



ASSOCIATION *of*
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee

Chair: Doug Vincent-Lang (Alaska)

Vice-Chair: Dave Kay (Alberta)

Wednesday, March 9th 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM (Pacific Standard Time)

This meeting will be virtual only

87th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

Minutes of the Meeting

Committee Charge:

Advocate the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and promote the sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources at the international level.

Subcommittees and Working Groups:

U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

Agenda

- **Agenda review, adjustments, and opening comments (Doug Vincent-Lang)**
 - Chairman Vincent-Lang opened the meeting
 - Adjustments to the agenda were made as follows:
 - Partner with a Payer presentation was moved up on the agenda to accommodate presenter's schedule
 - Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program update was canceled (though there is a written update contained herein)
 - Update: AIHTS Implementation and Trap Testing in Canada was provided by Bryant White at the request of Dave Kay

- **Introductions (Doug)**
 - Meeting attendees introduced themselves

- **Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting (Doug)**
 - Chairman Vincent-Lang presented a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was moved and seconded. There was no discussion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

- **Update: Current Multi-State Grants (Bryant White, Cory Mosby)**
 - Current Grants
 - “Maintaining the relevancy of the AFWA North American Trapper Education Program”
 - This program is maintained by AFWA at no cost to agencies and available for use by all agencies. A MSCG was awarded to create trapper education videos and update the manual based on the updated national trapper education standards created by AFWA and IHEA in 2019.
 - Seventeen videos (including the trailer) have been produced. Editors are shooting/incorporating b-roll. This objective will be accomplished before the September meeting.
 - Videos will be close captioned in English and Spanish
 - The manual and online program have been reviewed and edits are being made to both so that we can maintain IHEA certification
 - Completion is expected by September 1, 2022.
 - “Modernizing Trapping Matters Professional Development Workshops and Wild Fur Schools Delivery Through Updated Messaging and the Creation of Distance Learning modules”
 - This grant will allow for creation of distance learning modules for virtual delivery of professional development workshops on regulated trapping. Production of materials has already begun, and we anticipate having the online program available for agency use by September 1, 2022
 - Delivery of workshops will take place in person (5 have already been delivered and 8 more will be delivered in person through 2022, unless this is stalled by the pandemic).
 - Six national focus groups were conducted to evaluate messages used to gain approval of sustainable wildlife use and trapping. A final report is expected by May 1, 2022. Results of this project

relative to messaging will be incorporated into the Trapping Matters Workshop and education modules.

- “Trapping Matters - Communication Message Training”
 - This grant will allow for creation of additional distance learning modules for virtual delivery of professional development workshops regarding trapping
 - In person delivery of Trapping Matters Workshops wild fur schools
- The Committee supports the extension on these grants through 12/31/22. The extensions have been requested. If extensions are not approved the Committee will request action from the AFWA Executive Committee.
- **Future Multi-State Grant Opportunities (White, Mosby)**
 - Considering that the three MSCGs noted above continue to be implemented (thru 12/31/22) by AFWA staff and the Furbearer Conservation Working Group, it was decided that no additional grants will be pursued for the FY23 funding cycle.
- **Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program (Dave Windsor)**
 - <https://clft.org/past-programs>
 - <https://clft.org/conservation-hunting-america-online>
 - Conservation & Hunting in America (C&HA) is an online distance learning program for natural resource agency professionals to explore the conservation theories, policy, and practices that apply to hunting and the sustainable uses of wildlife in North America.
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 - This program grew from our highly successful Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT) workshops with content being delivered by over 20 experts from the natural resource profession. The program is comprised of approximately 16 hours of total learning, divided into 11 hours of self-directed digital learning interspersed with (5) 1 hour facilitated discussion sessions. Each cohort will have a CLfT staff facilitator and on occasion 1 or 2 guest experts to help answer questions about the material covered during each discussion.
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 - Cohort sizes are kept small and maintain the same 8-12 participants throughout to ensure meaningful conversation and the opportunity for every participant to ask questions and reflect on how the topics apply to their professional responsibilities. To ensure that every participant can get their questions answered, each group will also have a discussion board, allowing questions to be sent to CLfT staff at any time while participants explore the digital content.
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- Each cohort is conducted over a 15-day period with Zoom discussions scheduled twice a week at predetermined times.
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- Program participants are expected to have access to the internet, computer with a camera, and microphone in order to fully engage and complete the course. It is expected that the total experience will require about 90-120 minutes per day on average, spread over 11 continuous working days.
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- The Wildlife Society allows 16 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in Category I of the Certified Wildlife Biologist Renewal/ Professional Development Certificate Program.
- <https://clft.org/hunting-conservation-online>
 - Hunting for Conservation (HfC) online is designed specifically for university students majoring in natural resources who do not hunt and provides them with an understanding of the diverse values and important roles of hunting in North America. Course material is based on many of the same principles and goals of our in-person Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLFT) workshops for natural resource agency employees.
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 - Through several modules, students explore the conservation theories, policy, and practices that apply to hunting and the sustainable uses of wildlife in North America. Content for the program was developed by CLFT staff and over two dozen CLFT instructors and presented in the forms of video presentations, written materials, and assessments.
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 - The program is a non-credit course hosted in partnership with Purdue University-Online Learning.
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 - Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a certificate and an electronic badge.
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- **US FWS Partner with a Payer Program (Kyle Daly)**
 - This is an outreach program of the US-FWS Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) program that is designed to help manufacturers who pay excise taxes into the program see how those dollars benefit conservation initiatives.
 - See <https://partnerwithapayer.org/>
- **Safari Club International (Regina Lennox)**

