to WAFWA Directors.

There may be a need to have more formal guidance from Directors as to how WAFWA sanctioned working groups function. **Leonard** will talk with **Larry Kruckenburg** on how to proceed with this issue.

WAFWA sanctioned work groups and workshops discussion is an agenda item for next year. There was general consensus that the Wildlife Chiefs should be involved in the process with each formal group.

Adjourn: 5:00p

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Statement of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2007

	Jun 30, 07	Jun 30, 06	$ Change	% Change
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Checking/Savings				
10000 · US Bank - Checking Accounts				
10001 · WAFWA Main Checking #5216	77,044.96	35,777.68	41,267.28	115.34%
10002 · Conference Checking AZ # 5208	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.0%
10003 · Conference checking CA #5224	500.00	100.00	400.00	400.0%
10004 · Conference checking SD # 7714	500.00	500.00	0.00	0.0%
Total 10000 · US Bank - Checking Accounts	78,144.96	36,477.68	41,667.28	114.23%
Total Checking/Savings	78,144.96	36,477.68	41,667.28	114.23%
Accounts Receivable				
11000 · Accounts Receivable - Summary				
11200 · Contracts/Grants Receivable	-0.09	1,000.00	-1,000.09	-100.01%
11400 · Publications Receivable	6,447.83	-18,878.00	25,325.83	-134.16%
Total 11000 · Accounts Receivable - Summary	6,447.74	-17,878.00	24,325.74	-136.07%
Total Accounts Receivable	6,447.74	-17,878.00	24,325.74	-136.07%
Other Current Assets				
13500 · Proceedings Inventory	3,100.00	3,100.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Other Current Assets	3,100.00	3,100.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Current Assets	87,692.70	21,699.68	65,993.02	304.12%
Other Assets				
18000 · Marketable Securities				
18300 · Short Term Investments	156,200.46	175,387.04	-19,186.58	-10.94%
18400 · Long Term Investments	25,339.57	25,339.57	0.00	0.0%
Total 18000 · Marketable Securities	181,540.03	200,726.61	-19,186.58	-9.56%
Total Other Assets	181,540.03	200,726.61	-19,186.58	-9.56%
TOTAL ASSETS	**269,232.73**	**222,426.29**	**46,806.44**	**21.04%**
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Other Current Liabilities				
21000 · Prepaid WAFWA Proceedings	60.00	0.00	60.00	100.0%
Total Other Current Liabilities	60.00	0.00	60.00	100.0%
Total Current Liabilities	60.00	0.00	60.00	100.0%
Total Liabilities	60.00	0.00	60.00	100.0%
Equity				
30000 · Opening Bal Equity	79,342.54	3,800.00	75,542.54	1,987.96%
32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets	218,626.29	25,806.05	192,820.24	747.19%
Net Income	-28,796.10	192,820.24	-221,616.34	-114.93%
Total Equity	269,172.73	222,426.29	46,746.44	21.02%
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**269,232.73**	**222,426.29**	**46,806.44**	**21.04%**

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Consolidated Statement of Financial Income and Expense
July 2006 through June 2007

	TOTAL	
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
40200 · Program Income		
40210 · Membership Dues	11,500.00	
40215 · Associate Membership Dues	700.00	
40220 · Member Assessments	186,674.69	
40230 · Repaid Conf. Seed Money	5,000.00	
40240 · Conference Registration Fees	3,980.00	
40250 · Conference Proceeds	36,284.06	
Total 40200 · Program Income		244,138.75
43300 · Direct Public Contracts/ Grants		
43330 · Foundation Contacts/Grants	-679.00	
Total 43300 · Direct Public Contracts/ Grants		-679.00
43400 · Direct Public Support		
43450 · Individ, Business Contributions	1,225.00	
43490 · Foundation/NGO Donations	2,500.00	
Total 43400 · Direct Public Support		3,725.00
44400 · Government Contracts		
44420 · Federal Contracts	305,387.79	
Total 44400 · Government Contracts		305,387.79
45000 · Investments		
45020 · Dividend, Interest (Securities)	819.23	
45030 · Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	9,008.34	
Total 45000 · Investments		9,827.57
46400 · Other Types of Income		
46430 · Miscellaneous Revenue	40.00	
46440 · Proceedings Income	3,580.00	
Total 46400 · Other Types of Income		3,620.00
Total Income		566,020.11
Cost of Goods Sold		
50700 · Cost of Sales - Inventory Sales		
50710 · Cost of Proceedings	1,290.00	
50720 · Cost of WAFWA Minutes	2,524.25	
Total 50700 · Cost of Sales - Inventory Sales		3,814.25
Total COGS		3,814.25
Gross Profit		562,205.86
Expense		
60300 · Awards and Grants		
60320 · Cash Awards and Grants	10,000.00	
60330 · Noncash Awards and Grants	6,394.66	
Total 60300 · Awards and Grants		16,394.66
60900 · Business Expenses		
60910 · Bad Debts	861.08	
Total 60900 · Business Expenses		861.08

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Consolidated Statement of Financial Income and Expense
July 2006 through June 2007

	TOTAL	
62100 · Contract Services		
62150 · Outside Contract Services		
62151 · Contractor Personnel Costs	293,356.54	
62152 · Contractor - Sub Conctracts		
62155 · Contractor Travel	52,831.43	
62156 · Contractor Supplies	2,738.17	
62157 · Contractor Printing	11,233.53	
62158 · Contractor Other Direct Expense	30,428.43	
62159 · Contractor Indirect Costs	11,751.67	
62150 · Outside Contract Services - Other	5,617.70	
Total 62150 · Outside Contract Services		407,957.47
62170 · Professional Services		79,136.82
Total 62100 · Contract Services		487,094.29
65000 · Operations		
65020 · Postage, Mailing Service		6,506.71
65030 · Printing and Copying		32,094.49
65040 · Supplies		51.12
65090 · Secretary / Treasurer Reimburse		2,000.00
Total 65000 · Operations		40,652.32
65100 · Other Types of Expenses		
65160 · Other Costs		904.75
Total 65100 · Other Types of Expenses		904.75
65200 · Conference Seed Money Expense		5,000.00
68300 · Travel and Meetings		
68310 · Conference, Convention, Meeting		4,095.48
68320 · Travel		12,735.49
Total 68300 · Travel and Meetings		16,830.97
Total Expense		567,738.07
Net Ordinary Income		-5,532.21
Other Income/Expense		
Other Expense		
80200 · Payments to Affiliates		
80210 · Conference Seed Money Advance		500.00
Total 80200 · Payments to Affiliates		500.00
Total Other Expense		500.00
Net Other Income		-500.00
Net Income		**-6,032.21**

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Statement of Financial Income and Expense
July 2006 through June 2007

	WAFWA Administrative Fund	Conference Proceedings (WAFWA Publications)	TOTAL
y Income/Expense			
come			
40200 · Program Income			
40210 · Membership Dues	11,500.00		11,500.00
40215 · Associate Membership Dues	700.00		700.00
40230 · Repaid Conf. Seed Money	5,000.00		5,000.00
40240 · Conference Registration Fees	3,980.00		3,980.00
40250 · Conference Proceeds	36,284.06		36,284.06
Total 40200 · Program Income	57,464.06		57,464.06
45000 · Investments			
45020 · Dividend, Interest (Securities)	819.23		819.23
45030 · Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	9,008.34		9,008.34
Total 45000 · Investments	9,827.57		9,827.57
46400 · Other Types of Income			
46430 · Miscellaneous Revenue	40.00		40.00
46440 · Proceedings Income		3,540.00	3,540.00
Total 46400 · Other Types of Income	40.00	3,540.00	3,580.00
tal Income	67,331.63	3,540.00	70,871.63
st of Goods Sold			
50700 · Cost of Sales - Inventory Sales			
50710 · Cost of Proceedings		1,290.00	1,290.00
50720 · Cost of WAFWA Minutes	2,524.25		2,524.25
Total 50700 · Cost of Sales - Inventory Sales	2,524.25	1,290.00	3,814.25
tal COGS	2,524.25	1,290.00	3,814.25
s Profit	64,807.38	2,250.00	67,057.38
pense			
60300 · Awards and Grants			
60320 · Cash Awards and Grants	5,000.00		5,000.00
60330 · Noncash Awards and Grants	1,394.66		1,394.66
Total 60300 · Awards and Grants	6,394.66		6,394.66
62100 · Contract Services			
62150 · Outside Contract Services			
62151 · Contractor Personnel Costs	3,319.39		3,319.39
62155 · Contractor Travel	806.10		806.10
62158 · Contractor Other Direct Expen	34.20		34.20
Total 62150 · Outside Contract Services	4,159.69		4,159.69
62170 · Professional Services	10,170.82		10,170.82
Total 62100 · Contract Services	14,330.51		14,330.51
65000 · Operations			
65020 · Postage, Mailing Service	167.34		167.34
65030 · Printing and Copying	1,346.49		1,346.49
65040 · Supplies	51.12		51.12
65090 · Secretary / Treasurer Reimburse	2,000.00		2,000.00
Total 65000 · Operations	3,564.95		3,564.95
65100 · Other Types of Expenses			
65160 · Other Costs	904.75		904.75
Total 65100 · Other Types of Expenses	904.75		904.75
65200 · Conference Seed Money Expense	5,000.00		5,000.00
68300 · Travel and Meetings			
68320 · Travel	10,577.77		10,577.77
Total 68300 · Travel and Meetings	10,577.77		10,577.77
al Expense	40,772.64		40,772.64
nary Income	24,034.74	2,250.00	26,284.74
	24,034.74	2,250.00	26,284.74

WAFWA TREASURER'S REPORT

January to June, 2007

As your WAFWA Treasurer, the past six months have been a busy period. Upon leaving Idaho Fish and Game, it was necessary to acquire new accounting software (Microsoft Quick Books for Nonprofits) and transition all WAFWA financial records to the new system. Additionally, numerous tasks, activities and other routine services were provided to member agencies, contractors, grantees and cooperators. A summary of the 2nd half of the fiscal year follows:

- WAFWA net income for the year was over $562,200 with total expenses of over $568,200.
- WAFWA administration and proceedings net income was $67,057 with expenses of $40,773 resulting in about $26,300 in net income.
- Completed 296 financial transactions.
- To reduce mailing costs, initiated sending WAFWA invoices by e-mail to directors as well as contract and other documents.
- All WAFWA members are current with their assessments for the first time in the past 3 years.
- Coordinated contract with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for Colorado River Native Fish Data Base contract, BLM for Sage Grouse C A Implementation and several other Multi-state grant requests.
- Submitted the progress reports to meet the terms of three Multi-state Conservation Grants involving Western Native Trout Initiative, Sage Grouse Coordinator, and Human Dimensions Expertise.
- Submitted the financial and contract reports to US Forest Service and BLM to meet the terms of their contracts for the Sage Grouse Conservation Assessment.
- Coordinated banking and financial issues with the Arizona conference planning staff.
- Coordinated banking and financial issues with the Idaho's Administrative Officer's Workshop planning staff.
- Completed an update of the WAFWA Sanctioned Workshop Procedures and Guidelines.
- Received over 900 WAFWA related e-mails and sent over 700 WAFWA related emails.
- Participated in about 120 WAFWA related phone calls.

My thanks to all the directors, agency staff, contractors and others for making this a successful year.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Barton
WAFWA Treasurer

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies									
FY 07 Budget Comparison									
FY 08 Proposed Budget									
WAFWA Administration & Proceedings Funds									
				July 13, 2007					
								FY 08 Proposed	
			FY 06	**FY 07**	**FY 07**				
			Prior Actual	**Current Actual**	**Budget Amount**	**FY 07 Budget**		**Budget**	**Budget**
			07/05 - 06/06	**07/06 - 06/07**	**07/06 - 06/07**	**Variance**		**07-07 - 06/08**	**Changes**
enue									
ram Income			0.00	40.00	0.00	40.00		0.00	0.00
bership Dues			11,500.00	11,500.00	11,500.00	0.00		11,500.00	0.00
ciate Membership Dues			350.00	700.00	350.00	350.00		1,050.00	700.00
ssment - Treasurer Services (1)			0.00		0.00	0.00		17,100.00	17,100.00
head Income (1)			0.00		0.00	0.00		16,800.00	16,800.00
eedings Income (2)			1,280.00	3,540.00	5,400.00	(1,860.00)		3,400.00	(2,000.00)
est Income			8,430.43	9,827.57	5,000.00	4,827.57		8,000.00	3,000.00
id Conference Seed Money			5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00		5,000.00	0.00
stration/Admission Fees			3,660.00	3,980.00	4,000.00	(20.00)		4,000.00	0.00
erences Proceeds			74.22	36,284.06	5,000.00	31,284.06		5,000.00	0.00
Revenue			30,294.65	70,871.63	36,250.00	34,621.63		71,850.00	35,600.00
nses									
el			10,170.06	10,577.77	11,000.00	(422.23)		15,500.00	4,500.00
ract Services (Webb Site)			0.00	4,159.69	4,750.00	(590.31)		3,000.00	(1,750.00)
WA Treasurer Services			0.00	10,170.82	0.00	10,170.82		29,900.00	29,900.00
WA Secretary/Treasurer Srvs			2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00		1,000.00	(1,000.00)
ng & Binding (2)			0.00	5,160.74	5,000.00	160.74		5,000.00	0.00
ne Tax Preparation		2	0.00	0.00	250.00	(250.00)		250.00	0.00
tment Expenses/Charges			9.62	0.00	50.00	(50.00)		50.00	0.00
Charges			37.60	0.00	50.00	(50.00)		50.00	0.00
r Services			183.75	904.75	500.00	404.75		500.00	0.00
age/Mailing Services			0.00	167.34	0.00	167.34		500.00	500.00
e Supplies			0.00	51.12	50.00	1.12		50.00	0.00
ance - D & O; Liability			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		2,000.00	2,000.00
ds			1,205.60	1,394.66	2,000.00	(605.34)		2,000.00	0.00
r Expenses			0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00		5,000.00	0.00
t Seed Money			5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00		5,000.00	0.00
Expenses			18,606.63	44,586.89	35,650.00	8,936.89		69,800.00	34,150.00
ss or (Deficiency) of Revenue over Ex			11,688.02	26,284.74	600.00	25,684.74		2,050.00	1,450.00
s:									
	(1) Treasurer services to be covered by an assessment of $900 to US member agencies and revenue from a 7% indirect overhead charge on all federal and private grants.								
	(2) Proceedings Income and Printing expenses are anticipated to be higher due to Alberta and North Dakota Proceedings to be printed and sold in FY 07								

ASSOCIATION *of*
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

STAFF REPORT

WAFWA 2007 Annual Meeting
Flagstaff, AZ
July 7-12, 2007

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INTRODUCTION -- MATT HOGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Changes in Director Ranks

Since our last staff report at the North American, there have been several changes within the ranks of state directors:

Bruce McCloskey, Director in Colorado, retired on May 31. Mark Konishi is acting director.

Virgil Moore, Director in Oregon, has announced that he is leaving the position effective July 12 to return to Idaho as the Deputy Director.

Gerry Barnhart, Director in New York, has announced his retirement effective August 10.

Lee Perry, Director in New Hampshire, has announced his retirement effective August 13.

Bob Cook, Director in Texas, has announced his retirement effective August 31.

Dave Graham has been named Director in Ohio effective April 16, replacing Steve Gray who retired on March 31.

Association Staff Updates

On May 14th, Ron Regan began work as Resource Director for the Association. Among other things, Ron is working on implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (and related support to the Board), oversight of the Management Assistance Team and National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI), facilitation of the National Survey Working Group, AWDS-related assignments, and staff support for the Fisheries and Water Resources and Angler and Boating Participation Committees.

Naomi Edelson, Wildlife Diversity Director, has gone on maternity leave for the next 3 months. Dave Chadwick will serve as Acting Wildlife Diversity Director during her absence. In addition, Rebecca Brooke, Teaming with Wildlife Coalition & Communications Associate, has left the Association to pursue her Master's degree at the University of Michigan. In June, Megan Cook joined the staff to fill that vacancy. From now until December, Megan will work to support the

agencies in their coalition building and outreach efforts related to Teaming with Wildlife and the state wildlife action plans. Megan comes to us from The Wildlife Society, where she served as their Government Affairs intern.

In July Mark Humpert from the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission will be joining us for a two-month detail assignment. He will assist with outreach on the state wildlife action plans. As Wildlife Diversity Coordinator for the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Mark led the development of Nebraska's Wildlife Action Plan and he has been active in many of the regional and national activities on the action plans.

Association Annual Meeting Theme to Focus on Climate Change

The plenary session of the Association's annual meeting in September will focus on climate change and the emerging challenges facing state fish and wildlife agencies to manage resources in the face of uncertainty. The session will include presentations by state fish and wildlife agency personnel on a variety of topics of importance, and a panel discussion of state directors that will provide a regional perspective on the real and perceived impacts of climate change on fish and wildlife. In order to provide an opportunity for further discussion, the plenary session will be followed by a private luncheon for directors only. This luncheon is intended to provide a forum for directors to further discuss the topic of climate change and how state fish and wildlife agencies should address these challenges.

National Fish Habitat Action Plan Board

On April 19, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was asked to join the board of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP). Currently, the four regional associations as well as the State of Alaska are represented on the board. The number of board members was increased by one to accommodate the Association being added to the board.

On June 6 and 7, the NFHAP board met and among other things, received presentations from the five existing pilot fish habitat partnerships, including the Western Native Trout Initiative. In addition, the board discussed and approved the application process for recognizing fish habitat action plan partnerships. A more detailed summary of the NFHAP can be found in this report.

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and Take Me Fishing Campaign

The RBFF and the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) are considering a new, joint marketing campaign. Currently, RBFF, through the "Take Me Fishing" campaign, spends approximately $5 million on a national advertising campaign. The NMMA, through its "Discover Boating" campaign, spends approximately $10 million on its national campaign. The proposal would combine the two efforts to increase both the frequency as well as the length of the joint campaign. However, the joint campaign could impact the future of the "Take Me Fishing" brand which many states have invested in.

There are still a number of questions that need to be answered but both organizations are committed to a collaborative process and are working on establishing a joint marketing/governance committee, to include state agency representation, to work through the issues and determine if this proposal makes sense. More information on this proposal will be provided soon.

National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)

On June 28, the board of the NCLI met and approved the recommendations of the selection committee for the second cohort beginning in November. In total, there were 49 applicants for this cohort, including 34 from state fish and wildlife agencies. The final cohort will include a total of 36 fellows, including 21 from state agencies, 2 from the FWS, 5 from other federal agencies and 8 from NGOs and industry.

Polar Bear Comments

On April 9, the Association submitted comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the proposed rule to list the polar bear as a threatened species throughout its range. The Association's comments were developed in consultation with the International Relations, Sustainable Wildlife Use and Threatened and Endangered Species Policy committees as well as in

consultation with the State of Alaska. A copy of our comment letter was sent to Directors on April 10. In the letter, we state that we do not believe that the proposed listing is supported by the data presented by the FWS in the Federal Register and that proceeding with this listing would be detrimental to the long-term conservation of polar bears. As a result, we recommend that the FWS withdraw the petition. If you have any questions or would like another copy of our comment letter, please let us know.

In a related development, the House of Representatives recently rejected an amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill that would have prohibited the import into the U.S. of sport hunted polar bear trophies from Canada. For more information on this issue, please refer to the legislative update in this report.

Other Areas of Note

President Parker attended the Canadian Wildlife Directors' meeting in Canada on May 2-4, 2007 to discuss ways in which we could work closer with Canada on issues of mutual concern.

AGENCY INFORMATION DATABASE

Annually, the Association receives requests for information on our member agencies' "vital" statistics (i.e. Annual Budgets, Revenues, Land Area Managed, Harvest Level of Game Species, etc.) and in many cases we cannot fulfill these requests very accurately, or to do so involves contacting agencies and collecting the information on demand. Lacking this information, we are unable to proactively promote the breadth and depth of responsibilities and activities undertaken by our members.

To position us to aggressively promote the accomplishments of our members and to update our business practices and to improve the quality and accuracy of services to our members, we are creating an interactive, web-based database that will make readily available the vital statistics of our member agencies on our web server – the Association's Agency Information Database (afwaAID). Once complete, the data will be accessible from the Association's web site and available for use.

A database structure is currently in place and is undergoing initial testing through agency data input. Missouri has volunteered to serve as the pilot state for data input.

AUTOMATED WILDLIFE DATA SYSTEMS (AWDS)

With the departure of Jeff Johnston earlier this year, it is time to reassess the Association's role in the coordination of AWDS services. The Association will work with the Executive Committee regarding future staffing and funding options.

FARM BILL

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill), which provided an 80% increase in funding for conservation programs and approximately $3 billion annually to the nation's farmers, ranchers and forest land owners under a variety of programs for conservation of our natural resources, is slated for reauthorization this year. Most provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill expire September 30, 2007. While the Association, its State fish and wildlife agency members and partner conservation organizations continue to work with the Administration to improve the conservation programs' benefits for fish and wildlife, it is time to focus our attention on reauthorizing Farm Bill legislation that will promote a co-equal status for fish and wildlife with soil and water resources. The following is a summary of the current status of the 2007 Farm Bill reauthorization process followed by an update on 2002 Farm Bill implementation issues.

2007 Farm Bill Update

Farm Bill Fly In Day a Huge Success!
The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies hosted a Fish & Wildlife in the 2007 Farm Bill Fly-In Day on May 15-17, 2007. Those participating were from 26 state fish and wildlife agencies and 23 conservation partners for a total of 96 individuals. Hill visits made on May 16 were extremely timely and came the day prior to the House Agriculture Committee releasing its discussion bill for the Conservation Title of the 2007 Farm Bill. Hill offices visited were receptive to fly-in participants and support the conservation programs as well as increases in conservation funding.

Funding for Conservation Programs Still Elusive -- Your Help is Needed Today!
Unfortunately because of PAYGO and the budget scoring process, the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) do not have funding as reauthorization deliberations intensify and progress. We must have additional dollars to continue WRP and GRP in the next Farm Bill, and I am requesting your assistance at this critical time in reauthorization. Please call your U.S. Senators and Representatives today. Phone calls are more effective than email, and you can call (202) 225-3121, for a Capitol Hill operator who will connect you to your Congressman. If you need help finding your Senators and their contact information, log on to the U.S. Senate website at http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm. To find your Representatives by zip code or state, go to http://www.house.gov/.

When calling your Congressional delegation in DC, please ask for the staff person who works on agriculture issues and use the talking points provided below. The most important thing – the essential message – is that we need more funding for WRP and GRP in particular because no funding is budgeted to continue these programs, and for other conservation programs in the Farm Bill in general. Please ask your Senators and Representatives to request from the House and Senate Leadership and Budget Committee additional dollars for WRP and GRP in the Farm Bill.

These Talking Points are provided for your convenience:

1) The Wetlands Reserve Program and the Grasslands Reserve Program are critical agricultural conservation tools in the Farm Bill.
2) WRP & GRP funding is being cut to zero. The programs will come to a halt without the needed dollars to continue.
3) If funding for WRP and GRP is not provided, Congress is telling landowners that being a good steward of the land is less important than growing crops on marginal lands and the heritage of our precious natural resources are expendable.
4) Please ensure that the Wetlands Reserve Program and Grasslands Reserve Program will continue. Please have the Senator/Representative ask Leadership to provide funding to the Agriculture Committee for WRP and GRP.

Thanks for your assistance!

House Agriculture Committee and Floor Debate Scheduled for July -- Chairman Peterson of the House Agriculture Committee will mark-up 2 Farm Bills in full committee, which is set for the week of July 17. One bill will be PAYGO compliant and the other will use $17.5 billion of the "reserve fund" although all offsets have not yet been identified. A floor debate on the Farm Bill is scheduled for the week of July 23. However, if for some reason debate time on the floor shifts to September, do not look for a full committee mark-up until after the August recess.

Chairman Peterson's mark will include additions and changes to the titles passed by the subcommittees. However, the push for commodity reform and more funding for conservation, renewable energy, nutrition and specialty crops continues from Members outside of the House Agriculture Committee and increases pressure on Chairman Peterson to fund their priorities as well as the Committee's priorities. To date, more than a dozen marker bills that affect Farm Bill provisions have been introduced by Representatives. These pressures combined with PAYGO and inadequate baseline funding to address the diverse interests of the majority and Leadership could result in waiving PAYGO for the Farm Bill or the Leadership delivering the real money necessary to minimize dissent on the House floor during the Farm Bill debate.

Senate Agriculture Committee Is Drafting Discussion Titles -- **The Senate Agriculture Committee and staff are in the process of drafting discussion titles for the 2007 Farm Bill. Until Senate Leadership provides time on the Senate Floor for debate, the Senate Agriculture Committee will not conduct a full committee mark-up of its 2007 Farm Bill legislation. The Senate is exploring more reforms and program modifications than the House to commodity and conservation programs. To date over a dozen bills have been introduced in the Senate that affect Farm Bill provisions and although no debate dates have been set, Senate staff are extremely close to introducing the committee's 2007 Farm Bill legislation.**

Conservation Coalition Releases Blueprint for Growing Conservation in the Farm Bill – The Agriculture and Wildlife Working group (AWWG) of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership released recommendations on February 22, 2007, for the conservation programs in the 2007 Farm Bill. The report titled "Growing Conservation in the Farm Bill" recommends conservation program and policy improvements as well as funding and acreage allocations. Co-chairs of the coalition are Jen Mock Schaeffer of the Association, Dave Nomsen of Pheasants Forever and Bart James of Ducks Unlimited. Together we will work with other members of the conservation community to broaden the coalition and build community support for robust conservation provisions in the next Farm Bill. Additionally, the AWWG recommendations are consistent with those of the Association.

2002 Farm Bill Update

Contribution Agreements between NRCS and States for Delivery of Conservation Program Technical Assistance in Jeopardy -- Because the Budget Resolution was passed for FY2007 instead of appropriations bills, many federal agencies have tightened their budget belts to survive funding shortfalls. According to NRCS headquarters, some state NRCS offices have filed deficit reduction plans, 30 state NRCS offices cannot balance their budgets, and furloughing for some NRCS employees is being discussed. Consequently, NRCS indicated it will not sign any new contribution agreements for Technical Assistance with states or NGOs until new funds are available (FY2008). Some states with current NRCS agreements are experiencing funding shortfalls of $100,000 to $500,000 because NRCS is not funding their portion of the contribution agreement. These states are trying to cover NRCS shortfalls to keep co-shared, co-funded state agency staff afloat and employed during this difficult budget period.

Memorandum of Understanding between Association-FWS-NRCS for Species At-Risk is Final! -- We did it! After 2 years of negotiations and hard work, we have signed an MOU between the Association, FWS, and NRCS to strengthen cooperation to proactively conserve plant and animal species at-risk and their habitats. The intent is to identify and create more opportunities to work together to help preempt the need to list additional species under the ESA, foster the recovery of species already listed, and address similar needs for State species of conservation concern. Pick up a copy of the MOU at a committee meeting at the North American conference or soon to be available on the Association's website at www.fishwildlife.org.

USDA Appoints Gary Mast as Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment – On February 5, 2007, USDA announced the appointment of Gary W. Mast as Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. As Deputy Under Secretary, Mast will oversee NRCS and work closely with NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster and Under Secretary Mark Rey on conservation policy and operations issues. Prior to his appointment, Mast served as Senior Advisor to the Chief of NRCS and before that as NRCS Special Assistant and Chief of Staff. Mast served as President of the National Association of Conservation Districts and is a sixth-generation family farmer.

USDA Announces Christina Muedeking as NRCS Regional Assistant Chief for Central Region -- Muedeking will serve as Regional Assistant Chief for the NRCS Central Region. NRCS is organized into three regions—East, Central and West with each region headed by a Regional Assistant Chief. Regional Assistant Chiefs are management representatives of the Chief and are responsible for providing overall direction of NRCS programs and activities consistent with the Chief's guidance and overseeing NRCS State Conservationists. Muedeking, a native of Minnesota, grew up on a family farm outside Tracy, Minnesota. She graduated from the University of Minnesota, Morris, with a degree in political science and earned her law degree from George Washington University in 1995. In addition to her legislative

experience, Muedeking worked for Koch Industries as a Program Officer and for National Pork Producers as International Trade Specialist.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – *USDA Announces Results of Intentions to Re-enroll and Extend CRP Contracts* – After months of waiting, USDA announced on March 9, 2007, farmers' intentions to re-enroll and extend CRP contracts on 27.8 million acres set to expire between 2008-2010. An estimated 23.2 million acres out of 27.8 million acres of eligible CRP contracts are expected to be re-enrolled. An estimated 4.6 million acres in CRP contracts will exit CRP between 2007 and 2010. Intent to re-enroll or extend contracts was determined by payment of compliance fees by farmers and does not reflect signed and finalized contracts. Of the 4.6 million acres, approximately 1.4 million acres are located in major corn producing states. Because of high corn prices and increasing demands for ethanol and feed supplies, Secretary Johanns is exploring the option to allow farmers to withdraw from CRP contracts early without penalty in order to meet corn supply demands. Secretary Johanns said early this summer he will announce his decision on permitting early-outs for CRP contract holders. Tables showing state and county acreage for which the fee has been paid for 2008 through 2010-expiring contracts are available at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/. Updated tables based on the latest fee payment data for 2007-expiring contracts are also available at the same site. Acres with compliance fee payments do not represent final approval to stay in the program. Final figures of producers who sign contracts may vary.

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) – The USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) published an audit report in August 2005 on the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) which criticized the program and cited flawed valuation methodology because it lacked "before and after appraisals" that incorporated residual land values into the processes of offering payments for easements. The Yellow Book appraisal process requires using the "highest and best use" value of the land for appraisal determinations instead of agricultural value, which has resulted in dramatic reductions in the prices offered to purchase WRP easements. The OIG concluded that because the restored land has resale value for recreation (i.e., hunting), the payment should be reduced by this recreational value or "residual value." The NRCS has implemented this approach, and the result is that land value paid for easements is being reduced so much that farmers cannot afford to accept WRP easement offers and enroll marginal farm land in the program. Consequently, farmers may have no other choice but to continue farming these marginal acres and to continue receiving the associated crop assistance payments.

The Association is working with the conservation community and Congress to fix problems associated with the appraisal process through the Farm Bill reauthorization process. All information on this subject is greatly appreciated. Please send information to Jen Mock Schaeffer at jenmock@fishwildlife.org. Thanks.

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP): Assessing the Fish and Wildlife Benefits of Farm Bill Programs--The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in partnership with others, is making a concerted effort to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation program practices. CEAP is scheduled to proceed through 2007; however, USDA is expected to continue to monitor the effectiveness of conservation programs beyond that date.

- The objective of the Wildlife Component of CEAP is to quantify the benefits that Farm Bill conservation programs and practices provide to fish and wildlife resources. Outcomes will enable more effective implementation of the existing programs and inform the Congress and the public in the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization process.
- *Your expertise is needed!:* We invite any state fish and wildlife agency staff with experience in Farm Bill conservation programs to participate in the regional work groups. Jen Mock Schaeffer (Association Farm Bill Coordinator) and Ray Evans are leading the effort for the Association and working closely with regional work group members to facilitate development of regional work plans. Work groups are assembled through regional meetings and conferences. Please contact Ray Evans if you are willing to participate in this important effort (rayevans24@earthlink.net, 573-896-4836).Thanks!

FY2007 NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS

STATE	EQIP	FRPP	WRP	GRP	WHIP	CSP	TOTAL
ALABAMA	$15,457,345	$964,624	$904,756	$22,448	$399,547	$2,070,869	$19,819,589
ALASKA	$6,436,646	$534,316	$277,272	$35,655	$3,490,567	$16,503	$10,790,959
ARIZONA	$26,506,165	$454,758	$289,863	$799	$434,335	$357,941	$28,043,861
ARKANSAS	$24,382,204	$261,595	$12,728,630	$3,081	$577,395	$14,801,456	$52,754,361
CALIFORNIA	$62,089,529	$2,462,828	$11,792,776	$53,540	$927,447	$6,504,495	$83,830,615
COLORADO	$40,216,358	$2,112,601	$2,772,294	$35,484	$499,712	$4,370,401	$50,006,850
CONNECTICUT	$6,184,844	$2,925,228	$474,809	$17,428	$1,801,722	$52,867	$11,456,898
DELAWARE	$7,278,163	$3,109,574	$810,892	$52,285	$482,531	$1,420,721	$13,154,166
FLORIDA	$26,359,636	$1,678,077	$10,778,120	$52,513	$442,832	$391,791	$39,702,969
GEORGIA	$18,967,829	$943,664	$1,219,397	$7,017	$391,930	$5,105,701	$26,635,538
HAWAII	$7,009,206	$1,116,459	$779,215	$742	$2,776,579	$182,491	$11,864,692
IDAHO	$19,330,014	$817,786	$876,431	$52,399	$512,709	$9,727,695	$31,317,034
ILLINOIS	$17,872,254	$1,131,926	$10,124,564	$88,168	$380,721	$8,780,201	$38,377,834
INDIANA	$14,063,740	$316,543	$10,099,410	$513	$491,665	$7,853,121	$32,824,992
IOWA	$26,331,712	$594,598	$10,531,327	$38,850	$406,763	$16,567,696	$54,470,946
KANSAS	$30,424,817	$676,136	$2,082,023	$332,391	$480,922	$10,677,379	$44,673,668
KENTUCKY	$13,673,503	$1,808,238	$3,672,896	$18,740	$482,709	$919,934	$20,576,020
LOUISIANA	$18,035,389	$303,935	$13,257,643	$2,738	$435,720	$416,113	$32,451,538
MAINE	$8,509,481	$1,103,324	$1,033,048	$20,109	$1,198,709	$239,309	$12,103,980
MARYLAND	$8,565,883	$2,987,098	$1,152,023	$1,863	$362,156	$7,139,179	$20,208,222
MASSACHUSETTS	$5,475,230	$3,961,185	$614,166	$2,624	$1,490,653	$27,679	$11,571,537
MICHIGAN	$20,421,811	$1,705,365	$8,739,650	$21,821	$371,370	$7,957,176	$39,217,193
MINNESOTA	$32,906,587	$701,843	$14,240,480	$4,849	$440,730	$7,062,683	$55,357,172
MISSISSIPPI	$19,773,375	$166,967	$13,221,638	$55,137	$569,668	$751,230	$34,538,015
MISSOURI	$24,701,928	$639,621	$10,639,172	$174,596	$473,928	$24,391,117	$61,020,362
MONTANA	$31,370,259	$1,504,268	$3,628,938	$35,484	$427,567	$9,223,496	$46,190,012
NEBRASKA	$32,452,281	$454,195	$13,638,502	$1,084	$484,228	$13,076,485	$60,106,775
NEVADA	$8,330,500	$1,962,923	$241,733	$0	$525,563	$571,459	$11,632,178
NEW HAMPSHIRE	$5,325,784	$3,301,147	$761,580	$104,569	$2,185,853	$36,694	$11,715,627
NEW JERSEY	$5,147,241	$4,740,488	$747,691	$970	$1,033,422	$168,052	$11,837,864
NEW MEXICO	$24,353,002	$428,372	$367,678	$34,856	$250,399	$1,675,947	$27,110,254
NEW YORK	$15,047,394	$2,099,172	$5,840,382	$19,482	$395,017	$1,731,793	$25,133,240
NORTH CAROLINA	$18,964,614	$1,614,567	$5,324,958	$52,456	$574,639	$1,823,936	$28,355,170
NORTH DAKOTA	$22,385,193	$405,330	$3,022,397	$70,226	$461,003	$6,852,835	$33,196,984
OHIO	$16,008,946	$1,988,580	$3,664,436	$112,499	$380,558	$12,303,940	$34,458,959
OKLAHOMA	$29,508,903	$826,563	$4,146,875	$107,593	$756,920	$5,019,694	$40,366,548
OREGON	$21,850,141	$614,037	$7,164,346	$2,909	$903,409	$21,268,817	$51,803,659
PENNSYLVANIA	$13,956,248	$3,067,978	$823,056	$96,725	$258,286	$1,739,889	$19,942,182
RHODE ISLAND	$4,642,957	$2,916,852	$687,418	$17,485	$3,354,456	$25,839	$11,645,007
SOUTH CAROLINA	$8,829,264	$1,284,991	$5,562,427	$17,599	$792,199	$2,863,482	$19,349,962
SOUTH DAKOTA	$20,887,628	$162,111	$3,302,805	$1,711	$462,108	$2,017,908	$26,834,271
TENNESSEE	$13,268,809	$762,599	$2,286,562	$20,052	$264,109	$900,421	$17,492,552
TEXAS	$89,124,483	$1,081,011	$5,954,291	$228,221	$526,230	$2,605,153	$99,519,389
UTAH	$24,514,007	$889,015	$581,461	$18,170	$519,547	$2,485,157	$29,007,357
VERMONT	$6,346,122	$3,048,322	$503,878	$5,534	$1,326,837	$66,545	$11,297,238
VIRGINIA	$14,188,176	$1,091,895	$837,055	$105,140	$472,669	$1,382,798	$18,077,733
WASHINGTON	$20,226,339	$1,178,980	$6,871,337	$36,111	$737,318	$5,017,114	$34,067,199
WEST VIRGINIA	$7,931,791	$1,725,675	$249,437	$87,426	$827,775	$189,869	$11,011,973
WISCONSIN	$21,647,399	$1,442,973	$6,980,402	$3,594	$462,689	$4,559,536	$35,096,593
WYOMING	$17,491,301	$741,616	$1,132,149	$52,969	$327,633	$1,690,044	$21,435,712
PACIFIC BASIN	$2,958,429	$0	$0	$0	$282,035	$11,724	$3,252,188
PUERTO RICO	$7,195,386	$0	$197,010	$1,198	$600,258	$250,340	$8,244,192
TOTAL	$1,004,926,249	$72,801,948	$227,631,300	$2,329,874	$39,915,746	$237,344,712	$1,584,949,829

FEDERAL AID EXCISE TAX INITIATIVES -- STATUS

After 12 years of work, this project is moving toward conclusion. The Federal-State Aquaculture Drug Approval Partnership Project (known as the Association Project) and the continuing efforts on the part of its participants have made great progress and are close to having limited approvals from the Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) for seven of the nine Association Project drugs. With the extensive base of existing data, it is anticipated that some additional effectiveness data will be required to develop the broad "all freshwater-reared fish" approvals envisioned in the original Association Project proposal. These broad approvals will allow the widespread, legal use of these drugs for fish management and aquaculture.

To date the project has helped gain expansions and extensions of the New Animal Drug Applications (NADAs) for two label claims for formalin and one supplemental label claim for immersion marking with oxytetracycline. Two pharmaceutical sponsors for formalin and three for oxytetracycline have stepped forward to add the new label claims to the labeling of their products.

It is anticipated that NADAs will be submitted for three broad label claims for hydrogen peroxide. In addition, final data packages will be submitted to CVM for the following drugs with the number of label claims in parenthesis: chloramine-T (2), copper sulfate (1), florfenicol (4), formalin (1), hydrogen peroxide (1), oral oxytetracycline (2), and immersion oxytetracycline (1). From 2008 to 2009, final data packages are projected to be submitted for AQUI-S® (2, contingent upon planned funding), copper sulfate (1), and potassium permanganate (1).

The submission of these NADAs should lead to approvals for nine drugs and 20 label claims. All of this progress will have been made as a result of the efforts that were funded in large part by 38 state natural resources agencies, three federal agencies, and 10 company sponsors over a 15-year period. The total public sector contribution as of 2005 is more than $25 million; drug sponsors have also contributed a significant, but for confidentiality reasons, unknown amount. To put this effort in perspective, pharmaceutical companies usually expect to spend $12 million over a ten-year period on one drug, one label claim and one species.

To help realize these potential outcomes and to finish the Association's commitment to this project a new National Conservation Need was selected for the 2006 MSCG cycle to solicit proposals specific to approval requirement for AQUI-S, a zero withdrawal anesthetic drug. In cooperation with the national coordinator and other project partners, the Association's Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee submitted a successful proposal under that NCN to conduct critical studies and related activities necessary to complete national coordination of this project and obtain approval for AQUI-S use. It is expected that the direct Association role in this effort will conclude by the end of 2008 and will have yielded significant new approvals for commonly used aquaculture drugs.

FEDERAL-STATE AQUACULTURE DRUG APPROVAL PROJECT

After over 12 years of work, this project is moving rapidly toward conclusion. The Federal-State Aquaculture Drug Approval Partnership Project (known as the Association Project) and the continuing efforts on the part of its participants have made great progress and are close to having limited approvals from the Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) for seven of the nine Association Project drugs. With the extensive base of existing data, it is anticipated that some additional effectiveness data will be required to develop the broad "all freshwater-reared fish" approvals envisioned in the original Association Project proposal. These broad approvals will allow the widespread, legal use of these drugs for fish management and aquaculture.

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It is anticipated that NADAs will be submitted in 2006 for three broad label claims for hydrogen peroxide. In addition, final data packages are projected to be submitted in late 2006 or 2007 to CVM for the following drugs with the number of label claims in parenthesis: chloramine-T (2), copper sulfate (1), florfenicol (4), formalin (1), hydrogen peroxide (1), oral oxytetracycline (2), and immersion oxytetracycline (1). From 2008 to 2009, final data packages are projected to be submitted for AQUI-S® (2, contingent upon planned funding), copper sulfate (1), and potassium permanganate (1).

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FURBEARER RESOURCES AND BMP OUTREACH PROJECTS

Furbearer Research Program – While all 50 states support the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping in the United States, to date, 37 states have participated in and assisted with trap testing projects to evaluate traps and trapping methods. All regions of the US have directly participated including states in the Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, West, and Alaska. More than 80 different restraining and body-gripping trap types have been evaluated. Data have been collected on 16 of the 23 species of furbearers prioritized for testing.

The purpose of the Best Management Practices process is to scientifically evaluate the traps and trapping systems used for capturing furbearers in the United States. Trapping BMPs are based on scientific research and professional experience regarding currently available traps and trapping technology. Trapping BMPs identify both techniques and traps that address the welfare of trapped animals and allow for the efficient, selective, safe, and practical capture of furbearers. These guides are intended to be a practical tool for trappers, wildlife biologists, wildlife agencies, and anyone interested in improved traps and trapping systems. BMPs include technical recommendations from expert trappers and biologists, and a list of specifications of traps that meet or exceed BMP criteria. The results of this research serve as a reference guide to wildlife management agencies, conservation organizations, tribal nations, researchers, trapper organizations, individual trappers, and others interested in the continued improvement of traps and trapping systems. Trapping is an element of many wildlife management programs. State fish and wildlife agencies must continue to take a lead role by establishing a practical and effective plan for the improvement of trapping systems in order to maintain trapping as a valuable wildlife management practice.

BMP Development – Best Management Practices for trapping beaver, muskrat, fisher, river otter and nutria are currently being written. Completion and distribution of these BMPs is anticipated in August of 2007. CDs containing these newest BMPs will be distributed to state agency directors, I&E chiefs, state furbearer biologists, federal fish and wildlife agencies, and trapper associations. BMPs for trapping eastern coyote, western coyote, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, raccoon and opossum, along with a general Introduction were released in March of 2006. A press release on these new BMPs, which included information on how to access them through the www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html website was distributed to state agency members along with a complimentary CD of the BMPs.

National Furbearer Harvest Database -- This new database will be administered by the U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group and supported by Association staff. It will provide an outlet for all states to collect furbearer harvest information in one concise location. Information such as the number of licenses sold, amount of revenue collected from license sales, average pelt value, harvest estimates, and harvest status of species will be collected. This database is expected to be on-line for state use this fall.

Ownership and Use of Traps by Trappers in the United States Survey -- A survey of trappers in the United States was conducted to provide a better understanding of trappers, their equipment and techniques used for capturing furbearers, and to provide information to those in furbearer management which will allow them to make informed decisions on trapping matters. More than 4000 trappers from 46 states were surveyed. Results of the survey have recently been provided to all state fish and wildlife agencies via

CD. The report is also available at www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html. The survey was conducted on behalf of the Association by Southwick and Associates.

Summary of Trapping Regulations for Fur Harvesting in the United States -- The Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group conducted a survey to summarize state furbearer trapping regulations in 1995. A similar survey is currently being conducted. Results will represent the current conditions and restrictions within existing laws for the harvest of 26 species of furbearers by regulated trapping throughout North America. The body of regulations set forth by state and provincial wildlife agencies for the harvest of furbearers is among the most complex and comprehensive of all laws concerning wildlife today. The information within this report will be very useful to furbearer managers to help examine technologies and initiate and make furbearer management decisions. Results will be provided to state and federal fish and wildlife agencies via electronic format as well as being available on the Association website.

Technical papers on "Modern Snaring Technology" and "Ethical Use of Bodygrip Traps" on dry land – These papers are currently being written by members of the Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group for use by state agency wildlife managers and other user groups. These papers will provide wildlife managers and other user groups with information on the state-of-the-art in these trapping technologies as well as giving suggestions about their proper use. These documents will be provided to state and federal fish and wildlife agencies in electronic format. They will also be available via the Association website.

Train the Trainers Workshops
Based on requests by state agency personnel, the Association has received a grant to present "Train the Trainers" workshops to support state agency hunter/trapper education coordinators and instructors in the use of these newly developed trapper education materials. The workshop has three main components – use and customization of the student manual and workbook; presenting a skills/field program; and use of the authentic assessment method for student performance evaluation. The Association will cover expenses for workshop materials and trainer fees to deliver this workshop in your state. **If you are interested in hosting one of these workshops, please contact Susan Langlois at TE.Workshops@state.ma.us.** Please include your name, contact information, and a list of three potential dates for hosting this workshop. *We require a minimum of 30 participants per workshop (not to exceed 60 per session.*

National Trapper Education Curriculum -- In 1979, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies passed a resolution recommending and supporting the development of trapper education course materials. These materials were distributed to state agencies following an 18-month development period that included extensive evaluation. Designed for trappers of all experience levels, developed using trapping best management practices and using the standardized approach that has made hunter education so successful, the program is very flexible and can be adapted to the needs of each state. The curriculum provides content standards, learning objectives, student manuals, student workbooks, a student exam, and an instructors guide and evaluation forms. Educators, furbearer biologists, expert trappers, and representatives from the International Hunter Education Association were consulted in the development of this program. Because each state implements hunter/trapper education differently, we have sent this CD to the following state agency personnel: Director, Public Affairs/I&E chief, Hunter/trapper coordinator, Furbearer program contact, and Law enforcement chief. Additionally, the CD was shared with the Canadian provinces/territories and the state offices for USDA-Wildlife Services. The education curriculum is also available at www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html.

These materials are especially timely, as many state agencies have recently begun the process of revising trapper education materials. It is our hope that by adopting and customizing these materials, states will be able to save valuable time and expense. The curriculum will not only inform trappers about Best Management Practices, but it will also provide consistent information to trappers in every state. As a result, the program will provide for the potential for licensing reciprocity through content standards. *If states choose to customize the materials, please note that the content standards should be maintained to promote consistency among the states. At the March 2005 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies business meeting, a recommendation was passed by the agency Directors that state agencies voluntarily adopt the content standards developed for this program.*

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROJECT

The work of this project is split between domestic and international projects. **International activities have been pretty much focused on CITES, while domestic activities have been focused on Trap Testing work where significant gains have been made (see Trap Testing report).**

Also during the last few months, a sizeable percentage of project time has continued to be focused on CITES work – **in this case preparing for and attending the Conference of the Parties in June of 2007.** The entire CITES Team – Dale Toweill (ID F&G), Carolyn Caldwell (Ohio DNR), Cal DuBrock (PA GC) and Buddy Baker (SC DNR) – took part in the CoP in June. **When the Regional Association representatives met in Aspen, CO with the Federal CITES leaders, consensus was reached that our first priority would be getting the Bobcat de-listed from CITES. CITES Team Leader Carolyn Caldwell set a time-table for the group's work to carry this agenda forward. To this end, Cal DuBrock (PGC) met with Federal officials to coordinate work, and Buddy Baker (SC DNR) worked with the collateral bobcat researcher efforts in Mexico to pull all our work in North America together. Gordon Batcheller (NY DEC) assisted by lining up a PhD candidate from Cornell to do a peer review of the Mexican research. That researcher, funded by the Association, conducted inspections in Mexico. The so-called Cornell report is still available on request. This whole effort at de-coupling bobcat management from CITES was to free up state agency resources being wasted on unnecessary tracking, tagging and reporting on an abundant resource with robust populations. Unfortunately, the animal rights groups mounted a large campaign and were able to defeat our proposed delisting. The Regional's Team was successful in other areas including prevailing on issues relating to sturgeon, personal effects and several crocodilian issues. A full report on the CITES meeting is available upon request.**

The Regional's CITES Team continues to monitor the current review of the CITES implementation regulations (50 CFR part 23) – regulations infamously out of date and in need of updating.

The discussions/negotiations with the European Union continue and the outcome of our fur trade with Europe continues as an issue and is something we follow closely.

This is a very active file right now and the outcomes are largely unpredictable at this time. Our contacts believe that the EU will honor the understanding with respect to maintaining trade as long as we maintain an active testing program and carry out our own commitments. The next meeting to be held in Brussels may be delayed until later this year and may be associated with a technical workshop for European Parliamentarians and member state representatives.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Significance -- especially for Birds -- the Association continued to be a part of the U.S. work on the Ramsar Convention. Don MacLauchlan of the Washington office staff represented the States at the meeting held here in conjunction with the North American.

Wildlife without Borders -- The Project has continued to promote this important project on behalf of its southwestern States -- all four Mexican Border States are members of WAFWA. The purpose of this project is to make joint US/Mexican projects work more efficiently and effectively and act wherever possible as a facilitator for projects. This Association received funds for five members of border agencies to participate in the 2007 Trilateral in Quebec. This meeting has impacts far broader than the four border states for many states share hundreds of species with Mexico.

This project provides staff support to the Association committees dealing with Hunting and Shooting Sports, Wildlife Resource Policy, Sustainable Wildlife Use and Law Enforcement. Because of these committee assignments and the international nature of the proposal, the project coordinated the Association's response to the proposal to list the polar bear as threatened across its range.

JOINT TASK FORCE ON FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

The Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (JTF) was established in September 2002 to review issues identified by State and Service personnel in the administration and policies of the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. The Office of the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a state fish and wildlife agency director, as designated by the Association, serve as the co-chairs of the JTF. The Service names six additional federal employees as members and the Association names six additional state fish and wildlife agency employees as members.

Current members include:
State Representatives: Glen Salmon (IN), Co-Chair; Gerry Barnhart (NY); Lisa Evans (AK); John Frampton (SC); Kelly Hepler (AK); Tom Niebauer (WI); Keith Sexson (KS)

FWS Representatives: Rowan Gould, Co-Chair; Tom Barnes; Jim Greer; Mitch King; Chris McKay; John Organ

JTF staff: Carol Bambery (Association Counsel); Larry Mellinger (DOI Attorney); Christina Zarrella (Association); Kim Galvin (FWS)

If determined to be necessary, the JTF recommends policy clarifications to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Starting in late 2005, the USFWS began issuing policy clarifications as new Service Manual Chapters rather than issuing Director's Orders (DOs), which are only in effect for one year and must be renewed. To date, 16 clarifications have been issued, including five Manual Chapters, six DOs (which are being converted to Manual Chapters), three Director's memorandums, and two memorandums from the JTF Co-Chairs. These policy clarifications are used by USFWS's regional staff in administering grant programs.

The JTF is exploring the applicability of policy clarifications to not just the two Federal Aid programs, Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration, but also 10 other programs whose funds come from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (WR) and/or Sport Fish Restoration Account (SFR). The 10 include (1) Clean Vessel Act Pumpout Grant Program; (2) Boating Infrastructure Grants; (3) Section 10 Firearm and Bow Hunter Education and Safety Grants; (4) Multistate Conservation Grant Program; (5) Landowner Incentive Program; (6) State Wildlife Grants; (7) National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants; (8) North American Wetlands Conservation Fund; (9) Boating Safety Financial Assistance (DHS and US Coast Guard), and (10) Priority Louisiana Coastal Wetland Restoration Projects.

The last JTF meeting was April 4-6, 2007. The next JTF meeting will be scheduled for October 2007.

More information including Director's Orders, USFWS Manual Chapters, Policy Recommendations and Meeting Reports is available at http://federalaid.fws.gov/jtf/jtfindex.html.

LEGAL REPORT

Trapping:

Humane Society of the United States and Help Our Wolves Live v Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (intervenors Minnesota Trappers Association, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, Fur Takers of America, National Trappers Association and individual trappers) filed in U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota; civil no. 06-2933. Plaintiffs alleged that Defendant's authorization of trapping and snaring activities have caused the illegal take of the Canada lynx, which is listed under the Endangered Species Act as a threatened species. Terms of settlement are:

- MDNR will file an incidental take permit application with U.S.F.W.S. under section 10 ESA concerning its trapping program as it relates to the take of lynx;

- MDNR will share the completed permit application, proposed habitat conservation plan, draft NEPA analysis, implementing agreement with Plaintiffs;
- MDNR will pay HSUS $25,000 in attorney fees and costs of litigation;
- Humane Society will donate $12,500 to Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Fund to be used for Canada lynx conservation efforts, including programs for habitat improvement, acquisition, and management.

There are two other trapping cases that are still pending against the Minnesota and Maine fish and wildlife agencies where plaintiff pled the same theory, i.e., that the state trapping regulations violate the Endangered Species Act as the trapping programs cause the illegal take of lynx, eagle, and bobcat. The Animal Protection Institute brought the suits against the state agencies.

On April 16, 2007, Humane Society of the United States, HOWL, and Animal Protection Institute brought another lawsuit against the Department of the Interior challenging the FWS's decision to remove gray wolves in the Great Lakes region from the Endangered Species Act list. The lawsuit also challenges the FWS's decision to designate and delist the northern Rocky Mountain Distinct population segment. Safari Club International and the National Rifle Association filed a motion to intervene in the suit. The lawsuit alleges that the FWS's actions violate the ESA and the Administrative Procedures Act. **Plaintiffs amended the lawsuit to add Friends of Animals and their Environment (FATE) as a party plaintiff. The Court has now granted SCI, USSA, Wisconsin's Bear Hunters, and NRA's motions to intervene. The amended complaint alleges none of the states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, or Michigan) have allocated sufficient funds for wolf management and protection. Michigan may take lead on filing an amicus brief on behalf of the states. The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and other Regional Associations could consider signing onto the states' brief.**

NPDES Programs:

EPA v Defenders of Wildlife and National Association of Homebuilders v Defenders of Wildlife (9th Circuit). The U.S. Supreme Court has **heard oral arguments** in two consolidated cases addressing the Environmental Protection Agency's obligations under the Endangered Species Act while implementing other laws. In 2002, Arizona became the 45th state to submit for approval its request to administer its own NPDES permit program and issue water discharge permits within the state under the Clean Water Act. The law requires the EPA to transfer authority to the state if nine criteria are satisfied. The ESA is not on the list of criteria. Defenders and others argued to the court that the ESA was not being followed because unlike the federal government, Arizona was not required to consult with FWS when issuing permits that might affect listed species. The Ninth Circuit agreed with Defenders finding that the ESA required EPA to consider the impact of its transfer approval would have on listed species. In other words, the court ruled that EPA must comply with ESA requirements even if a state applicant meets all of the conditions under the CWA for transferring NPDES wastewater discharge permitting authority. Alaska, Arizona, Idaho and New Mexico are the only states that do not have approved NPDES programs.

Hunting in National Refuges:

Fund for Animals v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, SCI, et al. On August 31, 2006, Judge Ricardo Urbina ruled in *Fund for Animals v Hall* that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act by issuing six rules that collectively opened or expanded hunting opportunities on 36 refuges within the wildlife refuge system without first analyzing the cumulative impacts of those rules. Refuges involved in the litigation are: 10,000 Islands (FL), Balcones Canyonlands (TX), Key Cave (AL), Trustom Pond (RI), Canaan Valley (WV), Bond Swamp (GA), Currituck (NC), Julia Butler Hansen (WA), Plum Tree Island (VA), Cameron Prairie (LA), Mandalay (LA), Lower Rio Grande (TX), Lake Umbagog (NH), San Andres (NM), McNary (WA), Mackay Island (VA), Arid Lands (WA), Grand Bay (AL), Big Oaks (IL), Clarks River (KY), Petit Manan (ME), Deep Fork (OK), Bayou Teche (LA), Black Bayou Lake (LA), Cat Island (LA), Catahoula (LA), Occoquan Bay (VA), Okefenokee (GA), Marais des Cygnes (KS), Lost Trail (MT), Washita (OK), Trinity River (TX), and Whittlesey Creek (WI).

The court has asked for further briefings on the appropriate remedy which have now been filed. FWS has asked the court not to close any of the hunting programs while it reassesses its NEPA compliance. The

Service has voluntarily offered to delay additional hunting openings and/or expansions until May 2007 when the FWS projects it will be able to meet its NEPA obligations.

The Association believes that hunting on refuges should not be made vulnerable to NEPA challenges and will continue to explore all options.

Global Warming case:

Massachusetts v Environmental Protection Agency. The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on November 29th on their first-ever global warming case, a bid by states and environmentalists to force the EPA to regulate tailpipe emissions. Michigan, along with eleven other states, filed a brief in support of the federal agency position that EPA had not been given authority by Congress to regulate tailpipe emissions. Several justices, led by Antonin Scalia and John Roberts, questioned whether 12 states have the legal right to challenge an Environmental Protection Agency decision not to regulate those emissions. Roberts, the chief justice, said the states were "spinning out conjecture on conjecture" to support the argument that they would benefit from EPA rules. The court's ruling on legal standing would create a precedent for other global warming lawsuits involving power plants and other emissions sources. It might also have a broader impact on legal challenges regarding government implementation of environmental requirements.

In April, the Supreme Court ruled that (1) the State of Massachusetts had standing to petition for review; (2) the Clean Air Act authorizes the EPA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles in the event that it forms a judgment that such emissions contribute to climate change; and (3) EPA can avoid taking regulatory action with respect to greenhouse gas emissions from new motor vehicles only if it determines that greenhouse gases do not contribute to climate change or if it provides some reasonable explanation as to why it cannot or will not exercise its discretion to determine whether they do.

Public Trust Doctrine not extended to Wildlife:

Citizens for Responsible Wildlife Management v State of Washington
In November 1996, Washington voters approved Initiative 655, which made it unlawful to hunt black bear with the aid of bait or to hunt black bear, cougar, bobcat, or lynx with the aid of dogs. In November 2000, Washington voters approved Initiative 713, prohibiting the use of body-gripping traps and other devices to capture animals and banned the use of two poisons, sodium fluoroacetate and sodium cyanide. Plaintiff Citizens sued the State to enjoin implementation and enforcement of the Initiatives. Citizens alleged that the Initiatives violate the public trust doctrine. Both parties moved for summary judgment. The trial court granted the State's motion, ruling the Initiatives do not violate the public trust doctrine. Citizens appealed to the Court of Appeals of Washington. The Court of Appeals affirmed the summary judgment in favor of the State, holding that the Initiatives do not violate the public trust doctrine.

The Court's rationale was the public trust doctrine concerns the public's rights to navigation and the incidental rights of fishing, boating, swimming, waterskiing, and other recreational uses of public waters. Title to animals belongs to the state in its sovereign capacity and the state holds this title in trust for the people's use and benefit. No Washington case has applied the public trust doctrine to terrestrial wildlife or resources.

Endangered Species Act and governmental immunity:

Seattle Audubon Society v Sutherland
In another Washington State case, the Seattle Audubon Society sued the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the Washington Forest Practices Board, and all individual board members including Mr. Doug Sutherland, Washington Commission of Public Lands and Ms. Vicki Christiansen, a Department director, for violating the Endangered Species Act. Audubon argues that the Defendants' authorization of the Weyerhaeuser Company's logging of the northern spotted owls' surrounding habitat constitutes an unlawful "take" of northern spotted owls. Audubon sought declaratory and injunctive relief to bar the Defendants from approving logging applications until the Defendants provide assurances that the logging approvals do not violate the ESA.

The Department and the Board were dismissed from the suit because the Eleventh Amendment's state sovereign immunity prohibits state citizens from suing state governments. The individual board members were dismissed from the suit because legislators enjoy absolute legislative immunity and the board members take quasi-legislative actions. Mr. Sutherland and Ms. Christiansen were not dismissed from the suit because they were acting as implementers and enforcers, rather than as quasi-legislators like the other individual board members.

Further, the court held that the Tenth Amendment does not bar a federal court from ordering state officials to comply with federal law. If the Court finds for Audubon on the merits, it can craft an injunction that orders state officials to stop violating the ESA, but avoids ordering the state to take positive steps with respect to advancing the goals of a federal regulatory scheme. Thus, the Tenth Amendment did not bar Audubon's actions.

Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish:

This issue has been (again) gaining national recognition. Apparently, NRA has been pushing this agenda as a way to help curtail local zoning aimed at shutting down shooting ranges. NRA and others who support constitutional amendments protecting the right to hunt and fish argue:

- The people should have a constitutional right to hunt and fish.
- This right should be subject to rules and regulations that manage game populations from a scientific, not a political, perspective. Unregulated hunting in the Unites States has proven to be a failure with regard to protecting healthy game populations.
- Traditional means, methods and species should be protected in the constitution to guard against actions by activist courts. Language should allow for the incorporation of future means, methods and species.
- Hunting should be the preferred means of managing overpopulated and invasive species.
- The right should provide aggrieved sportsmen a private cause of action.
- The right should be truly meaningful. For various reasons, some organizations advocate for language that provides sportsmen with little or no practical benefit or protection against politically motivated actions. As a rule, public policy makers favor this approach because they prefer the path of least resistance when crafting policy.
- The fact that many states have adopted constitutional amendments that are little more than "window dressing" is not an argument against changing course and adopting meaningful, substantive amendments in the future.

This issue was discussed at length during the various legal committee meetings. At the last Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies legal committee meeting, NRA spokesperson Steven Halbrook, an attorney in Virginia, visited with the committee on NRA's position.

LEGISLATION

The 110th Congress, with the Democrats holding the majority in both the House and Senate by slim margins, is finding that, like their predecessors, a narrow majority makes legislating challenging. Bipartisan support is essential, and cloture will likely be required for any significant vote in the Senate. Farm Bill reauthorization remains a high priority for the Association, as does seeking assured funding for state comprehensive wildlife programs, and furthering private lands conservation through tax incentives. Progress on FY2008 Appropriations so far reflects an economy strained by national security spending. Finally, although we expect much legislative attention to be given to various climate change proposals, it is less likely that a significant and comprehensive bill that manages greenhouse gas emissions can pass Congress and would be signed by the President.

Farm Bill: The Farm Bill expires September 30, 2007 and Congress is heavily into reauthorization activities. Both Agriculture Committee Chairs, as did their predecessors, have indicated their strong support for the Conservation Title. **The House Agriculture Committee has initiated subcommittee**

markups and expects to report a Farm Bill out of the full Committee by the August recess. It is unclear what the Senate Agriculture Committee schedule is since the Senate Majority Leader has indicated that there is no time for Farm Bill consideration on the Senate floor this year. We expect reauthorization by this Congress but likely not until next spring. The Association continues to assiduously advocate its reauthorization principles on the Hill, and is working with the broader conservation community to bring a more diverse coalition to consensus support around reauthorization details of the Conservation Title. **The big challenge remains finding enough money in the budget to satisfy robust funding for the conservation title. The biggest need remains finding funds for WRP and GRP, both of which have no budget after September 30th. We continue to work with the leadership to find those funds.**

While the Administration has advanced some proposals, including the idea of consolidating some conservation programs, it is clear that Congress will write the Farm Bill. The Committees may look at some ways to render program delivery more efficient and effective, but they don't seem favorably inclined to program consolidation. One of the biggest challenges will be the proposed Energy Title, and making sure that energy programs are done in a way that is not inconsistent with conservation. See the Farm Bill treatment elsewhere in this report for more details.

Assured Wildlife Funding: We again seek to access assured and dedicated (direct spending, not subject to annual discretionary appropriations) funds for state comprehensive wildlife programs (the WCRP account under the Pittman-Robertson fund). Many income sources remain potentially viable, from Outer Continental Shelf gas and oil lease receipts; onshore gas and oil lease receipts; cap and trade revenue from a potential regulatory emissions protocol for greenhouse gases; or others. **Several bills have been introduced on climate change and many have a title which would provide potential funds from climate change derived revenue to wildlife programs. The House Natural Resources Committee last month reported out a bill (HR2337) with which we have significant concerns. It proposes to send 70% of the revenue to federal agencies and only 30% to states, and seeks to authorize a new program for delivery of funds to the states. We are advocating at least a 50:50 state:federal split and the use of existing programs of Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux, and the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration program account (SWG) of Pittman-Robertson as delivery mechanisms.**

Other proposals relating to capture of potential OCS receipts are also maturing and we continue to advocate state comprehensive wildlife funding also from those proposals.

Conservation Tax Incentives: We are working closely with Congressional champions in the leadership of the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee on a bill to make permanent the tax credit to private landowners who donate conservation easements on their property to the government or a qualified conservation organization. This provision, passed last Congress after many years of work by the fish and wildlife, land and agriculture conservation community, is good only for tax year 2006 and 2007. There is broad support for making this permanent and it could happen on any of a number of larger tax bills.

Senator Crapo (ID) and Senator Lincoln (AR) recently reintroduced (from the last Congress) a bill with broad bipartisan support which would give landowners a tax credit for either entering into an easement or a habitat restoration agreement for conservation of threatened or endangered species and their habitat on their property. The bill amends the IRS code and not the ESA. It has the support already of the leadership of the Senate Finance Committee and a House companion bill has also been introduced.

Endangered Species Act: ESA reauthorization is not a high priority for either Congressional Committee of jurisdiction. The House Natural Resources Committee leadership has indicated that it will likely hold oversight hearings, and is seeking more robust funding for ESA implementation. However, it appears unlikely that any significant ESA reauthorization bill will move in this Congress.

Clean Water Act Jurisdiction: Congressman Oberstar (MN) and Congressman Dingell (MI) introduced a bill that seeks to clarify the jurisdictional reach of the CWA as it relates to isolated wetlands and intermittent streams, in the context of the post Rapanos-Carabell Supreme Court decision of last year. The bill would also seek to restore wetlands protection to the pre–SWANCC (2001 Supreme Court decision) jurisdictional status. **While we are supportive of their effort, we are hesitant to support**

their explicit bill language. While we share their objective, we continue to look at alternative bill language which we (and others) believe is more explicit in grounding Congress' authority (to protect these waters) in the Constitution, and less subject to judicial interpretation. We will continue to work with Congressman Oberstar, Congressman Dingell and others as their bill legislatively progresses. It is still unclear though what scope of a legislative clarification (if any) could pass this Congress and be signed by this President.

FY2008 Appropriations: As always, there are winners and losers in the President's FY2008 budget request, but in this economy constrained by war-time and national security spending, maintaining level funding has to be considered a success. See the Association's FY2008 Budget Recommendations for details.

Congressional Support for the North American Model of Wildlife Management: In a welcome informed, bipartisan vote, the House defeated (188-242) a proposed amendment (to the FY2008 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill) which would have prohibited the USFWS from expending any funds to allow the importation of legally taken polar bear trophies. Congressman Don Young (AK) made a particularly informed appeal to allow science-based management to prevail with respect to polar bears. Many thanks also to the House Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus leadership for their role in defeating this amendment. Also to our colleagues at the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, NRA, and SCI, in addition to many others in our fish and wildlife conservation community. This is a benchmark vote in this Congress affirming the North American model of wildlife management. While a similar amendment was accepted to the Senate Interior Appropriations bill in full Committee, we are optimistic that we can strip that language from the bill once it gets to the Senate floor.

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Management Assistance Team (MAT) provides, free of charge to state fish and wildlife agencies, expertise focused on leadership development, in the form of consulting, employee training, and other related services in the area of organization and human resources development, management systems, change management and agency effectiveness. Since MAT is funded by the Multi-state Conservation Grant, MAT's services are provided at no additional cost to states.

Staffing
Melissa McCormick is leaving MAT to move to Florida – the new location for her husband's employment. We anticipate her departure by the end of July. We are currently interviewing applicants to fill her position.

State Leadership Development Program
Per directions from the Association's Executive Committee and Leadership and Professional Development Committee, MAT is focused implementing leadership development programs for state fish and wildlife agencies. Using input from a survey with participation from all state fish and wildlife agencies, MAT completed the *States' Toolbox for Leadership Development*. The *Toolbox* is a comprehensive approach to integrating a leadership development within any state fish and wildlife agency and includes strategies necessary for implementing the program as well as a comprehensive set of resources to develop leadership at all levels in an agency: online and face-to-face workshops, evaluation methods, and facilitator resources. MAT provides train-the-trainer workshops so that state agencies can have their own staff deliver the MAT workshops at will.

MAT has begun work with several states to consult on creating leadership development programs and assessing workforce planning needs. With completion of the *Toolbox*, MAT continues to work with any state needing assistance in these areas.

In 2006 MAT developed the Conservation Learning Campus to deliver leadership development opportunities to all state fish and wildlife agencies through an online learning system. Visit www.conservationlearning.org. MAT has contracted with eCollege to provide the platform to offer select MAT workshops in an instructor-led, asynchronous learning environment. ECollege uses research

supported (www.sloan-c.org) best practices to economically deliver learning to geographically dispersed professionals in a way that can *improve* learning in many cases.

In 2006 MAT developed 6 online classes and 5 face-to-face classes as part of the *Toolbox*. MAT is also developing a National Faculty to assist with course delivery. MAT's online courses have been a success by providing increased accessibility to leadership development opportunities with fewer time, travel, and cost restrictions. Online courses are available through open registration to Association member agencies on a quarterly basis.

Online Courses Available:

- Creative & Critical Thinking
- The Adaptive Leader
- Visionary Leadership
- Power
- Secrets to Agency Assessment & Development
- Going from Good to Great

Face-to-Face Courses Currently Available (MAT focuses on train-the-trainer so states can deliver their own courses):

- Emotional Intelligence
- Mastering Agency Change
- Leadership Ethics
- Publics, Problems, and Politics
- National Faculty Certification for Online Courses

National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)

The first cohort of the NCLI concluded at Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri on May 2, 2007 with 35 Fellows completing the 9-month experience. MAT worked with faculty from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the Association, USFWS, The Conservation Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, WMI, Boone and Crockett, Izaak Walton League, and others to design and successfully implement the NCLI. MAT created the NCLI curriculum and website and is responsible for program coordination and management. Nominations for Fellows for the second cohort are complete and the NCLI Board of Directors approved the Fellows for the second cohort which will begin work in September 2007. In all, 36 Fellows will participate in the second cohort coming from state fish and wildlife agencies, conservation-focused federal agencies, and the non-governmental community. The second Institute residency will be held in the fall of 2007 at the National Conservation Training Center. Visit www.conservationleadership.org for more information.

One goal of the NCLI is to create a network of conservation leaders. At the conclusion of the first NCLI program, the Fellows created the NCLI Alumni Association (NCLIAA). MAT is working with the NCLIAA to facilitate their network building efforts, and has built a website for the NCLIAA to enhance their networking opportunities.

Consulting and Training

MAT provides ongoing consulting and training for state fish and wildlife agencies primarily focused on leadership development.

For more information on MAT and their services offered to state fish and wildlife agencies, please visit www.matteam.org or contact Dr. Sally Guynn at 304-876-7395, Dr. Dwight Guynn at 304-876-7387 or Jake Faibisch at 304-876-7915, sallyg@matteam.org, dwightg@matteam.org or jacobf@matteam.org.

MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION

North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) – The U.S. NABCI Committee met on February 27-28, 2007 to discuss progress and make decisions about its work plan that includes coordinated monitoring, private lands management, conservation design/landscape planning, international cooperation, and communications.

The Conservation Design Subcommittee developed the first half of the plenary session at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' 2006 Annual Meeting. Every day state wildlife agencies face the challenge of balancing and integrating multiple conservation needs and multiple conservation demands from numerous stakeholders. Browse any State Wildlife Action Plan and you will see hundreds of species of greatest conservation need, driven to this status by a host of problems, most commonly habitat loss in its varied forms. How can agency administrators and biologists decide where to spend time and money to most effectively address these problems and conserve these species before they reach the brink of endangerment? The morning part of the plenary session was dedicated to addressing this question—wildlife conservation design. Bruce McCloskey, Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, made the opening and closing remarks. Plenary speakers Seth Mott, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Russ George, Colorado Division of Wildlife; and Doyle Shook, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission gave stimulating presentations on what conservation design is and how States are using it to develop a roadmap for conservation. Due to the success of the plenary and the many requests for copies of the handouts and presentations, they have been posted on the NABCI website at http://www.nabci-us.org/consdesign.htm.

The Tri-national NABCI Committee is advancing international conservation efforts on various fronts with a focus on promoting regional alliances (joint venture-like partnerships) in Mexico and securing new and innovative funding sources for bird conservation by promoting and soliciting funding for tri-national projects. The tri-national projects are being developed from five priority sites in Mexico (Janos, Yucatan, Marismas Nacionales, Laguna Madre, and El Triunfo) and linked to sites and Joint Ventures in the US and Canada through common priority species. Initial U.S. proposals have been received from the Pacific Coast, Intermountain West, Central Hardwoods, and Atlantic Coast Joint Ventures. The next step is to have workshops that allow US, Canadian, and Mexican participants to work together to complete the proposals. It is anticipated that a minimum of one and a maximum of three proposals will be completed in summer 2007.

The Committee has developed a draft agenda, time line, and desired outcomes for a joint US/Mexico NABCI Committee meeting to be held in August 2007. The meeting will be held August 21-24, 2007 outside of Mexico City.

The newly formed Private Lands Subcommittee is looking at how the US NABCI Committee can improve the conservation of birds on private lands across the country. One of the first tasks before the Subcommittee will be to talk with NRCS leadership about bird conservation at their July 2007 meeting and develop web-based training sessions for NRCS biologists from around the country. **The Subcommittee drafted a letter to NRCS leadership on behalf of Bruce McCloskey and Dale Hall in regards to presenting to NRCS. The Communications Subcommittee developed a generic presentation for federal agencies on bird conservation. The presentation was then tailored to the NRCS by the Private Lands Subcommittee. The Subcommittee also developed a compilation of case studies that highlight the conservation work done on private lands for bird conservation by NRCS and some of its partners. The case studies were published in the All-Bird Bulletin in June. The presentation was given to the Chief's Executive Leadership Team on June 19. The response was positive and follow-up conversations with the Chief on monitoring, conservation design, and working with the State Conservationists will be conducted.** The Subcommittee will also tackle an updated guide to the Farm Bill for conservationists after reauthorization is complete. The guide will be based on the one developed by the Wildlife Management Institute in the early 1990s. The Subcommittee will engage in the Conservation Effects Assessment Project and work to assist in determining how to improve bird conservation on private lands through recommendations in the State Wildlife Action Plans.

See below for information on NABCI's Monitoring Subcommittee.

Farm Bill – As the Association's Farm Bill Coordinator addresses the reauthorization of the 2007 Farm Bill, the Migratory Bird Coordinator will assist where necessary on bird related issues in the Farm Bill. Both Coordinators will work as liaison between the Bird Conservation Committee and the Agricultural Conservation Committee.

Bird Monitoring – The Coordinator continues to help facilitate the development of products on coordinated monitoring through the US NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee and the NE Coordinated Monitoring Framework. The Subcommittee held its latest meeting in January 2007. The meeting focused on addressing the comments received on the report *Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring.* The report lays out key ideas and actions to improve monitoring. Although we are in a time of tight budgets, the US NABCI Committee feels that there are efficiencies and improvements that can be made to the design of surveys, the storage of data, and the link between monitoring and conservation/management action that can occur with little new resources. **A final report was distributed at the North American Conference in March 2007 and is available on NABCI's website at http://www.nabci-us.org/aboutnabci/monitoringreportfinal0307.pdf. The report was well received and was endorsed by the Bird Conservation Committee. Other reports and efforts that were also released at the North American Conference that are in line with the NABCI report include the Natural Resources Monitoring Partnership (NRMP), the adaptive harvest management report, and the DOI guidance on adaptive management. The US NABCI Committee is in the process of signing an MOU among all the member organizations and agencies that supports the goals and objectives of the Report. The NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee is continuing to promote the report and advance specific 2007 tasks to advance monitoring.**

The Migratory Bird Coordinator and the Association's Science and Research Liaison partnered with the USGS, NPS, and other partners to develop the NRMP that includes a Monitoring Protocol Library and a Monitoring "Locator." They include an internet accessible, searchable database that provides information on monitoring protocols and ongoing and past monitoring programs. The library and locator (http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/MonitoringPartnership.htm) was released on November 6, 2006. An open house was held at the North American on March 21, 2007 to officially kickoff the NRMP.

Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team – The Migratory Bird Coordinator is a member of the Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team developed under the provisions of the proposed *American Bald Eagle Recovery and National Emblem Commemorative Coin Act* (H.R. 4116). The Team has started preparing drafts of proposed application forms, guidelines, project rating forms, etc. The Team has also drafted a list of major points or topics to be included in the guidelines. Little activity has occurred recently.

Nongame Migratory Bird Consultation between the States and the USFWS – Implementation of an Expanded Flyway System has begun with the nomination of state fish and wildlife agency personnel to the nongame migratory bird technical sections of each flyway and the development of bylaws. **The Flyway nongame technical sections will meet again in July 2007. Examples of the topics they will address include Avian Influenza surveillance, and Cormorants, falconry, and Bald Eagle issues.**

State Wildlife Action Plans – As the States completed the development of the State Wildlife Action Plans, the Coordinator has shifted her support from development to implementation. Currently the Coordinator is working on support for the implementation of monitoring and on the implementation of regional projects developed as a result of the Duke Foundation grant. Extracting the regional and national priorities from the Strategies will be critical for identifying the priority issues. A first stage of this is the development of a workshop for the states within the Atlantic Flyway to identify priorities and develop a means of pulling bird conservation information out of the plans and putting it in a useful format. This project is being done in conjunction with the USFWS and is funded by NBII. The first workshop was held December 4-5, 2006 at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland. Seventeen participants attended the workshop including representatives from six States and Puerto Rico. The workshop results included compilation of the bird conservation information and priorities and priority management issues from the State Wildlife Action Plans; a description of what an application would allow partners to do; and the information management needs in order to implement priority conservation actions and address priority management issues. **A workshop was held on May 1, 2007 to work with application developers to define what the application will look like. Follow-up tasks from that workshop are being addressed.**

NBII – Bird Conservation Node – The Bird Conservation Node's Strategic Plan is complete but the Coordinator continues to work with the Node to make sure state interests are represented on the Node Guidance Team that is being created.

National and International Bird Conservation Initiatives – The Association's Migratory Bird Coordinator continues to be an active member of the WSHRN-US committee, Partners in Flight, and the shorebird and waterbird conservation initiatives. For example, the Coordinator is keeping up to date on State issues surrounding the Red Knots and horseshoe crabs in the Mid-Atlantic. The Coordinator attended the joint Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) and Waterbird Conservation for the Americas meeting in January 2007. Topics of discussion included planning for waterbird conservation throughout the hemisphere and implementing waterbird conservation priorities in the US, and seabird conservation. **The Coordinator is helping develop numerous sessions for the 2008 international bird conservation conference. The topics include climate change, private lands, monitoring, conservation design, and State agency participation in international conservation.**

Bird Conservation Committee – The Committee's most recent meeting in Portland, Oregon included discussions on avian influenza, the North American Monitoring Partnership, the Southern Wings Program, the Clean Water Act, Farm Bill, the NABCI monitoring report and other topics. Hot issues in the Committee that are being addressed include the ramifications to wetland-related and wetland-dependent species with regard to the Clean Water Act and the start of the Southern Wings Program. Also, the Committee discussed at length the numerous monitoring-related efforts that have recently been released and their common messages. The Committee stressed that we have the opportunity to send a strong and united message about the importance of monitoring.

The Southern Wings Program is being developed to provide a mechanism for States to easily engage in projects that help conserve their priority species on the wintering grounds in Latin America and the Caribbean. The State Fish and Wildlife Agencies spend millions of dollars conserving migratory birds each year. The economic significance of migratory birds is well known. To protect millions of dollars worth of States' investment in migratory birds and to maintain and increase the millions of dollars in revenue that flow into the States from bird watching, States should consider engaging in partnerships that conserve migratory bird species on their wintering grounds. A presentation was given to the Directors of each State Regional Association in the summer of 2006 to begin the discussion of how to develop a flexible, transparent mechanism that would make it easy for States to engage in conservation of migratory birds throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and also to leverage State money with other partners' resources and potentially the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. The Directors expressed support for moving forward with the development of a mechanism to make this a reality. To facilitate the initial stage of this process, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, American Bird Conservancy, and the National Audubon Society have prepared a number of proposals that address the conservation of State priority migrant bird species. The proposals are available on the Association's website at http://www.fishwildlife.org/allbird_LAC_projects.html. In addition, we developed a regional proposal in response to a request from the SEAFWA Directors. States were asked to identify a point person to determine where their State fits into the program now and into the future. A conference call was held in June with State agency representatives, NGOs, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The objective was to discuss developing 2-3 proposals that support the conservation of State agency species of greatest conservation need, and NGO and NFWF priority species.

Wind Power Development – **The Coordinator, along with the Association's Science and Research Liaison is engaged with the wind subcommittee of the Association's Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee. Currently the Subcommittee has decided to address a number of topics including updating the USFWS Draft Guidelines through the FAC process, considering the development of guidance for states including partnering with the Clean Energy States Alliance in state-level discussions, and increasing communication with federal agencies in the US, Canada and Mexico on wind energy guidance development. The Subcommittee, through the Coordinator and the Science and Research Liaison, is also engaged with the National Wind Coordinating Committee (NWCC). The Coordinator helped the Chair facilitate discussions on all these topics at the recent Wind Subcommittee meeting at the North American Conference. Keith Sexson, Kansas Parks and Wildlife Department, was nominated as the Association's representative to the FAC Committee. Due to Ron Regan's recent job change, Keith Sexson is the new Chair of the Subcommittee.**

Two recent developments include discussions with the Association of Wind Energy of Regulatory Utility Commissioners to determine how to get wildlife issues higher on their priority list and discussions on the development of regional state discussions to increase standardization of wind energy siting guidelines and share protocols and information. **We worked in cooperation with the USFWS to compile state energy guidelines, legislation and related information that will be useful to States as they address wind energy. The compilation has been completed and is available on the Association's webpage.**

Avian Influenza – The USDA and USGS were recently given mandates to develop a management plan for avian influenza that includes a continental survey. The Migratory Bird Coordinator in coordination with other Association staff participated in the development of the plan to make sure States' needs and concerns were addressed. Currently, implementation of plans is being implemented through the Flyway Councils.

MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

To date, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) has directed over $45 million to 127 national and regional priority projects of the state fish and wildlife agencies.

The selected NCNs for the 2008 MSCGP cycle are:

1. Subject: Integration of fish and wildlife needs as the conservation provisions of the Farm Bill are implemented. (Submitted by the Agricultural Conservation Committee)

2. Subject: Large-scale Habitat Conservation Design, Implementation, and Evaluation for the Conservation of Birds and Other Fish and Wildlife Species (Submitted by the Bird Conservation Committee)

3. Subject: Landscape-scale Information on Migration Pathways and Distribution of Fish and Wildlife Related to Potential Energy Development (Submitted by the Energy & Wildlife Policy Committee)

4. Subject: Develop or advance programs that seek to create, improve or facilitate access to lands by hunters and anglers (As revised by the NGC to include all lands both public and private; Submitted by the Federal & Tribal Relations Committee)

5. Subject: A National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative (Submitted by the Fish & Wildlife Health Committee)

6. Subject: Support for Coordination and Development of additional National Fish Habitat Partnerships under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, and the development of effective methods, programs, and coordinated strategies for inventory, management, conservation, and enhancement of reservoir fisheries habitat (The NGC combined these two NCNs; Submitted by the Fisheries/Water Resources Policy Committee & Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies)

7. Subject: Develop leadership capacity within the conservation community through leadership development initiatives, training, consulting services, and support of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (Submitted by the Leadership & Professional Development Committee)

The deadline for proposal submissions was Friday, June 8, 2007. This year, 38 proposals were received. The review process will begin in late June/early July. Proposals will be reviewed by two Association Committees with related subject matter. This year, the MSCGP will be piloting new software developed for proposal reviews by the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS).

The next steps in the annual MSCGP cycle include. At the Association's Annual meeting in September, the National Grants Committee will use the committees' input as a starting point for selecting a recommended list of projects. Once the state directors approve this priority list, it will be submitted to

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by the mandated October 1 deadline. The USFWS can only fund projects on our list; we expect grant awards to be issued in December and funds will be available starting January 1, 2008.

For details on projects being conducted by the Association using Multistate Conservation Grant funds, please refer to other sections in this report, such as National Fish Habitat Initiative, Furbearer Resources and BMP Outreach Activities, Public Affairs, and Management Assistance Team. For information on other current and past Multistate Projects, please visit http://faims.fws.gov.

Please visit http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate_grants.htm for more information about the MSCGP. If you have any questions, please contact Christina Zarrella at czarrella@fishwildlife.org, or at 202-624-7821.

NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) is a world class leadership development program focused specifically on the conservation organizations. The Association joined with a number of like-minded conservation organizations to develop the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) to prepare future leaders in fish and wildlife conservation. This initiative has been integrated into the Association's leadership initiative under the guidance of the Management Assistance Team and the Leadership and Professional Development Committee. Beginning in 2006 the NCLI provides an annual opportunity for state, federal and private fish and wildlife professionals to attend a top-rate leadership development program. Developed to help conservation organizations meet the challenge of continued leadership as current leaders retire from the workforce, the Institute combines leadership and management development training with exposure to the history and current challenges of fish and wildlife conservation in North America.

The initial class of Fellows graduated in April 2007. A total of 49 applications were received for the second class, which will convene this November, and 36 individuals were selected to participate by the NCLI Board at its meeting on June 28, 2007. Formal notifications will go out in the near future.

The Association's Management Assistance Team is coordinating most operational aspects of the Institute and Sally Guynn is serving as Executive Director. Steve Williams is the President of the NCLI Board and Matt Hogan serves on it.

Additional information is available via the NCLI website (www.conservationleadership.org).

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT INITIATIVE

The National Fish Habitat Board (NFHB) held its initial meeting in conjunction with the Association's Annual Meeting in Snowmass on September 22, 2006. Since then, the NFHB has met on several occasions (most recently June 6-7, 2007 in Washington, DC). The Board includes state agency leaders John Cooper (Chair), Gary Myers, Ed Parker, Kelly Hepler (Vice-Chair), and Doug Hansen and Association Executive Director Matt Hogan. The full membership and additional information can be viewed at www.fishhabitat.org.

To date the NFHB has adopted a charter and draft national enabling legislation, provided some preliminary guidance regarding future operational needs (e.g., staffing), approved interim national strategies, developed Fish Habitat Partnership Guidelines and related application materials, and adopted a communications strategy. The four interim conservation strategies focus on protecting intact and healthy waters, restoring river flows and lake levels to natural patterns, establishing connectivity of fragmented aquatic systems, and producing reductions in sedimentation phosphorus and nitrogen runoff.

One of the highlights of the June 2007 Board meeting was presentations by the five pilot Fish Habitat Partnerships: Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, Eastern Brook Trout Joint

Venture, Western Native Trout Initiative, Midwest Driftless Area Restoration Effort, and the Matanuska-Susitna Salmon Conservation Partnership (Alaska). By 2010, it is expected that the NFHB will officially recognize at least 12 Fish Habitat Partnerships that target priority habitats.

The Bush Administration has requested $5.2 million in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) FY08 budget for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Plan). This compares to nearly $3 million and $1 million, respectively, for FY07 and FY06. For the second consecutive year, with the concurrence of the NFHB, the USFWS is directing funds to the five pilot partnerships noted above. This fiscal year those federal funds total $1.76 million for implementing 40 projects that will further the goals of the Plan. Partner match is in excess of $6 million. The NFHB and the Association are working with the USFWS to ensure that future funding will be expended and prioritized in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan.

The Association's efforts on behalf of Plan implementation continue to be primarily funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant through 2007, a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for coordination services, and the ongoing support of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. At the June 2007 NFHB meeting, the Association was directed to submit a proposal, on behalf of the NFHB, to partially fund future NFHB operations and partnership support, for consideration during the next round of MSCG funds and that was done. The USFWS is in the process of supplementing its direct support of partnership efforts and regions with a grant to the Association to also help support portions of the NFHB operations and committee functions.

Christopher Estes (Alaska Department of Fish and Game) has been working at the Association in support of implementation of the Plan. Ron Regan and Rachel Brittin of the Association are actively engaged in Plan implementation and Board coordination. The USFWS and NOAA Fisheries have appointed and fund Tom Busiahn and Susan-Marie Stedman, respectively, to provide full-time Board/Action Plan support. USGS/BRD is providing a half-time position to support the science efforts of the NFHB (filled by Janet Cushing). Gary Whelan (MI DNR) and Doug Beard (USGS/BRD) are serving as co-chairs of the Science and Data Committee. The NFHB hopes to hire a communications coordinator in the near future.

In August, a working group of the NFHB will meet with the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC), USFWS Assistant Regional Directors for Fisheries, and USFWS national leadership. They will discuss opportunities for better local, regional, and national coordination of efforts to support the Plan and to address issues that can no longer be executed solely by the SFBPC.

The Board will meet again in October 2007, at which time it will consider the applications of pilot Fish Habitat Partnerships for formal recognition by the NFHB. During the Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society on September 2, 2007, there will be a Science and Data Partners Workshop to address the national fish habitat assessment and the role of fish habitat partnerships. In 2008, USGS/BRD will host a workshop regarding future science and data needs; this workshop has been endorsed by the NFHB.

For more information, contact Ron Regan at rregan@fishwildlife.org, Christopher Estes at cestes@fishwildlife.org or Rachel Brittin at rbrittin@fishwildlife.org or at (202) 624-7890. For web-based background materials see:

- National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) document: http://fishhabitat.org/plan/National_Fish_Habitat_Action_Plan.pdf.
- FAQ (we are in process of updating this information): http://fishhabitat.org/documents/NFHAP_QandA.pdf.
- National Fish Habitat Board (NFHB) Charter: http://www.fishhabitat.org/board_documents/Charter.pdf.
- NFHB Partnership Guidance: http://www.fishhabitat.org/partner/FHP_Guidance.pdf.
- NFHB Partnership Guidance Summary: http://www.fishhabitat.org/partner/guidance.htm.
- NFHB Meeting Minutes: http://www.fishhabitat.org/nationalboard.htm.

NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN (NAWMP) COORDINATOR'S REPORT

It is a pleasure to report to you on my activities as the Association's NAWMP Coordinator. I would like to thank all of you for your assistance and support. I would also like to thank the Canadian provinces, Canadian Wildlife Service and the NAWMP partners in Canada for continuing to **financially** support the coordinator position at the Association. A number of NAWMP and NAWCA (North American Wetlands Conservation Act) activities have taken place in Canada, the United States and Mexico since my last report. This report will cover some of the major items.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
NAWCA provides funding for cooperative public-private wetland conservation projects throughout North America which support the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. NAWCA allocates to Canada and Mexico between 30-60% of available funds and currently Canada receives 45%.

All states have benefited from NAWCA standard and small grants programs. Thousands of projects have been put on the ground in North America, including a total of more than 23 million acres of wetlands and associated uplands in the U.S. and Canada. **Partners in more than 1,582 projects have received more than $770 million in grants. Indeed, the partners have also contributed $2.3 billion.** There has been at least one NAWCA funded project in every state, including Alaska and Hawaii.

