



Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee Report

Chair: Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri Department of Conservation

Vice-chair: Jonathan Regosin, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

Meeting on March 7, 2019

North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

Denver, CO

Committee Charge: *Advocate for long-term dedicated funding and annual appropriations for the conservation of species of greatest conservation need, nature-based recreation and conservation education and support development, implementation and revision of State Wildlife Action Plans.*

Participants

Norman Murray (MDOC), Dan Kennedy (MIDNR), Sean Saville (AFWA), Jenny Dickson (CTDEEP), Taylor Schmitz (CSF), Jen Newmark (NDOW), Eric Odell (CPW), David Klute (CPW), Jill Feldhusen (NWF), Davia Palmeri (ODFW), Kendra Wecker (ODNR), David Hanni (TWRA), Sunni Carr (KDFWR), Daren Riedle (KDWPT), Chris Berens (KDWPT), Steve Klein (FWS), Julie Kempf (IDNR), Melissa Panella (NGPC), Allison Fowler (AGFC), Robert Trujillo (USFS), Wendi Weber (USFWS), Noreen Walsh (USFWS), Thomas Eason (FWC), Rex Sallabanks (IDFG), Naomi Edelson (NWF), John Davis (TPWD), Greg Link (NG&F), Ashley Green (UDNR), Caroline Murphy (TWS), Christina Donehower (ODFW), Shelley Plante (TPWD), Margen Carlson (WDFW), Leo Miranda (USFWS), Nancy Gloman (Retired DOW), Elsa Haubold (USFWS), Nicol McSweeney (MDFW), Sandy Boyce (USFS), Paulette Nelson (NJDFW), Ed Boggess (MAFWA), Krystal Phillips (USFS), Charlie Sperry (MFWP), Jessica Wilkinson (TNC)

Scheduled Discussion Items

The meeting convened at 8:01am

Sara Pauley-Introduced Jon Regosin as the new vice chair to the committee and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Sara Pauley-Asked if there are any changes to the September 2018 meeting notes. Hearing none, the meeting notes were approved.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)/Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

Recap of 115th Congress/National Strategy for the 116th Congress/Changes to Legislation/Advocacy Campaign

Sean Saville-Progress was made with the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) during the last Congress. Passage of a bill providing permanent authorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund could create some momentum. Texas Parks and Wildlife is doing a great job building congressional and public support. Resolution or letters of support are needed from every state and/or region. Work is

underway to make changes to the bill so that it can be reintroduced shortly. A Senate version of the bill will be down the road. Members of the House Natural Resources Committee are top targets for co-sponsorship. The target list will be shared. The media will be engaged to show there is a groundswell of support for RAWA.

John Davis-Texas Parks and Wildlife has RAWA-related video that can be shared.

Sean Saville-Fresh content is needed, should use the campaign hashtag.

John Davis-Do we send it to you? Other agencies should do the same.

Sean Saville-It is important to show that there is coordination with the national campaign.

Naomi Edelson-If you use the hashtag then it can be coordinated.

Melissa Panella-What are the hashtags?

Sean Saville-It is #RecoverWildlife.

Sean Saville-We've had some good media coverage. We want to do targeted media to members of the House Natural Resources Committee. Those offices will pay attention to their own media markets. A profile that we did on Sara Parker Pauley was one of the more engaging Facebook posts. The Alliance video also drove traffic. We have found that high quality wildlife images help. The State of the Birds report will focus on funding needs for birds and will garner additional media attention. It will be a twofold report, on science with an insert on advocacy. Actions states can take were highlighted.

Dan Kennedy-How would you like success stories?

Sean Saville-We would like a one or two page summary of your State Wildlife Action Plan in MS Word format. We will share the target list and list of previous co-sponsors. We want to onboard them early. We want our partners to be engaged, help conduct field tours with members of Congress to help build champions. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission cultivated Congressman Fortenberry by building a relationship with him showing him the work that they do. We need more members who can speak to their personal experiences.

