



Report from the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies to the MAFWA Directors

June 2013

Organization

We have identified action priorities for 2013, based on our **new Strategic Plan**, and we are actively building assignments into staff performance plans.

The Executive Committee has approved an **investment strategy** for the Association and we are in the process of securing the services of an investment advisor. The Executive Committee has also taken affirmative action on a **membership policy** for multiple stand-alone fish and wildlife agencies (e.g., marine fisheries, inland fisheries and wildlife).

We continue to build momentum behind our new social media initiative called “**AFWA Stateline**” to share Facebook posts, events and photos by state agencies (i.e., AFWA Stateline-OH). AFWA Statelines are added throughout the day and featured on AFWA’s twitter feed [@fishwildlife](https://twitter.com/fishwildlife). The Association also launched a Pinterest site at www.interest.com/fwagencies.

Policy and Program Updates

The Association continues to be active in advancing **state-federal relationships**. Larry Voyles and Rowan Gould (FWS) are leading a small work group that plans to develop a training manual on state-federal authorities for field and line managers. The Association’s Executive Committee met with the Executive Leadership Team of the U.S. Forest Service in December. Jeff Vonk has appointed a President’s Task Force on State Authority and it presented a white paper for discussion, among state directors, at the North American last March; final completion is pending.

A state-federal framework for addressing **surrogate species** has been completed. We are now seeking a few state technical staff to assist the FWS with the development of technical guidance.

The National Grants Committee is currently reviewing 50 Letters of Intent submitted for the **2014 Multistate Conservation Grant Program**. Invitations to submit a full grant proposal will be sent to selected recipients in late June. Please contact Ashley Salo for any questions (asalo@fishwildlife.org).

The Association, National Wildlife Federation, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service hosted a meeting of **State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinators** and their federal and private partners at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia on June 4-6, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to assist states with revising their Wildlife Action Plans before the October 2015 deadline, with a specific goal of working toward building consistency across the plans to make them a foundation for landscape level conservation. The meeting was very well attended with most states represented (~42 states), and about 60 other representatives from federal agencies and NGOs. Staff contact: Mary Pfaffko, mpfaffko@fishwildlife.org.

The Association is actively laying groundwork for the establishment of a national **Blue Ribbon Panel on Wildlife Diversity Funding**. We are engaged with partners in a variety of settings about growing wildlife funding for the future, including the LWCF dimension (and making it more beneficial for stateside needs) and State Wildlife Grants.

Dear Colleague Letters supporting funding for the **State & Tribal Wildlife Grant Program** for FY14 were circulated in the US Senate and House of Representatives. A total of 33 senators and 115 representatives signed on to the letters. Jon Gassett (KY) testified before of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on April 16th. He spoke about the benefits of the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program and other grant programs such as NAWCA. Staff Contacts: Mark Humpert (mhumpert@fishwildlife.org) and Mary Pfaffko (mpfaffko@fishwildlife.org).

The FWS received 28 applications from the states for **Competitive State Wildlife Grants** funding. Approximately \$8 million was requested and \$5.4 million is expected to be awarded. The review team is made up of FWS regional and Washington Office staff and a representative from AFWA. Award announcements are expected by mid-Summer. Staff Contact: Mark Humpert (mhumpert@fishwildlife.org).

Training for **Wildlife TRACS**, the new tracking and reporting system for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has begun. States will not be required to enter data into TRACS until they receive training. It is expected that all states will be trained by November. Staff Contact: Mark Humpert (mhumpert@fishwildlife.org).

The **North American Conservation Education (CE) Strategy** has begun work in conjunction with its 2013-2014 Multistate Conservation Grant "Expansion and Coordination of State Agencies' Fish and Wildlife-related Recreation Initiation Programs Using Community-based, Crossover Outdoor Skills Models." The purpose of the grant is to understand and blaze natural pathways from outdoor initiation to recruitment using experience- and skills-building models to be applied and tested in community and social settings such as clubs, scouts and parks and recreation departments. Staff Contact: Laura MacLean, lmaclean@fishwildlife.org.

The **U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Work Group**, which operates within the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee, is in the process of developing a new BMP document: “Best Management Practices for Trapping Gray Wolf in the U.S.” The Wolf BMP will be released by October of 2013. The group also recently produced “Avoiding the Incidental Capture of Wolverine During Regulated Trapping Activities.” The guidelines for avoiding wolverine offered in this document should help western states with trapping programs due to the likely listing of the wolverine as a “threatened” species under the ESA. The wolverine document and all 21 BMPs for trapping are available on the AFWA website. Staff Contact: Bryant White, Bryant.White@mdc.mo.gov.