In July 2006, the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CIJV) hosted the US North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) in Cranbrook, BC, as well as the first meeting of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Advisory Group. The Advisory Group consists of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council and five additional migratory bird conservation professionals from Canada, the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, and Trinidad and Tobago. Both the US and Canadian wetlands councils met in July 2006. As one of the most recent Joint Ventures in Canada, the CIJV has published a prospectus entitled "Something Ventured Something Gained." For more information please go to www.cijv.ca.

Early in June 2007, representatives from across the Canadian NAWMP/NAWCC program met with the U.S. NAWCC staff and U.S. FWS staff. The Canadians gave a presentation entitled "NAWCA and NAWMP in Canada: A Landscape Approach" and hosted a reception.

Appropriations **– The Association supported the President's FY 2008 budget request of $42.6 million for NAWCA and recommended that Congress try to eventually achieve full funding at $75 million. Both the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees are also recommending funding at that level which would mean an increase of $3.23 million for NAWCA.**

Last year, Congress reauthorized NAWCA, and President Bush signed it into law for five more years with an authorized funding level at $75 million annually.

Congress also reauthorized the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act for five years and increased the level of authorization. The NMBCIA now also provides for projects in Canada. Of the 12 Canadian proposals submitted in 2007 for NMBCA funding, 5 were approved including one that was a joint proposal with the United States. The President has asked for $3.96 million for neotropical migratory bird conservation.

Canadian NAWMP/NAWCA Initiatives
The NABCI/NAWCC Canada Secretariat has been integrated into the Canadian Wildlife Service and now is located at the Environment Canada headquarters. Cynthia Wright, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Environment Canada is the Chair of the NABCI/NAWCC Canada. Richard Pratt is the Executive Secretary. Michele Brenning, Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service, is Chair of NAWCC Canada.

The Canadian program is so successful that it has expanded to include waterbird, shorebird and landbird interests through the Canadian NABCI Council. **Canada has achieved 69% of its NAWMP goals since**

1986 which translates into 5.9 million acres that have been secured. During that period, Canada has spent over $612 million on NAWMP and wetland and wetland-associated habitats.

The Western Boreal Forest Initiative covers over 2 million square kilometers containing a mosaic of wetland complexes, flood plains and river deltas from the Yukon Territory to Manitoba. The region supports a significant component of the continental population for some waterfowl species of concern such as scaup and scoters. Furthermore, waterfowl produced in this region use all four Flyways. As work continues, the full importance of the Boreal Forest to other bird species is just beginning to be understood. The overall objective of this program is to conserve wetland and upland habitat based on priority areas to sustain western boreal water bird populations. Agreements have been signed with Aboriginal people, industry and Ducks Unlimited. Progress continues on expanding the program into eastern Canada while aligning it within existing joint ventures.

While the Boreal Forest is the second most significant breeding ground in Canada, it should be noted that the focus of NAWMP activity will remain on the Prairie Provinces. The priorities of the PHJV are integrated landscape management, biological foundation, policy leadership, governance of the PHJV, marketing, communications and education, and developing a viable resource base/PHJV capacity.

The PHJV has recently produced a set of five "fact sheets" on policy, conservation partnerships, science, achievements and the PHJV as a strategic investment. Contact the PHJV at phjv@ec.gc.ca for copies of the fact sheets or for more information. The PHJV has also published its Strategic Plan 2006-2011.

An action plan for the recovery of pintail has been completed and distributed. The Northern Pintail Action Group (PAG) has established as its highest priority the reduction of cultivated land and spring tillage in key pintail breeding areas. The Alberta NAWMP partners are using both direct habitat securement and policy initiatives to meet this priority.

The PAG has identified several topics to address immediately: pintail population status and dynamics, assessment of band recovery data, and a harvest strategy and recruitment. In addition, they will also conduct research on migration and breeding ecology.

A Scaup Action Team Prospectus has been developed. The Scaup Action Team Mission, briefly stated, is to reverse the decline of scaup populations. They have identified the following management needs: scaup harvest management, improved estimates of annual survival, Joint Venture Habitat initiatives and evaluation of biases in annual breeding population and winter surveys. Efforts are underway to secure separate funding specifically directed toward surveys, banding and monitoring scaup.

All Canadian Joint Ventures continue to move ahead with finalizing their implementation plans. The PCJV and CIJV are planning from a "focus area" basis while the EHJV is undertaking provincial implementation plans. The PHJV is drafting a plan which will examine the suite of deficit and recovery targets compared against current levels of funding.

The Canadian NAWMP Committee membership now includes M. Anderson and I. Barnett (DUC), R. Milton (NS), A. Tremblay, Wm. Gummer and S. Wendt (CWS). David Brackett, former Director General of the CWS is now the President of Wildlife Habitat Canada.

You may wish to explore the website of the NAWMP in Canada for more information, including the annual Canadian NAWMP report entitled "Habitat Matters" at www.nawmp.ca.

Association President's Task Force

I would like to thank all of the states and organizations who generously provide NAWCA "match" money to support Canadian NAWMP projects. We need to continue our work on the prairies and elsewhere in Canada to provide good quality habitat for waterfowl populations. While most duck species have recovered to well above their normal levels, some species (for example, sea ducks, pintails, and scaup) either continue to decline or they are recovering very slowly.

Since there has been a substantial increase in NAWCA funding over the past few years, we will need additional support in raising the non-federal U.S. "match" money for Canadian NAWCA grants. Without

your assistance we will not be able to achieve the goals set by the NAWMP. We must not lose sight of the fact that the goals of the NAWMP have not all been accomplished. There is a significant amount of work that needs to be done in Canada to ensure the fulfillment of the NAWMP.

An Association Task Force was formed under the Bird Conservation Committee to develop strategies to increase state contributions to Canada as non-federal U.S. match for NAWCA/NAWMP projects.

The Task Force was chaired by Scott Yaich, who is also chair of the Waterfowl Working Group. Membership included representatives from each of the four Regional Associations, the four Flyways, WMI, DUI and the Association. The Report of the Association Task Force on State Contributions to Canada is available on the Association web site www.fishwildlife.org. The Report contains six recommendations related to maintaining the $10 million Association funding goal: apportionment among the States; use of State/NAWCA relationship as consideration in evaluating state contributions; establishing a minimum partnership level; developing five year plans; and a review process for the draft recommendations. We have met with each of the Regional Associations; all endorsed the Report and its recommendations. A resolution was passed in support of the Report and its recommendations at the Association's Business meeting in September 2005. **We would like to thank those states which have increased their support, as well as the states that have started or resumed providing match to Canada. If you require any assistance in preparing a five-year plan, please do not hesitate to contact us.**

NAWMP 20th Anniversary

There were a number of activities in Canada and the United States to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the NAWMP last year. Congratulations to all who have been a part of the greatest conservation success story in North America.

Canada Night

The Canadian NAWMP/NAWCA partners hosted a reception at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting in September 2006. The purpose of the reception was to recognize and thank all of the states and other partners who have sent money to Canada for NAWMP/NAWCA projects. Over 700 people attended.

Continental Assessment

The first comprehensive continental assessment of progress in achieving the biological goals of NAWMP is now completed and a draft assessment report is under review. The assessment identified desired biological outcomes and habitat needs, how to strengthen the scientific foundation of NAWMP, re-evaluation of the resources needed to attain the full vision of NAWMP and ways to improve the effectiveness of institutional structures and relationships. A draft of the NAWMP Continental Assessment Report has been completed and reviewed by the Plan Committee. The draft report examines progress to date in achieving the biological goals of the Plan; adaptive processes (monitoring and evaluation); the status of North American waterfowl populations; and future needs and actions, among other matters. **The North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee met earlier this year to review stakeholder comments on the Assessment Report and to develop a management response to the recommendations contained in the report. The Plan Committee agreed to focus on four work areas that address a number of recommendations contained in the Assessment Report: policy, science, communications and funding. In addition, individual Joint Venture Assessment Reports have been sent to all the Joint Ventures. The Plan Committee will be meeting with the U.S. NAWCC at their meeting in July 2007.** It is anticipated that draft recommendations will be addressed during the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March 2007.

North American Bird Conservation Initiative

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) continues to move forward in Canada, the United States and Mexico. All three countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

Canada is also involved in the Arctic to Argentina Initiative, a science and conservation strategy for bird species and habitat in the Western Hemisphere. It focuses on action for science, habitat partnership and leadership.

Other Matters

a. Canada has passed legislation to more effectively protect migratory birds and the marine environment from the negative effects caused by the discharge of harmful substances, such as oil, into marine waters. The Birds Oiled at Sea Bill directs any fines to Environment Canada.

b. **Fisheries and Oceans Canada has developed a "National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries."**

c. The MBCA has been changed in Canada to provide for a regulatory framework that could address the incidental take of migratory birds.

d. NAWCA technical assessment questions for the U.S. Standard Grants Program continue to be revised in order to improve the quality of geographic/species priority information and to establish equity among all bird groups in the NAWCA application and proposal review process. Proposals are evaluated based upon 1) overall quality; 2) the extent of overlap among the four bird plans, and 3) the quality of the scientific basis, among other criteria.

e. A "Coordinated Bird Monitoring Technical Working Group" was established under the Association's Science and Research Committee. Canada is renovating its migratory bird program and also developing a coordinated bird monitoring program which will be complementary to the U.S. program.

f. Canada has developed a number of environmental stewardship programs such as Environmental Farm Planning and the National Farm Stewardship Program under its Agriculture Policy Framework which is modeled after the Farm Bill in the United States.

g. The Association is administering an NCN entitled "Clarifying Population Objectives for Waterfowl Habitat and Harvest Management."

   The proposal objectives are:

   i. Clarifying the biological meaning of North American Waterfowl Management Plan population objectives and the implication for monitoring and assessment.

   ii. Develop options for incorporating those objectives in Adaptive Harvest Management and describe the implications of those options for both harvest and habitat management.

   iii. Engage all relevant stakeholders in consultations to identify a preferred option for adoption and implementation.

A Joint Task Group has held meetings to review comments from stakeholders and it is anticipated that a draft report will be prepared in the near future.

I look forward to working with you.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Annual Report—Rachel Brittin, Public Affairs Director for the Association, has just wrapped up the 2006 Annual Report. This document is a first for the Association and is a great example of the work the Association pursues on behalf of its member agencies. Brittin will present this report to the Executive Committee and membership during the North American in March. In addition, a matching PowerPoint presentation about the Association has been completed and will also be available to the committee and membership.

Annual Meeting—Preparing for Louisville, KY is well underway. Plans to hold events at the Louisville Slugger museum, Muhammad Ali museum and the Arms Museum are in the works. Stay tuned for more in coming months. The website for the Annual Meeting is up to date and ready for your use.

In December, the Association's Executive Committee chose Saratoga Springs, NY as its next site for the 2008 Annual Meeting.

Working on Behalf of the State Agencies—The Association's Public Affairs Director, Rachel Brittin continues to oversee Association publications, field media calls, and coordinate fish and wildlife

community outreach and background collateral. Since January, National Public Radio, The New York Times, and the Associated Press covered stories fielded through the Association on a variety of national topics including deer populations, hunting restrictions, and canned hunts.

Early March brought a lot of public affairs activity, as the Association kicked off this year's Teaming with Wildlife Fly-In. We released six national news pieces, and eight awards press releases; a few of these releases garnered media attention in many states across the country. We even garnered a bit of press when Challenger the American bald eagle flew during a staged event at the U.S. Capitol.

Currently, Brittin is also co-chairing a national team of public affairs professionals for the North American Conservation Education Strategy, and she chairs the Communications Team of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

Conversations also continue about the state wildlife action plans with several top market media outlets, particularly as we head to Nebraska the week of March 12 for a media tour focused on conservation projects related to the Nebraska action plan. The media tour will feature time viewing more than a million sandhill cranes. As of March 12, we had nearly 20 reporters attending.

SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP WITH USGS, USFWS AND NPS

Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This position works to coordinate the science and research needs of state fish and wildlife agencies with key federal resource agencies. Amber Pairis is the Association liaison with various federal agencies with **salary provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Discipline (USGS), and operational support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and U.S. National Park Service (NPS).** The Liaison provides staff support to a variety of committees and scientific assistance to all other Association committees (and the Regional Associations) and is the Association's point-of-contact for invasive species issues. She regularly makes a variety of site visits to science centers and federal facilities around the country.

Current priorities include:

Research and Monitoring Priorities

- Science and Research Committee -- The Science and Research Committee is focusing on identifying State priority research and monitoring needs based on input and presentations from State representatives. In addition, a representative from each of the regional associations has been present to participate in the committee meeting and represent regional needs. **Based on the discussion and member feedback, priorities have been compiled into themes which serve as the foundation for future activities of the committee.**

- Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership -- The Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership (NRMP) is a collaborative effort by the natural resource management community to improve the accessibility of monitoring efforts in order to support effective evaluation and decision-making. NRMP has developed two Internet-based tools that provide information on current monitoring activities at a variety of spatial scales and serve as a reference and clearinghouse for monitoring protocols and resource assessment methodologies. **The library and locator (http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/MonitoringPartnership.htm) was released in November and followed by an Open House at the 72nd annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Portland, Oregon. The open house was very successful and a second open house is planned for The Wildlife Society meeting in September.**

  At the business meeting in Portland, the Science and Research Committee recommended that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorse the Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership and that the State Wildlife Agency Directors identify appropriate personnel in their state to become familiar with the tools and participate in its use. This recommendation was also supported by the Bird Conservation Committee and the Invasive Species Committee and was passed unanimously by the directors. A letter was

sent out by the Association President to encourage directors to identify someone in their staff to become familiar with the NRMP tools.

The Science Liaison serves on the NRMP steering committee along with other representatives from the States, USGS, USFS, NPS, and other partners and is the leader of the Outreach Committee that organizes the NRMP Open House events.

- Coordination with TWW -- The Science Liaison is working with TWW by serving on a steering group for a project on State Wildlife Action Plans. The Science Liaison is particularly interested in identifying priority research and monitoring needs and regional opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between State and Federal Agencies.

Cervid Immunocontraceptive Vaccine

- Since September 2006, the Science Liaison has been working with the Human Wildlife Conflict Working Group of the Wildlife Resource Policy Committee on the issue of a deer immunocontraceptive vaccine. While no final decision has been made regarding the registration or use of this product, USDA-APHIS-WS anticipates that GonaCon™ will be registered as a "Restricted Use" product for use by state or federal wildlife or natural resource management personnel or persons working under their authority. The Science Liaison has worked with the working group to compile a final report of recommendations, best management practices, a summary of the Deer Immunocontraceptive Preparedness Survey 2007, model statute or regulations for fertility control, example of draft legislation or rule regulating fertility control of wildlife, and label language to serve as a resource to State Wildlife Agencies. This report was sent out to all State Directors in March. **The report is also available on the Association's web site at http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency_science_GONACON.html. As of now the working group will remain intact and the liaison will continue to support the efforts of the working group on this topic.**

Invasive Species

- The Science Liaison is the Association's point-of-contact for invasive species issues and provides staff support to the Invasive Species Committee. She attends the meetings of federal interagency working groups including the Invasive Terrestrial Animal and Pathogens (ITAP) committee, the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Nuisance and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW), and the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) of the National Invasive Species Council (NISC). She is also working with representatives from USGS, NBII, and DOD on early detection rapid response projects for invasive species that could be beneficial to State Agencies' management efforts.

- The Science Liaison is involved in a project with the USDA-FS and Wildlife Forever on the creation of informational videos/DVDs on controlling invasive species spread and supports the involvement of State representatives (WI DNR) on this project. This project is being created for the hunting and angling community and is focused on activities that might halt the spread of invasive species.

- Aquatic Nuisance Species Communications Workshop -- In 2003, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies received a Multistate Conservation Grant to support a comprehensive, three-year project to increase effectiveness of state agency efforts to manage aquatic nuisance species (ANS). **The Science Liaison helped plan a day-long workshop and poster session to share the results of this project with other State Agencies and partners at the 72nd annual North American Conference in March 2007 in Portland, OR. Materials, PowerPoint presentations, and proceedings from the workshop have been compiled and will be available on the Association's web site in July.**

Threatened and Endangered Species Committee – The Science Liaison worked with NatureServe to compile a list of State listed species to be used for a project being undertaken by the Threatened and Endangered Species Committee.

Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee – The Science Liaison serves as the staff support on the global climate change and wind power and wildlife subcommittees.

Climate Change

- **Panel Discussion – The Science Liaison organized a panel of state wildlife agency representatives titled "State Agency Responses to the Challenges of Climate Change Impacts on Fish and Wildlife Resources" that took place at the George Wright Society meeting in St. Paul, MN. The panel featured State agency representatives from AZ, NC, ND, MN, OR and the state representative for Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC). A summary of the panel and presentations will be available on the Association's web site soon.**

- **The liaison serves on an advisory committee for a project through the Wildlife Habitat Policy Research Program (National Council for Science and the Environment) looking at climate change impacts on wildlife habitat.**

Wind Power Issues –
In conjunction with the Association's Migratory Bird Coordinator, the Science Liaison is working on a variety of wind-related issues.

- **The Association is supportive of the USFWS Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee and has submitted a nomination for a state representative to serve on this committee on behalf of the Association. Keith Sexson, Kansas Parks and Wildlife, was nominated as the Association's representative to the FAC Committee.**
- **Keith Sexson (KS) is the new Chair of the Subcommittee.**
- **In conjunction with the USFWS, the Association compiled information on existing state legislation for wind power issues (including regulations, who implements these regulations, guidance or proposed guidance, and renewable portfolio standards) and siting/assessment protocols from each State. This report was sent out to all State directors in April and is available on the web at http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency_science_wind_Priorities.html.**
- **A new Wind Power web page has been created on the Association's web site under the Science and Research program. This site compiles a variety of web resources, reports, existing siting guidelines, conference and workshop proceedings, publications, and web resources on this topic. http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency_science_windwildlife.html**
- Efforts are made on a continuous basis to maintain communications between state, federal, industry, and NGO partners, and retaining state representation at various meetings.

National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) – Current NBII coordination is managed on a project-by-project basis. Areas of interest include collaboration with the USGS Status and Trends program, NBII, and key individuals in a host of other agencies to develop a searchable, geospatially explicit reference library of monitoring efforts and protocols under the Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership. Additionally, the Science Liaison is engaged in several activities with the Invasive Species Node.

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) – The Science Liaison is a member of the PARC Joint National Steering committee.

Fish and Wildlife Health Committee – The Science Liaison stays up to date on wildlife disease issues including Avian Influenza, Chronic Wasting Disease, and chytrid fungus (Bd). The Liaison remains focused on making sure that State Agencies are informed of current activities and try to facilitate information exchange.

The Science Liaison is also a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Directorate Science Advisory Committee.

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

State Wildlife Grants Advocacy:

FY 08:

- President Bush recommended $69.5 million for the State Wildlife Grants program in his budget. This includes $5 million for a competitive grants program and $6 million for Tribal Wildlife Grants.

- Dear Colleague Letters in both House and Senate are requesting $85 million for State Wildlife Grants in FY 08. The House letter was signed by 161 Representatives, and the Senate letter has a record 60 signers.

- The Association and other members of the Teaming with Wildlife Steering Committee participated in the House's public witness day on April 19th on State Wildlife Grants to the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee.

- The Teaming with Wildlife Fly-In was an enormous success, bringing more than 150 people from a record 43 states to Washington, DC to discuss the importance of the State Wildlife Grants program and the wildlife action plans.

- **The House of Representatives voted to provide our requested $85 million for State Wildlife Grants. This action followed an intensive campaign which included new State Wildlife Grant success stories from the states of all Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Members.**

- **The Association and the Maryland/DC Teaming with Wildlife Coalition hosted a field trip for 14 Congressional staffers and two state legislators to visit wildlife sites on Maryland's Delmarva Peninsula.**

- **The Senate Appropriations Committee voted to provide just $72.5 million for State Wildlife Grants, $12.5 million less than their House colleagues. While this is a slight increase over last year, it's a disappointment considering support from a record 60 Senators on this year's State Wildlife Grants Dear Colleague letter. We will mobilize the Teaming with Wildlife coalition to work toward the higher House funding level on the Senate floor and in conference.**

Long-Term Funding

Climate Change:

The Association has worked in partnership with the National Wildlife Federation and other members of the Teaming with Wildlife Steering Committee to secure dedicated funding for the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program in all the climate change bills. As the profile of this issue rises, we hope it will become increasingly likely that a bill will pass which generates revenues for wildlife potentially through the sale of emissions credits under a cap and trade system for greenhouse gases.

- In the fall of 2006, the Association helped to gather support from 375 organizations for a letter urging Congress to include funding for wildlife in all global climate change bills.
- In early February Senators Lieberman and Warner held a "Climate Change and Wildlife" hearing in the Environment and Public Works Committee. The Association submitted testimony on the need for increased state wildlife agency funding to "protect, restore and reconnect wildlife and their habitat."
- **A June conference call featuring experts from The Wildlife Society and National Wildlife Federation introduced state coalition leaders to the basics of this issue including the impacts of climate change on wildlife and how climate change legislation could generate funding. Future calls will address more specific legislative opportunities and strategy.**

- **Following a series of meetings with the National Wildlife Federation and supported by the Association and other members of the Teaming with Wildlife Steering Committee, dedicated funding for the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program has been included in at least five climate change bills. These include legislation sponsored by Senators Lieberman (D-CT), McCain (R-AZ), Feinstein (D-CA), Carper (D-DE), and Collins (R-ME) and Representatives Olver (D-MA) and Gilchrest (R-MD). This situation is changing rapidly and we're working to secure dedicated funding in several other bills which mention addressing wildlife but do not specify a funding source.**

Stand-Alone Bill:

The Association continues to pursue a bill that would provide a long-term dedicated funding source for the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program through revenue from existing federal receipts from oil drilling on and off shore and/or other sources.

98 and 99 Lease Sales from Gulf Coast Drilling:

The Association also is exploring the dedication of some of the revenue that might be generated from lease sales in 1998 and 1999 that did not pay royalty fees to the federal government. The House has claimed these funds for renewable energy purposes, but the Senate has not yet determined where these funds will go. These bills must pass Congress in order for any funds to be recouped from the oil industry.

Oceans Legislation:

Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) has included funding for wildlife conservation in draft oceans conservation legislation he is currently developing. This proposed bill would dedicate a portion of existing federal revenue from oil and gas activities on the Outer Continental Shelf to a variety of coastal and marine conservation programs. It also includes a small set-aside that could be used to fund the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program. We're working to clarify and expand this wildlife funding provision as Senator Stevens moves forward.

State-level Wildlife Funding Initiatives

While Association staff does not get involved in work on state-level wildlife funding initiatives, we do conduct outreach to national non-governmental organizations that are involved in this work to ensure that they work with the appropriate state agencies. The National Wildlife Federation and The Nature Conservancy are both dedicating substantial resources to state level funding campaigns in many states. The Association is carefully monitoring state needs and consulting with these organizations regularly to ensure that state wildlife agencies are adequately involved in the planning of and receive dedicated funding from these initiatives. Success stories, lessons learned and helpful resources for launching a funding initiative in your state are available at www.teaming.com.

Teaming with Wildlife Public Outreach Initiative

The Association continues its public outreach initiative with The Nature Conservancy funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to raise awareness of the State Wildlife Action Plans. The communications campaign has thus far been highly successful in that coverage of the state wildlife action plans has been positive and on message.

- Approval of the final nine state wildlife action plans took place in January 2007. Approximately 20 states issued press releases using the Teaming with Wildlife messages and gained media coverage upon approval of their wildlife action plans.
- The Association hosted a well-attended media trip at the October 2006 Society of Environmental Journalists conference. Reporters were very interested in the plans and were provided with background materials to generate some features in the short term and, perhaps more importantly, to present the plans as a frame with which to evaluate conservation stories they'll encounter in the years ahead.

- The Association co-hosted with Nebraska Game and Parks a national media tour on March 16, 2007 timed to coincide with the annual sandhill crane migration in Kearney, Nebraska. This attracted over 20 reporters and gained coverage in 10 news outlets across Nebraska.
- New Teaming with Wildlife materials include several displays (which are loaned to state agencies and others on a frequent basis), a Teaming with Wildlife brochure, and **two new websites: www.wildlifeactionplans.org and a completely revamped www.teaming.com.**

Teaming with Wildlife Coalition

The Association has been working with Teaming with Wildlife coalition leaders in the states to energize the more than 5,000 member organizations to support increased funding to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered and help implement the state wildlife action plans.

- **The Teaming with Wildlife Coalition has reached a new record of over 5,377 organizations and businesses. More than half these organizations are new members from the past year. Now more than 25 states have achieved the goal of 100 members and Ohio just became the first state to exceed 500 organizations!**
- A Teaming with Wildlife Coalition Summit was held in conjunction with the Teaming with Wildlife Fly-In Day. State coalition leaders shared tactics for growing and engaging the coalition through development of e-action alerts, field trips for Members of Congress and the media, wildlife summits and outreach to the 2007 target audiences: sportsmen, land trusts, tourism industry, and natural resource providers (ranchers, timber and energy companies, etc.).
- **Weekly emails and monthly conference calls continue to keep coalition leaders up to speed on the latest tactics and resources for strengthening their coalitions. Workshops on coalition building and state-level wildlife funding were held at the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Conference in April.**
- Outreach through the Teaming with Wildlife Steering Committee, has brought the number of national organizations in the coalition to more than 150. Already these new members have helped contribute to record Fly-In Day fundraising and in the months ahead they will be further engaged in coalition outreach, communications and advocacy.
- **The newly revamped www.teaming.com includes a completely updated "Coalition Tools" sections integrating the old "Message Kit" and "Coalition Toolkit" with an extensive collection of new and updated outreach templates and examples.**

State Wildlife Action Plan Federal Partner Outreach to Support States in Implementation

The Association is supporting state agencies in building strong programs by conducting outreach to federal agencies to build awareness and support states in their efforts to work with the federal agencies.

- The Association and the Fish and Wildlife Service jointly hosted the "One-Year Later" Meeting from July 30-August 2, 2006 at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia which was attended by over 40 states as well as many federal agencies, NGO's and private businesses. This conference provided an opportunity to learn how other states are approaching implementation and help to forge new partnerships to move our wildlife action plans forward.
- The Association is meeting regularly with key federal agencies including USFWS, USGS, USFS, NRCS, DOT, and DOD. **In May, Deputy Secretary of Interior Lynn Scarlett hosted a summit of leadership from across the federal land and resource management agencies in order to discuss the state wildlife action plans. More than 30 individuals representing the senior leadership of federal agencies attended.**
- A report on the state wildlife action plans will identify crosscutting issues and high leverage opportunities to help other agencies and conservation organizations partner with state wildlife agencies as well as incorporate the action plans into their own. A working group of state agency personnel and partners is helping with this process and will stay involved to steer the project as it moves forward. This report is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, US Fish and

Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Department of Transportation and Department of Defense. State Wildlife Directors at each regional association will be briefed and input sought on regional issues and needs as well as for the overall project. We have surveyed State Directors to identify the top priorities from each state's wildlife action plan and are ground-truthing this information with each agency to ensure that we accurately capture their information.

- The new www.wildlifeactionplans.org website is done and will be especially helpful to federal agencies and NGO partners to access information on how they can help states implement the wildlife action plans. The website provides streamlined access to state-by-state information in order to encourage partners to contact and collaborate with state agencies.

For more information on the Teaming with Wildlife initiative, contact Dave Chadwick at (202) 624-7890 or Chadwick@fishwildlife.org.

Association Staff

Matt Hogan, Executive Director
Carol Bambery, Association Counsel
Rachel Brittin, Public Affairs Director/Webmaster
David Chadwick, Wildlife Diversity Senior Program Associate
Megan Cook, TWW Communication and Coalition Associate
Naomi Edelson, Wildlife Diversity Director
Jacob Faibisch, MAT Project Manager
Estelle Green, Administrative Assistant
Dwight Guynn, MAT Project Manager
Sally Guynn, MAT Project Manager
Debbie Hahn, Migratory Bird Coordinator
Don MacLauchlan, International Resource Director
Gina Main, MAT Production Coordinator
Wendy Mansfield, Chief Financial Officer
Melissa McCormick, MAT Project Coordinator
Angela Rivas Nelson, Executive Assistant
Amber Pairis, Science and Research Liaison
Donna Reeves, MAT Administrative Assistant
Ron Regan, Resource Director
Sean Robertson, TWW Communication and Coalition Associate
Jen Mock Schaeffer, Agriculture Conservation Policy Analyst
Liz Skipper, Administrative Assistant
Gary J. Taylor, Legislative Director
Len Ugarenko, NAWMP Coordinator
Bryant White, Furbearer Research Coordinator (MO)
Christina Zarrella, Multistate Grants Coordinator

ASSOCIATION of FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Committee discussion items:

1) Responsibility/lead for mountain lion workshops
2) Whether Committee should re-do existing *Cougar* book or pursue separate document due to WAFWA and western directors concerns associated with specifics in book

Committee Recommendations:

1) WAFWA should assume responsibility for mountain lion workshops
2) WAFWA should develop guidelines for mountain lion management in western states associated with WAFWA workshops, independent of *Cougar* book

AFWA Agenda Items

Annual AFWA Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky on September 17-18, 2007
Commissioner O'Neal has invited commissioners from 18 eastern states
Western state commissioners were invited via e-mail; Chairman Golightly would like at least one commissioner from each western state to try to attend
Dr. Sally Guynn will be on the agenda, discussing the Commissioners Guidebook again
The Commissioners Committee still does not have AFWA committee status; there has been no response to our previous request for committee status, it will be based on the turnout during the AFWA September 2007 meeting

State Reports from Each Commission/Board

All completed; written copies submitted and distributed

WAFWA Mid-Winter 2007 Agenda Items

- National Park Service wildlife/herd management
  Suggested presenter - Jerry Williams, NPS Veterinarian, Ft. Collins, CO
  State Responsible for Coordination – South Dakota
- Tribal Relations/Interactions
  State Responsible for Coordination – Washington
- Mule Deer Work Group presentation
  State Responsible for Coordination – Arizona
- Other potential agenda items:
  - Wildlife damage
    - Washington State Program
    - Urban Geese Program in Utah
    - Wildlife Services
  - Hunter Characteristics (M. Duda)
  - Human Dimensions (Manfredo)

The meeting adjourned at 5:00p. It was unanimous by all in attendance that there was no need for the July 9 meeting scheduled for 1:00-5:00p.

WAFWA STATE REPORT – ALASKA

June, 2007

New leadership: Alaska elected a new governor, Sarah Palin, last fall. With the change in governor and with retirements, leadership in the Department has changed. Denby Lloyd has been appointed and confirmed to be the Commissioner. David Bedford has been retained as a Deputy Commissioner focusing on fishery issues, including Pacific Salmon treaty issues. Ken Taylor has been appointed as the second Deputy Commissioner, focusing on wildlife and habitat issues. John Hilsinger has been appointed as the Director of the Commercial Fisheries Division. Kelly Hepler has been retained as the director of the Division of Sport Fisheries. Elizabeth Andrews has been retained as the Director of the Division of Subsistence. Tom Lawson has been retained as the Director of the Division of Administrative Services. Finally, Matt Robus who was retained as the Director of Wildlife Conservation has announced his retirement effective August 1, 2007. A replacement has not yet been named.

Whirling disease: After years of negative results in tests by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a new, more sensitive molecular test, based on DNA (the QPCR test), has detected evidence of the parasite *Myxobolus cerebralis* (Mc) in some rainbow trout from Elmendorf State Fish Hatchery. Sixty rainbow trout, divided into 12 batches, were tested by Oregon State University. Results were positive in one batch of 5 rainbows. A second test of 60 rainbows confirmed the first test by finding 3 rainbow trout that had DNA from Mc. To date, there is no evidence for the presence of Mc anywhere else in Alaska outside of Elmendorf Hatchery. Presence of Mc in the Elmendorf Hatchery probably dates from the last rainbow trout transferred there from the Lower 48 states about 30 years ago. Even though the likelihood of whirling disease outbreaks in Alaska appears low, the Department is taking strong precautionary steps to limit the possible spread of Mc. Fish at the Elmendorf Hatchery will continued to be closely monitored for the Mc parasite. Additionally, no fish from Elmendorf State Fish Hatchery of any species will be stocked into lakes that have an inlet or outlet at any time of year, or that have wild fish. As a result, over 94,000 hatchery fish

will be moved to closed systems in 2007. King salmon will continue to be stocked in Anchorage's Ship Creek, since the stream already receives discharge water from Elmendorf Hatchery. However, no Elmendorf hatchery fish will be transferred to the Fort Richardson Hatchery. The Department is also planning to investigate previously tested populations of fish throughout Alaska using the new, more sensitive QPCR test. The stocking of open systems will resume when a new well-water-only hatchery is built, in the next 5-7 years.

CWCS implementation strategy: The Division of Sport Fisheries has completed an aquatic resources implementation plan for its Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. It can be accessed online at www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/ngplan/. This plan provides guidance for identifying projects that meet the Division's eligibility requirements for funding under the State Wildlife Grant (SWG) program. It also serves to provide a framework for focusing efforts within the Division that promote a unified approach to addressing existing data gaps.

Economic surveys: The Division of Sport Fisheries has contracted with Southwick Associates to produce updated information on the economic contribution of sport fishing to the Alaskan economy. The study will estimate the total expenditures associated with sport fishing in Alaska in 2007, as well as the total direct, indirect, and induced economic effects of angler spending. The study will estimate total jobs, wages and salaries, and tax receipts generated from sport fishing activities by residents and non-residents within several regions in Alaska. The results of the study will be used to ensure that the Division is meeting performance goals and to provide fisheries managers and policy-makers with additional information to evaluate projects, policies and management strategies in light of regional impacts to the Alaska economy. Final results of the study will be published by 2008. In additional, the NMFS is conducting several economic surveys of marine recreational fisheries off Alaska.

Avian flu: Although there have been some adjustments to the national approach to sampling for the early detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza, Alaska remains a

high priority area for this summer's sampling effort. Both the US Fish & Wildlife Service and USDA APHIS will fund significant sampling programs in the state, and as in 2006, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game will partner in the effort. The emphasis of sampling will be more focused on waterfowl and other water-associated species, based on the results of previous results. ADF&G continues to work as a member of a state multi-agency coordinating group assembled to foster communication between agencies responsible for wild and domestic birds, for public health, and for public outreach on all aspects of pandemic preparedness. Personnel turnover in many key positions on this MAC group due to a change in state administrations has caused a need to revisit many of the basic issues the group dealt with in the past.

Predator management: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game continued to implement aerial wolf reduction programs in five predator control areas established by the Alaska Board of Game, comprising about 9% of the state's land area. Target wolf densities were achieved in three of the areas by winter's end, but in two large areas in Interior Alaska a lack of snow prevented effective wolf tracking. Wolves were taken by members of the public permitted under the state airborne hunting statute. State attorneys and the Division of Wildlife Conservation continued to exert significant effort to respond to litigation from several national and local animal rights and conservation groups, but the wolf control program is now the largest and longest-running predator reduction effort since statehood. More significantly, the program is showing promising results in terms of moose population increases documented in the two longest-running areas. An attempt in late winter by the administration to help motivate and compensate wolf control permitees by offering to pay for biological samples (front foreleg for aging) was deemed a bounty by the state superior court and was overturned.

ESA issues: The State is responding to a significant increase in activity involving status assessments and proposed listings for nearly a dozen species. The majority are triggered by the Center for Biological Diversity petitions.

POLAR BEAR: The State found that the FWS proposed world-wide listing of polar bear as 'threatened' was based on worst-case-scenario climate modeling of late summer sea ice

conditions and that numerous legal criteria of ESA are not met. The State opposed listing polar bear populations, which are generally healthy, and noted that factors related to human activities (not loss of habitat) are directly linked where they are not. The State believes a listing will significantly impact existing conservation programs elsewhere in the world. Given that any critical habitat would only apply in Alaska and the regulatory mechanisms are already available, the Service would face great costs with no benefit for polar bears if listed. Furthermore, the Service has no jurisdiction to regulate emissions and other factors that increased summer ice melt is linked to.

COOK INLET BELUGA WHALE: The State is reviewing a proposed listing for Cook Inlet Beluga whale, a geographically isolated population that experienced a significant decline due to subsistence harvests that stopped in 1999. The population decline stopped but has not recovered as predicted. Different analyses conclude that the population is stable, reaching maturity, or slightly decreasing. A significant lack of research in the intervening 8 years was not addressed in part because the conservation plan was never implemented or funded. The economic impact of a listing and designation of critical habitat in Cook Inlet may be significant, since a recovery plan would likewise lack data and create huge costs for the required consultation.

NUMEROUS OTHER SPECIES (e.g., the yellow-billed loon, Lynn Canal herring) in various stages of review for listing encompass the entire State's coastline, as well as most of the North Slope. The legislature recognized the seriousness of this upsurge of ESA activities and provided funding to assign biologists and an attorney to addressing the proposed listings.

Federal subsistence: The federal subsistence program continues to allocate harvests that create problems for other users, create conservation concerns for the state managers, and are increasingly authorizing sales of wildlife parts despite ESA and enforcement issues. The State is protesting these expansions of the subsistence priority that the Board is implementing without following their own criteria and regulations. The State is requesting oversight by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to adopt formal policies that the Board minimize its intrusion in State management of fish and wildlife and follow the federal regulations.

Federal reserved water rights suit: In 1999 the Appeals Court revised the definition of "public lands" and determined that the federal subsistence priority for rural residents in the Alaska Lands Act applies to waters in which there is a federal reserved water right, both within and adjacent to conservation system units. In 2005 the State filed suit that the federal agencies were applying this jurisdiction without following the Supreme Court's specified process to identify FRWR waters and were expanding into waters where they could not justify jurisdiction, such as in state navigable waters outside of units, marine waters, and waters within state or private lands within the units.

On May 17, 2007, the District Court determined that the FRWR claim does not set precedence for FRWR adjudications, only for applying defining public lands for the subsistence preference, so the federal agencies do not have to follow the normal FRWR application process to identify where their subsistence jurisdiction applies. The State is concerned about the precedence but the suit now moves to identifying specific examples of waters "where" FRWR can apply. The impact of this case is to significantly intrude on state management of fisheries throughout most of the state and allocation among the user groups. Briefing will be completed on the "which waters" phase in winter 2007.

WAFWA Agency Report

Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division

May 2007

Chronic Wasting Disease

Alberta continues an aggressive approach to surveillance and control of chronic wasting disease in the eastern border regions. We use a combination of increased hunter harvest opportunities in high risk areas and targeted local herd reduction around known infected deer. Hunter harvest, in conjunction with testing clinical emaciated deer, is our primary means of surveillance. Recently we also tested a sample of winter-kill deer associated with long periods of deep snow, particularly in northwestern Alberta. None of these deer had chronic wasting disease. In the 2006/07 hunting seasons we tested over 3,000 deer heads and detected four new cases of the disease: one along the Red Deer River in southeastern Alberta and three east of Wainwright in an area directly adjacent to previous cases identified in Saskatchewan. New in 2006/07, we implemented mandatory submission of deer heads from animals harvested in specified risk areas. Compliance was very good. Hunters were notified of results within two to four weeks.

In March 2007 we followed up with a program of intensive herd reduction generally within 10 km circles around four fall positives. Between March 5 and 27, we collected 1,850 deer, of which 12 were infected: 10 mule deer, 2 white-tailed deer (the first cases of chronic wasting disease documented in wild white-tailed deer in Alberta). Three of the cases were in the southern and nine in the northern risk areas. For the first time, we included a private contractor to shoot and collect deer from the air. The helicopter delivery proved a very effective and efficient tool for increased herd reduction. We believe our extensive information and communication programs, including two public advisory committees within the high risk areas, serves us well in terms of maintaining public support for all our chronic wasting disease programs, including the aerial delivery.

The provincial total now stands at 29 documented cases of chronic wasting disease in wild deer, focused in two relatively small areas along the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. Maps and program information can be found at:
www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/livingwith/diseases/.

The cooperative research program between the Fish and Wildlife Division and the University of Alberta, in conjunction with a similar program by Saskatchewan Environment and the University of Saskatchewan, continues. The shared goals are to assess deer movement and genetics as a basis for predicting potential spread of chronic wasting disease and to enhance current field response programs in both provinces. The student is currently tracking 130 collared deer. The Division also is

working with the University of Alberta to evaluate the economic costs associated with chronic wasting disease under various scenarios of potential chronic wasting disease occurrence within the province.

West Nile Virus

Alberta began West Nile virus bird surveillance in 2002. The virus arrived in the province in 2003 as a major epizootic with widespread infection in crows, magpies, mosquitoes, horses and humans. Since then there have been relatively few cases in any host group and a predictable pattern of temporal and spatial distribution. The virus appears in late summer (July and August) in the grasslands of southeastern Alberta. It appears the virus is unable to establish significant summer populations and flourishes in late summer depending on the available *Culex tarsalis* population. As such, West Nile virus bird surveillance is no longer effective in providing new information and has been discontinued for 2007. Mitigations in critical endangered sage grouse range appeared to reduce the number of local *Culex* and whether related or not, documented mortality associated with West Nile virus in 2005 (n=0) and 2006 (n=1) was minimal. This program is carried out as part of a graduate student program at the University of Alberta.

Avian Influenza

As guided by the provincial steering committee directing avian influenza planning and response in Alberta, the Fish and Wildlife Division will again conduct dead bird surveillance targeted on waterfowl. The theoretical risk that migrating waterfowl passing through Alberta from arctic breeding areas may potentially carry high path Eurasian H5N1 is still considered negligible in Alberta. Federal agencies conduct a national live bird avian influenza surveillance program. Results are available at: http://wildlife1.usask.ca/en/aiv/index.php .

Escape of Farmed Cervids

Alberta's chronic wasting disease program includes monitoring and responding to reports of escaped farmed cervids. In recent years, there have been a significant number of reported escapes/releases of farmed cervids, the majority of which involved elk, as follows:

April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 – 22 incidents involving 258 escaped animals
April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006 – 15 incidents involving 124 escaped animals
April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 – 13 incidents involving 215 escaped animals

The Division's response to a specific incident, which can range from simply monitoring the situation to actively collecting the animals, is based on a risk assessment of each

incident made in consultation with Agriculture and Food (the provincial government department that regulates and administers game farming in the province). The Division also works with Agriculture and Food and the industry to minimize the number of escapes.

Commercial Fisheries Rationalization

Alberta's fisheries resources are limited with increasing demand from domestic, recreational and commercial users. A rationalization program was implemented in 2003 with goals of reducing the number of commercial fishermen, the potential for conflicts between recreational and commercial users, and improving the economics of the industry. Licence fees were increased in 2003 and compensation payments have been made for the past three years. These have had the desired effect of reducing participation in the industry. The number of commercial gill net fishermen is now below the goal of 200 (177), down considerably from the 800 at the start of the program. The other goal of reduced yardage from 37,000 to about 18,000 nets, has basically been achieved and will be exceeded when the remaining compensation offers are made. One to two more years of funding will be required to complete payments for the remaining fishermen who have volunteered to relinquish the licences for compensation.

New Fisheries Harvest Opportunities

Anglers in Alberta want to be able to harvest fish, particularly walleye. The challenge to fisheries managers has been to balance this demand with the need to protect recovering fish populations. A variety of strategies have been utilized to try and meet the demand without reversing the trend in improving stocks. Strategies that have been implemented to either target or restrict the harvest include area closures, large minimum size limits, short harvest periods and expanded small fish harvest opportunities. Monitoring of these new opportunities is critical to their evaluation and future success. Angling pressure has been shown to have a significant impact on walleye in particular, even with a limited harvest window. Alberta has walleye and northern pike management plans that are based on Alberta data, leading-edge science and extensive public consultation. The use of limited-entry walleye harvest tags was implemented on a trial basis in 2006 at three lakes with recovering walleye populations. This system is intended to provide harvest opportunities in a manner controlled to still facilitate continued population recovery. This program is continuing to be delivered and evaluated in 2007.

Bow Habitat Station at the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery

Construction of a world-class visitor and education centre, the Bow Habitat Station in Calgary, is well underway as part of a broader departmental public education and outreach initiative. The centre, which includes a 14.6 hectare interpretive and treatment wetland, will highlight the diversity, sustainability and stewardship of Alberta's aquatic resources. Construction of the interpretive wetland, a large-scale re-naturalization project to restore valuable riparian habitat, naturally treat hatchery wastewater, and showcase a variety of Alberta's aquatic ecosystems was completed and officially opened in September 2004. The wetland, known as the Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland, was completed through a unique partnership involving different levels of government, industry, non-profit organizations and hundreds of community businesses.

Work is also underway to develop the new visitor centre that will include more than 15,000 square feet of state-of-the-art exhibits, aquariums, a multimedia theatre, discovery room, "Aqua" school, gift shop and other visitor amenities. Construction of the new visitor centre is made possible through the Alberta Centennial Legacy Initiative and donations from project partners such as Ducks Unlimited Canada, BP Canada Energy Company, HSBC Bank Canada, and the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery Volunteer Society.

Alberta's Species at Risk Program

Alberta supports a fully integrated species at risk program to identify, legally designate and plan for the recovery of Threatened and Endangered species within the province. Central to this process is the Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee. This unique ministerial advisory committee is chaired by a member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly and is comprised of a balance of members representing resource industries, landowners/land managers, conservation groups and university scientists. The Scientific Subcommittee of the Committee assesses the biological status of candidate species within Alberta, and recommends appropriate designations for those that meet established international criteria for Threatened or Endangered status, and those that are of special management concern. The Committee considers these independent scientific assessments and makes practical recommendations relating to legal designation, recovery planning, and immediate conservation priorities for these species to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Once received by the Minister, the recommendations of the Committee and its Scientific Subcommittee become public.

A fundamental underpinning of the Species at Risk Program is the General Status of Wild Species exercise. Like all other provinces and territories in Canada, Alberta assesses and reports on the general status, or well-being, of a large number of species. This is done every five years and is accomplished by evaluating population and distribution trend information, as well as threats to habitat and populations, for all species. This year, we reported full general status designations for the following

groups: amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, mammals, odonates, lepidopterans, vascular plants and unionid mussels. This information is 'rolled-up' to produce national general status ranks for all species. In view of the large number of species, no hard copy report was produced this year for Alberta; instead, a separate web page with a searchable database is available on the Sustainable Resource Development website. Complete information on the Alberta species at risk program can be obtained from our website at http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/speciesatrisk/default.aspx .

Woodland Caribou

Woodland caribou is a Threatened species in Alberta and Canada. A national recovery strategy is in preparation. This strategy is expected to provide an umbrella document under which the more detailed provincial plans will reside. In May 2004, the Alberta Woodland Caribou Recovery Team formally submitted a draft provincial recovery plan to the department of Sustainable Resource Development for review. The provincial plan is a strategic plan that provides provincial goals, objectives, a strategy and an action plan to address caribou conservation issues. The action plan is based on the provision of adequate effective habitat to meet the needs of the individual herds. This requires the creation of a habitat effectiveness target. This target has been developed. Operational plans will be developed by industry-government planning teams. These plans will occur on landscapes that will contain caribou ranges of similar biological and industrial characteristics.

An Alberta Caribou Committee has been established to coordinate and direct caribou conservation initiatives in the province. This Committee has established a Landscape Planning Team for the west central caribou ranges. This team is expected to complete its work this year, resulting in an action plan which will address the needs of caribou on these west central ranges. Two new landscape teams will be started in 2007 (Chinchaga and Athabasca ranges). The final two landscape plans will be started later.

Provincial Recovery Planning

Alberta's recovery planning program has grown steadily since its inception over six years ago. Recovery plans have now been approved, and are being implemented for twelve Threatened or Endangered species, including the greater sage grouse, Ord's kangaroo rat, piping plover, northern leopard frog, western spiderwort, burrowing owl, soapweed, yucca moth, peregrine falcon, woodland caribou, trumpeter swan and shortjaw cisco. The western blue flag has recently been downlisted from Threatened to Species of Special Concern, resulting from initiatives developed in the recovery plan for that species. Further, plans are currently being reviewed for three species (grizzly bear, swift fox and western silvery minnow), and recovery planning is in progress for the tiny cryptanthe, wood bison, ferruginous hawk, lake sturgeon, small-flowered sand-verbena, St. Mary's sculpin, stonecat and short-horned lizard. All completed and developing recovery plans are prepared by multi-stakeholder teams to ensure that affected and

interested agencies and individuals are involved in the planning process and that the proposed management is effective. Additional information on provincial recovery teams and the progress of management can be obtained at http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/speciesatrisk/default.aspx.

Grizzly Bear

The Endangered Species Conservation Committee made recommendations to Sustainable Resource Development on the conservation of grizzly bears in Alberta. Sustainable Resource Development is acting on many of those recommendations. A provincial grizzly bear recovery team has been convened with representatives from industry, land managers and conservation groups. A technical committee was also assembled to review our approach to population modeling and management. A moratorium on grizzly bear hunting was announced in spring 2006. This closure will remain in effect for three years, until DNA-based surveys can provide a clearer picture of provincial population size.

Grizzly Bear Research

Since 1999, Fish and Wildlife Division has worked with the Foothills Model Forest and its participating members to improve our understanding of grizzly bear biology and environmental influences. Over the years a powerful landscape modeling tool has been developed which can be applied to predict changes to bear habitat resulting from human-induced and natural changes to the landscape. Work is ongoing to update, refine and expand this tool. In addition, there is a new focus on stress-related health assessments of bear populations, and an assessment of the potential impacts to bears by Mountain Pine Beetle control efforts.

The Alberta BearSmart Program

The Alberta BearSmart Program is a multi-stakeholder initiative to reduce bear-human conflicts and increase public stewardship of black and grizzly bears by providing strategies, information and educational materials to the public, stakeholders and government agency staff dealing with bears. Audience specific – bear awareness and bear attractant/conflict reduction information is directed to home owners in communities in bear habitat, agricultural producers and outdoor recreationalists. The BearSmart program is being expanded to the "industry" audience. Information on bear awareness for individual workers, in the petroleum and forest industries, is being developed and delivered in conjunction with industry. Best Management Practices for industry camps are being implemented that will reduce bear attractants and limit bear encounters at work camps. Sustainable Resource Development staff continue to work with a number of communities (the towns of Canmore, Rainbow Lake, Bragg Creek, Ft. McMurray and the municipality of Crowsnest Pass) on Community BearSmart initiatives. These

communities are situated in wildlife corridors and have a history of bear/human conflict.

Wolf Management

Alberta has a thriving wolf population. This results in some management challenges when wolves prey on domestic stock, compete with hunters for wild ungulates and generate a strong following of people interested in maximizing wolf numbers because of conservation concerns or desires for viewing opportunities. We have established a stakeholder group to work on a collaborative approach to understanding and mitigating cattle depredation in southwest Alberta. We now have several radio-collared packs which are being monitored and managed by removal of some wolves from packs if the pack is depredating livestock. In collaboration with the University of Alberta, a research program has been established to examine wolf/prey interactions, wolf population dynamics with some wolf harvest by trappers and development of wolf population survey methodology in west central Alberta. This research is nearing completion. In the winter of 2006 and 2007 we actively removed wolves in one of the caribou ranges where caribou populations have been in decline to reduce predation on caribou. The 2006 reduction helped caribou calf survival rates to double.

Biodiversity

Alberta is a signatory to *Canada's Biodiversity: A Commitment to its Conservation and Sustainable Use* committing the province to use the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy as a guide to its actions. Development of an Alberta Biodiversity Strategy was included in the 2005-2008 Government of Alberta Business Plan. The Fish and Wildlife Division, in partnership with Sustainable Resource Development's Corporate Business Support, continues to take a leadership role in moving the strategy forward under the guidance of an interdepartmental steering committee and working group; eight government departments are represented on these committees. A broad strategy framework and public consultation plan have been developed and efforts are now underway to integrate development of the biodiversity strategy with development of a proposed provincial land use framework. Initial integration will include developing options for consulting Albertans on biodiversity as part of development of the provincial land use framework. This will set the stage for future consultations on a draft biodiversity strategy.

The Fish and Wildlife Division also continues to provide technical support to development of the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Program, a partnership that includes industry, research institutions, academia and governments. The program is intended to be a provincial-level monitoring program that will be able to measure the status of a comprehensive suite of aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity indicators across Alberta over time. Testing of aquatic and terrestrial monitoring is underway and is expected to be completed by 2007. The goal is to have the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Program operational in 2007.

Water Strategy

In November 2003, *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability* was released. The strategy outlines a series of short, medium and long-term actions aimed at ensuring Albertans have safe, secure drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems; and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. The Division continues to work cooperatively with the Ministry of Environment to carry out activities that support the Healthy Aquatic Ecosystem outcome of the strategy. Some of these activities include:

- development and adoption of a provincial Instream Flow Needs guideline;
- completion of detailed Instream Flow Needs (IFN) studies in a number of river basins in Alberta;
- development of a winter IFN tool, in cooperation with the University of Lethbridge, to assess effects of winter water withdrawals on fish and fish habitat (winter IFN tool);
- continued development and investigation of tools required to assess the health of Alberta's aquatic ecosystems, such as an Index of Biotic Integrity for fish and an overall assessment of health of fish populations;
- ongoing support to watershed stewardship groups through the Cows and Fish program (http://www.cowsandfish.org); and
- continued participation in development of an Alberta Wetlands Policy.

Integrated Resource Management

The level of resource development activity within Alberta is very high and continues to accelerate putting greater pressure on public lands and fish and wildlife populations. In addition to ongoing development of conventional oil and gas reserves, mineable oil sands and forest resources and expanded human settlement, the province is facing tremendous expansion in coal bed methane extraction and conventional coal mining. The Fish and Wildlife Division continues to be involved in the review of project applications and environmental impact assessments. As well, the Division is one of several government agencies that participate in regional forest management planning processes, provincial integrated resource planning initiatives such as the Southern Alberta Sustainability Strategy, and a variety of regional access management strategies such as the Bighorn Access Management Plan, the Ghost-Waiparous Access Management Plan and the Richardson Backcountry Access Management Plan. In addition, the Fish and Wildlife Division is participating in the Integrated Land Management Project, being coordinated by the Lands Division of Sustainable Resource Development. A total of nine departments are participating in the Integrated Land Management Project. The Project will establish the foundation for addressing land use challenges, including managing and reducing the footprint, reclaiming the land and providing the appropriate level of access.

Arizona Game and Fish Department
WAFWA State-of-the-State Report
January – June 2007

Game and Fish Commission urges BLM to allow dispersed recreation shooting on Ironwood Forest National Monument

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission in May requested the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) allow dispersed recreational shooting on the Ironwood Forest National Monument near Tucson.

The current Bureau of Land Management preferred alternative in the draft Ironwood Forest National Monument Resource Management Plan would prohibit the use and discharge of firearms except for permitted or authorized hunting activities.
The Game and Fish Commission is adamant that banning recreational shooting within the new monument is not an acceptable management alternative and has sent BLM officials a resolution asking them to reconsider their preferred management alternative and continue allowing safe recreational shooting.

"The Game and Fish Commission opposes restrictions on recreational shooting on any public land in Arizona and is hopeful that this resolution will assist the BLM in its decision-making process," said Commission Chairman Michael Golightly.

Public input sought on Game and Fish operational plans

The Arizona Game and Fish Department sought public comment on draft plans that will guide how the agency manages wildlife, outdoor recreational opportunities and its own detailed operations for the next two years.

Eight public meetings were held around the state the first two weeks in May to provide an overview of the plans and to accept comments

The draft operational plans identifies the approaches the department will take to implement key management programs including game, nongame, sportfish, off-highway vehicle, watercraft and business administration as well as support functions such as public information and education, law enforcement, shooting sports, habitat, research, and watchable wildlife. The department develops new operational plans every two years.

Game and Fish Commission launches plan to improve fishing at Salt River lakes

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission gave its blessing to a multi-thrust, multi-year plan by department biologists to improve fishing quality at those Salt River lakes impacted by golden alga the last several years.

The adaptive-management plan, which could total approximately $1.8 million the next two years, includes fish stocking, biological research, additional habitat enhancement, and increased monitoring. The plan emphasizes utilizing partnerships and outside funding whenever possible.

"This is an adaptive-management plan. We will try things. If they work, we will duplicate our successes. If they don't work, we'll try something else. As we learn more about

golden alga, we will fine-tune our efforts accordingly," said Bob Broscheid, the assistant director for the Wildlife Management Division.

Saguaro, Canyon and Apache lakes have all been impacted by golden alga blooms. For instance, Saguaro Lake has again had recent shad die-offs due to golden alga, and Canyon Lake to a much lesser degree. Fishing quality has suffered significantly, especially at Saguaro and Apache lakes.

Southwest California condor program review completed
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently completed a review of the condor program in northern Arizona and southern Utah.

The review is the second five-year assessment of the program and focuses on the 2002-2006 period. A team of wildlife officials, land managers and condor biologists recommend that the reintroduction program continue with several improvements.

The California condor reintroduction project began in 1996 with the release of six condors at the Vermilion Cliffs in Arizona. A total of 93 condors have been released since then, with 57 still remaining.

In 2001, a reintroduced condor produced the first confirmed egg laid in the wild since 1986. Five condors have hatched in the wild to date.

Implementation of a voluntary non-lead ammunition program in Arizona has reduced available toxic lead bullet fragments by an estimated 50 percent on the Kaibab and Paria plateaus.

Apache Lake stocked with 3.3 million fish
Apache Lake received a multi-million fish boost when Arizona Game and Fish Department biologists stocked this scenic fishery along the Salt River with walleye sac-fry recently.

On April 10, biologists were assisted by volunteers from the Southwest Walleye Anglers to stock 3.3 million, 3-day-old walleye. "The walleye were just two eyes and a wiggle in size," says Jim Warnecke, fisheries biologist with Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The walleye were donated by a state fish hatchery in Pueblo, Colorado. Biologists from Arizona transported the millions of small fish and after 13 hours and 700 miles, released the young walleye into their new Arizona home.

Information meetings set on federal land management planning efforts
The Arizona Game and Fish Department continued its series of meetings in May to provide the public with information about federal land use management and travel management planning efforts in Arizona and how people can provide input.

The USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are revising land use management plans and travel management plans statewide. These plans include updated guidelines and rules on how public lands are to be managed, including what activities are permitted, and how and where motorized travel should occur. The different Forest Service districts and BLM field offices are in various phases of the planning efforts.

The Game and Fish meetings included information on the Forest Service and BLM planning processes; information about the new policies and direction, both from a statewide and local standpoint; how members of the public can become involved in the process; and resources for obtaining more information.

Governor nominates Woodhouse to Game and Fish Commission
Governor Janet Napolitano announced and the State Senate confirmed the nomination of Robert "Robbie" Woodhouse from the Yuma area to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission.

"Robbie will bring a wealth of experience to the commission," Governor Napolitano said. "His experience in working with the Legislature and active community leadership will make him a valuable asset to Arizona Game and Fish."

Woodhouse, a third-generation Arizonan and a third generation farmer in the Wellton-Mohawk Valley, is a lifelong sportsman who wants to give something back to the wildlife resources of this state. He is the owner of Casa de Lena Farms and president of the Woodhouse & Son Inc. Trucking Company.

"I truly admire what the Game and Fish Commission and department have accomplished over the years," he says. "Like most sportsmen, I look forward to those times when I am lucky enough to get drawn for something.

More than 17,000 attend Game and Fish Outdoor Expo
This year's Arizona Game and Fish Department Outdoor Expo was a resounding success, judging from total attendance, feedback from visitor surveys, and the smiles on the faces of kids and families.

About 17,400 people—three times the number of last year's Shooting Showcase—visited the free Expo at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix on March 31 and April 1.

People indicated they enjoyed the expanded scope of the event, the hands-on outdoor recreation opportunities, and especially the variety of activities available for young people and families.

Popular activities included trying out firearms from various manufacturers on the shooting range; checking out fishing, archery, air gun and .22 shooting at the Family Fun Adventures area and test-driving off-highway vehicles.

Skeet champions decided at Commissioners' Cup youth competition
Nearly 140 young target shooters from across Arizona competed at the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Commissioner's Cup state skeet championships on April 7 at the Tucson Trap and Skeet Club.

"There were some great scores out here," said Ashley Lynch, shooting sports coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "Two of the shooters hit 99 out of 100 targets."

Young shooters came from several different parts of the state. Winning teams are eligible to compete at the national SCTP skeet championships held July 13-15 at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio.

The skeet championships were the second leg of the Arizona Commissioners' Cup championships. Sporting clays championships were held at the Ben Avery Clay Target Center in Phoenix on March 31, and the trap championships will be held April 28 at the Red Mountain Trap and Skeet Club in Scottsdale.

Archery in the Schools Program holds first state championship
More than 60 young archers squared off for state titles as Arizona's Archery in the Schools Program held its first state championship on March 31 at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility.

"The Archery in the Schools Program has been part of many Arizona schools' physical education curricula for several years, but this is the first time we've had a state championship event," says Denise Raum, statewide archery and bow hunting coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "We're planning to expand the championship next year."

Archery in the Schools is a school-based program that teaches international-style target archery to students in grades 4-12 as part of the physical education curriculum. The program was launched in Kentucky in 2002 and has since been adopted by nearly 3,000 schools in 40 states. More than 70 schools participate in Arizona's program.

Arizona crowns youth sporting clays champs
More than 150 young shooters from across Arizona competed at the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Commissioner's Cup state sporting clays championships on March 31.

The competition, held at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix, featured some of the state's top young shooters in varsity, junior varsity, intermediate and rookie divisions.

Winning teams are eligible to compete at the national SCTP sporting clays championships held July 13-15 at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio. The best of these young shooters could be selected to attend an Olympic development camp in August in Colorado Springs.

The sporting clays championships are the first leg of Arizona's Commissioners' Cup championships. Separate competitions will be held in skeet and trap.

SCTP is a youth development program that teaches trap, skeet and sporting clays to students in grades 12 and under. Arizona's program is sponsored by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and administered by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, in partnership with the National Shooting Sports Foundation. More than 600 kids compete in Arizona's SCTP. Nationally, about 10,000 youngsters compete in 40 states.

"First Shots" classes offered at Ben Avery Shooting
When it comes to learning about recreational target shooting and firearms ownership, newcomers can be intimidated by not knowing how or where to start.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is partnering with the National Shooting Sports Foundation to offer a welcoming introduction to the safe, recreational use of handguns. First-timers, novices or experienced shooters wanting a refresher are welcome to attend one of several free "First Shots" classes at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix.

"The First Shots class is a great opportunity for beginners to learn about recreational target shooting and to give shooting sports a try on the range," says Tristanna Bickford, hunter recruitment and retention coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Arizona State Legislature considers OHV bill
The Arizona Legislature is considering a bill, HB 2443, that would provide funding for off-highway vehicle programs, as well as bolster off-road laws in the state.

If passed, this bill would not only cut costs for off-highway vehicle users, but it would also increase resources for trail development, safety, law enforcement and management of off-highway vehicles in the state.

The Off-highway Vehicle Legislative Workgroup, comprised of OHV recreationists and outdoor user groups, land management agencies, county and local governments, sportsmen, and Arizona Game and Fish Department, worked together with Rep. Jerry Weiers, R-Glendale, to develop this landmark OHV bill.

OUI arrests on Arizona waters increased in 2006
The number of arrests for operating a boat under the influence of alcohol on Arizona waters increased dramatically in 2006, according to final statistics from law enforcement agencies. There were 535 operating under the influence (OUI) arrests in 2006 compared to 375 the previous year.

Arizona waterways were also the site of 14 deaths in 2006, the worst boating fatality record since 1998. Thirteen of those fatalities were on the Colorado River, which also saw 387 accidents and 185 injuries.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has expanded law enforcement efforts along the Colorado River, a highly used body of water that includes lakes Havasu, Powell, Mohave and Mead. An increase in boating use over the years has made these waters more problematic for the states bordering it.

New elk and antelope draw garners record applications
Arizona's first-ever separate draw for elk and antelope garnered a record number of applicants.

"We worked long and hard to spread the word about the new draw for elk and antelope," said Leonard Ordway, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's game branch chief.

"We were pleased to see a record number of people applied for antelope permits and the elk application number was almost the same as last year."

Ordway said this new early drawing was actually created at the request of hunters themselves. The new draw allows them to find out whether or not they are drawn for elk and antelope prior to applying for deer, turkey and other species.

"This is better customer service all the way around. We're glad to see it is working out so well and judging by the application numbers, it looks like most everyone got the word. With the large number of hunters, that is quite an accomplishment in itself," Ordway says.

Invasive mussels found in Arizona
Invasive quagga mussels were found for the first time in Arizona at lakes Mead, Mohave and Havasu.

Divers even have found quagga mussels at Hoover Dam and at the Central Arizona Project (CAP) intakes at Lake Havasu.

Officials are seeking help from anglers and boaters to fight this mollusk invasion.

"Once they become well established, quagga mussels can substantially alter an aquatic ecosystem, cause damage to boat motors and negatively impact fishing," says Larry Riley, the fisheries chief for the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Kaibab Plateau to undergo habitat improvement for mule deer
The North Kaibab Ranger District of the USDA Forest Service approved a project to increase the amount and diversity of mule deer forage on approximately 30,000 acres of winter range west of the Kaibab Plateau.

The project includes planting shrub seeds to reestablish forage on burned uplands and drainage bottoms, using a combination of methods to prepare seed sites.

The plan also calls for removing certain trees and seeding grass and shrub species on pinyon-juniper woodlands and old pushes. The project also specifies extensive treatments to remove weeds and restore native species around Slide Tank. Work could begin as early as this spring.

Arizona takes steps to protect bald eagles' future
One of our nation's greatest symbols – the bald eagle –received the assurance of continued protection in Arizona as a broad coalition of public agencies and private businesses signed a Bald Eagle Conservation Agreement.

Representatives from Gov. Janet Napolitano's office, the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were among those on hand for a signing ceremony at the Phoenix Zoo. The agreement pledges to continue key bald eagle conservation efforts in the state.

Game and Fish sponsors event to get kids back in the outdoors
The Arizona Game and Fish Department sponsored an event to help reconnect our children with the great outdoors.

The public was invited to attend "A Nature-based Evening with Richard Louv" at the Phoenix Zoo in February. Author Richard Louv's most recent book, "Last Child in the Woods," discusses what he calls "nature-deficit disorder."

In the book, Louv talks with parents, children, teachers, scientists, child-development researchers and others in a quest to find ways for children to experience the natural world more deeply.

Super Raffle offers chance at 9 year-round dream hunts
Can you imagine hunting desert bighorn sheep in Arizona any time you want for an entire year? Or maybe you would like a year-round tag for elk, antelope or mule deer?

Nine lucky hunters are doing just that as the winners of the first-ever Arizona Big Game Super Raffle. With a little luck, this coming year it could be your turn for a dream year-round hunt.

Super raffle tickets for the 2007-08 hunts are on sale now. You can purchase raffle tickets for antelope, black bear, buffalo, Coues whitetail, desert bighorn sheep, elk, javelina, mule deer and turkey (Gould's or Merriam's). Tickets range from $5 to $25.

The first Super Raffle in Arizona resulted in 42,606 tickets being sold and raised more than $514,000 for wildlife conservation purposes.

Big game hunter survey: Arizonans look forward to more opportunities to hunt
A newly released independent study shows Arizona hunters feel having more opportunities to hunt is more important than hunt quality or outcome of the hunt.

"This agency has always prided itself on providing hunters with the highest quality hunting experience it can," says Arizona Game and Fish Department Deputy Director Steve Ferrell. "However, hunt demand now far exceeds hunting opportunities. This survey provides us with another perspective for use in our management efforts so they may address our customers' expectations."

The two-part independent study was conducted for the Arizona Game and Fish Department by Responsive Management of Harrisonburg, Va., to determine Arizona hunters' attitudes toward the state's big game hunter permit tag draw, as well as hunting participation, hunting characteristics, and attitudes toward hunting.

Responsive Management, which is an internationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, conducted the study via an Internet survey of hunters who applied for an Arizona big game hunt permit tag for fall 2006, plus a telephone survey of those who didn't respond to the Web survey.

Volunteers build 65 Pisces pyramids to help Apache Lake
What do 1,180 wooden pallets, 1,200 trees and 43 tons of cement blocks all have in common? The answer is that they make up Pisces pyramids at Apache Lake.

Thanks to 151 volunteers, who put in 995 hours of work and logged 16,643 miles on their vehicles, all these materials were used to construct fish habitats, affectionately called Pisces pyramids, on the exposed lake bottom at Apache Lake over the past few weeks.

With very little budget to work from, a little imagination, a healthy dose of persuasion, and a whole lot of angler dedication, Warnecke was able to pull the immense project

together to give this aging but picturesque lake along the Apache Trail a much-needed helping hand, or actually, hundreds of helping hands.

Heritage grant-funded documentary on Fossil Creek to premiere in Phoenix
A new documentary tells the story of the historic restoration of Fossil Creek, one of the state's unique riparian areas. The documentary, *A River Reborn: The Restoration of Fossil Creek*, premiered at the Orpheum Theatre in Phoenix.

The film, produced for Northern Arizona University by Emmy award-winning producer Paul Bockhorst and narrated by actor and Flagstaff native Ted Danson, depicts the collaborative effort of multiple partners to restore Fossil Creek after more than 100 years of water diversion. The creek, located near the town of Strawberry in north-central Arizona, is one of the last free-flowing year-round streams in the state and an ecological treasure.

Conserving wildlife and building safer highways: A win-win for Arizona residents
A potential key to conserving wildlife and making highways safer as our state continues to grow was made public with the release of Arizona's first-ever statewide Wildlife Linkages Assessment.

The report, a two-year collaboration between state and federal agencies, conservation groups and a higher educational institution, identifies 150 "linkage zones"-areas connecting places where wildlife lives-that are important to animal movement and migration.

The assessment is a resource for planners and engineers, providing suggestions for the incorporation of linkage zones into their project planning. If linkage considerations can be integrated early in the planning process, these areas have better potential to be maintained or conserved.

Couple assessed $16,000 for poaching trophy elk and deer
A Show Low, Arizona couple convicted of multiple violations relating to the poaching of a trophy-class elk and a mule deer became the first violators to feel the effects of a new law on the books allowing the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to employ tougher penalties, especially for repeat or gross offenders.

John D. Polzin was civilly assessed a total of $16,000: $8,000 for the loss of a 6x6 bull elk and $8,000 for the loss of a 7x5 mule deer buck to the state and the Commission revoked the hunting, fishing and trapping privileges of John Polzin for 10 years and Shelly L. Polzin for five years.

In addition, Arizona is a member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact with 22 other states and that means the Polzins will not be able to legally hunt in any of those states until their license privileges are restored in Arizona.

This new law creates a system of license revocations based on the number of convictions an individual has for unlawfully taking or wounding wildlife. The new law also allows the Game and Fish Commission to permanently revoke or suspend a person's hunting privileges for multiple convictions for unlawfully taking wildlife.

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British Columbia's Fish & Wildlife Report: 2006-07

Legislative Review

Wildlife Act Review

The *Wildlife Act*, last updated in 1982, is the most important piece of legislation governing the management of fish and wildlife in British Columbia. The *Act* regulates many human activities that can affect native freshwater fish and wildlife populations – for example, hunting and angling. The Fish & Wildlife Branch is currently reviewing the *Act*, in discussion with First Nations, industry, the public, and stakeholders, in order to identify ways in which it might be improved. To goal of this review is to update and modernize the *Act*, while making it more clear, understandable, streamlined, flexible, and responsive to emerging issues. During 2006-07, the Branch's focus was on: reviewing and analysing the existing Act; creating a database of issues; beginning informal discussions and consultations with First Nations, major stakeholders, and other government agencies; and developing a discussion paper and associated web site to gather external input. The Branch intends to complete the review and have a revised *Wildlife Act* introduced to the Legislature in 2008.

Wildlife Management

Big Game Inventory

During 2005-08, the Fish & Wildlife Branch received $1.45 million to update existing inventory information for big game species. Demand for these funds was very high province-wide. In order to identify the highest priorities, and ensure that funds were spent strategically, the Branch developed and used a set of standard evaluation criteria for assessing possible projects. Designed to balance conservation with harvest management objectives, the chosen evaluation criteria included:

- responsibilities under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Canada's *Species at Risk Act*, and treaties with First Nations;
- the size of populations and trends in abundance;
- the severity and immediacy of threats to populations;
- the value for hunting;
- the potential for growth in hunting opportunities;
- the necessity for harvest management;
- the expected gain of information; and
- the cost

Using this approach, more than $500,000 was spent on 14 new inventory projects during 2006-07, focusing mainly on mountain goat, moose, mule deer, and thinhorn sheep. The ranked list (developed through this process) was then used to re-allocate money throughout the year, as needed.

Big Game Allocation Policy

Following nearly three years of consultation, the Fish & Wildlife Branch completed its new policy and procedure about the allocation of big game harvests in early 2007. In the past, allocation decisions had been made through long, and sometimes heated, negotiations amongst staff and stakeholders. With the help of a private decision analyst, the Branch developed, and consulted on, a new and more objective approach to allocating harvests. Starting from the basis that resident hunters will receive an allocation of 75%, allocation shares are adjusted for individual species and regions using past data about hunter demand and utilization. Minimum shares are then applied to ensure that the objectives of the review are being met – for example, to ensure that residents would have priority to the resource and that the guide outfitting industry would not be unduly impacted. This new approach is being implemented during the 2007-08 hunting season, with the support of the province's largest hunting organizations.

Big Game Harvest Management Procedures

The Fish & Wildlife Branch's policies on the management of big game species have not been reviewed in most cases for more than a decade – indeed since the Wildlife Harvest Strategy was written in 1996. Stemming in part from the Harvest Allocation Review, the Branch is in the midst of developing a new Wildlife Harvest Management Policy and Big Game Harvest Management Procedure that would overarch a number of species-species management procedures for mountain goats, grizzly bears, bighorn and thinhorn sheep, moose, and possibly other big game. In 2006-07, the Branch's focus was on revising the Grizzly Bear Harvest Management Procedure to make it more clear, consistent with other Branch policies, reflective of the latest scientific information, and flexible in dealing with regional complexities. Implementation of the new procedure is underway for the 2007-08 hunting season. The format and structure of this procedure will be used to develop other big game harvest management procedures – specifically for bighorn sheep and moose – during 2007-08.

Hunter Recruitment & Retention Strategy

In BC, the number of annually active resident hunters has been declining for the past 25 years. The Ministry of Environment is beginning to consider options for reversing this trend, as the hunting community plays an integral role in the stewardship of wildlife. To this end, a Hunter Recruitment and Retention Strategy was developed in 2006-07, through discussions with staff, a review of the literature, and an analysis of existing data. The Strategy, now posted on the Fish & Wildlife Branch web site, explores the reasons for the decline and presents more than 30 recommendations for its reversal.

Implementation of several of these recommendations is already underway – for instance:

- An electronic licensing system is being designed and built to allow more convenient access to licences, timely availability of licence information and most importantly, the opportunity to offer more enticing hunting

opportunities, licence options and pricing (see *Electronic Licensing Initiative* section).

- In many areas, general open seasons (GOS) for mule deer and white-tailed deer does are being instituted for hunters under the age of 19 and hunters participating in their first season.
- The province's hunter education course is currently being reformatted for DVD and online use, allowing for improved home study options. Furthermore, a broader, less hunter focused version of this course is being developed. This new course will expose people to hunting and its place in wildlife management, as well as many other outdoor and conservation topics.

Fisheries Management

Freshwater Fishing Regulations Simplification

One of the issues identified as contributing to a decline in angler participation is the apparent complexity of the existing fishing regulations and the difficulty associated with their interpretation and compliance by the angling public. To address this issue, the Fish & Wildlife Branch has initiated a review of existing angling regulations. This review will initially focus on changes to small lakes regulations throughout the province. Small lakes were chosen as a priority focus because they constitute the largest portion of the special regulations section in the current synopsis. The review will build on existing regional work and will provide a pilot for subsequent priority reviews of the regulations involving large lakes and rivers.

Steelhead Stream Classification Policy

Steelhead – both wild and hatchery raised – are experiencing record low survival rates mainly due to poor ocean survival. To help address this issue, the Fish & Wildlife Branch has developed a policy which, while aimed primarily at the conservation of wild steelhead stocks in BC, will allow for the development and maintenance of angling opportunities through the implementation of consistent management practices that consider and address identified risks. The policy sets out clear stream classification categories based on sound scientific knowledge and principles, and provides direction for the development of procedures, rules and regulations under the policy. The Fish & Wildlife Branch is moving forward on the development of criteria and procedure to both assess the viability of existing steelhead culture programs, and to identify additional capacity for development of steelhead angling opportunities. This work is being carried out through the Provincial Rivers Committee.

Management of Non-Native Fish

The spread of non-native fish in BC's freshwater systems is now identified as a top fisheries management issue in all southern and central regions of British Columbia. In particular, the intentional, unauthorized movement of some non-native sportfish species appears to be on the rise, and reports in the past year indicate movement into high-priority watersheds that support substantial recreational and commercial fisheries for native salmonids, as well as a number

of species at risk. In response to this growing concern, the Ministry has drafted a provincial policy to address the management of non-native fish species and is currently developing supporting procedures including rapid response planning, a regulatory framework for non-native species fisheries, and eradication options. However, the Ministry recognizes that prevention is the key to eliminate the threat non-native species pose to native species values and is partnering with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC to develop a provincial communication plan. The goal of this plan will be to develop the most effective strategies to prevent future human-assisted introductions of non-native species into BC's freshwater systems.

Freshwater Fishing Regulations Advisory Committee (FFRAC)

The FFRAC was developed to facilitate discussions between freshwater recreational angling stakeholders and the Fish & Wildlife Branch on issues related to recreational angling regulation, specifically those regulations that are of a provincial or multi-regional nature. The FFRAC consists of recreational angling stakeholder representatives (resident and commercial operators), and provides a forum through which fisheries resource managers can receive input and advice on ongoing regulatory initiatives. It also provides an opportunity to review and discuss regulatory issues of concern pertaining to freshwater recreational angling in B.C. In the spring of 2006, the FFRAC had its inaugural meeting in Richmond BC where a number of new regulatory initiatives were discussed.

Angling Market Development Plan

In 2006-07, a strategic, province-wide angling market development plan was developed under the leadership of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC and a coalition of stakeholders including federal and provincial fisheries management agencies, tourism agencies, and business and angler associations. The Angling Market Development Plan for BC is a customer focused, research based, ten year plan that addresses the decline in angler participation and related license sales in both freshwater and tidal sport fishing in BC. This is the first time that a comprehensive and collaborative marketing plan for angling has been attempted in BC.

The Angling Market Development Plan's overarching goal is to increase angler participation by 30% in BC from 2007 to 2017 by focusing on BC's angler needs, creating effective partnerships within the sport fishing/tourism industry, ensuring a sustainable sport fishing stock is available and evaluating performance objectives year after year. The plan is built on a comprehensive situational analysis of the sport fishing industry: the size and growth of sport fishing, consumer characteristics of resident and visiting anglers, current sport fishing marketing activities, BC's freshwater and tidal fishing tourism products, and the best practices among leading sport fishing jurisdictions.

Implementation of the plan began in April 2007. For more information, visit www.gofishbc.com

Species at Risk

Conservation Framework

British Columbia is the most biologically diverse province in Canada, and this is reflected in a high number of species at risk. Over 1000 species and ecosystems of conservation concern, including 583 red-listed species[1] and 154 species listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, are found in BC. The Ecosystems Branch, in cooperation with the Species at Risk Coordination Office has been working on a conservation framework to help meet the growing conservation challenges faced by the province. The conservation framework has as its foundation a new science-based decision support tool, which provides science-based information for setting priorities for species conservation and for determining appropriate conservation actions across the province. The Ecosystems Branch is currently developing an implementation plan for the conservation framework, including an approach for incorporation of the tool outputs in branch business planning and communication to external partners.

Species at Risk Regulation

In May 2004, the BC Legislature enacted several amendments of the *Wildlife Act* to enhance the ability of the government to designate, manage and protect species that are at risk in British Columbia (*Wildlife Amendment Act, 2004*). The 2004 amendments provide Cabinet with the authority to list any species or population of animal, bird, fish, plant or other species as a species at risk to ensure additional protection. Work is underway to develop a regulation to bring these amendments into force, including a list of species at risk and their residences that will be protected under the amended *Wildlife Act.*

White Sturgeon Conservation Surcharge Stamp

The majority of the white sturgeon populations in BC (Columbia, Nechako, Kootenay and upper Fraser rivers) were listed as endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). White sturgeon populations in the middle and lower Fraser River were not listed; however, they are vulnerable to human activities such as angling, commercial net fishing, habitat alteration and pollution. Accordingly, there is an increased responsibility on the Fish & Wildlife Branch to monitor and assess the health of these sturgeon populations. In order to accomplish this, the Ministry is proposing the implementation of a Sturgeon Conservation Surcharge Stamp. The stamp would authorize the licence holder to angle for sturgeon in areas open to angling. Revenue generated from the sales of the sturgeon conservation stamp would be used directly to fund sturgeon stock management activities. The Ministry has presented this initiative through the new Freshwater Fishing Regulations Advisory Committee (FFRAC) and through a series of public meetings in communities adjacent to the lower and middle sections of the Fraser River. The results of these

[1] Species identified as extirpated, endangered or threatened by the BC Conservation Data Centre

consultations are being summarized as part of the Fee Issues process and a decision should be available by January of 2008.

Administration & Client Services

Electronic Licensing Initiative

The Ministry is replacing a number of license and permit systems that are either paper-based or using old technology with a common internet solution. The common solution is a commercial off-the-shelf software package (Earthwon) acquired by the Ministry in 2006. The business drivers for the E-Licensing Initiative are to:

- Provide responsive and meaningful services to clients;
- Support citizen-centric services (such as FrontCounter BC, a central service centre for clients of provincial natural resource ministries and agencies);
- Support legislation and regulation changes;
- Improve consistency in process and outcomes across the province;
- Increase compliance;
- Integrate systems and delivery mechanisms required to address the needs of businesses; and
- Replace legacy systems that hinder business transformation and best practices.

This initiative is a collaborative approach across a number of business areas. Environmental management permits, parks use permits, fish and wildlife commercial permits, water licensing and angling licenses are all scheduled for production in 2007-08. Support for inspections and compliance is scheduled to start in 2008-09.

Partnerships & Outreach

Private Land/ Enfranchisement Projects

The Ministry of Environment, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, continues to make progress on its bid to develop enfranchisement programs. Such programs, commonly in use throughout the western US, generate user pay revenues that induce landowners to provide managed public access, enhanced stewardship, or both.

Two types of pilot projects are now underway:

- *Using hunting as a tool to address crop loss and contamination problems.* Two pilot projects, one in the East Kootenay sub-region and one in the Peace sub-region, are exploring new hunter management and licence revenue systems to address issues associated with ungulates' use of agricultural lands. The East Kootenay pilot produced an effective hunter coordination system which resulted in high hunter success rates. Through special funding provisions, landowners were compensated for their crop losses. All participants were generally satisfied with the results

of this pilot. In the Peace, loss assessment work was initiated in 2006-07 and, to no one's surprise, wildlife impacts in this productive region were found to be high. The hunting coordination phase of this pilot will be initiated in the fall of 2007.

- *Creating incentives for landowners to participate in wildlife management and stewardship.* In the Thompson Region, a pilot is underway to test the ability of user revenues to induce landowners, in this case the Kamloops Indian Band (KIB), to participate in the development and execution of wildlife and habitat management plans. In order to generate revenue, guided hunts on a population of California bighorn sheep (total size ~ 250 animals) were sold in 2006 and 2007 for $74,000 and $84,000, respectively. Approximately $100,000 of the monies raised thus far have been dedicated to habitat stewardship activities and planning, including noxious weed planning and control as well as a range burn during 2007-08. The remaining funds are used to cover the guide outfitter's costs and to provide the KIB with an administrative fee as incentive. Through this program, resident hunters are also administered special sheep hunting opportunities which are managed through the existing Limited Entry Hunting system with no additional authorization or access fees.

Informed by the pilot projects, the province has now initiated a provincial level consultation process for an agricultural land base-specific hunting license system. Special licences for agricultural zones with a separate pricing system and bag limits may be used to encourage hunting where wildlife are plentiful and problematic. Revenues gained could be paired with other funding sources to offset landowner losses and encourage public access for hunting.

Relationships with First Nations

The Ministry of Environment has been working to engage with First Nations on issues of importance to fish & wildlife management. During 2006-07, the Ministry focused its efforts on:

- funding and instituting Aboriginal Program Specialists in each region, thereby allowing regions to more easily deal with local fish, wildlife and parks issues and to support the "New Relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal People";
- engaging with First Nations where possible to determine how wildlife might be cooperatively managed in a manner consistent with the constitutional recognition of First Nations' asserted aboriginal hunting rights and the New Relationship;
- learning more about First Nations' views on how the *Wildlife Act* can be improved and how it might better support the New Relationship; and
- maintaining Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes – regional forums for First Nations and other stakeholders to discuss and provide guidance to the Ministry on a variety of wildlife management and habitat issues.

In the past year, two Final Agreements were successfully negotiated with the Tsawwassen First Nation and Maa-nulth First Nations; these agreements, each including a chapter on the management and sustainable use of fish and wildlife, will be voted on and hopefully ratified in 2007. In addition, two new

Agreements in Principle, with the Sliammon First Nation and In-SHUCK-ch Nation, are now in place; negotiations of these Final Agreements are ongoing.

Other Topics

Wildlife Health Program

In 2006-07, the Ministry of Environment's Wildlife Health Program focused on planning, disease surveillance, information management, and outreach. Particular progress has been made in the following areas:

- *Wildlife Health Database.* In 2006, a provincial Wildlife Health Database was designed and is now in use. Already, approximately 1000 wildlife health incidents have been entered into this database, allowing animal health information to be collected in one place and, when needed, shared easily with other interested parties.
- *Coordinated Approach to Chronic Wasting Disease.* A fatal disease of the central nervous system in the deer family, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has not yet been detected in BC. There is increased concern for the disease at a national level as well as positive cases in free-ranging deer from eastern Alberta. Together, these triggers stepped up our BC program and the *Surveillance and Management Plan for Chronic Wasting Disease in British Columbia* was drafted in 2006-07, in collaboration with federal, provincial, and Aboriginal governments as well as stakeholders. The primary goals of this plan are to maintain the health and diversity of BC's native cervid populations as well as to ensure the health of the hunting public. Surveillance of the disease in free-ranging and captive cervids, efforts to increase the awareness of hunters and the general public, and consideration of proactive preventative regulatory actions are ongoing.
- *Protecting Against West Nile Virus.* Detected in humans, horses and birds in both Washington and Alberta, West Nile Virus (WNV) is expected to move into BC in 2007. The Wildlife Health Program is part of a cooperative surveillance network testing dead corvids and mosquitoes for presence of the virus and encourages the hunting public to take appropriate precautions.
- *Reducing the Risk of Avian Influenza.* Avian influenza was detected in BC domestic poultry in 2004-05. Since that time, BC has collaborated in a national surveillance program to improve our knowledge of the virus in wild bird populations. In addition, hunters are asked to take general safety measures to prevent their exposure to infectious agents.
- *Diseases You Can Get From Wildlife.* A collaborative project involving the Wildlife Health Program and many others resulted in a unique, user friendly booklet about wildlife diseases that can be transmitted to humans. A web version can be accessed at the Wildlife Health Program website. Other information about the health of BC's wild animals can be found at: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/wldhealth.html.

State of the State Report

California Department of Fish and Game
L. Ryan Broddrick, Director

California Fish and Game Commission
John Carlson, Jr., Executive Director

July, 2007

ORGANIZATION

Fish and Game Commission

The Commission and California suffered a great loss with the passing of President Bob Hattoy earlier this year. Commissioner Hattoy was originally appointed by Gov. Gray Davis to the Commission on Aug. 29, 2002, and was reappointed on April 2, 2003 to a six-year term. In February, 2007 he was elected as the Fish and Game Commission's president and served as Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board. Commissioner Hattoy's life and significant professional contributions were celebrated during a memorial tribute in the U.S. Capitol hosted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. His commitment to protecting the environment and his passion for public service were consistently demonstrated throughout his tenure with the Commission.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed two new commissioners, R. Judd Hanna and G. Michael Sutton. Commissioner Hanna brings extensive experience in land use matters, including agriculture and development, and Commissioner Sutton's professional experience includes service as an enforcement officer for the National Park Service and USFWS, and as an executive with the World Wildlife Fund and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

FISHERIES

Marine Life Protection Act

On April 13, 2007, in a landmark decision, the California Fish and Game Commission adopted regulations to create a new suite of marine protected areas (MPAs) designed for the Central Coast of California, the first region considered for the state. This move effectively launches the state's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Program, which was designed to better conserve marine resources for their long-term sustainability while also enhancing outdoor recreation and ocean research opportunities along the coast. The newly established Central Coast MPAs represent the culmination of a two-year public process with nearly 60 public meetings held for stakeholders and scientists, as well as the oversight of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force.

The Commission voted unanimously in favor of its preferred alternative: 29 MPAs representing approximately 204 square miles (or approximately 18 percent) of state waters with 85 square miles designated as no-take state marine reserves along the Central Coast, which ranges from Pigeon Point in San Mateo County south to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County. CDFG, the lead agency charged with managing the state's marine resources, will be responsible for implementing the MLPA program, including all enforcement, research and monitoring activities. The Central Coast MPA regulations will go into effect this summer after the appropriate filings with the Office of Administrative Law and Secretary of State.

Delta Smelt

Surveys conducted by CDFG staff over the last several months indicate the population of endangered delta smelt, a tiny species endemic to the Sacramento/San Joaquin River-San Francisco Bay Delta system and sentinel for the overall ecological health of the region, plummeted to record lows. These findings prompted emergency discussions between Director Broddrick, the director of CA Department of Water Resources, Resources cabinet secretary and governor's staff, legislators and federal officials, resulting in a decision to temporarily shut down water pumps on the State Water Project. The water from these pumps transports substantial amount of the resource from northern California to southern California for residential and agricultural use. CDFG scientists continue their intense efforts to determine the cause of the smelt's sudden decline as well as ongoing efforts to help conserve this species. Director Broddrick continues to work cooperatively with local, state, federal and private partners to employ necessary actions to minimize impacts to the smelt from the State Water Project.

Hatchery Impacts to the Environment

CDFG has been ordered by state court to complete an environmental impact report on the impacts of the state's hatchery program on the environment. The CDFG has agreed to undertake this assessment and is currently identifying a contractor to assist in the preparation of the report. The expansive project area – the entire state – and the extensive number of stakeholders makes this one of the largest efforts CDFG has conducted with the potential to impact approximately 60% of CA's angling public.

Sturgeon Listing

CDFG proposed and the Commission approved substantial conservation- and data-oriented revisions of the sport fishing regulations to limit take of white sturgeon and the threatened green sturgeon. Approximately 10 months of extensive outreach through public meetings, the press, and discussion on internet forums by CDFG staff helped to inform anglers of the changes.

Russian River Coho Salmon

The Russian River Coho Salmon Captive Broodstock Program (RRCSCBP) uses conservation hatchery principles to help restore depressed or extirpated coho salmon populations in Russian River tributaries. Over the past seven years, the program has collected a total of approximately 800 wild coho salmon fingerlings and raised and spawned them in a CDFG hatchery. Since 2004, more than 75,000 offspring of these wild coho salmon have been released back into the streams where their parents were collected. It is hoped that enough of these fish will return to the streams of their release in the coming years to form self-sustaining populations.