Melissa Panella-Do you want a list of challenges too?

Jen Mock Schaeffer-We have a working redline draft of the bill. A few advocates went to Congresswoman Dingell with suggested changes to the bill. Congressman Fortenberry will still be one of the leads. The new bill will include renewable energy revenue and resources for federally endangered species. We are also looking to add a tribal title. A tribal association passed a resolution. Tribes don't have a lot of resources. We are working with the National Wildlife Federation who is helping with the tribes. In the next week or two we will finish changes to the legislation and then reintroduce the bill in the coming weeks. We are working with onboarding cosponsors from the last Congress. We want to move the bill quickly out of the House. Congresswoman Dingell has discussed the bill with Congressman Grijalva (Chair of the Natural Resources Committee). He has made favorable comments in the media about RAWA. Pittman-Robertson modernization was not passed last year. We are trying to find out what the barriers are. We don't want to get to the end of this and find out there is a technical violation of the "constitutional origination clause". The challenge in the Senate will be the price tag and need for an

offset. The prevention message is resonating, this will be an all hands on deck effort, field tours are important.

Paulette Nelson-By bringing on the tribes are you worried about the higher price tag?

Jen Mock Schaeffer-Their funding will be on top of the states' share. We will not negotiate against ourselves.

Question-How organized or prepared are the states secure match?

Jen Mock Schaeffer-There is some flexibility in the bill. Some federal sources (i.e. non-DOI and USDA) can be used as match. Directors are getting together to discuss ideas for match. Texas is doing some innovative work on match.

John Davis-We spent time looking at where match would come from. We went through an exercise that showed we can come up with the match.

Jenny Dickson-Is the Endangered Species Act (ESA) language to clarify how the money is used? Will there be new requirements?

Jen Mock Schaeffer-There is clarification that states may use funding for endangered species. I don't want to get crosswise with the authorities of the ESA. We added a section that includes additional funding for recovery.

Jenny Dickson-Will it be new funds?

Jen Mock Schaeffer-Yes, in the draft it will be new funds.

Naomi Edelson-Other groups and the Hill are asking whether the states are using existing funding on endangered species. We need examples from the states. This area could be difficult later. Some states use Pittman Robertson or the ESA. We could use information on State Wildlife Grants.

Jen Mock Schaeffer-Congress doesn't know how states are using funds on endangered species. The most recent report does not show an accounting of every state. I will bring this up in the endangered species committee tomorrow. We need to show how states are using funds to conserve endangered species.

Sara Pauley-I appreciate the report and look forward to working with you.

National Wildlife Federation Campaign Plan

Naomi Edelson-The National Wildlife Federation has been a partner with states on funding since the Pittman Robertson Act and also Teaming With Wildlife. Jill Feldhusen is helping with the Recovering America's Wildlife campaign. We had a great meeting yesterday. One hundred people attended and shared information. We are at a turning point. We have to work even harder in the new Congress. It takes a long time to pass legislation and we need to work hard to get this done. We have a good shot to get this done. The National Wildlife Federation had an internal meeting in December to discuss lessons learned and we put together a draft campaign plan. We held a meeting two weeks ago with partners and discussed how we can work together. We can be more effective if we are doing the same things. We agreed to work get some governor champions. Getting money back to your state is one of their priorities. The coalition will work together. The state sportsmen's and environmental legislature caucuses can be champions. Passing resolutions will be a useful. Texas should send their language

around. We should engage with businesses including resource extraction, renewable energy, timber, agriculture, outdoor industry and bring those voices in and have their leaders talk to members of Congress. We would like you to identify the top three businesses in your state. A scientist's letter is being considered. We need to articulate that there is a real problem. The National Wildlife Federation is creating a letter with The Wildlife Society, American Fisheries Society and the NAS. We want to identify voices that can be used with the media. It looks like it is self-serving when state fish and wildlife agencies ask for money. We need to highlight the crisis. We could to have scientists do videos showing their work. We need more field trips. I worked with New Jersey and they had staff hold a peregrine falcon and then they became a strong ally. We will be doing a Fly-in. We will raise money to do a reception with animals. In addition to the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Fly-in, the National Wildlife Federation will be doing a 100 days effort. We will be doing a stuffed eagle drop at congressional offices. National Wildlife Week is next week. We will be doing a blog and seed packet delivery on the Hill. There is a business sign-on letter. We are working with MAFWA, the Monarch JV and others to get the message out when the monarch listing decision is made.

