

2014

ANNUAL REPORT



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES





Nicole Cappucio of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and her colleagues survey fish on the South Fork of the Ogden River.



**EVERY HOUR OF EVERY DAY,
THE GREATEST CONSERVATION
SYSTEM IN THE WORLD IS AT
WORK SAFEGUARDING FISH
AND WILDLIFE**





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Every hour of every day, the greatest conservation system in the world is at work safeguarding North America's precious fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.

The boots on the ground delivering conservation are well worn by state, territorial and provincial conservation agencies, which collectively employ the largest, highly trained conservation workforce on the continent. Combined, we manage or control a vast estate of lands and waters for proactive conservation and recreational access, and we deliver billions of dollars worth in continental financial investments annually in the public trust for long-term benefit and use.



Our great conservation system is so effective because we integrate with the conservation efforts of federal agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Plus, we depend upon the community of private land owners and non-governmental organizations that help agencies implement conservation projects and connect more people to wildlife-related recreation.

Conservation is indeed an intricate machine and that is why the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies is absolutely vital as the voice of fish and wildlife agencies. The Association harnesses the power of integration and coordination to enable its members, including my agency, to conserve fish and wildlife on a continental and hemispheric scale across a tapestry of public and private lands.

The Association acts tirelessly to protect state management authority; strengthen partnerships; and build support in Congress and the Administration for science-based conservation needs. The Association is also energizing the work to secure systems of dedicated funding to conserve the full array of species through AFWA's *Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources*, which was announced in 2014.

While I like to use the words "conservation machine" to describe the system, it is truly because of people who feel the calling of the outdoors as part of their own life story, that we as agencies and as Association members can make a difference.

I am very proud to be a part of this Association and to serve as its 2014-2015 President. As you join me in celebrating AFWA's stories of accomplishment, please contemplate the critical role you play in telling our conservation story of who we are, what we do and why we do it for people all across the continent.

Thank you for all that you do to support fish and wildlife conservation.

Larry Voyles

2014-2015 President of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Director of the Arizona Game & Fish Dept.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Last year, I completed my 34th year of employment as a wildlife professional. During that time, all of my work has been within a state agency (the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department) or in service to state, provincial and territorial agencies via my tenure with the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

Based on this career—and what a wonderful career it has been—I know that the work of state, provincial and territorial fish and wildlife agencies is meaningful and fulfilling, yet complex and demanding. Such agencies are close to the ground; close to the people who enjoy fish and wildlife; and close to the democratic institutions that are critical to their success.

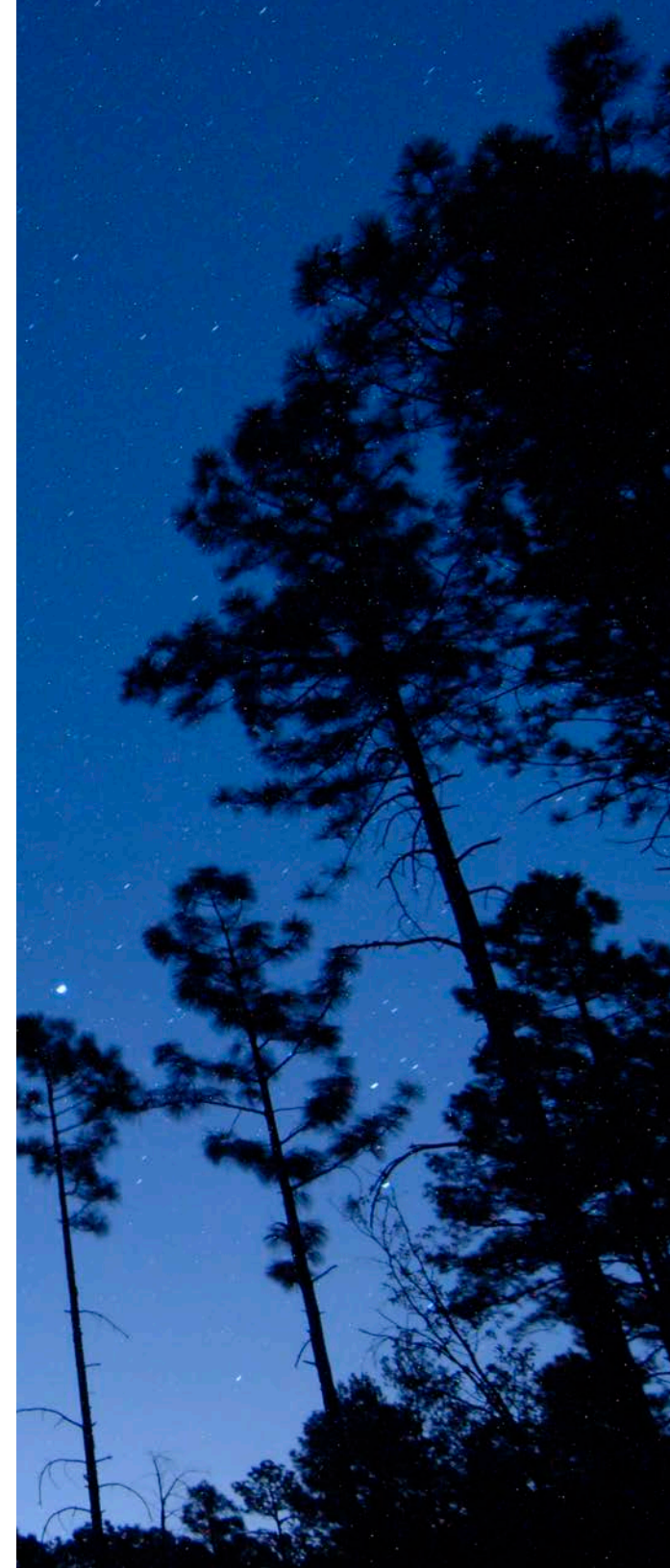
Day in and day out, stories unfold in headquarters, regional and home offices with biologists, wardens, educators and administrators on the front lines of managing resources, enforcing laws, teaching classes and promulgating regulations to promote the conservation of and responsible access to fish and wildlife resources. Few people have a true appreciation for how the work of dedicated fish and wildlife professionals impacts their quality of life at some scale.

These many stories roll up into an important whole. Inside our 2014 Annual Report, the pages are replete with the Association's contributions to the great story of conservation during the past year—a year where we worked to provide resources, tools and policy support at a national level for your work at the local level. Looking ahead, we will continue to work to address ongoing and emerging priority issues of the day and to tell your story with renewed vigor.

Ronald J. Regan

Ron Regan

Executive Director of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies





conservation

ADVOCACY

National conservation laws, programs and policies – steeped in science and sound management – are foundational to achieving successful, state conservation outcomes.

By themselves, individual laws may accomplish little. But, when combined with people, passion, fortitude and funding, each plays an important role in moving a fish and wildlife conservation legislative agenda forward.

While federal appropriations for fish and wildlife conservation programs are the gas and grease needed to effectively meet and sustain state and national conservation goals and objectives, other Congressional legislation provides the leverage, authority and framework to unite partners and improve efficiency of conservation delivery.

LEGISLATION

SPORTSMEN'S LEGISLATION

In 2014, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the SHARE Act, which was a package of hunting, angling and sportsmen's bills sponsored by the House Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus leadership. The Senate's Bipartisan Sportsmen's Package sponsored by Senators Kay Hagan (NC) and Lisa Murkowski (AK) contained provisions similar to the SHARE Act, but a cloture vote failed on the Senate floor despite widespread support for the bill.

Still, the post-election lame duck session of the 113th Congress did yield the passage of an increase of the federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25. This small, yet significant, conservation piece of the sportsmen's packages was enacted in 2014, which will result in more funding for habitat conservation and public access for hunting and outdoor recreation.



Nick Wiley (FL), Ed Boggess (MN) and Colonel Curtis Brown (FL) briefed Congress on the importance of the Lacey Act to state-based conservation.

FISHERIES CONSERVATION & MITIGATION

The Association joined the greater conservation community to facilitate the introduction of and bipartisan support for the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NFHCA) last year. The bill authorizes the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP)—an unprecedented, national partnership of grassroots fisheries conservation efforts developed to protect, restore and enhance the nation's fish and fish habitats.

NFHCA successfully passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee without amendment and was a strong contender as an amendment to the Senate's Bipartisan Sportsmen's Package. Nonetheless, the bill ultimately stalled with the sportsmen's legislation.

Last year, state fish and wildlife agencies also were extremely concerned about the contents of the USFWS' "National Fish Hatchery System and Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report" and the associated undesirable ramifications to mandatory fish mitigation responsibilities resulting from federal water development agency projects.

The states united in expressing their concern through letters, Congressional testimony, legislation and nationally coordinated discussions in an advocacy effort to successfully increase the funding needed by the Service to maintain fish hatchery operations and prioritization of sport fish propagation in fulfillment of federal agency mitigation responsibilities.

Thanks to states' outreach, the FY15 omnibus yielded higher funding for the national fish hatchery system to sustain fish propagation programs through the end of the fiscal year.

LACEY ACT

A staggering \$19+ billion dollars a year is being reported in the illegal trade of fish, wildlife and plants. When state laws and penalties are not enough to deter criminal trafficking, the Lacey Act provides for joint federal and state cooperation and prosecution to address egregious cases and disrupt large-scale, illegal activities, both inter-state and globally.