WILDLIFE

Non-Lead Ammunition in Condor Range

The Commission is currently considering requiring the use of non-lead ammunition for taking big game mammals in the geographic area inhabited by free-ranging California condors. This action is being considered in an effort to further protect the California condor. In 1987 there were only 22 condors left in the wild. At that time, a decision was made to capture them in an attempt to repopulate the nearly extinct species. Reintroduction to natural habitats in California began in 1992 and there are currently 68 free-flying condors in California, and approximately 130 overall with populations also established in Arizona and Mexico. CDFG staff is continuing to provide information to and advise the Commission on this issue and final action may be taken this summer.

E. coli

Several occurrences of E. coli in CA agricultural products have raised concerns that wildlife (wild pigs and deer in particular) access to agricultural crop areas is a potential transmission source of this bacterium. CDFG is working with members of the agricultural and public health communities to determine the extent of wildlife impacts, if any, to agricultural crops, and consider possible solutions that do not close off critical wildlife corridors.

Whale Rescue

Two humpback whales, a cow and her calf, inexplicably made their way in from the Pacific Ocean and up into the Sacramento River. The pair traveled approximately 90 miles into freshwater, staying in the river system almost three weeks before slipping back out to sea. CDFG led and incident command made up of NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to provide protection for these endangered whales, which were also injured. Both mother and calf had suffered significant ship strike wounds. A team of scientists from CDFG, NOAA and private marine mammal rescue organizations followed the whales, obtaining invaluable data and the distinction of successfully delivering antibiotics to free-swimming whales in the wild for the very first time. The whales' journey and the rescue team's efforts were followed daily by national and international media.

Avian Influenza

CDFG wildlife specialists continue their coordination with federal, state and local agencies in the design and implementation of continuing sampling strategies for AI detection, including related grant agreements and budget tracking. Last year, CDFG's AI Team was successful in developing a response plan that utilizes a SEMS/NIMS structure and established realistic safety guidelines for field activities; executing MOUs with the CA Department of Food and Ag, USFWS and USDA for surveillance and testing activities; partnering with the University of California, Davis and CA Department of Health Services for research and public education and outreach activities, respectively; and collecting more than 12,000 samples from live capture and hunter-harvested birds, morbidity/mortality investigations, and environmental areas. The highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza has not been detected in CA.

Wildlife Action Plan

CDFG continues to move forward in implementing California's extensive State Wildlife Action Plan. This important tool allows for greater involvement by stakeholders and the legislature in wildlife management efforts, many of which are already an element of CDFG's strategic operations. Education and outreach activities continue to provide information to the public about the status, importance, and uniqueness of California's nongame species, as do management considerations of continuing human population growth and habitat loss. This entails more intensive involvement in land use planning decisions to better design wildlife conservation areas and other private and public lands for maintenance of ecological function in perpetuity. It also involves saving critical habitat linkages for wildlife movement and maintenance of genetic exchange.

Game Harvest Data

CA saw a 34% decline in the number of pheasant harvested in the 2006/2007 season. A total of 640 birds, 337 wild and 303 planted, were harvested. There was an increase in waterfowl harvested, however, with a total of 11,484 birds taken over 6,181 total hunter days. The top three birds taken were Northern Shoveler, Green-winged teal, and American Wigeon. Elk harvest for the season showed 32 elk taken, 22 females and 10 males, from 40 tags that were issued.

Perennial Green Forage & Wildlife Drinkers Development
The project to install wildlife along four miles of pipeline in CDFG's Knoxville Wildlife Area is nearing completion. This project is being accomplished in partnership with Safari Club International, California Deer Association and National Wild Turkey Association.

Wind Energy Guidelines
CDFG has been working in partnership with the California Energy Commission (CEC) to develop the *"California Guidelines for Reducing Impacts to Birds and Bats from Wind Energy Development."* The *Guidelines* are voluntary and provide information to help wind developers and CEQA lead agencies reduce impacts to birds and bats from new development or repowering of wind energy projects. They include recommendations on preliminary screening of proposed wind energy project sites; pre-permitting study design and methods; assessing direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to birds and bats in accordance with state and federal laws; developing avoidance and minimization measures; establishing appropriate compensatory mitigation; and post-construction operations monitoring, analysis, and reporting methods. The *Guidelines* are expected to be finalized and available in August 2007. CDFG has begun a dialog with other states and the USFWS to share information, and foster consistency to ensure that wind energy facilities maximize wildlife protections.

HABITAT

South Bay Salt Pond
In March 2007 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the 15,100 acre South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project was released, commencing the environmental review process for the largest coastal wetlands restoration project on the West Coast. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) manages 5,500 acres of the project area as part of the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve and is the lead agency, together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)for this ambitious effort. Restoration work is expected to commence next year.

East Contra Costa County NCCP
After nine years of collaborative planning, the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) is awaiting final approval by all partner entities, including CDFG and USFWS. The conservation strategy of the HCP/NCCP focuses on acquisition of up to 30,000 acres of land to create a preserve system that will be protected and managed in perpetuity. The conservation strategy also includes specific measures to restore, enhance, and otherwise manage habitat for 28 covered species in six natural community types. The conservation measures are designed to achieve and integrate 33 biological goals and 91 biological objectives at three scales: landscape, natural community, and species. Long-term monitoring in an adaptive management framework will be used to assess the success of the overall conservation strategy.

PG&E Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP)
CDFG is currently assisting Pacific Gas & Electric (PF&E) and the USFWS in developing HCPs for the routine operation, maintenance and minor new construction of electric and natural gas infrastructure. The HCPs will mitigate potential impacts to sensitive species while allowing PG&E to conduct operations necessary for providing energy to its customers. Three HCPs are being developed: San Joaquin Valley, Bay Area and North Central. The San Joaquin Valley HCP is in the final permitting stages while the Bay Area and North Central HCPs are still in the early stages of preparation. Thousands of operations, maintenance, and minor new construction

activities may be conducted annually, and predicting when and where activities may occur is not possible. Due to this complexity, a landscape level approach to estimating impacts was used which will be validated as projects are proposed. Based on the estimates, approximately 1,350 acres of high quality habitat will be acquired over the 30-year term of the HCP.

Truckee River Canyon Acquisition

CDFG took title to 3,688 acres of land in the Truckee River Canyon in 2006 to ensure the protection of over 6 miles of river frontage and canyon lands on both sides of the Truckee River east of Truckee to the Nevada state line. This complex acquisition was a collaborative effort between The Nature Conservancy, the Truckee Donner Land Trust, and the Sierra Fund - all of whom have committed private and other funds to complete the transaction - and the CDFG and the California Wildlife Conservation Board. Conservation of this spectacular canyon on the eastern flank of the Sierra Nevada Mountains will protect the natural values of the canyon by providing contiguous public lands in the watershed to sustain critical deer migration and wildlife habitat through the Truckee River Canyon; provide substantial recreational opportunities; offer an impressive entrance into the Golden State along Interstate 80 between Reno and Sacramento; and serve as a fantastic area for delivering education and outreach programs.

Highway 89 Stewardship

The Highway 89 Stewardship Team is a working group of primarily biologists, transportation ecologists, and educators from the CDFG, CA Department of Transportation, US Forest Service, University of CA Cooperative Extension, Sierra County Fish and Game Commission and Sierra County Board of Supervisors that focuses on wildlife-highway interaction along this heavily traveled stretch of state highway. After securing grants, evaluating road kill data, selecting a site, choosing and engineering a wildlife crossing structure, fitting deer with GPS collars and educating students in the local community, and developing a 20-year research strategy, the team is scheduled to install a deer/wildlife undercrossing at Kyburz Flat this summer. The team recently partnered with the Sagehen Experimental Forest and Research Station for additional funding and staffing resources. The work being done here began as a grass roots effort to reduce wildlife mortality on the highway, increase public safety, better understand the ecology of wildlife/highway interaction and serve as a model for future projects throughout the state and possibly across the nation.

Levees

Governor Schwarzenegger's commitment to the environmental, economic and public health needs of California allowed for extensive levee work to be performed. CDFG staff ensured that, in conjunction with the repair of about 31 miles of Delta and Suisun Marsh levees, all impacts to habitat were fully mitigated, and aquatic and terrestrial habitats were enhanced as well. A large portion of financial assistance was provided to local Reclamation Districts for the repair of levees damaged by storms in January, 2006. CDFG environmental scientists directed the planting of a 50-acre mitigation site on Bradford Island, creating riparian forest, scrub shrub, and freshwater marsh, fully compensating for impacts for levee improvements on the island. Staff also assisted with the permitting process to create a setback levee for habitat along Mayberry Slough on Sherman Island. About 2,200 feet of shaded riverine aquatic habitat and four acres of riparian forest and intertidal wetlands will be created purely as an enhancement project.

FERC Relicensing

The CDFG successfully negotiated an agreement with public and private interests involved with the relicensing of Lake Oroville Dam. The Oroville project, located on the Feather River in Butte County, is owned by the CA Dept of Water Resources and is the highest dam in the country. It

is also one of the points of origin for the California State Water Project, a network of dams and reservoirs that distribute water from Northern California to the drier southern parts of the state. Lake Oroville has been rated as one of the best bass fishing spots in California. The terms of the agreement will improve stream flow and water temperature conditions in the Feather River downstream of the lake; expand habitat for fall-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout; expand flood pain habitat within the CDFG-owned Oroville Wildlife Area; improve waterfowl nesting and rearing habitat; improve wetland habitat; and improve sport fish and recreational facilities at Lake Oroville and the Oroville Wildlife Area.

Another relicensing project on the Upper American River is owned by the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District and includes eleven reservoirs and eight. These reservoirs and associated stream reaches are heavily utilized by anglers and hunters from the greater Sacramento metropolitan area. CDFG staff participated in this relicensing effort for six years and was instrumental in helping the parties reach this notable settlement. The terms of the new license will provide flows and temperatures for healthy rainbow trout; habitat for healthy mountain yellow-legged frog; move sediment through the system to improve fish habitat; distribute large woody debris throughout reach to improve fish habitat; and ensure on-water recreation does not adversely affect other resources.

These two historic agreements have been submitted to FERC for final licensing. FERC is expected to issue 50 year licenses for both of these projects which will include the mitigation measures negotiated by the Department for the protection of public trust resources.

Federal Endangered Species Act Grants

CDFG was awarded more than $36 million in planning and land acquisition grants in May. The grants will enable the State of California - working in partnership with private landowners, conservation groups and other agencies and organizations - to support conservation planning efforts and to purchase and protect habitat to conserve threatened and endangered species.

Safe Harbor for Rangelands

CDFG is collaborating with private interests and federal agencies (California Farm Bureau Federation, California Cattlemen's Association, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense, Sustainable Conservation, USFWS and U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service) to create a Safe Harbor program for rangeland landowners in California. This is one of the major initiatives of the California Rangeland Coalition. The intent of the rangeland safe harbor will be to provide incentives to private landowners to protect and enhance habitat for endangered species free from future risk of violating the Endangered Species Act. A pilot project area has been identified for four northern California counties with hopes to expand it to additional rangelands based on lessons learned from early successes.

ENFORCEMENT

Operations

CDFG game wardens continue to set the standard for law enforcement in CA. Through both sophisticated undercover operations and routine investigations, game wardens have continued to foil poachers, drug dealers and parole violators. Several wardens have also demonstrated the extent of their public safety responsibilities as first responders to vehicle accidents, in saving drowning victims, and in locating missing persons. CDFG is honored by the deserved recognition its force has received by the awarding to some of its finest the Pogue-Elms and the Governor's Medal of Valor awards.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Quagga Mussel

Earlier this year, quagga mussel infestations were detected in Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River. CDFG Invasive Species Program collaborated with staff from several state and federal agencies to respond to the discovery of this invasive mollusk. A close relative of the better-known zebra mussel, quagga mussels obstruct water delivery infrastructure and boat engines. They can drastically alter the water chemistry and species composition of lakes and reservoirs. It is likely that the quagga mussels were inadvertently transported to the west on recreational boats from the Great Lakes region. A formal incident command was established in California which included state agencies and the USFWS. Actions were taken to quickly assess the extent of the infestation in California and step up efforts to prevent future introductions, including partnering with the CA Department of Food and Agriculture and sponsoring legislation to expand our regulatory authority. Thus far, the infestation appears to be quite limited and steps are being taken to conduct more detailed surveys and assess the risk of infestation to waterbodies throughout the state. CDFG is working with our collaborators to develop eradication options as well as long-term monitoring and prevention measures.

Invasive Species Plan

CDFG is in the process of finalizing the California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan. This plan identifies priority actions and a management framework for state agencies responsible for addressing the problem of aquatic invasive species. It was developed with extensive input from relevant agencies and stakeholder groups and a draft has been approved by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

Lake Davis Northern Pike Eradication

Eradication efforts for the invasive northern pike, which have degraded the trout fishery at Lake Davis, as well as the associated local economy, are planned for late summer. The pike population represents a serious threat to aquatic ecosystems and sport and commercial fisheries in the region, and could have statewide impacts if this species were to establish in the Sacramento/San Joaquin River-San Francisco Bay Delta system. Years of working in the local community as well as at the lake to control and contain pike have revealed that the northern pike population at Lake Davis cannot be controlled using standard fisheries management tools. The eradication plan calls for use of a form of rotenone to kill the fish.

Knoxville Wildlife Area Phase I & II Tamarisk Eradication

Tamarisk eradication efforts continue for a 12 mile stretch along Eticura Creek within CDFG's Knoxville Wildlife Area. Completion of this multi-year project is expected in July 2008.

COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDIFE REPORT

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

July 2007

SPECIES OF CONCERN

3-Species Fish Conservation Efforts

Colorado's efforts towards conservation of 3 species continue, with significant progress in several areas:

- CDOW biologists have been working closely with the Southern Ute Tribe in 3-species planning efforts and reports the Southern Utes may soon become a signatory to the 3-Species Conservation Agreement.
- CDOW, Southern Ute Tribe, and Jicarilla Apache Nation are jointly planning a project to capture adult roundtail chubs from the mainstem San Juan River above Navajo Reservoir this summer to supplement the Navajo/San Juan RTC brood stock now being developed at the Mumma Native Species Hatchery. If these efforts are successful, the Mancos, La Plata, and Navajo River roundtail chub broodstocks currently held at the Mumma Hatchery may be blended into a single San Juan River broodstock to improve genetic diversity.
- The CDOW has decided to attempt to propagate bluehead sucker from the Yampa River. This is uncharted ground for the Hatchery staff and immediate results are not guaranteed. Due to concerns about hybridization with white suckers, it will be useful to learn more about the feasibility of propagating these large-bodied fishes.

Native Cutthroat Trout

Recent results from genetic analyses greenback and Colorado River cutthroat trout indicate possible misidentification of presumptive populations and effects from historic stocking. Analyses of genetic tissues from numerous populations and historic fish stocking data continue to be conducted to resolve issues and refine information on the current distributions and genetic purity of greenback and Colorado River cutthroat subspecies. A species status assessment for Rio Grande cutthroat trout has completed the data collection phase for all the population and habitat information available from biologists in New Mexico and Colorado. The end result will be to produce a range-wide assessment similar to that published for Colorado River cutthroat trout in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah.

Prairie Dogs

Currently Colorado is implementing occupancy modeling for white-tailed and Gunnison species within their range in the state. Colorado has completed one year of surveys in 2004 for white-tailed prairie dog and in 2005 for Gunnison prairie dog. Monitoring of Gunnison prairie dog was resumed in 2007 to align with the range-wide scheme set in place by the conservation team. The next survey for white-tailed prairie dog will be in 2008. A habitat suitability model for both species is being developed for the statewide management plan. State management plans for both species will be completed by December 2007. Stakeholder and expert workshops are being held to provide opportunities for input. These plans will integrate conservation strategy objectives with

other sage-steppe species such as greater sage-grouse, Gunnison sage-grouse, ferruginous hawk, black-footed ferret, burrowing owl, kit fox, and pygmy rabbit.

A second range-wide aerial survey of black tailed prairie dog colonies and subsequent ground-truthing for occupancy were completed. The search protocol was revised in 2006. Analysis of survey results will be completed by fall of 2007. The Colorado Wildlife Commission established shooting dates for all three Colorado prairie dog species as year-round on private lands and June 15th through February 28th on public land.

Mountain plover

Ongoing conservation of mountain plover nests in cultivated fields in 2006 resulted in the enrollment of over 100,000 acres by 96 landowners. The purpose is to identify plover nests prior to cultivation and minimize related mortality. Recent graduate student research indicates more than 10,000 plovers occupied the eastern plains and South Park. Division research on mountain plover recruitment rates is near completion.

Sage-grouse

·tivity under the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Gunnison sage-gr· · continued with 19 landowners signing up to enroll almost 59,000 ac. Baseline vegetation surve, ·have been completed on 30,000 ac of what was considered the highest priority habitat. Develop...nt and review of the state conservation plan for greater sage grouse continues with agency and public stakeholder review. Management plans by several local working groups concerned with greater sage-grouse are nearing completion. A $100,000 habitat enhancement grant to local working groups was initiated by the Division with a request for proposals.

Black-footed ferret

Monitoring in 2006 resulted in location of nine ferrets, two of which were wild-born. One of these ferrets was reared by the wild-born female discovered in 2005. Small mammal disease sampling was undertaken within both the Wolf Creek and Little Snake Black-footed Ferret Management Areas for the first time in 2006 for a more precise assessment of plague activity. All 542 samples were seronegative for plague and tularemia, indicating no epidemics ongoing at the time. Habitat evaluations in the Wolf Creek Management Area showed a substantial increase in the quality of habitat based on prairie dog densities.

Colorado River Endangered Fishes Recovery

Annual removal of predatory, adult northern pike and smallmouth bass from the Yampa and Colorado rivers continues. Reduction in abundance of large pike in the Yampa River has been evident in the last three years. Evidence of predatory wounds on adult Colorado pikeminnow appear to be lessening in frequency and roundtail chub, another native fish highly vulnerable to pike predation, has been captured in greater numbers recently. Smallmouth bass removal on the Yampa and Colorado rivers has been more variable in effectiveness.

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES FOR MERCURY

Over the past two years, CDOW has collected fish samples from 56 waters and has provided technical expertise to the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE)

to facilitate their Fish Consumption Advisory Program. Thus far, fish sampling efforts have targeted reservoirs identified as "high risk", or those which have top predator fish species (e.g. walleye, northern pike, several bass species, and lake trout) and which receive notable angling pressure. Fifteen (nearly 30%) of the 56 waters tested have warranted an FCA due to mercury contamination. Several others may eventually receive FCA's if Colorado's action limit is lowered from 0.5 ppm to 0.3 ppm. Waters in the urban front range of eastern CO, and in the southwestern corner of the state, have a higher prevalence of FCA's, while mountain trout fisheries and eastern plains warm water fisheries appear to be free of mercury problems. CDOW plans to initiate a research study to determine whether changes in fisheries management can potentially reduce mercury levels is walleye, and thus reduce health risks to anglers.

FISH PRODUCTION REPORT

The Hatchery System again received adequate water flows in 2006 to continue meeting the requested numbers of fish from fishery biologists. Levels of production are as follows; 3.56 million catchables trout, 15.55 million cold water sub-catchables (8 species) and 73.5 million warm water sub-catchables (14 species). Over 1.88 million pounds of fish were reared and distributed into State waters with over 495,000 miles of travel to accomplish our schedules.

Working with researchers and biologists the hatchery system is incorporating the Hofer and Hofer crosses into our production scheme. The Hofers are a strain of rainbow that has shown a resistance to the effects of Whirling Disease and should have positive impacts on our ability to re-establish wild spawning populations of rainbow in systems that have been impacted by the disease. Both the Hofers and Hofer crosses have shown promising performance in our catchable program and we are looking forward to the results from our researchers in the sub-catchable plants.

Our Native Aquatic Species Restoration Facility in Alamosa continues to provide refugia and develop brood stocks for T & E species both Federal and State along with the Species of Special concern. The species presently at the facility are Colorado Pike Minnow, Bonytail Chub, Roundtail Chub, Rio Grande Sucker, Rio Grande Chub, Suckermouth Minnow, Northern Redbelly Dace, Southern Redbelly Dace, Common Shiner, Arkansas Darter and Plains Minnow. We are adding an additional 20 small production ponds at the facility in preparation to begin handling requests for the Roundtail chub, Bluehead sucker and Flannelmouth sucker. The Boreal Toad program is stable and we are expecting increases in requests for both tadpoles and toadlets.

A total of 120,104 various fish species and toads were stocked from this facility in 2006.

INTER-STATE MOVEMENTS OF TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

Colorado was a recipient and a donor state again this year, receiving 25 moose from Utah in January and additional individual moose throughout the year to augment our Grand Mesa moose introduction effort. In return Colorado sent Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep back to Utah as a first installment on that debt. Colorado also sent mountain goats and swift fox to South Dakota. The trapping and subsequent release of swift fox is part of a multi-state effort to re-establish viable swift fox populations in their historic range.

BIG GAME HARVEST SURVEY

Colorado switched from a live-operator telephone survey to estimate big game harvest to an automated telephone (IVR) and internet survey with a live operator backup. This system reduced costs by about 30% over live operators, but at the expense of response rate which declined by about 8 percentage points. Hunters were contacted by IVR or e-mail, but strongly preferred to respond via the internet.

ELK QUADRAT SURVEY

Colorado successfully implemented a DAU wide helicopter quadrat survey for elk for the first time. Although commonly used to estimate deer numbers, this method has not previously been used for elk because of their tendency to herd up in large groups in winter inflated confidence limits to the point where the estimates had little meaning. We were able to get estimates with +/- 20% confidence limits by stratifying the sample based on three prior years locations of elk which were recorded with GPS units during classification counts.

FRONT RANGE LION STUDY

Division Research Staff have begun attempting to capture and attach GPS radio-collars to mountain lions along the Front Range. The intent of this project is to better understand lion movements and home ranges in the urban interface, and evaluate effectiveness of aversive conditioning techniques at altering lion use of human habitats or their behavior. This is a pilot year designed to evaluate techniques and capture and communication protocols on open space lands, and if successful is expected to be a multi-year project.

WILDLIFE HEALTH

The Colorado Division of Wildlife's Wildlife Health Program provides veterinary and diagnostic support services and conducts research related to wildlife health problems. Although much of the program's ongoing work is related to chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance and research, surveys or studies on bighorn respiratory diseases, plague, avian influenza, and other wildlife diseases of importance or concern are either underway or in various stages of planning and initiation. A summary of key activities and findings for 2006–2007 follows:

Chronic Wasting Disease

As has been the case for the last five years, CWD surveillance and research continued to dominate programmatic activities for Wildlife Health Program staff. Surveys conducted during 2002–2006 have shown that CWD is more widely distributed in Colorado than originally believed. At least one case of CWD had been detected in 18 of 55 deer Data Analysis Units (DAUs), 11 of 46 elk DAUs, and 2 of 4 moose DAUs; no additional deer or elk DAUs were added in 2006, but CWD was detected in one new moose DAU (M-2). Within CWD-infected DAUs, pooled estimates of prevalence from 2004–2006 harvest survey data varied from <1–10% among mule deer, <1–2.8% among elk, and 1–2.7% among moose. Much of the change in the known distribution of CWD in Colorado since 2002 is attributable to improved surveillance rather than true geographic spread. Despite substantial improvement in

understanding about the true distribution of CWD, survey data from many DAUs in southern Colorado remain insufficient to assure that the disease is truly absent from those areas. More efficient survey methods are needed to assure long-term sustainability of CWD surveillance efforts in Colorado and elsewhere.

Surveillance To Detect Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza In Wild Birds

In 2006, the CDOW used multiple survey approaches to monitor wild bird populations for avian influenza (AI) viruses. These programs were developed in response to national concerns over an emerging Asian strain of highly pathogenic AI (HPAI) virus (also termed "H5N1"), and the possibility that migrating wild birds may introduce Asian HPAI into North America.

Our primary focus was to investigate unusual mortality events of ill/dead wild birds reported across the state of Colorado. Staff responded to all calls forwarded by the Colorado Health Education Line for the Public (CO-HELP) line regarding dead birds. Calls were handled using a decision tree developed in conjunction with the Colorado Avian Disease Surveillance Program and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment staff. Of the 2,162 calls received in May–December 2006, 53 were described as waterfowl or shorebirds. Only one potential mortality event was missed. The missed event was a report of 5 dead waterfowl, however, it was determined during the call that the carcasses were not likely to be 'testable.' Of the 93 bird carcasses received for necropsy in 2006 as a result of this reporting system, 25 were sufficiently fresh to screen for AI virus and all were negative.

Further AI sampling included 2,974 apparently healthy resident Canadian geese (1,319 from Front Range sites, 1,655 from the Western Slope sites), from which three (0.001%) yielded evidence of low pathogenic AI strains endemic in North American waterfowl. All three positive birds were adult females from the same location. The prevalence of low pathogenic strains of AI was consistent with historical waterfowl surveillance data. In addition to that effort, CDOW worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to sample a wider variety of apparently healthy birds in Colorado as part of a nationwide surveillance program. By December 2006, CDOW and USDA had obtained and submitted for testing 1,746 samples from wild birds in Colorado, including 377 shorebirds, 708 dabbling ducks, 63 diving ducks, 597 geese, and 1 sandhill crane. Numerous samples tested positive for endemic strains of low pathogenic AI virus (data currently being withheld by USDA), but none tested positive for HPAI virus.

Northern Shoveler Mortality Event

Over 1,000 ducks were reported dead between Jan and Feb 2007 at 10 or more water treatment plants throughout the northern Front Range, mostly in the Denver Metro area. The majority of the mortalities were from two facilities: Metro Wastewater Reclamation District in Denver (>850) and Boulder Wastewater Treatment (>100). Most (98%) of the mortalities were northern shovelers (NS); a few gadwall (~1%) and other species also were submitted. One other mortality event was noted at a residential pond involving ~50 NS. Mortalities at water treatment facilities appeared to be associated with the secondary clarifiers at these facilities. NS were the predominant species using the ponds at most facilities, but other species were present. Based on field and postmortem observations and laboratory findings, the cause of death in these cases was thought to be hypothermia and/or malnutrition. Feather analyses are still pending. A list of wetting agents and surfactants being used at the various facilities also is being evaluated.

NONRESIDENT ELK HUNTER SURVEY

To address an over abundance of elk in the state, the Colorado Wildlife Commission reduced fees and liberally issued licenses for cow elk. As Colorado's elk herd reaches population objective, changes in the availability and fees for cow licenses will have to be addressed. To better understand how possible changes might affect non-resident hunters, a mail survey was administered in the spring of 2007 (response rate 67%, n=3502). The survey focused on differences between non-resident bull and cow elk hunters and contained questions pertaining to: their history of elk hunting in Colorado and other states/provinces; reasons for choosing Colorado; their 2006 Colorado elk hunting experience, and; their attitudes towards possible cow elk license fee changes. Results indicate that the majority of Colorado's non-resident elk hunters viewed their 2006 hunt as an important recreational activity that they plan on continuing under the current fee structure. Increased cow license fees would affect the intent of many non-residents return to Colorado. Most indicated they would return albeit at either a reduced frequency or with a different license type. Findings provide insight into possible CDOW revenue changes resulting from adjustments to cow elk fees and availability.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Report to Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

June 2007

ublic Outreach – Communications

atewide Fish Reports Launched

e Bureau of Communications is in the process of shifting the Department's website emphasis from ;anization-centric to a more customer service site. This spring, we launched a new feature on the site: tewide fish reports. Seven people from throughout the Communications Bureau, along with several :kups, check with tackle shops and Fisheries personnel in each region and compile the information into nprehensive report that is updated every week. These fish reports are clear and concise, telling anglers ere to go and what to use while fishing. The reports are generating website "hits" and have attracted dia attention as well. They are designed to work alongside the Department's new "Fish Planner" feature t allows anglers to search for information about fishing waters throughout the state. A complete re-;ign of the website homepage emphasizing current opportunities for hunters and anglers will be in place er this summer.

ommissioner's Corner" Column

e Department's quarterly Fish and Game News tabloid debuted a new feature this spring titled mmissioner's Corner. This new regular feature provides a forum for Commissioners to communicate ectly with Fish and Game constituents about important policy issues facing the Department and priorities by the Commission.

sh and Game Vendor Bulletins

e Communications Bureau is in the early stages of developing a tool to utilize Fish and Game vendors in lping to inform constituents. A prototype board titled the "Hook and Bulletin" will be made available for ndors to place in their businesses. The Department has approximately 400 vendors statewide, providing ;reat opportunity to inform regular customers about issues and events.

quatic Education

vo new projects have been initiated in the Aquatic Education Program. The existing "Trout in the assroom" program is receiving a facelift with the development of a new statewide curriculum. Input)m teachers across Idaho has been gathered to determine the needs of participants in the program. The w curriculum will provide teachers with lesson plans, background information, copy pages, aquarium re and fish rearing information all in one easy-to-use resource. While "Trout in the Classroom" will)vide students with information on the natural history and habitat needs of cold-water fish, the new 'olunteer Mentored Angler Program" seeks to provide training to adult anglers interested in teaching uth about fishing. Aimed at angling club members and youth leaders, this program will prepare adults to ich kids how to fish. Several pilot classes are scheduled for the summer 2007. Following an initial aluation, the Department intends to launch this program statewide in the summer 2008.

unter Education

January of 2006, Idaho's Bowhunter Education Program went on-line. This online course option has)ven to be very popular with bowhunters both in Idaho and around the country. Participants in the on-ie bowhunter education class routinely number near those taking the traditional on-line hunter education

classes. Idaho is one of ten states that offer hunter education students on-line options for both hunter and bowhunter education.

Idaho's Hunter Education program recently added a new video "Shattered Lives" to its selection of videos available to instructors. The video chronicles a tragic fatal hunting accident that occurred near Coeur d'Alene, ID in 1999. The families of both hunters involved participated in the filming of the video, bringing to it a personal note that reinforces to viewers the importance of safe and responsible hunting behavior. In addition, the video includes a quiz to help instructors and students alike discuss a variety of topics brought up in the video.

Conservation Law Enforcement

New Forensics Equipment Purchased

Shikar-Safari Club International provided Idaho Fish and Game's Wildlife Forensics' program with a grant of $70,000 to purchase a new DNA sequencer. The new sequencer replaces an older and outdated version originally purchased by Shikar-Safari in the mid 1990's. The use of DNA techniques has become an integral part of our big game criminal investigations. Our Forensics program continues to receive more cas work each year and this new equipment utilizes the latest technologies and is able to run more samples at a faster pace.

Citizens Against Poaching turns 25

Idaho's Citizens Against Poaching (CAP) is a private organization that partners with Idaho Fish and Game, providing a toll free 'hotline' for concerned sportsman to report wildlife violations. CAP also funds the reward system for tips that lead to an arrest.

CAP was started 25 years ago by a group of concerned sportsmen who wanted to curb "poaching" of Idaho's wildlife. CAP rewards have averaged $18,500 per year and since its inception, has resulted in the collection of more than $668,000 in fines and $547,000 in civil penalties.

To celebrate the 25th year, CAP and the Department have started a new campaign, "Make the Call" to encourage hunters and anglers report violations. Visit the web site at:
http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/about/enforcement/call.cfm

Recruitment and Retention

The Baby Boomers continue to retire and leave gaps in the Department's Enforcement ranks. We are averaging nearly 6 retirements annually (from a work force of 110). Recruiting is constrained by limited salaries coupled with high housing costs in certain communities. In addition to recruiting entry level Conservation Officers, we are also faced with several vacancies in our first line supervisors (DCO) and regional managers (RCO).

Unique Cross Boundary and Cooperative Enforcement Efforts

After a lengthy and complicated investigation, the US Attorney's Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agents and Department Conservation Officers were successful in prosecuting an individual,

merly of Carmen, Idaho, for violating the Endangered Species Act. He pled guilty to conspiring to son wolves and placing poisoned meat bait on Idaho's public lands.

ıddition, Department officers continue to investigate a group of habitual wildlife criminals from Idaho, ıska, and Hawaii. The investigation centered around an Idaho resident allegedly taking clients on big ne (7 illegal deer) hunts without proper licenses and tags. The investigation has blossomed to include gal grizzly bears taken in Alaska and over 10 suspects in several states.

ıinbow's End

partment officers, assisted by Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board agents, reported a plea eement and sentencing of a Challis resident and owner of the Rainbow's End Bed and Breakfast. He is ɛged to have provided unlicensed outfitting and guiding services to deer hunters. During the estigation, a CAP call reported a closed season take of a 7X7 trophy mule deer as well as where the at was wasted. Photos taken by the callers on Nov. 1 matched the photos of a dead deer on the suspect's b page claiming to be killed on Oct. 31, prior to the close of the season. During the investigation, icers were shown the skull plate of the deer in question. DNA samples were taken from the head. Within hours, samples of DNA from the head and samples from the kill site were rushed to the Caldwell ldlife lab where the Forensic Scientist was able to determine the samples were an identical match.

med with a warrant, officers performed a search at the Rainbow's End B&B and the owner was later ırged with multiple counts of hunting closed season, possession of unlawfully taken wildlife, wasteful ɜtruction of wildlife and various outfitting violations. In a plea agreement, he pled guilty to the waste and ssession charges and received the following sentence from the Challis Magistrate:

Six years revocation of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges,
$1000 fine on each of the two charges,
$400 civil penalty,
$50 processing fee,
Court costs,
10 days jail (which started immediately after the proceedings),
10 days jail to be served starting Oct. 10, 2007, and Oct. 10, 2008, and Oct. 10, 2009 and Oct. 10, 2010 for a total of 50 days to serve.
4 years supervised probation with terms as follows:
- He may not accompany anyone in the field, who is engaged in hunting, fishing or trapping activities,
- He may not have any firearm in his vehicle,
- He will be subject to unwarranted search of his property for firearms (vehicle) and unlawful wildlife,
- He must notify his probation officer when and where he plans to go into public lands,
- He may not go antler hunting.

Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat

Lake Pend Oreille

During 2006, the Department embarked on an aggressive predator control program in Lake Pend Oreille in an effort to restore the kokanee population and to provide forage for the trophy rainbow trout fishery and for bull trout. Lake Pend Oreille holds the world record for both rainbow trout (37 lbs) and bull trout (32 pounds), and when kokanee were abundant supported the most popular fishery in Idaho. A rapidly growing lake trout population, coupled with a decline in rainbow trout harvest on the heels of a significant flood event, placed kokanee in a "predator pit."

Between 2000 and 2006, anglers were strongly encouraged to harvest lake and rainbow trout, but little progress was made in reducing their numbers. In the spring of 2006, the Department formed a citizen task force and developed an angler incentive program. This program included entry into cash prize drawings for every angler that turned in a rainbow or lake trout head, as well as having several hundred lake and rainbow trout PIT tagged with reward tags. The incentive program greatly stimulated harvest but was cumbersome to administer. In August 2006, the program switched from reward tags and drawings to a $10 per head reward. Anglers appear to prefer the change, although both programs have proven effective at increasing harvest of predators. The award was increased to $15 per head in December 2006 to stimulate angler effort during the winter months. The Department also began using commercial scale trap and gill nets to augment lake trout removal in fall 2006.

During Spring/Summer 2006, the Department obtained new population estimates of rainbow and lake trout to assess status and provide a baseline for efficacy of the removal program and to develop targets for removal. These estimates were also used as baseline data for a model developed by Dr. Mike Hansen, who is currently spending his sabbatical away from University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point working with IDFG on Pend Oreille.

Through angling and commercial netting, we were able to meet the target of removing 18,000 lake trout. Rainbow trout are not susceptible to netting and are more difficult to catch, thus fewer than 6,000 were removed. Dr. Hansen's modeling indicates that sustaining the current rate of removal on lake trout will collapse the population within a relatively few years. Further assessment indicates we will need to slightly increase overall take on predators to provide kokanee with a better than even chance of recovery.

Because IDFG was able to initiate the predator removal program in earnest at the first of the year in 2007, the project is over 20% ahead of last year in the take of predators. If population estimates and modeling predictions are on target, we should be able to start turning the corner on kokanee recovery in the next couple of years, if the elevated harvest rate continues. Management plans call for ultimately restoring a fishable population of kokanee, with enough additional production to maintain a trophy rainbow trout fishery. Lake trout will continue to be suppressed as the lake cannot sustain rainbow trout, bull trout and kokanee in the presence of lake trout. Funding for the control program is primarily through Avista, as part of the mitigation for the Clark Fork hydropower projects. Some funding is also provided through Bonneville Power as mitigation for the federal dam on the Pend Oreille River.

The project was recently recognized by a federal hydropower group as the recipient of the 2007 award for "Outstanding Steward of America's Waters". It was the only project selected nationally (out of nine nominations). The project was chosen because of the commitment to measurable results, collaboration with numerous stakeholders and importance to conservation of a significant fishery resource.

;h Management Plans

: Idaho Fish and Game Commission approved final drafts of the Fisheries Management Plan 200-2012 p://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/fish/programs/fish_plan.pdf, Management Plan for Conservation of lowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho (http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/fish/programs/yellowstone.pdf), l Mountain Whitefish Conservation and Management Plan for the Big Lost River Drainage, Idaho p://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/fish/programs/whitefish.pdf).

Aquatic Species Management Plan has been drafted and is moving toward public review and npletion.

;h Planner

veb-based Fishing Planner has been developed and launched tp://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/fishingplanner/). The Fishing Planner provides anglers with ormation on fishing opportunity throughout Idaho, fishing regulations on various waters, facilities ›cks, picnic tables, outhouses, handicap accessibility, etc.) available, and species of fish likely to be :ountered. The Fishing Planner has also been linked to RBFF's Take Me Fishing webpage tp://takemefishing.org/page.cfm?pageID=4&StateID=16).

ıtrient Supplementation

ldition of nutrients to enhance fishery production continues in the Kootenai River, Redfish Lake, and has en initiated in Dworshak Reservoir. Nutrient addition is intended to replace nutrients lost due to ervoir construction or loss of marine derived nutrients formerly provided by large numbers of salmon d steelhead.

ıll trout

ıll trout monitoring continues to demonstrate increasing numbers of bull trout in many areas of the state. :reased numbers seem to be a response to closing bull trout to harvest, increased inventory work, and to gler awareness campaigns.

elicans at Blackfoot Reservoir

licans continue to increase statewide and their predation on selected fish stocks is thought to be affecting rvival of stocked sterile rainbow trout and Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Reservoir. Poor fish rvival has also reduced the quality of angling. Efforts are underway to manage pelican numbers while ıproving angling quality.

ascade Reservoir Fishery Recovery

ıe Cascade Reservoir perch fishery continues to recover. In the past, this perch fishery was often one of e most heavily fished in Idaho. The fishery collapsed in the early 1990's. Efforts to remove northern keminnow via trapping and with the use of rotenone in spawning tributaries have resulted in increased rvival of juvenile perch the past 2 years. The fishery appears on the road to recovery.

Westslope Cutthroat Hybridization

Fish research results documenting natural hybridization between native westslope cutthroat and native rainbow and the impact to native westslope cutthroat from stocking high mountain lakes was published in Transactions of the American Fisheries Society (TAFS 136:624-638). This work will help clarify the role of hybridization between westslope cutthroat trout as well as native and introduced rainbow trout in the ESA extinction risk discussion.

Access Yes!

The *Access Yes!* program is designed to improve hunter and angler access to private land or through privat land to public land by compensating willing landowners. As of June 1, 2007, there are nearly 100 properties enrolled for the current year (553,462 acres of private land). An additional 692,250 acres of public land is now accessible through this private ground for hunting and fishing. The goal is 1 million acres of private land and we are over halfway there. The program is supported by money from donations and the sale of "Super Hunt" drawing applications. This year the National Shooting Sports Foundation contributed to private land access in Idaho through the Hunting Heritage Partnerships grant. These funds allowed Idaho to engage landowners in negotiations for long term access through private to public ground.

Landowner Incentive Program

Idaho was awarded Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) implementation funds this year for the first time. Idaho LIP awards for more than $645,000 were made to three conservation projects for 2007. This technical assistance program continues to work well in conjunction with a successful Farm Bill Coordinato program. LIP Biologists have assisted more than 360 landowners since 2004.

Furbearers and Trapping

A public trapper education program is being developed based upon AFWAs' trapper education model. A pilot class will be conducted in fall 2007. Trapping instructors will be certified using a protocol similar to that for hunter education instructors. A furbearer trapping workshop for Fish and Game employees was conducted in October 2006. Biologists, conservation officers and communication personnel learned "hands-on" trapping techniques during a 3 day in the field workshop. A second employee trapping workshop is scheduled for fall 2007.

Farm Bill Coordination Habitat Program

The Department now has three habitat biologists working in Natural Resource Conservation Service offices on Farm Bill conservation programs, including WHIP, CRP, WRP, CCRP, and EQIP. In 2006-07, 125 landowners received technical assistance to develop and adopt conservation practices for wildlife, fish and rare native plants. Farm Bill Coordinators are providing technical assistance to landowners enrolling into Idaho's CREP program that retires 100,000 acres of irrigated cropland throughout the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer. CREP landowners are planting conservation cover benefiting many wildlife species including sage grouse, pheasants, and pronghorn. Accomplishments over 3 years (2004-present) include; directing 35 WHIP program projects to focus areas benefiting sensitive species, implementing 10 EQIP sensitive species habitat projects, providing technical assistance on 14,000 CRP acres, 11,000 CREP acres, 14 WRP projects, and GRP implementation. In 2007, Farm Bill Coordinators will develop an action plan to help implement CWCS recommendations for listed species.

ge-grouse Conservation

ıo Fish and Game has completed an update to the Department's statewide sage-grouse conservation ı. The "2006 Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho" was produced in cooperation ı state and federal agencies, American Indian tribes, private individuals, industry and conservation ups, and representatives from each of the sage-grouse local working groups in Idaho. The completed ı was signed by Idaho's Governor, each member of the statewide working group that produced the plan, the Idaho leadership for 8 of the state and federal agencies responsible for helping manage sage-grouse heir habitat.

: new Sage-Grouse Plan replaces a 1997 plan and incorporates significant new information. It also vides the overarching scientific and management framework within which completed local working up plans are nested:

: State Plan includes:

- Guidance for local working groups on developing local plans and local projects.
- Background information on sage-grouse and sagebrush ecology.
- A summary of the status of sage-grouse populations and habitat in Idaho.
- Identification, discussion, and a statewide prioritization of 19 threats to sage-grouse and their habitats.
- A toolbox of conservation measures for local working groups to address each of the 19 threats.
- Research, monitoring, and evaluation guidelines and recommendations.

th completion of the updated State Plan, the Department and local working groups are focused on npleting projects to improve sage-grouse populations and habitat. Since 2002, Department staff, in ɔperation with local working groups, has completed over 100 projects at a total cost of over $1 million llars. These projects have included 52 habitat projects, 31 inventory projects, 18 projects to support local ırking groups, and 11 others including educational and disease monitoring efforts.

FG participation in the BLM Learning Network

ɜh and Game Nongame Wildlife Program and Conservation Data Center have been a partner during the st year with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Colorado ıtural Heritage Program (CNHP) in a project called the BLM Learning Network. The Network was veloped to respond to a recognized need by BLM for better documentation of biological resource alysis in Resource Management Plans (RMPs), as demonstrated by frequent litigation regarding special ıtus species. The Network is designed to assist BLM planning teams to incorporate information for ecial status species and other priority species and their habitats into RMPs. The primary role of IDFG ıs to provide a state wildlife agency perspective and be a knowledge resource regarding content and use the respective State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies.

ıe Network was funded by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with matching funds ovided by TNC. The Network was designed for BLM planning teams that were early in the RMP update ocess in spring 2006. Participants include planning specialists, biologists, and ecologists from five anning teams: Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Kremmling, Colorado; John Day, Oregon; Lander, 'yoming; and Malta, Montana. Idaho initially had a planning team in the Network, but their RMP neline ended up not fitting well with the Network schedule.

ıe BLM worked with the Conservancy, the Department, and CNHP (Design Team) to design and cilitate a series of three workshops (October 2006, February and April 2007) based on BLM planning

needs for priority species and habitats for specific RMP planning steps. Instructors for the Learning Network include scientists from the BLM, IDFG, CNHP, Utah State University Extension, and TNC.

The workshops used existing information available through BLM databases, State Natural Heritage Programs, and State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies; as well as with regional assessment developed by or for the BLM (ICBEMP, LANDFIRE, Wyoming Basin Assessment, Great Basin Assessment, etc). The Design Team developed a Resource Management Planning Workbook (Excel spreadsheet based upon TNC's Conservation Action Planning tool) for Network use that utilizes BLM concepts and meets RMP planning needs for biological resources.

The information being developed through the Network provides a systematic way to document the current health of priority species and communities, to identify key indicators of community health or species condition that can be analyzed through multiple alternatives, to develop restoration strategies tied to key indicators of health, and to track those indicators during implementation through an efficient monitoring strategy. The workbook being used by the Network will assist with documentation for the decisions made in the RMP and will provide an administrative record, if needed, for resolving protests or future litigation.

Strategic Planning

The Department is continuing efforts to implement a comprehensive management system. The most noteworthy items include developing an annual "*Direction*" document that steps down from the Strategic Plan; aligning management plans with each other and with the Strategic Plan; improving the annual work planning process; and improving the cost-tracking system.

Adapted from the Ohio DNR, Division of Wildlife, the *Direction* document lays out current issues that will influence the year's work. Secondly, it lists the highlights the Department has accomplished during the last year, and identifies the priorities for the current year. *Direction* is designed to look and feel like *The Compass* (our 15-year Strategic Plan). It has been produced the last two years and is proving to be useful both internally (staff reference it for work planning) and externally (copies were given to all legislators and the Governor's Office). Find *Direction 2007* at http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/about/compass/direction.cfm

Planning staff is refining the recently-approved *2007-2012 Fisheries Management Plan* to build a new management plan prototype. Currently, management plans are disconnected from each other and are loosely connected – at best – to the Strategic Plan. The prototype is to be *driven* by the Strategic Plan (not just reference it), and articulates planning in three dimensions: 1) by statewide objectives; 2) by species with management emphasis; and 3) by geographic unit. Much of the prototype is in tabular form, which seems to facilitate a *thinking-and-planning* exercise rather than a *writing* exercise. The approach is gaining traction rapidly and is being tested in the current planning efforts for mule deer, wolf, and bighorn sheep management plans as well as for the Department's CWCS implementation plan.

Annual work planning between Headquarters and Regional staff has been gaining momentum over the years. However, managers use somewhat different processes and formats. Planning staff is designing a template that will improve consistency across regions and across bureaus. That standardization will enable managers to track progress towards objectives and will establish activity-based costing up front.

There has been a movement to improve the quality and utility of our activity-based costing system (ABC). ABC has been used for six years and was significantly modified two years ago to reduce the number of codes and to align it with our Strategic Plan. Another significant revision of the codes also may be

ɛssary. Developing and implementing a coding system directly linked to the objectives in the Strategic ı is necessary to link the budget to the Plan.

ıd Legacy Project

ɛsponse to growing development pressures reducing habitat and public access, the Idaho Department of ı and Game is undertaking what it has termed a Land Legacy Project. The Project's primary objective is stablish a Trust or Endowment with which to fund habitat conservation and stewardship projects uding conservation easements, land acquisition, enhancements, and other long-term projects benefiting itats. The Project will set its Vision based on a report of "Legacy Places" to be protected in the next 20-years. The report will be developed with input from a broad array of stakeholders.

ɜ Legacy Project depends on funding from two primary sources. The first is negotiating a settlement ɛement on an existing wildlife mitigation debt resulting from federal hydropower development with ınneville Power Administration. The Department is working with its Tribal partners on the BPA eement. The second source of funds is the sale of surplus Department owned lands. The Department ns a number of small in-holdings in designated wilderness that were purchased with Federal Aid to ldlife Restoration funds more than 60 years ago. These parcels were acquired to retire grazing permits he backcountry. That goal was achieved many years ago. These back country ranches no longer ıvide significant wildlife benefit but have great monetary value. The Department is considering options ɛeposition the value of these land assets through a cash exchange with the US Forest Service.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Kansas Report July 2007

Deer Task Force Recommendations Pass Legislature

After nearly two years of work, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' Deer Task Force was successful in getting changes made in deer-related statutes. The Task Force was initially asked by a legislative committee to review the statutes and make recommendations on how to condense and simplify the statues. Kansas' deer regulations had become increasingly complex as the resource and opportunities grew through the 1990s. Special interest groups successfully lobbied the legislature, getting much of deer management into state law, rather than regulation. As interest in Kansas whitetail hunting has grown and demand for nonresident hunting opportunities has increased, deer permitting became a politically and socially charged issue. The Task Force made draft recommendations that would drastically change the deer permitting processes, but members asked the legislature for a year to obtain public input. With the legislature's blessing, the Task Force spent most of 2006 listening to the public through a BLOG, telephone and email contacts, surveys and public meetings held around the state. Then members went back to the drawing board and modified to recommendations to accommodate public input. In January 2007, the Task Force brought final recommendations to the legislature and in April, the Governor signed a bill that will incorporate those recommendations. Some of the biggest changes will include, allowing resident hunters to hunt whitetails statewide with a permit that's valid during any season with proper equipment, eliminating the nonresident transferable permit, setting nonresident permit quotas using a formula that considers demand as well as biological factors, and letting nonresidents designate on application which season they prefer to hunt. Changes will be in place for the 2008 deer seasons.

Hunter Education

The department was successful with legislation that will allow a person who is 16 or older to obtain a one-time deferral of hunter education completion. Individuals will be able to purchase an apprentice hunting license to obtain the deferral and must be accompanied by a licensed adult 18 or older while hunting. The deferral will be valid through the end of the license year in which the apprentice license is purchased. Modeled after a similar program in Texas, this change is an attempt to remove barriers to hunting, letting prospective hunters try hunting before making the time commitment of hunter education. Another change to state law will make hunter education requirements for bowhunters consistent with those for firearms hunting. Currently, hunters 16 and younger may hunt under direct adult supervision without completing hunter education. However, there was still a requirement that hunters 12-13 years old complete bowhunter education before they could bowhunt. This legislation makes requirements consistent.

KDWP Signs Agreement With Irrigation District

Keith Sebelius Reservoir in Norton County has a history of low-water troubles. The Almena Irrigation District holds reservoir storage rights for irrigation but in recent years, water entering the lake has not been enough to maintain water levels and provide service to the irrigation district. In 2007, the reservoir was 17 feet below conservation pool, and

access from the state park for water-based recreation was difficult. In recent years, KDWP has leased the rights for a minimum pool level but in April, the irrigation district signed an agreement for KDWP to purchase storage rights that will maintain a minimum pool necessary for fishing and boating. This purchase should ensure adequate water levels to sustain angler and boater demand, as well as prevent large-scale declines in state park visitation.

Wildlife Disease

In 2006, KDWP tested nearly 3,000 samples from deer for chronic wasting disease with no positive results. In 2005, a white-tailed doe killed by a hunter in Cheyenne County, in far northwestern Kansas, was the first wild deer to test positive in Kansas. The number of samples submitted is the most ever, and samples will be taken through the summer from road-killed deer or those culled due to illness or injury. KDWP also participated in the avian influenza (H5N1) testing effort, submitting samples taken from 760 migratory birds. Biologists took samples from 10 species of ducks, nine species of shorebirds, three species of geese, as well as sandhill cranes. Biologists with federal agencies tested another 1,000 birds in Kansas. No high path H5N1 was detected.

KDWP TV

As internet technology as advanced, it's been a race for wildlife agencies to keep up. Today, there is no doubt that many KDWP constituents get much of their information through internet and, more specifically through the KDWP website. A recent addition to the website should make it even more attractive. KDWP TV is accessed through a sub-menu link on the homepage. By clicking on this link, viewers will be taken to a page that features a variety of short videos on department programs. The streaming videos are several minutes long and download quickly through any high-speed connection. The videos are actually hosted by Google, using the application Brighthouse. Viewer response has been positive.

Hunter Education in Kansas Schools

In an effort to get Hunter Education Program into Kansas school curriculums, KDWP staff completed four professional educator conferences in April. During the conferences, Hunter Education in Our Schools information was formally introduced to school administrators. A recent increase in the number of inquiries from schools having acquired program information indicates educators are busily planning their 2007-2008 curriculum offerings to include some form of Kansas Hunter Education/outdoor-skills. The process of training/certifying professional educators as hunter education instructors will begin this summer. The Hunter Education in Our Schools Advisory Committee will reconvene this summer to identify what needs to be done to keep the momentum going.

Landowner Incentive Program

In 2006, KDWP hired a full-time LIP coordinator to administer the program's federal funds. The LIP funds, $500,000 in 2006, will provide direct technical and financial assistance to landowners who are interested in enhancing habitat that will benefit species in Greatest Conservation Need (GCN). Those species include American avocet, Arkansas darter, whooping crane, black-tailed prairie dog, lesser prairie chicken, ferruginous hawk,

flathead chub, green toad, Topeka shiner, black tern, northern pintail, and Cassin's sparrow. Habitats for these species will include streams and associated riparian areas, playa lakes, and native grasslands. And although LIP funding habitat efforts specifically target GCN species, many other species will benefit, including deer, quail and pheasants. LIP will provide up to 75 percent of project funding and is limited to privately-owned land in the mixed and shortgrass prairie regions. Special consideration will be given to proposed projects in the Red Hills, Cimarron River Sandsage, Arkansas River Sandsage, Smoky Hills and the Playa Lakes areas. Examples for projects eligible include reparian fencing, native grass planting, brush/invasive plant management, alternate livestock water sources, prescribed burning and wetland restoration.

Fishing Regulation Changes for 2007

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission has approved a variety of fishing regulation changes for 2007.

- A handfishing season was established: June 15 – Aug. 31 for flathead catfish on the Kansas River and the Arkansas River (Wichita to the Oklahoma border). A $25 permit is required. While handfishing had not been allowed in Kansas prior to enactment of this approved regulation, several other states do allow the practice. The regulation prohibits the use of hooks, snorkeling or scuba gear, or other man-made devices.
- The Commission approve a Tournament Bass Pass (fee $10) which allows participants in registered bass tournaments held between Sept. 1 and June 15 to keep two fish, to be released after tournament weigh-in, that meet the statewide minimum length limit but are under a special length limit for that reservoir. The regulation also allows anglers in registered tournaments to cull their catch, meaning they can replace a small fish in their livewell with a larger one. To qualify for these tournaments, organizers must provide adequate weigh-in procedures and boats must be equipped with working livewells that contain an electrolyte chemical-water solution.
- A permit is now required of anyone wishing to snag paddlefish during the snagging season, which is opened at designated waters. The $10 permit will include six paddlefish tags, which must be affixed to each fish caught that exceeds the length limit.
- Two categories of trout fishing waters were established for the winter trout season. Waters in one category would require all anglers fishing there, for any fish species, to have a trout permit ($10) during the Oct. 15 – April 15 trout season. Waters in the other category would require a trout permit only for anglers fishing for and harvesting trout.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
REPORT TO WAFWA
July, 2007

LICENSE AUCTIONS

At the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep and the Mule Deer Foundation Conventions, Montana's bighorn sheep was auctioned for $140,000 (up $25,000 from last year); the moose license for $20,000 (up $7,000) and the mule deer license for $15,000 (up $2,000 from last year). At the RMEF Convention, Montana's elk license was auctioned for $27,000 and the mountain goat was auctioned for $9,000. FWP receives 90% of the proceeds for administration of wildlife management efforts and the organization that auctions the license keeps 10% for their wildlife management efforts.

SUPERTAG

Montana's 2007 Legislature authorized the addition of 3 species to the states' SuperTag lottery, bison, antelope and lion were added. Unlimited $5 chances are offered. Revenue from SuperTag sales is earmarked to enhance hunting access and boost FWP enforcement efforts. Sales in 2006, which was the first year of the SuperTag lottery and included moose, sheep, goat, deer and elk totaled $325,000 in revenue for the programs.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Montana again apparently dodged a bullet as over 1,300 samples taken from deer and elk throughout Montana came back negative for CWD. Montana has yet to find chronic wasting disease in a wild ungulate.

NEW ANTLERLESS ELK HUNTING OPPORTUNITY

Montana's 2007 Legislature passed a law that eliminates the requirement that hunters purchase a general elk license prior to purchasing a second antlerless elk license. A conservation license is now the only prerequisite. The law is a significant change as previously nonresidents had to have drawn a nonresident elk license prior to applying for the second elk license. It is hoped that the additional opportunities will help to reduce Montana's elk population in areas that are over objective.

BISON HUNT

Montana's FWP Commission approved the sale of 95 either sex bison licenses and 45 cow/calf licenses for use between November 15th, 2006 and February 15th, 2007. This years' hunt was much different than last years when all those who participated took bison. Thirty-five of 140 public hunters took bison this year. In addition, the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho exercised their rights under the Stephens Treaty of 1869, traveled to Montana and took 26 bison.

WOLF DELISTING

With the announcement in January that the US Fish & Wildlife Service proposes to de-list the northern Rocky Mountains gray wolf, hearings and opportunity for public comment were offered. The proposal to de-list wolves in Montana is based on the Services determination that the northern rocky mountain population has exceeded recovery goals and all the potential threats to it, with the exception of some state regulations in northwestern Wyoming, have been resolved. A final decision is anticipated in the late spring or early summer of 2008.

GRIZZLY DE-LISTING

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has announced the de-listing of the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). With the de-listing comes state management of the bear. A management goal of the GYE is to maintain 500 or more bears. Recovery requirements include maintaining or improving habitat conditions as of 1998 and confirming that grizzly deaths do not exceed sustainable limits. Best estimates are that the population currently exceeds 500 bears and that it is increasing at between 4 and 7% annually. Hunting in Montana would be limited to only a few permits annually, with harvest rates coordinated among Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. A coalition of organizations have formally appealed the decision.

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, WAFWA Summer 2007 Report

Removing Barriers to Participation in Hunting

The Nebraska Legislature passed a law during the 2007 liberalizing several statutes removing barriers to hunting participation. Any person may now hunt wild turkeys regardless of age replacing an age restriction of 12 years old. NGPC may now offer multiple permits and combination licenses for hunting and fishing for marketing and promotional purposes. The Commission is currently supporting legislation creating an apprentice license which was introduced in 2007 and is anticipated to pass during the 2008 legislature.

Hunter/Angler RDR Plan

The Commission is in the process of developing a 20 year Hunter/Angler Recruitment, Development and Retention Plan that will help guide the agency and help to turn the tide on declining hunter/angler participation. The plan is being developed with Commission Staff and partners and encompasses aspects from youth, adult and family participation, barriers, education, marketing and much more.

Outdoor Expo

The Commission recently completed the first state wide outdoors expo in Kearney, Nebraska this spring and was a huge success. The first day of the Expo was specifically developed for regional schools and pulled in over 1,500 kids to take part in 45 activities including shotgun, archery, air gun, wildlife, fishing, boating, and hunting. The Expo was designed for youth and families to participate and learn by doing under the guidance of agency professionals and volunteers. The second day of the Expo was for the general public which rounded out a total visitation of 5,500 for the event.

National Archery in the Schools

The Nebraska NASP continues to grow with over 100 schools officially participating. This spring marked our second annual state tournament, which saw an increase in student participation of nearly 65%. Nebraska will send three schools to the National NASP Tournament to be held in June in Louisville, KY.

Archery Summer Camp

The Commission recently developed a new archery summer camp program with the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Dept. to work with local youth on Fridays to develop archery skills, hunting skills, etc. The program will utilize a new archery range developed with the City of Lincoln for public use. The program will pair parks and recreation summer programs with NGPC personnel and volunteers to facilitate archery workshops.

Hunting and Fishing Permit Fee Increases

2002 was the year of the last increase in hunting and fishing permit fees in Nebraska. This year the Commission used our existing statutory authority and increased license fees

by as much as 20% or more starting in 2008, which is expected to generate $1.8 million. The Commission derives over 90% of its operating revenue from the sale of permits. The increases are necessary because of the costs of doing business are continuing to go up every year. The Commission deals with increases in employee wages, the rising costs of health benefits, higher prices for fuel, construction costs and utilities. Even though the Commission has been taking internal measures to cut costs, we still have experienced a $1.1 million annual increase in these areas.

Prioritization of the Strategic Plan

The increasing challenge for the NGPC will be ability to do all the things we are being charged with and undertaking new and expanded programs while realizing that additional staffing will very likely not be a reality. With this realization NGPC has set out on a process of prioritization of programs and projects to identify areas where efforts, time and resources can be reduced so that proper emphasis can be given to the new and other more immediate and important focuses. As with many agencies, we have in some cases been doing business the same way for over thirty years and it is justified by the fact that we have "always done it that way". There are undoubtedly activities, programs and services that should be restructured or eliminated given the current state of operational and budgetary reality that would not negatively impact accomplishing the higher priority goals and objectives of the agency. This prioritization and revamping of how the agency and divisions do business is more necessary than ever if we are to position ourselves effectively for getting the job done for our wildlife and natural resources into the future with finite personnel and funds.

Aquatic Habitat Program

Since its inception in 1997, the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Program has rehabilitated 43 lakes and reservoirs from a Legislatively approved plan listing 53 sites. Accomplishments include the removal of 4.4 million tons of oxygen robbing sediment and the addition of 13.7 miles of fish producing shorelines. Improvements have been calculated to add up to 87 years to the recreational life of many of these waters. Costs of rehabilitation to date have exceeded $26 million statewide. Funding to meet these costs has originated from over 70 sources with Sport Fish Restoration, the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Stamp and EPA 319 grants providing 80%.

New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement

A current project to develop a new joint State radio communications system would have substantial impact on our ability to communicate and coordinate with other State law enforcement agencies. Currently, there are several State agency radio systems that are old and separate – ours, the State Patrol, Department of Roads, Corrections, etc. The new system will tie us all together and provide some communications enhancements such as wireless data that will greatly improve our operational capabilities. Even with the new system still in development we have realized an initial additional benefit as part of the joint dispatch concept of the system consolidation - a new joint dispatch agreement with the Nebraska State Patrol gives our officers another dispatch and backup communications option 24/7.

Cost Savings Initiatives

Due to the budget challenges mentioned earlier, and the mandatory cuts in division budgets several Divisions have initiated some efforts to reduce expenses including:

- Holding vacancies unfilled for the indefinite future.
- Mandating a reduction of 15% in mileage driven by officers from January through March of 2007 to save fuel funds for the busier spring and summer periods.
- Delayed replacement of equipment such as boats and other high dollar items.
- Review of equipment inventory to prioritize issuance of equipment and eliminate marginally effective and less necessary equipment items.
- Mandating planned patrol tactics and prioritization of complaint responses and other activities that can be combined and planned more efficiently.

Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan

The Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan (State Wildlife Action Plan) identified 40 biologically unique landscapes (BUL's) where increased conservation and collaboration is needed to conserve the state's biological diversity. Nebraska's conservation and agricultural communities are implementing the Natural Legacy Plan by starting Natural Legacy Flagship Initiatives in selected BUL's. Flagship Initiatives are community-based enterprises that use a partnership approach to implement conservation actions on private and public lands, address education needs and institute monitoring and inventory within each selected landscape. To date, five Legacy Flagship Initiatives have been started in six biologically unique landscapes (Verdigre-Bazile Watershed BUL, Central Loess Hills BUL, Loess Canyons BUL, Middle Niobrara River BUL and the Wildcat Hills and Wildcat Hills South BUL's). Coordinating biologists have been hired through partner organizations to oversee and coordinate Legacy Flagship Initiatives. Funding for the positions and implementation of conservation actions are supported through grants from the State Wildlife Grants program, Landowner Incentive Program, Nebraska Environmental Trust (state lottery) and other sources.

Platte River Recovery Implementation Program

The States of Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming and the U.S. Department of the Interior all signed an Agreement to rehabilitate the Platte River in Nebraska. The program has as one of it's goals to acquire 10,000 acres of habitat for Whooping Cranes, Least Terns and Piping Plovers. Other goals include increased river flows and the conduction of research projects for the enhancement and adaptive management of the river which means millions of dollars spent annually to help recover the target species and control invasive species.

Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee

A new approach to recovering the Missouri River has been instituted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A large stakeholder group of states, tribes and interested parties is attempting to write a charter and start the collaborative decision process for providing recommendations to the federal government on activities affecting the threatened and endangered species and the ecosystem of the Missouri River.

Big Horn Sheep Reintroduction

The Commission has cooperated with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks on a capture, transport, and relocate project involving Bighorn Sheep. The panhandle of Nebraska historically supported populations of Bighorn Sheep and it is a great opportunity to work with the Montana Department in restoring this species to its native range. The project is incredibly popular with our staff and Nebraska's citizens and receives a great amount of media coverage. The Commission supports this effort with numerous monetary donations from both local and national conservation organizations and the sale of a lottery permit to hunt them.

State of Wildlife

After good precipitation in 2005 and 2006 significantly improved habitat conditions in the Mojave and Great Basin ecosystem have resulted. Wetlands were improved, benefiting continental duck populations and tundra swans. On a more sobering note, the drought cycle appears to be back in 2007 with less than 50% of normal precipitation across much of the state bringing with it an increased chance for summer wildfires. Between the impacts of the 2005 and 2006 fires, it is estimated that Nevada lost 62 greater sage-grouse leks and habitat that was supporting close to 4,000 sage grouse; winter range that supported 400-500 wintering mule deer and more than 70% of crucial migration habitat that supported an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 mule deer; and habitat that supported 20 to 30 bighorn sheep. Another year of wildfires of the magnitude of last years would further devastate the already greatly impacted mule deer and sage-grouse populations.

The Game Division completed a management plan to guide the conservation of mule deer herds in Nevada and is now in the process of developing tiered guidance prescriptions for each of the 29 Hunt Management Areas in the state. The Game Division has also completed a comprehensive upland species management plan that identifies management actions and opportunities statewide. Black bears are, at present, an un-hunted big game species in Nevada. The black bear population shows high fecundity and juvenile mortality, and is confined to the far western portion of the state. Bears represent a significant and growing nuisance and human safety issue and the Division is struggling with maintaining a comprehensive management program.

The ongoing drought in the Colorado River system has resulted in a dramatic decline in water levels in Lake Mead. At the present time water levels are over 100 ft below the spillway with further declines projected. Impacts to infrastructure have required the movement of marinas, the lengthening of boat ramps and the lowering of water intakes for municipal water suppliers. Our Lake Mead Hatchery receives water from one of these municipal suppliers and is currently unable to raise trout during the summer months due to elevated temperatures. In January, 2007, the first reports of invasive quagga mussels were received from a marina in Lake Mead's Boulder Basin. In response to this discovery a thorough examination was made of our Lake Mead Hatchery and quagga mussels were found to be present. Stocking operations were suspended until the situation was evaluated, a risk assessment made and protocols developed to reduce the likely hood of spreading quagga mussels to other waters. The continued plight of the Devil's Hole Pupfish has received national attention. Numbers of this unique species has declined to 38 in its natural habitat. The loss of the two refugium populations has elevated concerns. The USFWS, the National Park Service and the Department of Wildlife have assembled considerable resources to address this issue.

Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan is being implemented by targeting conservation actions to support species of greatest conservation need and the key habitats on which they depend. The Diversity Division developed and implemented Nevada's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) to provide financial and technical support to landowners desiring to enhance sensitive wildlife. There are currently four projects being implemented statewide.

Nevada continues to take proactive measures in order to address an ongoing recruitment and retention problem in the Game Warden ranks. We recently completed a long process with State Personnel to allow for applicants with a criminal justice degree in addition to a biology degree. The Law Enforcement Division formulated a strategy for community relations activities incorporating messaging, aggressive media outreach and community participation in crime prevention. These efforts resulted in generous positive publicity, improved stakeholder participation and better positioning within the agency.

The Conservation Education Division continues to support the agency's information and education needs across a variety of spectrums. Of special note this year, the agency's marketing team has stepped up outreach efforts to license agents – all agents are now provided with counter informational cards twice a year, to promote the upland game hunting season in the fall and to encourage fishing in the spring. The agency's online Unified Volunteer Data Base is now active,

which allows volunteers and volunteer coordinators to track volunteer time on line via the internet, report it to appropriate state grants, and report out volunteer time in a timely manner. The agency's Interactive Internet Mapping website went live, with layers of resource information available to the public through an online geographic information system website.

Wildfire related habitat restoration projects by the Habitat Division in FY07 were closely coordinated with BLM efforts and private landowners to address critical habitat needs. The Departments input allowed efforts to focus on restoration of critical habitats and the purchase of an additional 40,000 acres of seed. Seed application was funded by private donations sought in a cooperative effort with sportsmen's groups, private industry and Nevada's citizens. NDOW's technical guidance program works as a cooperating agency on federal land agency planning and project activities. Technical guidance staff will review more than 400 projects and planning activities in FY 2007; providing critical input to reduce impacts and to benefit wildlife and habitat. Land use planning, mining, energy exploration, wilderness management, wildfire restoration, grazing, and wild horse management continue to be major concerns. Division staff continue to collaborate with sportsmen's groups, federal agencies, and volunteers on a variety of water development activities. Emphasis has been placed on maintenance of existing developments that are utilized by wildlife. New developments are planned and implemented where necessary to mitigate human impacts to habitats.

Governor

Governor Jim Gibbons took the helm on Jan. 1, 2007 and went right into a biennial Legislative Session. The new Governor is an avid sportsman and former Congressman from Nevada.

Commission

Chris MacKenzie currently serves as commission chair. Clint Bentley is vice chair of the commission. The three final nominees for director submitted to Governor Gibbons were Kenneth E. Mayer, of Sacramento, Calif., a Branch Chief for the California Department of Fish and Game, San Stiver, a former Staff Biologist with NDOW from Prescott Arizona, and Bruce Crawford, of Olympia Wash., a former assistant director at Washington Fish and Wildlife. The Governor choose Ken Mayer who reported to work on February 8, 2007.

Two new commissioners will be appointed in July of 2007 as Chris MacKenzie and Mike Riordan's terms will be up and both have not expressed an interest in being re-appointed to the Board.

Regulations

New rules adopted or amended included:

Amendments and adoption of regulations regarding trapping; regulation to establish big game season dates, mountain lion harvest objectives, raptor and falconry quotas and dates for Heritage Tag seasons and quotas; a regulation to add two species of mollusks to the prohibited species list; amendments to prohibit mooring or anchoring of vessels at certain locations at Lake Tahoe; and big game quota setting.

Petitions

Two petitions were presented to the Commission. One on a requirement for a set back to trapping adjacent to certain hiking trails (pending) and one to establish a youth upland hunting season (accepted) .

Policy

Nothing new to report.

Committees

The commission enacted a new committee, the Tag Application and Allocation Committee, which will be reviewing processes and issues associated with the allocation of big game tags in the state. In addition, the Commission continues to make efficient use of committees, with individual members assigned by the chairman to the following active committees: heritage committee, legislative committee, regulations and procedures committee, wildlife damage management committee, Overton Wildlife Management Area Committee, and the Outfitters, Guides, Regulations and Procedures Committee.

Fiscal

A Legislative Counsel Bureau audit was reviewed by the Commission and the Department has implemented a corrective action plan. The Department's budget was approved, largely in tact for FY 08 and 09.

Appeals

The Commission heard three appeals, one from a gentleman on a landowner elk tag and one on a harvest questionnaire issue which caused a one year suspension of big game hunting privileges. The Commission upheld the agency action on both appeals. In addition, the first appeal of an elk depredation assessment was heard in front of an Elk Damage Compensation panel made up of three local members. The recommendation, which must be approved by the Commission, was for $10,000 for damage to alfalfa and potatoes.

Legislation

The Commission continued working on issues for the 2007 session of the Nevada State Legislature including the following:

AB13, Introduced on: Jan 18, 2007 By: Allen
Revises provisions governing the use of watercraft (increases age requirement to 13 for PFD use). Billed passed with NDOW support.

AB105, Introduced on: Feb 14, 2007 By: Stewart , Settelmeyer , Beers , Goicoechea , etal.
Provides certain benefits (reduced license fee) to members of the Nevada National Guard and their families relating to licenses, tags or permits for fishing, hunting or trapping. Billed failed

AB111, Introduced on: Feb 15, 2007 By: Claborn
Revises provisions (one license per lifetime) governing the use of tags to hunt bighorn sheep or antlered bull elk. Bill failed to pass out of committee.

AB176, Introduced on: Feb 26, 2007 By: Allen , Beers , Mabey , Kirkpatrick , Atkinson , etal.
Provides for the automatic transfer of ownership of certain vehicles and motorboats to the designated beneficiary on the death of the owner. Bill passed.

AB227, Introduced on: Mar 01, 2007 By: Carpenter , Mabey , Claborn , Goedhart , etal.
Revises the provisions governing the posting of warnings against trespassing. Bill passed.

AB259, Introduced on: Mar 07, 2007 By: Claborn
Revises provisions governing wildlife. Classified mountain lion as unprotected, renames NDOW to Dept. of Fish & Game, etc. Bill failed.

AB338, Introduced on: Mar 15, 2007 By: Claborn, Koivisto, Anderson, Atkinson, Beers, etal.
Makes various changes relating to wildlife. This bill would codify wildlife convictions, require sealing all fur bearers, and prohibit Commission from creating certain regulations. Bill failed to pass out of committee.

AB343, Introduced on: Mar 15, 2007 By: Gansert , Grady , Mabey , Carpenter , Goedhart , etal.
Revises provisions governing hunting and fishing licenses. Decreases time a 65 year old must reside in State for reduced fee licenses. Bill failed.

AB426, Introduced on: Mar 19, 2007 By: Goedhart , Beers , Gansert , Mabey , Marvel , etal.
Prohibits the Board of Wildlife Commissioners from establishing a policy or adopting a regulation to preserve, protect, manage or restore wildlife raised for human consumption. Bill failed to pass out of committee.

AB573, Introduced on: Mar 26, 2007 By: Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining
Revises certain provisions governing wildlife. Take a kid fishing, 1 day license, and reduced fee antlerless elk. Bill passed as supported by NDOW.

SB95. Introduced on: Feb 15, 2007 By: Commerce and Labor
Revises provisions governing public utilities. Original bill would have exempted renewable energy facilities from state permitting process. Bill passed with NDOW amendment.

SB189, Introduced on: Mar 01, 2007 By: Finance
Makes an appropriation to the Department of Wildlife for the implementation of sagebrush habitat projects. Bill passed with NDOW support.

SB306, Introduced on: Mar 19, 2007 By: Washington
Regulates the operation of a motorboat equipped with an engine cut-off switch. Bill passed with NDOW support.

SB366, Introduced on: Mar 19, 2007 By: Beers

Limits the authority of the Department of Wildlife over Australian red claw crayfish raised for sale as food for human consumption. (BDR 45-1328) This bill originally sought to limit NDOW's authority over a variety of animals produced for human consumption. Bill failed.

SB434, Introduced on: Mar 20, 2007 By: Natural Resources

Revises provisions governing off-highway vehicles.

NDOW efforts: Staff have been monitoring progress as DMV has testified they are not interested in administering this program. DMV estimates titling and registration start up costs of about $3.25 million. NDOW is concerned that no enforcement provisions or funding are provided. NDOW's estimate of start up costs is closer to $5 million and includes enforcement and education provisions. Bill failed.

SB514, Introduced on: Mar 26, 2007 By: Government Affairs

Establishes Monte Cristo State Park in Esmeralda County, Nevada. (BDR 35-401)

NDOW efforts: Game staff is concerned that this park could reduce access for hunting, particularly bighorn sheep. Bill failed.

AB 566 Makes appropriation to Department of Wildlife for State Wildlife Grants Program.

NDOW efforts: Diversity Bureau and several Conservation organizations sought and gained supporters for this Bill. Conservation Education and Diversity co-sponsored informational breakfast for legislators on the benefits of State Wildlife Grants. Bill failed.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris MacKenzie, Chairman
June 4, 2007

New Mexico State Game Commission
WAFWA Significant Events Report
January - June 2007

State Game Commission News

- **Commission Election and Appointments**

In January 2007, the State Game Commission elected Alfredo Montoya of Alcalde, New Mexico, to succeed Leo Sims as chairman. Mr. Montoya is a rancher, farmer, sportsman and educator who recently completed a 10-year term as a Rio Arriba County Commissioner. He has been Director of Financial Aid for Northern New Mexico Community College for 19 years and has been a commission member since 2003. Former chairman Sims' term on the Commission continues until December 2009. Tom Arvas of Albuquerque was re-elected as vice-chairman.

Governor Richardson appointed Jim McClintic, an Albuquerque developer, to serve a 4-year term. He succeeds Peter Pino of Zia Pueblo whose term expired in December 2006. Mr. McClintic is an avid hunter and angler and a lifetime member of New Mexico Trout who has served on the Economic Development Commission and the Albuquerque Municipal Development Sustainable Enhancement Team.

In March 2007, Governor Richardson appointed conservationist Sandy Buffet to replace David Henderson whose term had expired. Ms. Buffet is a graduate of Colorado College and holds a masters degree in International Economic Development from American University's School of International Service in Washington, DC. She has served as a project coordinator with the National Wildlife Federation and as a research consultant with the World Resources Institute.

Wildlife Management

- **New Trophy Penalties Applied to Poachers**

A Hobbs, New Mexico man accused of poaching 2 trophy mule deer faces possible criminal penalties of $1,600 and up to 6 months in jail, and civil penalties of up to $10,000 under new trophy penalties passed during the 2006 legislative session and adopted by the State Game Commission. One set of antlers found in the accused poacher's possession measured 202 3/8 inches under Safari Club International's (SCI) scoring system. Under New Mexico law, civil penalties for poaching a deer that measures 200 or more inches under the SCI system can be as high as $10,000. Two men, apprehended while posing for photographs with their trophy,

have been charged with hunting without a license and illegal possession of a Barbary sheep. They face maximum penalties of $100 for hunting without a license and up to 6 months in jail. Depending upon the outcome of court proceedings, the Department may pursue civil penalties as high as $6,000 to recover the state's loss of a trophy Barbary sheep.

- **Hunter Harvest Reporting Program a Success**

The New Mexico Hunter-Trapper Reporting System requires licensed deer and elk hunters to report the results of their hunts by February 15 annually or prior to applying for earlier special hunt drawings for oryx or spring turkey. Furbearer hunters and trappers are required to report their harvest results by March 31 annually. Specified deer, elk, and trapping licensees are required to report whether they hunted or not. Reports may be submitted on a designated Department website or through a toll free telephone number. Those who report online are eligible for special incentive hunt drawings. License buyers who do not report will not be allowed to draw licenses in the following season's special hunt drawings. Persons who miss the reporting deadline may still participate in the drawings if they submit a report and pay a late fee. Over 81% of 2006 season deer and elk season hunters filed their harvest reports on time. Over 98% of 15,000 applicants for 2007 oryx and spring turkey hunts submitted their harvest reports on time. This result accrued from a strong outreach initiative to make hunters aware of the new reporting requirement and the availability of a convenient reporting process. The harvest data thus acquired has to date been used to adjust the recommended number of 2007 season elk draw licenses and private land authorizations to be made available in game management units so as to coincide with attainment of sustainable harvest objectives.

Species Conservation and Recovery

- **Jaguar MOU and Conservation Framework Update Underway**

In February 2007, the Arizona Game and Fish Department and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish revised the 1997 Memorandum of Agreement under which they jointly convened the Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), previously an active participant in the JAGCT, has become the first signatory cooperator to the new MOU and other agencies have been invited to become cooperators. Among the aspects of jaguar conservation addressed in the MOU are: (1) maintaining an adequate and appropriate conservation program for the jaguar that is consistent with their respective state authorities, mission, and obligations under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA); (2) implementing voluntary conservation, with an emphasis on local stakeholder participation in public forums, as opposed to regulatory action; (3) protecting jaguars against illegal take and enacting state penalties commensurate with federal penalties under ESA for illegal take; (4) implementing education and outreach as a means of effecting jaguar conservation; and (5) ensuring that jaguars are able to roam back and forth across the U.S. – Mexico border and within Arizona and New Mexico when they are present there. The JAGCT anticipates submitting its new

Conservation Assessment and Framework for the Jaguar in Arizona, New Mexico, and Northern Mexico to the USFWS in July 2007 for acceptance as the states' conservation plan under Section 6 of the ESA. The jaguar is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Pupfish Agreement Updated**

In January 2007, the U.S. Army, Holloman Air Force Base, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish executed an updated version of the Cooperative Agreement for Protection and Maintenance of the White Sands Pupfish. The pupfish is listed as threatened under the New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act. The original agreement, signed in 1994, has been instrumental in preserving White Sands pupfish populations and protecting and enhancing habitat on federally managed lands. The White Sands pupfish is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery**

During its March 2007 meeting, the State Game Commission conducted a 2-hour listening session to hear concerns and suggestions regarding the ongoing Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project. The session opened with Commission Chair Montoya's reading of a statement from Governor Richardson affirming his support for the effective recovery of Mexican wolves in the Southwest and encouraging all interests to work together to find ways for indigenous wildlife species and our ranching communities to coexist. In February 2007, Catron County passed an ordinance regarding human responses to Mexican wolves; provisions of the ordinance are of questionable legality under federal law and state statute. In May 2007, more than 2 dozen conservation groups asked the USFWS to temporarily suspend its policy of permanently removing wolves implicated in 3 depredations until there are at least 100 wolves, including 18 breeding pairs, in the wild. It is estimated that there are currently 57 wolves in Arizona and New Mexico. The USFWS has announced its plans to conduct scoping meetings under the National Environmental Policy Act relative to changing the final rule that established the nonessential experimental population of the Mexican gray wolf in Arizona and New Mexico. The Mexican gray wolf is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery**

In January 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a draft revised recovery plan for the Rio Grande silvery minnow for peer and public review. Once widespread throughout the Rio Grande and Pecos Rivers, the species is now found only in the New Mexico reach of the Rio Grande from Cochiti Dam to Elephant Butte Reservoir. The original Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery Plan was finalized in 1999. The draft revised recovery plan differs from the original by including: (1) a Tribal Perspectives document prepared by representatives of 6 Rio Grande Pueblos; (2) updated objectives and measurable criteria for downlisting and

delisting; and (3) identification of how the plan's recovery criteria and recovery actions address the 5 listing factors and specific threats to the species. Concurrently, the Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative continues its efforts to restore riparian habitat along a stretch of the Rio Grande that passes through Albuquerque. The Rio Grande silvery minnow is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Recovery Plan Work Recognized**

In February 2007, Stephanie Carman, the Department's Aquatic Species Recovery Coordinator, was named Professional of the Year by the Arizona/New Mexico Chapter of the American Fisheries Society for her "outstanding contributions toward conservation of native fishes and forging of effective and inclusive relationships with those committed to protecting the heritage of the American Southwest." In nominating Ms. Carman her supervisor cited the professionalism, tenacity, and dedication of her work developing recovery plans for the Zuni bluehead sucker; roundtail, headwater, and Gila chubs; and 4 invertebrate species. These fish are all identified as species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Gila Trout Streams Opened**

Due to successful interagency recovery efforts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on August 17, 2006, downlisted the Gila trout's status from endangered to threatened. The Department subsequently collaborated with the Service to develop proposals for Gila trout fishing opportunities (first time since 1966) and associated regulations in areas that will not compromise its continued recovery. During its March 28, 2007 meeting, the State Game Commission voted unanimously to allow limited angling for Gila trout in Black Canyon and Iron creeks and specified catch and release only and a 2-fish limit for these streams, respectively. In addition, the Commission specified the use of artificial lures and barbless hooks and that anglers fishing these waters obtain a free Gila trout authorization to facilitate monitoring. The Gila trout is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Energy Development Guidelines Drafted**

In response to a fall 2006 request from Governor Richardson, the Department has drafted a document entitled Oil and Gas Development Guidelines: Protecting New Mexico's Wildlife Habitat and Wildlife. The guidelines are intended to be broadly useful to inform the conduct of oil and gas development activities statewide so as to conserve and restore wildlife habitat and promote the indirect benefits of improved air and water quality. The Guidelines incorporate relevant elements of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico, the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Health Plan, and the State Water Plan and were developed through interactions with the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, the Environment Department, the State Land Office, the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and other

stakeholders. A draft of the guidelines is currently available for public review and comment under the conservation tab on the Department's website (http://wildlife.state.nm.us/) and the document is expected to be finalized by early August 2007.

- **Gray Vireo Recovery Plan Adopted**

During its May 3, 2007 meeting, the State Game Commission adopted the Department's proposed plan for recovery of the gray vireo. Developed in compliance with New Mexico's Wildlife Conservation Act and with the involvement of interested individuals and agencies, the plan describes the status and conservation needs of the species and identifies actions that will protect and enhance native populations thereof. The gray vireo is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project Authorized**

During its March 2007 meeting, the State Game Commission approved the initial phases of a 10 to 15 year project to restore pure-strain native Rio Grande Cutthroat trout to 125 miles of streams and 20 lakes within the species' historic range in northern New Mexico. Scheduled to begin in the summer and fall of 2007, the Rio Costilla Restoration Project will require incremental removal of non-native trout through increased angling pressure, electroshocking, salvage bag limits, and, if necessary, treatment with short-lived chemicals. Restoration partners include the Department of Game and Fish, the New Mexico Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the U. S. Forest Service, and private landowners adjacent to the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest. The Rio Grande cutthroat trout is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

Disease and Health Considerations

- **Chronic Wasting Disease**

During the 2006 – 2007 hunting season only 1 hunter-harvested deer tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). The deer was taken in the Sacramento Mountains west of Pinon, New Mexico, and near the town of Timberon where other deer with CWD have been detected. The boundaries within which special CWD control rules apply will therefore remain unchanged for the 2007 – 2008 hunting season. To date, 20 animals (18 deer, 2 elk) with CWD have been detected since the first instance in 2002. Hunter participation in CWD surveillance declined during the 2006 – 2007 hunting season. CWD has yet to be detected in any of New Mexico's game parks.

- **Avian Influenza**

The Department reached its 2006 - 2007 goal of sampling 200 snow geese, 200 sandhill cranes and 100 pintail ducks for avian influenza. The geese and cranes were hunter harvested and most of the ducks were captured alive, tested, and released. Department staff also tested water and sampled other ducks opportunistically. Some low pathogen combinations of influenza were found, but the deadly H5N1 virus was not detected.

- **Tularemia**

Parts of New Mexico are experiencing an unusually high incidence of tularemia. The disease is most common among rabbits but several cases of infected pets have been documented.

- **Winter-killed Antelope**

Some areas of New Mexico received heavy snowfall during the winter of 2006 – 2007 and a number of antelope mortality events were reported. The extent to which snow and winter weather affected antelope populations is not yet known.

- **Loco Elk**

Locoweed (Astragalus spp.) began to grow in much of New Mexico in spring 2007 before grasses and other forbs. Though always abundant in the northeastern quadrant of the state, early emergence has made locoweed particularly available and attractive to elk this year. Numerous elk have displayed aberrant behavior and have been found to have locoweed in their rumens and lesions in brain tissue consistent with locoweed poisoning. It is unusual to observe such occurrences in New Mexico elk populations.

- **Canine Distemper and Rabies**

Canine distemper has been observed among New Mexico's gray foxes in 2007 and is not unusual. However, skunk rabies has been moving westward across Texas among gray foxes and animal health authorities in New Mexico are concerned that rabies could thereby be introduced into New Mexico's gray fox population.

Legislative Initiatives

- **Valle Vidal Protection Act Signed**

On December 12, 2006, President Bush signed the Valle Vidal Protection Act of 2005, successfully ending a 3-year effort to ban oil, natural gas, and other mineral development on the 102,000-acre National Forest parcel. The property, often referred to by supporters as "the Yellowstone of New Mexico," is highly valued by hunters, fishermen, and other conservationists as home to the state's largest elk herd and the native Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Carried by U.S. Representative Tom Udall, D-NM, the bill ultimately enjoyed the

support of the entire New Mexico congressional delegation. Public awareness (including sportsmen) of this important event carried into early 2007.

- **Department Initiatives for the 2007 State Legislative Session**

The Department prepared 10 bills representing 7 initiatives for consideration during the 2007 Legislature. Five bills representing 4 initiatives were passed by both chambers and signed by Governor Richardson:

- Provisions for new Governor's hunting and fishing authorizations to be used in conjunction with special events to raise money for fish and wildlife conservation.
- Game Commission authority to issue "Grand Slam" hunting authorization packages (elk, deer, oryx, ibex, and pronghorn) for auction to raise funds for big game conservation and management. Sale of the packages is anticipated to generate as much as $250,000 annually.
- Provisions for additional combination hunting and fishing licenses that will eliminate concerns of those who avoid buying general hunting and fishing licenses prior to completion of the annual special drawing.
- Provision that the fee for any issuance of a second deer license is consistent with the statutory deer license fee.

Three of our legislative initiatives were unsuccessful:

- A statutory amendment to acquire authority for non-regulatory activities applicable to all New Mexico wildlife species, especially those actions pertaining to habitat management and information and outreach regarding species that are not hunted, fished, trapped, or currently subject to special classification.
- Enhancing controls on nongame fish taking methods to protect game fish.
- Expanded misdemeanor penalty assessment to simplify processes for certain wildlife citations to be reconciled by violators.

The Land, Wildlife, and Clean Energy Act, a Governor's initiative to provide alternative state funding sources that was primarily coordinated by the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, failed to pass in either chamber.

- **Federation Promotes Federal Lands Legislation**

The New Mexico Wildlife Federation is promoting support for an amendment to the federal budget act to prohibit the sale of public lands as a strategy for balancing federal budgets. Planned for introduction by New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman the bill is a response to public concerns with a narrowly defeated 2005 amendment to the federal budget bill for divestiture of public lands and with 2007 and 2008 presidential budget proposals to sell $1 billion worth of lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to reduce budget deficits. The Federation is concerned that New Mexico hunters, 95% of whom report using public lands, will lose public hunting opportunity.

Special Funding

- **Record Bighorn Sheep Auction**

During the annual auction conducted by the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep an authorization to hunt bighorn sheep generated a record $210,000 for New Mexico's bighorn restoration program. The authorization actually sold twice. The first bidder bought the authorization for $105,000 and donated it back to the Department. When offered again on the auction block it sold again to a different bidder for an additional $105,000. Last year's authorization brought $185,000 at auction. The authorization allows the hunter to choose among 5 available hunting opportunities for either desert or Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep on public or private lands in New Mexico. This auction has raised almost $1.9 million since it began in 1990, with 90% of the proceeds going to the Department for bighorn research, management, and habitat improvement. The Rocky Mountain and desert bighorn sheep are identified as species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Mule Deer Habitat Enhancement Auction and Raffle**

In January 2007, a hunter paid $50,000 at an auction held during the Mule Deer Foundation's annual convention for an opportunity to hunt mule deer anywhere in New Mexico for 5 months. Other hunters are currently purchasing as many $20 tickets as they wish to participate in the raffle to win the 4th annual New Mexico Lieutenant Governor's Statewide Mule Deer Lottery License. The winner will receive 1 mule deer permit that is valid anywhere in the state from September 1, 2007 through January 31, 2008. The lottery has historically raised about $40,000 per year. Proceeds are earmarked for deer habitat management, research, water developments, and law enforcement. The mule deer is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

Public Outreach

- **Annual Prairie Chicken Festival Successful Again**

New Mexico's 6th Annual High Plains Prairie Chicken Festival was held April 13-15, 2007. Over 100 participants and volunteers converged on Milnesand, New Mexico to observe and photograph lesser prairie chicken mating rituals, birdwatch with some of the best birders in the state, talk with ranchers and biologists working to conserve prairie chickens, learn about the Southern Great Plains ecosystem, and otherwise enjoy good food and western hospitality. The event is made possible through the collaborative efforts of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, The Nature Conservancy, the Grasslans Charitable Foundation, the

Community of Milnesand, and a number of other enthusiastic supporters. A Glenwood New Mexico artist and an 11-year-old 5th grader from Los Lunas, New Mexico won $300 and $50, respectively, in the associated annual poster contest. The lesser prairie chicken is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Poaching Awareness Trailer**

The Department has added a 20-foot trailer to its repertoire of outreach strategies to increase public awareness about the negative impacts of poaching on New Mexico's wildlife and economy. Conservation officers will tow the trailer, illustrated externally with large depictions of wildlife in a manner similar to the advertisements seen on public transportation vehicles, to county fairs, outdoor shows, and other events to promote public use of our Operation Game Thief poaching tips hotline. Taxidermy mounts of illegally taken wildlife and examples of the equipment used illegally by poachers are displayed within the trailer.