Dan Kennedy-I am meeting with our Governors staff on Monday. What should be our "ask"?

Naomi Edelson-We are working on an engagement strategy for governors. You should ask if your governor will be willing to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. You should ask your legislators too. We need a couple of governors to be the lead.

Sara Pauley-A huge thank you to the National Wildlife Federation. We are appreciative of all your organization and what Collin has done.

How can States Support the National Campaign

John Davis-I hope you take home that the strategy is everyone's strategy. You have a small piece in this. We have found it useful to have a state vision document. We are willing to share anything that Texas has produced. You can call me if you have questions. A state vision document helps to pull your partners in. You can use rough percentages to show how new funding will be used. You should have partners see themselves in the document. After we wrote the vision, partners started to support the effort. We contracted with our National Wildlife Federation affiliate to hire a fulltime person to work on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. You should do an analysis of your legislators to identify interests, caucuses and positions which will determine the best way to reach out to them. You can do power-mapping to inform your strategy. Partners can make "asks" to members. We had to adapt and employ alternate strategies. Prioritize then implement your plan. We developed targeted fact sheets and a clearinghouse for information. What are the things that you did that were successful?

Allison Fowler-There are lots of people in our agency doing things. We are creating a Recovering America's Wildlife working group.

Sara Pauley-One of the benefits of meeting is that we can steal good ideas.

Jenny Dickson-We created a Recovering America's Wildlife website, been working to engage nontraditional groups and am using social media.

Jon Regosin-Is the info on your state website?

Jenny Dickson-Yes.

Dan Kennedy-This spring the Kirtland Warbler may be delisted. We are looking to do an event with our congressional delegation and highlight the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. This could get national and global attention.

Sunni Carr-We are building bridges and trying to earn trust. We have been talking about match. We started a program where people get to see wildlife management. The Recovering America's Wildlife Action will fundamentally change our agencies.

Kendra Wecker- It is wise to engage with governors. We are excited about engaging with our governor.

Dave Klute-We are creating a communication document. We have a great opportunity with our governor since he was a cosponsor last year.

John Davis-Don't leave thinking I can't do this. Texas is willing to help. We may be able to help with the analysis for other states.

Sara Pauley-We are grateful for the work that Texas is doing, please pass this along to Carter Smith.

Naomi Edelson-We are willing to work close with you. Jill put together a target list that you can take a look at. We would like to ground check with you.

Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap

Tony Wasley-In Nevada we met with the mining industry and showed them how much revenue is going to the treasury and talked to them about the return on investment. The message resonated with them. We met with staff from the Western Governors Association yesterday and they encouraged us to seek a resolution. A bipartisan resolution of support from WGA would carry a lot of weight.

