

WE BELIEVE

That by working together, we can advance a solution for funding a 21st century model of conservation.

In the 1930s, the times were as economically bleak as the country had ever known, and the bounty of wildlife that once graced the landscape was rapidly dwindling. The need for wildlife restoration was urgent; but funding was scarce.

The hunting and shooting sports industries united with state fish and wildlife interests and agencies to advance a national funding solution to restore hundreds of imperiled game species such as elk, deer, wild turkeys and waterfowl by creating the bold, integrated system supporting what we now call the "North American Model of Conservation." The sport fishing and boating industries followed suit to establish a similar funding model for restoring depleted striped bass, trout and other important game fish.

This historic collaboration between private industry, hunters and anglers, and state fish and wildlife agencies is unparalleled in the world. And, it is this remarkable partnership that forms the backbone of today's \$260 billion wildlife-related recreation market force.

Now is the time to revive this kind of innovation through partnership. Urgent work remains to safeguard the 95% of all species that are



W. BRILLIANT / GETTY IMAGES.COM

neither hunted nor fished, and the stakes are high for all of us.

Members of the Blue Ribbon Panel will use their insight, ingenuity and personal passion for the outdoors to move forward a 21st century system of funding conservation that will generate both a rich conservation legacy and a vibrant economic future.

It is time to create certainty for both industry and conservation by building systems of conservation and not wasting our precious resources of time and capacity haggling over project-by-project mitigation.

It's time for new visions, it is time for the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources. For more information, contact Ron Regan, Executive Director of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, at rregan@fishwildlife.org or call 202/624-7890.

Since 1902, the **Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies** has represented North America's fish and wildlife agencies to promote sound resource management and conservation and speak with a collective voice on critical fish and wildlife issues.



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THE

BLUE RIBBON PANEL

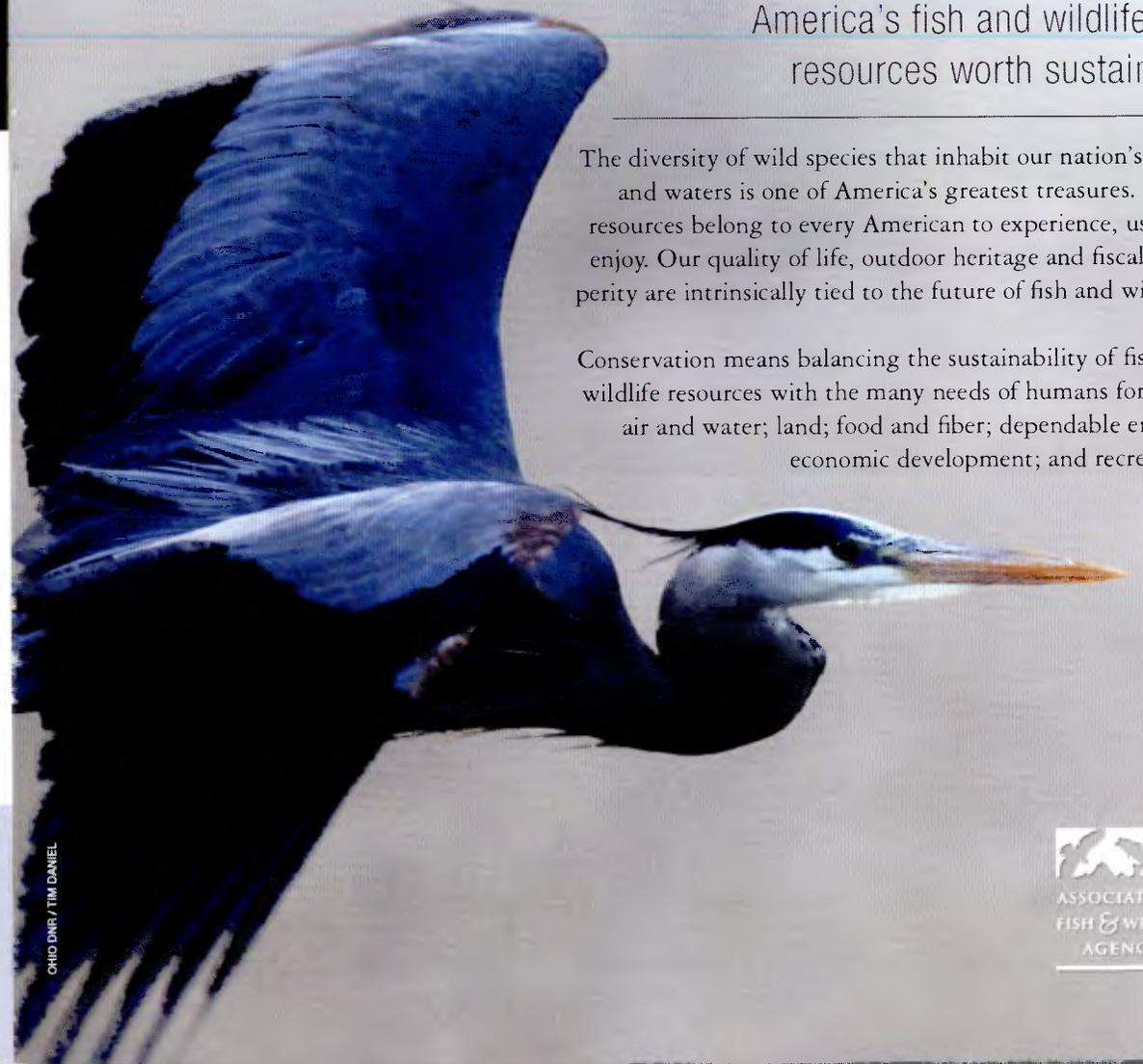
ON SUSTAINING AMERICA'S DIVERSE FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