- **Bear Awareness Initiative**

In April and May the Department issued news releases to newspapers throughout the state to make people aware that New Mexico's black bears were emerging from hibernation and searching for food. Readers were advised that some human-bear encounters had already occurred in mid-March and that they should inspect their properties and remove anything that might attract a hungry bear. In addition, the articles offered advice on how to behave when encountering a bear and encouraged people to report bear sightings to their local conservation officer. This annual outreach initiative is intended to protect people, their property, and bears. The black bear is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Cougar Awareness Initiative**

In early February 2007, the Department issued news releases in northern New Mexico cautioning that heavy snowfall had driven deer and elk to lower elevation wintering habitats where the presence of residential development increased the potential for human encounters with the cougars that follow and prey upon these animals. The outreach effort was initiated in response to receiving numerous reports of cougar sightings near residential areas since Christmas. Readers were provided precautions pertaining to managing children, property, livestock, and pets so as to preclude encounters and offered advice on appropriate behavior should an encounter occur. In mid-May, conservation officers also posted "Cougar Country" informational signs to caution users along a popular hiking and biking trail in the mountains above Santa Fe after cougar tracks had been verified in association with a deer carcass in the area.

Year-round Excellent Services

- **Open Gate Access Program**

Since April 2006, all New Mexico hunters, trappers, and anglers, except those under 18 years of age, 70 years and older, or those who are resident 100% disabled veterans, have been required to purchase an annual $4 Habitat Management and Access Validation with their hunting or fishing licenses. Authorized by the 2005 New Mexico Legislature, the law requires that proceeds from the sale of the validations be used to establish recurring funding for habitat improvements statewide, including maintenance of State Game Commission properties. One dollar of each validation is allocated to fund the Open Gate Program for the lease of private lands for public hunting, fishing, trapping, or other recreational endeavors and to acquire rights-of way through private holdings to access otherwise isolated public lands. During fiscal year 2007, 11 private properties, comprising over 26,500 acres, were leased for public access for dove, quail, waterfowl, or deer hunting or some combination thereof. Outreach materials are in development to familiarize landowners with the program and landlocked public lands of high interest are being targeted for lease of access across surrounding private lands. An Open Gate Program coordinator was hired in January 2007.

- **Hunter Education Weekend a Solid Hit**

Nearly 800 students in more than 40 New Mexico communities were certified as safe, ethical, and responsible hunters during the Department's first Hunter Education Weekend held March 10-11, 2007. During this 1 weekend, over 500 volunteer instructors certified almost 25% as many students as met the standards during all of last year. The objective of Hunter Education Weekend was to certify as many students as possible before the April 7 deadline for deer, elk, antelope, and other big-game hunts. In New Mexico, hunters under the age of 18 years must meet hunter education requirements to be eligible to participate in hunt drawings or to purchase any type of firearm hunting license. New Mexico's Hunter Education Training Course has certified more than 156,000 students since the training requirement was instituted in 1976.

- **Hunters Prefer On-line Hunt Applications**

More than 128,000 New Mexico big-game hunters took advantage of the Department's online hunt application system for 2007 – 2008 hunting season opportunities. About 71% of the nearly 181,000 applications were submitted online. Hunters who use the online application process pay a $6 fee with a credit card at the time of application and are charged for the license only if they are successful in the drawing. Those who use paper applications must submit the entire license fee with their application and will receive a refund check if they are unsuccessful.

Litigation

- **Black-tailed Prairie Dog Suit Filed**

In February 2007, conservation groups filed a federal lawsuit challenging the Secretary of the Interior's 2004 decision not to list the black-tailed prairie dog as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The suit argues that the species remains on just 1 to 2 percent of its historic range and that the secretary's decision led to the poisoning of thousands in South Dakota. Current black-tailed prairie dog populations are fragmented and isolated with only small remnants left in habitats that once spanned across the Great Plains from southern Canada through northern Mexico. Those filing the suit are Forest Guardians, the Biodiversity Conservation Alliance, the Center for Native Ecosystems, and Rocky Mountain Animal Defense. The black-tailed prairie dog is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Gunnison's Prairie Dog Suit Filed**

In mid-December 2006 environmental groups filed suit in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. challenging the federal government's decision not to protect the Gunnison's prairie dog under the Endangered Species Act. The species, slightly smaller than 4 other North American prairie dog species, is native to central and northern New Mexico and parts of Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. Plaintiffs claim that the USFWS's initial finding that listing might be warranted and its subsequent intention to initiate a 12-month status review were inappropriately reversed by an Interior Department official. The Gunnison's prairie dog is identified as a species of greatest conservation need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

- **Groups Oppose County Wolf-killing Ordinance**

In March 2006, Santa Fe-based Forest Guardians and 3 other groups sent commissioners of Catron County, New Mexico notice of their intent to file suit over a new county wolf-killing ordinance. Catron County recently approved an ordinance allowing livestock producers to kill wolves that might be a danger to humans. The conservation groups assert that the killing of Mexican gray wolves to protect humans is already covered under the Endangered Species Act and that the ordinance "unlawfully undermines federal wolf management." Federal wolf recovery policies currently permit the killing of wolves that prey upon livestock or that attack humans.

- **Re-hearing Sought on Lynx Decision**

In late March 2007, 6 conservation groups asked the 10th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver to re-examine its February decision that the Forest Service doesn't have to review the

impact of forest management plans on the lynx in the Carson and Santa Fe national forests in New Mexico. They argued that consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service by the New Mexico forests is especially important because of their proximity to the core release area in Colorado. The groups said the lynx has been documented in recent years in Taos, Rio Arriba, and San Juan counties in northern New Mexico. Those seeking the re-hearing are the Western Environmental Law Center, Carson Forest Watch, the Center for Native Ecosystems, Synapu, Animal Protection of New Mexico, and Animal Protection Institute. The lynx is not considered subject to ESA classification in New Mexico because this is not part of historic range.

- **Protection of New Mexico's Waterways Upheld**

In early May 2007, the New Mexico Court of Appeals upheld the state's right to protect all of its waters despite the federal government and Supreme Court's limitations in recent years regarding the kinds of waters that can be protected under the Clean Water Act of 1972. In 2005 the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission adopted a broad definition of which waters had to meet state water quality standards. It was this decision that was appealed by the New Mexico Mining Association, New Mexico Home Builders Association, the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, Chino Mines Co., and Phelps Dodge. Had the ruling been otherwise, 80% of New Mexico's waters would have been at risk of losing protection under the Clean Water Act. Lack of Clean Water Act protection for New Mexico's 5 closed basins, playa lakes, and isolated non-navigable waters was an issue identified in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico.

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ANS Prevention Regulations

Up to now, Game and Fish has established guidelines and provided recommendations for reducing potential for aquatic nuisance species transfer.

Proposals for 2008 would make some of the voluntary guidelines into laws.

Proposals include ANS possession, transportation equipment, aquatic vegetation, water containment and inspections.

Missouri River System Access

Even though wet spring weather brought hope to North Dakota, the much-needed precipitation was little benefit to the Missouri River System, which continues to tolerate a six-year drought.

While other upper basin states are also enduring drought conditions, North Dakota has seen the upper reaches of Lake Oahe, which used to extend some 50 miles into the state, simply disappear. Upstream, Lake Sakakawea is about 45 feet below full pool, and near the record all-time low of 1,805 feet above mean sea level.

Although all of this is of considerable concern, there is still going to be suitable access for water enthusiasts up and down the Missouri River System. Boaters and anglers will still be able to access most areas along the system despite the low water.

CRP

The primary focus for the Department's private land section in 2007 is the Conservation Reserve Program.

The USDA's reenrollment and extension process provides an excellent opportunity for PLI biologists to work with producers who have CRP set to expire between 2007-10.

The Department is offering incentives to producers who reenroll or extend their CRP contracts and enter into the PLOTS program. In addition, incentives will be offered to producers who keep their land in grass.

PLOTS

The Department will likely reach the goal of providing 1 million acres of private land available for hunters enrolled in the Private Land Open To Sportsmen program this year, two years ahead of schedule.

More than one-fifth of the Department's budget is ear-marked for PLOTS, making it the Department's largest program.

Birds Test Negative for Avian Influenza

North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists completed avian influenza testing in wild birds this past fall as part of a nationwide surveillance program designed to provide early detection of highly pathogenic strains in North America.

Biologists sampled 941 birds in 35 North Dakota counties from late July through early November. As expected, none of the birds tested positive for highly pathogenic

strains. Likewise, ongoing surveillance in other states and countries has not detected highly pathogenic avian influenza in North America.

The Department focused sampling on species that were likely to have Alaskan or Siberian connections, and species most likely to mix with them. Species of primary sampling focus were tundra swans, lesser sandhill cranes, pintails, and several species of shorebirds. Other birds sampled were mallards, wigeon, gadwall, green-winged teal, shovelers and scaup.

Legislation

While the 2007 legislative session didn't have nearly the number of hunting and fishing related bills as in 2005, North Dakota Game and Fish Department officials were busy just the same. The session lasted through April 25, 78 days from commencement.

In all, lawmakers considered 39 bills regarding hunters, anglers and the state's natural resources. In 2005, 58 such bills were introduced, more than in any other session.

More information on all 39 bills is available on the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov.

Game and Fish Launches Weekly Webcast

North Dakota Outdoors Online is now online at the State Game and Fish Department's website at www.gf.nd.gov.

Outdoors Online is a weekly video news broadcast available exclusively on the Internet. The program is hosted and produced by Tom Jensen and Mike Anderson, the Game and Fish Department's national award-winning video team.

The webcast will focus on current news and issues that appeal to people who hunt, fish, trap and enjoy North Dakota's outdoors. Each week Jensen will host a studio guest, and also keep viewers up-to-date on what they need to know to better enjoy their outdoor activities.

A new program will be posted to the Game and Fish Department's website each Thursday. Each weekly webcast will run approximately 10 minutes.

BOW Winter Workshops

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program scheduled one-day winter workshops in February at Buffalo Lodge Lake near Granville, and at Lake Metigoshe State Park, Bottineau.

The Buffalo Lodge Lake class was geared toward ice fishing and darkhouse spearfishing.

Lake Metigoshe offered a variety of classes – dog sledding, basic snowshoeing and winter tracking, winter ecology and cross-country skiing, and darkhouse spearfishing.

Bald Eagle Survey

The 21st annual mid-winter bald eagle survey was conducted Jan. 12 along an aerial survey route of the Missouri River stretching from Bismarck to the Garrison Dam. Altogether, 43 bald eagles – 30 adults and 13 immature – and one golden eagle were counted.

Each winter biologists nationwide conduct similar surveys to estimate the number of bald eagles wintering in the lower 48 states. Each state completes the survey as close to the target date as possible to make certain that birds are not counted twice.

The number of bald eagles wintering in the state depends on the amount of open water and availability of prey – fish and waterfowl. This year's figure is above-average in North Dakota, but down significantly from last year's record of 75.

National Park Elk Management Process

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department withdrew its support for a process to determine the best way to reduce elk numbers within Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

The Department would no longer participate as a cooperating agency because it cannot support the alternatives the park service is still considering for reducing the elk population in the park's south unit, located in southwestern North Dakota's Billings County.

From the time the park service decided there was a need to reduce the elk population, Game and Fish has worked closely with the federal agency, because many of the elk are not full-time park residents. Rather, many animals spend considerable time on public and private land outside the park where they are part of a larger western North Dakota elk herd.

The park service will not consider hunting as a management tool and has eliminated from further consideration the alternative of controlled public hunting by qualified volunteers. Alternatives that are still under consideration include taking no action; initial reduction and maintenance by sharpshooting; initial reduction and maintenance by euthanasia; using fertility control agents; and moving elk from the park to other locations (currently not allowed because of disease concerns).

Nonresident Any-Deer Bow Licenses

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department had 1,147 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2007, down from 1,155 issued in 2006.

The number of nonresident any-deer bow licenses available is 15 percent of the previous year's mule deer gun license allocation. The Game and Fish Department issued 7,650 mule deer licenses in the 2006 deer gun lottery.

Bighorn Sheep Management

Three checks totaling $95,000 were given to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department at the March 17 Minnesota-Wisconsin Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep annual meeting in Minneapolis.

North Dakota's 2007 bighorn sheep auction license, which allows the winning bidder the rare privilege of pursuing a North Dakota bighorn on a self-guided hunt, sold for a record $50,000. Along with an annual grant of $25,000, the Minnesota-Wisconsin conservation group also presented $20,000 to Game and Fish for last January's transplant of 20 bighorns from Montana's Missouri River Breaks.

2007 Bighorn Sheep, Elk and Moose Seasons

Additional elk and moose hunting opportunities highlight the 2007 special big game seasons.

A total of 261 elk licenses are available, an increase of 20 from last year. More licenses will be available for Unit E3 in an attempt to reduce the number of elk outside Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

A total of 147 moose licenses are available in 2007, an increase of 18 from last year. Units M9 and M10 have been expanded to include areas where moose numbers have increased. However, Unit M1C will remain closed due to a continued moose population decline in the northeastern portion of the state.

Six bighorn sheep licenses are available in four units, the same as last year. One license is available in units B1, B2 and B3; two in Unit B4; and one license auctioned through the Minnesota-Wisconsin Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

In an effort to increase the harvest of older rams, opening day has been moved back on the calendar two weeks in order to coincide with the rut.

Montana Bighorns Relocate to North Dakota

Twenty bighorn sheep from an area west of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in Montana have a new home in western North Dakota.

State Game and Fish Department biologists released the bighorns in the northern badlands Jan. 22, the second such transplant in as many years. Last January, 19 bighorns from CMR made the trip across the state line from habitat that is similar to North Dakota's and had no difficulties acclimating to their new surroundings.

Three rams and 17 ewes from the Missouri River Breaks south of Havre made the 250-mile trek unscathed.

North Dakota Game and Fish Department officials appreciate the cooperation from Al Rosgaard and the rest of the staff at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The entire transplant was funded by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

Spring Light Goose Season

North Dakota's spring light goose hunting season opened Feb. 17. The statewide season was open through May 6. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. There is no daily bag or possession limit. Electronic and recorded calls as well as shotguns capable of holding more than three shells may be used to take light geese during this season.

Spring Turkey

North Dakota's wild turkey population remains on a positive trend in 2007, allowing the state Game and Fish Department to make available a record number of spring hunting licenses for the fourth consecutive year.

Turkeys occupy all areas of the state containing good habitat. In many instances, they are even found in areas with marginal turkey habitat, but are surviving in good numbers in secondary cover.

A total of 6,935 spring turkey licenses are available, an increase of 510 from last year.

2006 Bighorn Sheep, Moose and Elk Harvests

Harvest statistics released by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department show overall hunter success during the 2006 season was 100 percent for bighorn sheep, 90 percent for moose and 59 percent for elk.

Four bighorn sheep units were open in 2006. All six hunters tagged adult rams.

The Department issued 129 moose licenses last year. Of that total, 116 hunters were successful, harvesting 66 bulls and 50 cows/calves.

The Department issued 259 elk licenses last year. Of that total, 154 hunters were successful, harvesting 98 bulls and 56 cows/calves.

2006 Prairie Chicken Hunting Season

A total of 30 prairie chickens and 52 sharp-tailed grouse were taken during the state's nine-day prairie chicken hunting season.

Forty-six hunters bagged 12 prairie chickens and 33 sharptails in the north unit, while 39 hunters took 18 prairie chickens and 19 sharptails in the south unit.

Canada Goose Depredation

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service combined resources to provide North Dakota agricultural producers with the necessary tools to manage chronic crop depredation caused by Canada geese.

The program, in place each spring and summer since 2002, provides landowners with equipment and technical assistance to ward off depredating Canada geese. Past efforts have shown Canada goose depredation control is most effective when a combination of techniques are used in concert: hunting seasons (extended Canada goose seasons and liberal bag limits), egg addling (destroying nests) and nonlethal treatment methods (propane cannons, pyrotechnics and electric fencing).

North Dakota's authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows for the taking of no more than 6,000 geese and 1,000 nests, including all the eggs.

This is the sixth year the special permits are available to North Dakota landowners. In 2006, 94 landowners used the special permit, taking 1,070 Canada geese (615 adults and 455 goslings) and destroying 101 nests under provisions provided by the permit. Canada geese were taken in 25 counties in eastern and northwestern North Dakota.

2006 Deer Gun Season Stats

While the number of deer gun licenses issued in 2006 was not a record, more deer than ever were taken during last fall's season.

The Department allocated 143,500 deer gun licenses in 2006. Survey data reveals more than 100,000 deer were taken during the gun season, and combined with bow, muzzleloader and youth seasons, the harvest was more than 110,000 deer.

The overall hunter success rate of 76 percent was the same as in 2005 and about average over the past 15 years.

Hunter success for antlered and antlerless white-tailed deer was approximately 76

percent each.

Mule deer buck success was 82 percent, while mule deer doe hunters had a success rate of 86 percent.

Bow hunters had a success rate of 42 percent, and 75 percent of the deer harvested by bow hunters were adult bucks.

Muzzleloader season hunters had a success rate of 44 percent.

The success rate by young hunters during the nine-and-a-half day youth season increased slightly to 53 percent.

CWD Test Results All Negative

North Dakota deer and elk populations remain free of chronic wasting disease, according to test results recently received by the state Game and Fish Department.

Last fall, North Dakota hunters submitted samples for testing from 2,993 wild deer, 37 elk and four moose collected during the 2006 hunting season. All those samples tested negative.

Samples for CWD testing were sent to the Wyoming State Veterinary Lab last December. Samples in 2006 were collected from hunter-harvested deer taken from all deer hunting units in the state.

Since 2002, nearly 8,500 North Dakota deer and 147 elk have tested negative for CWD. To date, CWD has not been diagnosed in wild or farmed deer or elk in North Dakota.

Paddlefish Snagging Season

North Dakota's paddlefish snagging season opened May 1 and closed May 11 because of the harvest cap of 1,000 fish.

This year an option was available of snag-and-release-only for up to seven days after the regular season closed.

For several years, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and its counterpart in Montana have instituted a harvest cap of 1,000 paddlefish in each state. Paddlefish snaggers in North Dakota reached that overall harvest quota the past two years in about mid-May.

Because of the ongoing drought, low flows in early May in the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers have concentrated fish, making them more susceptible to snaggers the last few years. As a result of the higher rate of harvest, the Department had to close the seasons early.

More Deer Licenses for 2007

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department continued an aggressive approach to deer management by increasing the number of deer hunting licenses available in 2007.

A total of 148,550 licenses are available, an increase of 5,050 from last year. This year's number includes an additional 4,350 whitetail and 700 mule deer licenses.

Mild winters and a corresponding increase in reproductive success have maintained white-tailed deer populations above management objectives in many units in northeastern, north central, and southwestern North Dakota. In response, the Department will continue an aggressive approach to deer management until deer numbers are reduced to unit goals.

The mule deer population in the badlands remains at or above management goals. The number of licenses available for 2007 includes 8,350 for mule deer, an increase of 700 from last year; 2,804 for muzzleloader, up 88 from last year; and 340 restricted youth antlered mule deer, the same as last year.

Spring Duck Index

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's 60th annual spring breeding duck survey showed an index of more than 3.2 million birds, down 13 percent from last year but still 51 percent above the long-term average.

The survey, conducted May 7-11, showed duck indices were down or unchanged from 2006, depending on the species. Mallards, pintail, gadwall, wigeon, scaup and ruddy ducks were about the same as last year. Green-winged teal (35 percent) and canvasback (30 percent) had the most significant decreases. However, all species except pintail remained above the 1948-2006 average.

The 2007 water index was up 39 percent from 2006 and 43 percent above long-term. The index is based on basins with water, and does not necessarily represent the amount of water contained in wetlands. Survey crews indicated that many wet basins held very little water at the time of the survey, and that a high percentage of ponds that had small amounts of water would soon be totally dry without the addition of significant precipitation.

Spring Mule Deer Survey

The mule deer population in western North Dakota remains healthy. Based on observations during the state Game and Fish Department's annual spring mule deer survey in April, the population index in the badlands is higher than the long-term average for the ninth consecutive year.

Biologists counted 2,797 mule deer in 291 square miles. Mule deer density per square mile was 9.6, a slight increase from 8.8 in 2006, and significantly higher than the long-term average of 6.4 mule deer per square mile.

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

WAFWA State-of-the-State Report

January 2007 – June 2007

Apprentice license implemented in Oklahoma

Sportsmen will see new regulations in the near future that allow hunting without hunter education certifica under an "apprentice" designation. Beginning immediately, those who wish to hunt but are not certified will be designa "apprentice" status, which will be noted on their hunting license. A person holding a license with the appren designation can only hunt if they are accompanied by a licensed hunter 21 years of age or older who possesse certificate of hunter education. Persons 21 and older who are exempt from either hunter education or hunting lice requirements may also accompany apprentice hunters.

Under the new regulations, someone hunting big game with the apprentice designation must stay within ar reach of the accompanying hunter, so that the accompanying hunter is able to take immediate control of the firearm archery equipment of the apprentice. While hunting small game, the accompanying hunter must stay in sight of and able to communicate with the apprentice hunter in a normal voice without the aid of any communication device.

Those 16 years of age and younger must have their hunter education certification to hunt or buy any big game (de antelope or elk) license. Those under 16 who hunt small game must carry their hunter education certification or accompanied.

Exempt from the hunter education requirement will be those who are 36 years and older, those honora discharged from or currently on active duty in the United States Armed Forces and members of the National Guard.

Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission approves numerous regulation changes

In March the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission passed a host of hunting and fishing regulat changes for the upcoming hunting season. The Commission voted to:

- Add river otters to the list of species that can be taken during the state's furbearer season in 14 counties eastern Oklahoma. A season limit of two river otters will apply.
- Allow mountain lions to be taken year-round when committing or about to commit depredation or when deeme nuisance or health hazard.

The Commission also passed a number of significant deer hunting regulation changes aimed at improving t health of Oklahoma's deer herd while providing additional hunting opportunities for antlerless deer. Specific deer hunti regulation changes were:

- The statewide combined season limit on antlered deer was reduced from three to two bucks.
- Youth under the age of 18 will have the opportunity to harvest a buck during the Youth Gun Season.
- For most of the state, the number of days open to antlerless deer hunting was increased to include the ent muzzleloader season and the entire gun season.
- Special antlerless seasons for most of the state will be open Dec. 21-23 and Dec. 28-30.

In much of northwest and north central Oklahoma, the antlerless deer bag limit for muzzleloader and gun seasons was increased to two antlerless deer.

)klahoma Wildlife Expo to include new Outdoor Marketplace

To date 80,000 people have participated in the first two Oklahoma Wildlife Expos. New this year, the Expo will e the Outdoor Marketplace, a large tent where commercial vendors will be selling their hunting and fishing-related andise, services and memberships to outdoor organizations.

Among many other activities, Expo visitors will be able to fish, shoot shotguns, kayak, ride mountain bikes, see uch wildlife, attend dog training seminars and learn about recreation in the great outdoors. They will also be able to variety of free prizes thanks to the Expo's generous sponsors.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's third annual Oklahoma Wildlife Expo is slated for mber 28-30 at the Lazy E Arena.

Creek fishing area sees first trout stocking

Lost Creek is a brand new 1,200 ft. long stream constructed last summer as part of an extensive trout habitat t on the Lower Mountain Fork River. It branches off from the river and flows through a wooded area before emptying e newly renovated Evening Hole trout fishing area.

The Evening Hole was previously a slow-moving, wide, shallow section of river that had limited available fish t. After renovation by Department streams biologists, the section's fish habitat was improved and as well as the , stream flow, sediment transport and water temperature for ideal trout habitat.

The new Lost Creek fishing area of the Lower Mountain Fork River was stocked with trout for the first time in ıry. At Lost Creek, as well as the Evening Hole, brown and rainbow trout both have a one-fish-per-day limit, and fish be 20 inches or longer. Also, anglers in the areas may only use artificial flies and lures and barbless hooks. lete fishing regulations, license information and trout stocking schedules are available at wildlifedepartment.com.

at harvest and prices reach highest point in nearly two decades

Hunters and trappers tagged 5,425 bobcats in 2006 — a 21-year high according to biologists with the Oklahoma tment of Wildlife Conservation. Some Oklahoma trappers reported selling bobcat pelts for about $75 on average ear, and some buyers reported paying $80-$175 for top quality Oklahoma bobcats. The values of bobcat pelts were ghest they've been since the 1987-88 season.

smallmouth bass record almost broken again at Eufaula

A Broken Arrow college student caught an eight-pound, one-and-a-half-ounce smallmouth bass at Lake Eufaula ell only an ounce and half short of matching the current state record.

James Elam, a 20-year old and a member of Oklahoma State University's fishing team, was fishing near the n Landing around 2 p.m. March 21 when he reeled in the lunker on a homemade plastic lure. That was after he had dy reeled in a six-pound smallmouth at 7:45 a.m. that morning.

With two of the largest smallmouth bass in state history pulled from its waters in recent years, Eufaula is prov itself as a well-established trophy fishery. The east-central Oklahoma lake saw its first stocking of smallmouths in 1992 the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Home to a self-sustaining population of reservoir-strain smallmou that originated in Tennessee, the lake is also a great destination for white bass and black bass anglers.

Elam's fish fell just shy of the state record smallmouth, an eight-pound, three-ounce fish caught out of Eufa March 4, 2006 by Steve McLarty, also from Broken Arrow.

Report reveals increase in fishing success of bass tournament anglers

Bass tournament anglers caught more and bigger fish last year according to the most recent Oklahoma Ba Tournaments Report.

The average winning weight rose once again in 2006 to 10.9 lbs., which is nearly a one-pound gain over the last th years. The report summarizes the results of day-long weekend events as well as weekly evening jackpots across state. Additionally, tournament anglers on average caught bigger fish in 2006 than they did during other rec tournament seasons. In 2006, the average angler caught about two fish per day that weighed 2.2 lbs., up slightly fr 2.14 lbs. in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, the overall success rate at tournaments was 65 percent, up three percent over previous year. Success rates are measured based on anglers or teams who bring at least one bass to the tournam weigh-in.

The success of competitive bass fishermen can reveal useful information to the Oklahoma Department of Wild Conservation about the quality of angling opportunities across the state, and the newest report shows that bass fishing getting better and better in Oklahoma.

The Department has been gathering data on bass fishing tournaments across the state for the last 13 years, a the information collected helps manage bass populations.

The Department collects the data on "tournament report cards" that are voluntarily submitted by tournam directors or through the Internet. Ninety-nine different organizations submitted almost 600 reports from 61 lakes for 2006

Oklahoma Archery in Schools state tournament a success

Four hundred students competed April 26 in the third annual Oklahoma Archery in Schools state tournament h at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. Coordinated by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservatio Oklahoma Archery in Schools is part of a national program that partners state wildlife agencies, schools and the natio archery industry to introduce students to the sport of archery. The Archery in Schools curriculum is designed for 4th-12 graders and covers archery history, safety, techniques, equipment, mental concentration and self-improvement. Abo 6,500 students participated in the program last year. At its May meeting, the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commissi voted to approve a memorandum of understanding to work with UCO to develop and increase outdoor recreation Oklahoma, in particular the Oklahoma Archery in Schools program.

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
Major Issues Report
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
June 2007

FISH DIVISION

The Fish Division manages fish and their habitats in a manner that maintains all species at optimum levels, while providing recreational and ecological benefits. In addition, the division regulates fish populations in a manner compatible with the primary uses of the lands and waters of the state of Oregon. The Fish Division has four main programs: Natural Production, Fish Propagation, Marine Resources and Interjurisdictional Fisheries.

Natural Production

Fish Screening and Passage Program

The Fish Screening and Passage Program continues to provide financial and technical assistance to landowners, irrigation districts and other water users throughout Oregon, to provide fish screens and fishways to protect native fish. In addition to funding and constructing fish screening and passage provisions at specific sites, the program also works with the owners and operators of all types of artificial obstructions (e.g., dams, road crossings and tide gates) across the state toward an approved fish passage solution when they are legally required to address fish passage. For the 2005-2007 biennium, the program will receive funding of approximately $11.4 million to fund project activities, primarily providing cost-share funds for the construction of fish screens at unscreened diversions and fishways over artificial barriers. Funding for the program comes from state Lottery funds, a $0.25 surcharge on fishing licenses and federal funds through National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In the 2005-2007 biennium, the program plans to coordinate the construction of more than 150 new fish protection screens on diversions totaling more than 1,500 cubic feet per second. In addition to those already installed in the 2005-2007 biennium, the program plans to install 20 more fishways, providing fish passage at artificial barriers and improving access to upstream habitat. Since July 1, 2005, 102 fish screening and 8 fish passage projects have been installed.

Hydroelectric Licensing

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is a member of the state Hydroelectric Application Review Team and works closely with facilities operators, other agencies and interest groups in relicensing efforts. Currently ODFW is participating in Idaho Power's Hells Canyon (Snake River) project, PacifiCorp's Klamath (Klamath Basin) project, Eugene Water and Electric Board's Carmen-Smith (McKenzie River) project and several proposed hydro retrofits of federal dams (Dorena, Applegate, Fall Creek and Mason Dam). Additionally, implementation of settlement agreements continues to move forward at Pelton–Round Butte (Deschutes Basin), Willamette Falls (Willamette Basin), North Umpqua (Umpqua Basin) projects. ODFW has signed a settlement agreement with PacifiCorp to settle several issues on the Prospect (Rogue Basin) project. We are also working cooperatively with tribes and the utilities to implement settlement agreements for removal of Marmot Dam (Sandy River) and the Powerdale Dam (Hood River).

ODFW is currently involved in the review of seven preliminary permit applications or preliminary permits to develop wave energy projects off the Oregon coast. Proposed projects that are being evaluated by developers include: Lincoln County, Newport, Reedsport, Douglas County, Coos County (2) and Florence. ODFW is working closely with the Oregon Governor's Office, state and federal agencies, recreation and commercial interests and others through the Oregon Solutions process to develop a Declaration of Cooperation and Settlement Agreement in 2007 for the Reedsport OPT project proposal. In addition ODFW is reviewing several proposed tidal energy projects in the Columbia River.

Water Quality/Quantity Activities

Resolving municipal water right extension issues associated with maintaining fish persistence (consistent with state statutes) continues to be challenging. Advice has been provided to the Water Resources Department on nine of the 100 or so municipal water right extensions, a Proposed Final Order has been developed for one of the nine, which was protested. ODFW believes it has been able to provide advice that maintains the persistence of listed fish species while allowing the extension of a municipal water right, although some restrictions will be placed on the use of the water right. In some areas of the state winter water is becoming unavailable and water developers are looking for additional water supply opportunities and are exploring avenues to utilizing peak flows above standard water availability. ODFW has developed a protocol to use in evaluating and providing advice to the Water Resource Department on these peak flow use water right requests. The guidance defines what peak/elevated flows are needed to maintain fish habitat.

Natural Resource Information Management

The Natural Resource Information Management Program (NRIMP) is responsible for the development of resource data sets and providing the tools to access and use the data. NRIMP staff continues to participate in an agency wide effort to develop a GIS Strategic and Implementation Plan. The intent is to integrate GIS use throughout the agency. The program is providing support for the implementation of Oregon's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy through the development of online mapping for the Conservation Registry which allows for the voluntary reporting of conservation activities. Products are also being developed to implement a new Wildlife Movement Strategy, providing map content for a series of new Warmwater Angling Brochures, provide information for cougar target areas, winter range, game bird and invasive species locations. Additionally, we have improved a number of products used by the public including Travel Management Area maps, Wildlife Area maps and Hunt Unit maps. NRIMP is also leading an effort to develop data standards for fish passage barrier data.

Conservation Plan Development

The conservation plan for Oregon Coast coho salmon was completed and approved by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in March. The goal of the plan is ambitious in seeking to double the number of spawning coho along the coast. The key management strategy seeks to increase the level and effectiveness of voluntary measures by landowners under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. The plan was also endorsed by the Governor and all natural resource agencies and is considered a State of Oregon conservation plan.

The public draft of the Rogue River spring Chinook conservation plan has received public review and will be presented to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission for consideration this summer. Upon adoption of the Rogue spring Chinook plan, ODFW staff will begin working

with their counterparts from California Department of Fish and Game and NOAA Fisheries to develop a coho conservation/recovery plan for the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coho ESU.

In the Columbia basin, the State of Oregon, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries, is well underway with conservation/recovery planning for coho, Chinook, chum and steelhead in the Lower and Mid Columbia ESU's, as well as the Upper Willamette ESU. A draft of the Mid-Columbia Steelhead ESU Recovery Plan will be released this summer and finalized before the end of the year. The Lower Columbia ESU Recovery Plan is approximately six months behind the Mid-Columbia Plan, and a draft of the Upper Willamette ESU Recovery Plan is anticipated in early 2008. Information on some of the conservation plans and other fish management issues can be found on the web at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/nfcp/.

Efforts are also underway to initiate conservation planning processes for interior redband trout in Southeast Oregon and white sturgeon in the Columbia River.

Oregon Hatchery Research Center (OHRC)

OHRC Senior Scientist, Dr. David Noakes (also a professor at Oregon State University) has been working closely with a 15 member public advisory committee to finalize a strategic research plan and a monitoring plan. The initial one-year shakedown of the facility was successfully completed and research is ready to begin in earnest. Several experiments both on and off site are currently under development for coho and steelhead. Collaborations continue with researchers and students from Oregon State University. Investigations include: the use of sterile fish for fisheries, benthic invertebrate monitoring, stable isotope analysis, stress in juvenile steelhead and wild broodstock handling and holding. Several students have completed internships at the facility. Additional information on the OHRC can be found on the web at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/OHRC/.

Native Fish Investigations Project

The Native Fish Investigations Project (NFIP) conducts research and monitoring of Oregon's native fish fauna. The NFIP implements these activities throughout the State and has recently focused on studies involving inland trout, unique native nongame fish and lamprey. Project personnel work closely with regional management staff as well as federal agencies in providing research results and assessments to guide conservation and recovery efforts. Examples of current studies conducted by the NFIP include:

- Research on bull trout life history, genetics, status and limiting factors. Current efforts are focusing on populations in Northeast Oregon, Odell Lake, Hood River and the Upper Klamath Basin.
- Monitoring and adaptive management of Oregon chub populations in the Willamette Basin.
- Population monitoring of federally listed native minnows and suckers in Southeast Oregon.
- Migration characteristics and habitat selection of adult pacific lamprey in coastal streams
- Development and implementation of a monitoring program for Great Basin redband trout.
- Distribution and relative abundance of native fishes of the Goose Lake basin.

Additional details regarding theses studies as well as information on other NFIP studies can be found at our website: http://oregonstate.edu/Dept/ODFW/NativeFish/Index.htm.

Aquatic Inventories Program

The Oregon Plan monitoring projects (Aquatic Inventories Program, Western Oregon Rearing Project and Oregon Adult Salmonid Inventory and Sampling Program) in cooperation with statisticians at EPA and Oregon State University developed a new survey design and standardized 1:24,000 digitized stream coverage to monitor the status and trends in habitat, juvenile fish and adult salmon at both the regional and coho salmon population scale in western Oregon streams. The surveys will provide rigorous estimates of habitat capacity and quality, juvenile fish populations and adult populations at multiple scales to address recovery goals in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and Coastal Coho Salmon Recovery Plan. The new survey design is being implemented this summer (2007) in coastal Oregon and in tributaries to the lower Columbia River.

The Aquatic Inventories Program is studying the recovery and survival of sea-run cutthroat trout and coho salmon in Big Creek watershed in the lower Columbia River. Big Creek was blocked to anadromous fish passage by a hatchery weir, which has recently been modified. The study includes Bear Creek, a nearby reference stream that has never had passage barriers. We are estimating the number of migrating fish, and are tagging coho, cutthroat and steelhead with PIT tags and a subsample of cutthroat with acoustic tags to describe their movement and survival as they migrate through the Columbia River estuary to the ocean and back as adults.

Recreational Fisheries Program Administration

ODFW's Recreational Fisheries Program continued to provide support and guidance for many of the day-to-day activities of ODFW's District Fishery Managers. Program accomplishments include:

Oregon's Warmwater Angling Pamphlets

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has recently developed a series of 10 Warmwater Fishing Angling Pamphlets that feature warmwater fisheries throughout the state. Each pamphlet covers a specific geographic region of the state and has a featured waterbody section that contains a map showing important features of the waterbody and an angler dialog box that describes proven angling techniques to catch the various species of warmwater fish species in the featured waterbody. Also included in the pamphlets are a matrix table that lists other warmwater fisheries in the area and general tips on how to fish for and catch warmwater fish as well as full color drawings of warmwater fish species. The brochures are intended to be a resource for new or novice anglers with little experience with warmwater fishing, but even experienced warmwater anglers will find the information helpful. The Warmwater Fishing in Oregon brochures are free and available at most ODFW offices. An online version of the brochure is available on the ODFW Web site www.dfw.state.or.us.

2006 Oregon Angler Survey

The Recreational Fisheries Program contracted with Responsive Management, a survey research firm specializing in natural resources, to conduct a statewide telephone survey of 1,500 Oregon anglers. The survey was completed in November 2006 and the data analyzed by Responsive Management staff. The main purposes of the study were to determine licensed anglers' participation in fishing in Oregon, their motivations for fishing and constraints to their fishing participation, their opinions on various fishing regulations and management strategies and to actively involve the public in decisions on public fishery management. The survey showed trout

to be the most popular freshwater fishery (73 percent of active anglers had fished for trout), followed by salmon (33 percent), steelhead (30 percent) and warm-water game fish (26 percent). Overall, participation in most fisheries declined compared to a similar survey in 1977, consistent with general national trends in license purchases.

Biometrics Program

The Biometrics Program implements numerous angler creel surveys on various fisheries throughout the state and conducts analyses to aid fishery managers. The creel surveys provide critical information for District Managers to use in fishery assessments. Statistical creel surveys are underway on Lake Billy Chinook and Crane Prairie Reservoir and on the Deschutes River near Sherars Falls. Other surveys have been completed for 2006 and the data were analyzed and provided to District staff. This includes surveys on the Deschutes River to estimate catch of fall Chinook and summer steelhead; Lake Billy Chinook to estimate catch and catch rates of bull trout and kokanee; the Nestucca River to evaluate catch rates on different brood stocks of winter steelhead; Laurance Lake to monitor angler use and catch of hatchery stocked rainbow, bull trout and introduced small-mouth bass; the Lower Grande Ronde and Imnaha Rivers to estimate catch of winter steelhead; and a quota-based fishery on wild coho in Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes. Continuing data analysis includes surveys on Diamond Lake to estimate pre-treatment catch rates of trout; Crane Prairie Reservoir to estimate catch rates of two fish stocks and to compare angler use that estimated in surveys in the early 1990's; and Deschutes River above Sherars Falls to estimate angler use and catch of trout. The survey on Crane Prairie also includes a human dimensions questionnaire that will be used in conjunction with the statewide survey to better understand angler attitudes and opinions about fishing.

Stream Nutrient Enrichment Program

In 2006-2007 the Department continued the fish carcass placement program for stream nutrient enrichment with almost 600 individual placement projects statewide. The program operates under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Waste Discharge Permit that requires an annual Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and ODFW to cover placements from July 1 through June 30. The projects use salmon and steelhead broodstock obtained from ODFW hatchery facilities. Prior to placement, the fish are sampled by ODFW Fish Health Services to prevent the amplification or spread of fish pathogens that could affect native fish or other aquatic life. The majority of the placement projects are labor intensive and rely heavily on volunteers recruited through the Department's Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP). Fish carcass placements will continue in 2007-2008 under a similar MOA.

Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP)

Since its implementation in 1981, more than 260,000 adult and youth volunteers have contributed over 2.3 million hours to STEP. These include efforts to inventory, monitor and research fish populations and their habitats; projects to enhance, restore and protect aquatic habitat; activities to inform and educate the public about Oregon's fish resources and their habitats; and fish production programs to supplement natural production or augment fisheries. To ensure fish propagation programs are consistent with the protection and enhancement of native fish populations, STEP fish propagation projects are reviewed every five years to ensure they conform to ODFW policies, such as Hatchery Genetic Management Plans and the Native Fish Conservation Strategy. Department staff reviewed and reauthorized eleven STEP propagation projects in 2006.

In 2006, over 1,100 volunteers participated in 128 fish and habitat monitoring projects, improved about 995 miles of waterways and released nearly five million juvenile salmonids for enhancement or augmentation. The complete 2006 STEP Annual Report can be found at: http://www.dfw.state.or.us/STEP/.

Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program

In 2005-2007, the Fish Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program allocated $5.3 million to a diversity of fish restoration and enhancement projects across Oregon that benefit Oregon's sport and commercial fisheries. In this biennium, the R&E program invested in more than 150 projects with $14 million of match funding from project sponsors. The R&E Program is fully funded by dollars generated from surcharges on all sport fishing licenses and commercial salmon permit and poundage fees.

Grande Ronde Endemic Spring Chinook Supplementation Program

Regional fish managers, including ODFW, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service are using several approaches to restore spring Chinook salmon runs in northeast Oregon by using endemic broodstocks to enhance natural production and maintain genetic diversity. By the mid 1990's, declining population trends indicated that Grande Ronde River subbasin spring Chinook salmon were in imminent danger of extinction. Managers decided that immediate development of broodstocks from local natural populations was necessary for genetic conservation and natural production enhancement. As there were too few adults returning to these streams to collect for broodstock, a captive broodstock program for spring Chinook salmon was initiated in the Grande Ronde River subbasin in 1995 to rapidly increase the number of salmon from three populations in the subbasin. Wild Chinook salmon parr are collected from each of the three populations and reared in captivity. At maturation, the salmon are spawned and their offspring are reared to the smolt stage and then released into their parent's natal stream to complete their life cycle in nature. A conventional hatchery broodstock program for spring Chinook salmon populations using endemic stocks began in 1997 for these same three populations. Naturally produced adult spring Chinook salmon returning to these three streams are collected for broodstock and their offspring are released as smolts. The returning adults from the captive and conventional programs are allowed to spawn naturally to enhance natural production. This integration of artificial production with natural production has increased the number of spawners in the three populations in comparison to the levels observed in the 1990's. Monitoring of spawner escapement and smolt production will show whether these approaches will contribute to recovery of these populations.

Fish Propagation

Annual Production

Oregon hatcheries rear 85 different stocks of salmon, steelhead and trout. Production numbers have been steady the last several years.

Area	Salmon	Steelhead	Trout	Total
Coastal	6,871,600	1,785,000	1,454,139	10,110,739
Columbia & Inland	32,623,990	2,896,500	5,279,420	40,799,910
Total	39,495,590	4,681,500	6,733,559	50,910,649

Major Recent Projects

- Responding to the detection of the IHN virus at various hatcheries this past year increased the costs of rearing and stocking rainbow trout in particular. Several anadromous programs had releases reduced or eliminated.
- Examination of fish through the Naturally Reared Fish Health Survey is providing valuable information on pathogens associated with various stocks of fish in the state. This program will continue in order to establish a baseline database for future comparisons.
- Marking and tagging of over 25 million hatchery reared fish.
- Submittal of 77 of 83 Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans to NOAA and are available on the ODFW web site.
- Completion of 33 NPDES permit renewal applications to DEQ.
- Completed analysis of effluent thermal impact for 31 hatcheries and submitted reports to DEQ.
- The 2006 Fish Propagation Annual Report can be found at www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hatchery.

Marine Resources Program

During the first half of 2006, several issues framed the Marine Resources Program's (MRP) research and management activities, public review process and community outreach. The MRP focused its activities in the following areas:

- Participation in regional groundfish management through the Pacific and North Pacific Fisheries Management Councils
- Nearshore groundfish research, planning and fisheries management
- Fishery port sampling and at-sea monitoring activities
- Marine mammal population assessments and management
- Nearshore planning and habitat assessments

Federal Groundfish Management

Eight species of groundfish are managed under harvest caps (six federally imposed and two state imposed). Mixed stocks and complex and unpredictable patterns in the ocean fisheries have created new challenges for the West Coast groundfish management programs. During 2005, the PFMC completed stock assessments for 22 species – more than twice the number considered in past years. Many of these species were assessed for the first time. MRP staff were involved in preparing and reviewing some of these assessments. Incorporating the outcomes into an already complex set of management measures will present significant challenges in the coming years.

Ocean Fisheries Management in Oregon

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission set the state's marine groundfish bag limit at six fish and two lingcod in an effort to provide year-round opportunity. MRP groundfish managers are keeping close watch on harvest data to ensure that the take of black rockfish, canary and yelloweye rockfish and other constraining species remain within federal harvest caps.

Marine Research

Several research projects led by MRP teams study the nearshore environment and its inhabitants. Two projects look at survival of rockfish that are released after capture by anglers because they

are undersized or are prohibited under current fishing regulations. These fish suffer from expansion of gases in their swim bladders when they are brought up from depth and often die as a result. The research projects examine the effects of being brought up from depth and explore methods to increase survivability of the fish.

MRP researchers are working in the fourth year of a black rockfish mark-and-recapture project that uses PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tags to determine the exploitation rate of this species in the recreational fishery. Black rockfish are also the subject of a continuing acoustic telemetry study investigating fish movement patterns. Ongoing nearshore habitat surveys are enhancing our understanding of habitat type distribution and species-habitat relationships. In an ongoing effort to reduce bycatch in both commercial and recreational fisheries, the MRP is conducting several gear research projects examining fish behavior in response to specific gear configurations or methods of deployment.

Pink Shrimp Fishery

The MRP staff continues to work with commercial shrimp fishermen to further refine the spacing of the metal bars used in the devices to improve fishing effectiveness and bycatch reduction. As a result of these efforts the Oregon pink shrimp fishery is now being considered for Marine Stewardship Council Certification as an "ecologically sustainable fishery." If successful, it will be the first shrimp trawl fishery in the world to be MSC certified. The fishery was recently declared a "best choice" by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program.

Sardine Fishery

In December 2005 the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission moved the Pacific sardine fishery from a developing fishery into a state-run, limited-entry fishery system. Twenty-six Oregon limited entry permits were established and made available to qualified participants in the fishery.

Dungeness Crab Fishery

The MRP plays an active role in managing the Dungeness crab fishery on the West Coast through the Tri-State Commercial Crab Committee. MRP is working with the fishing industry in Oregon, partner state agencies and other states to address several major policy, management and enforcement issues including state jurisdiction, enforcement, safety, domoic acid, gear limits and pre-season testing. As a result of the first-ever Crab Summit for Oregon commercial crabbers, the MRP and the industry developed several proposals to address excess gear and effort in this fishery. A reciprocal regulation with Washington State limits access to federal waters by vessels without that state's permit. In addition a three tier (200, 300, 500 pot) crab pot limitation program was adopted and has been implemented for the 2006-2007 ocean Dungeness crab season. A pot/permit stacking program is under development.

Nearshore Planning

In December 2005, Marine Resources Program staff completed *Oregon's Nearshore Marine Resources Management Strategy,* which identifies priority needs and opportunities for the sustainable management of nearshore marine fish and wildlife. This effort – undertaken in collaboration with management partners, user groups and the general public is part of ODFW's development of a statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. The Strategy process and report received special recognition by the Nature Conservancy this year. Implementation of the Nearshore Strategy has begun with establishment of a Nearshore Advisory Committee (NAC) that provides advice to ODFW staff during implementation of strategy

recommendations. ODFW staff is focusing its work on inter-agency management coordination, nearshore habitat surveys at Port Orford Reef, a revision of the Interim Management Plan for Oregon's Commercial Nearshore Fishery and expanded public outreach including revisions to the ODFW/MRP website http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/.

Marine Habitat

The Marine Habitat Project recently concluded investigations on Perpetua Reef (central coast) that addressed whether rock-associated species make use of very small patches of rocky substrate. The project is currently working with a commercial fishing vessel out of Port Orford on a pilot survey that will result in an increased understanding of important groundfish resources on Orford Reef.

Marine Mammals

In recent years, questions of how growing seal and sea lion populations affect fishery resources received increased attention. The MRP worked cooperatively with the National Marine Fisheries Service to assess and monitor pinniped populations and to conduct studies to evaluate their potential impact on recovering threatened and endangered salmonid stocks. An example of this concern is the escalating problem of California sea lions in the lower Columbia River and their negative interactions with sport fisheries, and the increasing levels of predation on adult salmonids at fish ladders at Willamette Falls and Bonneville Dam. In the summer of 2006, the MRP worked with NMFS and sport fishing groups to test methods to reduce losses of hooked salmonids to predation by pinnipeds. Significant resources were applied to the Columbia River area. The work will continue for a second year on the lower Rogue River.

Interjurisdictional Fisheries

Revising the 2004 Biological Opinion

Oregon was one of several plaintiffs in suit against the federal government, challenging the 2004 Biological Opinion on the proposed operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS). The Court found the Biological Opinion invalid and remanded it back to the federal government to be fixed. Staff has provided the scientific analyses necessary to inform the state's policy and legal positions during the remand and helped to resolve issues in the analysis of jeopardy to the ESA-listed salmon and steelhead.

2007 Annual Water Management Plan

Fish managers worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to develop and guide initial implementation of measures in the 2007 annual water management plan for the FCRPS.

2007 Columbia River Non-Indian Recreational and Commercial Fisheries

Non-Indian fisheries in the winter and spring seasons for Chinook, steelhead and sturgeon were or are being implemented and managed in the lower and middle Columbia River within harvest quotas and incidental-take constraints for fish species listed under the ESA. Planning is underway for summer and fall season fisheries on coho, Chinook, steelhead and sturgeon.

2007 Ocean-Salmon Recreational and Commercial Fisheries
Ocean fisheries for coho and Chinook were planned and initial implementation and management have begun based on harvest quotas and incidental-take constraints for fish species listed under the ESA.

Management of Fish Harvest and Hatchery Production under US vs. Oregon
State, federal and tribal fisheries managers continue negotiations on a long-term agreement for managing fish harvest and hatchery production in the main-stem Columbia River. Actions include development of biological assessments and opinions for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead taken incidentally in the fisheries.

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Consistent with ORS 496.012, the objective of the Wildlife Division is to manage wildlife in a manner that maintains all species at optimum levels, while providing recreational and ecological benefits, and regulate wildlife populations in a manner compatible with the primary uses of the lands and waters of the state of Oregon. The Wildlife Division has three sections: Game, Wildlife Diversity, and Habitat. The Habitat section includes two sub-programs: landowner assistance and permits/planning.

Game Program – Big Game

Review of Cervid Holding Rules
A review of the Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) governing holding captive cervids was initiated in response to two petitions from a coalition of groups generally opposed to the private holding of cervids and one petition from cervid ranchers. All three petitions requested changes to the OARs governing cervid holding. The Commission directed the department to form an Advisory Group which will develop recommendations for consideration by the department. The department will be responsible for drafting proposed OARs for Commission consideration. A 13 member group has been formed which includes a non-ODFW biologist, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Cattleman's Association, sporting groups, cervid holding opponents and proponents.

- Major issues to discuss include
  - Disease, risks and testing
  - Facility/Site design and transferability
  - Genetics, risk to native elk
  - Economics related both to producers and the public

Black-tailed Deer Management Plan
Work continues on development of a Black-tailed Deer Management Plan. Because of the difficulty in surveying black-tailed deer Oregon has not established population Management Objectives (MOs) as we have for mule deer in eastern Oregon and statewide for elk. The department is considering development of a "Sex-Age Kill" (SAK) model for black-tailed deer. The population estimate from the SAK model would then be used to develop MOs for black-tailed deer in western Oregon. A Draft Plan has been completed and provided to a public review committee for comment.

East Slope Cascades Mule Deer Study
This five year study was initiated in 2005. The study is a Cooperative project with Oregon Department of Transportation, USFS, BLM and Tribal Governments. A combination of VHS and GPS telemetry collars are being used. Study goals include:

- Track movements between summer and winter ranges, migration corridors and timing
- Determine herd ranges
- Evaluate impacts and relationship of movements to Hwy 97
- Habitat selection
- Survival of adults and fawns, causes of mortality

Preliminary information after ~1.5 years of study:

- 185 deer collared, 49 mortalities, 24 unknown cause
    - 25 known cause of death, top three, cougar 7, legal harvest 6, road-kill 4
- Monitoring 150 miles of Hwy, 564 road-kills documented (avg. 3.76/mi)
- Average distance of migration 45 miles; longest, 80 miles

Cougar Management
The estimated cougar population in Oregon has increased from approximately 200 in 1961, to 3,100 in 1994, to the 2005 estimate of 5,400. In April 2006 the Commission adopted a revised Cougar Management Plan. Major changes from previous management include:

- Establishing a minimum statewide cougar population level.
- Modeling the cougar population and establishment of minimum population levels for each cougar management zone.
- Changing the cougar quota for each zone to include both hunter harvest and cougars taken in damage/conflict situations.
- A process has been developed to establish "Target Areas" for the removing cougars in response to persistent conflict with humans, livestock, or big game populations.

Three Target Areas have been implemented as described in Chapter VI, "Adaptive Management Process" of the Cougar Management Plan. Target Areas were designed to address each of the three major categories of conflict; big game, human safety/pet concerns and livestock depredation. Through April 9, 2007, 26 cougars were administratively removed, 18 were removed using dogs, 4 with snares and 4 using foot-hold traps.

Upland Game

Mountain Quail Reintroductions
Oregon continues its cooperation with adjacent states with their mountain quail translocation and re-introduction efforts. During 2007, 340 mountain quail from SW Oregon were made available for translocation in Washington, Idaho and the Steens Mountain area of SE Oregon. Trapping efforts began in late November 2006 and continued through mid-February 2007. Oregon released 90 mountain quail on Steens Mountain, 63 of which were equipped with radios. This was the third year of releases for Steens Mountain. The remaining birds were provided to

Washington and Idaho. Oregon anticipates there will be mountain quail available in 2008 and 2009 to fulfill a request from Nevada and to continue instate translocations.

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse
In 2007, with the assistance of Utah, Idaho, Washington and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the department augmented for the second year, a re-introduced population of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse in NE Oregon with 50 new birds, 20 were equipped with radio-transmitters. Twenty-four birds were obtained from Utah and 26 from Idaho. Oregon hopes to obtain additional sharp-tailed grouse next year from both Idaho and Utah in the final year of a 3-year augmentation effort. In August 2006, the annual flush count resulted in the highest number of grouse observed (56) since re-introduction efforts began in 1991.

Habitat improvement projects to provide additional winter shrub habitat for sharp-tailed grouse continue to be a priority in the reintroduction area. Projects included fencing existing aspen stands to exclude ungulates and planting a variety of deciduous shrubs. Additional private land projects have been identified for 2007.

Waterfowl

The department and California Fish and Game, in conjunction with the Pacific Flyway, developed new hunt proposals in response to a rapidly expanding Aleutian Canada goose population in coastal areas of southern Oregon and northern California. Delisted federally in 2001, this population now exceeds 100,000 geese. The draft management plan calls for a population objective of 60,000 geese and was developed with consideration for private land depredation issues. Late season (February to early March) hunting frameworks were implemented for 2007 along the southern Oregon and northern California coast. Landowners in both states are supportive of this proposal. However, some landowners have indicated they would like the season to extend later in the spring. Additionally, there are increasing complaints caused by geese on the central Oregon coast where hunting continues to be restricted to protect a sub-population of Aleutian Canada geese from Simidi Island.

Wildlife Diseases

Chronic Wasting Disease
Reducing the risk of Chronic Wasting Disease entering Oregon through carcass parts from other states is a primary concern of the department. The department continues to work in developing a process to notify hunters who will be hunting out of state of carcass import concerns and rules.

High Pathogenic Avian Influenza
The department is working under the umbrella of the National Strategic and Pacific Flyway plans for the early detection of high pathogenic avian influenza (AI) in North America. Working cooperatively with several federal and state agencies, in 2006 more than 800 samples were collected from live birds, none were positive for high pathogenic AI.

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) was first detected in Oregon in 2004. Since then it has been found in 18 of 36 counties. As of September 25, 2006, there were 63 documented human cases in Oregon. West Nile virus struck parts of Oregon during summer of 2006 and locally impacted at least one sage-grouse population associated with flood irrigated alfalfa. In response, ODFW requested a sage grouse blood-sample from each sage grouse hunter. The department took a novel approach and provided blood swab materials to each hunter (n = 1,018). Blood samples were to be returned with wings of harvested birds. Of 669 wings returned, 310 blood swabs were received from successful hunters. All of the samples were useable and tested by the National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC). All results were negative for WNV antibodies. ODFW intends to continue monitoring the situation with the assistance of hunters and the NWHC in 2007.

Wildlife Diversity Program

Oregon Conservation Strategy

The Strategy Leadership Team was formed to integrate Strategy implementation throughout the department and to build support for short-term and long-term funding for Strategy implementation. Accomplishments include: creating a Strategy Internal Communications Plan to ensure that every ODFW employee understands and promotes the Oregon Conservation Strategy; defining a structure that defines the roles and responsibilities for implementation within the department; identifying key programs and functions needed to fully implement the Strategy; and beginning to draft a Strategy budget concept for full implementation by ODFW and its partners. The budget concept will evolve over time, as ODFW staff visit with constituents around the state more clearly, identify program needs within the department, talk with partners about their project needs and refine the funding estimate.

ODFW is allocating State Wildlife Grant funds both internally and externally through competitive processes. Thirteen internal grants were awarded for ODFW staff to address data gaps and research needs identified in the Strategy. ODFW also launched external grants to provide funding for our partners' work on Strategy implementation.

ODFW continued to work with Idaho, Washington, Oregon Institute for Natural Resources and Defenders of Wildlife to develop a regional Conservation Actions Registry to track projects within and across three states. The web structure has been completed (http://www.conservationregistry.org/), and the Registry will be launched this summer.

The collaborative Fish and Wildlife Monitoring Team continues to provide guidance to ODFW as it develops its monitoring approach. The Monitoring Team has completed a draft species monitoring priority portfolio for each ecoregion and has begun work on a habitat monitoring portfolio. Strategy Staff are working with other ODFW programs to incorporate amphibian monitoring into on-going stream surveys.

Strategy Staff continue to meet with many agencies and organizations to develop and implement collaborative projects. Strategy Staff are working with Oregon Department of Transportation to develop a Wildlife Movement Strategy. We are also collaborating with major landowners crossed by state highways, such as the Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry and Bureau of Land Management. The goals include maintaining and improving natural movement

of animals across the landscape while improving safety for the traveling public. ODFW also co-hosted a Native Turtle Conservation Workshop with the Oregon Zoo. This interactive Workshop focused on two Strategy Species, the western pond turtle and western painted turtle. The topics included what Oregon's native turtles need, what information we need, and what people are doing to monitor and conserve turtles. Particularly popular were two "Habitat Clinics" that let participants determine what could be done on their land or in their neighborhood.

Teaming With Wildlife

Staff is continuing to work with a core group of supporters to build and strengthen the Oregon Teaming With Wildlife coalition which includes hunting, angling, environmental, conservation, business, agriculture, forestry, publishing, state agencies, local government and Governor Kulongoski. The department participated in the AFWA Fly-in event, and the workshop for Action Plans and State Wildlife Grants. Oregon continues to receive strong support from our Congressional delegation for SGW funding and for our Conservation Strategy.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission recently removed (delisted) the American and Arctic peregrine falcons from the Oregon Endangered Species Act. This achievement completed a status review and rule-making process which took place over the last twelve months. ODFW is initiating a similar process to consider removing the bald eagle from protection under the Oregon ESA. This action is likely following anticipated federal action later this year. The department is continuing to evaluate the adequacy of state and federal regulations following potential delisting. ODFW and partners continue to monitor both species, however resources to do so over the next few years are very limited.

The department continues to work with a coalition of partners to protect nests and monitor nesting success of coastal western snowy plovers. ODFW and Oregon Parks and Recreation continue to work on the coastal snowy plover HCP.

Surveys of pygmy rabbits have recently been concluded in central and eastern Oregon

Wolf Management

The Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan was adopted in its final form in December of 2005. The plan calls for conserving and actively managing wolves that disperse into Oregon from other states. In order to fully implement the strategies outlined in the plan, several legislative changes were required to allow more flexibility in managing wolves and addressing livestock depredation. A bill to make those changes was introduced in the 2007 Legislative session, though, for the second time, failed to pass out of committee. The plan will continue to be implemented as much as state law allows while the species remains federally listed. If wolves are delisted federally in a portion of Oregon (currently proposed), the Oregon plan will guide management of wolves in that area.

The department continues to move forward with necessary preparations (i.e., equipment and training) for the eventual return of wolves. In 2006, considerable effort was expended by the department investigating wolf observation reports. Although not confirmed, evidence collected in 2006 suggests that wolves likely occur at low densities in Northeast Oregon. The department applied to the USFWS for a Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit which would allow the department to use

lethal control of wolves involved in chronic depredation. It is unknown at this time if the department will receive such a permit.

Sensitive Species
Oregon's Sensitive Species List (SSL) is a non-regulatory tool that helps focus wildlife management and research activities to prevent native species from declining to the point of qualifying as "threatened" or "endangered." Currently, staff is updating the sensitive species list. Comments from internal and external reviewers on proposed changes to the list have been received and final consultation and research is in progress. An update to Oregon's Sensitive Species list is expected this summer (2007).

Invasive species and Wildlife Integrity Program
The department continues to map invasive vertebrates across Oregon to provide more clear insight into current and future invasive species management issues. The department continues to play an active role in the Oregon Invasive Species Council (Council) and in January 2007, the Council released a feral swine action plan. The department continues to monitor the feral swine population in the state and work with USDA-Wildlife Services to trap, control and confirm feral swine populations.

With the discovery of quagga mussels in Lake Mead, Nevada, the department has been working closely with a variety of partners to create educational outreach materials and monitor Oregon's waters for these invasive mussels. In addition, the department has continued to work with the pet trade industry to reduce or eliminate illegal trafficking and/or dumping of non-native pets.

Habitat Program

Wildlife Restoration
The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (PR) program supports operation of 16 wildlife areas, six regional habitat programs and two research programs. The 16 major wildlife areas encompass approximately 200,000 acres and are actively managed by the department, providing over two million user-days for hunting, fishing and viewing benefits to the general public. The PR program also funds a statewide habitat program designed to provide technical assistance to public land managers and private landowners to enhance and protect wildlife habitats on public and private lands across the state. Other PR funded programs include the NE and SW Research programs, Hunter Education program, Population Laboratory and the Statewide Technical Guidance program.

Priorities for the upcoming year include maintaining current service levels for Wildlife Areas, Statewide Habitat Development, Wildlife Research and Technical Guidance programs with a small increase in federal PR dollars combined with rapidly rising operating and overhead costs. Meeting federal compliance standards (e.g. ESA – Section 7, Cultural Resources, and NEPA) continues to involve significant staff time.

Wildlife Area Management Plan Review
In the fall of 2005, the department initiated a review and update of 16 ODFW wildlife areas long range management plans. The review of the first three plans has been completed. The goals and objectives of each plan were adopted by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in October 2006. The review of the next three plans has begun in earnest, with completion scheduled for

April 2007. Every six months thereafter three wildlife area plans will be reviewed and updated until the existing plans are completed. Four long range management plans will be written for those wildlife areas currently without plans.

The newly updated wildlife area management plans will offer a comprehensive vision and action plan for the next 10 years. The plans will describe management issues unique to each wildlife area and actions or strategies needed to address these issues. These actions will be implemented during the life of the plan but are subject to funding and personnel availability. Each management plan will be reviewed every five years to gauge implementation progress and will be revised in its entirety 10 years after adoption.

Bonneville Power Administration Wildlife Mitigation

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program ensures involvement in BPA's implementation of the Northwest Power Planning and Electric Conservation Act of 1980. The act mandates that BPA fully mitigate for wildlife losses caused by the development and operation of the Columbia Basin hydropower system. The Willamette Basin contains the largest unresolved debt for wildlife mitigation.

In 2006, the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program provided support for restoration and enhancement activities including exotic species removal, wetland development and native plant restoration on ODFW wildlife areas, on acquisitions purchased through the mitigation program and on municipal green spaces. Specifically, funds were provided in the Willamette Basin:

- to restore 44 acres of emergent wetlands on E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area;
- to restore 34 acres of wet prairie along the Yamhill River;
- to plant and maintain 40 acres of bottomland hardwood forests;
- reconnect 300' of side channels near the confluence of the Middle and Coast Fork of the Willamette River;
- to develop a management plan for 200 acres of wet prairie and riparian forests near Corvallis; and
- to begin restoration on 890 acres of bottomland hardwood forests, wet prairie, and upland prairie at the confluence of the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers.

Additionally, funding was provided to the Willamette Floodplain Restoration project for hydrological surveys and ecological response modeling on the Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette River. The program also provided funding to inventory Oregon white oak and ponderosa pine forests in the southern Willamette Valley. In 2007, the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program will increase restoration activities on focal habitats identified in the Willamette Subbasin Plan, pursue priority habitats for potential acquisition and conservation easements, complete the inventory of oak woodlands in the lower Willamette Basin, implement new restoration projects along the Middle Fork of the Willamette and the Santiam Rivers, begin implementing results from the Willamette Floodplain Restoration Study and assist in the completion of management plans and reviews for previous acquisition sites.

Western Oregon Stream Restoration

The Western Oregon Stream Restoration Program assists landowners and watershed councils in completing salmon habitat enhancement actions under the "Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds". In 2007 the program has scheduled 46 instream projects involving 617 structures,

eight riparian restoration projects and 32 fish passage projects. The program is also involved with the removal of two dams and restoring the stream function below those dams. In addition, the program practices adaptive management through a monitoring program that aims to evaluate the effectiveness of these actions to inform restoration specialists and managers about the efficacy of their actions.

Landowner Incentive Program
The department continues to work with interested citizens on the Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Management Program (WHCMP) and the Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program (RLTIP). This past year the department worked with Washington County to add it to the list of counties (now 15 of the 36 counties in Oregon) that allow participation in the WHCMP. The department is also working with several cities interested in allowing the RLTIP within urban areas for the first time.

Access & Habitat Program
The Access and Habitat (A&H) program is an incentive-based program aimed at improving public hunting access and wildlife habitat on Oregon's private lands. Since the program's inception in 1994, the A&H program has implemented over 350 projects. Over three million acres of private land public hunting access has been secured annually on private properties. Over one million acres of private land habitats have been enhanced or restored with A&H funds. The program has expended over $8 million of A&H funds, and secured over $18 million of cooperators funds. Over 400 sports organizations, agricultural clubs, school groups and other volunteer groups have been involved in A&H projects.

Current program priorities include:

- providing large, open access private land hunting opportunities
- improving public access to "landlocked" parcels of public land
- encouraging more private landowners to enroll in the program
- creating new projects and partnerships in locations that have historically not participated in A&H

Energy Facility Siting
The department is working with the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on a number of energy facility siting projects. The department is coordinating with ODOE and project proponents on site certificate applications for six large wind energy projects, an ethanol production facility and an integrated coal gasification – combined cycle power plant. The department is coordinating with FERC and project proponents on FERC applications and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents for two liquefied natural gas intake facilities and two large natural gas pipelines. The department expects a third liquefied natural gas intake facility and a third natural gas pipeline to start the FERC pre-filing process in summer 2007.

The department is also working with Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries on:

- coalbed natural gas extraction drilling projects (potential for 300 well sites) in Coos County, Oregon
- expansion of an underground natural gas storage facility in Columbia County, Oregon

Forest Practices

The department continues to cooperate with other state, federal, tribal, local agencies, landowners, individuals and interest groups to develop and implement fish and wildlife habitat protection and restoration activities on private, state and federal forestlands. The department continues to provide technical expertise and assistance to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) relating to Forest Practices Act regulations.

The department continues to work with ODF to promote enhancement of fish and wildlife on private forestlands. Department and ODF staff are working to understand the relationships between the Oregon Conservation Strategy and the Forestry Program for Oregon and special resource sites (spotted owls, bald eagles, other T&E species, wetlands and sensitive sites) to improve the efficiency of forest practices and overall maintenance of fish and wildlife resources.

The department also continues to provide technical assistance to ODF in developing, implementing and monitoring strategies and prescriptions to maintain and enhance functional fish and wildlife habitats pursuant to the ODF State Forest Management Plans for northwest and southwest Oregon, Elliott State Forest and federal Habitat Conservation Plans.

The BOF appointed and charged the Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee (FFAC) with developing a document that articulates the State's vision for managing federal forests in a manner that contributes to the sustainability of Oregon's overall forestland base. The committee, formed to help the BOF meet Oregon Governor Kulongoski's mandate to give Oregonians a greater voice in the management of federal lands, represents a broad range of interests including fish, wildlife and their habitats. A member of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and department staff are working to assist the FFAC in developing policy on federal forestlands that will achieve the department's goal of maintaining and enhancing functional fish and wildlife habitats on federal forestlands.

The department also continues to cooperate directly with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in determining land management direction on federal forestlands. Both the BLM and USFS initiated planning processes to revise all federal land and resource management plans in Oregon.

Land Use Planning

The department continues to work on issues relating to big game winter range issues and destination resorts. Development pressure on lands designated as winter range is becoming much more intense. Developers are proposing numerous destination resorts, especially in Jackson, Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook Counties.

Measure 37, Oregon's property rights initiative, continues to have a significant effect on development outside of urban growth boundaries.

Natural Resource Damage Assessments

In early 1999, the *M/V New Carissa* ran aground north of the entrance to Coos Bay and broke in two spilling thousands of gallons of tar-like "bunker" fuel into the environment. The department is one of several state and federal NRDA trustees working to recover damages since 1999. In January 2006, the NRDA trustees finalized and published the New Carissa Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan. In February 2006, the NRDA trustees submitted a claim to the National

Pollution Funds Center for natural resource damages over and above the $4 million received through the 2004 settlement with the responsible parties.

In 2006, department staff worked with other state and federal agency representatives and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to evaluate and select proposals for fish and wildlife enhancement project funding. The source of this funding, called the Columbia River Estuarine Coastal Fund, resulted from criminal settlement penalty monies related to the illegal discharge of freighter waste oil along the Oregon and Washington coasts. Projects eligible to receive these funds include:

- On-the-ground habitat conservation, restoration and management projects
- Landowner outreach and incentive programs
- Public use and natural/cultural projects
- Collaborative projects from local communities seeking environmentally and economically sustainable solutions; and
- Applied research directly related to improvement of natural resources management in the same geographic area

To date, grant-funding disbursements amounted to $1.3 million in the first round, and should amount to approximately $700,000 in the second round.

Oregon Department of Transportation Coordination

The Wildlife Division employs three biologists funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to assist and coordinate on transportation projects. The ODOT Coordinators continue focusing on bridge replacement issues, major construction and maintenance projects, and education of ODOT and ODFW staff on minimization and avoidance measures during construction and maintenance activities. They provide technical assistance to ODOT on fish and wildlife issues related to ODOT activities that include fish passage criteria and law requirements, federal and state permitting requirements, in-water work window extensions, in-water work area isolation and fish removal, mitigation opportunities and wildlife passage and habitat needs.

The coordinators are also working to develop awareness for the need for wildlife crossings and habitat connectivity as they relate to transportation and human safety. They joined with the Wildlife Diversity Program and ODOT staff to develop a Wildlife Movement Strategy for Oregon. They have formed a working group in response to interest from several stakeholders in understanding and minimizing the effects of highways on wildlife movement, and to address one of the key conservation issues of the Oregon Conservation Strategy: barriers to fish and wildlife movement. The working group is conducting several workshops across the state to identify linkages, which are key movement areas for a suite of species that encompass the movement needs of the broad array of wildlife.

The coordinators assist ODOT in development of programmatic agreements that streamline permitting processes and facilitate project development and delivery. They continue assisting with the development of a statewide mitigation banking strategy to address wetlands, habitats and specific species conservation and enhancement needs.

Waterway Alterations
The department continues to work with other state agencies to develop and implement a process for streamlining administration of all water-related permitting activities. The proposed process will reduce paperwork, eliminate duplication between agencies, increase certainty and timeliness for applicants and enhance resource protection. Implementation of this process will occur over the next two years.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) suspended the State Programmatic General Permit (SPGP) for fill and removal activities issued to the state last year. The process proved to be too cumbersome for both the applicants and the agencies. The state and federal agencies are working together to develop several new regional general permits (RGPs) that will replace the SPGP. The department is working with the state and federal agencies to develop a RGP that will address placement of large wood and boulders for fish enhancement. The RGP will include programmatic consultations from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In-stream gravel removal has been the subject of several USACE permit denials this past year. The National Marine Fisheries Service issued jeopardy opinions for several proposed in-water gravel bar scalping operations. The department is working with other state agencies to develop a Memorandum of Agreement for coordinating comments on large floodplain and upland gravel pits.

The department continues to coordinate with state and federal agencies on the creation and monitoring of wetland mitigation banks. There are currently 14 approved mitigation banks with six more in the review process.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION DIVISION

Diamond Lake Outreach
Information and Education Division staff provided communications, media relations and education outreach support for the Diamond Lake Restoration Project, an ambitious $6 million project to remove invasive tui chub from one of Oregon's most popular high mountain lakes. The project received extensive, science-based coverage from the media, supporting a multi-pronged information and education outreach effort that included personal meetings, group presentations, newsletters and inter-agency collaboration. The result of outreach was overwhelming public support for the project.

Easy Angling Oregon
Significant media coverage of the Easy Angling Oregon Program was achieved through news releases and personal conversations with journalists about new books, events and the web site. The Easy Angling Program was highlighted in statewide and local newspapers as well as several TV spots. Within the first two months, we distributed 20,000 print copies of the booklets.

Oregon Conservation Strategy Outreach
Staff is currently implementing inreach and outreach plans for promotion and acceptance of the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The goal is to encourage participation in the Oregon

Conservation Strategy and promote Strategy-related work being done by ODFW and partners via a monthly e-newsletter, On the Ground: the Oregon Conservation Strategy in action.

Promotion of Hunting Opportunities

The Information and Education Division developed fall and spring hunting forecasts. The reports were well received and aimed at promoting hunting opportunities for big game and game birds in Oregon.

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH & PARKS
Wildlife Division
Issues Update – July, 2007

Missouri River Reservoir Conditions

Lake Oahe is about two feet higher than it was one year ago at this time. Rain over most of the eastern and southern portions of the Missouri River basin have resulted in record low releases from Gavins Point Dam.

The rising water levels in upstream reservoirs have provided exceptional spawning conditions for fish, which means future fishing should be good.

Anglers coming to the Missouri River to fish are reporting excellent catch rates and healthy fish in 2007. Boat ramps will be maintained in all areas so access should remain at last year's levels throughout the summer and early fall. The Missouri River and the nice adjacent campgrounds continue to be destination spots for vacationing anglers from all over the country.

All this points to the "up and down nature" of managing the Missouri River. We have been through a long-term drought in the upper basin of the River and it has resulted in record low water levels in the major reservoirs located in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. The bottom line is that there has been insufficient mountain snowpack over the past 10 years to gain water storage levels. The snowpack this again this year is forecasted to be approximately 70% of normal above the Oahe Reservoir. The only reason the current reservoir levels are rising this spring is the substantial amount of rainfall in reaches below Gavins Point dam. That allows the COE to reduce the amount of outflow from the upper basin reservoirs along the mainstem and results in some rising reservoir levels.

However, we all have to keep in mind that while "saving water" is certainly a plus, there is still no substitute for local rainfall and snowpack in the upper basin to revitalize reservoir water levels on a more permanent basis. Extended drought continues to tax the ability of the COE to provide adequate service to ALL beneficial uses of the Missouri River under the Flood Control Act. Certainly, seeking changes to the existing Flood Control Act of 1944 to address the current economic, biological, social and cultural status of the whole Basin is needed, especially during times of drought and for the predicted climate change.

Fisheries Program

Fish Hatchery System Upgrade – Renovation of the state's three fish hatcheries is nearing completion. Construction activities are within schedules and McNenny Fish Hatchery, located near Spearfish, has fish in the recently completed rearing building. Asbestos removal, electrical upgrades, addition of ADA restroom facilities and installation of new attic insulation will be completed this summer.

Cleghorn Springs State Fish Hatchery, located in Rapid City, has undergone the most change. Outdoor serial raceways have been replaced with indoor circular tanks. Spring

water collection has been improved to increase pumping efficiency and degassing. In addition a shop and new office are being constructed. Work at this facility has progressed ahead of schedule and will allow incubation of eggs to occur this fall. Final completion is scheduled for February of 2008.

Work at Blue Dog State Fish Hatchery has been challenged by the cold winter and wet spring weather. Rearing pond renovation is scheduled to allow modified fingerling rearing to occur the summer of 2007. Work is scheduled to be completed this fall and the facility will be fully operational for the 2008 fish rearing season.

Statewide Water Levels Issues - Continuing drought since 2000 has impacted fisheries across the state. Stream, river and lake levels, and flows are low. Historically, fisheries in South Dakota follow trends in water conditions. Good water conditions produce good fisheries and fishing license sales verify those facts.

Many Black Hills streams are experiencing low flows and do not have adequate water quantity. Subsequently, stocking scheduled for 2007 has been modified. Small impoundments in the Black Hills are low and will not be stocked during the warm part of the summer. Spring rises and flushing flows have not occurred for many years and stream productivity has been reduced. While South Dakota has received much needed moisture in the eastern third of the state, lake and stream water levels in western South Dakota including the Black Hills, continue to be low.

Early May thunder showers have produced stream and river flooding and increased lake levels in parts of eastern South Dakota. Excessive rainfall in local areas has caused dam spillways to erode and roads to be washed out. Lake levels that were low just a few weeks ago will be filling and in some cases overflowing. Conditions favor fish but have caused issues with lake shore property owners, farmers and those who manage roads.

Walleye Spawning Successful – April began with cold and snow in South Dakota. Timing was such that walleyes had not yet spawned and the inclement weather just prolonged beginning of spawning. The net result was a short spawning run but strong. Many years the run gets extended as cold weather hits during the run. Water levels have been on the rise in Lake Oahe and many eastern South Dakota lakes since walleyes spawned fueling the expectations for a successful natural spawn. Fisheries crews easily met egg goals and plans are in place to meet all walleye stocking requests.

Chronic Wasting Disease Status

We have been conducting surveillance for CWD since 1997 after it was discovered in captive elk herds in this state. CWD was first found in free-ranging wildlife in the fall of 2001, when a white-tailed deer was voluntarily submitted for testing and subsequently was found to be positive with the disease.

Our final results for 2006 found 7 CWD positive deer and 4 CWD positive elk. All of our CWD positive animals continue to be found in the Black Hills or the surrounding Counties of Pennington, Custer and Fall River. In summary - since 1997, South Dakota has tested 14,838 wild, free ranging deer and elk and has found 58 cases of CWD (39 deer and 19 elk). We will continue work with other state, federal, and tribal agencies on the CWD issue within South Dakota, and on a national level.

2007 Walk-In Area Program

The Walk-In Area program continues to be a model hunting access program, with numerous other states using South Dakota's program when they establish their own programs. The continued success of the program to secure public access to private lands is largely due to the payment system where GFP pays landowners up to $1 per acre per year for access, plus a bonus payment of up to $5 per acre per year for permanent, undisturbed cover in the state's prime pheasant hunting areas. The $5 per acre bonus payment will only be made if the cover remains undisturbed through the hunting season. For example, Walk-In Areas that have land enrolled in USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) must remain unmowed or ungrazed to receive the $5 per acre bonus payment. If for some reason a producer needs to hay or graze the tract, the payment falls back to the basic $1 per acre. Landowners can also receive an additional one-time bonus payment of up to $1 per acre for each hunting season remaining on their CRP contract if they enroll their CRP land as a Walk-In Areas for the duration of the CRP contract. Land not containing permanent, undisturbed cover can be enrolled for up to $1 per acre per year (actual price will depend on the type of hunting opportunity available on the site) anywhere in the state, as long as they have sufficient habitat to offer an opportunity to harvest game.

Enrollments for the 2007 hunting season is currently underway, but near future contract expirations of about 220,000 acres of CRP will likely have a negative impact on Walk-In Area enrollments in 2007. In response, we have challenged our regional staff to try pilot access projects in each region to secure access to lands that we have been unable lease through our traditional Walk-In Area program. For example, GFP Region 1 staff is considering implementing a program similar to Montana's Block Management program to secure additional access.

CRP Update

Approximately 72 percent of acres enrolled in South Dakota under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) were scheduled to expire from 2007-10. USDA announced in January 2006 that they would offer 2-5-year contract extensions and 10 & 15-year new contracts to CRP expiring in 2007-10. Almost 459,000 acres expiring in 2007 were extended or renewed for 2 or more years and almost 236,000 acres expiring in 2008-10 were extended or renewed. This will bring CRP enrollments in South Dakota down from 1.55 million acres to slightly more than 1.27 million acres in 2007. While this will result in a net decrease of 278,000 CRP acres, we have significantly more CRP than what would have remained in South Dakota had FSA not offered early extensions and new contracts on expiring contracts.

Long-term, CRP enrollment in South Dakota will depend on conservation provisions in the 2007 Farm Bill, structure of the commodity support programs (in the current Farm Bill is more lucrative to grow some program crops) and competition for cropland to grow corn for ethanol production.

Grassland Conversion

Current commodity programs in the 2002 Farm Bill, changes in agricultural technology and recent high crop prices have encouraged hundreds of acres of habitat to be converted to

cropland. According research conducted by Ducks Unlimited, the overall average loss of native grassland in the Missouri Coteau of North and South Dakota has been approximately 0.5 percent per year, with some areas approaching nearly 2 percent per year since 1984. According to their research, an annual rate of loss approaching 2 percent per year would result in a loss of one-half the remaining native grassland in 34 years. Even more disturbing is that this trend in conversion has accelerated since 2000. From 2002 through 2006, almost 300,000 acres of native grasslands were converted to cropland in South Dakota.

While the 2002 Farm Bill contains a provision referred to as Sodbuster, the intent of the current Sodbuster provision was to reduce soil erosion rates on newly converted highly erodible lands, not to prevent tillage of native grassland. Under current Sodbuster provisions, producers who bring newly converted highly erodible lands into production must file a form with USDA and file a soil conservation plan with the Natural Resource Conservation Service prior to converting the land. In most instances, the soil conservation plan merely requires crop residue management. If the tract is not classified as highly erodible, then no soil conservation plan is needed.

In response to the grassland conversion issue, many groups have proposed that a "Sodsaver" provision replace Sodbuster in the 2007 Farm Bill. Under Sodsaver, federal subsidy support, including commodity, conservation and energy program incentives, would be eliminated on any land without prior cropping history to discourage the conversion on native grasslands.

Wetland protection in South Dakota – loss of important federal protections, the need for clarity in federal wetland law and reauthorization of "Swampbuster"

Wetland conservation and protection in South Dakota has long been a contentious issue. Oftentimes it has pitted landowners, homeowners and developers against the Army Corps of Engineers, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA), state and federal wildlife and natural resource management agencies and non-governmental organizations. Nevertheless, the Corps/EPA Section 404 Clean Water Act (CWA) permit program, and perhaps more importantly, the "Swampbuster" conservation provisions of the federal farm program have been vital in conserving South Dakota's internationally important wetland resources.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's 2001 decision in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANNC) v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and its' more recent decision in the joint cases of Rapanos v. United Stated and Carabell v. US Army Corps of Engineers, have resulted in the outright loss of protection, and unparalleled confusion or uncertainty regarding protection of countless wetlands and small streams across South Dakota. Of particular concern is loss of federal Clean Water Act protection of isolated wetlands, wetlands not directly connected to navigable waters and small, often intermittent streams.

South Dakota's Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) wetlands are of international importance in sustaining viable populations of migratory birds and other wildlife, but are now suffering the consequences of rolling the regulatory calendar back by more than 30 years. It is estimated that that between 91% and 95% of the isolated wetlands in portions of eastern South Dakota are no longer afforded CWA protection due to the SWANNC decision. The Rapanos/Carabell decision may make the situation worse, depending on the Corps

regulatory response and subsequent court interpretations of these decisions. The SD Corps Regulatory Office has not received any substantive guidance on how to administer CWA regulations in light of Rapanos. Given the readily available information available from the Corps it is extremely difficult to ascertain the real effects of the SWANCC and Rapanos decisions in South Dakota.

Swampbuster - now the only protection for most SD wetlands - With such diminished and uncertain CWA protection of wetlands and streams, Swampbuster is now the only program protecting most of South Dakota's wetlands that occur in agricultural settings. However, these conservation provisions remain extremely controversial within the agricultural community. Lucrative commodity support programs have resulted in increased pressure from the agriculture community for more flexibility in drainage of wetlands. Such pressure has resulted in wetland losses on agricultural lands in some areas of eastern SD. Maintenance of current Swampbuster conservation compliance provisions in the Farm Bill is a priority as we continue our effort in helping craft the 2007 Farm Bill.

In general the wildlife community has put much emphasis on fine tuning a more wildlife friendly 2007 Farm Bill and this must continue to be a priority. However, we also suggest that an effort to reestablish and clarify federal protection of all waters of the U.S. under the CWA needs similar attention. While it was unsuccessful, the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act of 2005 (S912 & H.R. 1356) is a model for a legislative remedy that is essential to restore protection of the nations wetlands and small streams. The regulatory agencies, other resource agencies, the regulated public, the general public and the conservation community all deserve the clarity that could be provided by a legislative remedy to the current shortcomings of the Clean Water Act.

Pheasant Population Status

The 2006 South Dakota pheasant season was slightly lower than the 40-year high population level from 2005. Some 79,953 resident pheasant hunters and 98,212 nonresidents harvested a total of 1,846,400 pheasants. Our pre-hunt population estimate was just over 8.4 million birds. The average total season bag was just over 10 birds per hunter and the direct economic impact of pheasant hunting to South Dakota is estimated at $156,000,000.

Four years of mild winters and favorable conditions during hatch have been significant factors contributing to exceptional pheasant numbers. However, at the corner-stone of these incredibly high pheasant numbers are Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres. If CRP acres are maintained at current levels, pheasant numbers will remain strong, resulting in quality pheasant hunting in South Dakota. However, with thousands of acres set to expire between 2007 and 2009, pheasant numbers and hunting success could reflect the overall net loss of CRP acres.

Elk and Deer/Herd Reduction Efforts

After reviewing 2006 harvest data and hearing from elk hunters and landowners it appears that that elk herd reduction efforts of the past few years have been successful. Aggressive allocations of antlerless elk tags have resulted in elk herds that are comprised of nearly 50% bulls. Consequently, bull elk license allocations for the Black Hills increased in 2007 while cow elk license allocations declined.

Liberal license allocations and "shoulder" seasons have resulted in some success in reaching deer management objectives. However, unlike elk, we are not able to issue every license allocated. This is most pronounced in areas of the state where the human population is relatively low. A movement towards more double-tag licenses, where the second tag is only valid for an antlerless deer, has put more tags in hunter pockets. The additional challenge is to motivate hunters to fill those tags.

To encourage antlerless deer harvest, the Department implemented a pilot program in 2006 that offered financial assistance for commercial processing costs of *antlerless* deer that are donated to needy families under the Sportsmen Against Hunger program. A new mechanism where hunters could make financial donations to the pilot program when applying for hunting licenses resulted in just over $23,000 in donations. In order to ensure that the budget was not exceeded, hunters were required to obtain the $30 processing certificates in advance of taking deer to processors for donation to the program. Hunters used 391 of the 1,106 processing certificates that they obtained during the 2006-07 deer hunting seasons. We had budgeted enough funding to pay for processing of 3,400 deer. During the second year of this 2-year pilot program, the Department will be making numerous changes intended to induce substantial growth in program participation. These changes include: (1) expanding the pool of eligible license types to any deer license but retain the requirement that donated animals must be antlerless deer (2) allowing certificates to be issued by processors when a deer is donated to the program, and (3) increasing the value of certificates from $30 to $50. If this revised program establishes the need, a permanent funding source will need to be identified should the merits of the pilot program justify its implementation as operational.

Mountain Lion Hunting

The GFP Commission has proposed a third mountain lion hunting season for SD. Changes from 2006 include: (1) dissolving the separate Black Hills and Prairie units and establish one statewide unit, (2) dissolving separate Black Hills and Prairie licenses and establish one resident license that is valid statewide and set the fee for this license at $15, and (3) increasing the harvest limit to 35 (25 in 2006) mountain lions or 15 (8 in 2006) female mountain lions. During the previous 2 hunting seasons, SD residents were eligible to purchase Black Hills unit licenses but only landowners were allowed to purchase licenses for the prairie unit. Prairie unit licenses were valid only on landowners' own property. During the previous 2 seasons, hunters have shot a total of14 male and 15 female mountain lions.

Surveillance Plan for Avian Influenza

The department collected a total of 1,023 samples from live waterfowl and shorebirds and hunter-harvested waterfowl in 2006. Live bird samples were collected during summer capture and banding operations. No samples were collected by use of lethal collection. Hunter-harvested samples were collected through a predetermined network of avid waterfowl hunters, most of which were also department employees hunting on personal time. Northeast South Dakota has the highest density of migrating waterfowl and shorebirds and therefore most of the birds sampled came from that area in 2006.

In 2007 we intend to participate with other Central Flyway states to obtain our quotas using live bird and hunter-harvested samples. It's our understanding that the primary species have changed a bit and we intend to follow the Central Flyway Surveillance Plan. In addition, we may become involved with morbidity/mortality surveillance.

Conservation Officer Communication Enhancement Efforts

A series of conflicts over the past several years between some northwestern South Dakota agriculture producers and Game, Fish and Parks drew attention to the communication practices of the Division of Wildlife. In particular, the department's approach to conducting compliance checks of hunters and anglers on private lands was questioned and challenged during the last three South Dakota Legislative Sessions. In essence, proposed legislation would have limited the ability of conservation officers to enter private lands without landowner permission. This legislation would have had a significant impact on the ability of conservation officers to enter 'open fields' to conduct field compliance checks of hunters, anglers and trappers and hampered the department's ability to effectively enforce state law and agency regulations.

South Dakota Governor Rounds challenged the Division to share its communication successes, explore ways to improve communication with the public in our state and specifically focus on ways to improve agency relationships with agriculture producers. The Division of Wildlife developed a general strategic plan to help guide improvements to agency communication efforts and Division of Wildlife supervisors and administrators then identified additional focus areas where specific efforts were undertaken to enhance conservation officer outreach and communication efforts with landowners, sportsmen and other publics.

The 8 objectives listed below were identified by Wildlife Division Field Operations supervisors as 'high priority' focus areas.

Conservation Officer Communications Enhancement and Outreach Objectives:

- Develop and Formalize a Process to Document Landowner and other Citizen Contacts made by Division of Wildlife Conservation Officers and Other Staff
- Review and Revise Conservation Officer Work Responsibilities and Job Classification
- Develop a Communications Planning Process for Conservation Officers
- Review and Revise Conservation Officer Trainee Hiring and Screening Processes
- Review and Revise the Field Training Program for Conservation Officer Trainees
- Assess Conservation Officer Communications Training Needs and Develop a Communications Training Program
- Develop a Mission Statement and Philosophy Regarding Division of Wildlife's Role in Regulating Hunting, Fishing, Boating and other Conservation-Related Outdoor Activities
- Review Procedures Used to Document, Respond and Monitor/Review Citizen Complaints Against Conservation Officers and Other Staff

Additional training was provided to agency staff during the course of the past year. Agency field training officers, supervisors and conservation officers attended training on the "Reno Method" of field training which focused on the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills in newly hired conservation officers. In addition, training also focused on topics associated with the development of 'emotional intelligence' for law enforcement staff.

