

The AFWA Strategist

Update for Members and Partners of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Winter/Spring 2018

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647)



Save the date...

**108th AFWA Annual Meeting
Tampa Marriott Waterside
Hotel and Marina
September 9-12, 2018**



www.fishwildlife.org
www.afwaannualmeeting.org



We are very excited that the long-awaited Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647) was introduced on December 14th! This bill reflects the recommendation included in the Blue Ribbon Panel's final report and calls for annually dedicating \$1.3 billion in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters for fish and wildlife conservation.

Our House champions, Congressman Fortenberry (R-NE) and Congresswoman Dingell (D-MI) are enthusiastic about getting this historic legislation introduced and shepherding it through the congressional process. On February 15th, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, as well as four other bills, which was a great success. Bob Ziehmer, Conservation Director of Bass Pro and former Missouri Dept. Conservation Director, provided testimony supporting Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

We look forward to continuing our work with their offices, as well as with all of our Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife partners to support and build public support for the bill. We're working to spread our message far and wide, and encourage partners to share the good news with their networks, engage members in advocacy to support the bill and generate positive media. Please go to the campaign website at www.OurNatureUSA.com for more information. If you're interested in social media content on the legislative introduction, several Alliance social media channels have been created to communicate with our audiences as well, and we encourage folks to share, like and promote that content as well. Those channels can be found @OurNatureUSA, or refer to the website for more information on social media.

Please contact our Campaign Manager, Sean Saville, at ssaville@fishwildlife.org with any questions on materials, communications or general messaging around the legislation.

AFWA Executive Committee Updates

The Executive Committee met at the AFWA headquarters on December 4th to conduct the official business of the Association. The following is a summary of decisions and discussions at the meeting:

- The 2018 budget was reviewed and finalized.
- Virgil Moore moved and Hepler seconded that Carol Bamberg work on the bylaws so federal members can vote at committee meetings but not at the business meeting, with no harm done to the provinces or territories. Carol will also have to review the articles of incorporation. Motion passed.
- Jen Mock Schaeffer and Sean Saville gave an update on the status of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and a change in one of the sponsors.
- Jen Mock Schaeffer gave an update on the Chronic Wasting Disease legislation and grant opportunities.
- John Lord gave an update on the National Survey.
- Jen Mock Schaeffer gave an update on the WGA and discussion we have had with them.
- Glenn Hughes, the new CEO of ASA introduced himself to the committee.
- Drue Winters, Dan Cassidy and Ed Thompson gave updates on AFS and TWS respectively.
- Kelly Hepler (ND) gave an update on the WSFR Joint Task Force.
- USFS Chief Tony Took gave an update to the committee.

Please contact Ron Regan (rregan@fishwildlife.org) if you would like more information on any of these subjects or if you have suggestions regarding the Executive Committee.

The next scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee will be at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Management Conference in Norfolk, VA, March 26th-30th (<https://wildlifemanagement.institute/conference>)



National Conservation Leadership Institute- Cohort 13

The National Conservation Leadership Institute is currently accepting nominations for its 13th Cohort until April 15, 2018 .

www.conservationleadership.org

National Survey Update Special Session at North American

This is an important year for the National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. Five years ago, when AFWA leadership approved funding for the 2016 survey they requested that two separate surveys be conducted for the purpose of evaluating cost and accuracy.

The detailed results from the 2016 survey will be released soon and the recommendations of the evaluation of the survey will also be available shortly. Based on these recommendations AFWA leadership will need to make some critical decisions about the future of the survey for 2021 and beyond.

There will be a special session on the 2016 survey at the North American in Norfolk on Tuesday, March 27th at 10:00 AM. Members of the National Survey Technical Workgroup and the Independent Evaluation team will present on their findings and recommendations and be available to answer your questions.



ASSOCIATION of FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

NEW AFWA Website

Check out AFWA's NEW website at
www.fishwildlife.org

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
1100 First Street, NE
Suite 825
Washington DC 20002
info@fishwildlife.org
202-838-3474

Meetings with the Directorate and DOI

On December 6th the Executive Committee had two important meetings in Washington, DC. The first was a three-hour session with the Directorate of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), its 25-member national leadership team. The meeting was dominated by three focal topics: how states can *collaborate* with the FWS on Department of Interior (DOI) Secretarial Order 3356, especially regarding enhanced priority for hunting and angling opportunities on National Wildlife Refuges, new opportunities for state-federal collaboration on landscape-level partnerships, and new state-federal opportunities for collaborative governance on fish and wildlife management, perhaps through a FWS-State MOU template. You will note the focus on collaboration – the spirit of which was fully embraced during the meeting – and President Virgil Moore is looking forward to having “architect’s drawings” or an actionable path forward for discussion at the North American. Indeed, Jim Douglas, Nebraska Director and Chair of the Wildlife Resources Policy Committee, has already stepped up to lead the work on landscape-level partnerships. We anticipate these opportunities to dominate discussion among state directors on Tuesday afternoon, March 27, 2018, in Norfolk, VA, followed by additional dialogue with FWS leadership.

Legislative Update

PR Modernization- On February 15, 2018, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands heard testimony on H.R. 2591, which would clarify the purpose of the P-R Fund to provide financial and technical assistance to the states for the promotion of hunting and recreational shooting. Bob Ziehmer provided compelling testimony. For more info, contact Jen Mock Schaeffer at jenmock@fishwildlife.org.

The Farm Bill Is Coming – The House Committee on Agriculture is expected to soon unveil and swiftly move its 2018 Farm Bill. The time to reaffirm your/our Farm Bill priorities and inform the final house draft bill is NOW. For additional information about AFWA's 2018 Farm Bill priorities, please contact Andrew Schmidt at aschmidt@fishwildlife.org.

DOI Issues Opinion on Migratory Bird Treaty Act – Late on December 22, 2017, the DOI issued a Solicitor's Opinion on the MBTA, more narrowly reinterpreting the treaty as only covering intentional take of a bird and stating that accidental or incidental take of a bird is not illegal.

Congress Introduces Bills to Combat CWD – On November 21, 2017, Representatives Kind and Sensenbrenner (both of WI) introduced H.R. 4454, the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Act of 2017, to support State and tribal efforts to address CWD among deer, elk, and moose populations, and to support applied research on CWD. The bill provides state departments of wildlife and agriculture and Tribes with \$35 million annually, to develop and implement management strategies \$10 million per year for applied research grants on CWD, and requires the DOI and USDA land management agencies to work cooperatively with States on CWD research and response plans. On December 19, 2017, Senator Tester (D-MT) introduced a similar bill (S. 2252), which provides \$25 million per year for applied research grants and limits the overhead rate on such grants to 15%. **February 2018**, CWD was detected in Mississippi, which is concerning. AFWA is getting inquiries from neighboring state Hill staff who are concerned about the spread of CWD to their state. For more info, contact Jen Mock Schaeffer at jenmock@fishwildlife.org.

The Fight for States' Rights Continues – Key Commerce Committee and Leadership members of the Senate continue to negotiate provisions for passing the Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (CVIDA/VIDA), which is currently included in the US Coast Guard reauthorization bill (S. 168, S. 1129, H.R. 1154). This bill raises considerable federalism issues and threatens states' rights to protect their unique state waters and natural resources against water pollution and the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, which states may regulate under state and federal laws. Your assistance in generating additional opposition to this legislation would be greatly appreciated. Contact Devin DeMario at ddemario@fishwildlife.org for more info.

Founded in 1902, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to advance science-based management and conservation of species and their habitats for the public's long-term benefit and use.

www.fishwildlife.org

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