**FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Chair: Bryan King (D.C.)**

**Vice-Chair: Jim Fredericks (ID)**

**Date: Friday, September 10, 2021**

**Time: 10:00AM -1:00PM ET**

**111th Annual Meeting**

**Agenda**

* 10:00 am **Call to Order/Review Agenda** – *Bryan King (D.C.)*
* 10:05 **Introductions** - *All*
* 10:10 **Approval of Minutes** – *Bryan King (D.C.)*
	+ Moved by Gary Whelan and Lynn Quattro - Passed
* 10:15 **Subcommittee and Working Group Reports**
	+ Subcommittee on Water – *Jason Olive (AR)*
		- New Vice Chair – Bob Consies, PFBC
		- New Liasion to Western Water Groups – Kevin Mayes TX FPW
		- Overview given on USGS Gap Analysis Survey results – Dr. Richard Konrad
		- MSGC – IFC and AFS for business plan for Instream Flow and Water Level Conservation Center
			* Draft done
			* Survey completed – 500 responses and summarization in progress
			* Joint Aquatic Sciences Meeting – Workshop planned in Grand Rapids MI in May 2022
			* In-person meeting of IFC in early April, Columbia MO
		- Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act
			* Improved work with federal agencies and improved communications between states on how to use Act
			* Started process for group to work on issue at March meeting
			* Discussion and agreement that working group is better suited than full committee/subcommittee
			* Motion to remove previous motion recommending subcommittee formation – Jason Olive and Gary Whelan - Passed
			* New Motion – Committee creates FWCA working group with state and federal experts – Jason Olive and Gary Whelan - Passed
				+ SOW will assist with staffing
				+ AFWA knows the experts and will work with Brian King and Jason Olive to pull together staff

Charge and mission will be subsequent steps

Legal staff is also interested

They will assist and bring to Brian and Jim for approval

* + Drug Approval Working Group – *Alan Johnson (IA)*
		- Working with federal agencies to improve approval processes
		- 16 drugs are in approval process
			* Seeing progress
		- Aquaculture Drug Approval Coalition
			* Three meetings with FDA and CVM staff annually to help with approval process
			* Continuing engagement
		- FDA Comment Letter on Indexing for Aquatic Animal Drugs – Incentive in MUMS
			* Only two drugs for ornamental drugs have been completed
			* Room here for improvement
			* Hard to get approved due to low demand and high costs
			* Limited toolbox to deal with pathogens
			* Standards are still in place with some relaxing of human health standards
				+ Aid to breeding broodstocks that are not put into the food supply
				+ Non-food life stages should be included
			* Draft letter available to work from and all entities are needed to comment – Sent out to FAS emails and needs to go to all Fish Chiefs
			* Sept 22 deadline
		- AADAP has requested help with Chl-T Coolwater species and ROMET Coolwater species trials
	+ Bird & Fish-Related Conflict Working Group – *Craig Bonds (TX)*
		- WG met Thursday, Sept 9 1 – 3p
			* Leadership Change: Justine Hasz (Wisconsin DNR) has agreed to step in as vice co-chair representing fisheries interests after Jim Fredericks stepped down from this role.
		- Received presentation from USFWS (Lesley Kordella and Rachael Pierce) on recent Flyway Council discussions regarding DCC monitoring plans
			* The established framework of the Flyway structure continues to be a productive venue for both informing and gathering feedback from bird biologists.
				+ Collecting relevant fisheries managers input remains more difficult, partially because there is no analogous framework to provide feedback to USFWS.
				+ USFWS representatives committed to developing methods to solicit feedback from fisheries biologists and managers.
			* The USFWS developed two questionnaires to more formally gather feedback from biologists.
				+ The first (completed) focused on assessing current efforts to monitor DCCO populations in states and provinces.
				+ The second (still open) is focusing on assessing the level of interest in monitoring DCCO populations for each state/province and understand the challenges monitoring would provide.
			* Several Flyway representatives provided additional insights
			* Lesley and Rachael introduced possibility of survey to states regarding DCC monitoring objectives and strategies
		- Discussed 2022 WG Work Plan
			* Mainly focused on two items
				+ Complimentary survey to state fish chiefs to gather feedback on take permit utility, efficacy, and status of conflicts. The WG plans to elicit help from social scientists to ensure relevant quality data are collected.
				+ Development of BMP document for state agency directors and bird/fish staffs relevant to intra- and inter-agency communication on this topic. Difficult challenge due to the differing decision structures between disciplines.
		- WG intends to set up a series of fall/winter/spring virtual meetings to advance topics listed above and will meet (hopefully in person) at the NAWNRC in Spokane this coming March
		- We also intend to work with oversight committee leaders and AFWA support staffs to backfill some recent membership churn on the WG
		- Ken Richkus – Workgroup is continuing to grow in value. Want fisheries feedback and reducing conflict.
			* DCCO monitoring is a major item of decision
			* Want to determine how to best use the workgroup
* 10:45 **National Fish Habitat Partnership**– *Gary Whelan (MI*)/*Ryan Roberts (NFHP)*
	+ Updates & AFWA Resolution
* Overall Items – Gary
* Quickly nearing 1 Year Anniversary of the ACE Act
* Board established (still waiting to fill Board out, still meeting virtually) – Ed Schriever
	+ 2 tribal positions to be filled
	+ Working on business operations
* Following the ACE ACT (Overview of Timelines and obligations to Meet)
	+ Initial set of 142 projects submitted to DOI Secretary on June 30 with funding available for 93 projects at this time that provide a total of $31 million+ in conservation work ($6.1 million USFWS and $25 million non-federal match).
	+ Preparing for next set of FHP project submissions
		- Developing National Conservation Priorities that guide FHP projects
		- FHP projects due to Board on March 31
		- Board required to submit to DOI Secretary by July 1
	+ Congressional requirements
		- Board report by February 1
		- Detailed Board Report by 2025
		- Submission of FHPs for Congressional approval by 2025
	+ IOP for federal agencies needs to be developed by October 30, 2021 (1 year after passage of the ACE ACT)
* October meeting of the Board (2 Half-day Meetings) – Oct 27-28