In the first session of the 113th Congress, disconcerting hearings and proposed legislation to amend the Lacey Act started to proliferate on the Hill. As a result, AFWA sponsored a Congressional briefing to present the state agencies' perspectives on the importance of the Lacey Act to state conservation efforts. State directors Nick Wiley (FL) and Ed Boggess (MN) with Colonel Curtis Brown (FL-Div. of Law Enforcement) gave the briefing.

State directors and their staff expressed unwavering support for the law as well as their desired avoidance of amendments that could undermine state management authority, cause over-exploitation of fish and wildlife resources and perpetuate the spread of invasive species.





ENERGY

The development of energy resources—oil, gas, wind and solar—continues to reside at the forefront of national policy discussions.

The trickle down pressure from the energy development and transmission sectors onto the states is taxing agencies' capacities to manage their fish and wildlife resources and provide enduring opportunities for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation experiences.

Last year, AFWA developed training in partnership with federal agencies, industry and NGOs to help state agencies identify regulatory processes associated with energy development and learn how to integrate into those processes to influence planning and design; build relationships with industry; and have effective conversations on constructing energy and transmission projects to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife resources. The training is helping to bring the various agency and industry components into a more cohesive, efficient process.

Furthermore, AFWA urged President Obama and his Administration to improve their coordination with state agencies on federal energy, climate and natural resource conservation policies. Through greater alignment early in the planning process, the Association asserted, federal and state agencies can work to avoid unintended consequences to the management of the nation's fish and wildlife resources.



OTHER FEDERAL LEGISLATION & POLICY

The Association engages with Congress and the Administration to strengthen support for sound, state-based conservation. That is why we are the voice of fish and wildlife agencies.

In 2014, AFWA and its members sent letters to Congress; delivered testimony and briefings; participated in coalitions; and provided comments to federal agencies on more than 30 pieces of legislation, including:

- Access to Public Lands for Hunting & Fishing
- Budget Sequestration
- Chronic Wasting Disease Program Standards & State Authority
- Clean Water Act Jurisdiction & Waters of the U.S.
- Conservation Tax Incentives
- Controlled Substances Act
- Duck Stamp Legislation
- Endangered Species Act
- Energy and Revenue-sharing Legislation
- Invasive Species
- Farm Bill Reauthorization
- Federal Appropriations
- Federal Lands Management & Conservation Planning
- Sage Grouse & Lesser Prairie Chicken Legislation
- Land & Water Conservation Fund Reauthorization
- Lacey Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- National Fish Habitat Conservation Act
- National Fish Hatchery System
- Natural Resources Adaptation
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act
- Prelisting Voluntary Conservation Actions Proposed Rule
- Public Lands Legislation
- Sikes Act
- Sportsmen's Legislation
- Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund and Transportation Reauthorization
- Water Resources & Reform Development Act
- Wildfire Disaster Funding Act

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FLORA AND FAUNA (CITES)

Wildlife trafficking dominated much of the international wildlife conservation dialogue in 2014 and was the focus of extensive resources of the U.S. government. Heads of state are weighing in on elephant and rhino poaching and popular TV shows are highlighting animal and plant harvest. This has raised the profile of CITES, a treaty between nations to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants is not detrimental to their survival.

The increased focus requires that state agencies remain an active participant in trade discussions at home and overseas. AFWA's CITES Technical Work Group continues to participate in key meetings and confer with partners including the 27th Animals Committee, the 65th Standing Committee, Interagency CITES Coordinating Committee meetings, Wildlife Trafficking Federal Advisory Committee meetings and more.

The CITES Technical Work Group conducted the first of four CITES workshops at the October 2014 SEAFWA meeting. The workshop engaged state agency personnel in dynamic conversations about the ability of CITES and other international treaties and initiatives to both positively and negatively impact state agency authority and capability to manage wildlife. The workshop series is being funded through a multistate conservation grant of the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program.



AFWA ABROAD

In addition to its presence at CITES, AFWA attended the 11th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and represented the states on the U.S. National Ramsar Committee and the Hemispheric Council of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

AFWA represented state agencies at CMS on three key issues—a proposal to list Polar Bear in Appendix II; a resolution on the America's Flyway Framework; and a resolution and guidelines to prevent poisoning of migratory species, which included lead ammunition and fishing weights, an important state authority issue.

The Association also represented state agencies' interests in the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative; the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group; the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management; and the Convention for Biological Diversity.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANE TRAPPING STANDARDS

If AFWA had not led the effort to make an agreement with the European Union (EU) to maintain the fur trade in the late 1990s, there would be no trappers and trapping in the U.S. today. And, state agencies that rely on trapping to conserve a myriad of wildlife species would be struggling to meet their public trust management responsibilities.

In 1997, the U.S. signed an Agreed Minute with the EU allowing the trade in wild fur to continue from the U.S. to the EU. The Association led the way on behalf of the states to develop the commitments made in the agreement, and we were ultimately given the responsibility of fulfilling these obligations with funding provided by USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services.

One priority commitment was to produce a set of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping based on an internationally accepted animal welfare standard. The BMPs are widely used within trapper education programs to provide information about traps and, in some cases, special techniques to achieve the most efficient, selective, safe and humane capture.

Since the first BMP was published in 2003, 20 additional reports have followed on trapping furbearer species. In 2014, AFWA's Furbearer Technical Working Group used the latest research to update 11 of the BMPs including American badger, bobcat, coyote, raccoon and river otter. The final two BMPs on Arctic fox and wolverine will be completed in 2016.



A MINUTE FOR TRAPPING

Experts from all 50 state agencies and other conservation groups that care about the environment, natural resources and animal welfare are working together to improve and modernize the technology of trapping through scientific research.

In addition to producing BMPs and other trapping-related materials, AFWA maintains a National Furbearer Harvest Statistics Database and we offer a web-based National Trapper Education Program.

A person wearing a cap and sunglasses is holding a long, thin antenna against a clear blue sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and silhouetting the person. The antenna is a complex structure of thin rods and wires.

conservation

FUNDING

Funding for state- and territorial-based fish and wildlife programs is the gas that fuels America's conservation machine. However, the tank is too low, and dropping lower.

Over the last several fiscal years, appropriators have proposed to zero-out conservation programs important to state agencies and succeeded in reducing others.

As state agencies face ever-shifting natural, financial, political and social environments, it is clear that AFWA's work to secure comprehensive and dedicated funding to address the full range of agency mandates in the public interest is crucial.

FARM BILL

2014 FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

... \$28.2 billion... that's the level of funding authorized in the Conservation Title of the Agricultural Act of 2014, otherwise known as the 2014 Farm Bill. Although it represents an approximate \$4 billion cut, the Conservation Title is still the federal government's largest and strongest investment in private lands conservation.

The 2014 Farm Bill is creating opportunities for state fish and wildlife agencies to work with farmers and ranchers and partner with conservation groups to restore habitat, reduce erosion, improve water quality and provide access to hunters and anglers.

AFWA's Agricultural Conservation Committee and its working groups guided the Association's advocacy during the final phases of the Farm Bill reauthorization process. In what we consider a major win for conservation, the Agricultural Act of 2014 met all of AFWA's top priorities: to create policies to protect wetlands and native grasslands; and to continue effective, voluntary conservation programs at robust funding levels.

Yet, the power of the Farm Bill conservation machine was reduced in FY15 when congressional appropriators cut the Environmental Quality Incentives Program by \$136 million and the Conservation Stewardship Program by \$402 million—reductions that came on top of nearly \$250 million in sequestration cuts to Farm Bill conservation programs.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

The 2014 Farm Bill gave the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authority to implement programs under the previous 2008 Farm Bill rules. As a result, several private lands programs valuable to state agencies were able to enroll participants throughout the year:

- The Conservation Reserve Program enrolled 504,000 acres under continuous signup, and allocated an additional 86,800 acres to seven states for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement projects. There was no general sign-up held.
- Under the newly combined Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, 77,000 acres were protected under farm or ranch easements and 52,000 acres were protected under wetland easements.
- The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program awarded nearly \$20 million in grants to nine states and one tribe in support of public hunting and fishing access programs.

As rules were drafted and policies developed, AFWA's Agricultural Conservation Committee and working groups engaged regularly with USDA to provide input and encourage the department to align Farm Bill program delivery with state agency priority resource concerns.



FARM BILL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS ARE CRITICAL TO STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES FOR CONSERVING AND IMPROVING MILLIONS OF ACRES OF HABITAT AND FOR PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUNTING AND ANGLING ON PRIVATE LANDS.



MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

Each grant that has been awarded through the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) since its inception in 2000 has addressed a pressing conservation priority identified by state agencies. In sum, more than \$90 million in funding has been dedicated toward projects benefitting wild mammals, wild birds and sport fish and to help recruit and retain hunters, shooting sports enthusiasts, anglers and boaters.

Highlights of MSCGP projects completed in 2014 include: Coordination of the Industry, Federal and State Agency Coalition (AFWA); Increase Fishing License Buyers and Excise Tax Receipts through State-Industry Cooperative Research into Churn Rates and First Time License Buyers (American Sportfishing Association); and Increase Hunting License Buyers and Excise Tax Receipts through State-Industry Cooperative Recruitment and Retention Research and Testing (National Shooting Sports Foundation). For the 2015 MSCGP cycle, AFWA members selected 14 projects to recommend for funding.