The **National Fish Habitat Board** met in February 2013 and approved project prioritization criteria and a Fish Habitat Partnership performance evaluation document. The Partnership released its 2013 list of “Waters to Watch” in May. The Board’s next meeting is June 25-26 in Salt Lake City and will be hosted by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. For more information on the National Fish Habitat Partnership, visit www.fishhabitat.org or contact Ryan Roberts at rroberts@fishwildlife.org.

The **National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (Strategy)** was released in March. The Strategy was asked for by Congress in the 2010 Appropriations Act Conference Report. It was created by a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the New York Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources (representing the States with support provided by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies). The Steering Committee for the Strategy is currently determining next steps for implementation of the Strategy. Staff Contact: Arpita Choudhury (achoudhury@fishwildlife.org).

The **Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Natural Resource Science** will advise the Secretary of the Interior about the USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center and the Department of the Interior Climate Science Centers, which are managed by the U.S. Geological Survey. Twenty-five committee members were selected from more than 100 nominations received by the Interior Department. Members represent Interior and other federal agencies; tribal, state, and local governments; nongovernmental organizations; academic institutions; and the private sector. State members were identified from the four regional associations including John Sullivan from the WI DNR. The first meeting of the committee will take place on the 18th and 19th of September in Washington DC. Staff Contact: Arpita Choudhury (achoudhury@fishwildlife.org).

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is the latest state to join the **Southern Wings Program** bringing the total number of state wildlife agencies participating in the Program to twenty-seven. Great success has been achieved by the state wildlife agencies through the Southern Wings Program in the first three years. In order to document the amazing work of the states and their partners in Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean, the document “Taking Flight 2009-2012” was produced. It highlights the commitment to annual life-cycle conservation and the great progress in local conservation projects across the Hemisphere. Staff contact: Deb Hahn, dhahn@fishwildlife.org.

The **CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP)** was held March 3-14, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Regional Association CITES representatives and Deb Hahn provided technical and policy information and are enhancing global understanding of the role of state fish and wildlife agencies and of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. These understandings are important because of the potential for CITES decisions to directly impact state fish and wildlife agencies. Ongoing interactions with country delegates and NGOs continue to increase our recognition as State Fish and Wildlife Agency representatives in this international arena. The U.S. proposal to list the polar bear in Appendix I, which would effectively end all international trade of this species, was defeated. The states believe that this proposal is in direct opposition to the North American model of sustained use management.

Spotted turtles, Blanding's turtles, and diamondback terrapin were also proposed for listing in Appendix II by the U.S. All three turtle species proposals for Appendix II listings were adopted by consensus. The USFWS sent a letter to the Directors of the states impacted by this listing outlining the potential implications. However, this listing will only impact states where international trade of the turtle species occurs.

The Climate Change Working Group report was presented and ultimately accepted the report. This decision is supportive of and beneficial to the state fish and wildlife agencies that worked with the USFWS to form the U.S. position on this issue. Additional details are provided by Carolyn Caldwell's MAFWA CITES Representative report.

The **Eastern Interconnection States Planning Council (EISPC)** has developed a draft energy zones mapping tool that identifies and maps clean energy resource areas as well as natural resource concerns throughout the Eastern Interconnection. The initiative covers 26 states across the country. The tool, intended for use in energy development and transmission planning, is now available at <http://eispctools.anl.gov/>. Staff contact: Allison Vogt (avogt@fishwildlife.org).

As you know, **wind farms** are a contributing factor to **eagle mortality** across the county and an increasing cause for concern. The American Wind Wildlife Institute (AWWI) partners have identified eagle mortality and mitigation as a priority. Consequently, AWWI staff and contractors have been exploring new options for the wind industry to use in mitigating eagle take from wind energy projects.

As AWWI's research and expert elicitation process points to lead poisoning as a significant contributing factor to eagle mortality, one predictive model under development is a lead abatement model. It examines how the reduction of lead-related mortality may reduce overall eagle mortality, helping the wind industry to offset its industry mortality threats by reducing eagle mortalities from lead poisoning. There is likely an interest by the wind industry to turn to state fish and wildlife agencies for establishing voluntary lead abatement programs, funded by the wind industry, to reduce lead-related eagle mortality. Staff contacts: Allison Vogt, avogt@fishwildlife.org; Jen Mock Schaeffer, jenmock@fishwildlife.org.

