

Private Lands
and
Public Lands



Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

**Private Lands Working Group
and
Public Lands Working Group**

**Annual Report
2014**

May 22, 2014

Respectfully submitted by

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Michigan Department of Natural Resources
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Meeting Time and Place

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division hosted the annual joint meeting of the Private and Public Lands Working Groups on May 5-8, 2014, at the Ralph A. MacMullen (RAM) Conference Center in Roscommon, Michigan.

Attendance

State agency representatives from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky (private only), Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Ohio were present at the meeting. Agency representatives from Kentucky (public only), South Dakota and Wisconsin were unable to attend.

Representatives from the Canadian Provinces have not attended the meeting for multiple years. The working groups encourage the Directors to revitalize the connection with our Canadian counterparts.

Significant turnover is occurring in the Public Lands Working Group. Only eight of the 13 states had the same representative as in 2013, and two of those plan to retire or promote to a new position within the next two months—both with 11 years of experience with the group. The working group asked several long-time members to summarize the history of the group, before the institutional memory is lost.

Executive Summary

The 23rd annual meeting of the Midwest Private Lands Working Group and the Public Lands Working Group convened in Roscommon, Michigan on May 5-8, 2014.

This year's Private Lands Workgroup session included productive dialog and discussion on current conservation challenges and opportunities. Each state reported on private lands initiatives being utilized to address local conservation needs. The new Farm Bill dominated discussions and below is a summary of the major topics discussed:

1. Nebraska small grain stubble management program
2. Impact of potential USFWS listing of the northern long-eared bat
3. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
4. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
5. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
6. Voluntary Public Access – Hunting Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) grants
7. Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
8. Federal budget review

Meeting notes in Appendix 2a include a more detailed summary of each of these discussion points.

The Public Lands Working Group meeting covered the following topics:

1. Report from the June, 2013 MAFWA Director's meeting
2. Impacts of potential listing of northern long-eared bat on states' ability to manage habitat
3. Prescribed fire
4. Feral swine/hogs
5. Impacts of sequestration on land actions
6. Captive cervids with breeding and farming increasing transmission of chronic wasting disease
7. Oil and gas development/exploration
8. Emerging issues: farming practices on state wildlife lands
9. MAFWA requests for recommendations on FY 2016 federal budget priorities and Competitive State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

Private Lands committee members attended a field tour that included multiple stops in Crawford County demonstrating management techniques used to restore pine barrens and jack pine habitat for the endangered Kirtland's warbler (KW) and other important species. Stops included a new planting of over 150,000 jack pine seedlings on 125 contiguous acres owned by four private landowners. The project is adjacent to public land and within close proximity to 300+ acres of additional USFS land being managed for KW. The final stop included a private land habitat project designed to restore early successional aspen habitat for woodcock, ruffed grouse, deer and other wildlife. Management techniques observed on the tour include prescribed fire, invasive species control, tree planting and hydro axing. The tour offered prime examples of the importance of managing both public and private lands to benefit priority wildlife species.

The Public Lands group toured the Pigeon River County State Forest where we saw and discussed:

1. Elk management including opening maintenance, controlled hunts, prescribed fire and farming
2. Co-management responsibilities shared between Forest Resources Division and Wildlife Division
3. Implications of checkerboard patterns from multiple land acquisition funding sources on horse trails and wildlife management
4. Restoration of oil and gas well sites
5. Management of jack pine for the federally endangered Kirtland's warbler

Takeaway messages included: (1) Under co-management, one wildlife biologist and one wildlife technician are covering wildlife management responsibilities for 400,000 acres of public

land in the northern lower peninsula—more than the entire public land base managed by the Iowa DNR-Wildlife Bureau. This is possible because Forest Resources Division, as the lead manager handles timber sale administration, land administration and maintenance. (2) Over 190,000 acres in Michigan are managed for the federally endangered Kirtland’s warbler—slightly less than the acreage within the Wildlife Management Area System in North Dakota.