The MSCGP is funded through the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program because of the financial contribution of the hunting, archery, shooting, fishing and boating industries and purchases by America's sportsmen and women. The MSCGP is co-administered by AFWA and the USFWS.

THE STATE & TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS PROGRAM

The State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program provides each state and territory with an average of \$1 million annually in dedicated, on-the-ground conservation funding to prevent fish and wildlife from becoming endangered.

The grant funds are used by agencies to develop and implement their congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans, which assess the health of each state's wildlife and habitats; identify the problems they face; and outline the actions needed to conserve them over the long term.

Despite being the only federal grant program with the specific purpose of preventing expensive, last-ditch recovery efforts of at-risk species, the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants program has endured a 35% cut since 2010.

Added to that equation, the Association estimates that at least \$26 million is needed per state each year for agencies to reach 75% implementation of their State Wildlife Action Plans. It would take billions of dollars per state annually for full implementation. It's a seemingly insurmountable differential between what is available now and what is required to achieve maximum conservation success.



THE TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE FLY-IN

To raise awareness of the funding crisis for fish and wildlife diversity and state/territory-based conservation, AFWA again coordinated the annual Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In in February 2014.

The Fly-In is an important Capitol Hill event for representatives from the 6,400+ member Teaming With Wildlife Coalition of agencies, NGOs and nature-based businesses to build congressional support for the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. More than 90 advocates from nearly two dozen states participated in the event.

During the Fly-In's well-attended "Celebrating Wildlife" Congressional reception, AFWA and the coalition honored Senators Mary Landrieu (LA) and James Risch (ID) and Representatives Jeff Fortenberry (NE) and Betty McCollum (MN) for championing the grant program.

The Virginia Conservation Network received the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition Member Achievement Award and the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Institute were presented with the State Wildlife Action Plan Partnership Award.

Thanks to the advocacy efforts of the Fly-In participants and ongoing outreach by AFWA and the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition, a total of 41 Senators and 129 members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed on to "Dear Colleague" letters supporting FY15 funding for the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program.

Ultimately, funding for the program remained steady at \$58.7 million despite a proposed reduction of \$8.7 million by the Administration.

STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS

The October 2015 deadline for state agencies to update their State Wildlife Action Plans is fast approaching. To assist states through the revision process, AFWA partnered with the Missouri Dept. of Conservation to host a national workshop in July 2014. More than 100 participants from state agencies and partners attended the meeting.

In addition, the Association conducted a quarterly status survey and coordinated monthly webinars on best practices and other topics related to revision of the plans. AFWA also briefed federal agencies, congressional staff and partners throughout the year on the states' revision progress. Much of the work related to State Wildlife Action Plans was funded through a multistate conservation grant.



TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE
a natural investment

THE BLUE RIBBON PANELISTS

The co-chairs and the 24 panelists represent the outdoor recreation retail and manufacturing sector, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, legislatures, conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Co-Chairs

David Freudenthal, Crowell & Moring LLP; former Wyoming governor
John L. Morris, Bass Pro Shops

Panelists

Kevin Butt, Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing North America, Inc.
Richard Childress, Richard Childress Racing Enterprises
Jeff Crane, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Bruce Culpepper, Shell Americas
John Doerr, Pure Fishing, Inc.
Jim Faulstich, Daybreak Ranch
John Fitzpatrick, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Gregg Hill, Hess Corporation
Rebecca Humphries, National Wild Turkey Federation
Dr. Stephen Kellert, Yale University School of Forestry & Environmental Studies
Jennifer Mull, Backwoods Equipment, Inc.
John W. Newman, LLOG Exploration Company, LLC
Michael Nussman, American Sportfishing Association
Margaret O'Gorman, Wildlife Habitat Council
Glenn Olson, National Audubon Society
Collin O'Mara, National Wildlife Federation
Connie Parker, CSPARKERGROUP
Charlie Potter, Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
Steve Sanetti, National Shooting Sports Foundation
Lynn Scarlett, The Nature Conservancy
John Tomke, Wildlife & Hunting Heritage Conservation Council
Jeff Trandahl, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Dr. James Walker, EDF Renewable Energy
Dr. Steve Williams, Wildlife Management Institute
Bob Ziehmer, Missouri Department of Conservation

Ex Officio

Michael Bean, U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Ron Regan, AFWA

THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON SUSTAINING AMERICA'S DIVERSE FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

The diversity of wild species that inhabit our lands and waters is one of our nation's greatest treasures. Our quality of life, outdoor heritage and fiscal prosperity are intrinsically tied to the future of fish and wildlife.

For too many species, though, we are failing in our custody to leave the next generation with healthier fish and wildlife populations than those we inherited.

Officially announced in 2014, AFWA's *Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources* is intent on producing game-changing thinking that will move forward a 21st century model of funding conservation that will produce both a diverse conservation legacy and a vibrant economic future.

Co-chaired by Bass Pro Shops founder and CEO, John L. Morris, and former Wyoming governor, David Freudenthal, the Panel members will collaborate to produce recommendations on the most sustainable and equitable options for delivering sustained funding to states and their partners. The first meeting of the Blue Ribbon Panel is scheduled to convene in March 2015.



David Freudenthal and John Morris

*"BY ASSEMBLING THIS
PANEL OF HIGHLY
REGARDED LEADERS AND
PROBLEM SOLVERS, WE
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OUTDOOR HERITAGE."*

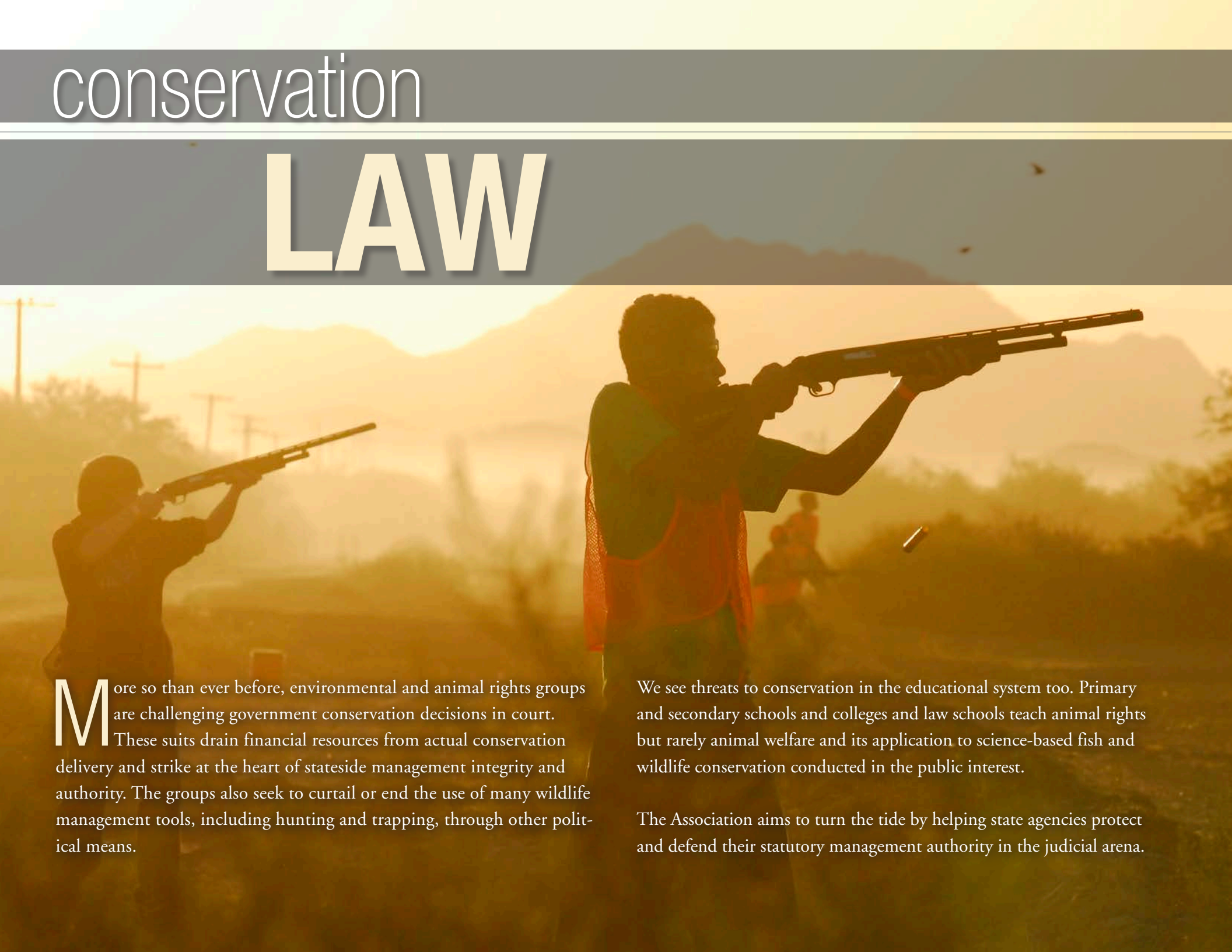
*~ JOHN L. MORRIS,
FOUNDER & CEO BASS PRO SHOPS
BLUE RIBBON PANEL CO-CHAIR*

*"IT IS TIME TO CREATE
CERTAINTY FOR
BOTH INDUSTRY AND
THE CONSERVATION
COMMUNITY BY BUILDING A
21ST CENTURY
FUNDING MODEL."*

*~ DAVID FREUDENTHAL,
FORMER WYOMING GOVERNOR
BLUE RIBBON PANEL CO-CHAIR*

conservation

LAW

The background image shows a sunset scene with silhouettes of hunters in a field. One hunter in the foreground is wearing an orange vest and holding a shotgun. Another hunter is visible in the background to the left. The sky is a warm orange and yellow, with mountains in the distance.