WE BELIEVE

America's fish and wildlife are resources worth sustaining.

The diversity of wild species that inhabit our nation's lands and waters is one of America's greatest treasures. These resources belong to every American to experience, use and enjoy. Our quality of life, outdoor heritage and fiscal prosperity are intrinsically tied to the future of fish and wildlife.

Conservation means balancing the sustainability of fish and wildlife resources with the many needs of humans for clean air and water; land; food and fiber; dependable energy; economic development; and recreation.



OHIO DNR / TIM DANIEL



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WE BELIEVE That collaboration—not regulation—is the best path toward securing a future where fish and wildlife and natural resource-based enterprise thrive.

Industries, businesses and landowners nationwide are facing ever-mounting pressures from new and potential land use regulations that impact their capacities to provide a growing

world with food, fiber, energy and other essential commodities.

At the same time, the number of species petitioned for federal endangered species listing

has increased by more than 1,000% over the last five years.

Thousands of additional species could be listed in the coming years—leading to more expensive recovery attempts; reduced access; increased regulation and compliance costs; and further polarization of business, energy, conservation and environmental interests.

It costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year to try to save a single species. That price tag does not even include the significant financial and regulatory consequences for natural resource-dependent businesses or the resulting economic impacts.

The key is to keep species off the list altogether. State Wildlife Action Plans are the blueprints state fish and wildlife agencies have developed to conserve the 12,000 species that are at risk of federal endangered species listing. Yet, Congress has repeatedly cut the primary source of funding to implement these congressionally mandated plans—the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program.

“I strongly believe that the future of our industry, the outdoor sports that we serve, and the outdoor sports we personally enjoy, is absolutely more dependent upon how we manage our natural resources than anything else.”

~ John L. Morris, Bass Pro Shops Founder
Blue Ribbon Panel Co-Chair

“We’ve reached a point where inaction will only dig us a deeper hole of controversy, litigation, lost business opportunities and declining fish and wildlife. The Blue Ribbon Panel will help to ensure wildlife and business prosper and divisiveness and reactionary conservation are a relic of the past.”

