



Wildlife Resources Policy Committee Report

Chair: Rick Jacobson, Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

Vice-chair: Chuck Sykes, Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Meeting on March 8, 2019

North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

Denver, CO

Committee Charge: *To discuss and develop recommendations on Association positions related to federal laws, regulations and policies concerning habitat conservation, wildlife resources and related funding for such programs as well as wildlife management practices including those concerned with problem or nuisance wildlife, and emerging issues (e.g., commercial trade). The committee also stays abreast of threatened and endangered species wildlife issues, state legislation pertaining to wildlife management and wildlife diversity funding initiatives*

Participants: Jenny Dickson (CTDEEP), Brian Wakeling (NDOW), Rick Jacobson (CTDEEP), Chuck Sykes (ALDCNR), John Bowers (GADNR), Jeremy Coleman (USFWS), Mylea Bayless (BCI), Brian Reichert (USGS), Ollie Torgerson (MAFWA), Brad Howard (NCWRC), Jennifer Sheehan (ARGFC), Steve Chadwick (MIDNR), Larry Clark (APHIS-WS), Janet Bucknall (APHIS-WS), Doug Bremeyer (WYGFD), Mitch Marcus (INDNR), Joe Benedict (TNWRA), Terry Messmer (BI), Elsa Haubold (USFWS), Briana Miles (TXWA), Bryan Jones (TXWA), Patrick Hogan (Southwick), Mike Reynolds (OHDNR), Taylor Schmitz (CSF), Joel Pedersen (NWTF), Mike O'Brien (FIC)

Scheduled Discussion Items

Committee Meeting Convened at 8:02 am

Rick Jacobson: Introduced himself as the new chair of the committee and offered a motion to accept the notes from the last meeting. John Bowers offered a motion; Brad Howard seconded. Motion carried.

Wildlife Services Report

Janet Bucknall-Wildlife Services works in partnership with the states. If we don't have a great relationship with the states, then we don't have good program. I appreciate AFWAs help in soliciting input from the states on our strategic plan. Deer management is conducted in 47 states. In FY18, 118 tons of venison was donated to food banks. Airport wildlife hazard management is a big part of our program. Of about 1900 people, 400 work on airport hazard management. We also work internationally. The Multiagency MOA on aircraft and wildlife strikes is still being revised. We are trying to resolve endangered species issues with USFWS and FAA. We hope to sign yet this year. The MOA will include AFWA. Feral swine, received increased federal funding in FY2014, it is now one of the largest programs and is funded at \$35M annually. The new Farm Bill includes \$75M (\$7M per year). We work in 35 states and have a working group or steering committee in each of those states to guide the feral hog program. Our goal is to control damage through population reduction. The program is different in every state.

Funding from the Farm Bill augments the feral hog program. There will be a listening session on March 28th. We will add AFWA to the list and hope that state fish and wildlife agencies can participate.

Chuck Sykes-Our meeting was held last week.

Janet Bucknall-We will send Mark the announcement.

Larry Clark-Our mission is to develop methods to support wildlife control. We are looking at tools for feral hog control. We are evaluating the Kaput feral hog toxicant. We are looking into humaneness, movement pattern and efficacy. We should complete our work by July 2019. We will have to incorporate this into the EIA. We are also working on sodium nitrite as a toxicant. The Environmental Protection Agency required a food safety study that has slowed things down. There is a formulation issue, where crumbling could pose a risk to birds. We will be studying that this summer to look at bird risk. This will result in a stronger registration package. We reformulated the bait using results from Australia. We are doing genetic analysis to determine management units and overlaying this on the landscape. We need to focus efforts on the right management unit. We think chemical pesticides available today for control may not be available in the future. Because of societal pressures, we are looking at new genetic technologies. Silencing RNA is already being used in the medical and agricultural fields. These can be species specific or population specific.

Rick Jacobson-Is this within a 10 year timeframe?

Larry Clark-Yes.

John Bowers-Are you looking at nontarget impacts of Kaput as well?

Larry Clark-Yes

John Bowers-Did EPA look at non-target affects?

Rick Jacobson-Is there a best management practice document for feral swine?

Terry Messmer-There is a monograph on feral hog management available through the Berryman Institute.

Larry Clark -There is a wildlife damage conference coming up in Starkville. We will be looking at other methods.

Rick Jacobson-Travis Ripley is looking at techniques for feral swine. Can someone contact him?

Larry-Yes, we will do that.

Janet Bucknall-There is a public comment period on M44 through March 21. M44 is an important tool for livestock protection against predators.

Landscape Conservation Working Group

Rick Jacobson-A forum was held on Tuesday by the Landscape Conservation Working Group, USFWS and Network for Landscape Conservation. The forum was focused on the AFWA Landscape Conservation resolution. There were about 80 attendees from state and federal agencies, NGOs and other groups. There were five breakout themes. 1) Vision and Goals; 2) Collaborative Governance and the Roles

of State, Federal and Private Partners; 3) Science and Conservation Planning; 4) Funding; and 5) Measuring Success. The groups were asked if the draft goal aligns with the needs of their organization; what high priority elements related to the vision/goal should be included in a regional/national framework; and if a framework were to be built, who should be involved in developing it. Comments expressed during the forum include the following: There is a need for traditional knowledge; funding is a backbone and stable funding can be achieved by showing progress towards accomplishment of goals; passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would be a game changer for landscape conservation; objectives should be discreet and measurable and include impact; we should learn from other efforts and adapt; the leadership team should evaluate the results, and potentially build a work plan that identifies next steps for the working group.