More so than ever before, environmental and animal rights groups are challenging government conservation decisions in court. These suits drain financial resources from actual conservation delivery and strike at the heart of stateside management integrity and authority. The groups also seek to curtail or end the use of many wildlife management tools, including hunting and trapping, through other political means.

We see threats to conservation in the educational system too. Primary and secondary schools and colleges and law schools teach animal rights but rarely animal welfare and its application to science-based fish and wildlife conservation conducted in the public interest.

The Association aims to turn the tide by helping state agencies protect and defend their statutory management authority in the judicial arena.

LEGAL STRATEGY PROGRAMS

AFWA's Legal Strategy program had a promising, action-packed first year. The Association's general counsel spearheads the strategy under the advisement of AFWA's Executive and Legal Committees.

LAW SCHOOL OUTREACH & LAW CLINIC

In 2014, the Association deepened its connections to the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Law.

AFWA's general counsel taught a wildlife law course during the school's spring and fall semesters highlighting animal welfare, the North American Model and state authority to manage fish and wildlife under the public trust. As part of the curriculum, the MSU students assisted with the production of AFWA's new Wildlife Law Call, an e-newsletter providing wildlife law case updates. The first issue will be distributed in early 2015.

The Association's legal team also developed a new course covering legal issues with energy development and wildlife which AFWA's general counsel will begin teaching in early 2015.

Moreover, the Association signed an MOU with MSU College of Law to establish an AFWA Law Clinic. Selected law students will work in AFWA's DC office and support the Legal Strategy's judicial engagement and legal research, or at state agencies to support their legal needs. By doing so, students get hands-on experiences with conservation law. In 2014, AFWA hosted one law student and placed two others with state agencies.

By reaching out to MSU and other law schools across the country, the Association hopes that students will carry their wildlife law experiences forward as they become practicing lawyers, legislators, judges, parents and voters.

THE ASSOCIATION IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST MEMBER AGENCIES WHEN THEY NEED SUPPORT IN LITIGATION. IN LATE 2014, AFWA'S COUNSEL WORKED WITH THE WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ITS APPEAL TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT IN A CASE INVOLVING HUNTING REGULATIONS.

LEGAL RESEARCH LIBRARY

The Association continued to make progress toward establishing a Wildlife Law Library. Composed of two databases, the first catalogs briefs, cases and other documents to help states and pro bono attorneys to respond to legal issues. The second database, generously hosted by MSU College of Law, archives AFWA historical materials and other public domain documents.

WILDLIFE LAW EDUCATION FOR LAWYERS

Last year, the Legal Strategy developed a blueprint for delivering wildlife law educational opportunities and products to practicing lawyers and judges through live seminars and web-based courses. AFWA's legal educational programming will feature topics such as the legal underpinnings of state authority to manage wildlife; the energy/wildlife nexus and associated state authority issues; and various conservation laws.

PRO BONO ATTORNEY NETWORK

AFWA's legal team started to build state networks of attorneys who are willing to assist the Association on a pro bono basis with legal filings—principally to draft and file amicus briefs. By the end of 2014, AFWA had launched "Team Arizona" and additional state networks were beginning to take shape.

Additionally, the Association inaugurated a Legal Strategy Advisory Council, a think tank of legal experts, to provide advice to AFWA leadership and our general counsel on ways to strengthen state legal authority.

LEGAL COUNSEL

AFWA offers in-kind legal services to state agencies, regional associations, flyway councils and other state-agency-based entities on contract and nonprofit governance issues. The legal team also monitors and analyzes court cases and federal agency actions that may impact states' legal authority to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats.

The Association is available to assist member agencies when they need support in litigation. In late 2014, AFWA's counsel worked with the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources to support its appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court in a case involving hunting regulations.

THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The Association supports member agencies in their efforts to manage fish and wildlife resources in accordance with the principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which is based on two keystones:

- 1) Fish and wildlife belong to all Americans and are held in trust by government for the benefit of present and future generations; and
- 2) Fish and wildlife need to be managed so that their populations will be sustained forever.



conservation

SCIENCE

Science is the very backbone of fish and wildlife management by state, territorial, provincial and federal agencies, and the Association emphasizes its importance in all of our work.

The Association is responsible for keeping its members informed of the research, policy and information needs of agencies and to manage a process for addressing those needs through a variety of mechanisms, including enhanced federal-state-NGO partnerships and cross-border collaboration.

Our work is not a one-group mission; it's unequivocally founded on creating stronger partnerships to achieve greater conservation delivery.



AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE CONSERVATION

Around the world, amphibians (40%), freshwater turtles (>50%) and other reptiles are declining, primarily due to the impacts of diseases and unregulated and illegal trade. The U.S. is home to the most salamander species—nearly 200—and the greatest number of turtle species—nearly 50—making any threats to herpetofaunal populations a major concern for state agencies.

The leadership of AFWA's Amphibian & Reptile Subcommittee and Invasive Species Committee acted on the emerging concern of the salamander chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*) by sending a letter to the USFWS expressing a need for prompt attention and action. The fungal pathogen has not yet been documented domestically, but has been causing die-offs in salamander populations in parts of Europe. The letter indicated the states' support for strong measures to prevent the spread of the disease to native U.S. species.

To address the threat of unregulated harvest and illegal trade, the Amphibian & Reptile Subcommittee released a whitepaper, Applying the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation to Herpetofauna.



SINCE THE U.S. IS A GLOBAL HOTSPOT FOR MOST SALAMANDER SPECIES AND GIVEN DISEASE AND OTHER THREATS TO POPULATIONS, IT WAS TIMELY TO GIVE ATTENTION TO THIS SPECIES.

Unanimously approved by directors at AFWA's September 2014 Business Meeting, the paper offers guidance to enhance state authority over the management of amphibians and reptiles.

At the meeting, the subcommittee also delivered a special presentation regarding international trade in U.S. turtles including a discussion of the vast numbers of turtles and the amounts of money involved in illegal trade along with the need for management attention for these species.

In addition, the subcommittee hosted four regionally customized webinars in partnership with the USGS Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative and the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) Federal Agencies Steering Committee. AFWA staff also participated in the Wildlife Habitat Council's Reptile and Amphibian Advisory Committee regarding its habitat certification program.

PARTNERS IN AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE CONSERVATION (PARC)

PARC celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2014. The Wildlife Society's annual conference served as an appropriate venue for a symposium by PARC leadership to promote achievements before a broad audience while also seeking feedback on progress and potential new trajectories. With direct staff support to PARC via AFWA, state agency needs and priorities were well represented in these discussions.

Salamanders were another focus in 2014 with PARC's Year of the Salamander campaign. In collaboration with AFWA, conservation groups and others highlighted efforts and challenges in salamander conservation through www.yearofthesalamander.org; monthly newsletters, including features on the work of state agencies; and other outreach activities and materials.

Since the U.S. is a global hotspot for most salamander species and given disease and other threats to populations, it was timely to give attention to this species.

PARC presented its fourth annual Alison Haskell Award for Excellence in Herpetofaunal Conservation to state herpetologist, Dr. Jeff Briggler, of the Missouri Dept. of Conservation. Of the four awards PARC presented in 2014, state agency herpetologists received three of the accolades.





BIRD CONSERVATION

2014 STATE OF THE BIRDS REPORT

One hundred years after the extinction of the passenger pigeon, the nation's top bird science and conservation groups came together to publish *The State of the Birds 2014*—the most comprehensive review of long-term trend data for U.S. birds ever conducted.

The report found bird populations declining across several key habitats with aridland birds facing the steepest declines, a 46% overall loss since 1968. The report also included a “watch list” of 228 bird species most vulnerable to extinction and a list of Common Birds in Steep Decline.

The most significant finding of the *State of the Birds 2014* is simply that conservation works. The report revealed that in areas where a strong conservation investment has been made—e.g., wetland birds—bird populations are recovering, which is optimistic news for state agencies.

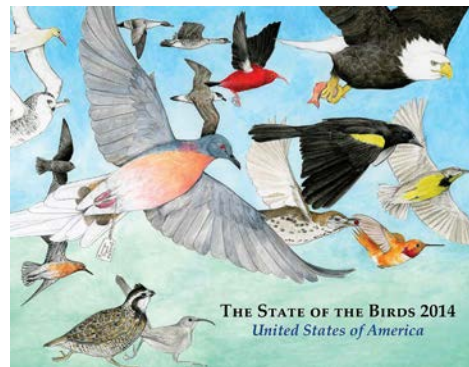
The report was produced by the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, which is chaired by North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Executive Director Gordon Myers and staffed by AFWA's Bird Conservation Coordinator. The full report, the watch list and other resources can be found at www.stateofthebirds.org.

NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN (NAWMP)

North American duck populations reached 49.2 million birds in 2014, an increase of 8% over the 2013 estimate and 43% more than the long-term average (1995-2013). Although duck populations are at record levels, some species like Pintail and Scaup continue to decline, most likely because of habitat loss in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of the U.S. and Canada.

The Canadian portion of the PPR supports an average of 66% of North America's breeding ducks. However, the region's habitat is being lost at an alarming rate, and there is an urgency to secure or enhance the habitat that remains. The key to starting the wetland conservation machine is the investment in the breeding grounds of Canada by state agencies.

The NAWMP is based on partners working together across the continent to leverage resources for habitat conservation. State agencies contribute non-federal match funds that are required to meet the requirements of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Ducks Unlimited and the federal government match the state contributions and Canadian partners



match these funds.

Last year, more state agencies contributed to Canadian waterfowl habitat projects than ever before—37 states and a \$3.336 million investment. Arkansas reached the \$5 million mark for total contributions, while Kansas increased its contribution by more than 10%. Oregon and Idaho resumed their participation in the program.

To learn more about NAWMP and the NAWMP Action Plan, go to www.nawmprevision.org.

SOUTHERN WINGS

Each year, we learn more and more about the wonder of bird migration. We have followed Whimbrels from Brazil to the Northern Tundra of Canada and Alaska, Wood Thrush from the forests of Nicaragua to Pennsylvania and Baird's sparrows that breed in North Dakota, Montana and Saskatchewan and fly south to northern Mexico to winter.

AFWA's Southern Wings Program facilitates partnerships between state agencies and conservation partners across the hemisphere to support conservation projects for shared priority species in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since its launch, 29 state agencies and their in-state partners have contributed more than \$890,000 USD and \$550,000 in-kind.

Through Southern Wings, states supported outreach and education, and shorebird research with the long-term goal of protecting key sites in the Bahamas where almost 20% of the Atlantic population of piping plovers winters. State funding also enabled the restoration of 98.8 acres of grasslands in El Tokio, Mexico, a priority grasslands conservation area, and 62 acres of mangrove habitat in Laguna Madre, Mexico. Laguna Madre is a critical wintering site for some shorebirds and waterfowl.



North American Waterfowl Management Plan



CLIMATE ADAPTATION

In partnership with federal and tribal agencies, AFWA released a report at our 2014 Annual Meeting entitled Taking Action, which describes 50 projects designed to address the impacts of climate change. The report was created in response to the National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy published in March 2013.

Taking Action highlights examples of how government agencies, partners and stakeholders are collectively preparing for and responding to the impacts of a changing climate on fish, wildlife and plants.

The examples featured illustrate the diversity of projects, scales of planning and partnerships that can and are being utilized to respond to the impacts of climate change. The case studies also demonstrate how climate change impacts can be integrated into conservation planning.

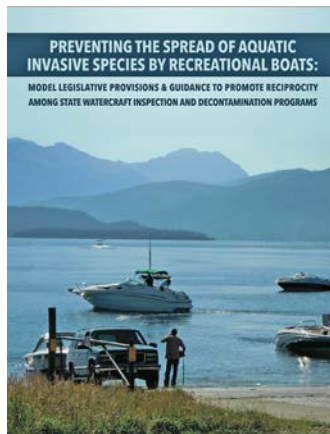
A key message of the report is that climate change can and should be a factor in a wide range of natural resource management contexts, and that both “adding a climate lens” to ongoing programs and designing intentionally climate-oriented projects are important, for effective management in a changing climate. The report is available online at www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov.



INVASIVE SPECIES

State agency authority over native and naturalized fish and wildlife is the standard. Authority and management responsibility over non-native and invasive species is less clear, but poses a major challenge to states, particularly because the invaders often harm native fish and wildlife populations or their habitats.

To begin to address these complex issues with state authority in mind, AFWA's Invasive Species Committee furthered its partnerships with the National Sea Grant Law Center, the National Association of Attorneys General and the Western Regional Panel of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.



The joint team released a report, *Preventing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species by Recreational Boats: Model Legislative Provisions & Guidance to Promote Reciprocity among State Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Programs*, which serves as a toolkit for states wishing to enhance or modify their legal authorities in this area.

The model legislative provisions create a framework to facilitate interstate collaboration and reciprocity with respect to watercraft inspection and decontamination programs. State directors unanimously endorsed the report in March 2014.

AFWA's Invasive Species Committee also continued to implement an MOU among the Association, the USFWS and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC). The MOU addresses risk screening and non-regulatory approaches to species not currently in trade. A workgroup to recommend species for, and review results from, ecological risk screening began meeting last year.

Legislatively, the Association worked with contacts on Capitol Hill, including members of the Congressional Invasive Species Caucus led by Congressmen Daniel Benishek (MI) and Mike Thompson (CA) and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), sponsor of the Invasive Fish & Wildlife Prevention Act, to discuss invasive species issues and state-based conservation.



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HABITATS.



Tolomato River, FL

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

State support has been vital in helping to manage and implement 341 projects spanning 46 states that the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) has supported since 2007. Many of these projects have been fostered through coordination efforts by state fish and wildlife and natural resource agencies, and are making a difference toward conserving fish habitat nationwide.

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD

The National Fish Habitat Board welcomed five new members in 2014, including Doug Austen (American Fisheries Society), Kevin O'Donovan (Coastal Conservation Association), Ron Skates (Native American Fish & Wildlife Society), Whit Fosburgh (Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership) and Kelley Myers (Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources). Tom Champeau (Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission) was elected Board Vice-Chair in November 2014.

The Board helped to shape federal agency programs last year with submissions of letters to the USFWS regarding its strategic plan for the Fish & Aquatic Conservation Program and the agency's support for the National Fish Habitat Partnership. The Board also sent a letter to NOAA Fisheries



regarding the formation of its Saltwater Recreational Fishing Program, which could benefit the work of the Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership.

The passage of national fish habitat legislation remained a strong priority for the Board. It joined other conservation groups in 2014 to advocate for the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act.

NATIONAL FISH HABITAT AWARDS

The winners of the sixth annual National Fish Habitat Partnership/American Fisheries Society (Habitat Section) Awards were honored in November 2014 at the Restore America's Estuaries/Coastal Society Summit in Washington, DC for their extraordinary achievements in fish habitat conservation.

Tim Birdsong (Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept./Guadalupe Bass Restoration Initiative) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska were named the recipients of the National Fish Habitat Award for Extraordinary Action in Support of Fish Habitat Conservation.

10 WATERS TO WATCH IN 2014

States held a watchful eye to the National Fish Habitat Partnership's list of the 10 "Waters to Watch" in 2014, which represents a snapshot of voluntary, locally driven freshwater, estuarine and marine habitat conservation efforts in progress across the country.

- Bear Creek, Colorado (Western Native Trout Initiative)
- Boardman River, Michigan (Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership)
- Eel River Delta, California (California Fish Passage Forum)
- Lake Bloomington, Illinois (Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership)
- Milltown Island Estuary, Washington (Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership)
- Montana Creek, Alaska (Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership)
- Muddy River, Nevada (Desert Fish Habitat Partnership)
- Nash Stream, New Hampshire (Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture)
- Tolomato River, Florida (Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership/Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership)
- Twelvemile Creek Watershed, Alaska (Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership)



Bear Creek, CO

SCIENCE & RESEARCH

CANADA LYNX

The Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) has been listed as “Threatened” under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) for nearly 15 years, yet a formal recovery plan has never been developed for the species.

Last year, AFWA surveyed western and northeastern state wildlife biologists to identify areas where states can work together to conserve Canada lynx. Promising areas for cooperation include multi-state recovery planning, range-wide genetic studies and improved BMPs for state fur-bearer harvest programs. Some states also suggested that it may be time to evaluate whether Canada lynx needs continued ESA protection, and whether the conservation needs of the species could best be met through coordinated action by the individual state agencies.

eDNA

The Association coordinated with state agencies, the U. S. Forest Service and the American Fisheries Society to encourage the use of cutting-edge Environmental DNA (eDNA) technologies in fisheries and aquatic ecosystem management in 2014.

eDNA analyzes water samples from lakes and rivers to determine whether or not the DNA of certain animal or plant species are present. eDNA is now being used by agencies to monitor the presence of invasive Asian carp in the Great Lakes region, and to track rare aquatic species such as Hellbender salamanders in southeastern states.

AFWA’s scientists and partners have developed an online clearinghouse where fisheries and aquatic managers can connect with the scientists who are developing new eDNA tools and applications. The clearinghouse can be accessed through the American Fisheries Society website at www.fisheries.org.



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FERAL SWINE

In October 2014, AFWA’s Fish & Wildlife Health Committee commissioned a survey of state agencies to learn more about state activities to manage feral swine. The information that the Association gathered from states is being used by USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services to design its new National Feral Swine Management Program.

MONARCH BUTTERFLY

Monarch butterflies depend upon a wide range of habitats in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico; however, habitat loss and degradation are posing serious threats to both the eastern and western migratory monarch populations throughout their annual cycle of breeding, migration and overwintering.