Tony Wasley-I'm preaching to the choir in this room so I won't talk so much about the justification. I want to cover the background and share a few things from the plenary. The notion of relevancy has become a frequent topic of conversation. Relevancy was addressed in the second recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel which was assembled in 2014. The Panel was co-chaired by former governor David Freudenthal and Johnny Morris and included 26 members from industry and conservation. The Panel looked at several models to fund conservation. Their first recommendation was to dedicate \$1.3 billion for fish and wildlife conservation. The second recommendation was to engage broader constituencies. The road to successful funding is linked to relevancy. A Blue Ribbon Panel working group that was chaired by Steve Kellert and Steve Williams started work on the second recommendation. When Dr. Kellert passed away, we lost some momentum. We held a meeting in December Dec 2017 at the AFWA headquarters to restart the effort. We discussed a toolkit that could draw from the literature and the need to compile a list of successful strategies, successes and failures. We assembled a diverse team and held an initial planning meeting in Denver, CO last summer. Several state agency Directors and staff from the Wildlife Management Institute, AFWA, federal agencies and NGO's attended. We spent three days thinking about how to create a toolkit and identified 26 barriers to relevancy and organized them into five themes (agency culture, agency capacity, constituency culture, constituency capacity and political constraints). We left that meeting with a conceptual framework and identified team leads. We wrote a job description for theme team members. Sixty individuals went to work, meeting regularly on conference calls. An update was given to Directors at the AFWA meeting and they passed a resolution supporting development of the roadmap. From October-March the teams developed strategies that

were reviewed by Directors here at the North American. The next step is to develop tactics by September.

Davia Palmeri-Will there be an action on this at the business meeting?

Tony-I'm not sure. We had a productive discussion with Directors. The toolkit is non-prescriptive and there is sensitivity that the roadmap not be dictatorial. It takes a crisis to move people and the rate of social change is slow. If we wait until there are major changes then it will be more difficult.

Charlie Sperry-We are trying to marry the relevancy discussion with R3. We are still heavy on the traditional value sets. There is the issue of maintaining support of our license buyers. We feel like we are out on the edge of this.

Tony Wasley-That's a really good comment. These are not mutually exclusive. This concern was brought up by Directors. We want to continue to dance with those who brought us to the dance floor. I am sensitive to that. As an agency we stepped up our outreach to traditional customers at the same time we reached out to new ones. There are some who don't want new customers. Social science information shows us that the trends are happening, just at different paces. Trends in Rhode Island and California will become the normal.

Naomi Edelson-Making R3 serve everyone and be more inclusive would be a big deal. That should be a big part of the strategy. Is that possible? Birders and others don't think agencies are welcoming to them.

Charlie Sperry-We are challenged to get more people on the dance floor. If we rethink R3, we can use R3 as a platform.

Tony Wasley-Your Director brought up the need to do some homework. There is the issue of R3, and we know many will perceive loss.

Nicole McSweeney-How do states conduct an analysis of relevancy?

Tony Wasley-Agencies have statistics. The planning group has recognized the need to create an objective measurement tool for relevancy. The percentage of people with mutualist value orientations is 34% but the percentage of mutualists in agencies is 8%. Agency culture needs to change through improved communication. Creating a more diverse workforce is also important. There are lots of little hurdles. It's really important to provide tools for objective evaluation.

Thomas Eason-How do we expand the tent but not lose core constituencies. We seem to be going down two separate paths with R3. In Florida, 80% of our funds come from other sources and 80% of commission meetings are dominated by traditional issues.

Tony Wasley-In Nevada, 95% of our budget comes from 5% of citizens to work on 8% of our species. The opportunity for folks to perceive loss is large. The last several years I have stressed the importance of not abandoning anyone. If we don't get more people on the dance floor, the dance will end. We want to be more relevant to hunters, it is one constituency of many.

John Davis-In the special session it was said we should leave no one out and leave no one behind.

Tony Wasley-Our statutory charge and missions do not change. The more people that we are relevant to, the better we can meet our charge.

Question-How do we get more information on the strategies.

Tony Wasley-The planning team discussed this. We don't want to get ahead of our skis. We hope to have something flushed out soon. There are many layers with leaders, teams and networks. We want to check our own biases but not shotgun this out there. The short answer is in about 6 months. This will not be set in concrete when done. We will update it over time.

Naomi Edelson-I think this is important work. When I was at AFWA, I was told building a coalition was just as important as getting the money. We shouldn't be too risk averse. You will alienate some.

Sara Pauley-Some states where funding is tied strongly to traditional users, there are constraints. In Missouri, we have more flexible funding so we can step out. I'm hiring a relevancy coordinator to broaden the tent. We need someone to coordinate and measure activities. It serves our traditional users if more people value wildlife. Some states will be able to move more quickly than others.