The **Wildlife and Energy Liaison Position** has been filled. Kathy Boydston, formerly with Texas Parks and Wildlife, started with AFWA May 13, 2013. The Wildlife and Energy Liaison will be working with state fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies, industry and NGOs on energy projects and impacts on fish and wildlife resources. One of the first tasks will be to establish a list of contacts within each fish and wildlife agency for energy related issues, and to develop a needs assessment for fish and wildlife agencies. This needs assessment should identify the top energy issues that state fish and wildlife agencies are facing and the actions needed to help address those issues. Kathy is collaborating on transmission issues with members of the NGO community and helping to identify ways of engaging sportsmen and private landowners who are not familiar with transmission issues but could be affected through the planning and permitting processes.

A new **Presidential Order on Transforming our Nation's Electric Grid Through Improved Siting, Permitting and Review** was issued June 7, 2013. The Presidential Order (PO) builds on Executive Order 13604 issued March 22, 2012, which established a Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT) involving nine different executive department and agencies. The RRTT has been working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of transmission siting, permitting, and review, increase interagency coordination and transparency, and increase the predictability of the siting, permitting and review processes. The PO requires the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy and Interior to continue the work of identifying and establishing energy corridors (as required by Section 368, Energy Policy Act, 2005) across the country. This primarily refers to energy corridors on Federal lands that are suitable for siting transmission projects but will affect the routes that cross other public and private property. Energy corridors have already been designated for 11 contiguous Western states. The PO designates Principles for Establishing Energy Corridors that apply to all states (due **December 1, 2013**), and requires that energy corridors be established for non-Western states (**April 1, 2014**). PO also requires Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to prepare a plan for producing the Western corridor study and regional assessment by **July 12, 2013**. The PO requires the Secretaries to consult with state, local and tribal governments in preparing the corridor report, and AFWA will seek clarification on how coordination with states agencies will be initiated. This Presidential Order can be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/presidential-memoranda>. Staff contact: Kathy Boydston, kboydston@fishwildlife.org.

The 2012 **NAWMP Revision** has been signed by Ministers/Secretaries in Mexico, Canada and the United States. A companion Action Plan (AP) has been adopted by the NAWMP Plan Committee. The AP provides guidance on what and how the waterfowl community needs to undertake for the setting of new population, habitat and people goals. The Plan Committee has established an Interim Integration Committee (IIC), chaired by Dale Humburg of DU Inc., to promote the coherent management of North American waterfowl populations and harvest, habitat conservation, and the growth of associated hunters, viewers, and conservation supporters. The IIC will report to the Plan Committee and focus on technical assessments and solutions; process and institutional matters; and leadership and marketing related to integration. Technical work will be pursued jointly with the existing harvest, habitat working groups and the new human dimension working group.

The **National Flyway Council**, chaired by Cal DuBrock, and the Plan Committee have established a human dimensions working group (HDWG) that will focus its efforts on establishing the “people goal” for the NAWMP Revision. The Joint Ventures are very engaged in the Action Plan and are looking to update their implementation plans to better align with the Plan Revision. The NAWMP Revision document and the Action Plan are available at www.nawmprevision.org.

The Association’s Waterfowl Working Group and Bird Conservation Committee remain focused on implementing the **Action Plan for State Contributions to NAWMP/NAWCA Projects in Canada**. The Task Force report had a positive impact on state investments in breeding ground habitat in Canada during 2012 with 36 State Agencies contributing an all-time high of \$3.254 million. The Association, state agencies, provinces, and Ducks Unlimited will continue to build momentum toward achieving the Association’s goal of \$10 million annually, through implementation of the Action Plan. The Action Plan can be obtained on the Association’s website, and Dean Smith is the contact person (dsmith@fishwildlife.org).

State agency and Association staff are working together to develop an action plan for the Association’s role in **Asian Carp** issues ranging from public education, to science, to developing commercial markets and recommendations for state regulatory controls. For more information, contact Matt Menashes at mattm@fishwildlife.org.

As part of completion of final reporting in September 2012 for a 2009 Competitive State Wildlife Grant for **Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Needs, several new reports are now available**: 1) climate vulnerability assessments for priority amphibians and reptiles in the Southeastern US, as well as additional priority amphibian and reptile species in other parts of the country; 2) a framework for using volunteers/citizen scientists to conduct surveys or monitoring protocols for herpetofauna, including recommendations for increased effectiveness; and 3) criteria and an implementation plan to identify Priority Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Areas (PARCAs). For more information on these and related reports, contact Priya Nanjappa (pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org).