	+ FY 23 Board Conservation Strategies
	+ IOP Status Update
	+ BassPro US Open FHP process for $1-1.5 million
* Future need to get Board committees re-established
	+ Partnership and Science and Data Committees established in March
* Communications Update – Ryan
* Recently developed new infographic Covering 2021 US FWS Funded Projects
* Developed new fact sheet for NFHP post Ace Act
* Waters to Watch Announcement for 2021 (coming September 25 – National Hunting and Fishing Day)
* 4 of 8 Bass Pro Shops US Open Events have occurred in 2021. NFHP presence at events thus far. Engaging with Anglers and Bass Pro shops. We have had an opportunity to have marketing booths at each event and address angler participants.
* Working on a strategy for expected funds to be received.
* Science and Data Committee Update - Gary
* Developing National Conservation Strategies Options for the Board
	+ Status
		- Draft set is completed
		- Currently ranking for Board consideration
	+ Report will be provided to the Board this month
* Begin work on next National Fish Habitat Assessment to support Board Congressional reporting
* Continuing revisions and refinement of Project Tracking Database that will be required for reporting
* Assisted Board in developing initial set of FHP project
* NFHP Resolution is completed with virtual input and at Resolution Committee
* Questions-
	+ Interactions between BassPro Open and their First Catch programs
		- DC bottomlands are owned by NPS
			* DC has an Aquatic Resources Education Center with programs
			* Uses some funding to help youth to participate in bass tournaments
		- BassPro wants funds put toward habitat projects and not directly to education
		- Reservoir and Lakes projects will benefit the most, more broad
	+ What happens and advantages to FHP being Congressionally authorized
		- Official member of the NFHP community
		- Eligible for funding and tech and admin support through NFHP including federal agency support
		- Dissolve without Congressional approval
		- Nothing in statute prevents the establishment of new FHPs, only states that existing 20 must be approved.
* 11:00 Break
* 11:10 **AFWA Government Affairs Update** – *Devin DeMario (AFWA)/Others*
	+ Infrastructure
		- SFRBTF reauthorization
		- Study on conflict between motorized and non-motorized vessels at access sites
		- Lots of language for connectivity and aquatic organism passage
			* Resilience of infrastructure - $1 billion – FY2022-2026
				+ $800 million for culverts and weirs for anadromous fish – NOAA Grants
				+ $200 million for barrier removal and passage for USFWS
		- Ecosystem restoration
		- Hydropower provisions
			* No bad language
			* Incentive Funds for mitigation for owners to apply for – fish passage, recreation, water quality, temperature, sediment transport
				+ $500 million – Partial reimbursement – 30% return
		- Wildlife Crossings funds include aquatic connectivity – SGCN
			* BMP and guidance from state FW agencies
		- AIS – 4804 - $200 million
			* USDA and DOI
			* Research, grants for eradication, and border control on federal and non-federal lands
		- A lot of other ecosystem items
			* Right vegetation and insect
			* Remediation of USFS roads and trails – Includes aquatic organism passage funds
			* Natural and nature-based infrastructure is throughout the package
		- TES species
			* $400 million on private and public lands
		- USDA water crossing structure funds
		- Grey infrastructure mitigation
		- Western water has a complete section
			* $80 million for water quality and passage
			* $80 million for WaterSmart
		- Energy efficiency funding is included – Energy Commissions – Score buildings such as hatcheries
		- Mining rehab - $800 million - AML sites and many issues are AMD issues but AMD is not included yet
		- Not IN
			* RAWA – In both House in Senate in its own bills - $1.3 billion
			* No state infrastructure
			* No direct high-risk dam funding but a loan program for NID dams
			* NHD+
			* USFWS NFH maintenance backlog
	+ Reconciliation
		- $150 million USGS gages
		- $9.5 billion for GL and ecosystem rehabilitation
		- $400 million Pacific salmon
		- $250 million for marine hatcheries
		- $300 million for USFWS hatchery maintenance
		- Implementation of Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act language
	+ Question on budget passing with CR likely and debt bill
	+ WRDA bill reauthorization is coming up
		- PA has received extra funding for hatcheries and unsafe dams from their governor
	+ Farm Bill platform is coming by end of year
		- Elevate fisheries
	+ Regulatory Affairs
		- Reviewing all current policies
			* Section 401 and WOTUS – Letter on WOTUS resubmitted
			* Rotenone reregistration
				+ Issues with aerial applications and maybe an option for BMP development for use to minimize issues
	+ Looking for help with Fish Passage, WOTUS and Section 401
	+ Many items have a 90 day deadline in the bills above
* 11:40 **Federal Agency Updates** – *All in attendance*
	+ Please limit comments to ~5 minutes (the committee welcomes written summaries of other relevant information and updates that cannot be covered in a 5-minute update)
	+ NOAA - Max Appelman
		- New AFWA liaison
		- Handout covers all of the NOAA activities – In meeting portal
	+ USFS – Chris Carlson
		- Apologies to the Committee, but I need to jump off for another engagement. For a FS update:
			* Agency and federal partners are at Wildland Fire Preparedness Level 5 with all available staff mobilized to respond to conditions in the west. BAER teams are active to assess and develop treatment responses to help protect watershed resources.
			* FS is continuing to implement GAOA provisions to address recreation infrastructure needs, including fishing access and aquatic organism passage.
			* FS continues to work on implementing the Rise to the Future Fish and Aquatic Strategy. As a part of that effort, the agency hopes to have a research needs assessment completed later this year to help inform agency and cooperator research.
			* FS is actively starting to plan for the anticipated injection of about $5.5b in new funding over five years from the infrastructure bill -Thorough bill overview from Devin DeMario
			* FS is also anticipating the potential of up to $30b in new funding over 10 years from Reconciliation.
	+ USFWS – David Hoskins
		- AIS
			* American Rescue Act - $6.5 million – ID risks, prevent intros, injurious rules
			* State funding up to $4.08M
			* Zebra mussels in west $2.25M
		- Hatchery Ops and Science
			* Priority propagation reports
			* Hatchery modernization evaluation at 5 facilities
		- Habitat
			* USFWS - $7.664M NFHP
				+ NFHP