This new model field training program utilizes an entirely new and unique approach to the field training of conservation officers by incorporating the use of critical thinking and problem solving skills and promotes the utilization of community resources in conservation law enforcement efforts. Additional improvements in the new field training program were also implemented. Graduates of the program indicate the training is providing them with the skills and confidence to develop important community relationships and solve problems by working with their community leaders and other constituents.

Late in 2006, the Wildlife Division completed development and printing of a "Landowner Guide to Division of Wildlife Programs". The Guide contains general information on Conservation Law Enforcement, Private Lands Fisheries and Habitat Programs, and Wildlife Damage Programs. The Guide can be 'customized' by individual conservation officers by incorporating existing agency informational pamphlets on a wide variety of subjects of interest to the farm and ranch community and will be used as an "ice-breaker" of sorts by conservation officers who make contacts with farmers and ranchers.

Over the past several months, the Division has also been working with several other conservation agencies across the US to develop an interpersonal skills training program for conservation law enforcement staff. Efforts are currently underway to finalize funding for "The IMPACT Project" which will provide conservation law enforcement supervisors with an interpersonal skills training and evaluation tool. At this time, 13 states and 2 conservation law enforcement associations (National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chief's and the Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers) have indicated a willingness to help fund this project.

Prairie Dog Management Status

South Dakota Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation and Management Plan - The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and Department of Agriculture remain under the guidance of the South Dakota Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation and Management Plan (http://www.sdgfp.info/Wildlife/hunting/Prairiedogfinalplan.pdf). The primary goal of the plan is to manage for long-term, self-sustaining prairie dog populations in SD while avoiding negative impacts to landowners. Action items outlined in the plan include establishing and maintaining a prairie dog population monitoring program every three years, creation of a private landowner incentive program in the black-footed ferret reintroduction area, conduct control efforts on private lands adjacent to public lands, and to develop a disease monitoring protocol for detecting sylvatic plague.

- In 2006, we conducted our second survey of the majority of the state's prairie dog acres. We expect to have results available before summer, 2007. It does appear that prairie dog populations in SD have expanded, by approximately one-third, from where they were in 2003.
- A private landowner incentive program is now available for individuals within the Conata Basin, black-footed ferret reintroduction area. Participating landowners agree to maintain, enhance, or create an agreed upon number of prairie dog acres in exchange for a yearly payment of $12.20/acre. There has been limited interest in this program to date.
- The 2006-07 prairie dog control program received many more complaints than received in the previous two years. Superficial examination suggested more acres poisoned for many of the repeat complaint areas – basically we are treating the same acres every year. Treatment followed guidance provided in the state Prairie

Dog Conservation and Management Plan. A total of 26,006.21 acres were treated in 2005-60, with approximately 2,000 acres remaining that did not get treated due to a lack of time.

- It is not clear that the Shannon County plague outbreak had an effect on either the statewide prairie dog survey or on the control program. In late 2005 and early 2006 some sero-positive coyotes have been taken in areas well east and north of the large outbreak spot in Shannon County. One of these coyotes was killed in extreme Mellette County. However, all monitoring surveys indicate no indication of plague in prairie dog has been observed near the successful black-footed ferret reintroduction site (Conata Basin).
- Initial work preparing for the upcoming prairie dog control season was begun in late May, 2007. Bid request letters for contractors will be sent out the first half of June. During that same time period both inter- and intra-agency coordination meetings will be held to help facilitate cooperative prairie dog poisoning efforts.

Prairie Dog Management on U.S. Forest Service Lands - The South Dakota Departments of Agriculture and Game, Fish and Parks are both active participants (via formal cooperative agency status) in the US Forest Service efforts to develop a new prairie dog management plan amendment for the Nebraska National Forest (Forest). On 1 June 2007, the draft Environmental Impact Statement will be released in the Federal Register. The proposed action is to amend current black-tailed prairie dog management on the Forest by specifying the desired range of prairie dog acres provided on the Forest and to allow toxicant use if acreage exceeds desired range or multiple use objectives. The current plan as modified in 1999 has a special management emphasis for black-footed ferrets in the Conata Basin and does not allow for any rodenticide use other than on boundary areas. The state position is that our original conditions for ferret introductions should be maintained. Thus we are requesting that a range of prairie dogs be maintained at between 8,000 and 12,000 acres in the Conata Basin and that rodenticides be used as management tool to achieve these acreage goals. Affected National Grasslands within South Dakota include Buffalo Gap and Ft. Pierre National Grasslands. Projected completion of the LRMP amendment process is October 2007.

Petition to List the Black-tailed Prairie Dog - In early February, four conservation groups filed suit with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service challenging the agency's decision not to list the black-tailed prairie dog as threatened.

Wildlife Action Plan and Wildlife Diversity Funding

SDGFP implemented its first Wildlife Action Plan Competitive Grants program in 2006, funding 3 projects from outside the agency with a total of $225,000 of its State Wildlife Grants (SWG) allocation. The successful applicants provided the required nonfederal match. The following projects were funded:

1. An evaluation of habitat use and requirements for grassland bird species of greatest conservation need in central and western South Dakota. Principal investigators Kristel Bakker, Dakota State University and Charles Dieter, South Dakota State University.
2. Estimating conversion of native grassland to cropland in South Dakota: Loss of habitat for grassland-nesting birds. Principal investigator Scott Stephens, Ducks Unlimited.

3. Understanding the relationship between prairie dog ecology and black-footed ferret resource selection. Principal investigator Joshua Millspaugh, University of Missouri-Columbia.

SDGFP will again set aside a portion of its SWG allocation for Wildlife Action Plan Competitive Grants to continue efforts to implement the plan and to increase visibility for this funding source. Information on past and current SWG projects conducted in South Dakota is posted on the Wildlife Diversity Program's website: http://www.sdgfp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/wcrp.pdf.

SDGFP continues its participation in the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition effort, led by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. South Dakota coalition currently has 122 members, representing several hundred thousand South Dakotans. Governor Mike Rounds recently joined the coalition. South Dakota's congressional delegation continues to be very supportive of efforts to secure stable, long-term funding for rare species and habitats. South Dakota's Teaming coalition can be viewed at the following website: http://www.sdgfp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/teaming.htm

Black-footed Ferret Populations

South Dakota currently hosts 4 black-footed ferret reintroduction projects, including the Conata Basin/Badlands site in southwestern South Dakota, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in northcentral South Dakota, Rosebud Sioux Tribe in southcentral South Dakota, and Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in central South Dakota. A project to introduce ferrets at Wind Cave National Park is pending – provided some local issues are resolved.

Wildlife Damage Management Status Update

The 110th US Congress passed a 2007 budget that removed all USDA pass-through funds to the SDGFP Animal Damage Control Program. These federal funds supporting the ADC program had been received for well over 30 years. The lost funds amount to approximately $600,000 annually (in 2007 dollars), which comprised about 40% of the overall ADC Program fiscal year budget.

Cooperative efforts between SDGFP and USDA-APHIS-WS identified $277,000 in 'stop-gap funding assistance' that would help assist in the uninterrupted operations of the ADC Program through September, 2007. The 2008 federal budget shortfall for the program still exists, however, although SD Sen. Tim Johnson's office has initiated efforts to encourage Congress to provide a full funding request for the ADC Program in South Dakota. No action has been taken on the 2008 funding request by the Ag. Appropriations Subcommittees at this time.

The GFP WDM program is unique to all other states in that the program includes a predator and nuisance animal response program (Animal Damage Control section – ADC). The majority of the ADC program's responsibilities are covered by APHIS-WS in all other states. Approximately 40% of the ADC program is funded through USDA; half of that with a Grant-in-Aid and the rest funded by an Agriculture appropriations line-item. If either of these federal funding sources were to be eliminated, the ADC program would not be able to continue to provide the same level of landowner services mandated by law. Communications between GFP, the Governor's office, the state's US elected officials, and

the various state agriculture groups continues on this issue in hope that additional program funding will be forthcoming.

While the state experienced another mild winter this past year, significant numbers of Canada goose and ringneck pheasant (yes pheasant) depredation complaints are being addressed by GFP staff this year. Young Canada geese and molting adults are causing damage to soybean crops while pheasants are causing damage to emerging corn plants. This is not unusual, but damage complaints are particularly numerous this year.

Western Association Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Summer 2007, Flagstaff, Arizona
State of the State Report

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Period December, 2006 – May, 2007

DEPARTMENT NEWS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

80TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE

The Texas legislature convened Tuesday 1/9/07 in Austin. The stakes are high for TPWD, which has requested millions of dollars in additional funding for parks and other important needs. However, conservation needs are only one factor among many legislators must weigh. Recent newspaper reports have listed immigration, electric rates, coal-fired power plants, prisons and education as key issues for the session. Water resource issues are also loomed large, perhaps the most important long-term conservation topic of the session.

SB 3 INCLUDES ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS, RESERVOIR DESIGNATIONS

SB 3, relating to the development, management, and preservation of the water resources of the state also included articles or sections covering environmental flows, water conservation and planning, land stewardship, public participation in groundwater management processes, irrigation systems and the legislative designation of unique reservoir sites and stream segments of unique ecological value. The bill also established a legislative joint interim committee to review financing of water infrastructure projects and funding for state agency water programs. The bill's Article 1 focused on environmental flows and includes consensus language that mirrors HB 3 by Rep. Puente, a bill which focused on providing political and scientific processes to make sure enough water flows down rivers and into bays to keep them ecologically healthy. Unlike the House bill, SB 3 included an article which contains legislative findings establishing the need for designation of unique reservoir sites necessary to meet the future water needs of the state, including the designation of 19 sites identified in the 2007 State Water Plan as having unique value for the construction of a dam and reservoir. SB 3's water conservation article recognized that responsible land stewardship enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's watersheds and encouraged responsible land stewardship as a significant water management tool.

"TEXAS THE STATE OF SPRINGS" TV DOCUMENTARY AIRS

"Texas the State of Springs," the latest department video program about water resources, aired Feb. 15 on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations statewide. Broadcast news legend Walter Cronkite will again lent his distinctive voice to this latest project. "Texas the State of Springs" examined the historical decline of springs across the state and explore current groundwater and land use issues that impact spring flow. It looked at groundwater pumping water marketing in rural areas, how proper land management can enhance and even restore spring flow and how conservation easements and land acquisitions can protect

watersheds. It concluded with how urban homeowners can have a positive impact and reduce water bills through native plant landscaping and water conservation. The documentary is made possible in part by funding from underwriting sponsor Shell Oil Company, along with patron sponsor The Partnership Foundation and supporting sponsors the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and Lower Colorado River Authority.

CHILDREN IN NATURE MOVEMENT GAINING MOMENTUM CHILDREN AND NATURE MOVEMENT GAINING MOMENTUM

The national grass roots Children and Nature Movement continues to grow, with TPWD and Texas playing an active role. Twenty-two U.S. regions have now launched or are considering campaigns to reconnect children with the world of nature and the outdoors. New resources are now available for movement leaders, including two key tools for communicating the need, reasons, urgency and scientific foundations for taking action to re-connect children and nature. These are a report listing 20 premier research studies on the benefits of connecting children to nature, plus a selection of conference resources, including online video excerpts, from the 2006 Dialogue on Children and Nature conference

WILDLIFE

SMUGGLERS REPORTED AT WEST TEXAS WILDLIFE MGT AREA

A recent rash of illegal drug smuggling is plaguing a West Texas wildlife management area, the latest activity in a long-running problem. A key factor driving the situation is that smugglers are using Elephant Mountain WMA as a back road route to go around and avoid a U.S. Border Patrol check station north of the area on Highway 118 south of Alpine. In early spring, the border patrol stopped a vehicle exiting the WMA reportedly carrying 1,200 pounds of marijuana. Besides the obvious danger and illegality, the activity creates management problems for Elephant Mt. WMA. "Cut fences and new locks appearing on our gates are fairly common," said Mike Pittman of the Wildlife Division, who has been working with authorities to try to stop the activity for years. TPWD continues to work closely with the border patrol, U.S. Customs office, county sheriff's deputies, and department game wardens to deal with the problem. Most recently, agents stopped 8 backpackers hauling 800 pounds of marijuana in the remote areas of this management area.

WHOOPING CRANE CONTINUES COMEBACK

Once down to about 15, the world's only wild flock of whooping cranes has continued its comeback, this year numbering a record 237 birds in their Texas Coastal Bend wintering ground, up from 220 last year. Tom Stehn, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who tracks the flock at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, said 45 cranes were born this year, including seven sets of surviving twins, which is unusual for the species. Whooping cranes were one of the first species to appear to rebound from extinction over the past century thanks to legislation, conservation agency efforts and public awareness. Their numbers have slowly increased since counting started in 1938. Stehn credited this year's record number of young birds to mild weather at their nesting grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada.

CAVE CREEK SUPER HUNT INVOLVES DOZENS OF RANCHES, YOUTH

Forty-nine young people from across Texas had an outstanding experience in what organizers called the state's largest youth deer hunt this past season. Twelve ranches opened their gates for free to the 3rd annual Cave Creek Super Hunt near Stonewall in Gillespie County, sponsored by the Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) in partnership with Austin Woods and Waters and the Cave Creek Wildlife Management Association. A key goal of the Super Hunt is to promote wildlife management. Cave Creek WMA's youth hunt program chairman Ronnie Ottmers said the youth hunt is important to help maintain a healthy deer population, and he hopes it will build positive relationships between landowners and young hunters. Providing a safe, affordable hunting experience is also a major focus, according to Doug DuBois of TYHP, who organized the hunt. "Our goal is to have parents and youth in the blinds, having that quiet time together and watching nature," Dubois said. The Texas Youth Hunting Program is run by the Texas Wildlife Association in partnership with TPWD.

TPWD TRAPS, RELEASES WILD TURKEYS

Department Wildlife Division staff are working with counterparts in other states on a research-oriented wild turkey restocking effort in East Texas expected to run several weeks. Department employees, in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation and private landowners, released 16 hens last week in Anderson County. There are two wild turkey sub-species in Texas. The turkeys released were Eastern wild turkeys trapped in South Carolina. A sample of the turkeys was fitted with radio transmitters and had DNA samples taken, part of a research effort involving Stephen F. Austin State University and other partners. Biologists hope to learn why turkey stockings in previous years have been successful in many Texas counties, and less successful in some others. Meanwhile, department employees, the NWTF and other partners were separately involved in trapping Rio Grande wild turkeys in the Panhandle region to assist with turkey restoration in Nevada. Both efforts show the reciprocal relationships and coordination common among game agencies in the various U.S. states.

NEW STATE RECORD BIGHORN SHEEP

A ram that Stephanie Altimus harvested in the Beach Mountains in early January should stand as the new state record desert bighorn sheep. The record sheep scored 184 points under the Boone and Crockett scoring system following the required 60-day required drying period for scoring purposes. The record eclipses Terry Fricks' previous state best of 183 5/8 taken on Elephant Mountain WMA two years ago. Larry and Stephanie Altimus of Arizona had purchased one of nine Texas bighorn permits issued to private landowners this year. Michail Pittman, Elephant Mountain WMA manager and official B&C scorer, scored the record ram. In all, 12 bighorn permits were issued this year, three to be used for public hunts. A bighorn ran scoring 179 was also taken this year at Elephant Mountain WMA with a permit donated to the Texas Bighorn Society, which auctioned it off with proceeds going into the bighorn sheep program.

ENGELING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA DEDICATES NEW FACILITY

At the end of May, TPWD's Gus Engeling WMA hosted a gathering of local school officials, the mayors of Athens and Palestine, and three generations of Engelings. A host of dignitaries stood by and watched as the great-grandchildren of former TPWD biologist Gus Engeling and

his wife and former Wildlife Division administrative employee Lisa, cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially open the WMA's new Wildlife Conservation Center. The WMA was originally named for landowner M.L. Derden, who sold much of the current 10,958 acres to the state. It was renamed for Engeling, the first TPWD biologist assigned to the area, after he was shot to death by a poacher in 1951. The center will offer educational opportunities on a wide range of topics geared toward adults and children, varying from landowner field days to school, Scout and 4-H field trips and conservation education programs. The center was a dream-in-the-making for Haucke, who persevered for 10 years to see it completed. It was his dream to see a facility at the WMA that could be used to teach conservation and introduce students to the world of outdoor learning.

UPDATED MOUTAIN LION BROCHURE AVAILABLE

A revised version of the TPWD tri-fold brochure Mountain Lions in Texas is now available in pdf form online, and has been shipped to state parks, wildlife management areas and field offices. The brochure revision is connected with TPWD's Mountain Lion-Human Interaction Response Procedure completed earlier this year. The revised brochure tells people how to report mountain lion sightings, provides safety guidance for property owners and wildlands users, and offers basic natural history and biological information. The brochure contains some new information, including "Despite reports of mountain lion attacks on people in California, mountain lion attacks are rare. Only three attacks on humans in Texas have been reported since 1980, all of them in remote areas of West Texas. From 1890-2001, there were 98 attacks across the U.S. and Canada, and only 17 of those were fatal. Cougar attacks have increased during the past few decades but are still much rarer than other hazards from animals or nature." A Spanish-language version of the brochure is in development.

INLAND FISHERIES

GOLDEN ALGA BACK IN TEXAS

Golden alga is reported at several lakes and river systems in north and west Texas. Inland Fisheries biologists and outside partners are monitoring several other water bodies. Although no other fish kills outside of the kill at Lake Spence have been reported, water samples are being analyzed from other locations in the Colorado River Basin (Beal Creek and C.J. Kelly Parks in Midland, Colorado City Lake, and Moss Creek Lake), the Brazos River Basin (Lake Whitney, Lake Granbury, and Possum Kingdom Reservoir) and the Red River Basin (Lake Texoma).

MEETING SET WITH MEXICAN OFFICIALS RE: FALCON LAKE

Department Inland Fisheries and Law Enforcement leaders and staff met with officials of the Tamaulipas state government in hoping to resolve illegal commercial gill netting on Falcon Lake. Game wardens have sustained a focused enforcement effort on the border lake for years, arresting illegal commercial anglers from Mexico and confiscating nets, boats and motors. Mexican authorities have indicated some willingness to explore ecologically sustainable fishing regulations and alternative ways for local communities to generate incomes.

TOYOTA TEXAS BASS CLASSIC SHINES

A stiff north breeze and morning temperatures near 40 degrees kept the public crowds down at Lake Fork the first day of this bass tournament

but the second day was beautiful for the fish-friendly Toyota Texas Bass Classic. In spite of chilly weather on the first day, the 160 pros still went out and caught plenty of fish. This tournament format was different than traditional bass tournaments and utilized a team approach involving four person teams. It is also the first where most of the fish were weighed with scales right in the boats, respecting the restrictive 16-to-24 inch fish slot (length) limit that has helped build a trophy bass fishery at Lake Fork. No tournament fish qualified for the Budweiser ShareLunker program (bass more than 13 pounds), but 3,500 pounds of fish had been caught at an average weight of 4 pounds. Oklahoma angler John Sappington caught the tourney's biggest bass, an 11.2-pounder. The winning team of Terry Scroggins of Florida, Chris Daves of Virginia, Frank Ippoliti of Maryland and James Niggemeyer of Van, Texas split $250,000 in prize money. On the last day TPWD received a check for $250,000 from Toyota for youth outreach programs.

FRESHWATER FISHERIES CENTER DEDICATES NEW BUILDING
In connection with the Toyota Texas Bass Classic, the department's Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens dedicated a new $2.2 million conservation facility funded entirely by outside donations. Back in April 2005, Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris presented a donation check for $650,000 toward the construction of the new building, pledging to match dollar-for-dollar funds raised by Schooling for Bass, a Dallas support group headed by Dick Hart. Hart's group went to work with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation to raise the necessary funds and they were successful in meeting their goal to fully fund construction of the building. The building was proudly and appropriately named the "Richard M. Hart and John L. Morris Conservation Center." The new 5,500-square-foot building includes state of the art technology and classroom space for environmental youth education, plus staff offices.

COASTAL FISHERIES

TEXAS COASTAL FISH HARVEST DATA SHOW IMPACT OF HURRICANE RITA The latest estimates showing how many fish recreational anglers caught in 2005-2006 on Texas bays and passes showed a 4 percent decline in fish harvest coast-wide. Coastal fisheries biologists believe much of this can be attributed to the impact of Hurricane Rita on Sabine Lake near Beaumont-Port Arthur, where total fish landings decreased by 46.6 percent. Rita reduced fishable days by six weekend days and 13 weekdays. "This gives us some indication of how a hurricane can affect a fishery," said Larry McKinney, PhD, TPWD coastal fisheries director. For some fish, the data showed significant decreases in landings for several species, including Atlantic croaker (down 9.2 percent), gafftopsail catfish (down 9 percent), and spotted seatrout (down 3.4 percent). Harvest increased for a few species, including black drum (up 4 percent), red drum (up 1.2 percent) and sand seatrout (up 2.1 percent). The sharpest decline was for southern flounder, where the catch dropped by 35.7 percent. McKinney said the flounder numbers are "an anomaly" in the data, which " …could be related to other factors" besides the hurricane. It's important to recognize these figures show how much anglers are catching, not how many fish are out there.

TPWD AIDS COLD-STUNNED SEA TURTLES

Coastal Fisheries Division employees worked with nonprofit, university and government partners to aid about 110 green sea turtles that were found stranded on South Texas beaches. TPWD worked with others to transport about 80 smaller (dinner-plate size) sea turtles from the South Padre Island area to the department's fish hatchery near Corpus Christi. The remaining mostly larger sea turtles are being held in facilities operated by nonprofit Sea Turtle, Inc. and University of Texas-Pan-American Coastal Studies Lab. The turtles were stunned when the late cold front that hit Texas caused water temperatures on the southern coast to plummet 18 degrees in 48 hours. The turtles were held in indoor hatchery tanks and similar facilities until the weather warmed and then returned to the sea. The green sea turtle is one of five turtles found in the Gulf of Mexico, all of them threatened or endangered. The other four are the Kemp's Ridley, leatherback, hawksbill and loggerhead.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

GAME WARDEN KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Texas Game Warden Justin Hurst, 34, was killed in the line of duty after a high speed chase and shoot out with a suspected poacher on Saturday, March 17. Hurst started his TPWD career as a biologist in August 1995 specializing in waterfowl management along the mid-coast. He was part of the 48th Game Warden Academy, graduating in August 2002. He served about a year in Brazos County before moving to Wharton County in 2003.

GAME WARDEN DIES DURING SEARCH AND RESCUE

Texas Game Warden Teyran "Ty" Patterson, 28, died in the line of duty during a search and rescue operation on the Paluxy River. Patterson apparently drowned after his boat capsized in floodwaters. Patterson and his partner, Game Warden Danny Tuggle, were attempting to recover the body of a 17-year-old suspected drowning victim when the accident occurred. Patterson was the second Texas game warden killed in the line of duty in less than three months. Patterson was a graduate of the 51st Texas Game Warden Academy in 2005 and had been stationed in Johnson County

***Since 1919, 17 Texas game wardens have lost their lives in the line of duty, five by drowning.**

STATE PARKS

TEAMS FORMING TO ADDRESS STATE PARK AUDIT ISSUES

The senior staff of the State Parks Division met with budget, accounting, audit and technology experts from Administrative Resources, Information Technology, Internal Audit and the Executive Office. The purpose was to form inter-divisional teams and develop action steps to address recommendations made in the State Auditor's Office "Report on Financial Process at the Parks and Wildlife Department" issued this spring. The report focused on state park financial accounting, park visitor attendance, repair estimates and related issues. Executive Director Robert L. Cook told state leaders in legislative hearings following the audit that TPWD would develop an action plan to address the auditor's concerns, and he highlighted elements of the department's

current Legislative Appropriations Request which would provide the necessary resources to implement audit recommendations.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES ADDITIONAL PARK FUNDING

Thanks to support from House Speaker Tom Craddick, Lt. Governor David Dewhurst, and key committee chairs in both the House and Senate, the 80th Texas legislature has approved HB 12. The bill has passed the House and Senate and is headed to the desk of Gov. Rick Perry, who now has final authority to sign it into law. HB 12 was championed by its author Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, who chairs the House Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee which oversees TPWD affairs in the House, and sponsored by Sen. Craig Estes on the Senate side. Also instrumental in supporting TPWD in the closing days of the session were Senate Finance Committee Chairman Steve Ogden, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Warren Chisum, Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairman Kip Averitt, Rep. Carl Isett and many other legislators. "All Texans owe a debt of thanks to our state elected leaders," said Joseph Fitzsimons, TPW Commission chairman. "Because of the unwavering support of Gov. Perry and our friends in the Texas Legislature, we are on the road to fulfilling a vision of great parks for a great state." If HB 12 is signed by the governor, it and several related provisions in HB 1, the appropriations bill, will provide approximately $182 million in additional funding for state and local parks in the 2008-2009 biennium. This additional funding includes:

- $25.6 million to operate state parks, including 229 additional FTE positions
- $8 million for state park minor repairs
- $9.7 million for state park capital equipment, such as vehicles and computers
- $3 million in additional support for state parks, including new architects and estimators in TPWD's Infrastructure Division to fulfill recommendations of the recent SAO state park audit.
- $44 million for major repairs to TPWD sites. This bond package includes the necessary appropriation funding to support bond debt service for FY08-09. Of the total, $17 million is Proposition 8 bond funding approved by Texas voters in 2001, and $27 million is a new bond issue that must first be approved by voters this coming November.
- $13.9 million in land acquisition funding. This includes $9.6 million from the sale of the undeveloped Eagle Mountain Lake State Park property near Fort Worth. It also includes $4.3 million for acquisition of inholdings and properties adjacent to existing state parks.
- $36.3 million for local park grants to cities and counties. This restores full funding for local park grants to cities and counties to $15.5 million per year, plus the appropriations bill allocated an additional $16.7 million for specific park projects.
- $16 million in appropriation authority if TPWD implements SAO state park audit recommendations. This essentially allows the department to spend revenue it brings in above projected estimates from sources like state park entrance and camping fees.
- 25.1 million in a new bond issue to fund dry berthing and repairs for the Battleship TEXAS in La Porte, bonds which must first be approved by voters this coming November.

HB 12 transfers 18 state historic sites from TPWD to the Texas Historical Commission, and it earmarks 6 percent of state sales tax

attributable to sporting goods to the THC. The bill also sets up a legislative task force to study sporting goods tax funding and make recommendations for the next session. As HB 12 neared passage in conference committee last week, a number of other bills that affect TPWD were attached to it and are now all headed to the governor's desk for consideration as part of HB 12. These include HB 1309, relating to possession or transportation of certain snakes that are not indigenous to this country; HB 2001, relating to a program to control or eradicate nuisance aquatic vegetation; HB 2414, relating to hunting from public roads or rights-of-way; HB 3765, relating to the taking or unloading of fish in this state; SB 775, relating to an interim study concerning this state's hunting and fishing license systems; SB 1172 relating to the disposition of income at Palo Duro Canyon State Park; and SB 997, relating to the regulation of commercially operated party boats on public water of this state.

WAFWA 2007 SUMMER REPORT
UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Volunteer Program

The Division's Volunteer Program had over 10,000 volunteers in 2006 who worked an equivalent of more than 43 FTE positions. These volunteers completed more than $1.7 million of conservation and outreach projects, while enjoying hands-on experience with Utah's wildlife, habitat restoration, outdoor education projects and supporting UDWR's personnel in "getting the job done." The volunteer program continues to grow, while offering quality projects to Utah's citizens who want to give something back to wildlife.

The Reber Decision – Wildlife Law Enforcement in Indian Country

The Utah Court of Appeals issued an opinion on November 10, 2005, in State v. Reber, 128 P.3d 1211 (Utah App. 2005) concluding the State of Utah lacks criminal jurisdiction over wildlife violations committed by non-Indians on non-Indian owned fee lands classified as Indian Country within the Ute Indian Reservation. The ruling eliminated state criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian wildlife crimes on over 2,000,000 acres of Forest Service, BLM and State lands within the Reservation's boundaries. While the Court of Appeals' opinion was under review in the Utah Supreme Court, the Division of Wildlife Resources and the Attorney General's Office organized a stopgap plan in cooperation with state, local, federal, and tribal representatives to provide wildlife law enforcement under the auspices of federal jurisdiction. First, a legal vehicle was created whereby state wildlife laws could be enforced in federal court. This was accomplished by using Forest Service and BLM regulations that assimilate state wildlife laws and make any violation of state law a violation of federal law. Next, an expanded federal law enforcement contingency was created by soliciting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to extend federal deputy game warden commissions to state conservation officers so they could investigate and enforce, among other things, the federal assimilation regulations. Lastly, additional prosecutors were needed to handle the anticipated volume of state-based wildlife violations in federal court since the U.S. Attorney's Office had but a single prosecutor assigned to such cases. This void was filled by the U.S. Attorney's Office extending Special Assistant U.S. Attorney status to a selected group of state government attorneys from the Utah Attorney General's Office and local county attorneys' offices. The three components of the plan, although cumbersome, came together and proved extremely successful in preventing and prosecuting non-Indian wildlife violations within the Ute Indian Reservation. On April 24, 2007, the Utah Supreme Court resoundingly overturned the Court of Appeals' opinion holding the State of Utah had criminal jurisdiction over wildlife crimes committed by non-Indians on non-Indian owned fee lands within Indian Country.

License Fee Restructuring

The Utah Division Wildlife Resources recently restructured the license and fee process. This was presented and approved through our public process that included Regional Advisory Councils, Utah Wildlife Board and the Utah Legislature. The concept of the fee restructuring was largely a change in the manner in which the public participates in hunts and applying for those hunts. Some fees have increased while others have been reduced in the restructuring. Nonresident hunters and those who only apply in draws but that do not regularly hunt or fish are most effected by the changes. Residents who hunt and fish regularly in the state will see little price change and many will have decreased costs. Both residents and non-residents will be required to purchase the new $26 hunting license or $30 combination license before applying in hunt draws or before buying other hunt licenses. The hunting license is valid for small game hunting for 365 days from time of purchase. Fees for deer, elk, and turkey have been reduced along with the price of the combination license. The cost of the application fee was raised from $5 to $10. The Division also lowered the age requirements for a fishing license and 12-13 year olds will be required to purchase a $5 fishing license that is valid for 365 days.

Reduction in Minimum Big Game Hunting Age

In early 2007, the Utah State Legislature passed a bill (endorsed by the Utah Wildlife Board) reducing the minimum big game hunting age from 14 to 12. This change, in addition to the 2006 bill that eliminated the minimum small game hunting age, was conceived as a way to reduce barriers to youth hunting, and thereby increase youth recruitment into the sport. Before these changes were made, Utah had some of the most restrictive youth hunting regulations in the western United States, and Utah's youth hunter recruitment rate was below the national average. The Families Afield Initiative, sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation, the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, and the National Shooting Sports Foundation, provided valuable data and support for our efforts to enhance youth hunting opportunities.

Marketing Program

To encourage retention and recruitment of anglers the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) has: 1) sent postcards to notify anglers that their 365-day fishing license has expired, 2) utilized the resources of the National Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's Take Me Fishing campaign, 3) ran outdoor and newspaper advertisements, and 4) partnered with Utah State Parks to offer up to half of the regular day-use fee mid-week at state parks that offer fishing if a valid Utah fishing license is presented. The UDWR also has an exciting new feature on its Web page called Fishing Hotspots." Here people see an interactive map with markers showing whether the fishing at a specific location is hot, good or fair.

As with other states, the UDWR has noticed an overall decline in anglers over the last few years. Surely there is a multitude of reasons for this decline,

however, the UDWR is confident it can lure those anglers back. The goal of the UDWR fishing marketing program is to "buy" customers for less than they bring in. Success in this marketing effort will equate to a increase in revenue.

Another way the UDWR is pursing new customers is by marketing Utah's wildlife license plates. The newest edition to our plate lineup is the bald eagle design. It was officially unveiled at an at Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area on February 10, 2007, during Bald Eagle Day celebrations. In its first three months, the bald eagle plate sold 187 plates and generated nearly $5,000. With an initial promotion budget of just $10K, the UDWR anticipates a positive return on its investment on the bald eagle plate before the end of 2007. In 2006, the Division received $120,100 from new sales and renewal fees of wildlife license plates. The revenue received from the sale of wildlife license plates enables UDWR and its partners improve to conservation of sensitive species, support endangered species recovery efforts, and restore wildlife habitat. In addition to the bald eagle, other wildlife plates available include a Rocky Mountain elk, a Great Blue Heron, and a cutthroat trout.

Walk - In Access program Expanding

Utah's population continues to grow and has shifted from a predominately rural setting to an urban one. Utah is now the sixth most urbanized state in the nation. As a result, more residents are becoming removed from the agricultural relationships necessary to establish opportunities for sportsmen and preserve wildlife habitat on private lands. Many species of wildlife in Utah use important habitats found on private lands. Upland game and migratory game bird species such as ring-necked pheasant and mourning dove, for example, are found almost exclusively on private agricultural lands. Species such as the Hungarian partridge, Rio Grande turkey and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse also spend much of the year on private lands. Big game species such as elk and mule deer rely on Utah's private lands for essential wintering habitats. Private lands in Utah also provide high quality aquatic habitats and offer abundant recreational angling opportunities.

As Utah's privately owned lands become developed, access to private lands and access to public lands through private lands for recreational activities seem to have declined while habitat has been lost. Through cooperative partnerships with private landowners and the state wildlife managing agency, Utah is establishing and improving access to fish and wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations. Those that visit and live in Utah are benefitting from these partnerships, that instill a desire to provide access and enhance upland habitats, including grassland, shrub, forest, and wetland habitats. Aquatic habitats along streams, rivers, lakes and sloughs are also essential in these efforts.

In Utah, wildlife-related concerns that involve private lands seem to fall into two categories: first, the concern of revenue loss that the landowner experiences

when sharing their lands with wildlife populations and second, destruction of private property holdings by wildlife or careless resource users. Successful programs have been developed and are continuing to come forward addressing these issues. Utah's Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit (CWMU) and Landowner Association (LOA) programs are proving successful at reducing the above-mentioned concerns by landowners. These two programs provide landowners with a limited number of hunting permits that they may sell to interested sportsmen or keep for themselves. In return the landowners must provide access to their properties for a specified number of public sportsmen. The agency can also provide voucher permits to landowners that experience damages from wildlife. The landowner may also sell these permits to sportsmen to help recover some of the costs of wildlife damage to crops. In some cases these permits are simply provided to assist the landowner in removing depredating wildlife. These programs have not only improved relations between private landowners, agency personnel and sportsmen but in many cases have produced a desire to encourage wildlife and improve habitats on private properties.

The UDWR has spent the past three years developing a pilot Walk-In Hunting and Fishing Access Program (WIA) in one of five administrative regions. We have enrolled 19 properties which provide a current total of 37,880 acres and 0.79 miles of stream that are enrolled in this program, and an additional 9,060 acres of isolated public property have either been opened or made available to sportsmen in Utah through the WIA program. A WIA area is a tract of private land on which the UDWR leases hunting, trapping, and/or fishing privileges for public recreation. Landowners enrolled in the WIA program receive monetary compensation based on suitable habitat and wildlife, the amount of land, and length of time the land or water is enrolled in the program. Payments are made within 45 days of the last day of hunting season or end of first year contract. Sportsmen are able to find out about the WIA program by simply searching online at *wildlife.utah.gov*. where a description of the program and their responsibilities to landowners and UDWR are posted. They are able to see how the program works and what is required of them by the landowners and UDWR at each of the properties. During the 2007 Legislative session, the Utah State Legislature asked UDWR to earmark $450,000 of license restructuring monies for expansion of the WIA program. In response, we have started an expansion that will add two additional administrative regions to the program this year. We are using Arc-view and GIS technologies to identify lands that are of significant importance to this program.

NRCS Farm Bill Biologists

Four Farm Bill biologists were hired to assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in helping private landowners cost-share on projects that will benefit wildlife utilizing existing NRCS Farm Bill programs, as well as state Watershed Restoration Initiative dollars. Partners include the

NRCS, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife. It is expected that these Utah Division of Wildlife Resources biologists will be able to assist the NRCS in enrolling more projects that are wildlife friendly and help them spend the wildlife program dollars that are allocated to the NRCS on an annual basis.

Watershed Restoration Initiative

Four years ago, the Division launched the Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI), an aggressive effort to restore shrub-steppe areas throughout the state. Since 2003, a partnership of state agencies, federal agencies, local governments, agriculture groups, conservation organizations, sportsmen groups, private individuals, and others has been able to restore over 300,000 acres of shrub-steppe habitat. With the completion of the Utah Wildlife Action Plan, which identified the 10 key habitats necessary for wildlife conservation in Utah, the WRI has expanded its focus. Conservation focus areas for the key habitat types (which include lowland riparian, mountain riparian, wetland, shrub-steppe, mountain shrub, grassland, streams, lakes, wet meadows, and aspen) have been mapped and proposals for restoration efforts in these focus areas are currently under review. The partnership has committed more than $11,000,000 toward these restoration efforts during the next year.

Strategic Plan, Management Effectiveness Study and Follow-up Teams

During the past year, the Division completed a new strategic plan and completed a third review of the agency using the Management Effectiveness Survey conducted by Dr. Steve McMullin from Virginia Tech University. Employee workshops were used to identify specific strategies to be taken to address barriers faced by the agency in achieving the objectives in the plan and weaknesses identified in the management effectiveness survey. Nine employee teams have been chartered to develop recommendations to resolve barriers and weaknesses, including: the Public Involvement (RAC/Board) Process; Potential Payment for Overtime; Salary Inequities; Internal Communication; Workloads; Educational Development; Employee Interview/Selection Process; Employee Recognition; and Career Development/Leadership Training. Additional projects are being pursued to address other priorities in the plan, including marketing, wildlife foundation start-up, full integration of the Wildlife Action Plan priorities into the Watershed Initiative, the formation of a Teaming With Wildlife coalition, and a constituency response/feedback system to measure the success of the delivery and quality of DWR programs and services.

Judicial ruling on Bonneville Cutthroat Trout

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the State of Wyoming intervened in 2006 in a judicial review compliant filed in the Federal District Court in Denver, Colorado by a number of conservation organizations challenging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision not to list the Bonneville cutthroat trout under the

Endangered Species Act. Utah and Wyoming expended considerable effort preparing and filing a joint brief in support of the Fish and Wildlife Service's decision. On March 7, 2007, the Federal District Court issued an order dismissing the plaintiffs' complaint and affirming the Fish and Wildlife Services' decision not to list. This was a critical victory for the State of Utah inasmuch as the Bonneville cutthroat trout's historic range encompasses nearly two thirds of the state. The plaintiffs appealed the District Court's order on May 4, 2007, and the case is now pending before the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit.

Response to Quagga Mussel Invasion

In January 2007, Quagga mussels were discovered in the lower Colorado River basin in Lake Meade, Arizona. The Quagga mussel is an aquatic nuisance species (exotic) that originated from east central Russia, and has caused millions of dollars worth of impacts to water resource based industries and water recreation in the eastern United States over the last two decades. Utah is very concerned with the close proximity of this new invasive site and the increased risk for this mussel to be transported into the state's waters.

As the lead for Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) in Utah, the Division of Wildlife Resources has taken the following actions to educate the public on the impacts associated with this species, and to increase prevention efforts to hopefully deter its invasion into the state. 1. Reconvened the state's ANS cooperative team to address the issue of educating the public and preventing the invasion of Quagga mussel into the state. 2. Developed a policy in the Utah Department of Natural Resources that authorizes and directs education and prevention measures throughout Utah. 3. Developed a Quagga mussel education and prevention plan for the Division of Wildlife Resources patterned after the one developed in Minnesota.

The Director of the Division has just recently received support from the Governor and Speaker of the State House of Representatives to proceed forward with hiring the people necessary to implement the state's education and prevention plan to stop Quagga mussel invasion into Utah.

Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

WAFWA
STATE OF THE STATE REPORT

SUBMITTED BY

THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

JUNE 2007

Priest Rapids Project 401 Clean Water Act Permit: WDFW staff reached final agreement with Department of Ecology staff and Grant PUD on all key aspects of the 401 permit for the Priest Rapids Project, which includes Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams. This is the final step in the FERC relicensing process for the project, unless the terms of the 401 or the license are appealed. Key aspects of the 401 include the existing settlement agreement for salmon and steelhead. Also included are the existing Hanford Reach flow agreement, with addition of a coordinating body for monitoring; provisions for development and implementation of sturgeon and lamprey management plans with the objective of bolstering populations of both; development and implementation of an aquatic invasive species control program; and agreements on baseline monitoring of resident fish populations and stocking of resident fish in Grant County lakes.

Meeting the Invasive Zebra/Quagga Mussel Threat: The Aquatic Nuisance Species Unit is working closely with the Columbia River Basin Team as part of the National 100th Meridian Initiative to address the increased threat of zebra/quagga mussels invading Washington waters. The quagga mussel is a close relative of the zebra mussel and this is most apparent when you realize that "quagga" is actually the name of an extinct zebra (the horse-type) species. Unfortunately, this aquatic quagga is more likely to make other species extinct as it even out-competes its close relative, the zebra mussel.

Windy Point Wind Farm: Staff was instrumental in achieving a mitigation agreement with Cannon Corporation for their Windy Point Wind Farm. The company will provide $30,000 to fund a long overdue and very important golden eagle study. In addition, they have committed to donating 30 acres of Oregon white oak woodlands to WDFW that serve as habitat for western gray squirrels.

Columbia River Fisheries: The commercial fishery ended on March 23, with a total of 2,700 spring chinook landed during the three days of fishing. Large-mesh nets were used on the first day (March 5) and tangle nets were used the last two days (March 20 and 22). Preliminary estimates of stock composition show the commercial fishery at 100% of its mainstem allocation of upriver chinook; additional impacts remain for SAFE fisheries. Prices paid to fishers were $10.25, $8.50 and $5.50/pound for the three days, respectively.

Clam Enhancement:

1. With the assistance of volunteers and Washington Sea Grant, 800,000 hatchery-reared Manila clam "seed" were planted on the Point Whitney public tidelands. This effort should provide 200,000 harvestable clams within two years. Staff also planted 300,000 Manila clam "seed" on the agency's Triton Cove tidelands with the assistance of volunteers from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund. This enhancement should provide 75,000 harvestable clams within two years.

2. Staff planted 400,000 juvenile Manila clam "seed" within the Point Whitney Lagoon public tidelands. This enhancement will produce approximately 100,000 harvestable clams within two years. The Lagoon was last planted in 2000. Successful Manila clam enhancement in both the Lagoon and neighboring Point Whitney tidelands has resulted in a large biomass of clams, longer sport seasons, and an extremely popular recreational fishery.

Oil Spill Penalty Money to be Used to Fund Nearshore Protection and Restoration Projects: Money collected from oil spill penalties is deposited into the Coastal Protection Fund (CPF) and a portion can be used to restore or enhance public natural resources. The CPF Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from the departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, State Parks, and Fish and Wildlife, participated on the screening committee to evaluate and prioritize project proposals. The advisory committee recently recommended that Ecology provide over $156,000 to support six restoration and acquisition projects in Puget Sound and Grays Harbor. The selected projects are expected to benefit and support the State's nearshore, estuarine and salmon restoration priorities. The following projects that will benefit from oil spill penalty funds are:

- Salmon Creek Estuary Restoration in Discovery Bay (North Olympic Salmon Coalition);
- Rainbow Marsh Estuary Restoration in the Swinomish Slough (Skagit River Systems Cooperative);
- Smugglers Slough Estuary Restoration (WDOE, Lummi Business Council);
- Frye Cove Bulkhead Removal (South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group);
- Pirates Cove Estuary Restoration (South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group);
- Bergquist Property Conservation Easement (Capitol Land Trust); and
- Bottle Beach (Grays Harbor) Native Plant Restoration (Washington State Parks).

Mole Trapping Violators: Officers spent considerable time working on information for a search warrant on a business that was making a substantial living illegally trapping moles for a fee. This business has been cited previously and also warned in 2005. Captain Hebner participated in several radio talk show programs concerning the recent enforcement actions of non-permitted and unlicensed Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCO) that are illegally using body gripping traps to kill moles. Another business involved as well has ignored verbal warnings and, once citations were issued, continued to disregard the NWCO legal requirements, the trapping license requirements, and the prohibition against body-gripping traps. One business attempted to try their case in the court of public opinion using both television and radio. Captain Hebner represented the agency on KVI (570), the Kirby Wilbur Show, and KIRO (710).

New Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Wildlife Practice: At the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference, the federal Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced a new allocation of CRP acres to states for wildlife, with Washington receiving 8,200 acres. No state funds are required for match (as with CREP). This will allow us to take existing CRP practices and alter them to target wildlife benefits for species covered by the Endangered Species Act or with significant population declines. Most CRP practices, including general signup practices, are allowed. This allows FSA to pay both a $100 per acre signing incentive at enrollment and a 50 percent cost share, plus a 40 percent practice incentive (which realistically means 90 percent cost sharing). We will need to put together a proposal for FSA to consider by fall. This is good for wildlife!

Triploid Trout: The Legislature provided WDFW with proviso monies to enhance recreational fisheries in 2007 through increased hatchery production. A portion of these funds was used to purchase an additional 41,000 triploid rainbow trout for planting into Washington's lakes. The Fish and Wildlife Commission approved these, as well as the earlier purchase of 73,460 triploids, and the list of lakes into which the fish will be stocked. These trout are sterile rainbows that have the potential to grow to trophy size if abundant food is available and if not harvested the first season after stocking. The triploids are produced by TroutLodge, Inc., and by the Nisqually Trout Farm; both growers are certified as producing healthy, quality fish.

Willapa Bay Oyster Reserve: A meeting was held with the WDFW Willapa Bay Oyster Reserve Advisory Board on March 20, 2007. The purpose of this meeting was to determine actual 2007 oyster sale tracts and establish a minimum per bushel bid price. The advisors joined WDFW staff on a trip out on the bay to the proposed sale tracts where their status was evaluated. It was decided to sell oysters from two locations, the lower Naselle River and the north end of Long Island. The advisors recommended selling both areas due to the size of the oysters and their tendency to "rabbit ear" with increasing density. It was felt that waiting an additional year would diminish the value of the oysters. Minimum bids for the majority of tracts was set at $2.00 per bushel, with one tract set at $1.50 and another at $0.80 per bushel. Expected revenue from this year's sale should be around $150,000. Staff will prepare bid specifications next week, which will then go to Olympia for processing. Bid openings occurred in May. Forty percent of the funds generated by the sales of oysters in Willapa Bay returns to a WDFW fund that is used to manage these reserves. During the meeting, WDFW staff and the reserve advisors also discussed ideas for research projects that could, in the future, be funded by oyster reserve funds.

WDFW Willapa staff also inspected oyster reserve beds in the Nemah area, which are scheduled for harvest next year. There was concern that this tract would not be salable due to the meager set in 2005. Inspection of the beds revealed a good set and with an additional year of growth this area should provide sales in the $125,000 range.

Hatcheries To Begin Mass Marking of Fall Chinook at all Lower Columbia Hatchery Facilities: Staff from the Hatchery Evaluation Assessment Team along with hatchery staff will begin marking approximately 17 million fall chinook later this month. In addition, approximately 2.7 million spring chinook will be mass marked during the same time frame. This will be the first year with the goal of marking the entire Lower Columbia fall Chinook hatchery production. This will allow for future selective fisheries in the ocean, Lower Columbia and various tributary streams. Marking is projected to be complete by mid-June.

Spokane County Commissioner Meeting: Jeff Lawlor and Mark Wachtel met with Bonnie Mager (Spokane County Commissioner) and city and county planning staff to discuss coordination on development issues in the county and city. Spokane is the second largest city in Washington and is experiencing heavy growth pressure. Staff met with the commissioner and city/county staff to discuss how we can work better to address natural resource concerns in light of this growth. Items discussed include Habitat Management Plan Requirements, critical area mapping, county/city-DFW coordination, and comp plan/critical area ordinance (CAO) updates.

Major outcomes of this meeting: 1) WDFW will supply a letter to the county and the city recommending that a Habitat Mgt Plan be required whenever a development intersects a mapped "critical area" (Priority Habitat and Species, open space, riparian, etc.) – the city agreed to require a Habitat Mgt Plan based on this letter unless we recommend otherwise – the county will use this letter to explore that option. Our hope is that the county will default to a management plan unless otherwise recommended by us.

WDFW also agreed to review management plans and work with applicants when possible. 2) WDFW agreed to coordinate a mapping effort between WDFW, county, and city planners to add GIS layers that anticipate growth in the county and outline critical wildlife corridors/other key habitat that should be protected when development proposals occur. The idea is that by identifying corridors and key habitat, connections between these natural areas can be preserved, rather than being eroded piece-meal as development encroaches. At this point, developments are considered individually as applications come in. Critical habitat may be protected in that specific plan, but there is not always a connection of that protection with other development plans. By mapping these connections ahead of time they should be preserved as limitations are placed on applications according to the mapped areas.

WDFW will work closely with the county/city in CAO revisions and stand by them to help defend these revisions. To help accomplish this, Karin Divens was assigned as the GMA Biologist for Region 1.

Hydraulic Project Approval Habitat Conservation Plan Public Meetings and Web Page: To introduce the Hydraulic Project Approval Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) project to the public, six public meetings were held across the state: Yakima, Cashmere, Spokane Valley, Mt. Vernon, Lacey, and Vancouver.

Both the Hydraulic Project Approval and Wildlife Areas HCPs were discussed at these meetings. The public meetings were designed to provide an opportunity to educate the public on the projects and provide input. For both HCP projects, a web page was developed to keep stakeholders informed of project progress and to access information and documents prepared in support of HCP development. The web address is: http://wdfw.wa.gov/hcp/index.html.

Lyons Ferry Hatchery (LFH) Named "Facility of the Year": Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP) Coordinator, Scott Marshall, named LFH the "Hatchery Facility of the Year" at the LSRCP annual meeting in Boise, Idaho on March 13-15, 2007. Scott cited "the quality of the fish produced, condition of the facility, morale and teamwork of the staff, excellent communication, and open and honest way the hatchery conducts business" as reasons for the award. He was also very impressed with the general feeling and outlook of the employees at LFH during recent visits, and said it was a simple decision to give this site the award. Congratulations to everyone at LFH and in the Complex for this well-deserved recognition.

Invasive Species Council: Environmental Policy Lead Bridget Moran, IRM, is chair of the Washington State Invasive Species Council. The Council's first quarterly meeting of 2007 was productive. The 100th Meridian Initiative, the Western Regional Plant Board, and USDA/APHIS provided the final in a series of Critical Connection presentations. This was a continuation from last meeting's presentations by the Ballast Water Work Group, the Aquatic Nuisance Species group, the Noxious Weed Control Board, and the Invasive Species Coalition. A prime directive for the Council is to provide coordination among groups working on invasive species issues; therefore, the Council began its work with briefings from these established organizations. The second item completed at the meeting was the establishment of work groups to begin the development of the Strategic Plan.

The Council's charge is to develop a statewide strategic plan that addresses prevention, detection, and response to the increasing number of harmful plant and animal species invading our state, resulting in damage to the environment and causing economic hardship. Internally, WDFW has formed an Invasive Species Work Group that facilitates information exchange across programs.

Columbia River Water Management Program: The Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP) Policy Advisory Group met March 1 to finalize a vision, mission, and goals statement; hear a presentation on a proposed project in the Yakima Basin; and discuss project-funding criteria. The vision of the CRWMP is to "Preserve and enhance the standard of living for the people of Washington by strengthening the state's economic condition and restoring and protecting the Columbia Basin's unique natural environment." The mission is to "Aggressively pursue development of water supplies to benefit both instream and out-of-stream water uses."

The Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association presented a plan to provide new water right irrigation service to the Red Mountain and West Richland Area and within the Kennewick Irrigation District service territory. This project would, ultimately, add a much-needed ~400 cubic feet per second to the Yakima River at the Prosser Diversion by replacing most of that water, plus water from a new water right application, with water pumped directly from the Columbia River downstream of the Yakima River mouth. Mitigation water is needed to ensure there is no deficit in the mainstem Columbia from this project. The Association talked about the growing need for water in the Red Mountain area to serve not only irrigated agriculture (primarily grapes), but also new hobby farms and subdivisions. After answering questions on mechanics of the proposal, the group's discussion included a healthy debate regarding the wisdom of supporting individual lifestyle choices (e.g., irrigated landscaping/lawns) with public funds and the concern that only a small proportion of the overall costs of the project would be borne by water users. In general, the group agreed that the project as described represents the type of project that was expected to come forth with this program, but also noted the difficulty of resolving the public benefit versus private benefit equation when considering project funding.

The Department of Ecology presented graphics depicting the locations of interruptible water rights that are affected by the program, as well as locations for the first 21 water right permit applications that would be processed under the program. These illustrations provided background for a discussion of Ecology's procedures for processing water right applications and illustrated the need for Ecology to be able to match water-saving projects with water need (as represented by applications). Discussion ensued around a draft model for screening projects for funding under the program and how to ensure instream benefits are met, as well as out-of-stream benefits. The group also agreed that the project funding criteria should somehow ensure that projects proposed for funding do not conflict with plans developed by local watershed planning units. An Ecology work group has been formed (which includes representation from WDFW) to refine the project review process and develop materials in preparation for a first round of project solicitations. The work group presented its progress at an April meeting, with a goal of a final grant package that is ready to implement by Summer 2007.

Special Appropriations:

1. Both the Governor and the House budgets supported a transfer of $4,000,000 GF-S into the State Wildlife Account (SWA) to help out with this account fund balance. The Senate did not support the transfer; however, it provided as one-time funding, in FY 08, $1,310,000 GF-S for "Engineering Program Backfill", and $1,190,000 GF-S for "HPA Permit Program Backfill", currently supported with the SWA to allow the Department time to address SWA shortfall issues.

2. The House required OFM to transfer $1,000,000 GF-S into the Regional Enhancement Group Account. Appropriations are provided solely for expenditure into the Regional Enhancement Group Account. The Senate did not do this.

Avian Influenza Update: From July 14, 2006 through March 14, 2007, WDFW submitted 973 live surveillance swabs, 817 hunter-harvested swabs, 150 fecal samples, and 101 morbidity/mortality swabs for avian influenza (AI) testing. Swabs were collected from 20 avian species throughout the state of Washington. In addition, 56 avian carcasses have been submitted for post-mortem examinations.

By March 14, 2007, lab results for 1,143 swab samples had been received. To date, 7 samples from mallard ducks have tested positive for an H5 strain of AI virus. There have not been any virus isolations of H7 or N1 subtypes of AI virus. The National Wildlife Health Center has reported that an additional 24 mallards, 5 cackling geese, 2 dunlin, and 1 western sandpiper have tested positive for AI viruses that were not of the H5, H7, or N1 subtypes.

Spotted Owl Conservation: Joe Buchanan, Ann Potter, and Lori Salzer spent extensive time sorting, selecting, and preparing spotted owl file material for the spotted owl lawsuit at the request of the Office of the Attorney General (AG). New requests from the AG continue to come in weekly.

Joe Buchanan attended the third annual "Workshop for federal biologists on the science of the Northern Spotted Owl," held in Portland, Oregon. Joe gave a presentation entitled: "*A synopsis of suggested approaches to address potential competitive interactions between Barred Owls and Spotted Owls.*"

Joe also participated in a conference call with other members of the Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team. The purpose of the conference call was to finalize a document that will be submitted to the provincial government and used, in part, to perform action planning for the species. The spotted owl in British Columbia appears to be on the verge of extirpation.

Abalone Restoration Pilot Study: Under a SeaDoc Society grant with the University of Washington, the shellfish dive team began field work in the Strait of Juan de Fuca to identify potential outplant sites for juvenile pinto abalone. Abalone stocks in Washington have undergone significant declines, and abundance is now so low that intervention is needed for population recovery to take place. This is the initial field trial in the pilot study to determine if hatchery-reared pinto abalone can be successfully introduced to the wild in Washington.

The juvenile abalone that will be outplanted have received health screening by two shellfish pathologists and are certified to be free of shellfish diseases. Prior to outplanting into protective modules, these abalone will be tagged to monitor individual growth and survival. All outplanted abalone will be removed in one year to reduce potential genetic impacts to wildstocks and to assess the genetic profile of survivors.

Investigation of Possible Wolf Sighting: Wildlife staff spent a day in the GMU 113 area, where reports of wolves have been common for a couple years now. Two log truck drivers were encountered on Mill Creek/Sylvis Creek. Both indicated they had seen and heard wolves this winter. They also reported wolf sightings or evidence in those drainages for at least two winters. The East Branch LeClerc Creek was also driven, and wolf tracks were seen and photographed. Two hound handlers were encountered; they too reported numerous observations of wolf tracks from Mill Creek to LeClerc Creek, noting it was especially common to have one large wolf in the vicinity of a cougar they have pursued over the last couple years. Everyone interviewed reported wolves, but also mentioned their presence did not pose a problem and that there certainly was plenty for them to eat, as moose, elk, and deer numbers were high. The hound handler indicated he did not have any trouble with his dogs encountering wolves thus far.

Lynx Ecology Study: WDFW and Department of Natural Resources staff in the Loomis area captured and marked two male lynx at the north end of the study area, along Long Swamp and Middle Fork Toats. These two lynx appear to be occupying adjacent home ranges. One animal's home range appears to have been partially burned (fire "treated"), while the other male's range may have not been treated. If this is correct, these two animals will provide an opportunity to compare movement patterns, home range size, and habitat use between animals whose home range received fire treatment and another whose home range may not have received treatment. All traps were pulled from the upper area to redeploy in the central area, from Boulder Creek to 20 Mile Meadows. Lynx captured and marked in this area will provide an opportunity to assess how lynx move and use habitats that received extensive stand replacement fires, fragmented with "islands" of unburned habitat. Surveys to date indicate that lynx are occupying this region, but it will be important to mark lynx to determine movement patterns among the fragmented landscape. This will enable us to assess how the fire may influence travel patterns and habitat use, and to assess the potential affect of the fire on the status of lynx in the area.

Joint Oregon/Washington Sardine Industry Meeting: IRM staff attended a meeting with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and sardine industry representatives from both states the end of January. The purpose of the meeting was to share information regarding our respective state sardine fishing regulations, with particular attention to the rules regarding the disposition of landed fish. Both Oregon and Washington have restrictions on the amount of sardines that could be landed for the purposes other than human consumption or fishing bait, commonly referred to as "reduction." The California Department of Fish and Game also has rules restricting reduction of sardines. The comments from industry members were mixed; however, there appeared to be general agreement that a targeted reduction fishery in the Northwest was not favored. Everyone seemed to agree that the best course of action would be to discuss this issue at a federal level with representatives from all three states. To that end, Northwest industry members are planning to raise this topic at the next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Sub-panel. In the meantime, the Department is currently going through a full rulemaking process to consider changes to the sardine regulations for the 2007 season, but revisions to the reduction restriction are not part of the proposed rule package.

Puget Sound Technical Assistance: The Puget Sound Initiative has provided substantial additional funding to the Department of Ecology to conduct cleanup of contaminated sediments in Puget Sound under the Model Toxics Control Act. As part of this effort, Ecology is working with WDFW to develop a process that integrates sediment cleanup and habitat restoration. Staff from the Environmental Services Division attended a recent meeting of the Toxics Cleanup Program and provided a presentation on WDFW's role (co-trustee and regulatory), an overview of regulations, an overview of restoration approaches, and some site-specific examples of habitat restoration. The meeting was well attended (~35 Ecology staff) and good discussions followed the presentations. Providing technical assistance to Ecology on habitat issues during sediment cleanup actions should result in improved nearshore conditions at cleanup sites in Puget Sound.

Invasive Tunicate Talk: Staff participated in the Washington Sea Grant sponsored 15th Conference for Shellfish Growers in Shelton, WA on March 5-6, 2007, by giving a talk on a non-native invasive tunicate (sea squirt) that was first reported in southern Hood Canal by the WDFW Subtidal Shellfish Dive Team. This particular tunicate, *Ciona savignyi,* is one of several highly invasive tunicates found in Washington and there is much concern over the signs of degradation of Puget Sound indicated by establishing invasives and the direct impacts to water-related industries like shellfish aquaculture and shellfisheries.

Invasive species, like these tunicates, may become problematic because they can form dense aggregations and out-compete native species for food and space.

Geoduck Management: IRM and Department of Natural Resources staff met with tribal staff from the Central Puget Sound and Eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca geoduck management regions on January 29, 2007, to initiate commercial harvest planning discussions for the 2007-08 season. The parties agreed to extend the time period to take geoduck shares if biotoxin closures (PSP) preclude harvest for extended periods of time. Other topics included total allowable catch, protections for finfish spawning sites, harvest locations, post-harvest surveys, and the possibility of multi-year plans. State and tribal representatives continue to work together to develop geoduck harvest management plans for Hood Canal and North Puget Sound.

Shellfish Import Advisory Committee: The WDFW Shellfish Import Advisory Committee and representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the shellfish aquaculture industry met on February 14, 2007, in Olympia. The main topic of discussion was the distribution of Denman Island Disease (DID) in Washington Pacific oyster populations. Aquaculture industry representatives at the meeting raised concern that the particular survey of DID in northern Hood Canal, near two shellfish hatcheries, would negatively impact their industry and communities where aquaculture occurs.

The WDFW monitoring and surveillance of DID in 2006 has shown that the disease does occur in the northern Hood Canal, making all of Puget Sound marine waters an endemic area for the oyster disease. It was suggested by at least one advisor that the industry should take management steps in the hatchery to reduce risk of introducing DID to hatchery systems. Another related development in 2006 was an action by the European Union (EU) to downgrade DID disease as a reportable disease. However, it is still up to individual countries to decide whether or not to import shellfish from Washington due to the presence of the disease.

As a result of the EU action, observed low rates of infection in WA oyster stocks, and an endemic distribution in WA, department staff are developing a proposal to downgrade the disease, to a WDFW "Class B" shellfish disease, and remove the WAC language that establishes DID restricted areas. Doing this will remove perceived stigma that restricted areas may have. However, it will put more responsibility on the shoulders of the shellfish industry to show importers of their products that their animals are disease free and that hatcheries are well-managed to reduce disease risks. The department will continue to work with the tribes and the shellfish industry to resolve DID "load" in relic oyster populations where the disease has tested positive.

Trout Hatcheries Provide Big Bang for the Buck: A newly-released study of the 11 primary national rainbow-trout hatcheries in the United States shows that in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 the facilities put out 9.4 million trout, attracting almost four million angler-days of effort and fueling a major contribution to the U.S. economy.

According to the study by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service economist Dr. James Caudill, anglers spent $172.7 million to pursue the pastime, in things such as fuel, lodging, food, bait and rods, reels and tackle. All of that, according to the study, provided employment for 3,502 people with a total income of $80 million. In turn, that income put more than $13 million into government coffers in income tax, $2.9 million of it is state income taxes and $10.6 million in federal income taxes.

All told, says Caudill, when you apply the multiplier effect to estimate the overall economic benefit from the hatcheries, their total economic impact for the year was likely somewhere just over $325 million. Sales and motor fuel taxes totaled $9.9 million alone, with the net economic value of a day's fishing calculated at $48 for U.S. residents and $69 a day for non-residents.

Caudill says that in FY 2004, taxpayers shelled out just $5.4 million, which the government put into rainbow-trout hatchery budget line items. That works out at just a little over 50 cents for every rainbow trout produced from the 11 facilities, says Caudill, so every $1 of hatchery budget spent on the fish generated $32.20 of retail sales, plus a further $36.88 of net economic value.

Craig Springer, a fish biologist with the USFWS in Washington State, said that the study was one of only about three that he recalls being done over the years into the value of fish enhancement programs. He added that it provides valuable information to decision-makers regarding the usefulness of hatcheries and nursery facilities (Northern Aquaculture, November/December 2006).

Liberty Bay Olympia Oyster Project: Puget Sound Restoration Fund and our agency signed an extension of our Joint Memorandum of Agreement on Liberty Bay. The MOA sets aside 24 acres of agency-owned tidelands in Liberty Bay for a joint Olympia oyster restoration project. Cooperators in the project include the Suquamish Tribe, NOAA, and the U.S. Navy. The on-going project places Pacific oyster shell on the muddy tidelands, increasing the setting substrate for naturally spawned native Olympia oysters. Thanks to the MOA extension, PSRF will receive grant funds from the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). This program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides cost-share assistance for habitat improvements on private or government-owned land. The signed extension of this MOA effectively removed the last remaining barrier to added funding for this project. WHIP has now allocated $28,500 to the Liberty Bay project, which represents 75% of the cost of buying, transporting and spreading 1,000 cubic yards of oyster shell.

Ringold Hatchery Cormorant Control: On January 16, 2007, Ringold Springs Rearing Facility (RSRF) staff reported that they were experiencing significant predation of steelhead caused by the sudden arrival of a large flock of double-crested cormorants. These birds may have relocated to the Hanford Reach (Columbia River) because of ice cover on lakes in the Columbia Basin where they normally reside. Up to 50 birds were working the five-acre rearing pond, which contained approximately 370,000 Wells-stock hatchery steelhead pre-smolts, which are listed under the ESA. This production supports the lower Hanford Reach steelhead fishery that runs annually from October through March. By January 17, the number of birds had increased to 200+, with 20-30 on the water at any time and the remainder flying around the pond looking for access through the monafilment line strung above the pond to provide fish protection. Hatchery staff was assigned to haze birds from daylight to dusk using pyrotechnics (fire crackers, bottle rockets, etc.). Several thousand rounds were used between January 17 to 23, 2007, with limited success (3,000 rounds on January 19 alone). On January 18, the RFPM requested and received Fish Program approval to request an emergency modification to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture-Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) "take permit" issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, who administers the "Migratory Bird Act". This modification allows USDA-WS staff to control bird predation at Ringold, on WDFW's behalf, by lethal removal of up to 50 cormorants. The permit was received by USDA-WS on January 23 and the first lethal removals (10-15 birds) took place on January 24, a week after the problem was first reported. Presently, predation has abated as a result of the January 24 effort, but USDA-WS is prepared to return at intervals, as needed, to provide additional protection for the fish. Hatchery staff is developing plans to seek emergency funding to construct over-head bird netting to provide 100 percent protection by denying bird access to the pond, thus eliminating the need for lethal removal.

Federal Landowner Incentives Program in Jeopardy: The federally funded Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is in jeopardy, since both congress and the federal administration have eliminated the program from their 2008 budgets. In Washington State, LIP has proven to be a very successful and popular program. LIP funding has provided over $3 million in competitive grants to over 150 private landowners for the protection and/or restoration of habitat to benefit species at risk on privately owned lands. Since over half of Washington State is in private ownership, preservation of the state's rich fish and wildlife heritage is largely dependent on the ability of private landowners to provide habitat for species at risk. Staff will be working with the Washington State Congressional Delegation to try to save LIP, or at least reserve funding for some type of private landowner program in the future.

Geoduck Clam Fertilization Experiment: As part of a Sea Grant funded study, Central Shellfish staff participated in a one-day study trial at the Taylor Shellfish hatchery facility in Dabob Bay. The overall study grant involves University of Washington (UW), Taylor Resources, Inc., and WDFW staff and seeks to address cultured-wild interaction related to geoduck aquaculture in Washington State. As currently practiced, aquaculture of geoduck clams in Washington State involves dense aggregations of seed geoduck. These densities far exceed those observed in wildstock populations. If cultured stocks mature prior to harvest and are reproductively successful, they could negatively impact the genetic variability of local wildstock populations. The study trial involved testing an artificial geoduck spawn apparatus. Geoduck sperm and eggs were collected and pooled from hatchery stock. WDFW and UW divers then set up an *in situ* artificial geoduck spawning system on bottom of Dabob Bay. Geoduck sperm was delivered through an array of 50 µm polyethylene bags containing eggs. The preliminary results indicated a 15-25% fertilization rate of geoduck eggs, establishing the efficacy of the study trial methods. Additional study trials were planned prior to the final fertilization study, in April 2007.

Invasive Zebra Mussel Threat Increases with New Discovery: "Please, let me be wrong" reported Wen Baldwin, Lake Mead Natural Resource Area Volunteer, in hoping that the new establishment of zebra mussels, verified in Lake Mead just a few days ago, has not already spread to more marinas. This has been a pivotal discovery as it is the first population established west of 100 degrees west longitude. Lake Mead straddles the Nevada and Arizona boarder and is only about a 12-hour drive from Washington State.

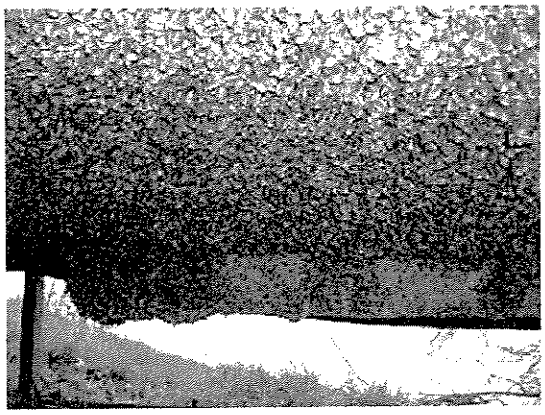
Zebra mussels are considered highly invasive biofoulers that occlude pipes in municipal and industrial raw-water systems, requiring millions of dollars annually to treat. Zebra mussel densities have been reported to be over 700,000 individuals per square meter in some facilities in the Great Lakes area. They produce microscopic larvae that float freely in the water column, and thus can pass by screens installed to exclude them. Monitoring and control of zebra mussels costs millions of dollars annually nationally. Zebra mussels also negatively impact aquatic ecosystems, harming native organisms (including already imperiled indigenous mussels).

The Aquatic Nuisance Species Unit is working closely with the national 100th Meridian Initiative and other stakeholder groups to address this issue. Zebra mussels have been prohibited in the state since 1996. Although this is the first case of a confirmed established population, most western states have regularly intercepted boats with attached zebra mussels before they could launch. Washington State has had five confirmed findings on commercial vessels since 2000 (limited inspections) with the most recent in December. Officer Eric Anderson only caught this one through diligent tracking after a report from California came in that a boat was heading our way.

Legislation proposed by the Enforcement Division for 2007 will improve and expand our boater inspection capabilities, which are the primary prevention mechanism to keep this species from

invading state waters. This is especially important due to increased cross-country vessel sales and professional fishing tournament activities.

The picture below shows the hull of a sailboat found recently in Oklahoma and heavily fouled with zebra mussels.



Acquisition of ROV for Marine Invertebrate Assessment: Shellfish dive staff is working with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to acquire a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to conduct certain marine benthic surveys. This assessment tool would be employed in areas inaccessible to scuba divers due to water depth, to survey large areas for presence/absence of certain invertebrate and algae species, to identify benthic surface substrates and habitats, and to identify signs of illegal harvest activity. With area quantification using triple beam lasers, this tool could be used for stock assessment of commercially important species such as sea cucumbers and possibly sea urchins. Important or sensitive habitat such as macroalgae and eelgrass beds can be surveyed and fishery management actions to reduce impacts to this habitat can be implemented.

Steelhead Genetics Report for the Walla Walla, Lyons Ferry Hatchery and Tucannon River Stocks: Joe Bumgarner, Scott Blankenship, Mo Small and Glen Mendel have been working on this report for some time. It indicates significant genetic differences between Lyons Ferry Hatchery (LFH), Lower Grande Ronde tributaries, Walla Walla, Tucannon, and Touchet steelhead stocks, as well as possible hatchery (LFH) introgression (genetic mixing) into Tucannon steelhead. This document will be very helpful when WDFW goes through the Hatchery reform process, Statewide Steelhead Management Planning, and responding to Federal Salmon Recovery Planning this year. Regional staff is hoping to receive some help from the genetics unit for genetic analyses of Tenmile and Asotin steelhead this spring.

Plan to Haze Sea Lions in the Bonneville Tailrace to Reduce Fish Losses to Predation: On January 9, 2007, representatives from the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho met with NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to discuss the action plan proposed by Washington and Oregon biologists for non-lethal hazing marine mammals below Bonneville Dam. The hazing plan, designed to deter pinnipeds from the Boat Restricted Zone one-half mile below the dam – during daylight hours (8-10 hrs/day) on a seven-day-per-week basis took place March through May. The goal of the plan is to reduce predation on anadromous salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act during the peak adult migration of the spring run. This work was conducted under funding from the NOAA Fisheries.

In addition, NOAA is currently reviewing the State's Section 120 Permit to allow limited lethal take of sea lions under the Marine Mammal Act.

Garth Griffin from NOAA fisheries indicated that NEPA considerations must be addressed and NOAA will announce its decision in the near future.

Predation by seal lions on white sturgeon below Bonneville Dam is not addressed by the NOAA Fisheries funded hazing plan.

Last year, during the course of diverse field activities, staff from Region 5 and from ODFW spent over 400 hours observing marine mammal activity in the Columbia River from late December through April. Predation of over 100 sturgeon and 75 salmonids was observed. In addition, predation at Bonneville Dam, documented by the USACE, totaled 233 white sturgeon through March 27, thirty-two of which were fish over legal-size. ODFW and WDFW staff prepared a marine mammal predation decision package for consideration by the state legislature in the 2007-2008 biennial funding cycle; however, this package has not received funding. The Department is currently looking into any possible options for funding sea lion hazing to protect the Columbia River sturgeon resources.

Tripod Complex Fire Update: Region staff working with a Collaborative Action Team (CAT) composed of stakeholders from the timber industry and environmental organizations has been asked to assist the Forest Service in crafting a salvage proposal for the portion of the Okanogan forest that was burned. The CAT has focused on trying to expedite salvage of burned material this winter in order to harvest the wood over snow when damage to soil would be minimized and before insects have penetrated the wood making it non-marketable. The Forest Service has opted to do a lengthier EIS, which proposes to salvage dead and dying trees from approximately 2,800 acres within a portion of the area burned by the fire. This salvage will include harvest that may have environmental impacts over a small area but maximize harvest in order to provide the greatest monetary return. This action resulting in the harvest of approximately 28 MBF of timber will require amendments of the Forest Plan to allow harvest of green trees larger than 21' diameter breast height that are expected to die from fire effects, allow motorized access in Management Area 26 (which is deer winter range) during the winter season to facilitate salvage operations, and exceed open road density standards in discrete management areas as a result of salvage operations. This money then will be put toward maintaining the green harvest program.

Combined Mule Deer Foundation/FNAWS Hunting Exposition: Wildlife Program staff attended the Western Hunting and Conservation Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah. At the Expo, the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep auctioned the Department's California bighorn sheep auction permit, generating $61,000 – the highest value ever for a California bighorn sheep permit in Washington. Ninety percent of the funds generated from the permit come back to the Department and are dedicated to bighorn sheep management. While at the meeting, biologists for all western states attended a wild sheep biologist meeting. Attendees discussed the recent creation of a wild sheep working group, which was established at the Director's winter Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting last month. The first task will be creating a guidelines document for managing wild sheep near domestic sheep.

Wildlife Program staffed two booths at the event. The deer booth showcased the Mule Deer Cooperative Research Project, as well as hunting opportunities related to the Eastside and Westside Deer Auction tags that were sold on the Department's behalf by the Mule Deer Foundation. Total gross funds generated were $16,000. WDFW personnel included Woody Myers, David Volsen, William Moore, and Jerry Nelson. Staff did a great job explaining deer biology and hunting opportunities to the public, most of which were pleasantly surprised by the deer hunting opportunities available in the Evergreen State. WDFW was presented in a positive and professional manner, and we received a lot of great feedback from the attendees and the hosting non-government organizations. Kudos to the Wildlife Program.

Wild Horse Wind Power Project: The transition of ownership and management of the Wild Horse Wind Power Project from Horizon to Puget Sound Energy is complete. The construction

phase of the project is over, the wind farm is at production capacity, and day-to-day operations and maintenance have been transferred. Seeding and restoration of the site per contractual obligations were about 80 percent complete before the site was snowed in for the winter. Seeding and erosion control work will resume in the spring. Horizon and its subcontractors will remain on retainer to complete site restoration work. We remain concerned with the discrepancies between the impacts that occurred during site preparation and construction and impacts described within the Environmental Impact Statement. In areas where seven parallel cable trenches converged, the clearing limits exceeded 200-feet in some of the most sensitive habitat at the site, potentially affecting ecological connectivity and creating migration barriers for some species of wildlife. Further discussion and monitoring of site restoration activities will occur in the spring. Staff is preparing a synopsis of challenges and concerns as well as successes regarding this project for use in updating WDFW's Wind Power Guidelines.

Coastal Crab Fishery – Commercial Vessel Seized: Officers once again flew the coastline before the opener. While this was occurring, additional Officers were handling a complaint from a commercial fisherman that gear was in the water a full 2 hours before the season opened. Officers were directed to the coordinates given and gear was detected with the aid of night vision. While officers appreciated the tip, the reporting party had a problem of his own – he possessed 140 crab pots in excess of his limit onboard a vessel being used to barge his gear. This was handled later. Evidence was recovered from the 62-foot vessel's electronics that showed the operator had begun to deploy his gear about 11 hours before the open season. He finally admitted to the violation. His motivation to get his 400-plus crab pots off of his deck was related to getting back across the Grays Harbor bar at high water; otherwise, severe conditions would dictate that he would have to sit it out in the ocean until the next high tide period. (Note: 95% of the Westport commercial crab fleet made the business decision to stay in port because they knew that they would not be able to deploy all of their crab gear and then be able to return to port in time to safely cross the bar.) A few other boats had chosen to go anyhow. Because they waited to fish until the season opened, they were forced to sit out at sea and get thumped by Mother Nature while our suspect was comfortably tied to the dock. Setting gear early provides a distinct advantage over the competition. Access to the prime fishing grounds and getting first crack at the available crab can have a massive bearing on profits. Most of the crab caught during the coastal crab fishery is caught within the first two weeks of the season, even though it is open from December to September. To take the profit out of poaching, the $1.5 million vessel was seized for forfeiture action. The operator decided to settle with the Department that evening for $10,000. Criminal charges will be referred to the county prosecutor.

Agreement in Principle with the Colville Tribes Extended: By the joint December 22, 2006, action of Governor Gregoire, Chairman Michael Marchand of the Colville Confederated Tribes, and Director Koenings, the Agreement in Principle signed in December 2004 between the parties has been extended until September 30, 2007. The extension provides additional time to study potential impacts of a modest drawdown of Lake Roosevelt as part of Department of Ecology's Columbia River Water Management Program. The Agreement in Principle with the Colville Confederated Tribes provides for investigation of potential impacts of the Lake Roosevelt drawdown and compensation of the Colville Confederated Tribes for impacts, creates an economic development capital fund for the Tribe, creates a fisheries enhancement capital fund to facilitate joint work on fisheries management, and provides for tribal participation in investigation of the potential for new off-channel storage in the Columbia River system.

Region Two Cougar Incident: Just outside the city limits of Leavenworth, Officers were called regarding a report of another cougar attack on a pet dog. The homeowner said that at around 2:00 a.m. he heard a commotion coming from the porch. He went outside and saw his basset

hound and a cougar in a fight on the front porch. The homeowner attempted to rescue his pet, and was bitten on the finger by the cougar. The dog was pulled away, and the cougar left. Officer arrived at around 3:00 a.m. with two local hound hunters and their dogs.

It was about 10 degrees, with three to four feet of snow making it very difficult to track the cougar. Additional officers and hound hunters were dispatched and after a long and difficult track the cougar was caught under a homeowner's deck in Leavenworth and was dispatched by an officer using his duty weapon. This cougar had been tracked for over twelve hours, had traveled over three miles and had gone through several residential neighbor hoods, past two schools and the Leavenworth ski area, swam the Wenatchee River and fought with the hunting dogs at the end. WDFW Officers used snowmobiles, snowshoes and patrol vehicles in the effort to catch and kill this cat. Seven hound hunters and a couple of dozen hunting dogs were utilized. The head of the cougar will be submitted for a rabies test per policy. Officers Grant, Oswald and Treser really did an outstanding job on this response.

When you think of ALL the things that can go wrong on a long, hard chase like this, it really comes down to the outstanding Officers that do these types of things with such great results. We are very proud of all three officers for a job well done!

Big Seas – Big Case: Officers received information that a non-tribal commercial crab vessel was fishing in closed coastal waters north of Destruction Island in a Tribal Special Management Area (SMA). Officers then coordinated with the USCG at air stations Port Angeles and Astoria and flights deployed to locate this vessel. A crew for WDFW's Corliss was organized and got underway from Westport along with a USCG patrol boat in an effort to locate the vessel. USCG helicopters spotted the suspect vessel engaged in pulling crab pots in the closed area and patrol vessels were directed to that location. Officers responded to USCG Air Station Port Angeles and the USCG Air Station Astoria to debrief the helicopter crews, review photos of the suspect vessel, and obtain statements. This critical information was then passed onto the Officers on the patrol boats. The USCG patrol boat and the Corliss located the vessel and ordered the operator to Neah Bay since sea conditions prevented a boarding. While en route to Neah Bay, the Corliss located 60 crab pots deployed in the closed area that belonged to the suspected vessel.

Once secured in Neah Bay, the suspect operator and crew were interviewed. The suspect gave four different versions of why the gear was in the closed area. After a long night in Neah Bay, 1,629 pounds of crab were seized the following morning, along with 30 crab pots believed to have been used to take illegal crab and then stacked on the suspect vessels deck. The next day, the Corliss got underway once again and searched the closed area for the presence of illegal gear. The 60 crab pots were located and seized. Many of these crab pots did not have functioning biodegradable escape mechanisms, appearing to have been treated with a substance. This prevents the cotton cord from rotting away, completely circumventing regulations important to limiting the adverse effects of derelict fishing gear on marine life. The crab pot buoys also did not possess tags as required. The tagging system is a tool used to assist in the enforcement of crab pot limits. Fishers have either a 300 or 500 crab pot limit, and the appropriate amount of tags is issued to coincide with the number of crab pots allowed. Pots without tags are presumed to be in excess of limits. Further investigation has shown that the suspect may be fishing more than 40 crab pots over his limit. Thanks to the USCG for their continued and vital assistance to WDFW.

The Molecular Genetics Laboratory: The Molecular Genetics Laboratory has constructed a genomic library using Chinook salmon DNA. A genomic library is a collection of DNA fragments that we want to study that have been inserted into special strains of bacteria and grown in cell cultures. We constructed our Chinook salmon genomic library to look for single nucleotide

polymorphisms (SNPs), a type of DNA variation that we can use to identify the population-of-origin of Chinook salmon that are sampled in ocean fisheries.

To construct this library we first cut up Chinook DNA using bacterial enzymes that cut DNA at specific combinations of bases. The DNA fragments were then inserted into bacteria and grown on culture plates in isolated colonies. We then sequenced the fragments in the bacterial colonies. We have now sequenced 15 distinct fragments, and currently are sequencing many more. The next step is to use these sequences to screen DNA from Chinook throughout their range to discover SNPs. The SNPs will be used for a wide variety of projects and hold the promise in the future of allowing us to do more detailed work at lower cost.

Lake Chelan Hydroelectric Project: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has issued a new 50-year license to the Chelan County Public Utility District. It contains some of the provisos and requirements for protection, mitigation, and enhancement that were included in a multi-party settlement agreement submitted to FERC three years ago. The Region Two Director asked Major Projects staff to identify: (1) specific changes from the settlement agreement; (2) activities where WDFW has a role or responsibility; (3) the nature of each identified role or responsibility; (4) timeline(s) associated with each WDFW role/action; and (5) which Regional staff person should be responsible for an action and also who should be involved or consulted. When we move into the implementation of protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures contained in the new license, the Regional Director indicated his desire that Major Projects staff be the lead WDFW representative in the several forums involved (e.g., Chelan River Fish Forum, Lake Chelan Fish Forum, Wildlife Forum, and Recreation Forum).

Makah Bay Offshore Wave Energy Pilot Project: The first license application in the United States for a wave energy project has been accepted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. While this and other wave energy projects have gone through the preliminary permit process, this is the first project to submit an application for a license. The application contains over 1,300 pages of material. The project will be located 3.7 miles offshore and will include four generating buoys and a transmission line. It will generate one megawatt of electricity. The applicant is requesting that the project area be closed to fishing in order to protect their anchoring system, which will occupy an area 625 feet by 450 feet.

SaSI Data Layer for SalmonScape! On January 2, 2007, the Geographic Information System (GIS) section of Biological Data Systems Unit in Fish Program's Science Division completed a new Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI) GIS database for the agency GIS data libraries. It is designed to allow SaSI data users to work with and view SaSI stocks on SalmonScape and for use as map images in agency documents. The new data will be made available on the SalmonScape Internet mapping application during this month.

More than 500 SaSI stocks are currently recognized for salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and cutthroat in Washington. This GIS database includes a separate spatial layer for each stock, along with descriptive attributes such as stock name and status, quality of information and federal listing status. These attributes are viewable on SalmonScape via a sophisticated but user-friendly query system. Each stock can be individually viewed from its upper extent of documented distribution to where it exits either to the Pacific Ocean, Puget Sound or the Columbia River.

We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of dozens of state and tribal fish biologists to contribute their expertise to creating the SaSI data and the Science Division staff who manage the tabular data and make it available for use in GIS.

Pygmy Rabbit Recovery: In March 2007, staff working with researchers from Washington State University conducted an initial release of 20 pygmy rabbits from captivity to the wild. The

release site is the Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area, the last area known to have supported pygmy rabbits.

Monitoring is conducted in conjunction with a Ph.D. student at Washington State University under the direction of Dr. Rod Sayler, who has been involved in pygmy rabbit recovery for a number of years. Although the rabbit numbers in the initial release were small, it provided key information for improvement of future releases.

WDFW Region 2 staff members are working with sixteen landowners on safe harbor agreements at present, and things are going smoothly. It appears that most landowners contacted have been interested in safe harbor agreements. WDFW has facilitated safe harbor agreements by conducting pygmy rabbit surveys on private lands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still working on the pygmy rabbit draft federal recovery plan.

Watchable Wildlife: Watchable Wildlife staff developed a Bald Eagle Festival display focusing on the promotion of the Bald Eagle specialty plate and the Bald Eagle WildWatchCams. The Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival featured hundreds of wintering bald eagles and reached thousands of visitors desiring to see and learn about this fascinating raptor. The Grand Coulee Bald Eagle Festival offered opportunities to see a few hundred bald eagles against the colorful rocks, canyons, and frozen waterfalls of Central Washington. Each festival had unique activities, speakers, and events. Additional information about the bald eagle festivals can be found at http://www.eaglefestival.com or http://www.skagiteagle.org.

Sage grouse: There have been two active translocation projects in Washington: one to the Yakima Training Center in Yakima County and one to the Yakima Indian Nation in southern Yakima County. WDFW has been involved in translocations to augment dwindling numbers of sage grouse in the Yakima Training Center since 2004. In 2006, we moved 15 animals from Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge to the training center. A total of 61 birds were translocated over three years. As of May 2007, 11 sage grouse were still being monitored. Five nests have successfully hatched chicks from monitored females in 2007. The next project phase will be data analysis and a final report on the translocation effort

Bighorn Sheep Attracted to Road De-icer: Biologists from Yakama Indian Nation and WDFW, along with the general public, have recently observed herds of bighorn sheep at several locations on SR12 and SR821 licking de-icer on the roads. There was concern for public safety and whether the de-icer is toxic to wildlife. In some cases sheep were actually blocking traffic. The Maintenance & Operations Superintendent for Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) indicated that DOT and the rest of Washington State are now using a performance enhancing anti-icer / de-icer additive. The additive that makes it less corrosive than salt is a concentrate derived from corn and is specifically engineered to enhance the effectiveness and viscosity. In addition to enhancing performance, the concentrate, mixed with magnesium, sodium and calcium chloride brines is more than 70% less corrosive than rock salt with a eutectic temperature of -10F. The supervisor indicates that DOT has been using this salt chemical now for four years, and their data shows no increase in road kill from previous years when just sand was used. This de-icer product is composed primarily of materials from the processing of salts and sugars, making it economical and readily available.

It is nontoxic and non-hazardous to plant and animal life and the environment, and is also biodegradable. Region 3 will be monitoring this issue to assess if these are isolated incidents or if there is a chronic problem and collaborate with DOT as needed.

Washington Chapter of Society for Range Management (SRM) Meeting: Edd Bracken and Mel Asher attended the fall meeting of the Washington chapter of the Society for Range Management (SRM) to discuss the livestock-grazing pilot project program among WDFW, the

Washington Cattlemen's Association, and the Cattle Producers of Washington. Members were especially interested in the monitoring methods that we used.

Pacific Coast Fishery Data Committee (PCFDC): IRM, Fish Program Marine Science, and Information Systems staffs attended the annual PCFDC meeting hosted by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in Portland. The meeting provided a forum for the three coastal states and Alaska to review their fishery data programs, make necessary corrections to data collection and reporting protocols, and pursue efficiencies in collecting fishery information to feed the Pacific Fishery Information Network (PacFIN). Among the issues addressed at this year's meeting were changes to the protocol for identifying nominal species catch in PacFIN (i.e., reported species catch categories that may contain some portion of other species), identifying the procedure to integrate research catch into PacFIN so that inappropriate catch discard penalties are not applied, and revising some sampling protocols for collecting and processing biological information collected from commercial catches.

Ocean Policy Working Group: IRM staff attended a meeting of the Ocean Policy Working Group finalizing the ocean policy recommendations and drafting of the final report. There were substantive comments received from members of the public on the draft report and recommendations. The Working Group reviewed these comments and discussed whether any modifications were needed. All written comments were appended to the final report.

The proposed governance structure was revised in response to recommendations to add seats for the coastal tribes and counties. The team composition will be similar to the current working group; that is, representatives from key state agencies such as Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Community, Trade and Economic Development. Coordination of and staff support for the team will be the responsibility of the Department of Ecology, with additional seats for the coastal tribes and counties. Meetings will be open to the public and constituents could participate in team meetings in an advisory capacity.

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization and the Pacific Council: Congress reauthorized the Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act in mid-December. The Act has been revised to include language specific to the Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding the creation of a limited access privilege program (or rationalization program) for the trawl fishery. Among other things, the Act requires that the Pacific Council consider the development of "regional fishery associations" and/or other cooperative-type programs.

Amon Creek (WRIA 37): Reporters interviewed staff regarding the recent success story of adult coho returns in Amon Creek, a small independent tributary to the Columbia River downstream of the Yakima River mouth. An article was published in various Eastern Washington newspapers. A documentary movie, Arid Lands, was presented at a film festival in Nevada recently.

In the film, Water Team staff Paul LaRiviere represented local interests in flow restoration and salmon recovery efforts in Amon Creek. The entire film was about how the Tri-Cities needs and utilizes water.

WRIA 32/35 Instream Flows: Staff attended WRIA 35 (Middle Snake River tributaries) and 32 (Walla Walla River basin) Planning Unit meetings to discuss instream flows.

WRIA 32 instream negotiations have hit a major milestone. WDFW has worked with the planning unit since its inception more than five years ago. Though the Department does have some issues with the current rule (e.g., reaches downstream of management points; allowing of withdrawals as late as May 31 on the Walla Walla for "environmental enhancement projects"), most of our concerns have been addressed through negotiation and we commend the Planning Unit for the work they have done and the final product they have submitted.