At AFWA’s 2014 Annual Meeting, state directors passed a resolution supporting voluntary and incentive-based efforts to address threats of loss, fragmentation and modification of monarch breeding habitat and encouraging a continental approach within the context of the annual life-cycle needs of the monarch butterfly. With this foundation in place, the Association will begin more focused collaboration among state and federal agencies and partners in 2015.

A group of about ten people, including men, women, and children, are sitting in folding chairs around a campfire at night. The fire is burning brightly in the center, casting a warm glow. They are outdoors, near a body of water, with a dark sky and a moon visible in the background. The scene is peaceful and social.

conservation

STEWARDSHIP

Every day, people make decisions collectively and individually that directly and indirectly impact fish, wildlife and their habitats.

As a result, the sustainability of the conservation system depends on the support of an informed and responsible citizenry that understands and appreciates that science-based management of terrestrial and water resources is essential to fish and wildlife, the outdoor landscape and the quality of their lives.

The future of the system also hinges on the public understanding, accepting and/or lawfully participating in hunting, shooting sports, fishing, boating and other types of wildlife-related recreation; and participating in the stewardship of and support for fish and wildlife resources for the next generation to enjoy.

Simply put, we've got to get people to care about fish and wildlife conservation and having fun outdoors just as much as we do.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

State, territorial, provincial and federal agency as well as NGO conservation education programs are important vehicles for inspiring and connecting youth, adults and teachers with wildlife, wild places and nature-based recreation; which in turn builds support for agency and partner conservation programs.

AFWA's North American Conservation Education (CE) Strategy was designed by experts from state agencies in 2004 to deliver unified core messages about conservation to build students' environmental literacy and outdoor skills. Essentially, the CE Strategy identifies what every citizen should know, feel and do related to fish and wildlife conservation.

Now, 10 years later, the CE Strategy continues to help agencies and NGOs maximize their investments in CE programs while strengthening recruitment, retention and community outreach programs.

The bulk of the CE Strategy's efforts in 2014 focused on initiating a research project to create an "Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model." The model is intended to help state agencies shape and realize the potential role CE can play in achieving goals associated with the recruitment, retention and re-activation (RRR) of participants in hunting, fishing, boating and outdoor recreation. Six state agencies and their partners were selected for field study. The research findings will be released in 2015.



INDUSTRY/AGENCY COALITION

The Association continued its commitment to strengthening agency partnerships with the hunting, shooting sports, archery, boating and sport fishing industries in 2014. Back in 2006, leaders from state agencies, industry trade and sportsmen's organizations and the USFWS met for the first time in many decades to find opportunities to foster better partnerships; assess the programs that deliver Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (Federal Excise Tax) funds to agencies; and to improve programmatic alignment between the groups.

This ongoing relationship is not only crucial for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, but also for recruiting, retaining and reactivating our shared customers, America's sportsmen and women.

Through the partnerships fostered by the Industry/Agency Coalition, the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports will facilitate the development and implementation of a national strategic RRR initiative to reach shared customers. The national plan will leverage the talents and resources of the coalition's partners that are vested in the perpetuation of the nation's hunting and shooting heritage.

In addition, state directors and industry representatives convened for the seventh annual Fish & Wildlife Business Summit in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in May 2014. The summit was hosted by boating industry partner, Perko, Inc.

All Americans benefit from hunting and angling in their states whether they participate in wildlife-related recreation or not.

Hunters, recreational shooters and anglers pay for conservation, education and recreational access through their purchases of taxable gear (bows and arrows, guns and ammunition; fishing tackle and equipment) and hunting and fishing licenses.

Approximately 80% of a state agency's day-to-day operating budget is funded through this user-pay, everyone benefits model.



conservation

LEADERSHIP

At the end of the day, we know this to be true... the conservation machine as a whole is more than a management construct... or set of policies and laws... or funding instrument... or series of actions. Conservation connects people, deeply, to something greater than themselves. For the Association and every one of our members, this is our purpose, our cause and our calling.

And, as AFWA looks to the future, we know that we must help to significantly increase leadership capacity within natural resource organizations through education and collaboration opportunities if conservation is to remain connectable, meaningful and valuable to all of the people across North America that we collectively serve.

NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The success of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) is hard to quantify, but its impact can be witnessed in so many ways. Currently, seven state fish and wildlife agency directors are alumni of the NCLI as well as countless deputy directors and division chiefs.

Yet, the NCLI's true impact is remarkably evident not only in those who hold positions of authority, but in individuals at all levels in conservation organizations who are empowered to ask the difficult questions; possess the mettle to engage in courageous conversations; and are willing to exercise leadership within their scope of influence to bridge the gap between the current reality of and the desired future aspirations for natural resources.

Last year saw the culmination and graduation of the NCLI's eighth cohort—elevating the total number of those who have completed this unprecedented leadership journey to 281 strong.

While Cohort 8 was taking their experiential lessons learned back to their agencies, the Fellows of Cohort 9 were embarking on their own unique expedition and acquainting themselves with the tenants of Adaptive Leadership, forging new relationships and oftentimes testing and questioning their own assumptions, values and ideas.

Such experiences gained through the NCLI enable individuals to help guide and lead their respective organizations through the challenges and complexities of conservation's future.

The NCLI welcomes direct donations to help prepare the next generation of conservation leaders. Visit www.conservationleadership.org for more information about the NCLI and how to become a Fellow or supporter. The NCLI is staffed by AFWA's Management Assistance Team.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
LEARN • LEAD • CHANGE

AFWA's Management Assistance Team (MAT) is like an internal training resource on retainer for all state fish and wildlife agencies to help advance conservation through leadership and professional development opportunities. MAT's products and services concentrate on agency administration—the people part of the equation.

Supported by funds from a multistate conservation grant, MAT continued its exemplary service to state agencies and partners by offering new delivery methods as well as new and revamped online training designed to fit the busy schedules of state agency employees.

In 2014, MAT conducted 15 online courses, 13 webinars and two workshop facilitations with a total of 518 student enrollments. Of MAT's online offerings, eight of the courses and webinars were new or revised, and all were served via the team's custom, rebuilt online Conservation Learning Campus.

MAT also provided leadership and organizational management consulting to five individual state agencies and three conservation-related entities, serving a total of 34 agencies and other partner organizations in 2014.

To view MAT's latest professional development opportunities, go to www.matteam.org.

THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AND THE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM HELP TO PRESERVE THE LEGACY OF NORTH AMERICA'S NATURAL RESOURCES BY DEVELOPING EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP.

save the date...

105TH AFWA ANNUAL MEETING
TUCSON, ARIZONA
SEPTEMBER 13-17, 2015

2014 ANNUAL MEETING

The Association held its 104th Annual Meeting, September 21-25, in the historic city of St. Louis. The elegant Gateway Arch that stands tall as a symbol of westward expansion served as the backdrop to the annual meeting and as a reminder to attendees to expand the relevancy of conservation in today's society by embracing partnerships and by being bold, brave and inspired.

AFWA thanks Dr. David Thorne of the Missouri Dept. of Conservation for facilitating the plenary session, and Dr. Mamie Parker for sharing her reflections on the meaning of partnership in conservation and in life. We also extend our gratitude to the co-chairs of AFWA's Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources – John L. Morris and David Freudenthal – who delivered remarks on the quest to fund a 21st century model of conservation and officially announced the members of the Panel during the opening session.

2014 ANNUAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

State agency directors passed six resolutions during AFWA's Business Meeting. The full text of the resolutions is available at www.fishwildlife.org in the Resources section.

- (1) Support for Monarch Butterfly Conservation, submitted by the Science & Research Committee
- (2) Raising Awareness of E-15 (Ethanol Fuel Blend) and Impacts on Boating, submitted by the Angler & Boating Participation Committee
- (3) Encouraging Exploring Partnership Opportunities between the Southern Wings Program and the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Program, submitted by the Bird Conservation Committee
- (4) In Appreciation of the Missouri Dept. of Conservation, submitted by the Executive Committee

AFWA COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & FUNCTION REPORT

At the Annual Meeting, the President's Task Force on Committee Structure and Function released its report of recommendations to help enhance AFWA's policy and program development and interstate and state/federal coordination through committee work. The recommendations aim to streamline processes, increase committee performance and collaboration, improve alignment to AFWA's Strategic Plan and inspire personal pride in being part of the AFWA voice.

2014 ANNUAL AWARDS

The Association honored seven individuals, two Members of Congress, a California vineyard and a consortium of two state agencies, five federal agencies, four NGOs and 31 private landowners for their dedication to advancing fish and wildlife conservation at AFWA's Annual Awards Ceremony.