On Thursday morning we wrapped up reports and business meetings focusing on action and informational items for the MAFWA directors to consider. Those action items are listed as follows:

Director Action Items—Joint Private and Public Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Impacts of the Potential Federal Listing of Northern Long-Eared Bat on States’ Ability to Manage Habitat

The working group discussed the impacts of potential federal listing of the northern long-eared bat. Of particular concern are potential restrictions to habitat management if the bat gets listed as a federally endangered species. These restrictions, similar to those associated with Indiana bat guidelines, could significantly limit implementation of habitat management techniques, such as timber harvest, prescribed burning, and herbicide application—even to control invasive species. Limitations on these techniques will likely reduce suitable habitat and may impact long-term sustainability of northern long-eared bat as well as other species dependent on the restricted activities. It would also not address the root cause of the concern for northern long-eared bat—white-nose syndrome, a lethal and fast-moving fungal disease

The working group noted that the negative effects of guidelines already in place for Indiana bat could be compounded if similar or more restrictive guidelines are implemented for the northern long-eared bat. In addition, the approval of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) operational project grants could be held up by this action.

ACTION: The working group encourages the Midwest Directors to: (1) become informed about the impacts to the natural resources of their states’ of the potential federal listing of northern long-eared bat, (2) mutually work with the Service to develop reasonable and appropriate conservation guidelines that benefit the northern long-eared bat but also allow the states and our conservation partners to sustainably manage natural resources, and (3) prioritize future research funding through appropriate fund sources such as the FY 2016 federal budget and the Competitive State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

A proposed draft letter is attached as Appendix 5a. A MAFWA website posting titled “States Seek Delay in Protecting Long-Eared Bats” is attached as Appendix 5c.

Director Action Items—Private Lands Working Group

None

Director Action Items—Public Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Prescribed Fire

The public lands working group recognizes the importance of prescribed (Rx) fire as a habitat management tool. The Midwest states continue to be concerned about efforts to require state agencies to follow national guidelines [National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)] for burning. The Midwest states manage land for federal agencies such as the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as their own and perhaps several others. There appears to be a trend for federal agencies to require state partners to adopt federal prescribed burn training guidelines. Most states have their own Rx fire burning program, which are certified fire manager programs. States do not have the capacity or resources to keep up with the constantly changing national training requirements resulting in less fire on the ground and more training. Rx burning is a critical management tool that is used by resource managers for a number of reasons, including controlling noxious weeds, managing invasive species, controlling succession, and maintaining diverse and healthy ecosystems. Prescribed burning produces results in native prairie and other fire-dependent ecosystems that no other mechanical management tool alone can produce including grazing or haying.

The states in the Midwest have traditionally adopted their own respective prescribed burn training guidelines according to the needs and environmental conditions of that state. While these guidelines may vary somewhat from state to state, there is at least a minimum standard set to help ensure the safety of personnel and property. These standards have proven to be effective and safe for many years, both for personnel and for meeting habitat management objectives. In summary, the group is very concerned that efforts to move towards national guidelines may minimize or halt the use of prescribed fire on wildlife areas, which will ultimately affect our ability to manage wildlife habitat.

ACTION: It is vitally important to keep fire as a tool for managing our landscape. The work group encourages the Midwest Directors to communicate (correspondence attached) with our federal partners to limit mandatory national training and agree that each state's fire training qualifications will be accepted as their standard for Rx burning.

ISSUE: Feral Swine/Hogs

Feral swine, also known as feral hog or pig, Eurasian or Russian wild boar, razorback, and piney woods rooster, all are considered to fall under the same ancestral genus and species of *Sus scrofa*. Through range expansion, escape from domestic operations and hunting preserves, and intentional release by individuals, it is estimated that more than 5 million feral swine now exist in at least 39 states, including many Midwest states. With no natural predators and because feral swine can reproduce year-round (1-12 piglets/litter; 2 litters/year), populations can quickly become established and expand from the release or escape of just one pregnant female. Feral swine cause significant damage to agricultural and natural resources. Ecological and economic losses from feral swine damage in the U.S., when combined with control costs, are estimated to be \$1.5 billion annually. In addition to physical damage, feral swine can carry at least 30 important diseases and up to 37 different parasites that can affect people, pets, livestock, and wildlife. The introduction of many of these diseases into our domestic production could cripple the livestock industry at both the state and national level. Not only do feral swine pose disease risks, they also compete with native wildlife and cause damage to agricultural crops and natural ecosystems. Feral swine will eat almost anything, including acorns, tubers, roots, shoots, fruits, berries, earthworms, amphibians, reptiles, rodents, bird eggs, and the young of many larger vertebrates such as white-tailed deer, cattle, sheep, and goats.