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) has completed its most recent technical report, ***Inventory and Monitoring: Recommended Techniques for Reptiles and Amphibians, with application to the United States and Canada***. For information on ordering hard copies, contact Priya Nanjappa (pnanjappa@fishwildlife.org). The **(PARC) Annual Report** is available via the PARC website, <http://parcplace.org/publications/parc-annual-reports.html>.

The **MAT Team** has completed graduation of Cohort 7 of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI). The NCLI Board met in June and approved the proposed budget for the next cohort as well as 36 people to attend cohort 8 which begins in October of this year.

To help the Southeast Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study and its 19 member states more effectively prioritize work for the future, MAT has collected data from member states and other stakeholders' and will report on the analysis and recommendations to SCWDS in August 2013.

Ten online courses and three webinars were provided to 30 different states since January. This reached 238 state fish and wildlife agency personnel in the last six months.

Dwight Guynn retires in early July and Tiffany Fritts has been hired as the new Communications and Media Coordinator.

Legal Update: Staff Contact Carol Bambery (cbambery@fishwildlife.org)

Legal Strategy

AFWA's 2013 Strategic Plan includes Goal 2: Policy and Legislative Advocacy: Promote policies, legislation, laws, regulations and legal strategies that enhance and protect the states' ability to conserve and manage fish and wildlife resources and their habitats consistent with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

A strategy under several of Goal 2 objectives includes "create a think tank of legal experts including state legal advisors, state attorney generals who represent the state fish and wildlife/marine agencies, law interns, and others to review fish and wildlife law cases and to advance appropriate legal actions and strategies as recommended by AFWA."

Steps, or action items, to implement the legal strategy are outlined below.

- DEVELOP UNDER THE DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE A THINK TANK OR LEGAL STRATEGY ADVISORY TEAM (LSAT) THAT WOULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THAT WOULD ADVANCE AFWA'S LEGAL STRATEGY.

NOTE: AFWA's Legal Committee charge is to advise the Executive Committee and the Association's Legal Counsel on legal matters which they believe are deserving of the expenditure of time, effort and money and to evaluate requests for the Association to enter into legal actions with the potential for national significance.

The role of the Legal Committee would not change. The Legal Committee's function is crucial as it, as with all AFWA's committees, is comprised of member agencies representatives.

The LSAT members would be selected from both inside and outside the agencies and would be expected to make recommendations to the Executive Committee that would advance AFWA's legal strategy. AFWA's Legal Committee would continue to advise the Executive Committee on legal matters deserving of AFWA's engagement.

- UNDER THE DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POPULATE THE LSAT FROM LEGAL COMMITTEES, JUDGES, PRIVATE PRACTICE, AFWA'S LEADERSHIP AND OTHERS.

A charter and potential membership list for the LSAT will be presented to the Executive Committee at our Annual Meeting. Other important preliminary steps include: determination of what role, if any, A.W.A.R.E. could serve and establishment of a network of pro bono law firms to assist in filing strategically placed amicus briefs.

We are pursuing some start-up funding via the MSCG Program which could:

- Fund technical support needed to enable the states to participate in the legal strategy
- Fund filing fees, printing costs for amicus filings
- Fund grant program for attorneys advancing primacy of state authority and other mission work (to be developed in 2014)
- Fund seminars for attorneys, judges educating on primacy of state authority and other mission work (to be developed in 2014)
- Fund administrative support for the LSAT

Legislation: Staff contact Jen Mock Schaeffer (jenmock@fishwildlife.org)

Farm Bill Reauthorization

The full Senate voted 66-27 on June 10th in favor of final passage of the Farm Bill, the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013 (S. 954). The Senate Farm Bill, as passed, retained the same consolidation approach from last year's bill for conservation programs, combining wetland, farmland, and grassland easements; consolidating WHIP into EQIP with 'at least 5 percent' of EQIP funds for wildlife; and reauthorizing CRP with 25 million acres of enrollment authority.

The Senate bill also included a national Sodsaver provision and links conservation compliance to crop insurance premium subsidies, per the compromise agreement between agriculture and conservation groups. The Senate bill also contains a means testing amendment for crop insurance. Although this amendment was opposed by the agriculture/conservation coalition supporting conservation compliance, the coalition will continue to work together on both parts of the agreement through the conference process between the House and Senate bills.