IOP

Project submitted

* + - * Species and habitat gap analysis – L MS, Lower GL, Rockies and Rio Grande
				+ High priority species and habitat – similar to propagation analysis
		- AADAP
			* Enrollment up with 259 facilities – 119 state
			* Diquat work underway
			* Aqui-S for saltwater fish
			* Working with FDA to address comments on 5 of FDAs guidance for industry
		- Communications and Partnerships
			* Tom McCann
			* SFHBPC
				+ Virtual meeting – COVID19 roundable and updates
			* RFBF
				+ Increased participation in 2020
				+ New website
		- Budget
			* Hatchery - $65M 2021 – $75-81M 2022
			* ME – $25M 2021 – $49-50M 2022
			* Habitat and Species
				+ $74M 2021 – $77-79M
			* AIS – $41M 2021 – $45M 2022
			* Total - $206M 2021 – $250-254M 2022
	+ USGS
		- Coop Res Unit - $25M
			* Filled 27 positions with 2 in HQ
			* Univ of NV-Reno Coop
		- National Strategy for Mussels Drafted and 37 reviews
			* Refinement completed
		- Aquaculture
			* 16 action items
		- Fisheries Summit – Postponed for now
			* Fish and Aquatic Animal Health – USGS will lead this discussion
		- Drought and Eco flows
			* More activity both in and off channel – Delaware and CO River will IL River coming
		- Dam Removal Portal – Citations now available in portal
		- Invasive Carp Plan is nearly complete including effects of treatment of
		- Chesapeake Bay work – Land use, blotchy bass syndrome – viral pathogen, endocrine disruptors
			* https://wim.usgs.gov/geonarrative/edcsinthechesapeake/Endocrine disrupting compounds in the Chesapeake: https://data.usgs.gov/drip-dashboard/
		- eDNA – Organism disruptor analysis, native mussel work
	+ USFWS SFR – Bob Curry
		- 12% increase in 2021 – likely overestimated
			* Level to increasing generally
			* Receipts slow coming in
				+ IRA logs in receipt