ACTION: An integrated approach of strict regulations and intense eradication efforts, supported by wildlife managers and agricultural producers can have the most beneficial impact in controlling the rapid expansion of this highly destructive invasive species. State and federal entities collaborate intensely to eliminate localized emergent populations of feral swine and to control range expansion of established populations throughout the nation. To combat this highly destructive, invasive species, methods such as aerial shooting, sharpshooting, and trapping must be carried out by highly trained agency officials as a unified effort coordinated by state and federal wildlife and agriculture agencies. To carry out large scale feral swine elimination efforts throughout the nation, it is critical that all possible sources of funding be investigated and acquired to help support “boots on the ground” and to provide the necessary infrastructure to implement such programs. Therefore, it is imperative that directors directly support or lobby for funding at state and federal levels to procure the essential funding to help eradicate this invasive species from the nation’s landscape.

ISSUE: Impacts of Sequestration and Response Time on Land Actions

The working group reviewed the status of the 2013 issue on the impacts of sequestration on United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Region 3 Wildlife and Sports Fish Restoration Programs related to delays in processing land matter issues. The group concurred that improvements in response time have occurred. However, some projects can still be delayed by

several months while waiting for a response. This is especially concerning because the rise in Pittman-Robertson funding will increase work load and slow response times.

ACTION: The working group encourages the Midwest Directors to: (1) communicate the state's concerns to the USFWS about the delays to the USFWS Region 3 Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Assistant Regional Director, (2) to encourage the USFWS to mutually determine priority rankings of land actions with state input, and (3) to encourage the USFWS to seek alternatives in efficiency to promptly work with states as partners in land matter issues.

A draft letter is attached.

ISSUE: FY 2016 Federal Budget Recommendation

The working group reviewed the AFWA FY 2015 Federal Appropriation Recommendations relative to the group's public land management responsibilities. We discussed the impacts of potential federal listing of the northern long-eared bat. Of particular concern are potential restrictions to habitat management techniques, such as timber harvest, prescribed burning, and herbicide application. Limitations on these techniques will likely impact the long-term sustainability of northern long-eared bat as well as other species dependent on the restricted activities.

The AFWA FY 2015 USFWS Recommendation urged Congress and the Service to ensure that land acquisitions are made with state concurrence. Most states expressed that conflicts with federal land acquisition were not an issue and that state concurrence may not be universally needed. However, one state had a couple of instances where the state and the Service were competing for purchasing the same land. This can be prevented by early coordination in the planning process.

Recent increases in funding for feral pig control are aiding efforts to manage this issue. However, continued funding will be needed.

ACTION: The working group recommends that:

- (1) the FY 2016 federal budget includes funding for research on northern long-eared bat habitat to inform the development of conservation guidelines. This research could include baseline information on habitat selection, roost selection, roost switching behavior, distance between roosts, and size of roosting home range,
- (2) the Service work cooperatively with the states early in the project boundary identification process to prevent competing for the same parcel of land, and
- (3) the FY 2016 federal budget includes continuing funding for feral pig control.

Director Information Items—Private Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Expanding Partnerships with FSA

The Private Lands workgroup discussed the desire to build upon existing partnerships to assist FSA in delivering strong Farm Bill programs, with an emphasis on CRP. States, NGO's and conservation districts are all interested in providing additional support and guidance to FSA. AFWA and the CRP subgroup outlined a letter to FSA that includes examples of how states have partnered on CRP in the past and ideas to expand future partnerships. The letter will also request information from FSA regarding partnerships and what can help them.

ACTION: No Director level action needed at this time.

Director Information Items—Public Lands Working Group

ISSUE: Oil and Gas Development/Exploration

New technologies have recently increased oil and gas exploration. The Midwest states continue to be concerned about the potential to lose valued areas to commercialization through requests to obtain and develop mineral rights. Development of sites often results in the loss of topsoil and unrepairable loss of habitat. The impacts of oil and gas exploration infrastructure to wildlife management are not clearly understood and need to be better defined. We encourage states to be proactive in developing requirements for avoidance, minimization, compensation, and mitigation of impacts on public land.

ACTION: No action required.