Domestic and Wild Sheep Don't Mix: Wildlife Biologist Beau Patterson received information of a Mouflon sheep at a residence in the area of Ohme Gardens on the north end of Wenatchee. This area is frequented by a resident herd of bighorn sheep, and the potential of the transmission of disease from the Mouflon to the wild sheep was a concern. Enforcement officers and Biologist Patterson met with the homeowners and provided a packet of information and regulations. The homeowners recently moved to Chelan County from the west side and were very concerned about the welfare of the resident wild sheep. They agreed to get rid of the deleterious wildlife and Biologist Patterson is currently attempting to locate a suitable and lawful location to transfer the domestic sheep.

Lands Division Winter Workshop: Lands Division staff from around the state spent the better part of a week at the winter workshop in Ellensburg. Agenda items included presentations on global warming implications for fish and wildlife, the 2007-09 budget outlook, the wildlife area habitat conservation plan, mapping, research on fish and wildlife lands, public access, work plans for 2007, Lands Division awards, acquisition program grants, proposed land-use rules and regulations, etc.

New Rules Coordinator: On December 1, 2006 Enforcement welcomed Lori Preuss to the WDFW as the Criminal Justice Liaison and Administrative Regulations Coordinator for the Department. Lori received her J.D. from Gonzaga University School of Law, and her M.A. in English – Technical and Professional Writing – and B.A. in English Education from Eastern Washington University. In the past four years, she has served as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the San Juan and Okanogan county prosecuting attorney's offices, working closely with WDFW. Lori is passionate about preserving, protecting, and perpetuating Washington's marine and wildlife resources and is a valuable addition to our team.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006

Phone: (307) 777-4600 Fax: (307) 777-4610

Web site: http://gf.state.wy.us

GOVERNOR
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Report to Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
January - June 2007

New Commissioners

Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal appointed two new Wyoming Game and Fish Commissioners, Fred Lindzey of Laramie and Ed Mignery of Sundance. Lindzey is a retired University of Wyoming professor and assistant leader for the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. Lindzey was appointed to District #2, representing Sweetwater, Albany and Carbon County. Mignery is an electric cooperative engineering support supervisor. He was appointed to District #6, representing Crook, Weston and Niobara County. Linzey and Mignery replaced outgoing Commissioners Linda Fleming and Kerry Powers, respectively.

Leadership Development

Nationwide, state fish and wildlife agencies will continue to lose large numbers of leaders to retirement in the coming years. In the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, individuals in nearly all Staff-level positions and throughout the Department are currently eligible for retirement, or will be in the next five years.

The Game and Fish is now accepting applications for the Leadership Development Level 1 program. This program is designed for emerging leaders within the department with a desire to move or advance into positions of formal leadership. Applications for this program will be reviewed by a steering committee on five criteria – background, character, personality, multi-lateralism and communication skills. Twenty participants will be selected for the program. Each Level 1 session will last about one year, and will include elements of assessment, training, mentoring, assignments and short-term experiences. The program will be administered in the Office of the Director, under the direction of the Leadership Development Program Coordinator.

Wolf Management Update

In August 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service denied Wyoming's petition to the U.S. Department of Interior to remove the gray wolf from the endangered species. The State of Wyoming proceeded with litigation arguing that the Wyoming petition merited de-listing of wolves in the State. This is based in part on the fact that wolf population data indicates at least 309 wolves in 31 packs in Wyoming, which is more than three times the original recovery goal.

In May 2007, the State of Wyoming and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reached an agreement that allows for Wyoming to be included in the proposed gray wolf de-listing rule that is currently under review. Based on the draft Wyoming Gray Wolf Management Plan, the state will manage wolves as trophy game animals in a portion of northwest Wyoming under a larger wolf management area than outlined in Wyoming's 2003-wolf management plan. Wolves would

be protected in Yellowstone National Park and adjoining lands included in the National Park system. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed that Wyoming could classify wolves in the rest of the state as predatory animals. Wyoming statutes and the draft Gray Wolf Management Plan specifies that Wyoming will manage for a minimum of 15 breeding pairs of wolves in the State, 8 in the National Parks and 7 in the rest of the State.

Several conditions in a law passed by the Wyoming State Legislature in March 2007 must be met by the Fish & Wildlife Service before the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission can consider adopting the draft wolf management plan proposed by the Service, including the de-listing of wolves in Wyoming, resolution of all pending litigation, and a 10j rule that allows the State to address wolf impacts to wild ungulates.

Grizzly Bears

In March 2007, the U.S. Department of Interior announced it would remove the Yellowstone population of grizzly bears from its status as threatened on the U.S. list of threatened and endangered species. Four other grizzly populations in the lower 48 states have not yet recovered and will continue to be protected as threatened species under the Act. Grizzly numbers in the Yellowstone ecosystem have increased from an estimated population of 136 to 312 when they were listed as threatened in 1975, to more than 600 bears today.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to de-list grizzly bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem in November 2005. The proposal was reviewed at four open houses and two public hearings; more than 193,500 public comments were received.

Effective in late May, grizzly bears in Wyoming are no longer listed. Litigation is anticipated in the coming months that may impact the de-listing decision.

Yellowstone grizzlies will now be managed under the Wyoming's 2005 Grizzly Bear Management Plan. The conservation strategy incorporates the best available science and allows state and federal agencies to adjust management in response to new scientific information or environmental and bear population changes. State and federal managers will continue to work cooperatively under this framework to manage and maintain healthy grizzly bear populations throughout the Greater Yellowstone area.

Grizzly Bear/Wolf Documentary

The department is currently producing a one-hour documentary that will examine the implications of grizzly bear and wolf populations in the Yellowstone ecosystem and in Wyoming specifically. This production will focus on the both the benefits and challenges posed by recovered populations of these predators and will feature numerous interviews with people who live, work, and recreate in wolf and grizzly country. It is anticipated the documentary will air on the Outdoor Life Network in 2008.

Mule Deer Initiative

Across the west and in Wyoming, mule deer numbers have declined since the 1950s and 1960s for a variety of reasons, including habitat loss, weather and predation. Because mule deer are so important to our state, the Game and Fish has created the Mule Deer Initiative, a strategic plan to address the many factors affecting this important species.

The Mule Deer Initiative focuses on six conservation goals: conserve, enhance and restore mule deer habitat; manage wildlife populations to sustain productive habitat conditions and populations through a hunting framework; apply the best available science to monitor deer populations and habitat conditions; develop cooperative working relationships with other institutions and organizations to conduct applied research; inform and educate the public regarding issues affecting the conservation of mule deer; and enhance funding and public support for mule deer management.

Department personnel conducted a series of open houses on the Mule Deer Initiative in March and April. The Mule Deer Working Group and other personnel will continue to inform and educate the public about the initiative and ways they can help get involved in the ongoing effort.

Sage Grouse

Wyoming's eight local sage grouse working groups are continuing their efforts to develop local conservation plans. Each working group has 10-15 members, including representatives from agriculture, industry, conservation and government. These eight working groups cover the entire sage grouse habitat in Wyoming. Priorities for each group are determined locally. Two conservation plans have been completed and approved by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. The South Central plan is in its final revision stage and the Wind River/Sweetwater River draft plan is open for public comment until the end of June.

The Wyoming legislature appropriated $1.1 million in general funds in 2007-2008 for local sage grouse working group efforts. Governor Dave Freudenthal will host a Sage Grouse Summit in Casper, June 27-28, 2007.

Bighorn Sheep

In January, Game and Fish conducted its third bighorn sheep transplant. This time the transplant occurred in Laramie Peak area near Wheatland. Forty-two bighorns from near Plains, Montana, were released in the Laramie Peak area, to supplement the current herd of 200.

The transplant is also part of a long-term study of habitat burned in a 2002 wildfire in the region. GPS collars were fitted on 30 of the bighorns, and their movements will be tracked using GIS technology. Maps will be created to analyze habitat use, daily and seasonal movement, adult survival, lambing locations and reproductive rates. The total project cost was $103,000 and was funded through donations from state chapters and national Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS), the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition and Dooley Oil in Laramie.

Chronic Wasting Disease

Five additional CWD zones were identified in Wyoming in 2006, including deer hunt area 4 in the Black Hills, deer hunt area 11 in Weston and Niobrara counties, and elk hunt areas 16 in the Shirley Basin, area 22 in northwest Carbon county and area 14 south of Encampment. Game and Fish personnel expanded testing in 2007 to include most areas in western Wyoming. No CWD was detected in those locations.

Brucellosis

The WGFD continues to implement all of the wildlife recommendations of the Governor's Brucellosis Coordination Team. Brucellosis Management Action Plans for all herd units in northwest Wyoming are being completed. All action plans will be completed and in place by July 1, 2007.

For the second year, Game and Fish personnel trapped elk in January 2007 as part of the Muddy Creek feedground test-and-removal pilot project. Personnel captured 79 adult cow elk, 13 of which tested seropositive for brucellosis. Biologists recently classified the Muddy Creek feedground and determined that there were a total of 383 elk on the feedground, with 228 being adult female test eligible animals. All seropositive elk were transported to an Idaho USDA processing facility. Meat from the elk was donated to a Wyoming food bank for donation to families in need.

In addition to the removal of seropositive elk, there is also valuable research in brucellosis management evolving from this scientific experiment. Tissue samples were collected from all 13 seropositive elk and will be cultured to determine if the slaughtered animals were actually infected and capable of transmitting the disease. There is also cooperative research being conducted with the United States Geological Survey on the relationship between parasites, such as lungworms, and rates of brucellosis infections on feedgrounds. Some evidence suggests that parasites may play a role in disease transmission.

Wyoming regained its Brucellosis Class Free status in September 2006. Ongoing research is part of the effort to eliminate brucellosis in wildlife and maintain Wyoming's brucellosis free status.

Avian Influenza

The Wyoming Game and Fish completed its first year of surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), subtype H5N1, with all samples testing negative for the disease. Game and Fish personnel collected a total of 532 samples from live-captured and hunter-killed birds. Samples of waterfowl and shorebirds, including sandpipers, geese and teal were collected. With assistance from the Wyoming Livestock Board, samples were also collected from pheasants at the department's pheasant farms.

The Game and Fish's results were part of a larger surveillance and outreach effort in Wyoming, involving the Wyoming Livestock Board, Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, Wyoming Department of Health and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services. More than 1,600 samples were collected in Wyoming – 532 from Game and Fish, 681 from Wildlife Services and 408 from the Livestock Board. All tested negative for HPAI H5N1.

Game and Fish, along with these partners, has created a frequently asked questions sheet on avian influenza. Press releases along with additional news on radio, television and in Wyoming Wildlife Magazine are being used to keep public abreast of the avian influenza situation.

Legislative Efforts

Game and Fish developed several proposals for the 2007 session of the Wyoming State Legislature relative to department funding needs, including a proposal for alternative funding to allocate funds for programs such as wildlife habitat and sensitive species. The Legislature

approved a 20-percent increase on most Game and Fish licenses to keep on par with inflationary increases to take effect in 2008. This increase would generate approximately $5.6 million annually. The Legislature also approved compensation to the Game and Fish Commission in the amount of approximately $1million annually for licenses issued free of charge or at reduced rates based upon past legislative action.

The alternative funding proposal was not approved, but will become part of an interim topic discussed by the joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Committee. The Committee will look specifically at allocating funds for the Game and Fish's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

Energy Development

With Wyoming's energy boom likely to continue, wildlife and wildlife habitat in oil and gas development areas continues to be a focus of Game and Fish. The department will continue to work closely with the Wyoming Governor's Office, Oil and Gas Commission, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, environmental organizations, industry representatives and local communities to identify concerns for wildlife and strategies to identify ways to mitigate impacts to wildlife and habitat across the state.

Electronic Licensing

In January 2007, the Game and Fish launched the online hunting license application system, offering hunters the opportunity to apply for limited quota deer, elk, antelope, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose and turkey licenses. Online applicants certify their residency using an electronic oath form, and have the option of applying individually or as a party. Hunters can also pay for their license using a credit card and donate to Access Yes or search and rescue upon checkout. The system is for limited quota licenses only, and does not offer conservation stamps, fishing, bird or small game licenses. To date, about 35 percent of all limited quota applicants are using the online system.

The online hunting application system will be combined with the department's electronic point of sale system that will be test-run by license selling agents beginning this year. The end result will be an integrated electronic licensing system that not only meets the ever-changing needs of the agency, but more importantly, meets the needs of hunters and anglers in an efficient, convenient and user-friendly system.

Wildlife Heritage Summit

The Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming hosted the Wildlife Heritage Summit May 11-12 in Casper, Wyoming. The summit brought together representatives from conservation groups, hunters, anglers and state and federal agencies to discuss current and future wildlife priorities. About 200 people participated, hearing presentations and panel discussions on global climate change, energy development, economic and demographic changes in Wyoming and open space.

Human Dimensions

Wyoming Game and Fish Assistant Services Division Chief Eric Keszler and Information Supervisor Teresa Cole recently completed the WAFWA Human Dimensions in Wildlife certification program. As part of the program, Keszler will examine the Game and Fish's current public participation and input solicitation methods. Cole will survey Wyoming Game and Fish

employees about their wildlife values and preferences and compare those results to the values of residents identified in the WAFWA "Wildlife Values in the West" survey produced by the Human Dimensions in Natural Resources Unit at Colorado State University.

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative

The Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) is a long-term science based collaborative effort to ensure Wyoming's wildlife and their habitats are fully considered and addressed in the face of increasing land use pressures in Wyoming. This is a multi-agency effort involving the Game and Fish, BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and others. The goal of the WLCI is to conserve Wyoming's wildlife resources and facilitate responsible development of critical energy resources.

The WLCI will initially focus on 15 million acres of mostly public lands in southwest Wyoming. This area is estimated to contain approximately 85 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas. The area also has a rich wildlife resource with 100,000 deer, 40,000 elk, 100,000 pronghorn antelope, 8,000 moose, 1,400 bighorn sheep and the highest density of sage grouse within their western range.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)
Wild Sheep Working Group
Initial Subcommittee
Recommendations for Domestic Sheep and Goat Management In Wild Sheep Habitat
June 21, 2007

Name	Agency
Kevin Hurley (Chair)	Wyoming Game & Fish Department
Jon Jorgenson	Alberta Fish & Wildlife Division
Bob Henry	Arizona Game & Fish Department
Dr. Helen Schwantje	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
Dr. Vern Bleich	California Department of Fish & Game
Dr. Michael Miller	Colorado Division of Wildlife
Dr. Dale Toweill	Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Keith Aune	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
Mike Cox	Nevada Department of Wildlife
Vic Coggins	Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Melanie Woolever	USDA-U.S. Forest Service, Denver, CO
Jim Dryden	USDI-Bureau of Land Management, Washington, DC
Jim Karpowitz (Director Sponsor)	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Introduction/Overview

The USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA Forest Service (USFS), the two principal federal land management agencies in the western United States, are in the process of reviewing and updating their policies on the management of domestic sheep and goats in wild sheep habitat, with the intention of developing consistent, and potentially joint, policy. Although the risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep is widely recognized by wildlife and land management agencies, a unified set of management guidelines for minimizing this risk has not yet been devised or adopted by responsible agencies. This report is designed to provide a foundation for BLM and USFS development of a more unified policy for management of this west-wide issue.

At the request of the BLM, guidelines for management of domestic sheep in bighorn sheep habitat were first formally developed in the late 1980s (Desert Bighorn Council 1990). These guidelines led to development and dissemination of BLM Instruction Memoranda (USDI-BLM 1992, USDI-BLM 1998), providing guidelines for BLM field offices in the western U.S. The USFS (Schommer and Woolever 2001, Schommer and

Woolever 2007) published and updated a process paper, providing agency staff with recommended direction to reduce or eliminate contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. The provinces of Alberta and British Columbia have also developed guidelines for the use of domestic sheep for vegetation management on crown lands where contact with bighorn sheep is possible.

In January 2007, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), comprised of 23 state and provincial wildlife agencies from the western U.S. and western Canada, established a Wild Sheep Working Group (WSWG). This WSWG was requested to provide a comprehensive, west-wide assessment of all facets of wild sheep management, from the desert southwest to the far north. The first task undertaken by the WSWG was to develop a framework of recommendations for state, federal, and provincial agencies to tier to, when developing management guidelines dealing with potential contact or interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, recognizing the diversity and complexity of applying such guidelines across the wide variety of habitats and jurisdictions represented within WAFWA. The members of this initial WSWG were specifically selected based on their familiarity and knowledge of this issue, and represented a diverse mix of wildlife veterinarians, wild sheep managers, and land management agency wildlife program leaders from the U.S. and Canada.

Throughout significant portions of their range, bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) suffer from periodic population depression, largely resulting from recurrent respiratory disease epizootics. Epizootics in native bighorn herds were reported in various locations following European settlement and establishment of domestic livestock grazing throughout the central and southern Rocky Mountains. This trend may reflect historical introduction of novel pathogens (including some *Pasteurella* spp. strains) into naive bighorn populations beginning in the late 1800s (Grinnell 1928; Skinner 1928; Marsh 1938; Honess and Frost 1942; Miller 2001); the lack of similar trends in "thinhorn" sheep (*O. dalli*) that reside in habitats that have not experienced widespread domestic sheep grazing supports the notion that such epidemics are not necessarily a part of the natural history of North America's wild sheep species.

Over the past 30 years, there has been a steadily increasing body of anecdotal and empirical evidence underscoring the potential risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep (McQuivey 1978, Hunt 1980, Jessup 1980, Foreyt and Jessup 1982, Goodson 1982, Coggins 1982, Onderka and Wishart 1984, Jessup 1985, Festa-Bianchet 1988, Onderka and Wishart 1988, Onderka et al. 1988, Schwantje 1988, Callan et al. 1991, Coggins and Matthews 1992, Foreyt 1994, Foreyt et al. 1994, Cassirer et al. 1996, Martin et al. 1996, Coggins 2002, Rudolph et al. 2003). More recent assessments (USDA-FS 2006a, USDA-FS 2006b), workshops (UC-Davis 2007), and authors (Gross et al. 2000, Singer et al. 2000, Dubay et al. 2002, Epps et al. 2004, Jansen et al. 2006) have addressed the risk associated with contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, and many have recommended no contact be allowed between wild and domestic sheep and goats, in an effort to minimize disease transmission.

The WSWG collectively believes that effective separation (both temporal and/or spatial) between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats should be a primary management goal of state and provincial agencies responsible for wildlife management. We acknowledge that effective separation does not necessarily require the removal of domestic sheep and goats. However, the option of removing domestic sheep and goats should be included in the array of strategies to address this issue.

We acknowledge the continuing debate between wildlife and livestock proponents regarding the credibility and scientific merit of past findings, criticisms of experimental design and rigor, limitations of drawing inferences about natural disease events versus "controlled" experiments in confined settings, and valid differences of opinion on this issue. However, we believe there is a preponderance of evidence, taken collectively from a wide variety of observations that indicates significant risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep exists. In some cases, consequences to wild sheep have been severe enough to endanger entire populations of wild sheep. Consequently, we continue to recommend that wild sheep managers take appropriate steps to minimize, mitigate, or eliminate the opportunities for disease transmission. Practical solutions will

be difficult if not impossible to achieve until there is widespread acknowledgement that the risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep is real. We recognize that reaching this goal is likely to require additional scientific evidence. Recognition by stakeholders that all parties benefit when this disease risk is actively managed is also critical.

Concerns about potential disease transmission between domestic livestock and wildlife, and management approaches directed at minimizing such risks, are certainly not unprecedented. An analogous situation presently exists with the disease brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA): suspected transmission between wild ungulates (i.e., bison, elk) and domestic livestock (i.e., cattle) has occurred, disease transmission from elk and bison to cattle has been proven in clinical environments but has been difficult to confirm under field conditions, the economic and herd management implications are huge, and management of this disease problem has largely focused on temporal and spatial separation of livestock and wildlife to minimize risk. In the GYA, significant, and what some may consider drastic steps (e.g., lethal removal of bison) have been taken to minimize the risk of contact and possible transmission of *Brucella* organisms between wild ungulates and domestic livestock. The situation is very similar for pasteurellosis in wild sheep caused by bacteria from the *Pasteurella/Mannheimia* families (Ward et al. 1990, Ward et al. 1997, Miller 2001): there is cause for concern that is supported by logic, experience, and clinical scientific study, and a clear strategy for minimizing the risk of disease transmission by separating reservoir and susceptible species exists. Consequently, we believe there is a sufficient amount of reliable information available to move forward, seeking solutions to this issue.

The Payette National Forest Principles

At a November 2, 2006 meeting in Boise, ID, the Payette National Forest Science Panel, comprised of wildlife and domestic ungulate health experts with experience in pasteurellosis in wild and domestic sheep, working closely with a USFS facilitator, reviewed the available scientific information on bighorn-domestic sheep interactions and

developed a list of statements of principle (USDA-FS 2006b) that were discussed and debated, but then ultimately agreed on by those same experts:

> 1a) Scientific observation and field studies demonstrate that "contact" between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep is possible under range conditions. This contact increases risk of subsequent bighorn sheep mortality and reduced recruitment, primarily due to respiratory disease.
>
> 1b) The complete range of mechanisms/causal agents that lead to epizootic disease events cannot be conclusively proven at this point.
>
> 1c) Given the previous two statements, it is prudent to undertake management to prevent contact between these species.
>
> 2) Not all bighorn sheep epizootic disease events can be attributed to contact with domestic sheep.
>
> 3) Gregarious behavior of bighorn sheep and domestic sheep may exacerbate potential for disease introduction and transmission.
>
> 4) Dispersal, migratory, and exploratory behaviors of individual bighorn sheep traveling between populations may exacerbate potential for disease introductions and transmission.
>
> 5) There are factors (e.g, translocation, habitat improvement, harvest, weather, nutrition, fire, interspecies competition, and predation), some that can be managed and some that cannot, that influence bighorn sheep population viability.
>
> 6) Pasteurellaceae, other bacteria, viruses, and other agents may occur in healthy, free-ranging bighorn sheep.

Our WSWG concurs with statements developed and adopted by the interdisciplinary Payette NF Science Panel, and they form the foundation for our recommendations. Consequently, in this report, we do not intend to again review and synthesize all available literature and other evidence, both published and unpublished "gray literature" in agency files. Rather, this working group is providing what we believe are reasonable, logical recommendations, based on the best available science, that will help achieve effective separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. We recognize it is impossible to achieve zero risk of contact or disease transmission; however, we also recognize there are many ways to proactively work toward minimizing or eliminating interaction between these species that should help lower the overall risk of epizootics in wild sheep.

Concepts of Managing Risk

Two-way transmission of certain diseases (e.g., paratuberculosis, some enteric pathogens and parasites) between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats in shared habitats can occur. However, as domestic animals have evolved and have been selected for their ability to live at high densities and for their resilience to infectious diseases, we believe the most important and ecologically significant transmission is from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep. It is widely recognized (Garde et al. 2005), but needs to be re-emphasized, that thinhorn sheep (Dall sheep, Stone sheep) in northwestern Canada and Alaska are immunologically naïve compared to wild sheep occurring in southern Canada and the remainder of the western U.S. Additional precautions should be taken to ensure that absolutely no contact occurs between naïve thinhorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

It must be acknowledged that wild sheep die-offs have occurred without reported contact with domestic sheep and goats (Onderka and Wishart 1984, Aune et al. 1998, UC-Davis 2007). However, when contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats has been documented, the severity of the wild sheep die-off is typically more pronounced (Aune et al. 1998, Martin et al. 1996).

Although these recommendations have been developed by a working group comprised of state and provincial wildlife agency personnel, we recognize that cooperation between state/provincial wildlife agencies, federal land management agencies, tribal/First Nation representatives, domestic sheep and goat producers and grazing permittees, agricultural industry representatives, wild sheep conservation organizations, environmental groups, academic institutions, and various interested publics is critical to deriving on-the-ground solutions. It is our hope that collaborative discussions on this topic occur in each state and province where this issue occurs.

As reflected in the Payette NF Science Panel summary, we recognize there are many human-caused (e.g, displacement/disturbance) and environmental (e.g., predation, climatic) stressors that also influence the dynamics and viability of wild sheep

populations. We acknowledge that some factors affecting wild sheep population performance can be managed; others cannot.

The guiding principle of this WSWG's effort has been "to seek effective separation." We believe that even though no "cookbook" exists for conducting risk assessments of respiratory disease transmission between wild sheep and domestic sheep or goats, comprehensive risk assessment is a critical component for managing potential disease transmission from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep. There are thorough qualitative and quantitative risk assessments (USDA-FS 2006a, Clifford et al. 2007, Epps et al. in press) that have used both map-based and modeling approaches to assess consequences of contact and subsequent transmission risk.

Management Guidelines

The following recommendations have applicability to state/provincial wildlife agencies, federal land management agencies, wild sheep conservation organizations, domestic sheep and goat producers/permittees, and private landowners. These recommendations have been strategically assigned to a category we have judged to be most logical and reasonable. However, it is imperative that readers recognize these recommendations are typically pertinent to multiple parties, and further recognize that a multi-disciplinary approach will likely produce the best outcomes, for wild sheep and for domestic sheep and goat producers/permittees. To simplify the content of these recommendations, we have defined specific, frequently-used terms (e.g., "effective separation") in a glossary (Appendix A).

We recommend wild sheep managers recognize and design management strategies by prioritizing the conservation values (e.g., federal- and/or state-listed status, sensitive species status, native wild sheep herds that have never been extirpated or augmented, naïve wild sheep populations with no previous exposure to domestic sheep and goats) and importance of wild sheep populations. The higher the wild sheep conservation value, and the greater the risk of contact with domestic sheep and goats, the more aggressive and

comprehensive that wild sheep and domestic sheep and goat management strategies should be, commensurate with the level of risk of contact.

Recommendations to WAFWA Agencies

- Historic and suitable unoccupied wild sheep range should be identified, evaluated, and compared against currently-occupied wild sheep distribution for each state/province within the historic range of wild sheep, and also compared against existing and potential areas where domestic sheep and goats are, or may be, authorized.

- Risk assessments should be periodically completed (at least once per decade, more often if situations change) on all existing and potential wild sheep habitat, to specifically identify where and to what extent the wild sheep/domestic sheep and goat interface is located and to monitor changes in risk along that interface.

- Following completion of site-specific risk assessment, wild sheep transplant, augmentation, restoration, and management strategies should be designed to minimize the likelihood of contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

- Wild sheep managers should identify, analyze, and evaluate the implications (i.e., both positive and negative) of connectivity and movement corridors between largely insular herds within a meta-population against the opportunity for increased contact with domestic sheep and goats. The benefit of genetic interchange (and implications for population viability) must be weighed against the heightened risk of possible disease transmission (Bleich et al. 1990), especially if dispersing/wandering wild sheep might travel through occupied domestic sheep and goat grazing allotments or trailing routes, or move introduced or locally endemic pathogens from an infected wild herd into a naïve herd.

- Do not transplant wild sheep where there is no reasonable likelihood of achieving effective separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, unless written agreement to the contrary has been reached between state/provincial wildlife agencies, federal land management agencies, agricultural interests, and wild sheep conservation organizations.

- As potential agricultural conflicts, landscape conditions and habitat suitability change, stocking wild sheep onto historic range, particularly on public lands, should be re-evaluated.

- Wild sheep populations should be managed to reach predetermined population levels (i.e., objectives), and maintained at appropriate densities, to minimize risk of dispersal whereby contact with domestic sheep and goats, and subsequent contact with other wild sheep, is increased. It should be recognized that wild sheep dispersal does occur at all population densities, so some risk is always present if domestic sheep and goats are within range of dispersing wild sheep.

- The higher the risk of contact with domestic sheep and goats, the more intensively that wild sheep herd(s) need to be monitored and managed. Intensity of monitoring should be commensurate with the level of risk and probability of domestic sheep and goat contact when considering "new" vs. "augmented" wild sheep populations. If there are anticipated differences in likelihood of contact with domestic sheep and goats, a site-specific transplant protocol should be spelled out for "new" vs. "augmented" wild sheep populations. For example, the percentage of transplanted wild sheep that should be radio-collared (preferably with GPS collars) should depend upon the subsequent risk of domestic sheep and goat contact. Intensive monitoring allows for documenting the proximity and frequency of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, and also allows for evaluation of post-release habitat use/selection and seasonal/daily movement. It should also be recognized that in some cases, monitoring will be long-term in nature. Budgets to transplant wild sheep should also be adequate to ensure long-term monitoring of transplant success and future wild sheep movements.

- Wild sheep managers should recognize that augmentation of a wild sheep herd from discrete source populations also poses a risk for moving pathogens between wild sheep. Wild sheep management agencies should only use healthy wild sheep herds as source stock for intra- and inter-jurisdictional transplant purposes. Source herds should have extensive health histories and be routinely monitored to evaluate current health conditions. Wild sheep managers should evaluate tradeoffs between genetic benefits vs. potential health consequences of mixing wild sheep from various source herds when conducting transplants or augmentations.

- If conducting a wild sheep transplant, a map of anticipated wild sheep distribution and movement should be developed prior to the transplant and compared with knowledge of domestic sheep and goat distribution. If a wild sheep transplant occurs, and contact with domestic sheep and goats is confirmed beyond an identified timeframe and/or beyond a mapped geographic area (possibly including historic, suitable wild sheep habitat), domestic sheep and goat producers should be held harmless. Domestic sheep and goat producers outside a pre-defined and mapped wild sheep restoration area, based on expected distribution following a transplant, should not be considered accountable if subsequent contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats occurs or becomes likely.

- Agencies should develop, adopt, and widely distribute a written strategy to address dispersing or wandering wild sheep (British Columbia Ministry of Environment example, Appendix B; Wyoming Game and Fish Department example, Appendix C). These animals may contact domestic sheep and goats, and continue traveling, either back to their source herd, or to other wild sheep herds, with or without infectious disease. This strategy should clearly identify what and when specific actions are to be taken (e.g., kill and medically evaluate wandering wild sheep), and specify who is authorized to take those actions. Furthermore, this strategy should be openly discussed with affected stakeholders, so there is clear and widespread understanding

of subsequent management actions by state/provincial wildlife agencies. Some state/provincial wild sheep management plans have already been through considerable public input/review, where this issue has been adequately addressed.

- Agencies should develop a response protocol for confirmed contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. This strategy should include notification requirements, wildlife health intervention (if appropriate), and post-contact monitoring strategies. Furthermore, state/provincial wildlife and agriculture agencies, land management agencies, industry representatives, and wild sheep advocates should collaborate to develop an effective, efficient, and legal response protocol for errant domestic sheep and goats (e.g, feral, abandoned) for which no owner can be determined and which threaten to come in contact with wild sheep.

- State/provincial wildlife agencies should work together to develop a system (possibly internet-based) to report, record, and summarize instances of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, to track reported contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, and to avoid loss of anecdotal sightings/reports, Once established, the WSWG website link (http://www.wafwa.org/5.html) would be a logical place to host this incident reporting system. Furthermore, state/provincial and federal wild sheep managers should encourage prompt reporting by the public of observed interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

- The use of domestic sheep and goats as pack animals by hunters, anglers, and other recreational or commercial users that travel in mapped wild sheep habitat should be prohibited where legislation/regulation exists. Where legislation/regulation is not in place, an effective outreach/education program should be implemented to inform potential users of the risks associated with that activity and recommend that individuals do not use domestic sheep or goats as pack animals.

- Wild sheep managers should coordinate with local Weed & Pest Districts or other appropriate agencies/organizations involved with weed management to preclude the use of domestic sheep and goats for noxious weed control, in areas where contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats is likely to occur. Agencies should provide educational information and offer assistance to Weed & Pest Districts regarding the disease risks associated with domestic sheep and goat use. Specific guidelines have been developed by, and implemented in, British Columbia (http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/publications/00006/).

- Several capture and disease-testing protocols (pre-transplant, post-dieoff) have been developed and/or drafted and are available to wild sheep managers (Foster 2004, WAFWA Wildlife Health Committee (WHC), UC-Davis 2007). Specific protocols for sampling, testing for transplant, and responding to disease outbreaks are necessary and should be standardized across state and federal jurisdictions. These protocols should be reviewed and updated if necessary by the WHC and presented to the WAFWA Directors for final endorsement. Once endorsed by the WAFWA Directors,

wild sheep management agencies should implement the existing protocols, and the WHC should lead the effort to further refine and implement said protocols.

- Wild sheep management agencies should coordinate and pool funding and resources to support laboratories and testing facilities with expertise in various facets of wild sheep disease diagnostic work. Furthermore, state and provincial wild sheep managers should support efforts on data sharing, development and use of standardized protocols for assessment of wild sheep herd health status. Inter-agency communication between wildlife disease experts should be encouraged, to synergistically accomplish more than individual agencies or organizations are capable of by themselves.

Recommendations to BLM and USFS (and other land management agencies)

- Joint federal land management agency guidelines on management of domestic sheep and goats in wild sheep habitat should be developed and included in both broad agency policy documents (e.g, USFS Manuals) and local Forest Plan/Resource Management Plans. Once guidelines have been approved, there should not be an automatic "sunset" provision or expiration date. If there is a specified longevity required by federal policy, and if appropriate and timely review cannot be completed, the existing guidelines should remain in effect, rather than becoming obsolete.

- Land management agencies responsible for domestic sheep and goat grazing allotments, trailing routes, vegetation management (e.g., weed control, enhancement of conifer regeneration), use as pack stock, or any other uses involving domestic sheep and goats should only authorize such use where mechanisms are in place to achieve effective separation with wild sheep.

- Land management agencies should require prompt notification of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats by permittees and their herders. Notification procedures (including phone numbers/contact information for permittees, and use of satellite phones in backcountry settings) should be included in the Annual Operating Instructions for grazing allotments and trailing permits.

- Land management agencies should map active vs. inactive domestic sheep and goat grazing allotments/trailing routes, including information on dates of use and contact information for the responsible grazing/trailing permittee.

- Ensure advance written instructions (such as USFS Annual Operating Instructions) exist, addressing management, retrieval, and disposition of stray domestic sheep and goats left on public lands prior to and/or after grazing/trailing/permitted on- and off-dates.

- Collaboratively with state/provincial wildlife and agricultural interests, written agreements should be developed as to management, retrieval, and disposition of stray domestic sheep and goats occurring on public lands where there is no grazing/trailing allotment nor permitted use. Furthermore, these agreements should address feral

sheep and goats as well as other exotic breeds (e.g., aoudad, Iranian red sheep, urial, argali) that range free on public lands.

- Annual Operating Instructions should require careful management and vigilant herding, to minimize/avoid wild sheep interaction with stray domestic sheep and goats. If appropriate, a count-on, count-off inventory of domestic sheep and goats may be required as a condition of operation.

- In areas of high risk of contact, trucking should be required, since trailing may result in additional management risks. Trucking of domestic sheep and goats is preferred to trailing, since there is less chance of stray domestics, and less chance of opportunistic contact by wandering wild sheep, particularly when domestic ewes are in estrus.

- If trailing occurs, on-site compliance monitoring to minimize strays should be conducted by the permittee and/or the land management agency. In areas of highest risk, use of wild sheep advocates as volunteers to assist with compliance monitoring should be explored.

- Land Use/Resource Management Plans, where relevant, should specifically address the issue of potential domestic sheep and goat interaction with wild sheep. Land use plans should evaluate the suitability of permitting activities involving domestic sheep and goats. Plans should address this issue and identify general areas of public land where domestic sheep and goats should not be permitted for weed control, commercial grazing, recreational packing, conifer regeneration vegetation management, and other management activities.

- Land management agencies should coordinate closely with appropriate entities involved in weed control programs (e.g., local Weed & Pest Districts, University Experiment Stations, private landowners) using on domestic sheep and goats on public lands, adjoining private lands, or state/provincial wildlife habitat management areas.

- Where topography, vegetation, and other abiotic/biotic parameters are suitable, conversion from domestic sheep and goats to cattle, llamas, or other classes of domestic livestock that do not pose a disease risk to wild sheep should be carefully considered when permitting grazing allotments and pack animal outfitting.

- Land management agencies should not convert cattle grazing allotments to domestic sheep/goat grazing or permit trailing, in areas of suitable, historic wild sheep habitat. In suitable, historic wild sheep habitat not currently stocked with domestic sheep and goats, management strategies should emphasize options for restoring wild sheep populations.

- Stocking of allotments not currently under permit to domestic sheep and goats under emergency conditions (e.g., reduced forage available in permitted allotment areas due

to wildfire or drought) should only be permitted after adequate risk assessment has been completed. This assessment can be completed via project-level NEPA analysis.

- Land management agencies should incorporate state/provincial wild sheep management plans either in, or supplemental to, federal Resource or Land Use Management Plans. Land management agencies should collaborate with state/provincial wildlife agencies on comprehensive risk assessments (USDA-FS 2006a, Clifford et al. 2007) of domestic sheep and goat grazing allotments or trailing routes in wild sheep habitat, to assess risk of contact with wild sheep. Adequate training (e.g., workshops, manuals) should be provided to agency staff to conduct risk assessments.

- Where mandatory buffer zones (frequently cited as a minimum of 9 airline miles [13.5 km]) between domestic sheep and goats and wild sheep have been used to ensure effective separation, it should be recognized that buffer zones apply to herds or populations of wild sheep, rather than wandering individuals (e.g, most often sub-adult bighorn rams).

- In some cases, buffer zones have been a very effective strategy to reduce the opportunity for interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. However, in continuous wild sheep habitat, where wild sheep movements may eventually exceed *a priori* expectations, buffer zones may not be the most effective or practical tool (Schommer and Woolever 2007).

- Topographic features or other natural or man-made barriers (e.g., fenced, interstate highways) can also be effective in minimizing the likelihood of physical contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. Site-specific risk assessments should be completed, to evaluate the efficacy using natural barriers, defined buffer zones and other preventive actions to minimize risk. Given the wide range of circumstances across jurisdictions, buffer zones may not be needed in all situations; conversely, buffer zones should not be precluded as an effective strategy to address this issue.

- Land management agencies, in collaboration with state/provincial livestock health agencies, should work with producers/permittees to prevent turnout of sick or diseased domestic sheep and goats on grazing allotments or on trailing routes, or used for weed control or pack stock. Sick or diseased animals on range should be reported to land management or wildlife agency personnel as soon as possible after recognition; after that initial notification, inter-agency coordination should promptly occur. Analogous to requirements to use certified weed-free hay on public lands, or requirements to clean logging or other heavy equipment which have been operating in other areas where noxious weed seed might be inadvertently scattered into new areas, domestic sheep and goats should be healthy before being turned out. Alberta and British Columbia (http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/publications/00006/) have developed specific health certification protocols required before domestic sheep are turned out for vegetative management in conifer reforestation efforts. The higher the risk of

contact between domestic sheep and goats with wild sheep, the higher the certainty of domestic animal health should be. It should also be recognized that "healthy-appearing" domestic sheep and goats may still carry pathogens that can be transmitted to wild sheep.

- Proportional to the risk of contact between domestic sheep and goats and wild sheep, land management agencies should work with producers/permittees, state/provincial wildlife agencies, wild sheep advocates, and others, to implement a variety of mitigation strategies (e.g., herders, dogs or other guarding animals trained to repel animals foreign to domestic sheep bands or goat flocks [such as wandering wild sheep, various predators], confinement of domestic sheep and goats at night to minimize strays, adequate fencing configurations [see Private Lands section], covenants, allotment retirements, conversion of class of livestock, trucking vs. trailing, etc.) designed to achieve the most effective separation possible.

- Land management and state/provincial wildlife agencies should cooperatively manage for healthy wild sheep habitat. Agencies should routinely monitor wild sheep habitat to detect changes in habitat quality or condition, and as needed and appropriate, conduct habitat enhancements (e.g., prescribed burning, pre-commercial thinning, salting, mineral supplements, water development, etc.) to encourage wild sheep to remain in wild sheep habitats, away from domestic sheep and goat use areas.

- In areas where contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats is likely, land management agencies should post advisory signs at trailheads, campgrounds, and other popular, high-use recreational areas, to educate visitors about the issue of interaction, and to encourage prompt reporting of wild sheep contact with domestic sheep and goats. Furthermore, individuals accompanied by pets (i.e., dogs) should ensure that those dogs remain under their control, and do not disturb or scatter domestic sheep and goats in permitted areas.

- Land management agencies should clearly define the process, protocols, and timelines for short-term or emergency management actions when intervention is needed to minimize or eliminate the risk of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

- Risk assessment should be conducted on an appropriate geographic scale, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. Recognizing the limits of regulatory authority, land management agencies should consider private lands (i.e., either adjacent to, or inholdings of, federal land) contributing to that disease risk when conducting risk assessments.

- Land management agencies should closely evaluate the timing of permitted domestic sheep and goat grazing and/or trailing activities, to reduce disease transmission risk. For example, grazing domestic sheep when ewes are in estrus heightens the possibility of contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep. Effective separation should be based on temporal and spatial separation of wild sheep and domestic sheep

and goats, based on the seasonally differential vulnerability of wild sheep exposure to domestic sheep and goats.

- In areas with high risk of contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, agencies and permittees should pursue enhanced monitoring of domestic sheep and goat grazing and/or trailing patterns via use of high-tech Global Positioning System collars or other technology that would provide detailed data on movements and grazing patterns of domestic sheep and goats.

Recommendations to Wild Sheep (and Other) Conservation Organizations

- Recognize and support efforts of wild sheep management agencies implementing different strategies where wild sheep are federally- and/or state-listed, hold sensitive species status, are native wild sheep herds that have never been extirpated or augmented, are naïve wild sheep populations with no previous exposure to domestic sheep and goats, or have unique conservation values.

- Assist state/provincial wild sheep and federal land management agencies with education efforts to inform hunters, anglers, and other recreational users, who might enter or utilize wild sheep habitat, that those individuals should not use domestic sheep or goats as pack animals, as they travel in, and through, wild sheep habitat. If use of domestic pack goats is authorized, close control and night-penning to reduce strays should be encouraged. Encourage prompt reporting of potential or observed interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

- Encourage prompt reporting of observed interactions between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. Help agencies in promoting a reporting system for monitoring potential or actual contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats.

- Maintain or establish open lines of communication with domestic sheep and goat producers and industry organizations (e.g., woolgrowers associations), to reduce polarization on this issue. Jointly organized and cooperatively-funded workshops on risk assessment, identification of practical strategies to achieve effective separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, development/distribution of pamphlets/brochures, and public speaking opportunities on this topic are tangible examples of a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to address the issue of interaction and potential disease transmission.

- Continue to negotiate alternatives or incentives for domestic sheep and goat permittees to shift or trade to grazing allotments outside occupied wild sheep habitat, convert to a different class of livestock where suitable, or waive permitted domestic sheep and goat permits in areas where risk assessment indicates high potential for contact with wild sheep. All federal grazing permit-related actions must be carefully coordinated with the appropriate land management agency to ensure that policies and permit requirements are fully met and that appropriate NEPA or other analyses and decisions support proposed/recommended changes.

- Assist agencies during periods (e.g., trailing of domestic sheep and goats) or in geographic areas where close monitoring is needed to reduce the risk of contact.

- Encourage and support the development and funding of cooperative research on this issue. Encourage state, provincial, and federal agencies and other conservation groups to commit appropriate resources to maintain wild sheep resources.

Suggested Management Practices for Domestic Sheep and Goat Permittees

- Support multi-lingual education and the need for prompt, accurate reporting of contact for foreign herders working domestic sheep and goat grazing allotments where interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats is possible.

- Commensurate with the level of risk of interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, and recognizing the differential seasonal likelihood of wandering wild sheep, provide an adequate number of herders and guard animals, and employ other methods (e.g., volunteers, hazing of approaching wild sheep) to monitor potential contact and minimize opportunity for contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. Depending on band/flock size, consider confining domestic sheep and goats at night where feasible, rather than loose herding/bedding, to minimize possible strays.

- Where feasible, provide cell or satellite phone or other communication tools to herders to ensure prompt communication to the livestock producer/permittee if interaction occurs between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats. The producer/ permittee should then notify the state/provincial wildlife agency of this contact.

- Producers/permittees should take appropriate measures to prevent turnout of sick or diseased domestic sheep and goats on grazing allotments, on trailing routes, or in weed control or pack-stock situations. Sick or diseased animals should be removed or otherwise eliminated as soon as possible after their recognition.

Suggested Management Practices on Private Lands

- Recognize that domestic sheep and goat husbandry on private lands may influence wild sheep population viability on adjacent public lands. Voluntarily participate in comprehensive risk assessments with state and federal agencies when private land/farm flocks adjoin public land with wild sheep resources.

- Any observed interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats on or near private land should be promptly reported to the state/provincial wildlife agency.

- Participate in cooperative educational efforts to enhance stakeholder understanding of the issues of disease transmission between domestic sheep and goats and wild sheep.

- Do not release or leave unattended domestic sheep or goats in areas where they may seek out, or be sought out by, wild sheep.

- Cooperate with the public, state/provincial/federal government agencies, agricultural organizations, producer associations, wild sheep conservation organizations, and other interested stakeholders to develop effective, comprehensive risk management approaches to ensure effective separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats, while recognizing private property rights in and near wild sheep habitat. Approaches may include but are not limited to changing species/class of livestock, buyouts of land and/or livestock, use of methods to ensure physical separation (e.g, fencing strategies, use of guarding animals), conservation-based resolutions, bylaws, covenants or legislation.

- Cooperate with agencies and wild sheep non-governmental organizations to investigate and develop adequate conservation incentives for effective risk management by private producers on privately-owned land.

- Consider alternative domestic livestock management strategies if they can reduce risk of disease transmission without causing economic hardship or reducing profitability.

- Consider partnerships with non-governmental organizations and wild sheep advocate groups for cost sharing in fencing or other domestic sheep and goat management that reduces risk of disease transmission from private flocks to public wild sheep.

- Support "effective separation" fencing standards whenever feasible, including the options of electric outrigger fences or double fencing methods to reduce transmission of respiratory disease agents. The goal of separation fencing is the physical prevention of nose-to-nose contact, and an adequate physical distance to prevent aerosol transmission. Outriggers of electric wire 2 feet from page- (woven) wire fencing or double fencing consisting of two page-wire fences with a minimum spacing of at least 10 feet are considered effective. A combination of fencing methods may be most effective to ensure that wild sheep do not come into contact with domestic sheep and goats on private land.

- Participate in cooperative research ventures to enhance understanding of this issue and test mitigation protocols for disease risk management.

- Investigate opportunities to graze domestic sheep and goats on public land allotments/landscapes where no potential contact with wild sheep exists, in exchange for grazing "cattle-only" on private lands where wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats might come into contact.

- Carefully consider the use of domestic sheep and goats for weed control on private land areas where wild sheep contact may occur. Work with agencies to consider alternative weed management strategies to reduce risk of contact while adequately managing weed problems.

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Appendix A.
Glossary of Terms

Allotment: A portion of a landscape where livestock grazing of a plant community is prescribed according to a specific land use plan or legally defined regulatory authority.

Annual Operating Instructions: Specific language included in a term grazing or trailing permit file; reviewed each year with the permittee, prior to turnout of livestock on a grazing allotment or trailing route.

Augment: An intentional introduction of wild sheep from one or more a source populations into another existing wild sheep population, to enhance the recipient population demographically or genetically.

Buffer Zone: A defined and delineated space on a landscape established by wildlife managers to prevent contact and disease transmission between wild and domestic sheep and goats across that geographic space

Bighorn Sheep: A member of the species *Ovis canadensis* found throughout the mountains of western North America. They occur from the Peace River in Canada to northern Mexico and east to the Badlands of the Dakotas. Eight races are reported if one counts the extinct Audubon's bighorn.

Contact: Direct contact or close proximity between body parts of two animals during which a disease might be transmitted from one to another. In this document, "contact" typically refers to nose-to-nose or face-to-face interaction that may lead to the transmission of respiratory disease via secretions or aerosols. Synonymous with "Interaction".

Close Management: A specific management prescription that requires intensive monitoring of animals in a population whose long-term persistence is at risk.

Connectivity: Creating or maintaining networks of habitat that connect fragmented habitats, thus linking population segments of wildlife. Connectivity allows gene flow and enhances long-term species survival.

Conservation Incentives: Incentive-based conservation is in direct contrast to regulation-based conservation. Incentive-based conservation provides economic, management or esthetic benefits to individuals or corporations to encourage them to conduct management activities that have positive conservation consequence to wildlife or wildlife habitat. Examples are: private land conservation easements, direct lease agreements for grazing rights for conservation purposes, or a trade/exchange of equal value grazing rights among various partners to minimize wildlife-domestic livestock conflict.

Die-off: A large-scale mortality event that impacts many animals from a population and may have significant demographic consequence to the long-term persistence of that

population. In this report, such mortality events are usually caused by respiratory disease epidemics involving bacterial and/or other pathogens alone or in various combinations.

Disease: The word disease means literally "free of ease". Disease is any impairment that modifies or interferes with normal functions of an animal, including responses to environmental factors such as nutrition, toxicants, and climate. Typically, disease involves transmission of, and exposure to, some infectious agent but it may involve non-infectious causes such as congenital defects.

Dispersal: The process where individuals leave one habitat or landscape to seek another habitat or landscape in which to live.

Double Fencing: Two fences running parallel around a landscape or pasture to prevent contact between animals across the fence line, designed to inhibit disease transmission.

Effective Separation: Spatial and/or temporal separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats resulting in minimal to no risk of contact and subsequent transmission of respiratory disease between animal groups.

Feral: An animal of a domestic species that resides in a non-domestic setting and is not presently owned or controlled.

Historic habitat: Landscape that at one time (most often at the time of European settlement) provided all necessary habitat requirements to sustain a wild sheep population through time.

Interaction: Direct contact or close proximity between body parts of two animals during which a disease might be transmitted from one to another. In this document, "interaction" typically refers to nose-to-nose or face-to-face interaction that may lead to the transmission of respiratory disease via secretions or aerosols. Synonymous with "Contact".

Meta-population: An assemblage of populations, or a system of local populations (demes) connected by movement of individuals (dispersal) among various population segments.

Migration or migratory: A term used to refer to the movement of individuals or genes (gene flow) across a landscape; typically refers to movements from one seasonal habitat to another, or between breeding and non-breeding habitats.

Movement corridor: Routes that facilitate movement of animals between habitat fragments.

Occupied habitat: Suitable habitat in which a wild sheep population currently exists (ca. 2007).

Preferred: A specific management action that *should* be chosen over another, whenever possible:

Radio Collars: Transmitters fitted on neckband material to monitor animal locations.

Global Positioning System (GPS): A radio transmitter fitted on neckband material linked with orbiting satellites; animal locations can be precisely triangulated from space, with the location data then electronically stored in a memory chip or transmitted from a satellite system for data retrieval.

Very High Frequency (VHF): Radio instrument fitted to neckband material transmitting in the Very High Frequency range that can be located from the ground and/or aircraft, using a telemetry receiver.

Removal of sheep: Physical extraction of domestic sheep and goats or wild sheep to eliminate (permanently or temporarily) occupancy of that range or habitat.

Required: A specific management action that ***must*** be chosen over another.

Risk/Risk Assessment/Risk Management: In this context, evaluation of the probability that a wild sheep population could experience a disease event with subsequent demographic impacts. Identification of what factors might contribute to the probability of a disease event. Management actions taken to reduce the probability of exposure and/or infection among, or between, animals. Examples of risk management include separation of infected and non-infected animals, treatment of infected individuals, vaccination, manipulations of the host environment, or manipulations of the host population.

Qualitative Risk Assessment: Interpretation and analysis of factors that cannot necessarily be measured.

Quantitative Risk Assessment: Use of tangible data and measurements.

Spatial separation: A defined physical distance between animal populations.

Stray: A domestic sheep or goat physically or temporally separated from its associated flock or band.

Stressor: A specific action or condition that causes an animal to experience stress and the subsequent physiological results of that stress.

Suitable habitat: Landscape that has all necessary habitat requirements to sustain a wild sheep population through time.

Temporal separation: Segregating animal populations over time to prevent contact, such that they may occupy the same physical space but at different times.

Thinhorn sheep: A member of the species *Ovis dalli* ranging from Alaska, the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and northern British Columbia.

Transmission: The physical transfer (direct or indirect mechanisms) of a disease agent from one animal to another, either within an animal population or between animal populations. In some instances, transmission can lead to full expression of disease in individuals or populations.

Transplant: An intentional movement of wild sheep from a source population to other suitable wild sheep habitat, either currently occupied or not. (Also called "translocation" in some documents.)

Trailing: The planned ambulatory movement of domestic sheep and goats across a landscape or within a corridor to reach a destination where grazing or use will be allowed.

Unoccupied habitat: Suitable habitat in which a wild sheep population does not currently exist.

Unsuitable habitat: Landscape that does not provide all necessary habitat requirements to sustain a wild sheep population through time.

Viability: The demographic and genetic status of an animal population whereby long-term persistence is likely.

Appendix B.

British Columbia Domestic-Wild Sheep Separation Project Contact Protocol

The following protocols outline **the steps to be taken when reports of wild sheep contact with domestic sheep are received by the Ministry of Environment** in one of several ways:

1. **Regular report from public to regional office (Conservation Officer Service or Wildlife Section):**
   - Contact reported to Regional office.
   - Assessment of situation by sheep biologist and COS, in consultation with wildlife veterinarian
   - If close contact is confirmed and is considered a high risk situation, consider the following options:
     a. Kill bighorn and save carcass - sample bighorn and/or domestics in consultation with wildlife veterinarian
     b. Continue to monitor bighorn herd in area – observe and record general signs of health
     c. Do nothing – but keep records
   - If contact is unsubstantiated/considered low risk, continue to monitor bighorn herd in area, alert and encourage mitigation measures with domestic producers in area to ensure separation.

2. **Regular report from public to Call Line.**
   - Contact reported to Call Line; Call Line staff forwards to regional COS.
   - Assessment of situation by COS and sheep biologist, in consultation with wildlife veterinarian
   - If close contact is confirmed and is considered a high risk situation, consider the following options:
     a. Kill bighorn and save carcass - sample bighorn and/or domestics in consultation with wildlife veterinarian
     b. Continue to monitor bighorn herd in area – observe and record general signs of health
     c. Do nothing – but keep records
   - If contact is unsubstantiated/considered low risk, continue to monitor bighorn herd in area, alert and encourage mitigation measures with domestic producers in area to ensure separation.

3. **Out of hours call from public to Call Line.**
   - Contact reported to Call Line; Call Line staff forwards to regional COS officer-on-call.
   - Assessment of situation by COS officer-on-call - contacts sheep biologist and wildlife veterinarian, if possible for consultation
   - **If sheep biologist and wildlife veterinarian cannot be contacted, biologist and veterinarian will support COS decision and action. COS will inform sheep biologist and wildlife veterinarian by email of the situation and action taken.**
     - If close contact is confirmed and is considered a high risk situation, consider the following options:
     - Kill bighorn and save carcass - sample bighorn and/or domestics in consultation with wildlife veterinarian
     - Continue to monitor bighorn herd in area – observe and record general signs of health
     - Do nothing – but keep records
     - If contact is unsubstantiated/considered low risk, continue to monitor bighorn herd in area, alert and encourage mitigation measures with domestic producers in area to ensure separation.

Appendix C.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006
Phone: (307) 777-4600 Fax: (307) 777-4610
Web site: http://gf.state.wy.us

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DAVE FREUDENTHAL
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TERRY CLEVELAND
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RON LOVERCHECK President
BILL WILLIAMS, DVM - Vice President
CLARK ALLAN
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HENRY JOYALING

April 5, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wildlife Division Employees

FROM: Jay Lawson, Chief, Wildlife Division

COPY TO: Terry Cleveland, Gregg Arthur, File

SUBJECT: **PROTOCOL FOR HANDLING THE COMMINGLING OF BIGHORN SHEEP AND DOMESTIC SHEEP/GOATS**

Due to the threat of disease transmission and subsequent bighorn sheep die-offs, the following protocol should be followed.

Wandering Bighorn Sheep:
Where there is known, suspected, or likely contact by a wandering bighorn sheep with domestic sheep/goats:

- If possible, that bighorn(s) should be live-captured and transported (one-way) to our Sybille Research Unit.

- If that bighorn(s) cannot be live-captured, that bighorn(s) should be lethally removed (per authority of Chapter 56) and, if possible, transported (either whole or samples) to our Sybille Unit or our WGFD Lab in Laramie.

Stray Domestic Sheep/Goat:
Where there is known, suspected, or likely contact by a stray domestic sheep/goat with bighorn sheep:

- The owner of such livestock should be notified and asked to remove the stray sheep/goat to eliminate the threat of disease transmission; however, it will be the owner's prerogative to determine what course of action should be taken.

Reporting:
All documented commingling and any actions taken must be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor, Wildlife Administration as well as the Bighorn Sheep Working Group Chairman, presently Kevin Hurley.

CITES UPDATE

Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora & Fauna

Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

July 7-12, 20
Flagstaff, Arizo

Issues of Importance to the WAFWA

Bobcat Delisting from Appendix II of CITES at CoP14

A significant issue for the United States was a proposal promoted by the CITES Technical Work Group on behalf of the state wildlife agencies to delist the bobcat from CITES Appendix II during the 14th Conference of the Parties (CoP14). The 1977 Appendix II listing originated because bobcat pelts in trade are similar in appearance to other members of the *Lynx* family that are endangered in Europe. Delisting of bobcats has been routinely discussed with the U.S.F.W.S. since last proposed for delisting at the 13th Conference of the Parties (CoP13) in 2004.

On June 8th at CoP14, the U.S. introduced the proposal deleting *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II and to voluntarily list it in Appendix III (CoP14 Proposal 2), stating that the species is thriving and that look-alike issues are no longer a concern due to improved identification techniques.

Delisting the bobcat was supported by Canada but Mexico opposed the proposal due to lack of informatior noting that the agreed-upon review of *Lynx* species has not yet been presented to the Animals Committee. Wh there was general consensus that North American bobc populations are not endangered, several governments including the European Union (27 countries), Serbia, N way, and India, as well as Humane Society Internationa vocally opposed the delisting. They noted population e mates were dated and ongoing concerns persist that pc tions of pelts from endangered *Lynx* species cannot be easily differentiated from bobcats. Although the U.S. ar Canada offered to voluntarily list bobcats on Appendix I assuring that all pelts in international trade would be ac companied by documents attesting to origin, the delistir proposal was rejected 28 to 63 when brought to a vote.

Nathan Roberts Represents the USA in Mexico on Bobcat Study

We invited doctoral candidate Nathan Roberts from Cornell University to serve as our *field ambassador* in Mexico t assist in the bobcat population research currently underway. Nathan was in Mexico from October 20-27, 2006. He initially met with graduate student Horacio Barcenas from the Institute of Ecology, University of Mexico. Mr. Barcenas is conducting the bobcat field study under the supervision of Dr. Rodrigo Medellín. They discussed the objectives of the Mexican research which include 1) documenting the distribution of bobcat in Mexico and 2) inferring relative abundance of bobcats with respect to habitat types.

The study consists of using motion-activated cameras to record the presence of bobcats at four study sites includin Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, Distrito Federal, and Sonora. Cameras are placed in a grid at each of the study locations and located using GPS. Once a site has been located in the field, the camera is placed on well-used game trails. No bait, lure, or other attractants are used. Mr. Barcenas explained that they hoped to identify individual bobcats from photographs to estimate minimum number of individuals at each study site. Preliminary reports have found bobcats at nearly every study area and Mexico believes they will have a more finalized study by January, 2008.

50 CFR 23 Being Revised After 30 Years

In 2006 the USFWS initiated revisions to the federal regulations (50 CFR 23) that implements CITES, representing the first substantive update of the U.S. CITES implementing regulations in nearly 30 years. Over the past year the CITES Technical Work Group and other interested folks have thoroughly reviewed the document and drafted comments on behalf of the AFWA, Regional Associations, and individual state fish and wildlife agencies. In May 2007, we reviewed the final rule language prior to it being approved by the Department of Interior and submitted to the Office of Management and Budget. The CITES program will be greatly enhanced with the addition of our recommendations to those proposed by the USFWS providing protection for rare species that could be adversely impacted by international trade while establishing sensible management and reporting regimes that state fish and wildlife agencies can comply with and endorse.

:stimony Presented Before the Subcommittee On Fisheries, Wildlife, & :eans Committee On Natural Resources, U.S. House Of Representatives

n May 2, 2007 Buddy Baker, CITES Technical Work Group member from the SEAFWA, presented testimony for the ncement of the bobcat delisting proposal by the United States at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. esenting the 50 state fish and wildlife agencies Mr. Baker articulated the importance of the bobcat delisting proposal e states. Below are some excerpts from Buddy's testimony:

/hile the CITES framework for ensuring sustainability is commendable, the ability of a country to successfully re- e one of their native species from Appendix II or down-list it from Appendix I has proven to be difficult to impossible.

he states fully support the CITES process and have been diligent in our participation in guiding and enforcing the sions of CITES. While the United States federal government ensures compliance with the terms of the treaty, they on expertise of the thousands of state wildlife biologists across the country who manage the wildlife resource on a basis. It is the 50 individual state fish and wildlife agencies that have the legal jurisdiction over and responsibility ie management of most species of wildlife. In addition, the state fish and wildlife agencies share important responsi- with the federal government for the management of federal trust species such as migratory birds. In the instance of obcat, it is the individual state wildlife agencies who professionally and capably manage this species.

ngoing wild bobcat population monitoring and management programs continue to demonstrate that this species is hreatened but flourishing, and harvest and trade are well regulated. Our management programs are ensuring the -term sustainable use of the species and support its conservation. It is important to understand that effective man- nent and regulatory processes by state wildlife agencies were in place for bobcats long before their CITES listing hese programs will not be discontinued if the species is delisted.

emoving the bobcat from CITES Appendix II is a significant, priority issue for state fish and wildlife agencies in the We firmly believe that a fair and objective review of the available data strongly supports this delisting action. The val of the bobcat from Appendix II will not compromise the conservation and legal trade of other listed Lynx species vill it jeopardize the responsible conservation of bobcat populations.

en Salmon State Delegate at CoP14

en Salmon, Director Indiana Division of Fish and llife, served as the state delegate for the United es at the 14th Conference of the Parties (CoP14), e 3-15, 2007, in the Netherlands. While this was 1's first exposure to CITES he took to it like a fish to er. Glen represented the states admirably and was nly received by the U.S. delegation. Glen spoke on alf of the states participating in the bobcat delisting posal introduction and subsequent interventions. Glen , "Chairman, on behalf of the 50 individual state wild- agencies in the U.S. that have statutory authority over dent wildlife including the bobcat, we commit to facili- g the development of identification techniques to dif- ntiate Lynx species. Furthermore, we will conduct kshops on use of these tools and techniques and the wishes to carry this proposal forward to a vote."

/ork Group: Roles & Responsibilities

Ensuring States' Authority is Maintained

Keeping State Wildlife Directors Informed

Serving as Liaison Between the States & USFWS

Providing Objective Input on CITES Issues

Identifying & Recommending Ways to Improve CITES and its Implementation

Meetings Attended on Behalf of the MAFWA

* 96th AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2006; Snowmass, Colorado
* 72nd North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2007; Portland Oregon
* 14th Meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties, June 2007; The Hague, Netherlands

It is an honor and a privilege to represent the WAFWA on CITES matters. Thanks goes to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for allowing me to dedicate the time necessary for this endeavor.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale E. Toweill

Wildlife Program Coordinator
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
600 S. Walnut Street
Boise, Idaho 83707
208 287-2746 phone
208 334-2114 fax
dtoweill@idfg.idaho.gov

REPORT* OF THE CITES' 14th CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
The Hague, Netherlands
June 3-15, 2007

The following state natural resource agency staff represented regional associations at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) 14th Conference of the Parties (CoP14):

Carolyn Caldwell (Ohio Division of Wildlife) - Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA).

Cal DuBrock (Pennsylvania Game Commission) - Northeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA).

Don MacLauchlan (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) - Western Association of Fi and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)

Dale Toweill (Idaho Department of Fish and Game) - Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA).

Buddy Baker (South Carolina Department of Natural Resources) – Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA)

Mike Berger, (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department) and chair of the International Relations Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, was unable to attend. **Glen Salmon** Director Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, served as the state's member of the United States delegation, which was staffed principally by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). **Don MacLauchlan** attended as a second member of WAFWA.

Most of the expenses for this trip were provided by a federal grant from the Association of Fish an Wildlife Agencies. Glen Salmon's expenses were provided by the USFWS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 14th Conference of the Parties (CoP14) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 3-15 June 2007 at the Wo Forum Convention Center in The Hague, Netherlands. Drawing together 1,250 delegates representing 151 of the 172 participating nations, 18 intergovernmental organizations, and 147 non-governmental organizations, the meeting considered a range of topics, including the 2008-20 budget; implementation of the Convention; species trade and conservation issues; 37 proposals t amend CITES appendices, and 70 agenda items. CoP14 was noteworthy for adoption of a strategic plan and agenda that firmly established the role of CITES within the framework of other international agreements addressing globalization, biodiversity loss, natural resource depletion, a efforts to combat poverty while building on its mandate to ensure that international trade does not lead to the loss of species of animals and plants. CoP14 was also notable for a discernable shift from ensuring protection for individual species to broader protection for commercially-exploited stocks of timber and fisheries species, with far-reaching impacts on major industrial centers such

ging, fisheries, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, music and jewelry, with impacts to millions of lihoods worldwide. Of particular interest to state fish and wildlife agencies, a proposal to de-list cats from the list of species in Appendix II (species whose trade is monitored to prevent ential impacts to other endangered species of similar appearance) was presented at CoP14 but s not adopted.

Introduction to CITES

ES is an international trade agreement among countries (Parties) to ensure that international de in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten species survival. The text of ES was finalized at a meeting of representatives of 80 countries in March 1973, and on July 1, 75 CITES entered into force. Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties, it does not take place of national laws, but provides a framework to be respected by each party, which has to opt its own domestic legislation to make sure that CITES is implemented at the national level. ES, with 172 Parties, is among the largest conservation agreements in existence.

ng known as a forum where critical decisions are taken about such high-profile issues as the ry trade and whale harvest, CITES is increasingly the focus of efforts to protect fish and timber ecies that are traded globally in profitable commodity markets. Commercial fishing and the timber ustry set aside, the international trade in wildlife and flora is big business, estimated to be worth ions of dollars annually and to involve more than 350 million plant and animal specimens every ar. Unregulated international trade can push species over the brink, especially when combined h habitat loss and other pressures.

ES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. ese require that all imports, exports, re-exports, and introduction from the sea of species covered CITES has to be authorized. The species covered by CITES are listed in 3 Appendices, cording to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes species threatened with inction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted in exceptional circumstances. pendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be ntrolled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Appendix III contains species at are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in ntrolling the trade. Appendix III proposals can be finalized without needing to have them cussed and approved at a Conference of the Parties (CoP).

e Parties to CITES are collectively referred to as the CoP. Every 3 years, the CoP meets to view the implementation of the Convention. Meetings of the CoP usually last two weeks and are ended not only by delegations representing CITES Parties, but also by observers, which includes presentatives of countries that are not party to CITES, of United Nations agencies, and of other ernational conventions. Observers from non-governmental organizations or NGO's (including our ite associations) involved in conservation or trade are also allowed to participate at the discretion the Parties. Although observers may participate in the meeting, they cannot vote. Members of e public may also attend as visitors, although they are not able to participate in the discussions. each CoP the Parties consider 1) proposals to amend the lists of species in the Appendices, 2) scussion documents and reports from the Secretariat, Parties, Committees and working groups, d 3) administrative provisions that allow the Secretariat to function effectively.

Strategic Vision

Development of the strategic vision for 2008-2013 was central to CoP14. Three arguments were central to these discussions:

1. A definition of "sustainable trade" and a determination that the role of CITES includes—requires—a holistic approach to management of commercially-exploited species.
2. The role of global sustainable development objectives, and the decision that the proper role for CITES is to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss in matters of sustainable development.
3. The relationship between CITES and other international agreements and accords dealing with environment and trade issues. The decision was that biodiversity conservation is the central focus for CITES efforts, but matters pertaining to sustainability of trade as central to the mission of CITES were only narrowly rejected.

International trade in wildlife and plants was estimated by TRAFFIC to amount to $240 billion annually, with 80% of that amount associated with timber production and fisheries. Proposals addressing commercially-exploited species drew heated discussion at CoP14, and only 3 of 11 proposals addressing timber and fisheries issues resulted in new listings to Appendices. Much of the debate concerned whether the role of CITES was to prevent serial over-exploitation of commercial resources or a final attempt to save species from extirpation.

Administrative Issues

Delegates were widely split on adoption of a budget for the coming 3 years, 2008-2010. Although the Secretariat proposed a 21.56% nominal increase in budget to meet the tasks assigned to CITES, some members objected to any increase, and many felt the proposed increase was excessive. The United States recommended a 3% increase. Ultimately a nominal increase of 6% was adopted by vote of more than 75% of member states.

Use of the Addis Abba Principles and Guidelines on Sustainable Use of Biodiversity were supported in concept, although it was noted that these principles may not always be applicable in making species-specific non-detriment findings. The Standing Committee was instructed to initiate a process for making rapid assessments of implementing CITES listing decisions on livelihoods of the world's poor, and ways to address and reduce those impacts. Discussions were made relative to the role of other CITES relative to other multinational organizations (such as the International Whaling Commission) and relationships with FAO, International Tropical Timber Organization, and Council on Biodiversity.

Trade and Species Conservation Issues

Trade in elephants and ivory, as usual, drew a great deal of attention as the African delegations struggled to craft a proposal on the future of the ivory trade. At issue were the benefits that might accrue from sale of accumulated ivory stocks to fund successful elephant management programs southern Africa versus the risks and costs associated with control of elephant poaching in west and central Africa. The final compromise was declared a win by proponents of both sides: a one-time sale of documented ivory stocks in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, to be followed by a moratorium on all future sales for a period of 9 years. The sale is to go to a single buyer, wit

ɔropriate controls to prevent development of "black market" sales, and all proceeds are to be ɜd for elephant conservation.

ɜre was great concern about the future of tiger populations worldwide, and additional efforts were ɜcted to tiger conservation and enforcement.

ɥuested increases in export quotas for leopards (Mozambique requested an increase in its pard export quota from 60 to 120 hunting trophies and skins, and Uganda requested an annual ɔort quota of 28 leopard trophies and skins) were approved, and the annual quota for 5 black ɲo from Namibia and South Africa was reaffirmed.

tters of Special Interest to State Agencies

ɜ primary issue of interest to state fish and wildlife agencies and a significant issue for the US legation was a proposal promoted by the state associations to delist the bobcat from Appendix II, ɜre it has appeared for the past 30 years. The listing originally resulted because bobcat pelts in fur trade similar in appearance to other members of the *Lynx* family that are endangered in ·ope. Delisting of bobcats has been discussed with the USFWS Division of Scientific Authority ny times over the past six years, and three years ago a delisting proposal was forwarded to the ɔretariat for consideration at CoP13. That proposal was withdrawn in light of opposition by ·ties (particularly Mexico, who believed that population status information was lacking for their ɹntry) and the European Union, home to related species whose populations are endangered and ɜd on Appendix I.

:hdrawal of the US proposal to delist bobcats at CoP13 was accompanied by an agreement ɜcting the Animals Committee to oversee a review of spotted cats listed by CITES, with a priority the bobcat and look-alike Lynx species. This review was to be completed in cooperation and ɹsultation with range countries and importing countries, and a report scheduled for CoP14.

ɨween CoP13 and 14, several significant accomplishments have been completed. A report on ɜrnational trade in bobcat pelts was completed by TRAFFIC under contract with the US Fish and dlife Service Office of Scientific Authority, which revealed that nearly all international trade tured whole skins, which are easily identifiable as bobcats rather than any of the endangered ɣx species. Reports from fur dealers indicated that genetic testing can confirm whether pieces of originated from bobcats or other lynx species at a cost of $7-$20 per test (depending on ume). In addition, state wildlife agencies, trapping organizations, and individual trappers from the provided funds to Mexico to help support a study of bobcat distribution and abundance. ɜliminary results indicated bobcats to be more abundant and widespread than previously ieved. However, contractual matters resulted in delaying the completion of the TRAFFIC report il after the July 2006 Animals Committee meeting prior to CoP14, and Mexico's study has not yet ɜn completed.

listing of bobcats as proposed by the US (see Attachment 1,2 & 3) was supported by Canada ɨ Qatar, but Mexico opposed the proposal due to lack of information, noting that the agreed-upon iew of *Lynx* species has not yet been presented to the Animals Committee. Although there was ɲeral consensus that North American bobcat populations are not endangered, several ɣernments and NGOs opposed the delisting because population estimates were dated, and the ·opean Union, Serbia, Norway, and India opposed the delisting due to concerns that portions of ts from endangered *Lynx* species cannot be easily differentiated from bobcats. Although the US

and Canada offered to voluntarily list bobcats on Appendix III, assuring that all pelts in internatio trade would be accompanied by documents attesting to origin, the delisting proposal failed 28 to when brought to a vote. A majority of 66 percent of those voting was required for passage.

Also of interest was the discussion about world stocks of sturgeon and paddlefish. This discussi was centered on international trade in caviar, and the outcome of these discussions at CoP14 w limited to recommendations concerning development of an international trade database for cavia and a recommended cap on annual quotas.

State agencies with marine fisheries programs may have been concerned about a handful of ma issues. Proposals to list porbeagle sharks and spiny dogfish as Appendix II species were defeat while sawfish were added to Appendix II. Red corals of the genus *Corallium* (a deep-water spec were recommended for addition to Appendix II (where other slow-growing and long-lived corals used for jewelry, home décor, and aquarium specimens are already listed), but this proposal was rejected.

Cooperation

Throughout the CoP the AFWA CITES Technical Work Group worked closely with the US delegation and was fortunate to have had several strategy meetings with Deputy Assistant Secretary Todd Willens and other US delegation members. The cooperation of the US delegatic enhanced our ability to be proactive as the CoP progressed. We appreciated the diligence of Dr Rosemarie Gnam, Acting Chief of the USFWS' Division of Scientific Authority for CITES, whose commitment to the bobcat delisting was evident as she discussed strategies with our team, other parties, and various NGOs.

FUTURE CoPS

Bobcat delisting may be again considered in 2010 at CoP15, by which time Mexico's research wi have been completed and published, and the *Lynx* component of the Felidae review will have be completed and sent to the Animals Committee. Efforts are underway to develop a quick and positive method of identification of portions of bobcat and endangered lynx pelts as raw skins and finished trade items (see Attachment 5).

Upcoming Committee Meetings and the Next CoP

CITES Animals Committee 23/Plants Committee 17- April 2008, Geneva, Switzerland

Convention of Parties 15 – 2010, Doha, Qatar (dates to be determined)

Details of the CoP14 can be found on the Earth Negotiations Bulletin website:www.iisd.ca/cites/COP14/

More background information on CITES and updated information on future meetings may b found on the CITES website: www.cites.org under Conference of the Parties.

achment 1
ifted by AFWA CITES Technical Work Group and was substantially used by the USFWS to oduce CoP14 Proposal 2)

posal 2. Removal of Bobcat from Appendix II

. Delegation Introduction. Presented by Deputy Assistant Secretary Todd Willens.

ank you Mr. Chairman. The United States is pleased to introduce Proposal 2, Deletion of *Lynx* *is* from Appendix II. The bobcat was listed in CITES Appendix II, along with most wild cat cies, on February 4, 1977. In 1983, at the fourth meeting of the CoP, the Parties agreed that species is included in Appendix II not because of its own conservation status but rather due to similarity in appearance to other small cat species listed in Appendix I or II. In the CITES ntification manual species similar in appearance to bobcat include the Canada lynx (*Lynx adensis*), Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), and Spanish lynx (*Lynx pardinus*), with the latter two erating the most concern among CITES Parties.

ough this similarity of appearance listing may have been necessary when adopted, over time roved regulation of harvest and trade by *Lynx* species range countries has eliminated the need eep bobcat listed in Appendix II. Further, as noted by the CITES Secretariat, the bobcat does meet the adopted CITES criteria for an Appendix II listing in its own right, and it is unlikely that eting the bobcat from the Appendices would result in the species qualifying for inclusion in the pendices in the near future, as wild populations are healthy, not threatened and well managed. e United States maintains that although the bobcat is harvested for its fur in large numbers, nitoring of bobcat populations since 1977 continues to demonstrate its sustainable use.

e bobcat is the most widely distributed native felid in North America. It ranges from British umbia, Canada to Oaxaca, Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast. Bobcat nagement programs in the United States and Canada are among the most advanced nagement programs for any felid. These programs ensure long-term sustainable use of the cies and support its conservation. While the population status in Mexico is not well documented, ent studies have found bobcats in every study location. We commend the Mexican biologists as y continue to evaluate the status of bobcat populations; we are encouraged by their preliminary lings. More importantly, bobcats are not harvested commercially in Mexico. The few bobcats orted from Mexico are for trophies.

urvey of *Lynx* species range countries, conducted by the United States, shows that take from the l of all *Lynx* species is highly regulated by range countries. This survey, as well as CITES trade a, show that trade in the Eurasian and Spanish *Lynx* species is well controlled, especially by ge countries. The results of this survey were provided to the Parties at CoP14 in Inf Doc 30. ese range countries have implemented adequate domestic regulations, management, and orcement to manage harvest and trade, the removal of bobcats from Appendix II will not npromise the conservation and trade of these other listed Lynx species. The US, as should all other Parties to the Convention, believes in the integrity of the CITES Management and

Scientific Authorities of the felidae range countries and their ability to effectively implement Treaty and ensure sustainability of their wildlife resource.

Bobcat skins should not present a look-alike problem to CITES Parties, because the majority (of trade in *Lynx* species consists of full skins. As noted in our proposal, identification of these to species can be accomplished with limited training, as the skins include distinguishing featur the ears and tail. Pieces of bobcat skin can be distinguished from other *Lynx* species molecular tools that are currently available ($7.00 - $20.00/sample depending on whether analyz mass quantity).
CITES trade data show that the low volume of illegally traded *Lynx* species specimens does suggest a major problem with illegal trade in *Lynx* species. This data also shows that the leve trade in Eurasian and Spanish *Lynx* species is minor relative to the level of trade in bobcat Canada lynx.

There does not appear to be an incentive for trading in furs of other *Lynx* species of concerr passing them off as bobcats. The ready availability of legally acquired bobcat furs in the marke safeguard against the illegal take and trade of other *Lynx* species. TRAFFIC North America rep in 2007 that nearly all demand for bobcat hides is focused on high quality furs from Nor populations.

The United States maintains that although the bobcat is harvested for its fur in large numb monitoring of bobcat populations since 1977 continues to demonstrate its sustainable use. have been advised of concerns regarding the current status of the bobcat population in the Uni States, specifically whether up-to-date population estimates are available. Estimates only h value in the context of space and time, which allows inferences about populations to previous ye What are really significant are population trends, e.g., the direction and magnitude of populat indices and occupied range. In 2006 the United States' CITES Management Authority determir that bobcat populations were stable or increasing in 35 states, undocumented in two states an Florida slightly decreased from 2004 due to loss of habitat as a result of urban and suburb development. It is evident from field studies, harvest trends, and surveys that United State bob populations are stable or increasing throughout most of the range, not decreasing. This sugge that if a current, comparable estimate were made today bobcat populations would be even lar and more robust than the 1980's estimate.

In considering Article II.2.(b) of the Convention, the provision under which the bobcat is listed, note that the purpose of such a listing is so that trade in other species listed in Appendix II may brought under effective control. Although we know from experience that trade in different types wildlife and wildlife products presents challenges that take time to address, the bobcat has n been listed as a look-alike species for 30 years. It is reasonable to expect that, over time, w improvements in management and trade controls, look-alike listings should be made unnecessar

Ladies and gentleman, Article I of CITES says that 'peoples and States are and should be the b protectors of their own wild fauna and flora.' Therefore, look-alike listings should be tempor measures to assist range countries of species threatened by trade to ultimately be able to prot their species through domestic measures. The United States comes to CoP14 respectfully aski the Parties to join us in removing the bobcat from the list of species listed as look-alikes. Let celebrate the delisting as an example of the successful implementation of the treaty.

achment 2
roduction presented by Glen Salmon, Director Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, served as the state gate for the United States)

ank you Mr Willens.

airman, on behalf of the 50 individual state wildlife agencies in the U.S. that have statutory hority over resident wildlife including the bobcat, we commit to facilitating the development of ntification techniques to differentiate Lynx species. Furthermore, we will conduct workshops on of these tools and techniques.

Attachment 3
(The complete text of the Proposal to De-list the Bobcat from Appendix II is available at www.cites.org)

CoP14 Prop. 2

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

A. Proposal

Deletion of *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II.

Lynx rufus does not qualify for listing in any of the CITES Appendices. We, therefore propose to delete it from its current inclusion in Appendix II, previously listed in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2(b), and Criterion A in Annex 2 b.

B. Proponent

United States of America

C. Supporting statement

1. Taxonomy

1.1 Class: Mammalia

1.2 Order: Carnivora

1.3 Family: Felidae

1.4 Genus, species or subspecies, including author and year: *Lynx rufus*, Lapham 1852

Potential subspecies: *L. r. baileyi, L. r. californicus, L. r. escuinapae, L. r. fasciatus, L. r. floridanus, L. r. gigas, L. r. oaxacensis, L. r. pallescens, L. r. peninsularis, L. r. rufus, L. r. superiorensis, L.r. texensis*, Hall 1981.

1.5 Scientific synonyms: *Felis rufus*, Jones et al. 1975, Tumlison 1987, Nowak 1999

1.6 Common names: English: bobcat, barred bobcat, bay lynx, bob-tailed cat, cat o' the mountain, cat lynx, catamount, lynx cat, pallid bobcat, red lynx, wildcat
French: lynx roux
Spanish: gato de monte, gato montés
(Jackson 1961, McCord and Cardoza 1982, Anderson and Lovallo 2003)

achment 4 (developed by the AFWA CITES Technical Work Group for distribution at CoP14)

Bobcat (Lynx rufus) and CITES CoP

COP14 PROPOSAL 2, DELETION OF LYNX RUFUS FROM APPENDIX II

Prepared by the regional Associations of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies

ociation of Northeastern State Fish and Wildlife Agencies — Association of Midwestern State Fish and Wildlife ncies

ociation of Southeastern State Fish and Wildlife Agencies — Association of Western State Fish and Wildlife Agencies

United States of America is represented at CITES by the national government; however, it is the governments of the 50 vidual States which have legal jurisdiction over and responsibility for the management of most species of wildlife in the ted States. In addition, the individual State governments share responsibility with the national government for the iagement of federal trust species such as migratory birds and listed endangered species. In the instance of the bobcat, it is individual state wildlife agencies who manage this species.

: bobcat has been listed under CITES for 30 years because of its similarity in appearance to other small cat cies listed under CITES, and in this proposal the United States of America argues that its listing is no longer ranted.

cies identified in the CITES identification manual as being similar in appearance to bobcat include the Canada x (*Lynx canadensis*), Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), and Spanish lynx (*Lynx pardinus*), with the latter two generating most concern among CITES Parties. Although this similarity of appearance listing may have been necessary en it was adopted, over time improved regulation of harvest and trade by *Lynx* species range countries has ninated the need to keep bobcat in Appendix II. Further, as noted by the CITES Secretariat, the bobcat does meet the adopted CITES criteria for an Appendix II listing in its own right, and it is unlikely that deleting the bcat from the Appendices would result in the species qualifying for inclusion in the Appendices in the near ire, as wild populations are healthy, not threatened and well managed.

ny has this proposal been submitted at CoP14?

Coordination and information sharing on the Lynx species review has continued with the Animals Committee since CoP13 and AC22. The results of the range country survey conducted by the United States and reported in CoP14 Inf. 30 confirm that Parties would like to see no changes in the CITES status of the Canada lynx, Eurasian lynx and the Iberian lynx, and none are proposed. It also was clear that bobcat populations in the U.S. and Canada are secure, harvests carefully regulated and the species is not being adversely impacted by trade. The remaining elements of the Felidae review will continue intersessionally between CoP14 and CoP15.

nat about the look-alike issue?

ince CoP13, the United States commissioned TRAFFIC to assess trade in bobcats and look-alike Lynx pecies. The majority (78%) of trade in Lynx species consists of full skins; therefore, bobcat skins hould not present a look-alike problem to CITES Parties. As noted in the proposal, identification of hese skins to species can be accomplished with limited training, as the skins include distinguishing eatures on the ears and tail. Pieces of bobcat skin can be distinguished from other Lynx species using nolecular tools that are currently available and relatively inexpensive ($7.00 - $20.00/sample depending n whether analyzed in mass quantity).

Isn't trade data inconclusive?

CITES trade data suggests very little illegal trade in Lynx species relative to legal trade. TRAFFIC admitted that they could not predict whether illegal trade in other Lynx would increase if the bobc were delisted from CITES. There does not appear to be an incentive for trading in furs of other Ly species of concern and passing them off as bobcats given the ready availability of legally acquired bobcat furs in the market. TRAFFIC reported that nearly all demand for bobcat hides is focused o high quality furs from northern (U.S. and Canada) populations.

How do we know bobcat populations are secure?

The security of bobcat population in the United States and Canada has never been seriously questioned. Routine monitoring of U.S. bobcat populations since 1977 continues to demonstrate it sustainable use. Comparisons of historical population estimates are relevant only in the context of comparable, replicated methodologies. The 1981 estimates contained in our proposal were derived by multiplying average bobcat densities by the area of occupied habitats in each state, a standard procedure for all secretive felids. What are really significant are population trends, e.g., the directi and magnitude of population indices and occupied range. In 2006 the United States' CITES Management Authority determined that bobcat populations were stable or increasing in 35 states, undocumented in two states and in Florida slightly decreased from 2004 due to loss of habitat as a result of urban and suburban development. It is evident from field studies, harvest trends, and surveys that United State bobcat populations are stable or increasing throughout the majority of its range, not decreasing. This suggests that if a current, comparable estimate were made today in th U.S. bobcat populations would be even larger and more robust than the 1980's estimate. Canada reported their bobcat populations as stable to increasing (CoP14, Inf. 30). While the population status in Mexico is not well documented, recent studies have found bobcats in every study location We commend the Mexican biologists as they continue to evaluate the population of the bobcat and we are encouraged by their preliminary findings. More importantly, bobcats are not harvested commercially in Mexico. The few bobcats exported from Mexico are for trophies.

CoP15...*Lynx rufus*...delist with subsequent listing in Appendix III

Topic	Tasks	Timeline	Assignment
Felidae Review	Obtain from the USFWS a list of the components that need to be completed and/or ask the Chair of the AC what else must be completed to wrap up the Lynx spp. complex review Complete the Lynx spp. Review within Felidae review Need specific AC action on Lynx spp. complex	AC23; April 2008	
Bobcat range assessment	Mexico stated at CoP14 that they were 30% of the occupied bobcat range. Use GIS technology to map or delineate occupied range in North America and calculate range in each country.		
Population Estimates and Trend Updates	Replicate the 1982 US population survey process for bobcats – also provide Hansen's estimates and ask for validation/comment; conduct by surveying state furbearer biologists Canada – query about bobcat population trends Mexico – January 2008 promised – have someone (e.g., John Organ, Duane Diefenbach) inquire at 2007 TWS meeting about status of research and when population estimate will be forthcoming during the Q&A or other public forum Bobcat population estimates in Hansen publication – contact Hansen (following replicated 1982 survey) – inquire about his credentials for bobcats, inform him about differences in population estimates, and ask if he is interested in collaborating with us in updating population figures Update bobcat population trend data in bobcat proposal		
TRAFFIC report	Get clarification on TRAFFIC report, e.g., 22% in parts/ pieces, what is this, is it reexport? We need to dig into this report, outline shortcomings and ask questions of TRAFFIC		

	If we update/recontract for an updated report, what additional issues should be addressed by TRAFFIC? We need to more clearly identify what actually is in trade for all Lynx species; look at Eurasian lynx trade data, Canada lynx trade and bobcat trade Update data in report		
Identification techniques/tools	Identify other possible look alike species besides Lynx spp. Develop an identification guide with photographs, including whole pelt identification key with appropriate references; available DNA techniques for differentiating species, required time, cost and references; other? Ask the fur industry, what are the bobcat look alikes? They've stated that it is easy to tell the difference between bobcats and Canada lynx, and possibly other spotted cats? Assemble a descriptive or prescriptive tool for differentiating species using whole pelts and parts/pieces Inquire if we can contract through Fur Institute of Canada or IFTF (jbailey@iftf.com; Juliette Bailey, International Fur Trade Federation) to do this work?		
CITES Management Authority operations	If someone wanted to put a spotted cat (Iberean lynx) pelt or part into trade, how would they do this? How would you detect this and safeguard against this happening? We need to better understand Management Authority certification process for moving furs/pelts/pieces/parts through the global market We will need to advise states what an Appendix III listing means from the perspective USFWS, i.e., no state obligation to certify legal acquisition, only national legal acquisition required. Develop a summary explaining how an App. III listing works and how it addresses the look alike issue.		
Mexico coordination	Letter to Mexico advising them of our intent to move forward in the Lynx review, target CoP15 for a renewed delist/App. III proposal that we hope would be a regional proposal and inquire about outstanding issues that must be addressed to enlist their cooperation for such a proposal. Continue dialogue at Trilateral Meetings		

coordination	to move forward in the Lynx review, target CoP15 for a renewed delist/App. III proposal that we hope would be a regional proposal and inquire about outstanding issues that must be addressed prior to the preparation and submission of such a proposal Continue dialogue at Trilateral Meetings		
European Union coordination	Identify EU meetings that the USFWS might attend to continue the dialogue on bobcat delisting; identify outstanding issues that must be addressed; enlist collaboration on resolving issues; etc. Identify other mechanisms to engage the EU in discussions concerning delisting and the App III outside of governmental meetings		
Other CITES Look Alike Issues	Survey CITES proposals and decisions that involve look alike issues for animals and plants and identify conflicts and double standards. For example, European eel…TRAFFIC recognized that there could be a look alike problem but the overwhelming majority of the product in trade was recognizable…smoked eel and eel products? Mexico delisted a cactus from App II during CoP14 Parrot from CoP13 Also look at wolves, caracal. Red fox, *Vulpes vulpes*, listed by India in App. III		
Education/ Marketing	Countries do not really understand why bobcat delisting is so important to the US/states - we should better articulate this – discuss the economic value of trapping (of bobcats) to individuals and families who have been trapping and sharing this with their children, producers, economic costs for CITES documentation for this secure species, status of secure species, etc.		

IWMC
Conservation Tribune

CITES COP14
The Netherlands

Date : 14 June 2007

What is the CITES Benchmark For Success?

When Barun Mitra posed this question during a side meeting on the subject of trade and conservation on Wednesday, it was greeted with an eerie silence. What is the CITES benchmark for success? Is it, for example, an increase in Appendix I listings, a reduction, or something else?

We may well ask the question with regard to some of the decisions that have been made so far at COP14. The most bizarre one is surely the narrow agreement to list Corallium on Appendix II. Even the proponent appeared to admit that this species is not endangered in one of its two regional locations. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had advised against the listing, saying it was flawed on several grounds.

What is clear at COP14 is that science, and even CITES rules about listings proposals, can be by-passed if there is sufficient political agreement, which more than ever involves securing the European Union bloc vote of 27 nations. In the case of Corallium, had Mediterranean range states from the EU voted the way they would have liked, the proposal would have fallen. Their EU minority created a CITES majority against their preference.

