

**MAFWA COMMITTEES AND APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES  
2016-17**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

**Jim Douglas (NE), President**  
**Terry Steinwand (ND), First Vice President**  
**Ray Petering (OH), Second Vice President**  
**Sara Parker Pauley (MO), Past President**  
**Keith Sexson (KS), Member**  
**Bill Moritz (MI), Member**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE:**

**Terry Steinwand (ND), Chair**  
**Kurt Thiede (WI), Member**  
**Ray Petering (OH), Member**

**AWARDS COMMITTEE:**

**Keith Sexson (KS), Chair**  
**Terry Steinwand (ND), Member**  
**Mark Reiter (IN), Member**  
**Greg Johnson (KY), Member**  
**Jim Leach (MN), Member**

**BYLAWS COMMITTEE:**

**Sara Parker Pauley (MO), Chair**

**INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE:**

**Kurt Thiede (WI), Chair**  
**Wayne Rosenthal (IL), Member**  
**Jim Douglas (NE), Member**

**NATIONAL CONSERVATION NEEDS COMMITTEE:**

**Jim Douglas (NE), Chair**  
**Kelly Hepler (SD), Member**  
**Ray Petering (OH), Member**

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:**

**Terry Steinwand (ND), Chair**  
**Jim Leach (MN), Member**  
**Sara Parker Pauley (MO), Member**

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE:**

**Jim Douglas (NE), Chair**  
**Terry Steinwand (ND)**  
**Sara Parker Pauley (MO)**

Ollie Torgerson (MAFWA)

**CONSERVATION FUND BOARD:**

MAFWA Executive Committee (see above)

Kurt Thiede (WI), Member

**MAFWA TECHNICAL WORKING COMMITTEES**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DIRECTOR/LIAISON</u>
MIDWEST PRIVATE LANDS WORKING GROUP	BILL MORITZ (MI)
MAFWA PUBLIC LANDS WORKING GROUP	MARK REITER, IN
MIDWEST LEGAL COMMITTEE	KEITH SEXSON, KS
ASSN. MIDWEST F&G LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS	WAYNE ROSENTHAL, IL
MIDWEST WILDLIFE AND FISH HEALTH COMMITTEE	DALE GARNER, IA
MIDWEST DEER & WILD TURKEY GROUP	DALE GARNER, IA
MIDWEST FURBEARER GROUP	KURT THIEDE, WI
MAFWA WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP	VACANT
MAFWA CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE	DON PEREIRA, MN
MAFWA HUNTER & ANGLER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION	MARK REITER, IN
NATIONAL CONSERVATION	MAFWA President

**NEEDS (NCN) COMMITTEE**

**MIDWEST CITES**

**MAFWA President**

**OFFICIAL MAFWA REPRESENTATIVES**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE & NATURAL RESOURCE SCIENCE:**

**Rick Schneider (NE)**

**AFWA CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TASK FORCE:**

**Dan Grove (ND)**

**Tom DeLiberto (APHIS-WS)**

**AFWA FARM BILL WORKING GROUP:**

**Greg Hoch (MN)**

**Michael Parker (MI)**

**AFWA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE:**

**Joe Larscheid (IA)**

**Paul Telander (MN)**

**AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PARTNER'S HUNTING & SHOOTING SPORTS ROUNDTABLE**

**Mark Reiter (IN)**

**CITES:**

**Carolyn Caldwell (OH)**

**ESA JOINT TASK FORCE:**

**Bill Moritz (MI)**

**FEDERAL BUDGET:**

**Bill Moritz (MI)**

**FEDERAL AID JOINT TASK FORCE:**

**Jim Douglas (NE)**

**HUNTER ACCESS:**

**Tom Kirschenmann (SD)**

**HUNTING HERITAGE ACTION PLAN:**

**Dennis Fox (MI)**

**MONARCH JOINT VENTURE STEERING COMMITTEE:**

**Bill Moritz (MI)**

**NATIONAL BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE:**

**Jim Douglas (NE)**

**NATIONAL CLIMATE ADAPTATION JOINT IMPLEMENTATION WG**

**Vacant**

**NATIONAL COOPERATOR'S COALITION:**

**Ollie Torgerson (MAFWA)**

**NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH INITIATIVE**

**Kelly Hepler (SD)**

**NATIONAL FISH HABITAT BOARD:**

**Jim Leach (MN)**

**NATIONAL GRANTS COMMITTEE:**

**Bill Moritz (MI)**

**NATIONAL LCC COUNCIL:**

**Vacant**

**NATIONAL WHITE NOSE SYNDROME EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

**Mark Reiter (IN)**

**RESERVOIR FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP:**

**Doug Nygren (KS)**

**SOUTHERN WINGS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE:**

**Craig Thompson, (WI)**

**STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN REVIEW TEAM:**

**Mark Reiter (IN)**

**Bill Moritz (MI)**

**WIND ENERGY:**

**Rob Manes (TNC)**

**PRESIDENT'S AD HOC COMMITTEES**

**FERAL SWINE COMMITTEE:**

**Steve Backs (IN), Chair**

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS



**MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES**

JUNE, 20167

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
**MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES**

**PREAMBLE**

The name of this organization shall be the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association). The Association shall be organized and operated as a non-profit professional association as described in 501(c)(6) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code with the purpose of promoting the protection, preservation, restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources.