ISSUE: Farming Practices on State Wildlife Lands

States discussed the concern about farming practices on state lands and the environmental impacts of cooperative farming agreements. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) representative gave a report on recent legislation in that state directing MNDNR to develop and implement best management practices and habitat restoration guidelines for pollinator habitat enhancement on MNDNR lands in response to recent declines in honey bees and native pollinator populations. This report precipitated a discussion among the states about farming practices related to pollinators, especially farming used as a wildlife management tool. Minnesota indicated that their Section of Wildlife has initiated a discussion within their section

to review farming practices used on Wildlife Management Areas. They indicated that they are taking a hard look at such things as use of neonicotinoid (systemic insecticide) treated seed, use of genetically modified (GMO) crops, tillage practices, and use of cover crops. Iowa indicated that they are developing and updating conservation plans on all wildlife areas that have habitat leases (cooperative farming agreements). While the public land base in Iowa comprises only about two percent of the total land base, Iowa DNR is taking the Gulf of Mexico hypoxia issue seriously and feels compelled to lead by example with their conservation oriented farming practices. Several states indicate a movement towards adoption of cover crop and nutrient management practices. Missouri is examining the impacts of GMO crops and is incorporating more cover cropping practices into their farming. The Midwest Public Lands Working Group agreed that there is a trend towards more environmentally friendly farming practices used by conservation agencies, and it would be in each state's best interest to review their own farming practices and be proactive in addressing these trends.

Action: This is an informational item meant to raise awareness to this growing issue. No action required by Directors at this time.

Time and Place of Next Meeting

The 24th annual meeting will be held in Minnesota in 2015.

List of Appendices

7. Joint Meeting Agenda
8. Private Lands Meeting Agenda
 - 2a. Private Lands Working Group Meeting Notes
9. Public Lands Meeting Agenda
10. List of Attendees
 - 4a. Private Lands Group
 - 4b. Public Lands Group
11. Draft Letters and Informational Items
 - 5a. Joint Private and Public Lands Letter—northern long-eared bat
 - 5b. Public Lands Letters
 - iii. Prescribed burning—USCOE, BOR, USFWS
 - iv. Sequestration—USFWS
 - 5c. Public Lands Information Item—MAFWA website posting-northern long-eared bat
12. State Reports

Appendix 1



**Private Lands & Public Lands Work Groups Agenda
May 5 – May 8, 2014
Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center
Roscommon, Michigan**

Monday May 5th

4:00 PM – 9:00 PM Registration (Resource Center—Lobby)
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM Dinner – soup & salad bar (Resource Center—Dining Area for all meals)
7:00 PM – 11:00 PM Evening Social (Resource Center—Fireplace Lounge for all socials)

Tuesday May 6th

7:15 AM – 8:15 AM Breakfast
8:00 AM – 8:15 AM Registration (Conservation Education Building for entire meeting)
8:20 AM Housekeeping
8:30 AM – 8:55 AM Welcome, Evergreen Goals, Public Land Management Strategy, Farm Bill from national perspective – Bill Moritz, MDNR Deputy Director
8:55 AM – 9:15 AM Welcome, Guiding Principles & Strategies, More Bang for Your Buck, Farm Bill from state perspective – Russ Mason, Chief, MDNR Wildlife Division
9:15 AM – 9:45 AM Overview of co-management and future of forestry – Bill O’Neill, Chief, MDNR Forest Resources Division
9:45 AM – 10:15 AM Pheasant Restoration Initiative – Mike Parker, Acting Private Lands Program Manager, MDNR Wildlife Division

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM Break

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM Conservation Districts and the Farm Bill – Steve Shine, CREP Manager, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
11:00 AM – 11:30 AM Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – Jon Mayes, Recreation Grants Unit Manager, MDNR Grants Management
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM Conserving Rare Species Across Landscapes – Dan Kennedy, Endangered Species Coordinator, MDNR Wildlife Division

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM – 3:15 PM Public/Private Breakouts

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM Break

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM Public/Private Breakouts

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM Gourmet Gone Wild program & food sampling
(Resource Center—Fireplace Lounge)

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Dinner

7:00 PM – 11:00 PM Evening social and optional work group breakouts

Wednesday May 7th

7:15 AM – 8:00 AM Breakfast

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM Public/Private Breakouts

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM Break

10:15 AM – 11:15 AM Public/Private Breakouts

11:30 AM Board vans (box lunch provided)

11:45 AM – 6:00 PM Two separate field tours - public and private

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM Dinner at Lewiston Lodge in Lewiston, MI

9:00 PM – 11:00 PM Evening social

Thursday May 8th

7:15 AM – 8:00 AM Breakfast

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM Public/Private Breakouts
Development of white paper issue documents for MAFWA Directors

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM Break

10:15 AM – 12:00 PM Public/Private Breakouts
Development of white paper issue documents for MAFWA Directors

Adjourn!

