

## **Report from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to the MAFWA Directors**

**June 28, 2010**

### Organization

Financial health is strong – a couple of states still having trouble paying dues. A by-laws amendment is under consideration to address that.

26 Positions – have begun recruitment for a Director of Operations. Don MacLauchlan, International Resource Director, has decided to move on.

Dean Smith – new NAWMP/Wildlife Liaison for Canada Wildlife Directors.

Annual Meeting – September 26-29. Web site is operational.

The Directors Line, HQ and our new website continue to be our principal communications tools.

### Issues

Oil Spill – we are monitoring the situation and prepared to help any way we can. We are advocating for stateside funding in any supplemental or emergency appropriations legislation. Secretary Robert Barham, LA Dept Wildlife and Fisheries, recently testified before a House Natural Resources Subcommittee on impacts to fish, wildlife and habitat. His written statement was provided to directors in the Directors Line.

ESA – working to create a joint federal/state task force on Endangered Species Policy.

Great Outdoors Initiative – looking for ways to communicate to the Administration the strong role of state fish and wildlife agencies in land conservation, outdoor recreation, and connecting children with nature. Listening Sessions are being scheduled in several states across the country.

Lead – AFWA has a Team, led by Dave Schad, addressing this issue. Some formal recommendations and actions likely at our Annual Meeting in September.

LCC's – we continue to monitor the development of LCC's. We encourage you to stay engaged. Our TWW Committee recently released some principles regarding the value of State Wildlife Action Plans to LCC planning. Canada is very interested in the LCC discussions and the potential opportunities for Canada to participate as appropriate.

Bobcats – we are seeking DOI/FWS support for eliminating the bobcat tagging requirement in light of the failed effort to downlist this species from Appendix II to III (also for river otters).

Carbon sequestration – the Climate Change Committee and the Forestry Working Group are working on a white paper for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

Aquatic Nuisance Species – the Invasive Species Committee is working on a white paper to address state versus federal roles and responsibilities for ANS for consideration at the Annual meeting.

Herps – the Amphibian and Reptile Subcommittee and the Invasive Species Committee drafted AFWA's comment on the proposed rule on constrictor snakes (in close consultation with Florida). USFWS will hold a workshop on commercial turtle trade and conservation in St. Louis, MO in September; all states should have received invitations via postal mail in late May; USFWS is providing travel funding for one or more state participants.

Open Fields (Voluntary Public Access Program) – an interim final rule is close to being published, then states can submit applications for access program funding. We hope to host a virtual workshop via a webinar for state folks in July to help them develop applications. We also would like to conduct some pre-implementation research with Southwick Associates. We are reaching out to regional associations for funding support (\$11.5K total needed), and appreciate your consideration of such a request at this meeting.

Energy Transmission – a planning process is underway for an Eastern Energy Transmission Corridor. We are working to develop access to the effort at a regional scale, but it would be a good idea for you to reach out to your state Public Utility Commission. The Wind and Transmission Subcommittee, chaired by Keith Sexson, recently completed a state Guide to Transmission Development.

NAWMP Plan Revision – it is underway and the first round of consultations were held this spring. The goal is to have a new Plan signed in early 2012.

MSCG Program – 72 LOI's this cycle; 17 have been selected for a full proposal. Funds are at a premium this year.

NCLI – we have over 60 applications, including seven from the Midwestern states.

SWG – This is the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SWG funding (over \$600 m total) and we are planning some events to celebrate that. It appears likely that the Senate and House will not pass an Interior Appropriations Budget prior to the end of the fiscal year and will enact a continuing resolution. One benefit is that the nonfederal match requirement for State Wildlife Grants would likely stay at the FY10 level (35%) rather than go back to 50%.

## Legislation

Climate change legislation – we are pleased to see wildlife adaptation funding in the draft language of American Power Act released last week by Sen. Kerry and Sen. Lieberman. Some concerns exist about the funding level and delayed implementation date, but Sen. Kerry assured us that the introduced bill language would explicitly characterize funding as dedicated (i.e., not subject to Appropriations), and that he would work with us to make more money available sooner for natural resources adaptation. The politics in the Senate change daily regarding a comprehensive energy-climate bill, and we will provide the latest at the MAFWA meeting.

National Fish Habitat Conservation Act – There are 14 co-sponsors in the Senate and 23 in the House. Our focus is turning to including this bill in a larger natural resource-public lands omnibus bill that will likely come near the end of the Congressional session.

Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund – we are still dealing with a 10 month extension to the Transportation program, which includes Wallop-Breaux. Partners have met with the FWS and CG to discuss their request for increases to their administrative funds. This discussion will likely continue at the AFWA Annual meeting.