Mitch Marcus-Did you talk about regional structures?

Rick Jacobson-There was a conversation about regional groups. Collaboration through science applications should consider two scales. The regional fish and wildlife association was a separate science level of the conservation initiative.

Elsa Haubold-There is also a need to discuss at the national level after regional needs are identified to fit into a national framework. We should start at the regional level.

Rick Jacobson-If this was put into a word cloud, there would be overlap at regional scales.

Terry Messmer-WAFWA has put a lot of effort into sage grouse. The focus now is on the landscape instead of just sage grouse. A big part of the challenge is engaging diverse voices. How do you capture the hearts and minds of people?

Rick Jacobson-The AFWA resolution included communication. For this forum we narrowed down to five topics. We could have had a sixth theme related to communication.

Elsa Haubold-Human dimensions and social science needs also came up.

Chuck Sykes-Elsa's group summed it up well.

Ollie Torgerson-MAFWA is standing up a new landscape partnership in the Midwest. Kelley Myers and Kelly Hepler are heading up a steering committee.

Rick Jacobson-The number of partnerships has skyrocketed. The committee needs to determine what our next steps are that would benefit all the partners.

Report from Bat Working Group

Jenny Dickson-The committee formed the Bat Working Group last September. We selected working group members based on agency affiliation, geography and expertise. We have over one hundred years of experience on the working group. The working group developed a charge and a work plan. Our initial progress was slowed by the federal shutdown. We held a forum on Monday and will compile a formal report for the AFWA Annual meeting. There were 29 participants at the forum with representation from every AFWA region. A number of needs were identified including the lack of baseline data, the need to identify data gaps, the need for topical webinars, the need to establish a better way for states to

interact, need to do more sharing of collaborations, the need for a survey of state authorities and the need for an assessment and identification of barriers.

Rick Jacobson-Are there any questions or action items?

Jenny Dickson-We sent the work plan to the chair.

Human Wildlife Conflicts Working Group Report

Brian Wakeling-The Human and Wildlife Conflicts Working Group met on Tuesday. We've distributed the Human-Bear Conflict report. Our stock is getting low?

Rick Jacobson-Are you considering another printing?

Brian Wakeling-The Berryman Institute subsidized the printing cost. Would this be an option?

Terry Messmer-We sent out 2,000 copies, it's up to the committee.

Rick Jacobson-Can you give an update in September if you can do another printing of the bear report?

Brian Wakeling-The working group is developing a new report on coyote conflicts. Our process is we come up with the experts and produce the document. The working group reviews the document and we keep the Wildlife Resources Policy committee updated so there are no surprises. For the bear conflict report, we did not know what the approval process was. Jim Douglas discussed this with the AFWA Executive Committee. If this committee determine that a report is simply advisory and not prescriptive or pointed fingers at a state, then the executive committee is OK. The report is just a description of the benefits and approaches of management. If we stay in that lane then the committee can approve. I brought copies of the report, "Methods for Managing Deer in Populated Areas". There were two human deaths from wildlife this year. A year ago, Nevada hosted a meeting to provide human wildlife attack response training. The training was conducted by Canadian experts. Canada deals with 30 instances each year. The training provides advice on how to interact with a coroner and how do respond to the incident. When there is a fatality, it should be viewed as a potential crime scene. Training was given on how to deal with police, and how to collect evidence. In Nevada, 93 people went through the training. Alaska is hosting the training in late April 2019. It's best to have training before there is an incident, including how to work with the media and victims.

Mitch Marcus-Who conducts the training? What is their name?

Brian Wakeling-Alberta and British Columbia do the training.

Brian Wakeling-The vice chair of the working group has been vacant since Michael O'brien stepped down. Doug Brimeyer has stepped up to be the new vice chair. We circulated a draft of the report "Methods of Managing Deer in Population Areas" to the committee last fall. We would like the committee's approval of that report. At the last meeting the committee asked for an additional 6 months to review. We received some feedback. Most of the comments were editorial. The working group would appreciate your approval so we can move forward with publication.

Rick Jacobson-This week we received some editorial comments. Are there any other comments?

Comment-A table of contents would be helpful.

Brian Wakeling-There is a table of contents but no page number yet. Bryant White and I reviewed the comments.

Rick Jacobson-Will the peer review process change any policies?

Brian Wakeling-The peer review will point out where more references are needed. It will not review our positions. Terry Messmer sits in on the working group meeting and is apt at editing.

Rick Jacobson-Is there a motion to approve the report with the condition that if there are any changes in policy then the working group should return to this committee?

John Bowers- I move to approve the report. Ollie Torgerson seconded. The motion carried.