Appendix 2

Private Lands Agenda

Tuesday

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1:00 -3:15 pm | State Reports - 10 minutes each |
| 3:30 - 4:30 pm | Wheat Stubble project and Long-eared bats |

Wednesday

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 8:00 – 10:00 am | Farm Bill – CRP, EQIP |
| 10:15 – 11:15 am | Farm Bill – WRE |

Thursday

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 8:00 – 10:00 am | Farm Bill – VPA, RCPP –Federal Budget Review |
| 10:15 – 12:00 am | Recommendations to the Directors |

Appendix 2a

Midwest Private Lands Working Group

Meeting Notes:

1. State Reports:

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota,
Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio

2. Nebraska Small Grain Stubble Management:

- Promotes harvest of small grains, wheat and milo, at heights greater than 14 inches to provide wildlife habitat and increase hunting opportunities
- Incentives provided to the landowners to encourage participation
- Producers receive additional benefit of decreased weed control costs and soil moisture conservation

3. Northern Long-eared Bats (NLEB):

- Federal listing of NLEB could severely limit management activities on private lands with a particular concern with timber harvesting and prescribed burning
- NLEBS are generalist species that seek vegetation as small as 3 inch DBH
- Indiana bat has similar protection which creates restrictions on timber harvest and prescribed burns
- Group discussed potential differences between ecological field offices/regional offices having different views of State-by-State restrictions pertaining to wildlife management plans
- Discussed whether management activities would be allowed on lands with annual agronomic practices

TO DO: Joint action item with Public Land Workgroup

4. Conservation Reserve Program:

- Enrollment cap reduced to 24 million acres.
- FSA providing very few details as of yet.
- FSA has requested FY14 funding for renewing existing contracts and a continuous CRP enrollment
- No general CRP enrollment expected in FY14
- Pollinators continue to be a focus of enrollment. Potential for using pollinator friendly practices as part of mid-contract management

- Discussion of a working grasslands program to allow grazing on CRP acres. Payment based on 75% grazing rate. Not expected in FY14.
- Concern expressed over new FSA handbook that states CREP and SAFE cannot occur in the same county
 - Recommend allowing both programs as the focus of each program is different. CREP is primarily filter strips whereas SAFE tends to be more upland habitat
- Discussion of CRP allowing early outs beginning in October. Landowners will face no penalty for leaving CRP early.
- FSA interested in expanding partnerships to provide technical assistance as FSA staffing continues to decrease
 - Discussion of what different states can provide FSA

TO-DO: AFWA writing letter thanking FSA for considering ways to expand partnerships, examples of how states have previously partnered with FSA on CRP, and ways we partner with NRCS that could be expanded.

5. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

- Annual funding of \$100 million plus 7% of EQIP. Anticipate approximately \$200 million total
 - 35% of total earmarked for 8 critical conservation areas
- Partners required to provide match, but no specific amount listed
- Partners required to do monitoring, outreach and education.
- State departments must provide funding for technical assistance and administration
- Discussion of using foundations and private sector for a broader scope
- States will potentially have more control of a project from start to finish.
- Program offers tremendous flexibility and innovation for potential projects

6. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP):

- Wildlife practices to receive 5% of state funds to replace former WHIP funding
 - Requires addressing state wildlife concerns identified in Wildlife Action Plans
 - Requires annual consultation with state tech committee
- Discussed the need to engage state tech committees on wildlife practices
 - IA using former WHIP subcommittee
- EQIP eligibility
 - Only open to producers so recreational landowners will be excluded
 - Producers must be in FSA system or tax records used to show minimum of \$1,000 in goods produced or sold annually
 - Producers working State land are eligible if they have management control of the land for the length of the contract
- Example of using cover crops to provide habitat discussed

TO-DO: States need to address AFWA (Bridget) if they do not reach the 5%. States that do are also encouraged to make case studies to share with AFWA

7. Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) & Wetland Reserve Program (WRP):

- Farm Bill aggregated WRP with two other easement programs:
 - Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program & Grassland Reserve Program.
 - New program is the Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP).
- ACEP addresses wetland restoration by formation of a new subprogram
 - Wetlands Reserve Easement program (WRE)
- Farm Bill reduced funding in WRE compared to WRP although there is now a financial baseline which WRP did not previously have
- Group discussed that in many states there is a need for maintenance dollars to maintain the quality of WRP and WRE projects. Other states more interested in funding for new contracts than maintenance.