The House version of the Farm Bill failed on the floor, 195-234. The roll call vote is available here: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2013/roll286.xml>. We were deeply disappointed that the bill failed and was not sent to conference with the Senate. We are evaluating our next steps with the agriculture and conservation community and will continue to advocate for a five year farm bill that contains our above priorities.

Back in January, the **American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012** (or fiscal cliff bill) extended authority until September 30, 2013 for the 2008 Farm Bill programs that expired in 2012. The authority to enroll new acres under CRP, WRP and GRP was restored. WHIP, EQIP and CSP authority had been previously extended until 2014 through the 2012 appropriations processes. The Voluntary Public Access Program was authorized to continue pending FY13 appropriations, but did not receive funding in FY13. If Congress does not pass a farm bill this year, CRP, GRP,

and WRP will expire on September 30th of this year and WHIP, EQIP, and CSP will expire in 2014. Staff contact: Bridget Collins, bcollins@fishwildlife.org.

Budget Sequestration Hitting Trust Funds: Sportsmen Rally for Permanent Exemption

Budget Sequestration took effect March 1, and federal agencies are implementing plans to respond to the 5.0-5.1% cuts across all federal line items. Included in reduced spending authority are the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Funds. New estimates released by the White House on March 1 include a withholding of \$21, \$23 and \$6 million from the funds, respectively. This is a total withholding of \$50m, down from an estimated \$76m last September.

Forty-three organizations from the hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, conservation and boating community rallied together and sent a letter to House and Senate leadership seeking a permanent exemption for the Trust Funds from budget sequestration. While there is support across both sides of the political isle to exempt these funds, it does not appear possible do so without killing the bill containing the legislative fix. In order for the Trust Funds to be exempted from sequestration, there must be a fiscal compromise made that would replace budget sequestration – either permanently or for a shorter short term of 1-2 years. The ability to reach a such a fiscal compromise between the House and Senate leadership will likely depend on the whether a bipartisan atmosphere is created by current legislative debates or if negotiations are forced by the debt ceiling or a potential government shutdown. We continue to educate Hill staff on the importance of the Trust Funds and increase the awareness of the need to fix budget sequestration.

Work on FY14 Appropriations Begins

The House and Senate both passed budget resolutions for FY14. Chairwoman Murray of the Senate Committee on Budget continues to request House leadership to name conferees, but that has yet to happen. Even though no agreement between chambers has been reached on federal spending limits for FY14, each chamber is initiating appropriations hearings and bill mark-ups.

Recently the Senate Appropriations Committee provided a subcommittee allocation for DOI & the Environment of \$30.1B for FY14 while the House provided DOI only \$24.3B. The President's request for DOI in FY14 is \$30.0B. The Senate number is an increase of \$127m above FY13 enacted levels while the House number is a \$5.5B decrease from FY13 enacted levels. The growing gap between the House and Senate spending targets only exacerbates the difficulties in reaching a fiscal compromise. Although both chambers are going through regular order for bill mark-up, without an agreement on federal spending through a budget resolution we could easily see an appropriations impasse, forcing another Continuing Resolution for FY14.

A 2013 Sportsmen's Package

Leaders of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) continue to express an interest in pulling together a 2013 Sportsmen's Package. However, this years' approach will likely be a bit different than that of the 112th Congress. Rather than introduce a package of bills, the provisions will likely be introduced individually and then packaged in such a fashion as to garner

bipartisan support. We suspect this to be the case for the House and Senate, with greater commonality between the two chambers than last year, but each likely to contain unique provisions for conference consideration. A Sportsmen's Package will not likely emerge for passage until after August recess. It is important that the bill be introduced and passed before November or else faces fierce election-year politics again next year, especially considering Senator Hagan (NC) who is Senate Co-Chair of the CSC is up for re-election in 2014.

Bipartisan Revenue-sharing Bill Underway in Senate

Ranking Member Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK) of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, together with Senator Mary Landrieu (LA), are working on a revenue-sharing bill that would let states share more of the revenue from energy produced on federal lands and waters. The bill is expected to raise revenues through expanded oil and gas and renewable energy development. The bill released on March 20, Fixing America's Inequities with Revenues Act of 2013 (S. 630), is a broader revenue-sharing agreement that appears to include all resource-dependent communities including timber revenues from federal forests and other forms of renewable energy. It is possible that some of the revenue-sharing outlined in the bill could include funding for federal and state conservation provisions including land acquisition.