John Bowers-What is the timeline for publication?

Brian Wakeling-Publication in the Human-Wildlife Conflict Journal moves fast.

Terry Messmer-About a 60 day review, rebuttal and then formatting. We could make it by September.

Rick Jacobson-If not September then March. What is the timeline for the coyote conflict report?

Brian Wakeling-By this meeting next year, we hope to have a draft. We will share information at the AFWA Annual meeting. After the bear report was started, the deer report followed close behind. That was more than the work group could handle. The deer report took a little longer. We are trying to find the optimal pace.

Brad Howard-In North Carolina we had a state training on wildlife response and have had four incidents. The training is very applicable. Should the human wildlife conflict working group explore a more formal training system? Training is very beneficial. We have different groups do the training, these types of incidents will continue to grow. Can there be AFWA sanctioning?

Brian Wakeling-The value of training is incredible. There are challenges because we are working with two provincial governments for the current training. We are seeking to sanction their work. I can contact the provincial government to see if there can be AFWA sanctioning. We can explore this?

Brad Howard-I encourage states to think about this.

Brian Wakeling-The Berryman Institute offered to help. There are issues of disclosure of photos of victims. The work group would like to be helpful.

Rick Jacobson-Thank you to those on the work group for their help.

Update on Regional Monarch Conservation Strategy

Ed Boggess-Thanked the committee for including monarchs on the agenda.

Claire Beck-We started the monarch strategy in 2015. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the USFWS provided funding to support the effort. The strategy was completed last summer. The eastern population covered about 6 hectares on the wintering grounds. The western population has decreased by 85%. The USFWS will make a listing decision in June 2019. It will take into account the eastern and western populations. A meeting was held in Nebraska last fall. Using information on challenges and actions, another workshop will be held in Missouri this summer.

Rick Jacobson-What has been the 5-year trend?

Claire Beck-The trend is down, both boom and bust. There has been favorable weather in the east, fires may have had an impact in the west.

Ed Boggess-The low point was in 2014. This was the year that monarchs were petitioned for federal listing. Since 2014, populations have been up or stable. This past year was the highest in 10 years.

Chuck Sykes-I would like to request some time on the agenda for Terry Messmer to discuss a working group on feral horses.

Terry Messmer-The Berryman Institute publishes the Human-Wildlife Conflict Journal. Free roaming equids were the first invasive species. They were brought here 500 years ago. Only two populations in Wyoming have original genetics. This is the only invasive species protected by federal law. This is not just a western issue on public lands. There are over 43,000 feral horses and it costs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) \$81M a year to manage them. Half of that is to support horses in care facilities. The spring issue of the Wildlife Professional has an article. The first act gave BLM the tools they needed to remove 80,000 equids to get to the desired management level. Slaughter was not an available option. Free roaming equids has not had a place at AFWA. What we don't know is what the public thinks about them. We don't have rigorous survey data. Is the public OK with spending \$100M on confinement? This working group could focus on a national survey. What does the public know and what would they accept. Congress is being influenced by advocacy groups. There will be a meeting in Reno this spring to discuss the priorities that need to be done. The BLM has modeling tools that can define cost. This seems like an issue a working group could take on. It could help increase visibility of this issue. If we don't get a handle on this, we will have 160,000 on federal land in the coming years and horses do move off federal land. This is a national issue.

Chuck Sykes-What does the committee think? Is this our issue for AFWA or WAFWA?

John Bowers-This seems to be primarily focused in the west. Why not form a WAFWA working group that could develop policy or recommendations for AFWA.

Terry Messmer-This is a national issue. The \$81M spent on this are federal funds. This is an issue for all Americans.

Rick Jacobson-Work groups are expected to be of limited time. It sounds like this is in concert with our charge.

Terry Messmer-Once we get to an appropriate management level, we can set a goal to get to an appropriate management level in 4 years.

Mitch Marcus-Are feral horses considered wildlife?

Terry Messmer-They are not wildlife and not livestock.

Janet Bucknall-Isn't there an Invasive Species Committee? Would that committee be a better home for a working group?

John Bowers-Thanks for your response about whose issue this is. Since this is a national policy issue, it probably does reside in this committee.

Terry Messmer-The Invasive Species Committee wants to focus on wildlife.

Rick Jacobson-The is a substantive issue. Building a path to an appropriate management level would be warmly endorsed. I suggest you work with your colleagues to develop a five year work plan that could be shared with the Invasive Species Committee and perhaps we will have a conversation with the AFWA Executive Committee.

Terry Messmer-We will do that after the May meeting in Reno.

Rick Jacobson-Are there any other issues?

Chuck Sykes: I motion to adjourn, seconded by Mitch Marcus.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:05am

Action Items

The committee approved the report “Methods of Managing Deer in Population Areas”.

Progress and Opportunities

The landscape conservation working group hosted a successful forum at the North American. The next steps of the working group will be determined at a future date.

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified

None identified.

New Opportunities Identified

The committee will explore the formation of a working group on feral horses

Submitted by: Rick Jacobson