8. Voluntary Public Access-Hunting Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)

- \$20 million of the authorized \$40 million is available in FY14.
 - Down from \$30 million in previous grant cycle
 - More states plan to apply, so likely increased competition
- Application deadline is June 16, 2014
- 3 year grant with opportunity to reapply or request extension for two years
 - Funds expected to be provided up front
- States applying for funds are encouraged to discuss the importance of economic benefits of public access and diversifying income for landowners.
- Recommend focusing enrollment on CRP and other FB conservation programs.

TO-DO: AFWA to write a letter on behalf of States thanking David Hoge from FSA for his leadership and assistance with VPA during the previous grant cycle

9. Federal Budget Review:

- Workgroup reviewed the administrations proposed budget for next fiscal year.
- Lisa Potter from Missouri working with AFWA staff on national budget
 - deadline is already past, but encourage group discussion for future changes
- Workgroup generally supported the position taken by AFWA.
- Specific comments made included maintaining funding for NRCS travel and training, and maintaining and/or increasing funding to State Wildlife Grants.

Appendix 3

MAFWA Public Lands Working Group Breakout Agenda

May 6-8, 2014

Roscommon, MI

Purpose: Disseminate information, discuss emerging or existing issues, and provide input to MAFWA Directors on public land issues

- Housekeeping
- Introductions

- MAFWA 2013 Committee Report
 - Review 2013 Action-Updates Since 2013-Actions for 2014?
 - Tony Black Report from June, 2013 MAFWA Director's Meeting (attached)
 - Prescribed Fire (Action)
 - Feral Swine/Hogs (Action)
 - Impacts of Sequestration on Land Actions (Action)
 - Captive Cervids with Breeding and Farming Increasing Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) (Action)
 - Oil and Gas Development/Exploration (Information)

 - Review of Actions Taken by E-mail Since May, 2013 Meeting
 - State Experiences with Habitat Equivalency Analysis (HEA)-June 11, 2013 e-mail from Jim Jansen (IA) regarding use of HEA for determining mitigation for habitat loss on power lines within a WMA

- State Reports

Illinois	Missouri
Indiana	Nebraska
Iowa	North Dakota
Kansas	Ohio

Kentucky (Tuesday by phone)

South Dakota (Tuesday by phone)

Michigan

Wisconsin (vacant)

Minnesota

- Emerging/Existing Issues—Common Challenges/Creative Solutions
 - How are states quantifying the number of visits to their wildlife management areas? What methods are being used to determine area use?
 - How are states addressing prescribed burning on federally owned wildlife areas, where the feds are requiring a fire management plan and NWCG standards before burning can take place?
 - Northern long-eared bat federal listing (see attached MAFWA post)
 - Review of Compatible Use Spreadsheets-Is there a desire to update?
 - Common Issues from State Reports

- MAFWA Requests
 - Competitive State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Recommendations
 - FY 2016 Federal Budget Priority Recommendations

- Other

- ACTION ITEMS-ASSIGNMENTS-What's left to do?