~ Dave Freudenthal, former Wyoming Governor
Blue Ribbon Panel Co-Chair



WE BELIEVE That it's time to launch the *Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources.*

We need action now to sustainably fund conservation of the full array of fish and wildlife as well as to maintain balance between natural resource diversity and economic development.

The 50 state fish and wildlife agencies, through its Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, are inviting 20 visionary leaders representing the outdoor recreation retail and manufacturing sector, the energy industry, conservation organizations and sportsmen's groups to chart a course toward a resource-full future. Bass Pro Shops founder, John L. Morris, and former Wyoming governor, Dave Freudenthal have generously agreed to co-chair the panel.

The bipartisan Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources will recommend funding solutions and policy options that mutually benefit America's industries, agencies and our shared fish, wildlife and economic heritage.



The AFWA Strategist

Update for the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

June 2014

ACTION: Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2014

The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2014 (S. 1875 & H.R. 3992) is gaining momentum and would fund a portion of the USFS and DOI wildfire suppression costs through a budget cap adjustment similar to that currently utilized by FEMA for other natural disasters.

The WDFEA would classify extreme wildfires as natural disasters, enabling the use of federal emergency dollars to fund excessive suppression costs; prevent disruptive funding transfers from essential non-fire programs, restoring functionality to vital forestry management, fire prevention, and conservation programs under the jurisdiction of the USFS; and introduce clear criteria on what suppression activities merit funding under the disaster cap. This would ensure that first responders have the up-front resources available for fighting wildfires and that agencies and programs funded through the Interior appropriations bill have a stable budget to accomplish their resources goals.

Please contact your Congressional delegation today and ask them to support and cosponsor the WDFEA.

ACTION: Senate Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2014

The Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2014 (now S. 2363), sponsored by Senators Hagan and Murkowski, has 42 co-sponsors and includes new language in Section 106 affecting the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that requires concurrence with the state fish and wildlife agency at the state's request. The greatest opportunity for passage is before August recess, and AFWA needs your help to make that happen.

Please call, email or write your Senators today and ask them to: 1) support and co-sponsor S. 2363; 2) request your Senator's leadership bring S. 2363 to the floor for passage as soon as possible before August; and 3) ask your Senators to support passage of the bill.

Legal Strategy

Jourdan Rasmussen has arrived in DC for the summer as AFWA's inaugural law clinic student from Michigan State University College of Law, where he was in Carol Bamberg's Wildlife Law class. Carol will continue to teach the class in upcoming semesters, and AFWA's Legal Strategy team (Carol & Parks Gilbert) is working on packaging the class to be taught at other schools. The team is also producing a course for lawyers on sustainable use, which should be ready this fall. They continue to move forward with a wildlife law brief bank and a compendium of AFWA historical documents and will be piloting a Legal Strategy Advisory Council in a few weeks. Carol and Parks visited UC Boulder Law on June 11th and spoke to students and faculty about state agencies' legal authority to manage fish and wildlife.



The National Conservation Leadership Institute's (NCLI) Cohort 8 graduated on 5/30. Cohort 9 Fellows will be announced in early August.

AFWA Annual Meeting & Awards Nominations

> Registration is now open for AFWA's 2014 Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO at www.AFWAAnnualMeeting.org.

> Please make your hotel reservations at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch before 9/6.

> Nominations for the Association's Annual Awards are due 6/27. Click on the link from AFWA's home page at www.fishwildlife.org for details.

Leadership Development

> AFWA's Management Assistance Team launched an updated web site and new learning management system. MAT's summer term of online courses and webinars starts 7/21. www.matteam.org.

> Gina Main has been promoted to AFWA's Director of Professional Development and Executive Director of the NCLI.