Thomas Eason-We appreciate Tony's work and fresh energy.

Report from EOD/WDCF Joint Working Group

Jen Newmark-We had a discussion at the last meeting about the need for the working group. We held a meeting of the working group yesterday and discussed if there is still a need. The answer was yes. We developed a new charge and will work on outreach tools to build a coalition to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The wildlife diversity group has been working on this a long time. This committee and the Education Outreach and Diversity committee also has a role. We are still bringing to bear all of our collective resources. The working group will facilitate conversations by reaching out to educators to brainstorm and share information. We will identify new partners and create products that are ready to go. We will have discussions to make sure states are ready for funding. The working group will meet monthly via conference calls. If the charter is extended, then we will seek a chair and vice chair. We need others to take a leadership role.

Sara Pauley-This is important work.

State & Tribal Wildlife Grants-FY19 & FY20 Funding & Fly-in

Mark Humpert-The FY2019 enacted level of funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants is \$64.57M. This is a \$1 million increase over the FY2018 level. Of that total, \$6.36M will be made available for competitive grants to the states and \$4.21M for tribal wildlife grants. The Administration has proposed a 50% cut to the program next fiscal year. The House Interior/Environment Interior Appropriations subcommittee is now chaired by Congressman Betty McCollum who has been supportive of State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. We will be meeting with her staff and other staff on the House and Senate Interior Appropriations committees. A State Wildlife Grant Fly-in will be held on March 27th to advocate for FY2020 funding. We invite all states and their partners to participate. The National Wildlife Federation, The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society are assisting with planning. We will be developing messages and will work with our champions in the Senate and House on Dear Colleague Letters supporting funding for the program. We will be assisting states with making programmatic requests. Support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act will be included in the ask.

Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program Update

Steve Kline-The Enhanced TRACS accomplishment reporting system will be launched this year. We will be forming a working group to work on including effectiveness measures for State Wildlife Grants in TRACS to help tell the story of that program. One of those successes is the recovery of the Kirtland warbler. The new SWAP Revision Guidance has streamlined our process for making revisions to State Wildlife Action Plans, saving thousands of dollars in staff time. The deadline for competitive State Wildlife Grants is June 28. The notice of funding opportunity will go out in March or April.

Thomas Eason-There is still frustration with TRACS. Competitive State Wildlife Grant funds would be better if they were in the apportionment pool.

Jenny Dickson-I agree the funds for competitive State Wildlife Grants would be better in the apportionments, but Connecticut has benefitted from competitive grants.

Sunni Carr-I agree with Jenny.

Paulette Nelson-I agree with Jenny too.

Davia Palmeri-The competitive State Wildlife Grant Program is very time consuming, but the changes made to the criteria make it better.

State Wildlife Action Plans Implementation Best Practices Guide

Melissa Panella-The 2017 State Wildlife Action Plan National Meeting highlighted best practices for plan implementation. It was decided to take lessons learned from that meeting and create a best practices guide for State Wildlife Action Plan implementation modeled after the one created in 2012 guide for plan development. The draft document was distributed several weeks ago for review. Comments are still coming in and overall is was favorable. Some of the suggestions included the need for additional case studies from western states, the need to better match case studies with best practices, need to improve layout and clarity. We will incorporate the comments into a second draft of the document.

Rex Sallabanks-Is it the intent for this committee to approve in September? Will it go higher?

Sara Pauley-I will take it to the Directors at the business committee.

Jenny-I agree with this approach.