Safari Club International's Update Re: A Few Cases Impacting State Management And Sustainable Use

- **Gray Wolves:** In late 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed gray wolves throughout the lower 48 States from the Endangered Species Act lists of endangered and threatened species. Three lawsuits were filed in federal district court in California to challenge the delisting. Last month, the court largely ruled against the USFWS and vacated the rule, putting wolves back on the ESA lists. The ruling does not affect wolves in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, where they are already delisted, but it does put wolves in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wyoming back on the lists—even though these wolf populations are large and healthy. On the upside, the court rejected the plaintiffs' arguments that State management plans were inadequate and instead held that these plans did not pose a threat to the continued existence of the wolves. On the downside, the court ruled on largely technical grounds that the USFWS' rule was arbitrary and capricious. It has been really difficult for the USFWS to remove gray wolves from the ESA, primarily because the wolves were listed across the lower 48 States—even though wolves did not historically inhabit all those States and are unlikely to ever inhabit all those States.
- **Alaska National Preserves:** In 2015, the National Park Service adopted a rule that restricted State authorized hunting practices on National Preserves in Alaska. These included the hunting of black bears over bait, extended hunting seasons for wolves, and some traditional hunting practices used by Alaska Natives. In 2020, the NPS withdrew its rule which preempted the State authorized hunting. SCI had sued to challenge the 2015 rule; in 2020, a new group of plaintiffs sued, and SCI intervened to defend the rule withdrawing the restrictions. That case has been proceeding slowly, and the NPS has now sought a stay in the case because the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks issued a memo directing the NPS to reconsider the 2020 rule and potentially adopt new restrictions on hunting on National Preserves in Alaska.
- **National Wildlife Refuges:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service annually works with State wildlife agencies to open new hunting and fishing opportunities on National Wildlife Refuges, which are closed to hunting, fishing, and other uses until opened by regulation. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act directs the USFWS to prioritize the opening of hunting and fishing (and a few other uses) when compatible with the purposes of the refuge. In 2020 (and pretty much in every year), the USFWS opened a number of new hunting and fishing opportunities. At the time, this was the largest expansion of opportunities on refuges and impacted 2.3 million acres. Recently the Center for Biological Diversity sued to challenge this expansion of hunting and fishing, primarily arguing that the expanded use of lead ammunition and tackle as a result of the new opportunities harms Endangered Species Act listed species. SCI, the NRA, Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation have intervened to defend the rule. However, the case is currently stayed while the USFWS and the plaintiff engage in settlement negotiations. The case is currently stayed until April 8, with a status report

due to the court on April 1. The status report may disclose the result of the settlement negotiations—or the USFWS and the plaintiff may seek additional time to negotiate.

- **Update: Best Management Practices for Trapping (Bryant White)**

- The BMP program continues to conduct research to evaluate trapping devices for furbearers and develop outreach materials to assist agencies with regulated trapping programs
- Trap testing projects are being conducted in 8 states during the 2021-22 trapping season and will again focus primarily on cable devices for the capture of bobcat, gray fox and swift fox. The Collarum trap (also a cable device) will be tested on coyotes. Colony cage traps will be tested on muskrats. At this time the gray fox, swift fox, bobcat and muskrat projects are complete. Testing on coyotes will continue with the Collarum trap until a sample of 20 animals has been captured.
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- New outreach materials have been developed including:
 - Science Briefs:
 - [Animal Welfare in Trapping](#)
 - [Animal Selectivity in Trapping](#)
 - [Sustainable Wildlife Use](#)
 - Conservation Briefs:
 - Trapping and Public Safety (in layout)
 - [Trapping and North American Model of Wildlife Conservation](#)
 - [The Implication of a Statewide Ban on Trapping: The Massachusetts Experience](#)
- ***It was decided that the Committee will write letters to thank the sponsors and cooperators of the BMP program.**

- **Update: AIHTS Implementation and Trap Testing in Canada (Dave Kay)**

- The Canadian program and US BMP program continue to work in partnership on the evaluation of trapping devices. Lethal snares used for the capture of coyotes are being tested in Canada, and the program will soon begin testing these devices for the capture of wolves.
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- ***Other topics potentially affecting Sustainable Wildlife Use**

- Discussion was held and will be continued in September on how the Committee can engage on issues related to sustainable wildlife use to include:
 - food security
 - consumptive/sustainable use as a lifestyle

- how the AFWA Relevancy Roadmap and America's Wildlife Values study can be used to bolster (instead of being used against) sustainable wildlife use
- how we might adapt our approach to sustainable wildlife use to assist agencies
- **Larry Clark, Keith Norris, Brad Feaster, Gordon Batcheller, Eric Gardner (review those comments)**

***Items that need follow-up**

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