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Farm Bill

> The Conservation Reserve Program began accepting applications for continuous CRP on 6/9. No general CRP signup will be held in 2014, but most expiring general contracts will be able to extend for one year.

> State applications for the first round of the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program were due 6/16. NRCS expects to complete agreements with successful applicants by 9/30.

> The Regional Conservation Partnership Program is accepting pre-proposal applications from partners, including state agencies, until 7/14. NRCS is making \$400M in RCPP funds available.

> The FY14 application period for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (including wetland, farmland and grassland easements) closed on 6/6. NRCS is currently ranking applications.

> NRCS is expected to release educational materials in July for producers new to compliance as a result of the 2014 Farm Bill's recoupling with crop insurance. A very basic rule linking compliance and crop insurance is expected from the Risk Management Agency shortly. A more detailed joint rule from FSA and NRCS on compliance and crop insurance and wetland mitigation banks is expected late fall. A separate proposed rule from NRCS on swampbuster implementation is expected late winter or early spring.

Transportation Trust Fund

The Transportation Trust Fund is expected to go bankrupt by August 2014. Consequently, a new urgency has emerged to find at least a short term extension and funding to bridge the gap between then and when Congress can come together on a new highway bill reauthorization, which includes reauthorization of gas tax contributions to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Funds. The Association, together with the Angling and Boating Alliance, continues to advance the reauthorization position adopted by AFWA at our March 2014 Business Meeting.

CITES & The Trilateral

27th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee

State agency representatives on the CITES Technical Work Group— Buddy Baker, Jack Buckley, Carolyn Caldwell and Jim DeVos along with AFWA's Deb Hahn— attended the 27th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee from 4/28 to 5/3. The newest rep, Jim DeVos, gave an intervention concerning Polar Bears. The group participated in or monitored a number of working groups and side events including a Sturgeon and Paddlefish Working Group and an event about sustainable use in the snake trade. A detailed report will be distributed soon.

2014 Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management (Trilateral)

The 19th meeting of the Trilateral was held 5/26-30 in Queretaro, Mexico. State agency representatives participated in the working tables, which include Migratory Birds, Species of Common Conservation Concern, Ecosystem Conservation and Law Enforcement. Larry Voyles (AZ) represented the states at the Executive Table. State agencies in attendance included staff from the Arizona Game & Fish Dept. and Texas Parks & Wildlife. AFWA's Deb Hahn and Allison Vogt also participated. A meeting highlight was a focus on tri-national Monarch Butterfly conservation. The Monarch is listed as a SGCN in many State Wildlife Action Plans. For more information, visit www.trilat.org.

New BMP on Trapping Wolves

AFWA's Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group released a new Best Management Practices for Trapping Wolves in the U.S. on 6/17. The document was produced as part of the U.S.'s fulfillment of an international commitment to humane trapping standards, which is vital to maintaining international trade of U.S.-trapped wild furbearers. Trapping BMPS for 21 species—including wolves—are available for download using the link <http://bit.ly/AFWATrappingBMPs>.

APHIS-VS Letter to Stakeholders on CWD Program Standard Changes

On June 11, AFWA received a letter addressed to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) stakeholders from Dr. TJ Myers of APHIS-Veterinary Services, stating that APHIS-VS believes the program standard changes will help slow the spread of CWD until new research advancements in detection and control methods are realized in the future. We strongly disagreed and conveyed our concerns through public comments submitted on 3/31. AFWA and our partners continue to collaborate on finding a better path forward with a more favorable outcome.

Upcoming AFWA Workshops

National State Wildlife Action Plan Workshop: July 14-16; St. Louis, MO

The National State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Workshop is intended to help SWAP Coordinators and their partners chart a course forward for implementing and revising SWAPs. Email Mary Pfaffko (mpfaffko@fishwildlife.org) to register.

Electric Transmission 101 Workshop: July 29-31; Wichita, KS

AFWA, the Edison Electric Institute, Westar Electric and the USFWS are offering this workshop to educate agency personnel about the electric transmission planning, design and permitting process. Registration is limited; contact Kathy Boydston (kboydston@fishwildlife.org) for details.