The EU has now become the de facto deal-maker at CITES, with the power to effectively block any decision so long as it can find around eight or ten other countries to agree with it. EU officials may say "So what?" but delegates from other countries are now beginning to ask whether the bloc vote approach is consistent with CITES rules, or at least with the spirit of CITES.

This situation has also skewed discussions over ivory although, again, EU officials might argue that its togetherness makes it easier for deals to be struck. To others, this is a problem because it produces deals rather than objective, science-based outcomes. And it is particularly notable that the EU gives a high level of access, and collaborates closely with, animal rights NGOs, which it seems to regard more as constituents than interest groups.

Which brings us back to the benchmark question. Success should presumably be determined by the number of species CITES assists to recover, not on the number of species it lists. But the success factor for some officials and delegations seems to be more related to securing a listing. Why? Why would any country seriously propose a listing for an animal so abundant that there are said to a billion in existence? And why would almost two-thirds of CITES Parties support such a proposal?

Notwithstanding the Strategic Vision process, it is time for CITES to succinctly define its measures of success and for Parties to focus on delivering them.

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WAFWA Mule Deer Working Group
Meeting Minutes ~ Flagstaff, AZ
July 10, 2007 (1-5pm) and July 11, 2007 (8am-5pm)
Radisson Woodlands Hotel, Flagstaff (1175 W. Route 66)
Chair, Jim Heffelfinger, Arizona

Minutes:

Working Group Members: Jim Heffelfinger AZ (Chair), Len Carpenter WMI (Scribe), Brian Wakeling AZ, Bruce Watkins CO, Brad Compton ID, Barry Hale NM, Anis Aoude UT, Calvin Richardson TX, Mary Sommer CA, Brandon Mason MDF, George Buckner OR, Lloyd Fox KS, Tom Stivers MT, Jim Karpowitz UT (Director Sponsor)

Guests: Rick Langley AZ, Russ Mason NV, Clay Brewer TX, Ken Mayer NV, Tom Keegan ID, Don Whittaker OR, Randy Smith AZ, Jim Hayden ID, Rick Woodard UT, Oscar Simpson NM, Chris Bagnoli AZ, Scott Fischer AZ, Keale Johnson UT, Kevin Hurley WY, Robbie Woodhouse AZ, Gene Degayner USFS, Clayton Wolf TX, Jim deVos AZ

Welcome and Introduction
Jim Heffelfinger gave a quick overview of the agenda and a bit of history of the Mule Deer Working Group (MDWG). The current list of MDWG members was distributed and no edits were needed.

Call for additional agenda items (see below).

Status of funding the new Wallmo Award bronzes
Jim Heffelfinger summarized status of the loan payoff from WAFWA and informed group that all $5,000 has been repaid by money received from donations, silent auction, and MDF gifts. The bronzes are in the final stages of production.

North American Mule Deer Conservation Plan (NAMDCP) implementation matrix update
Jim Heffelfinger gave brief summary of the status of the matrix updates and handed out the tracking matrix for all to review. Purpose of the matrix is to track progress by states and provinces on satisfying key elements of the NAMDCP. Some states have not provided input to this matrix but need to submit items soon.

George Buckner added what progress he and Bill Otani have made in assembling update information from the BLM and USFS. George pointed out there is a need for someway to roll all the information up so more concise outcomes can be reported. Discussed potential for the federal software developed for sage grouse to be used for the member states to add their information rather than the current WORD format. Potential is there and will need to be explored. George identified another use of the matrix would be to help develop budget requests for certain states or geographic areas. Bill Otani was

unable to attend the meeting and Jim Heffelfinger will contact him for details on the software that is being developed to get federal partner information.

Russ Mason asked about any measures of habitat being lost. Current matrix does not provide any information on habitat losses. Another issue is that habitat acres "improved" or "restored" may be lost by fires or other degradation. This kind of information could be included in the software to capture that concept.

Discussed the original purpose of the matrix was to help guide the MDWG as to which objectives in the NAMDCP were not being addressed. Jim Heffelfinger will formally review the matrix and identify obvious gaps.

Need to add date of updating on the matrix just once so it does not have to be repeated on each item. This will be done by Heffelfinger in the next update. Could be a running head on each page. Jim will send an email to those states and provinces that have not yet contributed information.

Status of Habitat Guidelines
Jim gave a brief history of the development of the habitat guidelines and general status of each. Jim handed out a sheet summarizing the status and designated authors for each of the subsections of each ecoregion guidelines. The MDWG was able to update all subsections but those of the Coastal Rainforest.

Intermountain West – Tony Wasley/Mike Cox
Tony Wasley was not in attendance as expected so details of the status of that ecoregion were not available at the meeting. Jim will check soon with Tony as to what he needs to finish. Daryl Lutz has volunteered to help as he can with this. In discussing this document with some coauthors, it appears this is nearing completion.

Northern Forest – Jim Hayden
Jim Hayden gave a brief update. Timber management chapter is the weakest of all. British Columbia is very active in timber management and has a lot of information that needs to be folded into this ecoregion guideline, however, we have no representative from B.C. participating. Hayden has a contact that is willing to review and edit any text that is generated so Hayden will write this section the best he can and send it to B.C. for (hopefully) a heavy-handed review to incorporate that information. Most other sections are ready to go out to co-author review. Jim Hayden will contact Jim Peek soon for his input regarding text on herbivory by native ungulates and make sure that is addressed properly. Jim Hayden estimates these guidelines are 75-80% completed, but needs photos also and will request them from federal agencies and coauthors during the internal review phase. Summary of the document is in skeletal form, but should be easy to flesh-out. Specific names for co-authors were reviewed and changed and noted on the summary sheet.

Great Plains – Lloyd Fox
Lloyd Fox gave a quick summary. Fire and Energy/Mineral Extraction sections are in good shape. Lloyd will provide Len more information on needs or more detail for the specific deer ecology section soon and Len will complete this and the Introduction section that should only need some minor word changes. Jon Jenks has had an accident and it has slowed his progress down, but the summary section he is writing should not take much effort when the other sections are nearing completion. Lloyd clarified and corrected specific author changes and confirmations on the status summary sheet.

Lloyd has committed to get this ecoregion caught up and stay on the latest revised timeline we established (see below).

Coastal Rain Forest - Jerry Nelson
Jim gave a brief update regarding a phone call with Jerry. Jerry was not clear on which co-authors are responsible for which sections or their current status. This ecoregion may be progressing, but Jerry did not provide a copy for Director and MDWG review at this meeting. Based on the draft at the midwinter meeting, the Forest Management section will have to include information from the southern part of that ecoregion, which has different issues. This earlier draft needed some improved organization and some important information was missing. Jerry said he was working on it and could provide a draft for Tom Keegan's technical review by August 3rd. This indicates there may have been more progress on this document than the MDWG knows about.

Jim deVos gave a bit of past history on ways he has found to be effective to get a project off dead-center. The MDWG suggested that perhaps someone like Don Whittaker could serve in a co-leader role for that ecoregion to help coordinate with the coauthors to bring their sections to completion if that is still needed. It was suggested that the MDWG should give Jerry a hard deadline and if not met then find someone that can make the time to complete it. The MDWG agreed that the latter would be the best way to proceed. Jim will contact Jerry Nelson and inform him of a hard deadline agreed to by the group (August 30).

CO Plateau Shrubland and Forest – Bruce Watkins
Final draft is done with internal and external review comments incorporated and is ready for Director's final approval at this meeting.

CA Woodland Chaparral - Mary Sommer
Final draft is done with internal and external review comments incorporated and is ready for Director's final approval at this meeting.

Updated timeline for 4 remaining guidelines (Intermountain West, Northern Forest, Coastal Rainforest, and Great Plains)

- August 30--Lead Author sends draft out to co-authors and working group chair (**Hard Deadline**)
- September 30--Lead author sends to Keegan for review
- October 20--Keegan gets comments back to lead author

- November 1--Lead author sends word document to the MDWG for internal review.
- December 1--Comments back to lead author
- January 4 --Draft ready for external and Director review (WAFWA midwinter meeting)

Suggestions to muledeernet.org
The group viewed, via the projector, the web site and Jim discussed some of the good and bad things about it. Keeping the updates current has been the hardest part.

The purpose of the website was discussed. The history of its development and the need for a web site for the MDWG was discussed. Jim deVos asked about the mule deer literature that was to be posted on the site but the link is no longer working.

Len suggested that it seemed logical for the MDWG to designate the site as primarily a repository for MDWG documents and/or any other documents that would be useful to mule deer workers. It was suggested that past workshop proceedings could be scanned and posted on the website as was done with past workshop proceedings (pronghorn and sheep). It is relatively cheap to do the scanning and would be a great resource for biologists and others. The value of being able to search within the documents would be good. Jim will ask the Directors to approve the use of up to $2,000 of the money Colorado is returning to the Deer/Elk Workshop fund to get all past deer (and possibly elk) proceedings scanned into pdf files. Anis will look into the cost of scanning in a searchable and nonsearchable format.

Jim pointed out that the website is more than just a site for the MDWG and we would just have a section of this site that contains the MDWG information. Terry Messmer could decide what he wants to do with the rest of the website. The possibility of using viable links to other sites was discussed rather than trying to keep sending updates each year. Jim deVos posed the question of the status of the postings of relevant mule deer literature on the website. Jim H. will ask Terry about this.

Website needs to be redesigned so Jim wants the group to visit the site and make suggestions for its improvement. Jim will send email to the MDWG reminding them of request for suggestions. Jim will then provide some feedback to Terry regarding updates to be done. One issue is the order form for the mule deer book – it needs to be improved so the order form can be downloaded on one page without a huge graphic. Also we will add the pdf forms of our documents and the web-friendly version of blue book.

MD mapping project cds are now available with additional software so it is more user-friendly so arcGIS is not needed. These CDs were distributed at the Deer/Elk Workshop and again at this meeting. This application is not currently available on the web site but should be. Jim will pursue this with Terry when he discusses the website.

Status of publication inventory
Brad Compton handed out the orders by states and provinces he has received for the various MDWG documents. We need to get the total number of orders before the total cost is known. We may want to do the orders in 2 waves – first the existing documents and then the 2 new mule deer habitat guidelines because it will take a couple months to get those out of the layout phase. Brad will get the totals and let Jim know so he can communicate to the printer.

Brad will email states and provinces that have not responded and ask for their orders.

Discussed future of the Berryman Institute and their handling and shipping of the mule deer book and possibly maintenance of the website. Terry Messmer will be key contact for answering this question.

Brandon will discuss with Miles Moretti the potential for MDF to develop an inventory list of all MDWG publications and potentially offer opportunity for ordering the documents through MDF after the states run out.

Joint Venture ideas
Jim gave a brief introduction to the topic. Brandon spoke briefly on available documents for the existing Joint Ventures. Len discussed some of the history and early discussions on the potential for Joint Ventures broader than birds and the potential for the mule deer mapping project to be used for determining priorities. Barry mentioned the potential to use the energy development impacts as potential drivers to identify potential Joint Ventures. Russ mentioned the possibility that the state action plans that have mentioned mule deer habitats of concern would be a good source. Anis pointed out that Utah has done a good job of identifying focus areas for need of attention. George said that using a combination of the state plans and existing federal plans would be very helpful in determining potential sites. Jim emphasized that this should be done by ecoregion.

A key ecoregion could be the Intermountain West. Nevada has made some real headway on this. Oregon and California could also be involved. Bruce Watkins pointed out the need for officially dedicated people (FTEs) to make a joint venture a reality. Money is not the only issue. Bruce pointed out the value of a NGO etc. to handle the money and hire people was extremely important to the Uncompahgre Project (grant writers, etc.). Don Whittaker identified a need for identifying timelines for the length of the proposed projects. The MDWG should serve as the catalyst for beginning this process but not carry the burden of carrying the whole thing out. Use of the mule deer map should be first step.

George said it would be important to include federal energy leases as well. One strategy would be to buy out the leases. Bruce pointed out that if doing rehab work there is a real need for consideration of available seed sources and the potential for getting necessary NEPA documents completed. Uncompahgre project developed its own seed sources. George informed that BLM is developing a seamless map (sage brush habitat) as a huge

electronic file with a series of GIS layers. When completed, each state will have its own map.

The MDWG viewed the ecoregions projected on the screen to further discuss potential sites. Barry raised the question of what would the role of the MDWG be? Len suggested that the main role would be to serve as the catalyst to highlight priority areas where mule deer habitat improvement is needed. The group looked at potential interstate herds that might be identified.

Tom pointed out the original intent of the MDWG was to identify priority areas (especially multi-state) with landscape scale where the need and the funding could be found to do the necessary work. George emphasized that the sage grouse example is a good one to help teach us what can be done on a landscape level. An upcoming meeting is scheduled for the sage grouse people and the healthy landscape initiative to identify key areas.

The group felt it would be good for the mule deer cause to be raised at this meeting emphasizing the value of having multiple species to benefit. George was asked to be the spokesperson. George informed that for this year there are already lines on the maps only looking at projects for sage grouse. George will report back to Jim on outcomes.

Jim deVos reported on the potential for a joint venture in northern AZ and southern Utah. Utah Sportsmen for Wildlife is a key group. Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife and Conservation is also involved. This is habitat that is used by the Kaibab deer herd and needs winter range rehabilitation. Developing a partnership of various agencies and NGOs where funding could be pooled to do a large-scale habitat rehabilitation project. Idea would be to span the range of the migrations etc. Jim reported he might well be the general coordinator to begin discussions to get this started. Jim emphasized that the MDWG documents and guidelines would be key to the work that might be done. Goal would be to have mule deer as the focus species for such an effort.

Jim deVos has discussed this with the MDF. Next step is developing his contract so he can begin work. Goal is that by a year from now decision to either begin actual work or decide that it is not feasible. Group discussed all the barriers to being technically prepared to pull these large-scale projects off. May be a narrow window of time where the funding and large-scale projects can be done. Jim deVos thinks that this may be the best chance to do a project with mule deer as the focus species.

Bruce Watkins pointed out that much of the work being done on the Uncompahgre would apply here, but some wondered if the Utah Sportsmen for Wildlife is truly interested in habitat work or merely want predator control done. Anis felt that the Utah Division could play a strong role in how the project is designed and carried out. Kevin Hurley pointed out that in Wyoming they had been reasonably successful working with the Wyoming Sportsmen for Wildlife group.

NEPA requirements are a real challenge to this work on federal lands. NEPA work will have to be contracted out if this is to get this done. BLM can't complete Archeology clearance or NEPA in a timely way. There have been some personnel changes that might make it easier to get these done.

Bruce asked about potential groups that might oppose or appeal any habitat work. None were obvious among attendees.

Brian Wakeling cautioned that if we want the guidelines to be applied then the design of the project be planned accordingly. Already there is a lot of work being done on this area in the name of habitat improvement. Lot of this work is not in the Kaibab per se.

MDWG encouraged Jim deVos to proceed and report back to the group with status and potential.

Standardized mule deer population monitoring guidelines
Jim gave an introduction to the topic and Brad handed out a document presenting a proposal for proceeding. Brad suggested that this should be the next (and possibly the last) major project pursued by the MDWG and if approved when presented to the Directors at the business meeting for their consideration and decision of approval. Brad emphasized the guidelines should be descriptive and not prescriptive, but some recommendations for improvement should be outcomes. The need for better data will only become greater each year. Standardization would be most helpful on the larger scale projects being imagined across the range of mule deer.

The group discussed the logistical and fiscal constraints each state faces with regard to selecting a specific monitoring approach. The MDWG discussed the issue of how to coordinate with the wildlife chiefs as this idea advances. Perhaps naming a liaison from the wildlife chiefs to work on this with the MDWG and be involved along the way. This group has no intentions to tell states how to do their business, but rather to provide a suite of methods that a state can use as a benchmark.

Len suggested that perhaps the best approach would be to simply report our discussions on this topic including the need to have close coordination with the wildlife chiefs. Jim Heffelfinger would then bring more specific details back to the Directors in January if they encourage the MDWG to proceed.

The future longevity of the MDWG was discussed. We need to finish the habitat guidelines and then if the directors approve, we will complete the standardized guidelines for mule deer and elk population monitoring.

Bruce Watkins reported on the CO effort to redo their software used to store and analyze their data and suggested that this work would benefit other states as well. The example of the trouble states had in reporting data for the 2007 mule deer and elk workshop. CO will move the database to a server-based platform as opposed to a pc-based platform.

Idaho and Utah are also moving along these same lines as well. AZ reported the need for the state IT groups to support what is developed.

Data structure is the most critical element of data sharing. There is an issue in some states of getting directors and administrators to understand the need for consistent data storage and retrieval is important. Discussion centered on whether this topic should perhaps be the first and most important first step to facilitate looking at larger scale ecoregion projects.

The MDWG decided that Jim Heffelfinger will ask or the Director's approval to proceed first with development of standardized guidelines for what should be collected and how it should be stored so it can be retrieved in a standardized way. This will be a first step to completion of the larger need for standardized population monitoring guidelines.

Decided that Bruce Watkins, Brad Compton, Brian Wakeling, Anis Auode, and possibly Daryl Lutz (?) will develop draft guidelines on what to be collected along with key issues for standardization for data structure. Report to be presented at the next MDWG meeting.

Standardize survey questions for the Deer/Elk Workshop
Bruce reported that this issue is closely tied to the above topic. It is a consistent frustration for every program chair for the mule deer and elk workshop. The work on the standardization guidelines above should address this issue, but those states who have issues with the way the workshop data are requested have to be involved in finding the solution to this.

AFWA White Paper on Effects of Global Warming on Big Game Winter Range
Jim deVos made a presentation on his work on global climate change grant he has co-authored regarding mule deer and elk winter range. Jim deVos handed out the final report for group to read. Group discussed the general predictions from global warming and what that could mean. Len explained the origins and intent of the original large grant that was issued to AFWA and coordinated somewhat by WMI. Jim outlined additional meetings and discussions that have occurred with the intent to be sure game animals are part of the future funding.

FY 2009 Federal Budget Priorities

- Increased Federal Agency budgets to implement the NAMDCP (i.e., Resource Management Plan, Allotment Management Plans, Forest Management Plan revisions and/or amendments to address the plan's components).
- Increase funding to the NRCS and Farm Services Administration to provide landowner incentives to implement NAMDCP.
- Provide adequate funding to the USFS to implement and enforce the Designated Motorized Route Rule.
- Recommend Funding for Berryman Institute to be a separate item as opposed to inclusion in the USDA APHIS budget.

- Increase funding within the Department of Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Department of Agriculture budgets to provide grants to states for development and implementation of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative for the United States.
- Increase funding for Interior and Agriculture agencies to implement the National CWD Plan and assist the state wildlife agencies.

Other Agenda Items

Gonacon Immunocontraceptive Issue

Jim Heffelfinger updated us on Gonacon AFWA task group that addressed this contraceptive. Label specifics for use of the drug was a key concern. These concerns were transmitted to Wildlife Services in a report entitled "Deer Immuno-contraceptive Working Group Meeting Summary and Products (3/14/2007). The result was that Wildlife Services has been very responsive and slowed down the entire process. Jim pointed out however that the registration effort will go forth. AFWA is waiting for response to some specific aspects of the report. All states need to prepare their regulation or statutes to assure that any use must occur with state wildlife agency approval.

Mountain Lion Management Guidelines

Russ Mason briefly updated the MDWG on the mountain lion work group assembled to address the 1st edition of the guidelines. Group has met with the authors twice to discuss concerns. There is some disagreement. The second edition or a WAFWA handbook is to be published in 2009. The emphasis will be on not having prescriptive guidelines. Goal is to have applied and workable guidelines. Guidelines to be produced under the auspices of the WAFWA mountain lion workshop. Some indication that the workshop has gotten away from WAFWA. Directors will author the first chapter. Other chapters will be directed by a group leader. May 2008 is date of the next mountain lion workshop and is the target date for completed drafts. The target date for completion is 2009.

Of note: Harley Shaw has produced a handbook on lions that appears to be quite useable.

Workshop Reports

Need for reports to be submitted on the mule deer/elk and pronghorn workshop was raised by Brian Wakeling. Bruce is working on the deer/elk report and it will be submitted soon. Brad Compton completed the pronghorn workshop report following the MDWG meeting and submitted it to Larry Kruckenberg. Apparently there is a specific form that is supposed to be used for this report, but few were aware of it. If it is important that a specific form be used, the new workshops chairs need to be made aware of this.

Potential future projects of the MDWG

1. Finish remaining 4 ecoregion habitat guidelines.
2. Focus on developing standardized mule deer population monitoring guidelines.
3. Mule Deer Joint Ventures: possibly N. AZ and S. UT and also efforts in the Intermountain West to team up with the "sage grouse people" to maximize the synergistic effects of actions with similar consequences and benefits.

Next Meeting

Question of early December was raised so that the meeting was before the mid-winter in San Diego the first week of January 2008. The MDWG decided to hold the meeting in Salt Lake City in early February to be concurrent with the MDF/FNAWS convention since most people had to be there and that was a way of saving agencies money and boosting attendance. The MDWG meeting will be February 7, 2008 (Thursday) so as not to interfere with the Wild Sheep Technical Committee (Wednesday afternoon) and the sheep workshop being help that Monday through Wednesday noon. Brandon will secure room for our meeting in the Convention Center.

Action Items

- Jim Heffelfinger will contact Bill Otani for details on the software that is being developed to get federal partner information into the NAMDCPmatrix.
- Jim Heffelfinger will formally review the NAMDCP matrix to add one single date and to identify obvious gaps.
- Jim Heffelfinger will send an email to those states and provinces that have not yet contributed information.
- Jim Heffelfinger will call Tony Wasley and Jerry Nelson about the status and completion of the habitat guidelines.
- Jim will ask the Directors to approve the use of up to $2,000 of the money Colorado is returning to the Deer/Elk Workshop fund to get all past deer and elk proceedings scanned into pdf files.
- Jim will send email to the MDWG reminding them of a request for suggestions to the website. Jim will then provide some feedback to Terry regarding updates to be done.
- Jim Heffelfinger will ask or the Director's approval to proceed first with development of standardized guidelines for what parameters should be collected for deer population monitoring and how it should be stored so it can be retrieved in a standardized way.
- Brad will email states and provinces that have not responded and ask for their publication orders then send the totals to Jim so he can communicate that to the printer.
- Brandon will secure room for our meeting February 6, 2008 in the SLC Convention Center.
- Brandon will discuss with Miles Moretti the potential for MDF to develop an inventory of all MDWG publications and potentially offer opportunity for ordering the documents through MDF after the states run out.
- Jim Hayden will contact Jim Peek soon for his input regarding text on herbivory by native ungulates and make sure that is addressed properly in the Northern Forest Ecoregion habitat guidelines.
- Bruce Watkins, Brad Compton, Brian Wakeling, Anis Auode, and possibly Daryl Lutz (?) will develop draft guidelines on what mule deer population monitoring parameters should be collected along with key issues for standardization for data structure (i.e., storage format). Report to be presented at the next MDWG meeting.

- Lloyd will provide Len more information on needs or more detail for the specific deer ecology section for the Great Plains Ecoregion habitat guidelines.
- George Buckner will share our desire for working jointly with the sage grouse efforts at the upcoming meeting of sage grouse people and the healthy landscape initiative and report back to Jim Heffelfinger.
- Anis will look into the cost of scanning past workshop proceedings in a searchable and nonsearchable format.

WAFWA
Western Bird Conservation Committee Minutes
July 11, 2007
Flagstaff, Arizona

1. Introductions –
    a. The third WBCC meeting was called to order by Chairman, Kenneth Mayer, Director Nevada Department of Wildlife at 8:05 am.
    b. Approximately 35 people attended the third summer WBCC meeting.

2. Status of Bald Eagle Delisting and Post-delisting monitoring plan
    a. No one was available to specifically discuss the status of the proposal; however, a number of members of the audience provide insight into the timing of the proposal, requirements for management and listing. Considerable discussion was generated about monitoring protocols in different geographical locations.

3. Intermountain Joint Venture - Dave Smith presented an informational program discussing the current status and future direction of the Intermountain West Joint Venture.

4. Sonoran Joint Venture – Robert Mesta provided a powerpoint presentation on the Bi-national Sonoran Joint Venture. Robert demonstrated the significant links between bird populations in the US and Mexico that each nation shares and the critical importance of habitat on both sides of the border. He further explained how management in Mexico was different and more difficult than efforts in the US. Robert concluded his program with an appeal for biologists north of the Mexican border to consider and engage conservation issues for birds that both countries share. Robert's presentation generated considerable interest and comments from the audience.

5. Sage & Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Workshop – Jack Connelly filled in for Scott Gardner, chair of the technical committee, to provide and update on activities associated with the technical committee and workshop. The WAFWA directors established the committee in 1954 to address conservation issues and management techniques across the west. Since that assignment the committee has hosted workshops every two years or more often to compare and inform biologists and the public about sage and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. The most recent meeting in Spearfish, South Dakota, 2006 was attended by 150 people. The next workshop will be held in California during the summer 2008.
The committee addressed three items during a meeting on 7 July 2007. First, the committee endorsed the attendance of biologist at a meeting to be held by the Society of Range Management, NRCS and WGA in Park City. Second, the committee suggested some changes in the Interagency MOU that would

streamline the Management Zone concept for sage-grouse management in the Comprehensive Strategy. Finally, the committee addressed a timeline for completing the population monitoring protocol.

6. Interagency Sage-grouse MOU – San Stiver presented background on the Comprehensive Sage-grouse Strategy that was approved by the Directors in January 2007. Linked to the implementation of the strategy is the revision of the Interagency MOU. The MOU was drafted and sent to a number of partners including the Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, NRCS, Farm Service Agency, and US Geological Survey for comment. Comments received back indicated widespread support for the MOU. The technical committee did suggest some changes to the membership of the Range-wide Interagency Sage-grouse Conservation Team and the Executive Oversight Committee. These suggested changes should be reviewed by the partnership before the MOU is finalized. Stiver suggested that we extend the current MOU until these changes can be vetted by the partner agencies.

7. WAFWA Representation on Cooperative Sagebrush Initiative – San Stiver – Stiver discussed the CSI effort and the request for membership on their partnership council. CSI is forming their council and has membership open for two representatives from WAFWA. Stiver reported that he serves as an interim director on their partnership council and would like to continue on the board if that is the desire of the Directors. Ken Mayer indicated that he would look for WAFWA members that desired sitting on the partnership council.

8. Sage-grouse LWG Coordination and Projects NV/OR/ID – WAFWA Grantee – Robin Powell was not able to make the meeting. San Stiver explained that Nevada and Oregon Audubon have applied for a grant to coordinate projects in Nevada, Oregon and Idaho among and between the state and federal agencies and the sage-grouse local workings in that area. The grant requires several states or fish and wildlife association to be the grantee. The request is for WAFWA to be the grantee for this application.

9. Local Working Conference – Dennis Phillippi, President Society of Range Management. This agenda item title changed in the week before the WAFWA meeting. Dennis described the plans for a workshop to be held in Park City, Utah in late October that will discuss State/transition modeling and NRCS ecological site descriptions as they relate to sagebrush rangelands. This workshop will help bring wildlife agency sage-grouse and sagebrush managers together with range management people to discuss techniques in the sage/steppe. Jack Connelly commented that the sage-grouse technical folks endorse the meeting, but warned that the fall is a very busy time of the year for WAFWA managers. A roundtable discussion explored the various attributes of the meeting and generally concluded that the wildlife and range people need to get together to discuss common issues.

10. Report Out – Sage-grouse Coordination Meeting – San Stiver – Most items have been covered in previous sections.

11. FY 2009 Federal Budget Priorities – Ken Mayer – Budget priorities were discussed and edited. Attachment A has those actions.

12. NABCI MOU on Bird Monitoring – Kirk Nelson – Kirk informed the group on the status of the bird monitoring MOU. He indicated that the MOU will help coordinate monitoring across the continent and reduce noise and confusion when talking about bird numbers and trends. They see a need to organize and maintain efforts.

13. All Bird Conservation Funding Efforts – Kirk Nelson – Kirk handled this topic with the previous topic and indicated the need for coordination between all of the efforts.

14. Form and Function of the WAFWA Bird Conservation Committee – Ken Mayer – Ken opened the discussion about the need and direction of the committee. The group discussed options from disbanding to serving a significant purpose. The audience used this meeting as an example of a committee that has a function and purpose and suggested that we communicate more and structure the forum. Nearly, all felt it was valuable to have the committee serve as a clearinghouse.
15. Follow-up Assignments and Wrap-up – Ken Mayer—Ken suggested that we continue the discussion of the purpose of the committee to the winter WAFWA meeting and review the membership of the committee.
16. The Meeting was adjourned at 12:00

Motions:
Sage-grouse Implementation MOU:

Motion: The MOU received substantial input from our partner agencies. WAFWA will send a letter to our 2000 MOU Federal partners extending the term of the MOU through January 2008. The new MOU will be re-circulated to the partners for concurrence between August and December and prepared for action at the winter WAFWA meeting.
Motion by Stiver, Second by Doug Hunt. Carried

WAFWA Sponsorship of SRM/NRCS/WGA Workshop

Motion 1: Request that WAFWA Directors support attendance by appropriate sage-grouse/sagebrush representatives to the Society of Range Management/NRCS/WGA workshop in October 2007.
Motion by Connelly second by Eric Gardner AZ motion passed
Motion 2: Request that WAFWA provide funding support as appropriate.
Motion by Connelly second by Hunt passed.

Action Items:

1. Amend the 2000 Interagency MOU for sage-grouse conservation to extend the expiration date to January 31, 2008
2. WAFWA co-sponsorship with SRM/NRCS/WGA for a joint workshop on State and Transition Models and Ecological Site Descriptions. Workshop to be held in Park City Utah in late October 2007. Commitment for staff presentations and attendance.
3. WAFWA to consider contribution to the SRM/NRCS/WGA workshop.
4. Choose two WAFWA members to serve on the Cooperative Sagebrush Initiative – Partnership Council.

Attachment A
FY 2009 Budget Priorities

- **High Priority:** Increase funding within the Interior Department, NRCS, and US Forest Service budgets for multi-state conservation strategies to benefit at-risk species in the Western Grasslands, Shrub-Steppe, Hawaiian Islands, and Sierra Nevada Foothills;

- **High Priority:** Increase funding for state grant programs (i.e. State Wildlife Grant, LIP, etc.) that place priority on implementation of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies/Wildlife Action Plans, including use of funds for education/outreach;

- **High Priority:** Consistent with the Greater Sage-grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy "short-term" funding strategy, provide sufficient funding within the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to support on-going conservation efforts in sagebrush country, including implementation in FY 09 of the Strategy for both Greater and Gunnison sage-grouse.

- Maintain funding for Interior and Agriculture agencies to implement plans directed at avian influenza surveillance, monitoring, and emergency response with provisions for state assistance;

- Provide sufficient funding in the FWS budget to carry-out near-term post-delisting monitoring and separate funding for long-term management and monitoring;

- Maintain funding for LIP;

- Support full funding of the Healthy Landscape Initiative in the FY 09 Budget and seek changes in the Energy Policy Act 2005 for HLC funding;

- Support Farm Bill funding options for avian conservation efforts.

- No budget priorities for FY 08 were rejected during this deliberation, rather they did not have an advocate.

STATE/FEDERAL/TRIBAL COMMUNICTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 10, 2007

Jeff Hagener called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM on July 10, 2007. Introductions were made and the agenda was reviewed and finalized.

FEDERAL AGENCY REPORTS

NOAA FISHERIES – No Report.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE – Judy Gottlieb presented the NPS report for the Alaska Region and provided several handouts. Bert Frost discussed the NPS budget and gave an update on the issues associated with using hunters to control big game populations in National Parks. The NPS determined that the use of hunters to control big game populations in National Parks is allowable under the current NPS regulations and will evaluate that alternative for Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado and the Teddy Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE – The FWS provided a handout describing a strategic planning approach they used to revise their Vision Statement, Guiding Principals and Priorities for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The FWS priorities include the National Refuge System, Landscape Conservation, Migratory Birds, T& E Species, and Aquatic Resources, including the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and Connecting People with Nature.

U.S.D.A. WILDLIFE SERVICES – Jeff Green provided a handout that highlighted WS activities for the coming year. WS is planning to hire 20 additional disease specialists for the Western Region. WS is also undergoing a safety review for their operations.

U.S.G.S./BRD – The U.S.G.S. provided an extensive handout describing their research activities and reported on the priority research topics for the west. Impacts associated with global warming are becoming a greater priority for all the federal agencies.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE – The USFS provided a handout that listed the major projects they are working on. The USFS is undergoing a Transformation Planning Process to determine how to deal with declining budgets. A major budget issue is related to fire suppression costs and the effect on the FS operating budgets. Other issues discussed include disease transmission from domestic to bighorn sheep, energy development on National Forests, and development of policy on wind energy and travel management.

BLM – The BLM presented an update on their activities and provided handouts. The BLM went over their budget and gave updates on several issues including the Healthy Lands Initiative, which shows promise in restoring public lands affected by fire, energy, invasive weeds and other activities. A final EIS on the National Vegetation Management Plan is expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year. Sage grouse and sage brush conservation is a high priority for the BLM. The draft EIS for the West Wide Energy Corridor Study is expected to be released this summer. The BLM is also undergoing a planning process called Managing for Excellence involving budgets and policy analysis.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION – No Report.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS – No Report.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE – No Report.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE – No Report.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS – No Report.

TRIBAL REPORTS – Larry Peterman reported that the State of Montana and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes renewed their Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Management Agreement for another 5-year period. MT FWP also entered into an agreement with the tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation to meet quarterly and discuss fish, wildlife, enforcement and other management issues.

UPDATES ON PREVIOSLY DISCUSSED ISSUES

Policies and Guidelines for Wildlife Management in Wilderness

John Kennedy provided an update on the Policies and Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Management in Wilderness. This guidance was developed in 1976 and revised/reaffirmed in 1986, 1995 and 2002. In 2002, the agencies communicated several action items. Completing the revision and clarification of the Policies and Guidelines was accomplished in 2006 and transmitted to staff in the FS, BLM and states in early 2007. Other action items include:

- Communications and training on the State's wildlife management role in wilderness and the policies and guidelines.
- State personnel should be aware of, and use this guidance document where it can help facilitate our wildlife management work in wilderness.
- Immediate initiation of annual coordination meetings between the federal and state agencies to discuss both short and long term wilderness management needs.
- Participation in development of wilderness management plans to assure consistency with the policies and guidelines.

The Committee agreed to ask the WAFWA Directors to support the AFWA's Federal and Tribal Relations Committee draft a letter to the state and federal agencies regarding the importance of accomplishing the action items communicated in 2002.

The Committee agreed to ask the WAFWA Directors to continue to support the AFWA, Forest Service, and BLM in developing a training module for the Policies and Guidelines.

USFWS/Tribal Agreements for Management on Wildlife Refuges - Mitch King described the situation with the National Bison Range and indicated that they are working out a new arrangement.

NPS Regulation of Public Use on Waterways

Tina Cunning reported that the Western's letter to the NPS last year, regarding fish management (e.g. stocking) and jurisdiction over public uses on state waterways, did not result in resolution of the issues. The final policies still assert jurisdiction to regulate all activities under the 1996 water regulations. The WAFWA requested specific and separate dialogue to resolve this issue in a letter to the National Director. The committee recommends that the WAFWA again seek support from the AFWA to resolve this issue. The NPS recently revised their boating regulations under this authority in consultation with the Coast Guard and state land management agencies but not with the state fish and wildlife management agencies. Some states are experiencing increasing intrusion in their regulation of fish and wildlife, such as methods and means as well as regulating commercial services on state waterways. Additional dialogue is needed to seek criteria to limit the NPS jurisdiction to the specific authority that was granted in the 1966 NPS Administration Act.

The Committee agreed to ask the WAFWA Directors to contact the AFWA and request help in approaching NPS to resolve this longstanding conflict created when NPS adopted regulations in 1996 expanding their jurisdiction to regulate activities in State waterways.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Federal Agency Reports
Larry Peterman asked if the present committee was functioning as well as it could and if the time was spent effectively. John Kennedy indicated that the updates were useful but not enough time was spent on pressing issues. After much discussion, it was decided that the Federal agencies should send their updates to the states electronically ahead of the meeting. The states would review the updates and identify several high priority issues for further discussion. The Federal agencies would be notified of the discussion topics.

New Federal Agency Employee Orientation
John Kennedy discussed the issue of new federal employees not understanding the role of State fish and wildlife agencies. Others indicated that new state employees didn't understand Federal agency roles and responsibilities either. The rapid turnover most agencies are facing are eliminating many of the mentors. It was agreed that this is an important issue with the transition most agencies are facing and that new employee orientation should include a section on the roles and responsibilities of both State and Federal agencies.

FY2009 FEDERAL BUDGET PRIORITIES – None.

WAFWA July 11, 2007

Human Dimensions Committee Meeting Minutes

Chairman Duane Shroufe opened the meeting with a welcome to attendees (34 people in attendance) and introductions, followed by solicitation for additional agenda items or changes. Scott Gurtin noted that he had one change in the National Survey Update (agenda item 8). Andrea Crews from Oklahoma would be providing that update.

Chairman Shroufe introduced the next agenda item, an update on the HD Training Certification Process by Tara Teel of Colorado State University. Dr. Teel provided a powerpoint show on the program components, and asked for input from student participants Discussion followed about potential interest in continuing the HD training. The committee wa in agreement that the training should continue, and Chairman Shroufe asked if representativ agencies had any interest in pursuing future HD training. Three attending member agencies expressed an interest (Alberta, SD, UT) but added that it will depend on cost. Chairman Shroufe asked Dr. Manfredo and Dr. Teel to put together a proposal for the Directors to review in January 2008 at the midwinter meeting. HD Training participants in attendance were to be provided certificates of completion signed by Director Shroufe. (Certificates were handed out at the conclusion of the meeting)

Chairman Shroufe moved to the next agenda item: Follow-up Activities for Wildlife Values in the West. Dr. Teel reported that she and Dr. Manfredo have met with six states to conduct workshops, and some states are still making requests, the last was in May 2007. Those meetings were to address questions and strategize how to meet the needs of their changing publics.

Chairman Shroufe moved to the next agenda item: HD Conference – Estes Park, Colorado i 2008. Dr. Manfredo provided an overview of the conference structure and website pages (www.hdfwconference.org). There has been strong international interest in this topic and sponsorship is starting to grow. This HD conference was conceptualized at a meeting in Colorado over a year ago. Dr. Manfredo is still seeking sponsorship support for the conference, including support for international travel for attendees, individual sessions, and support particularly for a book that will be published by Island Press. Dr. Manfredo would prefer to get endorsement/sponsorship from the HD Committee for the book, which will cost approximately $10,000. Chairman Shroufe agreed that it would be his preference as well. Chairman Shroufe asked attendees if there was any interest in book sponsorship by membe agencies and Alberta, AZ, MT, NE, SD expressed interest in contributing to the conference i some form. Chairman Shroufe will remind the Directors of the HD Conference and raise the issue of sponsorship at the business meeting to follow.

Chairman Shroufe addressed the next agenda item: NCN Update. The HD Committee had endorsed research into Human-Wildlife conflict at the 2006 WAFWA meeting in Bismarck, and furthermore proposed the concept as the lone WAFWA NCN. The NCN passed a vote a the business meeting, and was submitted as the WAFWA NCN, but narrowly failed at the North American meeting that followed in the autumn.

Chairman Shroufe noted that discussions ensued to pursue research through approved NCN's, but asked Dr. Manfredo to present a slightly new idea that was developed and pursued as a demonstration project, which was the next agenda item: Human-Wildlife Conflict; People in Places demonstration project. Dr. Manfredo provided an overview of the concept, which in essence will utilize place-based (GIS) information to develop models. Dr. Manfredo went through examples of potential data, and how it could assist agencies in making wildlife decisions. The project(s) can be tailored to meet agency needs, but costs will depend on the desired sampling resolution (i.e., census blocks, counties, zip codes, etc). The demonstration project currently has support from SD, WA, and AZ, and Dr. Manfredo noted that they would like to have a minimum of four states participating, but more are welcome. Dr. Manfredo asked if the Committee wanted to keep the existing NCN or revise it to reflect the slightly different approach to research under the demonstration project. After minor discussions, it was noted that the NCN had endorsement from the Human-Wildlife Conflict Committee and thus, should remain the same. Chairman Shroufe noted that he would need a motion to keep the existing NCN and move that for a vote at the business meeting. The motion was moved by Chris Smith (MT), and seconded by Andrea Crews (OK). Chairman Shroufe moved for a committee vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Shroufe moved to the next agenda item: National Survey Update. Andrea Crews provided a brief handout of the 2006 survey, including proposed language for an upcoming survey of directors on whether to continue the survey. Chairman Shroufe reported that agency directors need to seriously consider the costs, and look to their staff to see if they can either accomplish portions of the survey in-house, or not complete certain portions of the survey in order to reduce costs.

Next agenda item was Federal Budget Priorities. A handout from 2006 was provided which included funding recommendations for federal projects. Chairman Shroufe asked if there were any such projects that were identified. Scott Gurtin reported that the formation of a new website portal (www.HD.gov) by NOAA might be appropriate for a funding recommendation. Scott provided a handout of the HD.gov project, which is funded through NOAA, and is designed to be a one-stop shop for HD information, including various methods, tools, data, publications, and other information. A structural plan was provided on the back of the handout. Scott will work with Director Shroufe to develop a recommendation to reflect the need for funding to support the HD.gov effort.

Chairman Shroufe asked if there was any other business or projects for discussion, and since there were no other agenda revisions from earlier, chairman Shroufe thanked the committee for attending and participating in the discussions, and adjourned the meeting.

Action Items:

- CSU will develop an HD training proposal (including costs) for WAFWA directors to consider at Jan midwinter meeting.

WAFWA
HUMAN/WILDLIFE CONFLICTS COMMITTEE
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Flagstaff, Arizona
1:00 PM-5:00 PM
July 9, 2007

Chair—Terry Cleveland, Director, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

- Welcome, Announcements and Introductions—Chair; a total of 34 persons attended the Committee meeting. A copy of the attendance roster is attached.

- Review of Agenda and Request for Additional Agenda Items--Chair

- New Agenda Items Added

    1. Status of the Be Bear Aware Campaign
    2. A review of the 2007 Utah bear/human attack

- Review of Minutes from 2006—The Chair provided a brief review of the 2006 minutes.

- Status of Action Items from 2006—The Chair reviewed the status of the 2006 action items. The action items were:
    1. That the results of the Human/Wildlife Conflicts Survey be posted on the WAFWA website when it is operational—completed.
    2. That the Association encourages agency participation at the Large Carnivore Human Conflicts Workshop in Cody, Wyoming, May 14-17, 2007—completed.
    3. That the Association encourages agency participation at the Animal Damage Management Conference scheduled for April 9-11, 2007 in Corpus Christie, Texas—completed.
    4. That the Human Wildlife Conflicts Committee's two proposed FY2008 federal budget priorities be advanced to the director's for their consideration at the January, 2007 business meeting—completed.

- Review Wyoming's Human/Large Carnivore Conflict Training and Distribute Training DVD's—Jay Lawson reported the DVD's are in the process of being completed and will be sent to all participants at the 2007 Committee meeting.

- Review of Large Carnivore Workshop—Jay Lawson reviewed the outcome of the 2007 Human/Large Carnivore Workshop. The focus of the workshop was at field level conflict investigations and problem solvers. It focused on lions, bears, wolves, etc. Part of workshop was on depredation investigations. Training was also provided on capture and restraint devices, such as snares, darts, etc. There

was considerable interest expressed in doing another workshop if another state was willing to sponsor it in the future.

- Predicting Areas of Concern for Human/Wildlife Conflict Management
  Dr. Mike Manfredo and Dr. Tara Teel from Colorado State University provided a power point presentation on the Human Dimensions Aspect of Human Wildlife Conflicts.

- Media Training for Human Wildlife Conflicts--Jay Lawson reported that Lydia Saldana was unable to attend the committee meeting to speak to the issue of media training for human/wildlife conflicts. Therefore, Jay discussed the Media Relations Workshop held at Snowmass in 2006. Jay emphasized that it is essential to be totally prepared for media; otherwise, it can be disastrous for the agency. One strategy is to create talking points prior to talking with the media. Wyoming holds a media training session for new employees who potentially might have contact with the media.

- Utah Bear Incident--Alan Clark reported on the June 16, 2007, incident and what Utah learned from the tragedy. There was much discussion about incidents and placement of signs to notify the public of potential danger from bears/lions/other large predators. The consensus was that the appropriate land management agency was responsible for the placement of signs.

- Bear Wise Community Project-Wapiti, Wyoming Game & Fish Department--Jay Lawson gave a presentation on the project being conducted in Wyoming to address conflicts with grizzly bears and homeowners in the Cody, Wyoming area. Arizona described a similar program they have undertaken. Oregon is using another program.

- Be Bear Aware. Chuck Bartelbaugh discussed the more recent publications and efforts of this program.

- Role of Conflict Specialists--Jay Lawson reported on the program in Wyoming to create conflict specialists to deal with grizzly bears and black bears. In addition, Wyoming has implemented a contract with Wildlife Services to address conflicts. Idaho has done some similar work in this area. Alaska has concerns about funding of wildlife conflicts. Their legislature has been unwilling to provide general fund monies, so Alaska has used license dollars. New Mexico has a depredation fund and Arizona dollars come from their Heritage fund. Utah's Wildlife Services does much of the work on this issue; however, they also employ wildlife damage specialists in each region. Wildlife Services advised that they are willing to expand their role, depending on what each state desires.

- Human/Wildlife Conflict Collaboration—The Chair briefly discussed the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration (HWCC) and the potential to share information on conflict management. HWCC 's executive director is:

  Francine Madden
  % The Wildlife Society
  5410 Grosvenor Lane
  Suite 200
  Bethesda, MD 20814
  (202)-986-0067 or
  (202)-746-4421
  e-mail address: fmmadden@comcast.net

- Human/Wildlife Conflict Journal—Mike Carnover was unable to attend to discuss this new publication from the Berryman Institute at Utah State University.

- Gonacon National Survey of States and Recommendations of Working Group--Alan Clark reported on the survey. The survey suggests use of this contraceptive is controversial, with responding states almost evenly divided on the merits of such use. An AFWA Committee appointed to study this recommends that states adopt regulations pertaining to use of the contraceptive. The Committee made recommendations to AFWA for model legislation and regulations. Regulation of the drug has been by the EPA. States need to bee involved to ensure they have authority to regulate use of the contraceptive in wildlife.

- Roundtable Discussion—Status of States' and Provinces' Human/Wildlife Conflict Situations
  Larry Peterman of Montana will share report on reviewing what states are doing to address deer populations in urban areas. Emmett Keyser of South Dakota reported on the deer management in Rapid City and Pierre. Wyoming reported on urban antelope populations at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne.

  South Dakota questioned if anyone uses statutes to prohibit feeding. Many states have experience with this problem.

FY2009 Federal Budget Priorities

1. Provide adequate federal funding to the States to address population management and human/grizzly bear/gray wolf conflict management post de-listing.

2. Provide adequate funding for the Berryman Institute in the Wildlife Services budget.

3. Provide adequate budget capacity for Wildlife Services to carry out its responsibilities as they relate to management of wildlife in conflict.

- Other Business--None

- Adjourn
  The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Action Items

1. Recommend WAFWA sanction a human/wildlife conflicts workshop to address a myriad of issues regarding such conflicts, including, but not limited to: media training for personnel/ management of conflicts/ etc.

2. Encourage Directors to secure the necessary statutory authority to assure state wildlife agency regulatory control over contraceptive drugs to be utilized to control wildlife populations.

3. Forward federal budget priorities to the Business Meeting.

Mountain Lion Working Group Meeting
Flagstaff, Arizona

The WAFWA Mountain Lion work group met on Saturday, July 7 from 0800 to 1530. Minutes from the May meeting in Denver were approved. Work group members in attendance were

Russ Mason (Nevada)
Dorothy Fecske (North Dakota)
Don Whittaker (Oregon)
Ted McKinney (Arizona)
Mike Bodenchuk (USDA Wildlife Services)
Tony Leif (South Dakota)

Utah and Texas work group members were represented by Craig McLaughlin and Ruben Cantu, respectively.

Not present were work group members representing Colorado, Washington, Wyoming, Idaho, California, and Montana.

The session was also attended by 16 agency representatives and commissioners from Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and the National Park Service.

An overview of the last meeting of the work group in Denver was presented, and the draft prospectus for the second edition was discussed. General concern was expressed over the apparent preference of the authors of the first edition of the Cougar Management Guidelines to edit out a statement in the prospectus that the Guidelines were meant to be suggestive rather than prescriptive. This apparent preference, if accurate, would be directly contrary to the comments of Guideline authors who attended the May meeting of the work group in Denver, and directly contrary to comments by Fred Lindzey at the 2006 Summer WAFWA meeting in Bismarck, North Dakota. The work group asked Russ Mason to revise the prospectus and directly contact as many of the original authors as possible. A prospectus will be published on the WAFWA website, and preferably on that site and other appropriate sites as soon as this wording issue is clarified.

General concensus was reached that either a second edition of the Guidelines or a WAFWA handbook based on the Guidelines and other recent publications would serve the needs of managers and researchers. Whichever is ultimately produced would be distributed under the auspices of the Western Mountain Lion Workshop, provided that the Workshop continues to receive sanction by WAFWA. Continuing sanction will depend on the fidelity of the Workshop to the established WAFWA bylaws for this event. The group agreed that contributions to either a second edition of the Guidelines or a WAFWA handbook should be broad-based, and preferably include WAFWA managers and researchers, academic researchers, and experts from non-governmental organizations.

The issue of copyright in relation to the publication of a second edition of the Guidelines was briefly discussed. The concensus of the group was that production of a second, management-oriented, document would proceed while the issue of copyright was clarified.

The work group agreed that WAFWA should consider funding the publication of the second edition or handbook, and that WAFWA agencies should be actively encouraged to provide funding so that all members of the work group can attend and participate in work group sessions.

The group then identified key topics for elaboration in either a second edition of the Guidelines or a WAFWA handbook. These topics appear below:

EDITORS: Jim deVos, Tony Leif, Dorothy Fecske, Don Whittaker

TOPICS

Introduction and history of mountain lion management

GROUP LEADER: Don Whittaker

Objectives
Target audience
Where we're coming from, why we're doing it, and what we want the document to represent
Nomenclature issue (cougar, mountain lion, puma)
Value differences
Interjurisdictional differences in management (e.g., mandatory hunter education for lion hunting, cost of lion tags, etc.)
Hunting heritage
Document format
Recognition of overlap that exists between chapters

Potential authors: Contributors will produce a draft manuscript on behalf of the WAFWA Directors. The final manuscript will list the WAFWA Directors or the WAFWA President as the author.

Human Dimensions and Values

GROUP LEADER: LARRY GIGLIOTTI

Importance of understanding public attitudes and values
Summary of human dimension (HD) studies: what have we learned
Temporal changes in values
How to effectively use HD information in mountain lion management
Strategies for public involvement
Monitoring public attitudes and values

HD research needs
Public perception of conflict
Proactive strategies

Potential authors: Larry Gigliotti, Mike Manfredo

Mountain lion ecology and natural history
GROUP LEADER: DOROTHY FECSKE

Reproduction
Home range and habitat needs
Food habits
Behavior and social structure
Expanding populations
Diseases/Parasites/ other mortality
Changes in large carnivore dynamics

Potential authors: Dorothy Fecske, Jon Jenks, Dave Holderman, Dave Hamilton?, Don Whittaker , Jerry Apker

Assessing and monitoring mountain lion populations
GROUP LEADER: DON WHITTAKER

Population models
Population survey techniques
Movements
Harvest monitoring

Potential authors: Don Whittaker, John Young, Mike Wolfe

Cougar-Prey Relationships
GROUP LEADER: STEVE NADEAU

Compensatory versus additive prey mortality
Alternative prey
Top down versus bottom up mortality
Multiple predator systems
Cougar management to benefit prey species
Population level impacts to predation

Potential authors: Mike Bodenchuck, Eric Rominger, Ted McKinney, Jon Jenks, Steve Nadeau, Dave Moody
Jim Williams

Population Management

GROUP LEADERS: MIKE BODENCHUK (DEPREDATION) AND KEVIN BUNNEL(HUNTING)

Determining management objectives
Depredation
Characteristics of depredation by state
Characteristics of lions depredating livestock
Depredation management
Relationship between depredation and hunting

Hunting
Effects of hunting on lion populations (compensatory versus additive mortality)
Discussion on utility of hunting in lion management
Strategies for incorporating hunting seasons

Potential authors: Mike Bodenchuk, Kevin Bunnel, Ted McKinney, Don Whittaker, Dave Holderman

Strategies to Manage Mountain Lion-Human Interactions
GROUP LEADER: JERRY APKER

Define types of interactions
Response protocols by varying states for different levels of interactions
Distinguish different levels of conflicts (human danger conflicts, human economy conflicts)
Acceptable and unacceptable lion behavior
Proactive strategies
Determining credibility of sightings
Include case studies
Non-targeted and targeted removal of mountain lions

Potential authors: Jim deVos, Jerry Apker, Dave Holderman, Doug Updike, Craig Coolihan, Donny Martorello

Application of genetics in mountain lion management

Potential authors: Chuck Anderson?, Mike Schwartz?, John Young, Don Whittaker

Mountain Lion Research and Management Information Needs
GROUP LEADER: TED MCKINNEY

Better methodology for surveys and estimating populations
Standard protocols for collecting population data (e.g., lions, prey, climate data, etc.)
Impacts of cougars and prey shifting
Water development and wildlife
Adaptive management approach

Landscape level changes and impacts to lion populations

Potential authors: Ted McKinney, ALL

The next meeting of the work group will be in conjunction with the mid-winter WAFWA meeting in San Diego, CA, January 4-5, 2008. At that meeting, a detailed outline (or more) for each chapter will be presented by Group Leaders. Outlines will be circulated to all work group members and contributors during the second week of December. Subsequently, the aim is to produce draft manuscripts for discussion at the Western Mountain Lion Workshop in May 2008.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee Meeting

July 9, 2007, 1-5 pm

Note: This document is a combination of notes from the Fish Chief meeting and the Inland and Marine meeting

2. <u>Agenda review and additions</u> - Virgil Moore (OR)

- ANS report
- Desert Fish Habitat Partnership - report
- California sued by Center for Biological Diversity for fish stocking - report

3. <u>Marine Mammal Protection Act</u> - Charlie Corrarino (OR)

Oregon, Washington and Idaho applied under Section 120 of the MMPA for limited and selected lethal take of California sea lions in the vicinity of Bonneville Dam at RM 140 in the Columbia River. The public comment period ended 4-2-07. NOAA is setting up a Task Force that will meet in September and have 60 days to make a recommendation to the Sec of Commerce. The Secretary will have 60 (?) days to make a final determination but will likely be delayed by NEPA requirements and possible lawsuits. WAFWA submitted a letter of support in 2006 and at this point no further action is needed. WAFWA would support a federal funding note.

N. Dakota received a cormorant permit for several years but now can not find any cormorants to kill! Nevada also had issues with cormorants in an area with listed fish to take and disrupt nesting habitat. Idaho had permission to take a few white pelicans.

Need to develop management plans for predators that are problematic.

No action necessary at this time but states may look for support from WAFWA in 2008.

4. <u>Arkansas Certified Bait</u>—Larry Riley (AZ)

Incentive based bait certification program or "hitchhiker free". Statutory in nature. Will discuss more at AFWA in Louisville. Incentive is for improved marketing. No action necessary but may be worth discussing with AFS to formalize and perhaps endorse. Some regulatory tools in place for selling live bait (Oregon for example).

5. <u>Ocean Energy</u>—Ron Regan (replaces Eric Schwaab to represent WAFWA on many issues)

Some limited discussion at the federal level. Virgil commented this is a big issue in Oregon, Governor is supportive and FERC is the regulatory agency. Governor is also interested in marine protected areas. Ross Fuller (WA) compared it to small hydro 20 years ago with the gold rush mentality. Christopher Estes (AK) said some projects could be exempted from FERC but must be approved in D.C. May be land use issues associated with ocean energy. This may need AFWA action to consolidate coastal state issue as federal actions become clearer. Recommend as an agenda item for the Fisheries Water Policy Committee and possible action at AFWA meeting.

Additional discussion of **MSA** that lead into marine angler registry/survey discussion. Some concern about the marine angler registry expressed by Alaska. Would also include those areas where fishing for anadromous species occurs (like in Idaho). States with no licensing program (east and south coast) may be most at risk as NOAA may come in and dictate methodology

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DIRECTORS: Chair report to WAFWA Directors - Should be elevated to Association level for further discussion and action. Angler registry survey may be very similar to the HIP program relative to the survey aspects for migratory birds.

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6. National Fish Habitat Initiative, Update—Christopher Estes (AK)

NFHAP Board was formed last July. Composed of 22 members, including

- 4 regional Fish and Wildlife Association members, and Alaska member. John Cooper (SD) is the Chair and represents the WAFWA. Kelly Hepler represents Alaska.
- NGO's are represented, including TNC, AFS, ASA, and TU.
- Federal members include USFS, USFWS, EPA, NRCS, NOAA

- Board has developed standards for Formally Recognized Partnerships. (WNTI is a Pilot Partnership, and will seek Formal status). There are 5 different levels of 'partnerships' recognized. WNTI ill be addressed in October at the NFHAP Board meeting.
- Larry Riley discussed the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership.
- There will be another 'Data Summit' at the AFS meeting in San Francisco in August '07.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DIRECTORS: See memo from Larry Riley to WAFWA Fish Chiefs re: Alaska's support for the NFHAP. Resolution by Committee fully supported.

7. Western Native Trout Initiative, Update-- Rich Haskins (NV) Robin Knox (WNTI – Coordinator)

- See briefing memo provided by Robin Knox dated July 12, 2007.

What follows are notes from the Fish Chief and Inland and Marine meetings:

- Robin reviewed the presentation that was made to the NFHAP Board in June regarding the WNTI. Robin and Mike Stone (WY) attended to represent WNTI to the Board.
- Board has initiated the process to recognize Partnerships, and the Pilot Partnerships must apply – along with any others – for formal recognition.
- WNTI Executive Management Committee met on 7/7/07.

- Committee decided not to submit application for formal recognition at this first opportunity (August for an October Board Meeting).
- Committee decided to wait until Strategic Planning was closer to completion, and make a November submittal for February meeting of the Board.
  - Strategic Planning will be complete.
  - We will be able to brief WAFWA Directors and seek concurrence.
- After much debate, the Committee elected to pursue the first phase of Web Site development for WNTI, and requested modification of the DJ Case proposal to reflect a Phased development.

- Several challenges we identified regarding Board operation (NFHI).
  - Timing of notification of funding of NFHAP projects. The process (and federal budget constraints) provide funding at a point well into the Federal FY (March or after) with notification to successful proponents sometimes much later. Projects have a completion expectation that (just a few months in most cases) that is too ambitious and unreasonable.
  - Mr. Stone suggested to the Board that it's criteria for "Partnerships" should be in the form of broad guidelines, and the Board should avoid getting into the 'weeds' or the 'nuts and bolts' of what a "Partnership" should be.
- Doug Nygren (KS) mentioned other potential partnerships that could have a home in the West and with WAFWA. He mentioned in particular an emerging "Reservoirs Partnership". **Action: Virgil thinks he has authority to ask for a volunteer and Doug Nygren volunteered. Larry Riley volunteered to assist.**
- Christopher Estes (AK) suggested that, as partnership numbers grow in the West, we may have to figure out how we can staff all of these efforts. Numbers of staff and staff time are limited. If there are many 'Partnerships' that emerge, perhaps we should consider how we combine them for efficiency of effort.
- Dutch Salmon, a commissioner from NM, expressed concern about poisoning streams that contain Gila trout that are 95% pure. If that is all that is left then Nevada would leave alone stated Rich Haskins. Depends on management goals. In one case USFWS counted west slope cuts that were 80% pure as a valid population. When listed there are often small and isolated populations and there is a need to achieve highest levels of purity possible to meet recovery criteria.

RECOMMENDATIONS from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings:

- **Identify a representative from WAFWA to work on a Reservoir Partnership working group (request for Doug Nygren (KS).**
- **WAFWA should correspond with all of the WNTI State and Federal Partners, thanking them for their existing commitment and contributions, and urging their continued commitment.**
- **See recommended action at the end of the July 12, 2007 Directors Briefing memo presented at Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee meeting.**
- **Governance of WNTI is an ongoing issue and may need guidance from Directors prior to submitting an application to NFHAP Board for partnership.**

8. USFWS Fisheries Strategic Plan— Mike Stemple (USFWS)

- Mr. Stempel provided several handouts to the Chiefs, including performance reporting tied to the USFWS Strategic (Vision) Plan.
- The Plan provides performance direction and metrics are identified for reporting to OMB and under GIPRA.
- The Plan is due to be updated and revised. FWS will be meeting with the States (at least in Mountain Prairie Region) to seek guidance on revision. May also meet at other WAFWA and AFWA meetings.
- FWS will refer to State Wildlife Action Plans for guidance as well.
- This plan does have ties to budget for FWS.
    - Anticipated Budget reviewed by Mr. Stempel
        - A potential $34 million increase in Fisheries is on the horizon. Includes:
            - $3-4 million in fish passage increases
            - $3 million in ANS increases
            - $6 million for NFHAP
            - $3-4 million for Fish Health (Perhaps for NAAHP?)
            - $2-3 million increases for mitigation hatcheries.
    - Hatcheries maintenance backlog continues.

RECOMMENDATIONS from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings:

- **Budget priorities need to be shared with FWS and other Federal Partners earlier in budget development process, in addition to existing process of identifying Budget Priorities for interaction with Congress during approval process. It was suggested that broad priorities could be shared with FWS in February or March during the development of their budget for the out-year.**

9. AFWA Fish Chiefs Survey—Dr. Amber Paris (AFWA) and Larry Riley (AZ)

Dr. Pairis is the Science Liaison with AFWA and provides staff support to the "Science and Research" Committee of the Association.

Dr. Pairis provided a hand-out and overview of her survey of "Wildlife and Fish chiefs" (July 2006) targeted at identifying priority science and research needs. The results were shared and discussed at the September '06 meeting of the Committee.

- Survey identified 9 research themes.
    - Comprehensive resource monitoring strategies and tools
    - Urbanization threats to ecological systems
    - Invasive species prevention, control, eradication
    - Energy development effects on fish and wildlife habitats
    - Disease threats
    - Water allocation and quality challenges

- Conservation priorities in agricultural programs
- Specific data gaps
- Human/sociology/demographics of conservation practices

- Invited participation of a WAFWA fish chiefs on the AFWA Science and Research Committee.

- **A WAFWA Fish Chief/INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE representative should be placed on the AFWA Science and Research Committee as a liaison. Walt Donaldson (UT) volunteered and this was fully supported by Fish Chiefs and Inland and Marine committees.**

10. Piscicide Update— Dave Schmid (USFS- DC) and Larry Riley (AZ)

- USFS Piscicide Rule:
  - Proposed rule streamlining application of Piscicides by State Wildlife Agencies on FS Administered lands was a collaborative approach developed by WAFWA, AFWA, and USFS.
  - Proposed rule published in Federal Register in November '06, comment closed January '07.
  - 1,439 comments received. (140 were original letters, remainder were form letters or cards)
  - Is currently in Content Analysis stage. Principal concern is perceived loss of FS Authority and perceived loss of public involvement (NEPA).
  - Dr. Cota, who was leading much of this effort retired this past spring. Mr. Schmid is taking up this challenge as new Fisheries Program Leader.
  - FS is trying to stay the course. Looking at their strategy, which may include NEPA on the rule making, as well as other strategies.
  - Forest Health Protection will lead this process.
  - Forest Health unit has increased priority on risk assessment associated with Piscicide Use (being conducted now).
  - Expect to complete response to comments by end of August. Decision at that point on which alternative to pursue (NEPA, CatEx, proceed to final rule, etc.)
  - Chiefs offered assistance if needed in responding to comment.
  - Hope to adopt final rule this fall.
  - BLM considers piscicide application state business and does not need rule making.

RECOMMENDATIONS from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings: Support effort by USFS to modify rule as proposed. Provide assistance and written comments as appropriate.

11. Rotenone Re-registration—Larry Riley (AZ)

- Re-registration of rotenone and antimycin A.
  - Rotenone Re-Registration Eligibility (RED) published in federal register. RED was shared with Fish Chiefs prior to meeting. Comment due date July 23.
  - Key Question is: should the states or WAFWA respond to RED, especially in regards to concentrations identified, label requirements, and PPE use.
  - AFS (Brian Finlayson [CA]) response was shared with Chiefs by Riley prior to and at meeting.
  - Chiefs thought that each state should utilize the AFS comment letter to prepare their own responses.
  - Antimycin A RED was published in federal register in June. Riley will distribute.
  - Anticipate that AFS will also respond.
  - Chiefs also thought that might be model for State responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings:

- **Support the AFS position and recommendations on Re-registration Eligibility Decisions (REDs) published by EPA, and use the AFS response as a model for state responses and provide those responses to US EPA prior to deadlines identified in the respective Federal Register Notices. Urge Directors to have their staffs respond to the Federal Register Notices including a copy of the AFS letter and recommended areas of concern.**

12. Aquatic Nuisance Species

Quagga and Zebra mussels - Bob Pitman (FWS)

- Fish Chiefs met jointly with Law Chiefs for presentation.
- Quagga/zebra mussels in Colorado River report provided by Riley (AZ), Haskins (NV), Pitman (FWS), Mitchell (NPS)
  - Coordinating with National Park Service on Quagga Mussel Response at Lake Mead NRA and with California (Incident Command approaches) described.
- WAFWA IMFC collaborated (per Director Moore [OR] and President Shroufe [AZ] direction) with NPS on Incident Command effort to develop an NPS contingency plan for future infestations in National Park Units.
  - Greg Gerlich (CO) had Ms. Vicki Murano (CDOW) participate with the Incident Command team as they met in Fort Collins (1 week assignment). Riley and Donaldson (UT) also provided assistance. Mr. Mitchell (NPS) further described the effort and provided the plan. Plan is also available on NPS web site.
- WAFWA collaboration with WGA and WSWC on Quagga mussels (a Blue Ribbon Panel) was recommended in letter from 100th Meridian Initiative to Western Governor's Association. WAFWA is awaiting response from WGA.
- Mr. Haskins provided information on monitoring for Quagga at Wildhorse Reservoir (Owyhee River Drainage in the Snake/Columbia Basin) – a potential "at-risk" location outside the lower Colorado River Basin due to hatchery stocking. None have been found to date.

- Continuing relationship and partnership building with Law Enforcement regarding ANS was conducted. Pitman provided information on availability of tools including training videos, web tools, and a boater 'on-line' self certification training and certificate.

Ongoing actions on the mussel effort from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings:

- Pitman said if states take samples FWS will run DNA PCR test to detect presence/absence. The technique uses a genetic label to identify veliger presence at VERY low levels.
- ID cards are available from Mr. Pitman to biologists, law enforcement staff and marina operators.
- 100th Meridian web site lists all of these tools. Web site also a good place for other educational material.
- Voluntary compliance is critical to success.

- **When quagga/zebra mussel reports occur it is important to contact 100th Meridian staff. Need to prepare an e-mail to Directors and the WAFWA Fisheries Water Policy Committee to pass to their respective agency staff. Bob Pitman will draft the language.**
- **It is important for WAFWA to track and support reauthorization of National Invasive Species Act**

<u>Western Regional Panel Representative</u> – Larry Riley (AZ)

- Thw WRP representative to the ANS Task Force (currently Larry Riley) needs replaced by WAFWA.
- Chair requested volunteers/nominations and Greg Gerlich (CDOW) expressed an interest.
- **Action – Committee recommends appoint of Greg Gerlich as WAFWA's representative to the WRP.**

<u>STOP Aquatic Hitchers Sponsorship Proposal:</u>

- Proposal is an outreach partnership with WAFWA, FFF, and Coleman (now owner of Pure Fishing) on ANS education and awareness. Goal is to use the power of large manufacturer to send ANS message.
- This proposal emerged from prior grant relationships between AFWA and the FWS regarding Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers campaign, and is an outgrowth from the "Greater Yellowstone Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers campaign – a partnership among the FWS, MT, WY, the community of West Yellowstone, the Federation of Fly Fishers, and other corporate partners (Patagonia, etc.)
- Mr. Nygren (KS) posed concern about Coleman's historic opposition to Sport Fish Restoration excise tax. It was noted that management has changed at Coleman, and position may have as well. May be appropriate to discuss and explore with Jim Martin – Pure Fishing's Conservation Director.
- Mr. Hepler (AK) suggested that AFWA would perhaps be another or better partner. Suggested this be put on the AFWA FWRPC agenda for Louisville meeting in September. Mr. Regan (AFWA) agreed to do so.
- WAFWA subcommittee may be formed to move forward if approved by Directors.

RECOMMENDATION: Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee would approach the Directors with this DRAFT proposal, which may have both some controversies and some merits. The Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee seek authorization from the Directors at the Business meeting to enter into further discussions with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the other potential corporate [Coleman] and NGO [Federation of Fly Fishers] partners to further explore the nature of the proposed relationship and expectations of WAFWA. The Committee seeks the authority to return to the Executive Committee with details of the relationship to seek WAFWA approval, should this proposal prove to be a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Proposal should also be shared with AFWA, to determine its interest in such a proposal, seek its counsel, and evaluate the role that AFWA might play in such a proposed project.

Recreational Boating Act of 2007 - Ron Regan (AFWA) & Larry Riley (AZ)

- If any discharge comes off a recreational vessel shall be excluded from the definition of pollutant. Concerns about what this really means.
- Ron Regan suggested he and Virgil Moore discuss and put on the fall agenda for the Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee.

13. National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP)-- Dr. Paul Egrie, (APHIS)

- Collaborative effort of FWS, NOAA, and APHIS as directed by Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture. This is heavily related to US trade on international scope with WTO and European Union.
- Expected completion July 26, 2007. Change of approach.
    - While 1st 4 Chapters have been placed on web for review and comment as each was completed, remaining chapters are not being shared or posted until review by JSA completed.
    - Chapters 5-10 will not be available until JSA reviews.
    - Dr. Egrie was essentially providing overview of Chapter 11 (summary).
    - Would make available standardized testing, diagnostics, reporting, and 'authorized or approved' laboratories. **(MOST FWS FISH HEALTH CENTERS ARE NOT APHIS APPROVED [1 of 7], and MOST STATE WL AGENCY LABS ARE NOT APPROVED at this time.)**
- Re: VHS – European Union auditors visited the US and were not impressed. Hence, export of US shell fish (mollusks) to EU ceased 7-6-07.
- There are no monies in APHIS for implementation.
- ***Importance of participation by the states. APHIS is more adapted to coordination with State Vets than Wildlife Agencies. Need to continue to develop liaison.***
- Future roles of APHIS (segue to VHS discussion)

RECOMMENDATIONS from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings: Importance of participation by the states. APHIS is more adapted to coordination with State Veterinarians than Wildlife Agencies Fish Health professionals. Need to continue to develop liaison. Will elevated to AFWA and Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee for recommended direction and action.

14. VHS- Dr. Paul Egrie, (APHIS)

- APHIS Federal Order in the Great Lakes was described, along with developing rule making for VHS. This strain is essentially new virus, with new hosts, in a new environment. State regulationss were deemed to be variable and ineffective. This affects US trade position and international trade in aquaculture products.
- APHIS is collaborating with US Coast Guard on ballast regulation as a potential pathway.
- APHIS is developing regulations for interstate trade or movement of fish. Bait fish and aquaculture products are target, but also effects movements of fishes by USFWS and State WL agencies across state boundaries.
- PCR testing available, and APHIS will utilize state acceptable certifications. Utilizes Blue Book.
- Need for action in the west?
- Contact is Paul.G.Egrie@aphis.gov

15. **Wilderness Stocking and Fish Management Activities**—Larry Riley (AZ)

- Agreement between AFWA and USFS and BLM.
  - Mr. Peterman (MT) described the agreement again.
  - Chiefs asked if their state had met with their FS and BLM counterparts on how this would be used. Majority had not. Chiefs were urged to coordinate with FS and BLM in their state on the processes described in this agreement and deploy it within their own staffs. Can't work if we don't let people know about it.
  - **Riley will send this agreement again to Fish Chiefs (Originally distributed by Riley last July).**
  - **The signed Transmittal document with the agreement has likely been sent but not distributed. Ron Regan will send to Virgil and Virgil will distribute to the Inland and Marine Committee. Also recommend the agreement be posted on the WAFWA web site.**

- California has been sued by Center for Biological Diversity for stocking under CA statutes. States need to be alert. Potential or perceived impact on native species, especially in high lake areas.

- AFWA and Concerns about NPS Policies and Procedures regarding fish stocking operations:

  - Background - This issue was initially raised by issues between the State of Washington and the National Park Service regarding long-standing stocking activities of recreational cold water fish species in North Cascades. National Park Service Policies, which had been the subject of discussion between NPS and AFWA last summer, have been finalized. The finalized policies regarding the stocking and/or management of nonnative fishes in National Park Units shifted unexpectedly to a position not aligned with the previous discussions between NPS and AFWA. Hence, National Park Service policies are opposed to any stocking/management of non-native fish in "Parks". AFWA corresponded with NPS requesting reconsideration of this policy statement.
  - NPS staff was present to discuss and stated that most stocking operations ceased many years ago but there are a few exceptions. Large reservoirs or treaty situations are the general exceptions.
  - The Park Service representative read an excerpt from the NPS response to AFWA (2 paragraphs, that no one has seen). The letter essentially indicated that the view of the Park Service is that the stocking of non-native fishes is not aligned with its mission, and NPS does not wish to revise its policies. The NPS representative also indicated that these policies draw controversy whenever opened, and NPS would prefer not to open them to broad review again so soon following their adoption. NPS does wish to work with the states, and believes it may be more efficient and effective to address this issue on a 'state-by-park' basis. It is unclear whether the current policy statements and NPS response allows flexibility for discussion and negotiation at lowest possible level, where such issues should best get resolved.
  - NPS urged the committee to NOT adopt a resolution calling for the revisiting of their policies. Virgil thought it a bit unusual that NPS does not want to formalize arrangement with AFWA, much like BLM and USFS have done. Virgil suggested a motion to the Directors for the development of an agreement much like we have done with BLM and USFS. NPS stated that they want in every way to develop relationships with state to finesse management and avoid legal battles. Policy allows all parties to enter into discussion on a "state-by-park" basis. Each park has been established with individual legislation. Perhaps WAFWA could re-ask in a different way. NPS again suggests a "state-by-park" basis and he (NPS rep) will help facilitate if needed.

  - Based upon motion from Doug Vincent-Lange (AK), second by Rich Haskins (NV): **Recommend to the WAFWA Directors to enter into further discussions with the National Park Service to define to joint State-NPS coordination processes to reach decisions about fish and wildlife management activities (fish stocking/non-native fish stocking) on National Park units.**

16. & 17. State Wildlife Action Plans and Request for Partner Committee with Nongame and Endangered Spp committee for Coordination Among States – Mike Stone (WY)

- Action Item status update: Mr. Fowden (WY) presented this for Mr. Stone. Stone urged coordination with Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Committee, and in-state coordination on Wildlife Action Plans. These are influential and need to ensure that aquatic resources are correctly and adequately represented.

RECOMMENDATIONS from Fish Chief and Inland & Marine meetings:

- **Include a joint meeting with the Nongame and Endangered Species Committee for a portion of our next meeting. This should help in preparation for upcoming reviews and revisions of WAPs. WY (Mr. Fowden) volunteered to coordinate this.**

18. FY2009 Federal Budget Priorities—

- Chiefs reviewed the recommendations of WAFWA federal budget priorities, and identify any items that we believe may be missing. WAFWA shares these priorities with AFWA for their interaction with Federal Agencies and in their workings with Congress. We should be prepared to share these through Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee for recommendation to Directors.
- It was recommended that we need an additional process. These recommendations are targeted at negotiating with Congress once President's Budget is already developed. Fish Chiefs believe we need to share priorities with federal partners earlier so that those priorities are interjected into agency planning for their budget submittals.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DIRECTORS:

- **Add a process to our existing review of WAFWA/AFWA Budget Priorities to communicate programmatic priorities to FWS and other Federal Partners earlier in their budgeting process.**
- **Where ever appropriate in budget recommendations, use "Fish and Wildlife" in place of "Wildlife", to re-emphasize to non-wildlife professionals, Congressional staffers, and Members of Congress, that our requests are inclusive.**

- **New Suggestions for Budget Priorities:**

    - Maintain adequate funding for listing activities and significantly increase funding for recovery efforts for aquatic species listed under the endangered species act.

- Increase Section 6 ESA allocations to the states to support recovery and delisting activities for aquatic species.

- Support Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission initiative to fund marine resources research and management. ***(This statement was revised from what was presented at the Fish Chiefs meeting).***

- Ensure adequate financing the US Geological Survey budgets to restore and maintain fully staffed Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units.

- Increase funding to US Fish and Wildlife Service to provide grants to the states for implementation of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.

- Provide financing to and through USDA APHIS for reconnaissance by the states to maintain stocks of fish free of VHS and other OIE reportable diseases.

- Maintain funding for the cooperative stream gaging program administered through US Geological Survey, and decrease the match requirements for cooperators. (USGS currently passes on overhead costs for the program, adding to financial burden on cooperators.)

- Increase funding available through NOAA Fisheries for research and management of interactions between marine mammals and fisheries.

- Increase financial commitments of federal agencies in research related to climate change.

- Increase access by state Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement agencies to Homeland Security funds in order to maintain law enforcement presence along international and marine boundaries. (This is particularly driven by marine fisheries patrols that must also respond to homeland security issues as a related issue when conducting fisheries compliance enforcement activities.)

- **Modifications to Existing Recommendations**:

  - Financing associated with the National Invasive Species Council **and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force**:

- Ensure that the USFWS Budget includes sufficient funding for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and implementation of Aquatic Nuisance Species Plans by the states.
- Implementation of the Asian Carp Management Plan will require additional funding within the USFWS Budget for adequate certification of triploidy of Asian carp.
- **Provide adequate financing for response by state and federal agencies to existing quagga mussel/zebra mussel incursions into the west (Colorado River Basin) and to rapidly respond to newly detected infestations.**
- Implementation of HACCP plans can improve regional and national bio-security. Sufficient funding should be included in the USFWS budget to implement HACCP planning processes.

- Financing associated with the National Fish Habitat Initiative:

  - Maintain or increase support for the National Fish Habitat Initiative.

- **Reiterate Recommendations from Last Year:**

  - The Opening of Federal Lands to energy development in Alaska creates new and added permitting requirements and needs by the State of Alaska. The FY ~~08~~ 09 budget should provide resources to the State of Alaska to offset those permitting costs.

  - The drive to develop Federal Lands for oil, gas, and coal is creating the need for better financing of monitoring and mitigation associated with that development. Funding for USBLM to support this demand is critically important:
    - BLM resources are currently being diverted to energy development at the expense of fisheries conservation planning and implementation activities.
    - Broad commitments are being made in energy related Environmental Impact Statements to monitor impacts and implement mitigations, however no financing is being made available to the states for monitoring nor is any financing being made available to USBLM to implement mitigations required as a result of state monitoring.

  - Support for the National Fish Hatchery System should be maintained at least at FY 06 levels in the USFWS budget. The preference is for funding at FY 02 levels.

  - Restore Coastal Salmon Recovery funding for NOAA Fisheries to FY 02 levels.

- Additional budget requests for USFWS should not be at the expense of existing programs (Fisheries Assistance or National Fish Hatchery System), but should be additive to USFWS budget.

Follow-up from Fish Chiefs meeting. FWS spends $440K to certify triploid grass (Asian) carp. This equals five FTE's. Cost is 42 cents per fish.

Recommendation from Inland and Marine Fisheries meeting suggested by Doug Vincent-Lang (ADFG). This is likely something that would be taken under advisement by AFWA but want to seek approval from the Directors. The statement reads as follows:

The Committee is concerned with the decision to eliminate earmarks within the federal budget. The Committee feels this places too much expenditure discretion within federal agencies. For the FY 2009 budget, the Committee strongly recommends that the federal agencies continue to provide funding to congressionally identified projects formerly funded with earmarks on a prorated basis.

Two last recommendations from Christopher Estes reads as follows:

1. **Alert the Directors that the Strategic Habitat Conservation Focal Area Process was announced just prior to the N American by Director Hall and President Ed Parker. WAFWA is asking the Directors to request the FWS at a national, regional and state level including field offices to keep the states engaged and informed as this process evolves. FWS shall report to WAFWA on an annual basis.**

2. **Recommend that the FWS provide a budget presentation similar to that given at the June 2007 NFHB meeting by Darren Benjamin to allow the Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee to develop a more effective committee process for providing feedback to the FWS related to WAFWA budget priorities during and in between the summer and mid winter WAFWA meetings.**

Review of Federal Budget Priorities by WAFWA Fish Chiefs

July 08, 2007

The following recommendations were offered by the WAFWA Fish Chiefs upon review of the WAFWA Federal Budget Priorities. These are excerpted from the notes from the Fisheries Chief meeting, and were fed forward for consideration by the Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee. The recommendations appear in three forms – Umbrella Recommendations, New Suggestions, potential Modifications to Existing Recommendations, and Reiteration of recommendations offered last year by the Fish Chiefs.

Recommendations to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **Umbrella Recommendations:**
  - **Add a process to our existing review of WAFWA/AFWA Budget Priorities to communicate programmatic priorities to FWS and other Federal Partners earlier in their budgeting process.**[1]
  - **Where ever appropriate in budget recommendations, use "Fish and Wildlife" in place of "Wildlife", to re-emphasize to non-wildlife professionals, Congressional staffers, and Members of Congress, that our requests are inclusive.**
- **New Suggestions for Budget Priorities:**
  - Maintain adequate funding for listing activities and significantly increase funding for recovery efforts for aquatic species listed under the endangered species act.
  - Increase Section 6 ESA allocations to the states to support recovery and delisting activities for aquatic species.
  - Support the initiative by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Council to increase funding for marine fisheries (non-salmonid) research and management, drawing that financing from off-shore leasing royalties.
  - Ensure adequate financing the US Geological Survey budgets to restore and maintain fully staffed Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units.

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[1] This recommendation is really quite a different process than review of priorities for future congressional negotiations. The idea, developed in conversations with Mr. Stemple (USFWS Region 6), reflects a willingness of some FWS regions to accept priorities from the States as the USFWS develops its budget, 12 to 18 months prior to Congressional considerations of the President's budget.

- Increase funding to US Fish and Wildlife Service to provide grants to the states for implementation of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.

- Provide financing to and through USDA APHIS for reconnaissance by the states to maintain stocks of fish free of VHS and other OIE reportable diseases.

- Maintain funding for the cooperative stream gaging program administered through US Geological Survey, and decrease the match requirements for cooperators. (USGS currently passes on overhead costs for the program, adding to financial burden on cooperators.)

- Increase funding available through NOAA Fisheries for research and management of interactions between marine mammals and fisheries.

- Increase financial commitments of federal agencies in research related to climate change.

- Increase access by state Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement agencies to Homeland Security funds in order to maintain law enforcement presence along international and marine boundaries. (This is particularly driven by marine fisheries patrols that must also respond to homeland security issues as a related issue when conducting fisheries compliance enforcement activities.)

- **Modifications to Existing Recommendations:**

  - Financing associated with the National Invasive Species Council **and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force**:

    - Ensure that the USFWS Budget includes sufficient funding for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and implementation of Aquatic Nuisance Species Plans by the states.
    - Implementation of the Asian Carp Management Plan will require additional funding within the USFWS Budget for adequate certification of triploidy of Asian carp.
    - **Provide adequate financing for response by state and federal agencies to existing quagga mussel/zebra mussel incursions into the west (Colorado River Basin) and to rapidly respond to newly detected infestations.**
    - Implementation of HACCP plans can improve regional and national biosecurity. Sufficient funding should be included in the USFWS budget to implement HACCP planning processes.

  - Financing associated with the National Fish Habitat Initiative:

    - Maintain or increase support for the National Fish Habitat Initiative. ~~at $3 million, as originally proposed in the FY 07 budget~~.

- **Reiterate Recommendations from Last Year:**

  - The Opening of Federal Lands to energy development in Alaska creates new and added permitting requirements and needs by the State of Alaska. The FY ~~08~~ 09 budget should provide resources to the State of Alaska to offset those permitting costs.

  - The drive to develop Federal Lands for oil, gas, and coal is creating the need for better financing of monitoring and mitigation associated with that development. Funding for USBLM to support this demand is critically important:
    - BLM resources are currently being diverted to energy development at the expense of fisheries conservation planning and implementation activities.
    - Broad commitments are being made in energy related Environmental Impact Statements to monitor impacts and implement mitigations, however no financing is being made available to the states for monitoring nor is any financing being made available to USBLM to implement mitigations required as a result of state monitoring.

  - Support for the National Fish Hatchery System should be maintained at least at FY 06 levels in the USFWS budget. The preference is for funding at FY 02 levels.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Fish Chiefs Meeting Notes (July 2007)

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
July 8, 2007

Host – Ty Gray, Fisheries Chief, Arizona
Chair - Dave Lucchesi, Fisheries Biologist, South Dakota

1. Welcome to Arizona **Ty Gray (AZ)**

2. Review of Agenda **Dave Lucchesi (SD)**

3. National Fish Habitat Initiative- Recent Developments **Christopher Estes (AK)**
   - NFHAP Board was formed last July. Composed of 22 members, including
     - 4 regional Fish and Wildlife Association members, and Alaska member. John Cooper (SD) is the Chair and represents the WAFWA. Kelly Hepler represents Alaska.
     - NGO's are represented, including TNC, AFS, ASA, and TU.
     - Federal members include USFS, USFWS, EPA, NRCS, NOAA
   - Board has developed standards for Formally Recognized Partnerships. (WNTI is a Pilot Partnership, and will seek Formal status. There are 5 different levels of 'partnerships' recognized.
   - There will be another 'Data Summit' at the AFS meeting in San Francisco in August '07.

4. Western Native Trout Initiative **Rich Haskins (NV) Robin Knox (WNTI)**
   - See briefing memo provided by Robin Knox.
   - Robin reviewed the presentation that was made to the NFHAP Board in June regarding the WNTI. Robin and Mike Stone (WY) attended to represent WNTI to the Board.
   - Board has initiated the process to recognize Partnerships, and the Pilot Partnerships must apply – along with any others – for formal recognition.
   - WNTI Executive Management Committee met on 7/7/07.
     - Committee decided not to submit application for formal recognition at this first opportunity (August for an October Board Meeting).
     - Committee decided to wait until Strategic Planning was closer to completion, and make a November submittal for February meeting of the Board.
       - Strategic Planning will be complete.
       - We will be able to brief WAFWA Directors and seek concurrence.
     - After much debate, the Committee elected to pursue the first phase of Web Site development for WNTI, and requested modification of the DJ Case proposal to reflect a Phased development.

- Several challenges were identified regarding Board operation (NFHI).
    - Timing of notification of funding of NFHAP projects. The process (and federal budget constraints) provide funding at a point well into the Federal FY (March or after) with notification to successful proponents sometimes much later. Projects have a completion expectation that (just a few months in most cases) that is too ambitious and unreasonable.
    - Mr. Stone suggested to the Board that it's criteria for "Partnerships" should be in the form of broad guidelines, and the Board should avoid getting into the 'weeds' or the 'nuts and bolts' of what a "Partnership" should be.
- Doug Nygren (KS) mentioned other potential partnerships that could have a home in the West and with WAFWA. He mentioned in particular an emerging "Reservoirs Partnership".
- Christopher Estes (AK) suggested that, as partnership numbers grow in the West, we may have to figure out how we can staff all of these efforts. Numbers of staff and staff time are limited. If there are many 'Partnerships' that emerge, perhaps we should consider how we combine them for efficiency of effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **Identify a representative from WAFWA to work on a Reservoir Partnership working group.**
- **WAFWA should correspond with all of the WNTI State and Federal Partners, thanking them for their existing commitment and contributions, and urging their continued commitment.**

5. USFWS Fisheries Strategic Plan (Vision) Update **Mike Stempel (FWS)**

- Mr. Stempel provided several handouts to the Chiefs, including performance reporting tied to the USFWS Strategic (Vision) Plan.
- The Plan provides performance direction and metrics are identified for reporting to OMB and under GIPRA.
- The Plan is due to be updated and revised. FWS will be meeting with the States (at least in Mountain Prairie Region) to seek guidance on revision.
- FWS will refer to State Wildlife Action Plans for guidance as well.
- This plan does have ties to budget for FWS.
    - Anticipated Budget reviewed by Mr. Stempel
        - A potential $34 million increase in Fisheries is on the Horizon. Includes
            - $3-4 million in fish passage increases
            - $3 million in ANS increases
            - $6 million for NFHAP
            - $3-4 million for Fish Health (Perhaps for NAAHP?)
            - $2-3 million increases for mitigation hatcheries.
    - Hatcheries maintenance backlog continues.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **Budget priorities need to be shared with FWS and other Federal Partners earlier in Budget development process, in addition to existing process of identifying Budget Priorities for interaction with Congress during approval process. It was suggested that Broad priorities could be shared with FWS in February or March during the development of their budget for the out-year.**

6. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Fish Chiefs Survey **Amber Pairis (AFWA)**

- Dr. Pairis, the Science Liaison with AFWA, provides staff support to the "Science and Research" Committee of the Association. Dr. Pairis provided a hand-out and overview of her survey of "Wildlife and Fish chiefs" (July 2006) targeted at identifying priority science and research needs. The results were shared and discussed at the September '06 meeting of the Committee.
- Survey identified 9 research themes.
    - Comprehensive resource monitoring strategies and tools
    - Urbanization threats to ecological systems
    - Invasive species prevention, control, eradication
    - Energy development effects on fish and wildlife habitats
    - Disease threats
    - Water allocation and quality challenges
    - Conservation priorities in agricultural programs
    - Specific data gaps
    - Human/sociology/demographics of conservation practices
- Dr. Pairis reported on the ANS Workshop held in conjunction with the North American in Portland. All products available on the Association Web Page.
- Invited participation of a WAFWA fish chief on the AFWA Science and Research Committee.

Recommendations to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **A WAFWA Fish Chief/WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE representative should be placed on the AFWA Science and Research Committee as a liaison. Walt Donaldson (UT) has volunteered.**

7. Piscicide Update **Larry Riley (AZ) Mr. Dave Schmid (USFS)**

- USFS Piscicide Rule:
    - Proposed rule streamlining application of Piscicides by State Wildlife Agencies on FS Administered lands was a collaborative approach developed by WAFWA, AFWA, and USFS.
    - Proposed rule published in Federal Register in November '06, comment closed January '07.
    - 1,439 comments received. (140 were original letters, remainder were form letters or cards)

- Is currently in Content Analysis stage. Principal concern is perceived loss of FS Authority and perceived loss of public involvement (NEPA).
- Dr. Cota, who was leading much of this effort retired this past spring. Mr. Schmid is taking up this challenge as new Fisheries Program Leader.
- FS is trying to stay the course. Looking at their strategy, which may include NEPA on the rule making, as well as other strategies.
- Forest Health Protection will lead this process.
- Forest Health unit has increased priority on risk assessment associated with Piscicide Use (being conducted now).
- Expect to complete response to comments by end of August. Decision at that point on which alternative to pursue (NEPA, CatEx, proceed to final rule, etc.)
- Chiefs offered assistance if needed in responding to comment.