- 2015 Meeting

Appendix 4a

Private Lands Working Group Meeting Attendees

State	Name	E-mail address	Telephone
Illinois	Stan McTaggart	Stan.mctaggart@illinois.gov	217-558-6623
Indiana	Gary Langell	Glangell@dnr.in.gov	812-334-1137
Iowa	Kelly Smith	Kelly.smith@dnr.iowa.gov	515-281-6247
Kansas	Jake George	Jake.george@ksoutdoors.com	620-672-0760
Kansas	Mike Mitchener	Mike.mitchener@ksoutdoors.com	620-672-5911
Kansas	Matt Smith	Matt.smith@ksoutdoors.com	785-658-2465
Kentucky	Dan Figert	Dan.figert@ky.gov	502-548-6774
Michigan	Ken Kesson	Kessonk1@michigan.gov	269-244-5928
Michigan	Mike Parker	Parkerm5@michigan.gov	517-284-6217
Michigan	Brian Piccolo	Piccolob@michigan.gov	989-275-5151
Michigan	Mark Sargent	Sargentm@michigan.gov	269-512-1218
Michigan	Bill Scullon	Scullonh@michigan.gov	906-563-9247
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Missouri	Chris McLeland	Chris.mcleland@mdc.mo.gov	573-876-9365
Missouri	Lisa Potter	Lisa.potter@mdc.mo.gov	573-819-9024
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Nebraska	Alicia Hardin	Alicia.hardin@nebraska.gov	402-471-5448
Nebraska	Thomas Walker	Thomas.walker@nebraksa.gov	308-535-8025
Nebraska	Eric Zach	Eric.zach@nebraska.gov	402-471-5448
North Dakota	Kevin Kading	Kkading@nd.gov	701-527-1081
Ohio	Jeff Burris	Jeff.burris@dnr.state.oh.us	740-362-2410
Ohio	Mark Witt	Mark.witt@dnr.state.oh.us	419-889-3706
Washington DC	Bridget Collins	Bcollins@fishwildlife.org	202-624-3688

Appendix 4b

Public Lands Working Group Meeting Attendees

State	Name	E-mail address	Telephone
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Iowa	Pete Hildreth	Pete.hildreth@dnr.iowa.gov	712-363-0755
Kansas	Brad Simpson	Brad.simpson@ksoutdoors.com	620-672-5911
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Michigan	Earl Flegler	Fleglere@michigan.gov	517-641-4903
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Michigan	Jennifer Olson	Olsonjl@michigan.gov	517-641-4903
Minnesota	Bob Welsh	Bob.welsh@state.mn.us	651-259-5169
Missouri	Lee Hughes	Lee.hughes@mdc.mo.gov	573-522-4115
Nebraska	Jeff Hoffman	Jeff.hoffman@nebraska.gov	402-471-5415
North Dakota	Scott Peterson	Speterso@nd.gov	701-324-2211
Ohio	Bob Ford	Bob.ford@dnr.state.oh.us	419-429-8361
Ohio	Scott Peters	Scott.peters@dnr.state.oh.us	330-644-2293
Ohio	Jennifer Windus	Jennifer.windus@dnr.state.oh.us	614-265-6309
South Dakota	Paul Coughlin*	Paul.coughlin@state.sd.us	605-773-4194

*provided state report via phone conference

Appendix 5a

Mr. Daniel Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Impacts of potential federal listing of northern long-eared bat on states' ability to manage habitat

Dear Director Ashe:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

We are very concerned about the impacts of potential federal listing of the northern long-eared bat. Of particular concern are potential restrictions that could be implemented if the bat gets listed as a federally endangered species that could limit timing and implementation of habitat management techniques, such as timber harvest, prescribed burning, and herbicide application—even to control invasive species. Limitations on these techniques will likely impact the long-term sustainability of northern long-eared bat as well as other species dependent on the restricted activities. It would also not address the root cause for the concern for northern long-eared bat—white-nose syndrome, a lethal and fast-moving fungal disease.

The negative effects of guidelines already in place for Indiana bat could be compounded if similar or more restrictive guidelines are implemented for the northern long-eared bat. In addition, the approval of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) operational project grants could be held up by this action.

We encourage the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperate with the states to mutually develop reasonable and appropriate conservation guidelines that benefit the northern long-eared bat but also allow the states and other conservation partners to sustainably manage natural resources and prioritize future research funding for appropriate fund sources such as the FY 2016 federal budget and the Competitive State and Tribal Grants. Thank you for your attention to these issues, and feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

MAFWA President

Appendix 5b.i

Director
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

RE: Prescribed burning on federal lands managed by state agencies

Dear Director :

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

We are very concerned with recent developments regarding the management of wildlife lands owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and managed by state agencies. Some states have recently been informed there are new requirements (i.e., National Wildfire Coordinating Group standards) for staff who plan and conduct prescribed burns on federal land which will and has prevented agency staff from conducting or participating in these activities. Again, if enforced, this directive will seriously curtail proper grassland management of these areas. States and their federal partners have invested a great deal of time and money in removing invasive trees and shrubs from federal lands and improving grassland structure and species diversity, and prescribed fire is essential in maintaining the benefits of that work. Removal of fire as a tool runs the risk of squandering this mutual investment.