Sikes Act Reauthorization Underway in House

On March 21, the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs of the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on reauthorization of the Sikes Act. They also accepted testimony on a new bill, HR 1080, which would enhance the Department of Defense's (DoD) ability to collaborate with other federal agencies and land managers as well as local, state, Tribal agencies and conservation organizations on non-DoD lands. Jimmy Anthony, Assistant Secretary of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, provided testimony on behalf of the Association.

On May 15, the House Natural Resources Committee held a mark-up of H.R. 910, the Sikes Act Reauthorization Act of 2013, and favorably reported the bill out of Committee. The bill was requested to be placed on the legislative floor calendar for action by unanimous consent. AFWA will work with the Senate committees of jurisdiction and continue to work with House members to advance the states' authority for fish and wildlife management on DoD and neighboring federal lands.

Information Request on DEA & Controlled Substances Act Concerns

The DEA is opposed to Congressman Schrader's (D-OR) legislative fix for veterinarians, HR 1528, which would allow them to travel with scheduled drugs during the regular course of business. The language made its way into the Senate Farm Bill floor process but did not receive a vote, and is expected to be introduced as a stand-alone bill in the near future. When asked by Hill staff, the DEA was even more opposed to including AFWA's legislative suggestions, which consisted of including the terms "wildlife professionals, wildlife management and wild animal care, treatment and research."

Consequently, in order to address state fish and wildlife agencies' concerns with the DEA and the Controlled Substances Act and the Congressional Committees of jurisdiction, AFWA staff will need documentation of any DEA/CSA problems, policies, guidelines and discrepancies that you may have in order to generate justification and support for addressing our concerns.

Staff Contacts: Jen Mock Schaeffer at jenmock@fishwildlife.org and Arpita Choudhury at achoudhury@fishwildlife.org.

House Natural Resources Holds Hearing on ESA

On June 4, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on "Defining Species Conservation Success: Tribal, State and Local Stewardship vs. Federal Courtroom Battles and Sue-and-Settle Practices." Giving testimony on behalf of Wyoming Game & Fish was Steve Ferrell, Policy Advisor on Wildlife and Endangered Species, and testifying on behalf of Oklahoma was Tyler Powell, Deputy Secretary of the Environment.

The hearing touched on many issues, but some of the more dominate themes were whether or not the Act is effective; how state and local collaboration with federal agencies lead to successful delisting and conservation efforts; and what kinds of legislative changes need to be made to the Act such as whether it should require species recovery, include multi-listings as a requirement or option, the ability to prioritize listings and how the law might facilitate cooperation and enhanced partnerships with state authority and local interests.

House Launches Endangered Species Working Group

On May 9, Congressman Doc Hastings, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, announced the creation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Working Group. This Working Group, led by Chairman Hastings and Western Caucus Co-Chair Cynthia Lummis, represents a broad geographic range of republican interests that will examine many aspects of the ESA. Currently, there are no democratic members of the working group. The Working Group will hold a series of events, forums and hearings that will invite discussion and input on the ESA, which was last reauthorized in 1988. Issues to explore include where the ESA may be working well; how it could be updated; and how to boost its effectiveness for both people and species.

While the Natural Resources Committee laid some of the ground work last year exploring the impact of ESA-related litigation and settlement agreements, this year the Working Group will continue to examine the impacts of litigation along with a number of other specific topics including: "how to measure ESA progress; how to define success; if the ESA is working to achieve its goals; the role of state and local governments in recovering species; whether the ESA conserves species while ensuring property and water rights protection; the need for public engagement and input; and more." For more information on the House ESA Working Group, visit <http://naturalresources.house.gov/ESAworkinggroup>.

Reauthorization of Wallop-Breaux Discussions Resume

With the Transportation bill due to be reauthorized again next year, the conservation community is once again evaluating the political dynamics and what changes to the law may be possible. AFWA will continue working with the Angling and Boating Alliance to develop a community position that we collectively advance for reauthorization.

WRDA Reauthorization Passes Senate

The Senate and EPW Committee leadership (Senators Boxer and Vitter) passed S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act of 2013, on May 15 by a vote of 83:14. The bill includes a provision that would allow the Army Corps of Engineers to optimize the operation of existing dams to increase economic, recreational, and environmental benefits. It also improves the restoration of natural systems and the broader use of non-structural solutions to accomplish management objectives, such as authorizing the pilot program for stream-bank stabilization and erosion control among other modifications. Unfortunately, it also imposes financial penalties on FWS and NMFS for missing permitting deadlines. Attention now turns to the House which will be a more difficult political environment.

Ron Regan
Executive Director