SETH GORDON AWARD *for lifetime achievement, the Association's highest honor*

Gary Taylor (ret.), former Government Affairs Director for both Ducks Unlimited and AFWA

JOHN L. MORRIS AWARD *for lifetime commitment to fish and wildlife stewardship by a citizen conservationist*

Congressman John Dingell, Jr. (MI)

ERNEST THOMPSON SETON AWARD *for leadership in promoting scientific wildlife management by an agency and team leader*

Big Hole CCAA for Artic Grayling Conservation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; USFWS; NRCS and 30 private landowners

MARK REEFF AWARD *for an outstanding young wildlife management professional under the age of 35*

Christopher Penne, Aquatic Biologist with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

NATIONAL PRIVATE LANDS FISH AND WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP AWARD *for an individual- or family-run farm, ranch or forest operation that has incorporated proactive conservation and environmental protection measures*

Gio Martorana, Martorana Family Winery & Vineyards, California

CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD *for exceptional achievement in fish and wildlife resource enforcement*

Lee Lawshe, Wildlife Conservation Officer, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS *for outstanding commitment to the work of the Association*

Senator Debbie Stabenow (MI); Mike Harris, USFWS (formerly with the Georgia Division of Wildlife Resources), Steve Leggans, USFWS; and Cindy Delaney, Delaney Meeting & Event Management.



L-R: Gary Taylor and Dan Forster (GA)

"I've had a very rewarding and fulfilling career being provided the opportunity to work with so many of you and our state, federal and NGO community to advance fish and wildlife conservation on the ground and later in my career through national policy. I am particularly appreciative of the guidance, counsel and leadership of the state fish and wildlife agency directors, the cooperation of their agency staff and the dedication and commitment of my colleagues at the Association."

- Gary Taylor, 2014
Seth Gordon Award Recipient

ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS

AFWA extends its appreciation to the 104th Annual Meeting sponsors, exhibitors and, most especially, the Missouri Dept. of Conservation.

Sustaining Partner: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Platinum: Bass Pro Shops, Environment Canada, NOAA Fisheries, USDA-APHIS-Veterinary Services

Gold: National Shooting Sports Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services, USDA Forest Service,

Silver: Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), HP, National Park Service, Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Bronze: ACTIVE Network, Boone & Crockett Club, Brandt Information Services, Inc., D.J. Case & Associates, J.F. Griffin Publishing, National Rifle Association, Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, Systems Consultants, The Nature Conservancy, The Wildlife Society, Voss Signs

Hospitality-Meals-Receptions: Archery Trade Association, Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, Ducks Unlimited, Kalkomey, Mule Deer Foundation, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, Wildlife Forever, Wildlife Management Institute



AFWA COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

Almost without exception, the accomplishments of which AFWA are most proud started within our 70+ committees by our 1,000+ committee members. Without a doubt, the Association's success in advancing positions that further our collective capacity to manage resources will only continue thanks to the enduring personal contributions of the greater Association membership.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*

President

Larry Voyles, Arizona Game & Fish Dept.

Vice President

Carter Smith, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

Secretary/Treasurer

Glenn Normandeau, New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept.

Past President

Dan Forster, Georgia Wildlife Resources Division

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Dave Chanda, New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

Vice Chair

Nick Wiley, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Members

John Arway, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Ed Carter, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Jim Douglas, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Virgil Moore, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game

Bob Ziehmer, Missouri Dept. of Conservation

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

Canada

Mike Sullivan, New Brunswick Dept. of Natural Resources

REGIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Midwest

Ed Boggess, Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources

Northeast

Cathy Sparks, Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management

Southeast

Gordon Myers, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Western

Terry Steinwand, North Dakota Game & Fish Dept.

*Current slate of 2014/2015 Officers & Executive Committee members

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

Biofuels Working Group

Conservation Effects Assessment Project Working Group

Conservation Reserve Program Working Group

Conservation Stewardship Program Working Group

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Working Group

Farm Bill Strategy Working Group

Forestry Working Group

Grasslands Reserve Program Working Group

Public Access Working Group

Wetlands Reserve Program Working Group

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program Working Group

ANGLER & BOATING PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL MEETING/AWARDS/NOMINATING

AUDIT

BIRD CONSERVATION

Migratory Shore & Upland Game Bird Working Group

Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group

Resident Game Bird Working Group

Waterfowl Working Group

CLIMATE CHANGE

EDUCATION, OUTREACH & DIVERSITY

Conservation Education Strategy Working Group

Diversity Working Group

Outreach Working Group

Wildlife Viewing & Nature Tourism Working Group

ENERGY & WILDLIFE POLICY

Onshore Oil, Gas and Minerals Subcommittee

Wind, Solar & Transmission Subcommittee

EXECUTIVE

FEDERAL & TRIBAL RELATIONS

FINANCE

FISH & WILDLIFE HEALTH

Controlled Substances Act Task Force

Lead & Fish and Wildlife Health Working Group

FISH & WILDLIFE TRUST FUNDS

Federal Assistance Working Group

FISHERIES & WATER RESOURCES POLICY

Drug Approval Working Group

Natural Resource Damages Working Group

HUNTING & SHOOTING SPORTS PARTICIPATION

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CITES Technical Work Group

INVASIVE SPECIES

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LEGAL

LEGISLATIVE & FEDERAL BUDGET

Budget Working Group

Land & Water Conservation Fund Working Group (joint with Teaming With Wildlife Committee)

NATIONAL GRANTS

OCEAN RESOURCES POLICY

RESOLUTIONS

SCIENCE & RESEARCH

SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILDLIFE

Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES POLICY

ESA & Climate Change Working Group

WILDLIFE RESOURCE POLICY

Amphibian & Reptile Subcommittee

Human/Wildlife Conflict Working Group

Federal Lands Access Working Group

TASK FORCES

President's Task Force on Committee Structure and Function

President's Task Force on State Authorities

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Together as a greater assemblage of member agencies and organizations, AFWA constitutes the expertise and engine to conserve fish and wildlife and promote resource sustainability throughout North America for our generation and for those to come.

U.S. STATE & TERRITORIAL AGENCY MEMBERS

Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
 Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
 Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
 Arkansas Game & Fish Commission
 California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
 Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife
 Connecticut Bureau of Natural Resources
 Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife
 DC Dept. of the Environment, Fisheries & Wildlife Division
 Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
 Georgia Wildlife Resources Division
 Hawaii Dept. of Land & Natural Resources
 Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
 Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
 Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife
 Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
 Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism
 Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources
 Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
 Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
 Maine Dept. of Marine Resources
 Maryland Wildlife & Heritage Service
 Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
 Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
 Minnesota Division of Fish & Wildlife
 Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks
 Missouri Dept. of Conservation
 Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
 Nevada Dept. of Wildlife
 New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept.
 New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife
 New Mexico Game & Fish Dept.
 New York Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
 North Dakota Game & Fish Dept.
 Ohio Division of Wildlife
 Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation
 Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
 Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
 Pennsylvania Game Commission
 Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management
 South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources
 South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Dept.
 Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
 Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.
 Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
 Vermont Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
 Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries
 Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
 West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
 Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
 Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.

U.S. FEDERAL AGENCY MEMBERS

Bureau of Land Management
 National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration- Fisheries Services
 National Park Service
 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS/Veterinary Services
 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS/Wildlife Services
 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - Forest Service
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 U.S. Geological Survey

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT MEMBERS

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
 Canadian Wildlife Service
 New Brunswick Dept. of Natural Resources

Northwest Territories Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources
 Nova Scotia Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources
 Nunavut Dept. of Environment
 Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
 Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs
 Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

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Association for Conservation Information
 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
 College of Natural Resources (Univ. of Wisconsin-Stevens Pt.)
 The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
 Great Lakes Fishery Commission
 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
 International Hunter Education Association-USA
 National Association of State Boating Law Administrators
 National Association of University Fish & Wildlife Programs
 North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association
 Organization of Fish & Wildlife Information Managers
 Organization of Wildlife Land & Realty Specialists
 Organization of Wildlife Planners
 Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
 Society for Wildlife Forensic Science
 States Organization for Boating Access
 Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
 Wildlife Disease Association

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

American Eagle Foundation
 American Sportfishing Association
 Archery Trade Association

B.A.S.S. LLC
 Bat Conservation International
 Boone & Crockett Club
 Canadian Wildlife Federation
 Delta Waterfowl Foundation
 Ducks Unlimited Canada
 Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
 Fur Institute of Canada
 Fur Takers of America, Inc.
 Hunting Heritage Trust
 Izaak Walton League of America
 Kalkomey, Inc.
 Mule Deer Foundation
 National Audubon Society
 National Bowhunter Education Foundation
 National Marine Manufacturers Association
 National Rifle Association - Conservation, Wildlife & Natural Resources Division
 National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.
 National Trappers Association
 National Wild Turkey Federation
 National Wildlife Federation
 The Nature Conservancy
 NatureServe
 North American Bear Foundation
 North American Falconers Association
 North American Grouse Partnership
 North American Wetlands Conservation Council
 North Dakota Natural Resources Trust
 Northwest Marine Technology, Inc.
 Outdoor Roadmap
 The Peregrine Fund
 Pheasants Forever
 Pope & Young Club
 Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation
 Resource Management Service, LLC
 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
 The Ruffed Grouse Society
 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
 U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
 Wild Sheep Foundation
 Wildlife Management Institute
 The Wildlife Society