While we understand the need for strict training requirements from federal agencies across the country with extreme diversity of conditions, those requirements are not a good fit for prescribed burns conducted in most Midwestern states. Our existing fire policies are tailored to local habitats and conditions in our states. In addition, all natural resource agencies receive standardized prescribed fire training, at least to the S130/S190 level, and perhaps more importantly, have years of experience using prescribed fire in the management of their areas.

We encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to re-examine the applicability of this directive and continue to work with state agencies to allow the states training qualifications be accepted as their standard for prescribed burning on federal lands.

Sincerely,

MAFWA President

Appendix 5b.i, continued.

Director
Bureau of Reclamation

RE: Prescribed burning on federal lands managed by state agencies

Dear Director :

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

We are very concerned with recent developments regarding the management of wildlife lands owned by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and managed by state agencies. Some states have recently been informed there are new requirements (i.e., National Wildfire Coordinating Group standards) for staff who plan and conduct prescribed burns on federal land which will and has prevented agency staff from conducting or participating in these activities. Again, if enforced, this directive will seriously curtail proper grassland management of these areas. States and their federal partners have invested a great deal of time and money in removing invasive trees and shrubs from federal lands and improving grassland structure and species diversity, and prescribed fire is essential in maintaining the benefits of that work. Removal of fire as a tool runs the risk of squandering this mutual investment.

While we understand the need for strict training requirements from federal agencies across the country with extreme diversity of conditions, those requirements are not a good fit for prescribed burns conducted in most Midwestern states. Our existing fire policies are tailored to local habitats and conditions in our states. In addition, all natural resource agencies receive standardized prescribed fire training, at least to the S130/S190 level, and perhaps more importantly, have years of experience using prescribed fire in the management of their areas.

We encourage the Bureau of Reclamation to re-examine the applicability of this directive and continue to work with state agencies to allow the states training qualifications be accepted as their standard for prescribed burning on federal lands.

Sincerely,

MAFWA President

Appendix 5b.i, continued.

Mr. Daniel Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Prescribed burning on federal lands managed by state agencies

Dear Director Ashe:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 state and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

We are very concerned with recent developments regarding the management of wildlife lands owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and managed by state agencies. Some states have recently been informed there are new requirements (i.e., National Wildfire Coordinating Group standards) for staff who plan and conduct prescribed burns on federal land which will and has prevented agency staff from conducting or participating in these activities. Again, if enforced, this directive will seriously curtail proper grassland management of these areas. States and their federal partners have invested a great deal of time and money in removing invasive trees and shrubs from federal lands and improving grassland structure and species diversity, and prescribed fire is essential in maintaining the benefits of that work. Removal of fire as a tool runs the risk of squandering this mutual investment.

While we understand the need for strict training requirements from federal agencies across the country with extreme diversity of conditions, those requirements are not a good fit for prescribed burns conducted in most Midwestern states. Our existing fire policies are tailored to local habitats and conditions in our states. In addition, all natural resource agencies receive standardized prescribed fire training, at least to the S130/S190 level, and perhaps more importantly, have years of experience using prescribed fire in the management of their areas.

We encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to re-examine the applicability of this directive and continue to work with state agencies to allow the states' training qualifications to be accepted as their standard for prescribed burning on federal lands.

Sincerely,

MAFWA President

Appendix 5b.ii

Mr. Dave Scott
Assistant Regional Director – Migratory Birds and State Programs
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5600 American Boulevard West
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458

RE: Impacts of sequestration on land actions

Dear Assistant Regional Director Scott:

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) was formed in 1934 to provide a common forum for state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies to share ideas, information, pool resources, and form action initiatives to better the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest. Currently, MAFWA represents 13 states and 3 provincial Midwest fish and wildlife agencies.

We are concerned about the impacts of sequestration and response time on land actions. Over the past year, improvements in response time have occurred. However, some projects can still be delayed by several months while waiting for a response. This is especially concerning because the increases in federal aid funding will increase work load and slow response times.

We encourage the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperate with the states to mutually determine priority rankings of land actions with state input, and to seek alternatives in efficiency to promptly work with states as partners in land matter issues.

Thank you for your attention to these issues, and feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

MAFWA President

Appendix 5c

MAFWA website posting-northern long-eared bat (in PDF file)

Appendix 5c, continued

MAFWA website posting-northern long-eared bat (in PDF file)

Appendix 6

State Reports (in PDF file)