Some receipts low

* + - * + 3rd quarter down 9.9%
				+ Down about 5.4% overall this year thus far – Actual receipts through 3rd quarter
				+ August is up a bit
		- New website – Partnerwithapayer.org
			* Engage industry partners in aquatic
			* Videos and news releases
* 12:10 **AFS FAS Update** – *Gary Whelan (MI)*
	+ New Officers
		- Lynn Quattro (SC DNR) – President Elect
		- George Scholten (IA DNR) – Secretary Treasurer
		- Jim Fredricks (ID FGD) – Past-President
		- Thanks – Joe Larscheid, Jason Olive
	+ Section will be meeting at the Annual Meeting
		- Currently on Saturday if meeting stays in person
		- Meeting will be spread out again if virtual
	+ FAS - FDA Comment Letter MUMS
	+ Reminder that SFR Award nominations are due on Sept. 15
* 12:15 **AFS Update** – *Doug Austen (AFS)*
	+ Multistate Conservation Grant Program Project Status Updates
		- AFS Bluebook
		- Grey Literature
		- Research Project Catalog and Process
		- Climate Ambassadors Program – State part ongoing with another AFS cohort in Late 2022
		- Instream Flow and Water Level Conservation Training Center
	+ Upcoming meetings and initiatives
		- Annual Meeting will be in Baltimore MD – November 6-10
			* Still in-person as of now
		- Joint Aquatic Meeting with 7-8 other professional organizations – May 2022 in Grand Rapids MI
		- Spokane 2022 – August 21-25
		- DEI – Special committee now a formal committee
		- Climate Change – Signed on to statement
		- AFS Meetings Code of Conduct passed
		- AFS will be sponsoring Latin America and Caribbean Fisheries Congress
		- Officers
			* Leanne Roulson – President
				+ Policy – Fisheries sustainability and climate awareness
				+ DEI – HBCU and Tribal colleges
				+ Communications on climate change
				+ Diverse
			* April Croxton to President Elect
			* Cecil Jennings to 1st Vice President
			* Miguel Garcia Bermudez to 2nd Vice President
* 12:25 **State-led discussion on Multistate Conservation Grant Program-** *Craig Bonds (TX)/All*
	+ Review changes in grant application and award process
		- Identify regional and national fisheries needs and priorities
		- Key changes
			* Technical review teams developed
			* Tracs now is required
			* Funding is limited with the national survey getting most of it.
				+ $1.6 million
				+ $5 million required
			* Website has much of the information
		- Background information on FY2022 funding criteria and strategic categories
			* Six categories and SFR projects are diffuse across the buckets
				+ Conservation and Science
				+ Relevancy and Inclusion
				+ Coordination
				+ Trust Fund Stewardship
				+ AFWA
				+ R3
	+ More PR and less SFR
		- Big DCCO monitoring need now as an example
		- Robust state participation
		- Need check-ins on how projects benefit the states with their outcomes
		- Wild fish health surveys
		- Key drug needs
	+ Move from NCNs has reduced the understanding of intent
		- Need better alignment
		- NCN helped focused AFS proposals
		- Strategic Priorities and if there is a place for elaboration, examples of projects
		- Requesting priorities, scoring process, and appropriate projects from the Committees
	+ Improvements
		- Need more clarity on the priorities and how the priorities are approved
		- Need a better list of real experts which can be other agency staff
		- Should have committees and subcommittees generating the priorities
		- This topic needs to have a separate discussion of the committee
* 12:55 **Action Items and Next Steps** – *Bryan King (D.C.)*
* 1:00 **Adjourn**