The Missouri Comprehensive Conservation Strategy and Landscape Health Index

Norman Murray-The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is working on landscape conservation. The Missouri Comprehensive Conservation Strategy identifies key landscapes and opportunities for conservation and integrates the State Wildlife Action Plan, Forest Action Plan, Priority Watersheds and Partners Priorities. Key landscapes include forest and woodland, caves and karst, grasslands and prairie, glades, wetlands, rivers & streams. A final map includes about 13% of the state and 4,525 miles of streams. The map does not capture every high quality natural community. The agency can't save everything at once so limited resources are focused on where there can be impact. The strategy is incorporated into the agency strategic plan and is used to help drive partnership priorities. To define success, we are creating the Landscape Health Index which is modeled after the habitat suitability index. It uses components of a landscape health index such as occupancy rather than

abundance. It is too costly and time consuming to assess abundance. Species composition can indicate health as well as invasive species. Social condition can also be measured through human dimensions. The goal is to produce a dashboard. It is not intended to compare landscapes.

Wendi Weber-This is great. Did you identify the landscapes? What criteria did you use?

Norman Murray-We used biological criteria and pressed staff to focus in on real priorities.

Question-How is climate change factored in?

Norman Murray-Climate change was addressed in our State Wildlife Action Plan. Missouri will get hotter and drier with more extreme weather. This will affect wetlands and connections to riverine habitats. Shortleaf pine is expected to expand and grassland restoration may become more effective. We are not using assisted migration.

Davia Palmeri-Awesome project. How will you manage data?

Norman Murray-We will use an MS Access database or spreadsheet to do analysis. We will develop a model. Overall data management is an issue.

Dan Kennedy-There can be problems with narrowing the focus. If we only work on a fraction of a landscape, will we alienate some partners?

Norman Murray-This is outcome number one. Outcome number 2 involves public use and outreach. We are in the process of identifying public use. This will be directed at the most populated counties

Sara Pauley-Community conservationists are connecting with the public. There has been pushback. In the past we have not had good measures. Partners have been engaged. We are still doing work outside of the priority areas.

Norman Murray-Most of the hesitancy has been internal rather than external. It is hard to give up past priorities.

National Bird Conservation Priorities

Judith Scarl-Last year the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) released a national bird conservation priorities document. The US NABCI committee has 29 organizations which represents the full bird conservation community. NABCI identified priorities where there is consensus. They identified a short list of priorities for the next 3-5 years. The priorities reflect what needs to happen in bird conservation. We looked at many documents across multiple species. These are high level actions that were put to committee vote. Five themes emerged, land and water conservation, Research and Evaluation, Engagement and Partnerships, Addressing Threats and Policy and Funding. Partners are using the priorities and committing to communication of the priorities. There was an article in the Wildlife Professional, a symposium at The Wildlife Society meeting, a blog and NABCI is using the priorities to build new partnerships with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We are doing a gap analysis to see where more effort is needed. Most priorities are broader than birds. This one of the most powerful tools NABCI has ever created.

Jenny Dickson-Are these available online?

Judith Scarl-Yes, I can send Mark the link. (*the priorities are available at this [LINK](#)*)

Species Distribution Model White Paper

Jonathan Mawdsley-There have been proposals to do Species Distribution Modeling and there have been some issues related to use of certain models. A white paper was developed to identify good practices for development of models. The white paper was distributed to wildlife diversity program managers. Tom Edwards is putting together a training to enable managers to look at model output. You need to state obvious things in your problem definition. Model development should be collaborative and independent review is the gold standard for federal agencies. The Science and Research Committee is reviewing the draft white paper.

Melissa Panella-This is a good document. What comments did you receive?

Jonathan Mawdsley-Some questioned why models are needed.

Review 2019 Committee Work Plan

Jon Regosin-The current work plan includes the following: Advocate for State Wildlife Grant funding, support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, complete State Wildlife Action Plan Best Practices document, and National Conservation Need proposal. We need to add the work of the Joint Working Group and add identification of relevancy success stories to the charge of the joint working group.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:05pm

Action Items

There were no action items

Progress and Opportunities

The committee continues to support passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, development of the Relevancy Roadmap and increased funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program.

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified

None identified.

New Opportunities Identified

None

Submitted by: Sara Parker Pauley