THE LEGAL VOICE FOR FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES



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PROTECTING STATE AUTHORITY FOR FISH & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

ABOUT AFWA

Founded in 1902, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies is the professional organization that serves as the collective voice of North America's fish and wildlife agencies.

Our mission is to support and advocate for state, provincial and territorial authority for fish and wildlife conservation and to assist those agencies in promoting science-based resource management in collaboration with public and private partners.

We envision a future of healthy fish and wildlife populations managed by our member agencies for the public's long-term benefit and use.

THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The Association has a strong record of supporting member agencies in

their efforts to manage fish and wildlife resources in accordance with the principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

The Model 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. This principle is also known as the Public Trust Doctrine; and
- 2) Fish and wildlife need to be managed so that their populations will be sustained forever.

THREATS TO STATE FISH & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

For more than 100 years, state agencies have addressed threats to fish and wildlife such as habitat loss, invasive species and disease.

Today, new challenges to the Model's legal and educational foundations are exacerbating threats to state agency resource management. For example:

- Public misunderstanding of or lack of appreciation for the Public Trust Doctrine; its application to fish and wildlife management; and its history of science-based conservation success.
- Primary and secondary schools, colleges and law schools teach animal rights, but not animal welfare or the Public Trust Doctrine.
- Some management decisions, especially regarding endangered species, are being played out in the courts—draining valuable resources from actual conservation delivery—and striking at the heart of stateside management integrity and authority.

Founded in 1902, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to advance science-based management and conservation of species and their habitats for the public's long-term benefit and use.
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Join Us

How can you help the Association protect state fish and wildlife management authority?

- 1) Spread the word about AFWA's new Legal Strategy to your contacts.
- 2) Provide materials to our Legal Research Library.
- 3) Email Parks Gilbert at pgilbert@fishwildlife.org to sign up for our Fish & Wildlife Law updates.
- 4) Ask us about joining our Pro Bono Attorney Network.
- 5) Invite us to present at law schools, bar meetings & other professional events.
- 6) Donate to AFWA's 501(c)3—A.W.A.R.E—to support the Legal Strategy, including sponsoring internships for top law students.
- 7) Tell us how we can serve you better.



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ENGAGING THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Historically, the Association has successfully engaged the federal government's executive and legislative branches to advance state-based conservation consistent with the Model.

However, we haven't focused on the judicial branch to the same degree—until now.

In 2013, we initiated AFWA's new Legal Strategy to enable state fish and wildlife agencies to act in concert to address challenges to their statutory authority to manage wildlife.

AFWA's general counsel, Carol Bambery, spearheads our Legal Strategy under the advisement of the Association's Executive Committee.

AFWA'S LEGAL STRATEGY

AFWA's Legal Strategy comprises several exciting components that we will launch over the next couple of years.

AFWA Legal Research Library

We are compiling wildlife law materials into two, dynamic databases. The first houses briefs, cases and other documents and will enable states and pro bono attorneys to support our efforts to engage the judicial branch.

Our second database is generously hosted by the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Law. This resource archives AFWA historical materials and other public domain documents.

AFWA Law Clinic

We are partnering with MSU Law and potentially other schools to establish

an AFWA Law Clinic, located at our office in Washington, DC.

Selected law students will support AFWA's judicial outreach and legal research.

Ultimately, we hope students will carry their wildlife law experiences forward as they become practicing lawyers, legislators, judges, parents and voters.

Wildlife Law Education

We will be offering wildlife law educational opportunities and products to practicing lawyers, law students and judges through live seminars and web-based courses.

Our 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

We are establishing 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.

To date, the Association has launched "Team Arizona" and is seeking assistance in setting up teams across the country to help protect state fish and wildlife management authority.