- Re-registration of rotenone and antimycin **A.**
  - Rotenone Re-Registration Eligibility (RED) published in federal register. RED was shared with Fish Chiefs prior to meeting. Comment due date July 23.
  - Key Question is: should the states or WAFWA respond to RED, especially in regards to concentrations identified, label requirements, and PPE use.
  - AFS (Brian Finlayson [CA]) response was shared with Chiefs by Riley prior to and at meeting.
  - Chiefs thought that each state should utilize the AFS comment letter to prepare their own responses.
  - Antimycin A RED was published in federal register in June. Riley will distribute.
  - Anticipate that AFS will also respond.
  - Chiefs also thought that might be model for State responses.

Recommendation to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE should support the AFS position and recommendations on Re-registration Eligibility Decisions (REDs) published by EPA, and use the AFS response as a model for state responses and provide those responses to US EPA prior to deadlines identified in the respective Federal Register Notices. Urge Directors to have their staffs respond to the Federal Register Notices.**

8. Aquatic Nuisance Species **Bob Pitman (FWS) Larry Riley (AZ)**

- Fish Chiefs met jointly with Law Chiefs for presentation.
- Quagga/zebra mussels in Colorado River report provided by Riley (AZ), Haskins (NV), Pitman (FWS), Mitchell (NPS)
  - Coordinating with National Park Service on Quagga Mussel Response at Lake Mead NRA and with California (Incident Command approaches) described.

- WAFWA IMFC collaborated (per Director Moore [OR] and President Shroufe [AZ] direction) with NPS on Incident Command effort to develop an NPS contingency plan for future infestations in National Park Units.
    - Mr. Gerlich (CO) had Ms. Vicki Murano (CDOW) participate with the Incident Command team as the met in Fort Collins (1 week assignment). Riley and Donaldson (UT) also provided assistance. Mr. Mitchell (NPS) further described the effort and provided CD with the plan. Plan is also available on NPS web site.
- WAFWA collaboration with WGA and WSWC on Quagga mussels (a Blue Ribbon Panel) was recommended in letter from 100th Meridian Initiative to Western Governor's Association. Awaiting response from WGA.
- Mr. Haskins provided information on monitoring at Wildhorse Reservoir – a potential at-risk location outside the lower Colorado River Basin.
- Continuing relationship and partnership building with Law Enforcement regarding ANS was conducted. Pitman provided information on availability of tools including training videos, web tools, and a boater 'on-line' self certification training and certificate.

9. National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP) Gary Egrie (USDA APHIS)
    - Dr. Egrie provided overview of current status of NAAHP.
    - Collaborative effort of FWS, NOAA, and APHIS as directed by Joint Subcomittee on Aquaculture. This is heavily related to US trade on international scope with WTO and European Union.
    - Expected completion July 26, 2007. Change of approach.
        - While 1st 4 Chapters have been placed on web for review and comment as each was completed, remaining chapters are not being shared or posted until review by JSA completed.
        - Chapters 5-10 will not be available until JSA reviews.
        - Dr. Egrie was essentially providing overview of Chapter 11 (summary).
        - Would make available standardized testing, diagnostics, reporting, and 'authorized or approved' laboratories. **(MOST FWS FISH HEALTH CENTERS ARE NOT APHIS APPROVED [1 of 7], and MOST STATE WL AGENCY LABS ARE NOT APPROVED at this time.)**
    - Re: VHS – European Union auditors visited the US and were not impressed. Hence, export of US shell fish (mollusks) to EU ceased last Friday.
    - There are no monies in APHIS for implementation.
    - Importance of participation by the states. APHIS is more adapted to coordination with State Vets than Wildlife Agencies. Need to continue to develop liaison.
    - Future roles of APHIS (segue to VHS discussion)

10. Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) **Dr. Gary Egrie (USDA APHIS)**
    - APHIS Federal Order in the Great Lakes was described, along with developing rule making for VHS. This strain is essentially new virus, with new hosts, in a new environment. State regs were deemed to be variable and ineffective. This affects US trade position and international trade in aquaculture products.

- APHIS is collaborating with US Coast Guard on ballast regulation as a potential pathway.
- APHIS is developing regulations for interstate trade or movement of fish. Bait fish and aquaculture products are target, but also effects movements of fishes by USFWS and State WL agencies across state boundaries.
- PCR testing available, and APHIS will utilize state acceptable certifications. Utilizes Blue Book.
- Need for action in the west?
- Contact is Paul.G.Egrie@aphis.gov

11. Wilderness Stocking and Fish Management Activities **Larry Riley (AZ)**
    - Chiefs reminded of agreement between AFWA and USFS and BLM.
    - Mr. Peterman (MT) described the agreement again.
    - Chiefs asked if their state had met with their FS and BLM counterparts on how this would be used. Majority had not. Chiefs were urged to coordinate with FS and BLM in their state on the processes described in this agreement and deploy it within their own staffs. Can't work if we don't let people know about it.
    - Riley will send this agreement again to Fish Chiefs (Originally distributed by Riley last July).

12. Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation State Action Plans, Shared Priorities **Mike Stone (WY)**
    - Action Item status update: Mr. Fowden (WY) presented this for Mr. Stone. Stone urged coordination with Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Committee, and in-state coordination on Wildlife Action Plans. These are influential and need to ensure that aquatic resources are correctly and adequately represented.

Recommendation to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **Develop joint meeting with Nongame and Endangered Species Committee for a portion of our next meeting. This should help in preparation for upcoming reviews and revisions of WAPs. WY (Mr. Fowden) volunteered to coordinate.**

13. Instream Flow Council Presentations **Christopher Estes (AK) and Kathleen Williams (IFC)**
    - Intended to raise awareness within WAFWA of the IFC. Made similar presentation to Directors, and IFC was a sponsor of the WAFWA meeting.
    - Will replicate (in part) the National Instream Flow Program Assessment conducted in 1990s. 1990s effort was a Multi-state grant financed effort. This effort is likewise financed with MSG.
        - Has a self-assessment component. It is not a report card.
        - Phase 1 surveys complete and being compiled now.
        - October workshop will summarize.

    - Evaluations will be returned to participating agencies (States and Provinces) with recommendations.
- TNC will use this work to build a Southeastern Instream Flow Policy Project.
- Outcome of workshops will include Agency Action Plans.
- Working on a joint project with the Western States Water Council.

14. Proposed ANS Partnership **Mike Stone (WY) Joe Starinchak (FWS)**
    - Riley presented for Stone.
    - Proposal is an outreach partnership with WAFWA, FFF, and Coleman (now owner of Pur Fishing). Goal is to use the power of large manufacturer to send ANS message.
    - Mr. Nygren posed concern about Coleman's historic opposition to SFR. Was noted that management has changed at Coleman, and position may have as well.
    - Riley shared cover letter and will duplicate and share proposal at WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE.
    - Mr. Hepler (AK) suggested that AFWA would perhaps be another or better partner. Suggested this be put on the AFWA F&WRPC agenda for Louisville meeting in September. Mr. Regan (AFWA) agreed to do so.

Recommendation to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **Consider this proposal and consider recommending to Directors that WAFWA endorse this partnership and use of the WAFWA logo.**

15. Federal Budget Priorities **(ALL)**
    - Chiefs reviewed the recommendations of WAFWA federal budget priorities, and identify any items that we believe may be missing. WAFWA shares these priorities with AFWA for their interaction with Federal Agencies and in their workings with Congress. We should be prepared to share these through Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee for recommendation to Directors.
    - It was recommended that we need an additional process. These recommendations are targeted at negotiating with Congress once President's Budget is already developed. Fish Chiefs believe we need to share priorities with federal partners earlier so that those priorities are interjected into agency planning for their budget submittals.

Recommendations to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE:

- **Add a process to our existing review of WAFWA/AFWA Budget Priorities to communicate programmatic priorities to FWS and other Federal Partners earlier in their budgeting process.**
- **Where ever appropriate in budget recommendations, use "Fish and Wildlife" in place of "Wildlife", to re-emphasize to non-wildlife professionals, Congressional staffers, and Members of Congress, that our requests are inclusive.**

- **New Suggestions for Budget Priorities:**

  - Maintain adequate funding for listing activities and significantly increase funding for recovery efforts for aquatic species listed under the endangered species act.

  - Increase Section 6 ESA allocations to the states to support recovery and delisting activities for aquatic species.

  - Support the initiative by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Council to increase funding for marine fisheries (non-salmonid) research and management, drawing that financing from off-shore leasing royalties.

  - Ensure adequate financing the US Geological Survey budgets to restore and maintain fully staffed Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units.

  - Increase funding to US Fish and Wildlife Service to provide grants to the states for implementation of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative.

  - Provide financing to and through USDA APHIS for reconnaissance by the states to maintain stocks of fish free of VHS and other OIE reportable diseases.

  - Maintain funding for the cooperative stream gaging program administered through US Geological Survey, and decrease the match requirements for cooperators. (USGS currently passes on overhead costs for the program, adding to financial burden on cooperators.)

  - Increase funding available through NOAA Fisheries for research and management of interactions between marine mammals and fisheries.

  - Increase financial commitments of federal agencies in research related to climate change.

  - Increase access by state Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement agencies to Homeland Security funds in order to maintain law enforcement presence along international and marine boundaries. (This is particularly driven by marine fisheries patrols that must also respond to homeland security issues as a related issue when conducting fisheries compliance enforcement activities.)

- **Modifications to Existing Recommendations**:

  - Financing associated with the National Invasive Species Council **and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force**:

- Ensure that the USFWS Budget includes sufficient funding for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and implementation of Aquatic Nuisance Species Plans by the states.
- Implementation of the Asian Carp Management Plan will require additional funding within the USFWS Budget for adequate certification of triploidy of Asian carp.
- **Provide adequate financing for response by state and federal agencies to existing quagga mussel/zebra mussel incursions into the west (Colorado River Basin) and to rapidly respond to newly detected infestations.**
- Implementation of HACCP plans can improve regional and national biosecurity. Sufficient funding should be included in the USFWS budget to implement HACCP planning processes.

- Financing associated with the National Fish Habitat Initiative:

  - Maintain or increase support for the National Fish Habitat Initiative. ~~at $3 million, as originally proposed in the FY 07 budget~~.

• Reiterate Recommendations from Last Year:

- The Opening of Federal Lands to energy development in Alaska creates new and added permitting requirements and needs by the State of Alaska. The FY ~~08~~ 09 budget should provide resources to the State of Alaska to offset those permitting costs.

- The drive to develop Federal Lands for oil, gas, and coal is creating the need for better financing of monitoring and mitigation associated with that development. Funding for USBLM to support this demand is critically important:
  - BLM resources are currently being diverted to energy development at the expense of fisheries conservation planning and implementation activities.
  - Broad commitments are being made in energy related Environmental Impact Statements to monitor impacts and implement mitigations, however no financing is being made available to the states for monitoring nor is any financing being made available to USBLM to implement mitigations required as a result of state monitoring.

- Support for the National Fish Hatchery System should be maintained at least at FY 06 levels in the USFWS budget. The preference is for funding at FY 02 levels.

- Restore Coastal Salmon Recovery funding for NOAA Fisheries to FY 02 levels.

- Additional budget requests for USFWS should not be at the expense of existing programs (Fisheries Assistance or National Fish Hatchery System), but should be additive to USFWS budget.

15. Adjournment
    - Meeting of the Fish Chiefs Adjourned at 4:35 PM

16. Assignments
    - Notes to be prepared and shared with Mr. Lucchesi and Mr. Corrarino in preparation for Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee Meeting on 7/9/07.
    - Mr. Donaldson (UT), on direction from Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee, will seek position on AFWA Science and Research Committee to provide liaison for fisheries research needs.
    - Mr. Fowden (WY) will work with Mr. Stone on the issue of joint agenda for next July's Fish Chiefs meeting with Nongame and Endangered Species Committee related to Wildlife Action Plans and ensuring full representation of aquatic species of greatest conservation need.
    - Mr. Riley (AZ) will distribute ANS Proposal for Partnership regarding Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers Campaign prior to WAFWA INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES COMMITTEE meeting.
    - Mr. Riley (AZ) will distribute by e-mail:
        - Antimycin A RED published by US EPA in the Federal Register.
        - Wilderness Policy Agreement between AFWA and USFS and BLM.
    - All States to review AFS response to Rotenone and Antimycin REDs, and respond to FR notices published by US EPA.

Next Meeting to be hosted by South Dakota in July 2008. Agenda Preparation will be responsibility of the 2009 host state, California (per Fish Chiefs SOP).

Notes compiled by Riley (AZ), Gray (AZ), Lucchesi (SD) July 8, 2007.

Western Native Trout Initiative

Director's Briefing

WAFWA Director's Business Meeting, Tucson, AZ

July 12, 2007

Director Sponsor: Virgil Moore, Oregon

Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee WNTI Management Team: Christopher Estes, AK; Larry Riley, AZ; Rich Haskins, NV; Charles Corrarino, OR; Mike Stone, WY; Lisa Heki, FWS; Dave Schmid, FS; Tom Mendenhall, BLM.

THE WESTERN NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE (WNTI)

A regionally based, national level Fisheries Partnership:

The western Fish Chiefs, through the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Inland and Marine Fisheries Committee, determined that the combining and coordinating the multiple state efforts for native trout could lead to greater success in improving the status of the species. The intent is to have conservation and management actions focus on common themes that include but are not limited to; water quantity, water quality, fish passage, in-stream and riparian habitat, introduced species, introgression, and brood-stock development. This includes elements of focus in the parallel National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP).

I. Review of WNTI Project Goal and Objectives

The fundamental goal of WNTI is to speed the implementation of conservation strategies for western native trout. We propose to accomplish that by building and implementing collaborative conservation efforts for native trout (including bull trout) across the western states through interagency efforts and partnerships under this WNTI.

The specific objectives are to:

- Integrate individual species management strategies into a Western Native Trout Strategic Plan
- Implement actions to de-list western native trout and prevent future listings
- Develop and enhance recreational fishing opportunities for western native trout
- Develop and improve local partnerships through a collaborative conservation (joint venture) strategy
- Develop cost share programs for implementation of WNTI priorities.

II. Timeline: 3 years

III. Amount of Funding Received: Year 1 - $188,365; Year 2 - $188,365 ; Year 3 - $188,365

IV. Progress Report

Following approval of the MSG, and a Coordinator search process, Robin Knox was contracted to begin work on July 3, 2006. The office for the Coordinator has been established at the Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6 Fisheries Program office in Denver, Colorado. As a partner in WNTI, the FWS provides the office and related facilities at no cost to WNTI.

The Inland and Marine Fisheries committee established a Management Team for WNTI oversight and operations management. Rich Haskins, NV, and Mike Stone, WY co-chair the management team and other current members include Larry Riley, AZ;; Charles Corrrarino, OR; Christopher Estes, AK; Lisa Heki, FWS; David Schmid, FS; and Tom Mendenhall, BLM.

The implementation and development of WNTI is proceeding with three phases that will allow WNTI to meet its goal of speeding the implementation of conservation strategies for western native trout, and the objective of helping to focus financial resources on local joint ventures.

Phase 1 is the assessment of western trout species and sub-species, and development of a Status Report that will detail the main obstacles to improving the status of the western native trout. Also key strategic approaches that could be undertaken the next 5 to 10 years to improve the status of the fish and their habitats will be identified. Currently, final draft assessments have been prepared for the 15 species or sub-species, and a Species Assessment Working Group has prepared a draft Summary Status, Concerns, and Opportunities report to aid in the development of a western native trout strategic plan.

Phase II is the development of the WNTI Strategic Plan. This component is intended to communicate the need for resources and what approaches will be applied on the ground to help improve the status of the fish. The first meeting of the strategic planning group was held in March 2007, and the 2nd meeting is scheduled immediately following the WAFWA summer meeting in Phoenix on July 10-11, 2007. After that meeting, a final draft WNTI Strategic Plan will be completed at a third Strategic Planning meeting in October 2007.

Phase III will be focused on the communication and outreach of WNTI strategic approaches to facilitate on-the-ground joint ventures and projects that will further the WNTI objectives. A small communications team has been established, and a communications and outreach plan will be developed during the WNTI strategic plan development process. A WNTI brochure has been developed and distributed as needed at various events and meetings.

Relationship to National Fish Habitat Action Plan

The National Fish Habitat Governance Board was approved and selected in September at the 2006 AFWA annual meeting. Their intent is to have "recognized Partnerships" that will qualify for Habitat project funding. WNTI is considered a Pilot Fish Habitat Partnership, and an initial interview with the NFHAP Coordinator indicated that WNTI will meet the national criteria once the Strategic Plan is completed. WNTI intends to apply for recognition by the NFH Board by February 2008.

Benefits to date:

As a result of the WNTI being formed, the FWS has allocated funding in their Fiscal years 2006 and 2007 for habitat projects related to WNTI. In FY 2006, $197,000 was allocated to four projects – one each - in Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming and Idaho. In FY 2007, $440,000. has been allocated to WNTI related projects.

Reporting Requirements: The WNTI Coordinator, working through the WAFWA Treasurer and Secretary has completed necessary reports in a timely manner to date, and the Initiative has entered into the 2nd year of the MSG.

Recommended Director's Action:

The WNTI Management Team requests the Directors continue their respective agency support for WNTI efforts through staff involvement in the Species Status Assessments and the Strategic Plan development, with the continued empowerment of the Chairman of the IMFC, and the WNTI Management Team to continue their guidance of WNTI.

Submitted by, Robin Knox, WNTI Coordinator, on behalf of the WNTI Management Team

WAFWA 2007 Summer Meeting
July 12, 2007

WAFWA
HABITAT COMMITTEE MEETING

Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Flagstaff, Arizona

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
July 9, 2007

Chair – Keith Sexson, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

AGENDA

38 individuals signed the attendance roster.

1. **Welcome, Announcements and Introductions**

2. **Review of Agenda and Request for Additional Agenda Items**

3. **Status of Farm Bill Legislation and NRCS Report**

Jen (Mock) Schafer reported: House markup has been released for all the titles on the House Website. House plans to have 2 bills and are looking for additional funds for WRP and GRP. House debate scheduled for week of July 21. They would like to get something passed by August 6 recess.

Senate version of Farm Bill - committee work is in progress. Senate version looks quite different and there has been tweaking and combining various programs. House and Senate bills appear to be very different and will go to conference.

There are questions and debate on the "pay as you go" that aims at providing no new money without offsets from other parts of the federal budget.

Feelings are that the Farm Bill will not be passed by Sept. 30, resulting in an extension of the current bill. Hope is that new bill will be passed by early spring and before presidential election politics get involved.

AFWA hosted Farm Bill fly-in and there were 96 participants from states and NGO's. Effort was considered very successful and was well accepted by congressional folks.

4. **"The Farm Bill, Are We Getting What We Deserve"?**

Sal Palazzolo and Ray Evans summarized their presentation to Directors Forum. Western states not realizing all the benefits of the Farm Bill compared to Midwest states. Encouraged western states to engage in then delivery process to see benefits. They emphasized the funding available for habiat work contained in the Farm Bill compared to other funding sources. By states being engaged they can ask for more or

maintain funding for programs that can have major benefits that enhance or protect important habitats.

They observed that many western states do not have someone involved in Farm Bill programs to the level that they do with SWG or LIP. Directors were encouraged to engage themselves with State NRCS and FSA directors.

5. Aspen Restoration Subcommittee Report

Mark Fowden Reporting. Aspen in the west is second only to wetland ecosystems and are most important to wildlife diversity. Aspen Subcommittee met on July 7 and developed a draft charter (Attached as part of this committee report). Need for greater cooperation across state boundaries and involvement from federal agencies. Need involvement in the restoration effort from local, state and regional levels. Role for WAFWA is to assist with the local working groups to get the funding and political resources so that work can get done.

6. Status of LIP

Steve Riley Reporting. LIP has acted as the delivery tool for state wildlife action plans. Has been a struggle to maintain the program in the federal budget and neither of the Appropriations Committees in Congress have brought LIP funding forward. There may be a move to amend the budget to include LIP from the floor of the Senate. Not a real bright future for LIP funding at this time.

7. BMP Recommendations for Habitat/Wildlife Mitigation Related to Energy Development

John Emmerich Reporting. Somewhere between 20 to 25% of the land surface of WY will be impacted with primarily oil and gas developments. Several research projects in progress in potentially impacted areas; impacts of this level of development on wildlife are lacking. Actual surface occupancy on new developments are very intensive to the point of a well per 10 acres with roads and infrastructure leaves little open space. No regulatory authority by WYG&F but trying to get BLM to adopt practices and guidelines as Record of Decision to EIS. Some of the research being done is reviewing and monitoring the effects on wildlife of various levels and intensities of development.

8. Landscape Habitat Assessment and Enhancement Efforts in Southwest Wyoming

John Emmerich Reporting. Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative is an intergovernmental cooperative venture to engage local people who have leases for grazing. It will use USGS GIS to asses all the important land uses to evaluate maintaining valuable wildlife habitats and maintaining valuable grazing lands. There will be practices developed during this review.

9. Status of Prairie Dog Conservation Plans and Grasslands Initiative

Bill Van Pelt Reporting. Reported on the status or Black-tailed, White-tailed and Gunnison prairie dogs conservation plans. In 2004 WAFWA moved to have the Habitat Committee and T&E Committee form a prairie grassland and shrubsteppe MOU with states to take an ecosystem approach to addressing wildlife management in these systems.

Bill Van Pelt is the interim coordinator until such a time that it can be determined who and how best to hire someone to handle the duties of the Prairie Dog / Ecosystem Coordinator.

10. Implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans on Private and Public lands – Delivery of Habitat Programs

Steve Riley Reporting. Nebraska Natural Legacy Project. Posed question and challenge to non-game and T&E biologists to think about how to deliver programs and projects to private landowners. Used Nebraska example, including development of 40 unique biological landscapes in Nebraska for purpose of targeting SWG funds in those areas. Staffing to accomplish delivery of private lands programs were discussed.

11. Review Habitat Committee Responsibilities and Charge – How does the habitat Committee and Private Lands Access and Conservation Committee overlap, or Does it?

Discussed overlap between Habitat and Private Lands Access committees and the value of the joint winter meeting that has been held for last 3 years; purpose of winter meeting has been to discuss and formulate action items on common issues. The summer meeting becomes an update and overview meeting and opportunity to finalize any action items. Member of the committee in attendance favored continuing the joint winter meeting of the two committees. Plans will be made to meet again in Arizona in January, 2008.

12. Energy Issues in the West: AFWA approach to Addressing Energy and Wildlife Issues

Amber Pairis reporting. Amber is the Science Coordinator for AFWA primary focus for staffing the Wind Power Subcommittee. AFWA Energy and Wildlife Issues Committee and the several subcommittees are in their "infancy". A major issue to be addressed by the Wind Energy Subcommittee will be siting guidelines for wind development. Various reports on energy issues are available on AFWA Website. There is an extensive web page on AFWA that has one stop shop information on wind energy. Amber has been keeping up with wind power folks who want to put together a wind power wildlife institute to address wildlife issues surrounding wind energy, including research efforts.

13. FY2009 Federal Budget Priorities

The following are suggested federal budget priorities identified by the committee.

Farm Bill titles impacting conservation
Continued funding for LIP
"Open Fields"
NAWCA
Joint Ventures
Healthy Lands Initiative
Partners for Wildlife
State Wildlife Grants
Coastal Area Impacts Assistance Program

14. Other Issues and Updates: None

15. AFWA Committee for Energy and Wildlife Issues.

Terry Cleveland reporting. Terry described the purpose and charge for the AFWA Energy and Wildlife Issues Committee. He put the issue of energy development in perspective by describing energy development in Wyoming. Challenge will be to find balance between energy needs and development and wildlife. AFWA committee formed 2 years ago so is still in its infancy but has become very popular committee with 7 subcommittees formed. Objective are to ensure state wildlife agencies have a voice and be engaged from the start not after permits are issued or implemented.

Most of work will be done on the ground by state wildlife agencies, working with federal agencies, and NGO's. Each subcommittee is developing products.

AFWA has retained services of John Baughman to assist states with these issues.

16. Sage Grouse strategy

San Stiver reporting. San described the Greater Sage Grouse comprehensive strategy and current status relative to implementation. Currently attempting to draft legislation to pass the act in congress to focus on sage brush ecosystem; effort modeled after NAWCA .

Water for Wildlife

Plans for water developments to protect bats and birds were provided.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.

Restoring Aspen Ecosystems in the West

Aspen are considered by many to be a keystone species. The biodiversity of aspen communities is second only to western riparian systems for abundance and diversity of flora and fauna (Kay 1997). Since settlement of the West, an estimated 60% of historical aspen (over 5.7 million acres) have been lost in the Intermountain West resulting in reduced species diversity (Bartos 2001). Loss of aspen also results in diminished forage production (Mueggler 1985), reduced snow water equivalent (Ryel 2006) decreased water yields and stream flow (Bartos and Campbell 1998b, Gifford et al. 1984). Fire suppression and past grazing management of aspen the last 100 years have contributed most to the loss through succession and type conversion. Lately, aspen stands considered as stable have begun to dieback or die-off at a befuddling rate (Shepperd 2006). Aspen restoration techniques are well known, with many successes and failures well documented. The problem is simply the magnitude or scope of restoration needed across the west cannot be met with the existing state and local working groups often because of institutional and political barriers, lack of public support and inadequate funding. Only with a large-scale, coordinated effort can we begin to sufficiently restore aspen to the landscape and recover associated fish and wildlife habitat values.

Several decades of research has shown the value and need to actively manage aspen ecosystems. Increasingly, ecologists, wildlife biologists, foresters and other professionals within the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management recognize the need to increase the scope of aspen restoration efforts. Yet while they control the preponderance of aspen in the west they require state and local partners to sustain efforts across time. Because wildlife and water are public trust responsibilities of each state, the states have a resource obligation to better manage aspen communities, too. Because there is evidence that browsing by elk and deer in some instances may be reducing restoration success, the states have a pivotal role in ensuring science-based restoration activities are successful.

While action is best accomplished locally, a west-wide, coordinated approach is needed to better provide a reliable source of funding for research and project implementation. Agreement development (e.g. MOU) for state and federal cooperation is also needed to ensure consistency of purpose across state and federal boundaries and the development of best management practices.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the aspen sub committee of the WAFWA Habitat Committee is to promote the long-term health and restoration of western aspen ecosystems in order to sustain fish and wildlife populations dependent on them by:

- Coordinating with regional and local aspen working groups regarding their aspen ecosystem restoration concerns or needs.
- Elevating aspen ecosystem management and funding as a high priority at federal, state and local levels.
- Providing a forum for input by agencies and conservation partners that are actively engaged in aspen restoration.
- Providing a forum for states and provinces within the WAWFA to discuss and address aspen conservation issues.
- Increasing the public understanding and awareness of the functions and the public trust benefits of healthy, functional aspen ecosystems.

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Minutes for Private lands Access and Conservation Committee

WAFWA 2007, Flagstaff Arizona

Meeting was held on July 10, 2007

1)Kirk began meeting with opening comments and introductions.

2)Bill Gibson (BLM) provided a power point related to travel management and access within BLM lands.

3) There was group discussion related to the charge of the PLACC

*ACTION ITEM: Group will dissect charter at winter meeting and suggest possible rewording to clarify purpose of access to both private and federal lands.

4)PLACC discussed working definition of access for group.

*ACTION ITEN: staff will incorporate suggested changed and present at winter meeting.

5) Group was provided update on "open fields" legislation.

* ACTION ITEM: Committee recommended Association support the submittal of letter that was drafted for Commissioner's Committee regarding Farmbill and open fields.

6) Group was provided update on Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)

7) Group was provided update on National Shooting Sports Roundtable.

*ACTION ITEM: Group suggested support of current MOU and suggested review to address issue of Federal land management agency notifying state wildlife agency prior to closure of any lands to hunting.

Each Director will designate point person to identify 2 or 3 problem areas with each state to be forwarded to the roundtable. Areas should be specific land areas with access issues (i.e. sections or roads)

8) Group discussed FY 2009 federal priorities. Group decided priorities were same as those submitted by Habitat.

WAFWA LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 10, 2007

1. Welcome announcements and introductions- Chairman Hatcher convened the meeting at 1pm. Attendees introduced themselves. Attendance was Rob Buonamici (NV),Nancy Foley (CA), Bruce Bjork(WA),Dave Cleary(OR),Bill Jarmon(WA), Miranda Wecker(WA), Pat Barber(AZ), Pat Synder(NM), Rob Firth(CO), Deanna Pfleger(AZ), Andy Lawson(WY), Mike Fowlks(UT), Jon Heggen(ID), Sharon Adams(AZ), John Sims(AZ), Emmett Keyser(SD),Kevin Jones(KS), Gary Mowad(USFWS), Martin Bushman(UT), Nicholas Chavez (USFWS).

2. Approval of 2006 Minutes- Motion carried to approve minutes

3. The committee agenda was reviewed. Discussion of resolutions was added to agenda. Review of action items was moved to end of meeting.

4. Treasure's Report –Chairman Hatcher reported the balance of the law enforcement account 3846.47. This figure was provided by WAFWA treasurer Steve Barton. After discussion, motion by Nancy Foley(CA) 2nd by Jon Heggen(ID) to send the balance of the Law Enforcement account to South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks to further the IMPACT project, carried. The committee agreed there was no further need to maintain a separate law enforcement account within WAFWA.

5. AFWA LE committee report
Minutes from meeting was sent out to all states previously by Terry Cleveland (WY). No discussion was necessary.

6. USFWS law enforcement update.
Nick Chavez- Gary Mowad lead the discussion with the following highlights:
Kevin Adams to director's office; no chief has been hired yet, decision should be made within 30 days.
No new agents have been hired in past 3 years; new class expected Jan 2009.
New strategic plan is in place, will meet with each state to inform.
Good discussion on the working relationships between Federal agents and state game wardens, especially regarding the threshold of violations that can be investigated in the future. Normally, leads involving residency issues solely will not make the threshold.
Commitments were made to improve communications both state to state and state to federal; state officers will accompany federal agents whenever possible.
Lacy Act- injurious species enforcement will be limited regarding invasive species management issues.

7. Moved to end of agenda.

8. Distribution and discussion of 2007 state/province law enforcement reports. Nancy Foley (CA) distributed reports and led discussion at Chief's meeting on 7-8-07.
   Common themes among reports included recruitment and retention, and concern about increased job duties such as unfunded mandates to assist with disease control, delisted federal species, and any new laws impacting law enforcement.

9. Rob Buonamici (NV) distributed the recruitment and retention survey update. The 2008 update will include a column on what laws are enforced by game wardens i.e. parks, fish, wildlife, boating, etc. The game warden fact sheet was also distributed, which included data on number of field officers, state population per officer, square miles per officer, surface acres of water and miles of coastal shoreline per officer.

10. Bruce Bjork (WA) reported on legal committee's discussion of officer access to private land. The consensus of those in attendance at the legal committee meeting was that standardization of state laws regarding 4th amendment/open fields doctrine would be very difficult, and that a federal solution would also be difficult and unadvisable. States could still be more restrictive than any federal law. The legal committee agreed to provide a summary of individual state laws so that states with more restrictive laws regarding game warden access could seek individual statutory changes using other state laws as examples.

11. Bruce Bjork (WA) reported on legal committee's discussion of eligibility of specific law enforcement activities in PR/DJ language. AFWA general counsel Carol Bambery agreed to research director's orders resulting from the joint task force for federal aid issues, believing there was a previous order on this issue. It was also recommended that the joint task force would be a more appropriate venue if additional action items were requested on this issue.

12. Jon Heggen (ID) reported on the game transportation laws summary. AFWA law enforcement committee had taken up this issue. A very thorough website provides this summary, www.cwd-info.org. Each state was encouraged to review regulatory data on the website for accuracy and report any changes directly to the webmaster.

13. Officer exchange program update
    5 states present at the meeting participated in the officer exchange program last year. 10 of those present indicated they will participate in 2007.

14. FY2009 Federal Budget priorities

Concern about the process was discussed. There was lack of information regarding status of fy2008 recommendations, expenditures within existing budget, etc. Following discussion two recommendations for fy2009 priorities were approved by the committee:

Increased Federal funding to states for management and human conflict response for currently/recently delisted species under Federal Protection, specifically wolves and grizzly bears

Identify Law Enforcement funding for mandates relative to new federal fisheries and marine mammal protection.

15 Resolutions. Two resolutions were presented by Bruce Bjork (WA), Nancy Foley (CA) and Rob Buonomici (NV). 1st Resolution requested wafwa members to fill vacant officer positions and to develop officer needs forecasting models, referencing responsive management survey results. Following considerable discussion the committee rejected this resolution and as an alternative requested an action item to review and pursue the development of officer forecasting models. The second resolution by Nancy Foley (CA), seconded by Dave Cleary (OR) encourages wafwa states to be leaders in energy conservation and reducing agency carbon footprints. Motion to send this resolution to the resolutions committee passed.

16 Chair Hatcher reviewed last year's action items. All items were completed except item number 46, That the law enforcement committee provide a statute compilation on officer access to the legal committee by August 31, 2006. Legal committee has agreed to do this for 2008.

17 New and continuing action items requested from the law enforcement committee are as follows:

1. That Nancy Foley (CA) compile 2008 state/province law enforcement reports.
2. That Rob Buonomici (NV) update recruitment retention survey for 2008 to include a column on general types of laws enforced by wildlife officers.
3. That Rob Buonomici (NV) update game warden facts report for 2008.
4. That law enforcement committee request legal committee to compile state laws regarding officer access to private lands prior to 2008 meeting.
5. That the law enforcement account balance be sent to South Dakota Game and Fish Department for the IMPACT project, and that theWAFWA treasurer be notified there is no further need of a law enforcement account.
6. That the two proposed fy2009 federal budget priorities be advanced to the directors for their consideration.
7. That the law enforcement committee pursue the development of wildlife officer forecasting models to determine future personnel needs, and report progress at the 2008 meeting.

8. That the law enforcement workshop agenda be forwarded to the wafwa secretary for inclusion in the minutes.

18. Other Business
Bus will be ready for workshop at 8:00am

Meeting Adjourned at 4pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Hatcher

GAME WARDEN RECRUITMENT / RETENTION SURVEY (FIELD POSITIONS) 2007

					RETIREMENT BENEFITS						TURNOVER RATES			
STATE/PROVINCE	STARTING SALARY	TOP SALARY	WHAT % OF TOP SALARY DO OFFICERS ACTUALLY OBTAIN	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	LAW ENFORCEMENT (LE) OR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT (PE)	YEARS OF SERVICE NEEDED TO RETIRE	MINIMUM AGE REQUIRED TO RETIRE	MEDICAL INSURANCE PROVIDED UPON RETIREMENT	AVG # OF QUALIFIED APPLICANTS PER POSITION PER TESTING CYCLE	AVERAGE AGE OF APPLICANTS	LAST 5 YEARS TURNOVER	FORECASTED RETIREMENTS NEXT 5 YRS	AVERAGE TENURE OF WARDENS	PAY COMPARISON TO OTHER IN STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT
ALASKA														
ALBERTA	$ 36,348.00	$ 84,224.00	100%	2 year college	PE				15		15%	34%		LESS
ARIZONA	$ 30,480.00	$ 60,867.00	10%	BS in a wildlife or related field	LE	20	none	No	3	27	23% (49% Field Officers)	25%	13	LESS
BRITISH COLUMBIA	$ 47,628.89	$ 54,334.88	100%	Two year diploma in renewal resource management and/orconservation enforcement, or a combination of education of related law enforcement experience.	PE				6 TO 8		12%	14%		LESS
CALIFORNIA	$ 42,972.00	$ 81,546.00	100%	High School Diploma or GED plus 60 units (With 18 units specifically	LE	5	50	Yes	5 to 8	~28	47.00%	40%	25	LESS
COLORADO	$ 32,000.00	$ 68,048.00	less than 1%	BS in wildlife or related field	PE	Rule of 86	50	NO	7	25	41%	25%	13.5	LESS
HAWAII														
ILLINOIS	$ 37,524.00	$ 93,624.00	100% after 25 years	Bachelors Degree or Associates Degree plus 3 years law enforcement experience with the same agency	LE	25 years 7 months for full benefits	50 if at max retirement rate and to draw benefits	YES	6 to 7		18%	24%	12 years	EQUAL
IDAHO	$ 30,472.00	$ 61,256.00	0%	Four (300 -400 level) Wildlife/Fish mgt classes or closely related	LE	Age+Yrs service=80	50	Yes -some unused sick leave	6	NA	11% (3 yr.)	19%	25 years	LESS
IOWA	$ 37,960.00	$ 53,539.20	100%	HS	LE	22	55	YES, based upon employees unused sick leave hours at retirement.	39.24 average over last 4 hiring cycles	Not Available	20.85% for past 5 years	21.84% for next five years	29.62 years of service over last 5 years	EQUAL
KANSAS	$ 36,875.00	$ 60,320.00		BS N Resources or related	PE	10 YEARS VESTMENT	85 Pts age + service or 62 YOA	NO	2 to 4	28	22%	30.00%	15	LESS
MINNESOTA	$ 42,596.00	$ 57,983.00	100%	Two-year law enforcement diploma and skills program	LE	NA	50	Yes, 55	25+	32.5	37%	16.50%	9 years (Field Officers Only)	LESS
MISSOURI	$ 33,672.00	$ 59,672.00	less than 1%	BS N Resources or related	PE	Age + Service = 80 or 85		Yes	12	27	6%	10%	11.94	EQUAL
MONTANA	$ 30,080.00	$ 45,119.00		BS					6 TO 10		18.80%	14%		
NEBRASKA	$ 31,678.00	$ 47,902.00		HS					20		11.80%	33.80%		EQUAL
NEVADA	$ 40,486.00	$ 60,823.00	100%	BS - Biology or related	LE			YES	1 TO 4		22.50%	25%		LESS
NEW MEXICO	$ 30,825.00	$ 49,171.00	less than 3%	BS	PE	25	NONE	YES/group rate	6	25(estimate)	30.60%	16.80%	12 years	LESS
NORTH DAKOTA	$ 35,904.00	$ 59,832.00	100% at 27 years	BS/BA	PE				4		9%	12%		
OKLAHOMA	$ 28,300.00	$ 49,000.00		BS					3		4%	20%		LESS
OREGON	$ 43,164.00	$ 55,942.00	100%	HS	LE				1 TO 4		15%	10%		EQUAL
SASKATCHEWAN	$ 45,523.00	$ 58,939.00	100%	Resource Law Diploma	PE		50	YES	10 +	25	8%	25%	30	EQUAL
SOUTH DAKOTA	$ 32,291.30	$ 46,716.49	less than 1%	BS Wildlife/Fisheries, Biology or Equivalent Exp./Education	LE	25	50 or "Rule of 75"	No/COLA	2 TO 3	25	45%	15%	Info not avail.	LESS
TEXAS	$ 36,165.00	$ 58,933.00	100% @ 20 yrs	Any Bachelors Degree	LE	Age+Service=8 0	50	YES	19	29	27.80%	13.00%	12.5	EQUAL
UTAH	$ 32,000.00	$ 46,000.00		BS					7		40%	10.00%		LESS
WASHINGTON	$ 65,052.00	$ 75,408.00	17%	BS/BA or a two-year college degree, and two years of paid, full time, natural resource experience or two years of paid, full-time, commissioned law enforcement experience.	LE/PE	20/30	50/55	No	55	39.8	50%	21.00%	16	EQUAL
WISCONSIN	$ 48,500.00	$ 69,574.00	100% @ 27 years	60 college credits or 2 year Associate's degree	LE	25	50	NO - see note	2 to 3	28	18%	21%	25 years	EQUAL
WYOMING	$ 40,812.00	$ 50,568.00	~95%	BS + 4 years of experience	LE	20	50	NO	4		21.00%	39.00%	18	LESS
YUKON	$ 56,261.00	$ 76,164.00	20%	Diploma or BS	PE	30	55	optional	25+	25	10%	15%	25+years	EQUAL

GAME WARDEN FACTS (FIELD POSITIONS) 2007

STATE/PROVINCE	NUMBER OF FIELD OFFICERS	STATE POPULATION PER OFFICER	SQUARE MILES PER OFFICER	SURFACE ACRES OF WATER PER OFFICER	MILES OF COASTAL SHORELINE PER OFFICER
ALASKA					
ALBERTA					
ARIZONA	151 (72 District Officers)	85,560 per District Officer	1,578 miles per District Officer	5,411 surface acres of water per District Officer	0
BRITISH COLUMBIA					
CALIFORNIA	200	185,000	795	205000	1100 total miles/40 per
COLORADO	135	34,000	764	1726	407 miles of streams
HAWAII					
ILLINOIS	144	86245	393	11,416	30 miles, not coastal
IDAHO	84	17,458	995	6,270	NA
IOWA	83	38,524	725	4,208	0
KANSAS	69	39,000	1,200	2,700 Acres (Reservoir only)	
MONTANA					
NEBRASKA					
NEVADA	31	77897	3567		
MINNESOTA	154	33331	516	85,301	585 miles, not Coastal
MISSOURI	165	35,153	417	3,145	N/A
NEW MEXICO	67	27149	1811	2235	0
NORTH DAKOTA	28	22,900	2525	36,000	
OKLAHOMA					
OREGON	112	32950	866	7937	362 miles/ 29 total coastal officers
SASKATCHEWAN	109	9174	2309	1774	0
SOUTH DAKOTA	61	12,377	1,264	12,841	N/A
TEXAS	494	46,356	543.726	12.914 X 384 Inland Wardens	3.33 X 110 Costal Wardens
UTAH					
WASHINGTON	139	43,288	479	260	21.77 (Puget Sound, Pacific Ocean)
WISCONSIN	151	35,521	360 per field warden	6,623 - per field warden	6.62 per field warden - great lakes
WYOMING	59	8,513.00	19	varies significantly	N/A
YUKON	15	two thousand	20250 thousand	708 thousand	sixty five miles total costal shoreline

WAFWA Officer Exchange

Below are the officer exchange charts from fiscal year 2006 through fiscal year 2115. As you review the charts you will notice that the states rotate clockwise for each subsequent year.

As a rule each state/province pays the cost of their respective officer. Some state/provinces/game warden associations, etc. may be able to host the officer once the officer enters their state/province to help deter costs. The time an officer spends in another state/province has ranged from three days to 8 days in the past. The ultimate decision of who pays for what and for how long the exchange lasts is left to the two states/provinces exchanging officers.

In order to avoid jurisdictional/authority issues, officers involved in the exchange do so in a non-uniform/no arrest capacity. Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) may need to be developed to ensure legal parameters are set. Consultation with your legal advisor/risk manager is prudent.

Officer Exchange for 2006

Alaska	AND	Utah
Alberta	AND	Kansas
Arizona	AND	Saskatchewan
British Columbia	AND	South Dakota
California	AND	North Dakota
Colorado	AND	Nevada
Oklahoma	AND	Idaho
Montana	AND	Washington
Nebraska	AND	Texas
Oregon	AND	Wyoming

Officer Exchange for 2007

Alberta	AND	Alaska
Arizona	AND	Utah
British Columbia	AND	Kansas
California	AND	Saskatchewan
Colorado	AND	South Dakota
Oklahoma	AND	North Dakota
Montana	AND	Nevada
Nebraska	AND	Idaho
Oregon	AND	Washington
Wyoming	AND	Texas

Officer Exchange for 2008

Arizona	AND	Alberta
British Columbia	AND	Alaska
California	AND	Utah
Colorado	AND	Kansas
Oklahoma	AND	Saskatchewan
Montana	AND	South Dakota
Nebraska	AND	North Dakota
Oregon	AND	Nevada
Wyoming	AND	Idaho
Texas	AND	Washington

Officer Exchange for 2009

British Columbia	AND	Arizona
California	AND	Alberta
Colorado	AND	Alaska
Oklahoma	AND	Utah
Montana	AND	Kansas
Nebraska	AND	Saskatchewan
Oregon	AND	South Dakota
Wyoming	AND	North Dakota
Texas	AND	Nevada
Washington	AND	Idaho

Officer Exchange for 2010

California	AND	British Columbia
Colorado	AND	Arizona
Oklahoma	AND	Alberta
Montana	AND	Alaska
Nebraska	AND	Utah
Oregon	AND	Kansas
Wyoming	AND	Saskatchewan
Texas	AND	South Dakota
Washington	AND	North Dakota
Idaho	AND	Nevada

Officer Exchange for 2011

Colorado	AND	California
Oklahoma	AND	British Columbia
Montana	AND	Arizona
Nebraska	AND	Alberta
Oregon	AND	Alaska
Wyoming	AND	Utah
Texas	AND	Kansas
Washington	AND	Saskatchewan
Idaho	AND	South Dakota
Nevada	AND	North Dakota

Officer Exchange for 2012

Oklahoma	AND	Colorado
Montana	AND	California
Nebraska	AND	British Columbia
Oregon	AND	Arizona
Wyoming	AND	Alberta
Texas	AND	Alaska
Washington	AND	Utah
Idaho	AND	Kansas
Nevada	AND	Saskatchewan
North Dakota	AND	South Dakota

Officer Exchange for 2013

Montana	AND	Oklahoma
Nebraska	AND	Colorado
Oregon	AND	California
Wyoming	AND	British Columbia
Texas	AND	Arizona
Washington	AND	Alberta
Idaho	AND	Alaska
Nevada	AND	Utah
North Dakota	AND	Kansas
South Dakota	AND	Saskatchewan

Officer Exchange for 2014

Nebraska	AND	Montana
Oregon	AND	Oklahoma
Wyoming	AND	Colorado
Texas	AND	California
Washington	AND	British Columbia
Idaho	AND	Arizona
Nevada	AND	Alberta
North Dakota	AND	Alaska
South Dakota	AND	Utah
Saskatchewan	AND	Kansas

Officer Exchange for 2015

Oregon	AND	Nebraska
Wyoming	AND	Montana
Texas	AND	Oklahoma
Washington	AND	Colorado
Idaho	AND	California
Nevada	AND	British Columbia
North Dakota	AND	Arizona
South Dakota	AND	Alberta
Saskatchewan	AND	Alaska
Kansas	AND	Utah

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Law Enforcement Workshop Report

Snowbowl Ski Resort, July 11, 2007

The Law Enforcement (LE) Workshop was held in conjunction with the 2007 annual conference of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). As in previous conferences this meeting was held off-site; this year the workshop was held at the nearby Snowbowl Ski resort. The purpose of the workshop is to provide training, discussion, and planning outside of the more formal LE Chief's Meeting and the LE Committee. The 2007 LE Workshop was attended by 27 representatives of WAFWA member agencies (attendance sheet attached).

The agenda for the workshop (attached) was distributed to WAFWA LE Chiefs by e-mail several weeks prior to the WAFWA conference. A summary of items discussed are listed below:

Planning for the 2008 WAFWA Conference (added to the original agenda): The group discussed the need to provide direction to future hosting states relative to workshops and LE Chief's Meetings, and agreed there was a need to provide direction for the 2008 conference in South Dakota. It was agreed that a standing workshop agenda item should be an overview from the hosting state on programs, activities, and statutory authorities and direction. The hosting state should also be given the latitude to highlight regional issues and activities (South Dakota tentatively offered presentations on their new FTO program, unique efforts of officers to apprehend repeat fishing overlimits, and a presentation on the most recent officer exchange). Other potential topics were discussed;

1. An overview of the CLEA Accreditation Process (Bruce Bjork, Washington)
2. Boating Safety Programs and Statutes (Rob Buonamici from Nevada and Pat Barber from Arizona)
3. Fraudulent License Investigation Coordination Efforts (issues surrounding data sharing – all)
4. Homeland Security Update and Public Recogintion of State Agency Efforts (Pete Flores, Texas)

The group also discussed some issues more appropriate for the LE Chief's Meeting:

1. Regional Legislative Update (all)
2. Results of the LE Staffing Forecasting Model Project (all)

Agenda Item 1: All attendees introduced themselves, stated their agencies and positions.

Agenda Item 2: Larry Phoenix, the Wildlife Manager Supervisor for the Flagstaff area gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history and wildlife resources of the area, and an overview of current and recent activities of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Agenda Item 3: Bobby Griego and Chris Chadwick from New Mexico Department of Game and Fish gave a PowerPoint presentation on two recent counterfeit hunting license investigations in their state. The investigations demonstrated that fraudulent schemes and internet schemes can and are being used in the hunting community.

Agenda Item 4: Wildlife Manager Shawn Wagner gave a PowerPoint presentation on a recent Arizona case involving a number of suspects poaching a multitude of species. The case demonstrated the need for agencies to support investigative programs and to train new officers on how to be effective in developing informants.

Agenda Item 5: Andy Alban from South Dakota and Dee Pfleger and Russ Richins from Arizona gave a PowerPoint presentation on the two states efforts to implement the Reno Training Model. The presentation generated quite a bit of discussion on the benefits of this model, and the group agreed that continued updates from the two states are needed. Three documents provided for background information attached.

Agenda Item 6: John Romero from Arizona provide a PowerPoint presentation on Arizona's interactions with the eco-terrorist group Earth First.

The LE Workshop was adjourned.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Directors' ESA/SARA Working Group

Minutes of July 10, 2007 Meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona

Chair Duane L. Shroufe (Arizona) convened the meeting at 0630. The 40 or so participants were welcomed, and asked to introduce themselves and sign the attendance sheet.

Agenda Items

1. Mexican Wolf Management: Interdiction, Incentives, Compensation. Dr. Benjamin N. Tuggle (USFWS Region 2 Director) gave a PowerPoint presentation (see Attachment A) outlining a pilot program to address impacts of Mexican wolf reintroduction in Arizona and New Mexico. The concepts for this program are still evolving, and some stakeholders are skeptical of its feasibility or value, but support within the ranching community appears to be increasing. The program is intended for non-governmental administration once it is funded and begins working. USFWS is working with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation on an agreement to establish NFWF as the "banker" for the program. Initial funding would likely be through a one-time Congressional appropriation, with subsequent funding derived from private donations and/or contributions from state governments. The principal would be banked as an endowment to generate interest that would fund program expenses. Stakeholders (e.g. local ranchers) would serve on committees that would determine criteria under which payments would be issued to compensate for depredation losses, and grants made to provide for incentive and interdiction measures by which to minimize wolf depredation on livestock.

   Defenders of Wildlife funds a wolf-depredation compensation and proactive conservation program in the Southwest that has been a significant asset in Mexican wolf reintroduction efforts. However, cooperating agencies and the public have identified the need for a more comprehensive program to compensate undocumented losses and to enable continuation if and when the Mexican wolf is recovered and federally delisted.

   Dr. Tuggle is presenting the pilot program to stakeholders and potential supporters (e.g. members of Congress and private interests) to elicit comment and shape the program to meet substantive needs. He welcomes comment from WAFWA agencies, particularly those engaged in wolf recovery efforts in other parts of the country.

   In follow-up discussion, attendees complimented Dr. Tuggle for his efforts and agreed that resolving compensation issues, including after delisting occurs, is crucial to increasing social tolerance of wolves in rural communities. Chris Smith (Montana) advised Dr. Tuggle that a similar program has been created in Montana and Idaho, and closer collaboration among the Northern Rockies, Southwest, and Great Lakes states might be beneficial. Others echoed those thoughts, and agreed that the appropriate individuals should be convened to begin that dialogue.

2. State Issues Pertaining to Polar Bear Listing. Ken Taylor (Alaska) summarized State responses to the USFWS' proposed listing of the polar bear. The polar bear population is quite healthy on a rangewide basis, but projected effects of climate change, specifically the effects of ice melt on polar bears and their prey, are being uses as a basis for listing. These effects are based on modeling ice conditions 40-50 years out. However, more than 100 different models exist. Their projected results vary widely and seem to offer a weak basis for Section 7 consultations. Also, if listing occurred the ESA would trump several International Treaties and well-managed sport harvest that provides essential income to indigenous communities would be precluded. State opposition to the proposed listing reflects concerns about the science being applied and the Treaty-trumping precedent of listing by a singe agency (USFWS).

   In follow-up discussion, participants agreed that using conjectural effects of global climate change as a basis for listing species has broader implications than ice melting and polar bear status. For example, listings and Section 7 consultations might reflect subjective concerns about the potential for climate change to induce latitudinal and elevational creep by arid communities, with consequent impacts on species that would benefit or suffer from such changes. A key question is whether the science of climate change is sufficient at this time to drive listing and consultation decisions.

3. USFWS-State Working Group for ESA Implementation. Terry B. Johnson (Arizona, WAFWA Nongame and Endangered Species Committee Chair) advised the Directors that a working group convened by USFWS Director H. Dale Hall in 2006 has been continuing WAFWA's long-standing efforts to develop legislative, rule, and policy improvements in ESA implementation. Terry, Paul J. Conry (Hawaii), James Caswell (Idaho), and Gary J. Taylor and M. Carol Bambery (both of AFWA) represent the States. The group met in January 2007, and over the next several weeks contributed to USFWS development of a comprehensive proposal for changes that would not require Congressional action. The package has been submitted to the White House, and USFWS is awaiting approval to move it forward for public discussion. According to USFWS Director Hall, the package is based heavily on comment from "listening posts" across the country, input from AFWA and WAFWA, and experience of professional staff in USFWS. Director Hall believes that when he is able to share the draft with the States, they will quickly recognize that many of their recommendations have been incorporated. When the White House gives its clearance, USFWS will continue working with the States to refine how the improvements will be implemented.

   Johnson also advised the Directors that yet another "ESA Implementation Improvement" workshop has just been scheduled, this one by the AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence in cooperation with Departments of Transportation. The invited-participation session is August 15-16 in Washington, D.C. Taylor, Conry, and Johnson will represent the States, and provide a briefing afterward to the Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee (chaired by Conry) at AFWA's annual conference in September.

4. Update on Prairie Dog and Black-footed Ferret Issues. Bill Van Pelt (Arizona) provided a summary of state activities in these two areas.

Work continues on a transition from prairie dog species conservation to broader efforts on a landscape basis. WAFWA Coordinator Deb O'Neil resigned in April 2007 for personal reasons, and Van Pelt stepped in as Acting Coordinator (while retaining his permanent position with the Arizona Game and Fish Department). Keith Sexson (Kansas) has assumed the WAFWA Director Sponsor role previously held by John Cooper (South Dakota), and has also replaced Cooper as Chair of the Habitat Committee. Van Pelt has also replaced Terry Johnson (Arizona) as Sexson's liaison to the Prairie Ecosystem conservation effort. The Gunnison's prairie dog conservation plan, an addendum to the white-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dog conservation strategy has been completed, and will be presented in the NGESC to request acceptance by the Directors in the July 12 Business Meeting. The white-tailed prairie dog addendum will be completed for Director approval at the 2008 WAFWA Mid-Winter Business Meeting.

Van Pelt and Mike Lockhart (USFWS) provided an update on black-footed ferret recovery efforts. States provided comment on the initial draft recovery plan in 2006, and USFWS will provide a final draft for State comment late this year. Van Pelt will continue his role as WAFWA State liaison to the ferret recovery planning effort to help ensure strong State participation.

5. ESA settlement Agreements between USFWS and Private Parties. Terry B. Johnson (Arizona) posed a question as to whether other States are afforded and take opportunities to collaborate with USFWS in shaping settlement agreements on species listing and critical habitat designations. Although legal issues sometimes constrain such collaboration, other times there is opportunity for such collaboration.

   Participants agreed that these agreements have significant impact on State conservation programs and States should participate in shaping them whenever possible. Strong working relationships between the State and the appropriate USFWS office clearly enhance participation opportunities. WAFWA Grant for Regional Identification and Coordination of Priority Regional Conservation Actions for the Western United States

6. Direction to the NGESC for Follow-up Work. Chair Duane L. Shroufe directed the NGESC to continue representing WAFWA interests in developing ESA implementation improvements, and to provide appropriate briefings as such work occurs.

7. Other Business. No other agenda items were requested or discussed.

8. Adjournment. Business having been completed, Chair Shroufe thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 0740.

:tj

Document: WAFWA ESA-SARA Minutes.20070710.doc

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Nongame and Endangered Species Committee

Minutes of July 11, 2007 Meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona

The NGESC meeting was convened at 1300 by Chair Terry B. Johnson (Arizona).

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions – Terry Johnson welcomed attendees and asked them to sign the attendance sheet. Attendees introduced themselves and identified the organization they represented. Over the course of the meeting, 61 attendees were noted (52 signed in).

2. Report from WAFWA Directors' ESA/SARA Working Group.

   Discussion: Terry Johnson briefly reviewed the endangered species issues covered in the Directors' Forum and ESA/SARA Working Group. He noted that the single action item for the NGESC was to continue efforts to develop improvements in the Endangered Species Act and its implementation.

   Action Items: None.

3. USFWS-State Working Group for ESA Implementation.

   Discussion: Terry Johnson advised that a working group convened by USFWS Director H. Dale Hall in 2006 has been continuing WAFWA's long-standing efforts to develop legislative, rule, and policy improvements in ESA implementation. Terry, Paul J. Conry (Hawaii), James Caswell (Idaho), and Gary J. Taylor and M. Carol Bambery (both of AFWA) represent the States. The group met in January 2007, and over the next several weeks contributed to USFWS development of a comprehensive proposal for changes that would not require Congressional action. The package has been submitted to the White House, and USFWS is awaiting approval to move it forward for public discussion. According to USFWS Director Hall, the package is based heavily on comment from "listening posts" across the country, input from AFWA and WAFWA, and experience of professional staff in USFWS. Director Hall believes that when he is able to share the draft with the States, they will quickly recognize that many of their recommendations have been incorporated. When the White House gives its clearance, USFWS will continue working with the States to refine how the improvements will be implemented.

   Johnson also advised that yet another "ESA Implementation Improvement" workshop has just been scheduled, this one by the AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence in cooperation with Departments of Transportation. The invited-participation session is August 15-16 in Washington, D.C. Taylor, Conry, and Johnson will represent the States, and provide a briefing afterward to the Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee (chaired by Conry) at AFWA's annual conference in September.

Johnson asked that any NGESC members interested in collaborating in the ongoing WAFWA effort to improve ESA implementation identify themselves so he can coordinate with them. Chris Smith (Montana), Tom Nesler (Colorado), Tina Cunning (Alaska), and Alan Clark (Utah) volunteered.

Action Items: None.

4. 2008 Federal Funding for Nongame and Endangered Species Work.

Discussion: On behalf of the absent Gary J. Taylor (AFWA), Terry Johnson briefly summarized prospects for federal funding in FY2008. Budgets are not much different than in recent years, although advocacy will continue for increases in wildlife and fisheries program areas. All States continue to advocate alternative funding through the Teaming With Wildlife effort. WAFWA priorities for the 2008 budget were identified in a hand-out (Appendix A), and under Agenda Item 11 the NGESC will recommend priorities for the 2009 federal budget.

Action Items: None.

5. WAFWA's Grassland Ecosystems Conservation Effort.

Discussion: Bill Van Pelt (Arizona) said that work continues on integration of prairie dog conservation into a broader, landscape approach. As a result, WAFWA's Prairie Dog Conservation Team now operates under the umbrella of Prairie Ecosystems Conservation and leadership for the effort has moved from NGESC to the Habitat Committee. Coordinator Deb O'Neil resigned in April 2007 for personal reasons, and Van Pelt stepped in as Acting Coordinator (while retaining his permanent position with the Arizona Game and Fish Department). Keith Sexson (Kansas) has assumed the Director Sponsor role previously held by John Cooper (South Dakota), and has also replaced Cooper as Chair of the Habitat Committee. Van Pelt has replaced Terry Johnson (Arizona) as Sexson's liaison to the Prairie Ecosystems conservation effort.

Van Pelt provided a copy of WAFWA's Prairie Dog Conservation Team June 25, 2007 progress report to USFWS on black-tailed prairie dog conservation (Attachment A). The report summarizes progress in prairie dog monitoring, plague monitoring, and conservation planning. Van Pelt said WAFWA's Gunnison's prairie dog conservation plan, an addendum to the white-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dog conservation strategy has been completed, and will be presented for acceptance by the Directors in the July 12 Business Meeting. The white-tailed prairie dog addendum will be completed for Director approval at the 2008 WAFWA Mid-Winter Business Meeting.

Action Items: NGESC recommends WAFWA acceptance of the Gunnison's prairie dog conservation plan addendum to the white-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dog conservation strategy.

6. Black-footed Ferret Recovery

Mike Lockhart (USFWS Black-footed Ferret Recovery Coordinator updated the NGESC on recent progress in recovery planning (see Attachment B). States provided comment on the initial draft recovery plan in 2006, and USFWS will provide a final draft for State comment late this year. Bill Van Pelt will continue his role as WAFWA State liaison to the ferret recovery planning effort to help ensure strong State participation. Lockhart advised that although State participation in the Recovery Implementation Team has been strong, more participation is needed from New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and North Dakota.

Lockhart advised that 11 ferret reintroductions are underway and that only two appear likely to be unsuccessful. Annual evaluations of progress identify which sites receive captive-bred or translocated wild-born ferrets for release. USFWS is actively looking for additional release sites in cooperating States, and sites in new States within historical range. Although substantial strides have been made toward recovery, achieving the current downlisting goal by 2010 is not considered likely. However, the successes to date are enabling use of sites that once would not have been accepted because of lack of size or other factors. With growth of the captive population and two release-site populations sufficient to provide surplus ferrets for translocation, the partnership is now able to take more chances and let the released ferrets determine whether a site has sufficient quality to sustain a resident population.

Action Items: Affirm that Bill Van Pelt will continue to serve as WAFWA Liaison to the Black-footed Ferret recovery planning process.

7. Gray Wolves: A Southwestern Perspective.

Discussion: Terry Johnson advised that John Morgart (USFWS), due to a critical wolf situation in AZ-NM, was unable to attend today and make this presentation. Johnson gave a PowerPoint presentation on Morgart's behalf (see Attachment C). The Mexican wolf reintroduction project has not achieved its population objectives to date. In order to make progress, changes are needed in the nonessential experimental population ESA 10j) rule under which the project operates, additional funding is needed for field activities, and the interdiction, incentives, and compensation program presented by Dr. Benjamin N. Tuggle at the Director's ESA/SARA Working Group meeting on July 10 needs to be funded and implemented. The strengths of the effort at this point are development of a cohesive interagency partnership, and a well defined framework for adaptive management. The partnership is hopeful that NEPA process will begin late this year on revision of the 10j rule.

Action Items: None.

8. Borderlands Jaguars: A State-Federal partnership.

Discussion: Steve Spangle (USFWS Arizona) gave a PowerPoint presentation (see Attachment D) on this State-led conservation effort, which has been underway since 1996. The program was initiated in part to preclude the need for federal listing of the jaguar in the United States. Although the jaguar was listed later in 1996, in 2006 USFWS determined that designation of critical habitat was not prudent. The Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) conservation strategy is focused on monitoring borderlands jaguars, education and outreach, elevating State civil and criminal penalties for unlawful take of jaguars to commensurate with federal penalties under ESA, sustaining movement corridors between the United States and Mexico, and collaborating with Mexico to develop and implement a conservation sufficient to maintain the shared population of jaguars. The JAGCT has documented presence of several jaguars in Arizona and New Mexico since 1996, with one male present in Arizona in 1996 and 2007, and during several of the intervening years. Cooperator and public participation in JAGCT has been strong for the entire period, with 40 to 60 participants at each of the quarterly meetings each year. The conservation framework for this effort is being renewed this year, and within 18 months the conservation strategy for Mexico will be completed and the two will be fully integrated.

Action Items: None.

9. California Condors in the Greater Grand Canyon Area.

Discussion: Ron Sieg (Arizona) gave a PowerPoint presentation (see Attachment E) on this project, which has been underway since 1996. Great progress has been made toward establishing a self-sustaining population, and a strong interagency partnership has been crucial to success. Poisoning from spent lead bullets has been documented as the major cause of mortality in free-ranging birds. Focus groups and sportsman organizations have been used to help develop and implement a program to reduce the lead poisoning. Copper bullets are provided free to Arizona hunters for voluntary use in "condor country," and hunters are encouraged to cover or remove gut piles. Public support has been very strong, lead contamination is being reduced, and the program is being refined as more information is gained. Environmental organizations have not joined in supporting the lead-reduction effort, and some have recently indicated an interest in advocating a lead bullet ban. Such an effort would be devastating to the condor conservation program.

Action Items: None.

10. US-Mexico-Canada (Trilateral Committee) Species of Common Concern Working Table Issues

Discussion: Bill Van Pelt (Arizona) provided an overview of Species of Common Concern Table action items from the 2007 Trilateral Committee Meeting (see Attachment F). Terry Johnson noted that the Species of Common Concern Table has been rejuvenated

under Dave Stout's (USFWS) leadership over the past two years, and has been crucial to progress on several species (e.g. borderlands jaguar).

Action Items: None.

11. NGESC Recommendations on FY2009 Federal Budget Priorities.

Discussion: Terry Johnson provided copies of the WAFWA 2008 priorities, and asked for NGESC affirmation as to whether those pertaining to nongame and endangered species should be retained as is, modified, or deleted. The NGESC recommendations will be presented in the July 12 Business Meeting for Director consideration with recommendations from other WAFWA committees.

Action Items: NGESC recommends the following:

- Increase funding for Neotropical Migratory Bird Act with emphasis on management in Mexico, Central and South America. RETAIN

- Provide $2 million per year beginning in FY09 within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget to fund the Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project adaptive management processes and NEPA compliance (including an Environmental Impact Statement, if needed) associated with revising the existing nonessential experimental population rule for the Mexican wolf. RETAIN

- Provide base funding ($710,000 per year) for operation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center. Funding is needed to ensure adequate Service support of state and federal agencies, Tribes and other parties undertaking cooperative black-footed ferret recovery efforts across several western states, Canada and Mexico. RETAIN

- Provide sufficient funding within the Bureau of Land Management budget to fully fund state wildlife agency assessment and mitigation work associated with expediting permitting of oil and gas exploration and extraction. RETAIN

- Increase funding within the Interior Department, NRCS, and US Forest Service budgets for multi-state conservation strategies to benefit at-risk species in the Western Grasslands, Shrub-Steppe, Hawaiian Islands, and Sierra Nevada Foothills. RETAIN

- The drive to develop Federal Lands for oil, gas, and coal is creating the need for better financing of monitoring and mitigation associated with that development. Funding for USBLM to support this demand is critically important:

- BLM resources are currently being diverted to energy development at the expense of ~~fisheries~~ conservation planning and implementation activities. MODIFY

- Provide sufficient funding in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget for state wildlife agencies to carry-out post-delisting monitoring and management of the bald eagle for a minimum of the required monitoring period. MODIFY as recommended by the Bird Conservation Committee.

- Establish funding within the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service budget for marine mammals/fisheries interaction monitoring and management actions in Washington, Oregon, and California; increase funding for Alaska. RETAIN

- Increase Section 6 funding (i.e. state grants) for NOAA Fisheries and within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget for traditional Section 6 state grants. MODIFY

- Increase funding for state grant programs ~~(i.e. State Wildlife Grant, LIP, etc.)~~ that place priority on implementation of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies/Wildlife Action Plans, including use of funds for education/outreach. MODIFY

- Restore full funding to the Landowner Incentives Program. ADD

- ~~Increase funding within the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget for traditional Section 6 state grants.~~ DELETE (integrated with previous priority)

- A $1 million addition to the base budget of USGS to assist with research and monitoring efforts of grizzly bears in all four northwestern states for the purpose of advancing recovery and delisting of that species. RETAIN

- ~~Continue opposition to any level of funding the National Park Service's Natural Resource Challenge Program.~~ MODIFY in September 2007 based on recommendations from Task Force convened to address this program.

- ~~Further reduction of that portion of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Program budget devoted to listing of species, and~~ Increase funding for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Program budget for recovery efforts. MODIFY

- ~~Increase~~ Maintain base program funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ($1.3 million) for implementation of the Yellowstone Grizzly Conservation Strategy ~~upon delisting~~. This amount to be parsed out to the various state and federal agencies that have increased monitoring costs once delisting occurs. MODIFY

- Provide base program funding to the National Wildlife Research Center for invasive species research. ADD

12. Other Business

a) WAFWA Townsend's big-eared bat conservation program.

Discussion: Angie McIntire (Arizona) gave a PowerPoint presentation (see Attachment G) and provided a handout (see Attachment H) summarizing progress in the past year. The conservation effort is guided by a 2000 MOU among participating WAFWA States and federal agencies. WAFWA State participation in the North American Bat Conservation Partnership and Western Bat Working Group has been key to success.

Action Items: None.

13. Recap and Adjournment.

- Action Items identified above will be carried forward to the Business Meeting during this conference.
- The NGESC meeting minutes will be disseminated with the annual conference proceedings.
- The Chair will represent the Committee at the January 2008 WAFWA Mid-Winter Business Meeting.
- The Chair thanked everyone for attending and participating.
- The meeting was adjourned at 16:00 pm.

:tj

Document: WAFWA NGESC Minutes.20070711.doc

WAFWA Wildlife Health Committee Report
Flagstaff, AZ July 10, 2007
Keith Aune, Chair

The Wildlife Health Committee chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with 25 people in attendance. Representatives from 10 western states and 4 federal agencies were in attendance. Following the welcome and introductions the committee reviewed and modified the agenda.

First on the agenda were briefings from Montana, Idaho and Wyoming relative to the brucellosis situation in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Political and Social attention has shifted significantly toward elk as a risk for transmission to cattle herds in the GYA. Keith Aune provided an update on the current status of epidemiologic investigations of a brucellosis infected cattle herd in Montana. Brucellosis was discovered in a cattle herd on the NE corner of the Greater Yellowstone Area in May 2007. This discovery has caused considerable speculation as to the source of that infection and many entities are implicating wild elk. Despite this speculation the epidemiologic investigation is still underway. Over 2500 cattle from trace forward and trace-back cattle herds have tested negative to date. Further testing of cattle remains to be completed. Wild elk in Montana have a very low sero-prevalence and extremely low infection rate. Few elk live in the area where the infected cattle herd was discovered and have not tested positive for brucellosis in this specific area though sampling has been limited. The epidemiologic study may not be conclusive and the source of this cattle infection may never be known. John Emmerich gave a quick summary of recent brucellosis management actions by the Wyoming Game and Fish. Significant events include the reinstatement of Wyoming's brucellosis-free status and implementation of many risk management actions recommended by the Governors Brucellosis Task Force. Wyoming has continued to explore several important management alternatives for managing elk in the southern GYA including evaluations, implementation of enhanced vaccination programs, an effort to test low density feeding coupled with earlier spring ending dates for feeding on a few select feedgrounds to see if brucellosis incidence can be reduced in the elk herds using the feedgrounds where these trials will be tried, and an aggressive (but very expensive) test and slaughter pilot study. Jim Unsworth gave a brief review of the brucellosis situation in Idaho. Idaho has also developed some aggressive approaches to address this issue and has prepared 26 specific herd plans for cattle producers in the Idaho portion of the GYA Management approaches include increased surveillance and risk management. Risk management concentrates on temporal and spatial separation of elk and cattle and includes specific actions such as fencing cattle feed-grounds and the elimination of elk feed-grounds. The goal of all three states in this area is to maintain elk numbers within management objectives and reduce the prevalence of brucellosis in wild elk. The issue of brucellosis in elk and bison of the GYA will require continued vigilance and innovative management by all three states into the future.

Dr. John Fischer gave a quick update on the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative and steps taken to gain broad support for this plan. The initiative has been presented to regional associations, federal agencies and NGO's. There are several National

Conservation Need grant proposals that would support the continued implementation of this initiative.
Melanie Woolever from the US Forest Service briefed the committee on the recent events surrounding the Domestic Sheep/Wild Sheep conflicts on several national forests. The primary driver for this issue are several forest plan appeals in the west raising a concern that the USFS did not provide for viability of wild sheep in planning efforts. In addition to these forest appeals, the guidance developed by the BLM for maintaining separation between wild and domestic sheep has expired and needs reauthorization. As a result of these matters several important processes have been initiated by the federal agencies to acquire support from the states to update and review management guidance. The committee heard about several important meetings including the Payette Science Panel and the UC Davis Respiratory Disease Workshop. Products from these meetings were shared and discussed. There is pending need for strong guiding principles for the land management agencies, diminished conflict among affected stakeholders, and cooperative funding for more effective research to address uncertainties surrounding this issue.

Kevin Hurley, chair of the Wild Sheep Working Group, gave a presentation on the draft wild sheep management guidelines for the domestic sheep/goat and wild sheep interface. The working group assembled a set of guidelines within about 150 days of receiving the assignment from the Directors. Kevin explained the process for developing these guidelines and provided a glimpse of future work needed to finalize comprehensive guidelines for wild sheep managers in the western states. The committee discussed these guidelines and how they might be integrated into management plans and federal policy documents once the Directors have approved them. The guidelines include some tasks that the Wildlife Health Committee must address to support the comprehensive guidance for state and federal agencies. The committee discussed protocols needed to standardize health monitoring and disease investigations across various jurisdictions. It was decided that these protocols should be developed and ready for approval by the next summer meeting to support the guidelines from the Wild Sheep Working Group.

The committee discussed the American Veterinary Medical Association policy published in the Journal of Veterinary Medical News, May 3, 2007 and the subsequent response letter by state wildlife veterinarians on May 10, 2007. The JAVMA news article implied that public policy related to the domestic/wild sheep interface is being developed and implemented on the basis of speculation rather than peer reviewed research. The States took exception to this conclusion and offered a counter response. There has been no subsequent response from AVMA related to this issue. The committee felt WAFWA should interject its concerns and request a response from JAVMA related to this news article.

Dr. Emi Saito from the USDA/APHIS National Surveillance Unit (NSU) presented to the committee some information about National Surveillance for domestic animals and the recent draft plan for Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) that is affecting wild fish and the aquaculture industry. Emi demonstrated the many similarities between surveillance design, planning and implementation for wild and domestic animals. NSU is already supporting some wildlife surveillance activities and has considerable experience that

could help state agencies designing or implementing wildlife disease surveillance. There also are many synergies that could be exploited in animal disease surveillance if communication is open between federal and state agencies conducting surveillance efforts. The move toward national surveillance plans and activities by wildlife agencies (e.g.CWD, AI) presents many challenges that could be averted by looking at existing models of national animal disease surveillance.

Federal Funding Priorities

The committee discussed FY 2009 federal budget priorities related to wildlife health. The following recommendations are provided to the Directors:

1) Provide federal funding to provide grants to states for development and implementation of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative for the United States.
2) Maintain funding for the States to continue Avian Influenza surveillance at levels required by the unified National efforts to protect human and animal health. If funding is not available then state wildlife agencies should retain the discretion to discontinue surveillance efforts.
3) Provide funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative to conduct critical surveillance for significant diseases to public and animal health that cause serious social and political conflicts and impact wildlife conservation efforts. These include diseases such as brucellosis, TB and CWD that cause considerable regulatory and social impacts to conservation efforts of wildlife agencies.
4) Increase funding to federal agencies for assisting states to implement the National CWD Plan. CWD funding has been decreasing slightly and its impact is reduced by inflation and dilution among the affected states.
5) Increase funding to address rabies in western states. Funding should be directed to support Wildlife Services and to encourage cooperative programs between WS and State Wildlife Agencies to assure that rabies does not increase in prevalence or expand in its distribution.
6) Increase funding to state and federal agencies for research and control and eventual eradication of feral swine in affected portions of the United States.

Agency Reports

Allan Clarke provided a copy of a new document on modeling the epidemiology of CWD and explained that this document can be obtained from the CWD alliance website. Allan also announced that Utah will host the next CWD symposium and committee members should watch for further announcements and plan to attend this important conference.

Kristin Mansfield disclosed to the committee that there is great concern in Washington that hair loss syndrome is expanding its distribution and is of significant concern along the blacktail deer-mule deer intergrade range and could have significant impact on mule

deer management in those parts of Washington. Agencies should watch for this disease in the near future.

Lloyd Fox provided a very thorough Midwest Wildlife Health Committee Report. Keith Aune will circulate several agency reports electronically to committee members.

The Wildlife Health Committee was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Keith Aune, Chair of the Wildlife Health Committee

ACTION ITEMS

Task the committee to draft a letter for the AVMA relative to concerns for a news article published in JAVMA in May. The letter will be drafted by Dr. Collin Gilin and Dr. Kristin Mansfield and submitted to the WAFWA president for approval and signature.

Task the committee to develop standard protocols for monitoring sheep health, testing for transplant and investigating disease events or mortalities. The committee will assemble existing guidance and extract relevant information to be put into a standard set of protocols for Director approval in the summer meeting, 2008. These protocols will be developed to support management guidance developed by the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group.

Task the committee to update and review the existing WAFWA model protocol for pharmaceutical distribution and use. This should include recent updated information on appropriate withdrawal periods for various biologics and consider new and emerging immobilizing agents appropriate for wildlife. The protocol should comprehensively address human health and safety consideration.

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIE

RESOLUTION

LEADERSHIP IN REDUCTION OF CARBON FOOTPRINTS

WHEREAS, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is a leader in the conservation arena; and

WHEREAS, carbon footprints is a priority concern among its membership; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in carbon footprints by western state and provincial wildlife agencies would benefit the environment, and set a good example for other agencies and the public; and

WHEREAS, it has been demonstrated that changes in agency operations can reduce carbon footprints.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies strongly encourages its membership to implement practices that reduce the carbon footprint originating from agency operations.

Adopted in Convention
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 12, 2007

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

RESOLUTION

RECOGNITION FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA FOR ITS LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL FISH HABITAT ACTION PLAN

WHEREAS, over the course of the last three years, a National Fish Habitat Initiative and Action Plan has been developed under the leadership of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, with direct and crucial involvement, leadership and coordination from western states; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has been both an active participant in the development of that initiative and a principle supporter for development of the Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska ensured both that the implementation of the Action Plan did not falter and that western issues and concerns were well represented by detailing personnel from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to serve as key staff to the Initiative, ensuring that the Plan and its Governing Board would remain true to its mission; and

WHEREAS, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan can benefit and further the mission of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' efforts to develop a Western Native Trout Initiative and other aquatic habitat conservation efforts emerging throughout the West.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for its commitment, efforts and contributions to the development of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan Board on behalf of its member agencies.

Adopted in Convention
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 12, 2007

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIE

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, from July 6-12, 2007, the Western Association of the Fish and Wildlife Agencies held its 86th annual conference at the Radisson Woodlands Hotel in Flagstaff, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, the conference was hosted by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and had as its conference theme, "Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention", which underscored the importance of the North American Model of Wildlife Management, and even more directly, the challenges confronting agencies if public participation in these outdoor activities continues to decline in the future; and

WHEREAS, Director Shroufe - two-time WAFWA President and aging Dean of the western directors - provided strong and commendable leadership for the Association over the past year; and

WHEREAS, all of the elements that go into hosting a successful annual conference were top notch and carefully choreographed, let us here make special note of the facilities, weather, Directors' and Commissioners' retreats, spousal activities and field trips, hospitality tent, food, entertainment, special plenary session, raffles and silent auction, awards banquet, and the more than 40 formal and productive meetings that were convened during the six-day run of the annual conference; and

WHEREAS, Arizona showcased an unbelievable cast of dedicated, courteous, and helpful staff who worked tirelessly to ensure attendees had a good time and who were such great ambassadors for their agency, their state, and its fish and wildlife resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates of the 23 member agencies of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to Director Duane Shroufe, and the friendly staff of the Arizona Game and Fish Department for their outstanding hospitality, leadership, and planning in hosting the 86th Annual Conference of the Association.

Adopted in Convention
Flagstaff, Arizona
July 12, 2007

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Flagstaff, Arizona
LEGAL COMMITTEE MEETING
July 8-9, 2007

July 8, 2007
9:00 a.m. -12:15 p.m.
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

On July 8, 2007, the WAFWA Legal Committee met. In attendance were representatives from Utah (Martin Bushman), Texas (Ann Bright), Arizona (Shelly Cutts, Jim Odenkirk), Wyoming (Levi Martin), Kansas (Chris Tymeson), Alaska (Lance Nelson), and AFWA (Carol Bambery—a.m. only).

Round-Table Discussion. The meeting began with a round-table discussion of issues affecting each of the states represented. Chris Tymeson of Kansas reported on disease issues, recent legislation and regulations regarding deer permitting, authority to post trespass notices, and the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to the use of all-terrain vehicles. Martin Bushman of Utah reported on pending litigation involving snakes that had been imported into Utah without proper certifications and the recent fatal bear attack of a young boy. Ann Bright of Texas reported on wind power issues, water legislation, nongame species regulations, and litigation involving the designation of a wildlife refuge. Shelley Cutts of Arizona reported on invasive species issues, including efforts to prevent spread of such species and on the ADA implications of persons wishing to hold exotic species as service animals. Jim Odenkirk of Arizona reported on litigation involving the installation of watering facilitates on designated wilderness areas and on bald eagle issues. Lance Nelson of Alaska reported on offshore aquaculture, species impacted by climate change, the Endangered Species Act and a civil rights lawsuit under 42 U.S.C. §1983 about fishing cooperatives. Levi Martin of Wyoming reported on litigation involving feeder grounds for elk and APHIS regulations.

Closure of Roads. Shelley Cutts delivered a presentation about road closures focusing on a case study about a private landowner who closed a road that ran through the landowner's property to federal land. She discussed, among other things, the history of the matter and various legal theories for seeking access.

Wolf and Grizzly Bear Litigation. Levi Martin delivered a presentation regarding litigation involving the USFWS and Montana's wolf management plan. He discussed the history of the litigation and pending issues. He also discussed two pending lawsuits involving the delisting of the grizzly bear.

July 9, 2007
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

On July 9, 2007, the Legal Committee met. Those in attendance are listed on the attached sign-in sheet.

State v. Reber. Martin Bushman made a presentation regarding the recently concluded litigation involving the regulation of hunting on certain Native American land. Although the Utah Supreme Court ultimately upheld the state's regulatory authority, the state worked closely with other entities while the case was pending to try to ensure continued enforcement of fish and game laws.

AFWA Update. Carol Bambery presented an update from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Carol reported on wolf litigation involving the western states and the de-listing of the gray wolf. She also discussed work being to update research on the public trust doctrine in the states. Carol also responded to questions about the recent survey distributed by APHIS to the states.

Ethics: Agency as the Client. Ann Bright made a presentation about the legal ethics of having an agency for a client. Among the topics discussed were attorney-client communications and the relationship of the attorney's obligations as an attorney and the attorney's obligation as a public servant.

Law Enforcement Committee Issues. Representatives of the Law Enforcement Committee also requested Legal Committee Assistances on two issues.

1. Open fields doctrine. An issue was raised about whether there should be an effort to pursue more uniformity across the states in terms of the open fields doctrine and entry onto private lands. The consensus of the Legal Committee was that although there were federal constitutional issues involved, this was an issue to be left to the states. However, the Legal Committee agreed to attempt to gather survey information from the states' wildlife agency attorneys about the application of the doctrine in each state.
2. Use of Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds for law enforcement. An issue was raised about the ability to use PR or DJ funds for law enforcement. Carol Bambery stated that she believed there was a USFWS Directive on the issue. Carol will try to locate this directive and email it to the states. If the directive does not adequately address the issue, then the issue may be presented to Joint Task Force on Federal Aid Issues.

In addition, the Committee discussed topics for future meetings, such as more Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and USFWS issues.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Nominations Committee Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2007

Ken Taylor (Alaska) Chair
Larry Kruckenberg (Wyoming)
Kelly Hepler (Alaska)
Doug Vincent-Lang (Alaska)
Rod Lucas (Arizona)
Representatives from South Dakota and California

Ken Taylor convened the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Rod Lucas (AZ) reported on the attendance at the current meeting in Flagstaff, AZ. He estimated attendance at 320 registered participants, 80 guests, and 40-50 unregistered staff. He estimated the cost of this meeting at $200,000 plus. Fundraising is expected to raise about $100,000 plus.

Rod emphasized that it is important to begin planning early for these meetings, and said facilities selection and booking early is one key to success. States must remember that they are also responsible for organizing the mid-winter meeting prior to the summer conference. Arizona staff met with North Dakota planning staff after the 2006 meeting for a debriefing session prior to planning the 2007 meeting which he said was extremely helpful.

Rod encouraged host states to establish a planning committee early on. Arizona selected a management and planning team of 33 staff about a year and a half ahead of the meeting. The planning team staff were divided into workgroups, and each workgroup lead was empowered to make decisions. Good communication between workgroup leads is essential to success. They met about once a month with increasing frequency as the conference approached. They started in early 2006 to plan the mid-winter 2007 meeting.

Larry Kruckenberg helps with agendas and travels to the host state to work with the planning committee. He reminded host states to include a $40 WAFWA fee per registrant in planning the cost for conference participation.

Federal agency contributions are a significant part of the funds raised for this conference, and host states should plan early for the transfer of funds from the federal agencies to the host state.

Other suggestions:

- Cycle 2-3 meeting planners through the summer meetings prior to being a host state.

- Host state Director's Office in charge of setting meeting theme.
- Ancillary meetings are increasing and need to be planned for.
- Arizona will begin a guide book for holding the mid-winter and summer conference after debriefing with South Dakota after this meeting. Each host state should update annually.

The meeting schedule was reviewed. The next summer conference will be July 10-16, 2008 in Rapid City, South Dakota. California has not yet selected their location for 2009. Alaska will host the 2010 conference, and Montana will host the conference in 2011.

The slate of officers for 2007-2008 was unanimously approved by the Nominating Committee:

President:	Jeff Vonk (SD)
First Vice-President	Loris "Ryan" Broddrick (CA)
Second Vice-President	Denby Lloyd (AK)
Third Vice-President	Jeff Hagner (MT)
Secretary	Larry Kruckenberg (WY)
Treasurer	Stephen Barton (ID)

The Nominating Committee adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

WAFWA Resource Information and Education Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2007
Flagstaff, AZ

Attendees

Denby Lloyd (AK), Lisa Evans (AK), Steve Ferrell (AZ), Ty Gray (AZ),Kellie Tharp (AZ), Ashley Lynch (AZ), Anthony Chavez (AZ), Bob Miles (AZ), Dustin McKibben (AZ), Russ Haughey (AZ), Bob Hernbrode (AZ), Tristanna Bickford (AZ), John Thornton (BC), Bernadette Fees (CA), Tony McDermett (ID), Thomas Baumeister (MT), Patrick Block (NM), Andrea Crews (OK), Cindee Jensen (UT), John Kennedy (WY), Eric Keszler (WY), Chris McKay (USFWS), Bert Frost (NPS), Chris Chaffin (XONtv/Chaffin Communications, Inc.).

Meeting Agenda & Discussion

Chairman Kelly Hepler called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The committee reviewed the agenda and modified it to allow time to focus on developing strategies related to the suggested actions from the 2006 WAFWA Resolution on the Public Trust Doctrine.

The committee reviewed the "Opportunity for All" DVD and initiated discussion with Mr. Shane Mahoney on how to identify the issues facing fish and wildlife agencies related to public awareness of the North American Model and the Public Trust Doctrine.

The committee brainstormed meaningful ways to use the Opportunity for All" DVD as a tool in the effort to communicating the relevance of the North American model to the public. Notes from that brainstorm are appended.

Chairman Hepler suggested, and the committee agreed that it was appropriate for the committee to focus is future efforts on developing effective means of advocating sport hunting and fishing as a legitimate use of fish and wildlife resources, consistent with the North American Model and Public Trust Doctrine.

A subgroup met on July 10, 2007 to finalize committee recommendations and provided those for committee review that same day.

Committee Recommendations for Action

The committee recommends that WAFWA takes the following actions to advocate sport hunting and fishing as a legitimate use of fish and wildlife resources, consistent with the North American Model and Public Trust Doctrine:

- Purchase and distribute a copy of the "Opportunity for All" DVD to every hunter education instructor in the country. To accompany the DVD, this committee will develop a cover letter and lesson plan encouraging its incorporation into the hunter education course. Lead states for this effort are Arizona and New Mexico and a draft product will be available in early fall, 2007.

- Develop an agency resource guide that will assist resource personnel with understanding, applying and communicating the basic concepts inherent to expressing the NA Model in their daily activities. This resource will articulate the core concept message and include strategies for internal deployment, a collection of existing resources, examples of how it can be used, templates for common tasks (i.e., public meetings, legislative presentations, news releases) and reasons why this is relevant to what we do. Lead states for this effort are Arizona, Montana, Oklahoma and Wyoming and a draft product will be available for committee review in March 2008.

- Develop K-16 Curriculum that conveys the principles of the North American Model and is consistent with state educational standards. Lead states for this effort are Arizona and California and a status report will be provided at the WAFWA mid-winter meeting.

- Develop a communication plan for conveying the principles of the North American Model and its relevance to the public. This includes utilizing both electronic and written media, inter- and intranet resources. Lead states for this effort are Alaska, Wyoming, and California and a draft product will be provided to the committee by October 2007 and a final draft to the committee chair by the WAFWA mid-winter meeting.

- The RI&E Committee will solicit the Human Dimensions Committee for information about public awareness and attitudes to help craft messages and evaluate outcomes related to the efforts above. Lead state for this effort is Arizona.

Director Kelly Hepler adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Appendix 1

WAFWA Resource Information and Education Committee
Notes from Committee Brainstorm
July 9, 2007
Flagstaff, AZ

The committee brainstormed meaningful ways to use the Opportunity for All" DVD as a tool in the effort to communicating the relevance of the North American model to the public. Notes from that brainstorm are as follows.

- **Ways the video can be used:**
  - Internal reach
  - Sportsman's groups
  - Combination with hunter/angler recruitment & retention efforts
  - Leave behind copies with sportsman's groups
  - Staff presentations
  - Open a dialogue
  - Request how they are to be used by others
  - "Light" version of Hunter Education—natural world course for integration in public schools
  - Develop similar video for different target audience—school curriculum
  - Classroom curriculum-K-16 integrated into education standards, particularly those not currently being met (science, social studies, history)
  - Provide message that everyone has a civic responsibility to the natural world
  - Strategic plan for strengthening NA conservation model.
  - HS teachers implementing NA conservation model into history curriculum
  - Web page for dialogue with teachers to assess what they want
  - Electronic media—internet, TV, (PBS, History Channel, Discovery Channel)
  - Pilot study for curriculum development

- **Why is this topic important?**
  - There is a general lack of knowledge about the NA Model (specifically Public Trust Doctrine).
  - Decisions and value systems regarding fish and wildlife resources are based on incorrect information.
  - We are losing conservationists in this country because we are losing hunters and anglers.
  - Public's apathy of their civic responsibility towards wildlife.
  - Fragmentation of conservation organizations in their efforts.
  - Fewer and fewer people value wildlife and the natural world.

- Future of wildlife will once again become uncertain if we don't have an informed and engaged public.

- **What are our goals?**
  - Education
  - Positive effect of hunters and anglers on the sustainability of wildlife and habitats, and the need for management in the modern world.
  - Understand value of wildlife and hunters/anglers in their conservation and management.
  - Develop new voices for conservation.
  - Increase people's vested interest in conservation of fish and wildlife resources. (watershed/open space)
  - Broaden the conservation funding base.
  - Inform, educate and motivate to action that ensures the public ownership and sustainability of wildlife and habitat.
  - Make conservation of wildlife part of the public's value system.
  - Education and awareness process that helps support state fish and wildlife agencies.
  - Education and awareness process that helps support wildlife professionals.

- **Outcomes**
  - So the percent of those who don't hunt/fish support our right to do so.
  - All beneficiaries support conservation funding base for state fish and wildlife agencies.
  - Consistent/core message regarding the Public Trust Doctrine within WAFWA member agencies.
  - Most effective method of dissemination (informal and formal).

- **Evaluation**

- **Audiences**
  - voters
  - general public
  - students
  - decision makers
  - sportsman's organizations
  - hunters/anglers
  - agency staff
  - agency leadership
  - business community
  - communication community
  - Industry
  - NGO