AFWA STRATEGIC GOALS

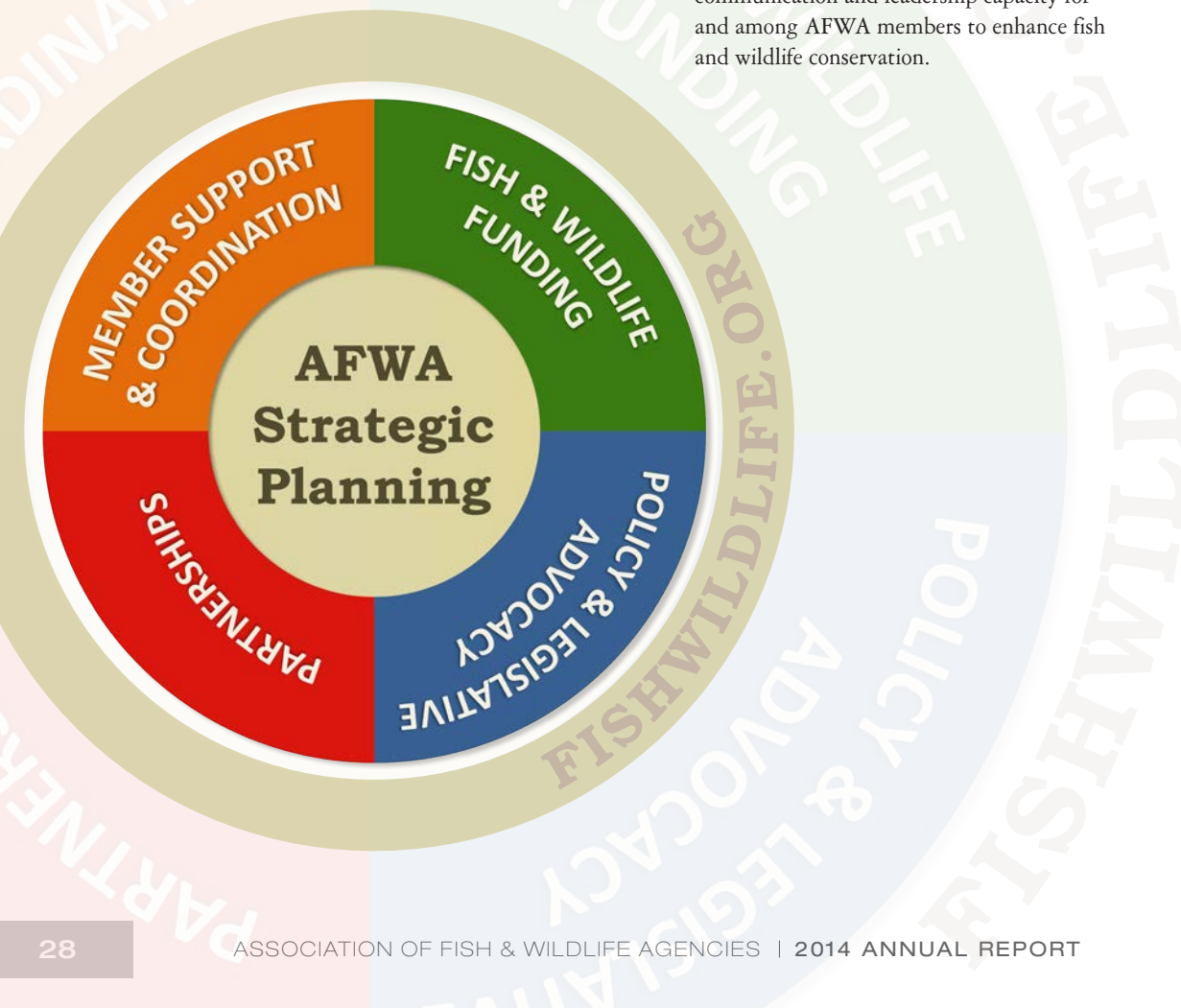
The Association supports and advocates for state, provincial and territorial authority for fish and wildlife conservation and assists those agencies in promoting science-based resource management in collaboration with public and private partners. AFWA focuses on four strategic goals to achieve our mission:

AFWA Strategic Advocacy Goal: Promote policies, legislation, laws, regulations and legal strategies that enhance and protect member agencies' ability to conserve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.

AFWA Strategic Funding Goal: Secure and sustain comprehensive and dedicated funding for fish and wildlife conservation.

AFWA Strategic Partnership Goal: Coordinate and facilitate conservation initiatives among state, provincial, territorial and federal agencies and other partners, enabling conservation delivery on a national and international scale.

AFWA Strategic Membership Goal: Support and facilitate education, participation, communication and leadership capacity for and among AFWA members to enhance fish and wildlife conservation.



STAFF

Ron Regan, *Executive Director*

Carol Bambery, *General Counsel*

John Bloom, *Accounting Manager*

Kathy Boydston, *Wildlife & Energy Liaison*

Bridget Collins, *Agriculture Policy Coordinator*

Tiffany Fritts, *MAT Communications & Media Coordinator*

Parks Gilbert, *Legal Strategy Attorney*

Estelle Green, *Administrative Assistant*

Deb Hahn, *International Resource Director*

Mark Humpert, *Wildlife Diversity Director*

John Lord, *Operations Director*

Laura MacLean, *Communications & Marketing Director*

Gina Main, *Professional Development Director/NCLI Director*

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Davia Palmeri, *Climate Adaptation Assistant*

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Jen Mock Schaeffer, *Government Affairs Director*

Liz Skipper, *Accounting & Administrative Assistant*

Dean Smith, *North American Waterfowl Management Plan Coordinator/
Wildlife Liaison*

Kim Switlick, *MAT Administrative Assistant*

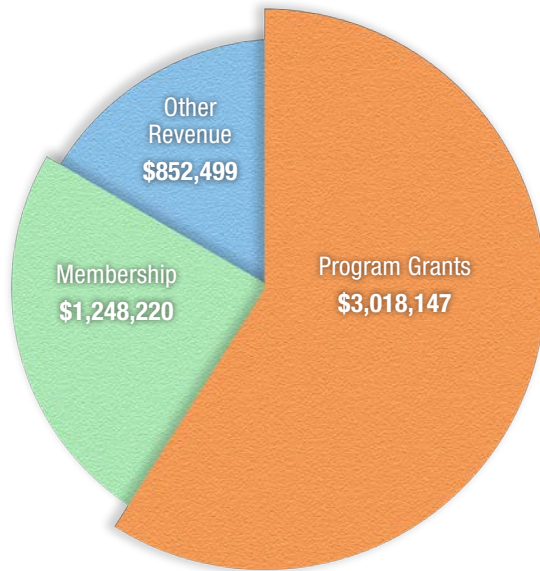
Bryant White, *Furbearer Research Coordinator*

We would also like to recognize the contributions of staff members who departed AFWA for other opportunities in 2014 and early 2015: Dr. Arpita Choudhury (Science), Matt Menashes (Operations), Greg Moore (Management Assistance Team), Mary Pfaffko (Wildlife Diversity) and Allison Vogt (Bird Conservation).

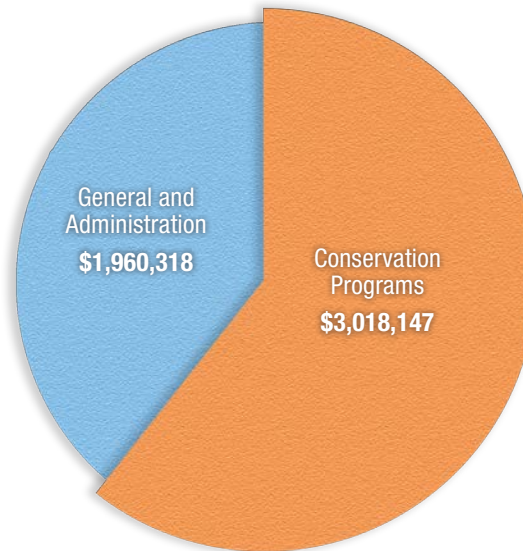
2014 FINANCIALS

The funds entrusted to AFWA enable us to provide coordination services; support national and international programs, projects and coalitions; promote wildlife-associated recreation; and help members continue to address the most pressing conservation challenges of the day.

2014 REVENUE



2014 EXPENSES



MEMBERSHIP DUES

State	23.08%
Federal	< 1%
Provincial	< 1%
Associate	< 1%
Affiliate	< 1%
Contributing	< 1%

GRANT REVENUE

Federal	13.70%
Multistate	38.71%
Foundation	< 1%
International	3.87%

OTHER REVENUE

Annual Meeting	7.39%
Misc. State Contribution	< 1%
Overhead	8.76%
Miscellaneous	< 1%

TOTAL REVENUE: **\$5,118,866**

TOTAL EXPENSES: **\$4,978,465**

The Association's independently audited financial statements and IRS Form 990 are available upon request.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Our thanks to the photographers who let us feature their inspiring images in this year's annual report:

George Andrejko, Arizona Game & Fish Dept.: *front and back cover, welcome letters; pages 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 21, 24*

Phil Douglass, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources: *inside cover spread*

Additional featured images by:

Laura MacLean, AFWA (pg5), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (pg5); Ben Davis, Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (pg7), Keith Anderson (pg7); Jonathan Carlucci, New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife (pg15); Curtis Tackett, Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (pg17); Lindsay Gardner, SARP (pg18), Western Native Trout Initiative (pg18); Tim Torell, Nevada Dept. of Wildlife (pg19); Jeff Kurrus, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (pgs20 & 21); Tiffany Fitts, AFWA (pgs 22 & 23); Jesse Lee Varnado, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (pgs 26&29)





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