The Conservation Enhancement Fund (Fund) shall be organized and operated as a non-profit charitable organization as described in 501(c)3 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

The Association and the Fund were incorporated in the State of Kansas on August 19, 2005. The Association and the Fund shall comply with K.S.A. 17-1759, et seq., known as the "Charitable Organizations and Solicitations Act." To the extent these bylaws conflict with a provision of the Act, the Act shall govern.

The objectives of the Association shall be:

- (a) to protect the right of jurisdiction of the Midwestern states over their wildlife resources on public and private lands;
- (b) to scrutinize carefully state and federal wildlife legislation and regulations and to offer support or opposition to legislative proposals or federal regulations in accordance with the best interests of the Midwestern states;
- (c) to serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of ideas concerning wildlife and fisheries management, research techniques, wildlife law enforcement, hunting and outdoor safety, and information and education;
- (d) and to encourage and assist sportsmen's and conservationists' organizations so that the fullest measure of cooperation may be secured from our citizenry in the protection, preservation, restoration and management of our fish and wildlife resources.

The Association met for the first time on October 28, 1934 in Des Moines, Iowa. At that time the group was known as the Association of Midwest Fish and Game Commissioners. The Association first received its non-profit status in 1968. The Association's name was changed to the Association of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Commissioners in 1972, to the Association of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 1977, and to the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 2001.

## ARTICLE I

### OFFICERS

Section 1. The Officers of the Association shall be President, First Vice-President, and Second Vice-President. The President and both Vice-Presidents shall be the duly authorized voting representative of their member state or province and shall be selected on an alphabetical rotation basis, with the First Vice-President being from the state or province next in order of rotation following the President and the Second Vice-President being from the state or province next in rotation following the First Vice-President. The term of office shall commence 30 days following adjournment of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (AFWA) annual meeting and conclude 30 days following adjournment of the succeeding annual AFWA meeting. The First Vice-President shall automatically succeed to President if he/she remains eligible. In the event that the immediate President separates from a member agency (or is replaced by that agency), the First Vice-President shall fulfill the remaining term, followed by their regular term.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall be composed of the officers identified in Article I, Section 1 and one representative from each state and province except those represented by the officers. Such state or provincial Board member shall be the chief executive officer of the fish and wildlife agency of his/her state or province, or his/her designee. A Board member may, by written notification to the President, designate a voting proxy from the Board member's state or province. However, Executive Committee members may not designate a proxy for the conduct of Executive Committee business.

## ARTICLE II

### OTHER ASSOCIATION POSITIONS

Section 1. The Association shall establish the position of "Treasurer." An Association member agency may provide an individual to serve in this capacity or the Association may contract with a member agency or an individual to fill this position. This is a nonvoting position.

Section 2. The Association shall also establish the position of "Executive Secretary." An Association member agency may provide an individual to serve in this capacity or the Association may contract with a member agency or an individual to fill the position. This is a nonvoting position.

Section 3. The Association may establish the position of "Recording Secretary." This is a nonvoting position.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Membership shall be by states and provinces and representation of each state and province at meetings shall be by its duly authorized representative or representatives.

Section 2. The area of membership in the Association shall be the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, and the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario and such additional states and provinces as may request membership and be elected by majority vote of the member states and provinces in annual meeting.

Section 3. Membership in the Association of an individual shall terminate upon the expiration of the member's term of office as a state fish and wildlife administrator.

Section 4. Other professional organizations may be granted affiliate membership in the Association based upon demonstration that the Constitution and Bylaws of said organizations meet the basic standards of the Association. Application for affiliate membership shall be forwarded to the Executive Secretary at least 90 days prior to a regular meeting of the Association and shall include a current Constitution and Bylaws and a letter stating the organization's justification for affiliate membership. Affiliate membership shall be voted on by the voting representatives and must attain a majority vote of a quorum. Affiliated membership dues shall be \$75.00 per year; however, this fee may be waived by a majority vote of a quorum. The fee is automatically waived for affiliated conservation agencies or organizations that provide annual financial resources to support the Association through the following sponsorships: Major Sponsor (\$5,000 or more); Gold Sponsor (\$3,000-4,999); Silver Sponsor (\$2,000-2,999); Bronze Sponsor (\$1,000-1,999); and Sponsor (\$500-999).

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **DUTIES OF OFFICERS and OTHER POSITIONS**

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association, appoint all special committees, preside at meetings of the Board of Directors, and perform such other duties as are naturally incumbent upon the office to serve the Association and the Fund. Copies of the annual proceedings shall be forwarded to each member in good standing, with the cost of preparation and handling to be paid out of Association funds. All other copies are for distribution at the discretion of the host state or province.

Section 2. The First Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the latter's absence, and specific duties may be assigned as deemed necessary by the President.

Section 3. The Board of Directors shall conduct the business of the Association.

Section 4. The Executive Secretary shall perform the following services for the Association and the Fund:

- (1) Function as the official "Executive Secretary" for the Association carrying out liaison services by keeping in communication via e-mail, mailings, phone contact and personal visits with member Directors, or their designated representatives, to enhance the viability of the Association.
- (2) Work to obtain direct involvement and commitment of member Directors and affiliate leaders to build strength in the Association as a leading force in the Midwest on behalf of fish and wildlife issues.
- (3) Assist the Executive Director of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in coordinating actions and communications relevant to the Midwest Association.
- (4) Respond to inquiries for information regarding the Association and the Fund and to routine correspondence.
- (5) Develop and maintain a web site for the Association.
- (6) Carry out directives of the President and/or Executive Committee of the Association.
- (7) Assist with the scheduling of meetings and conference calls and notify appropriate members.
- (8) Record minutes in the absence of the Recording Secretary.
- (9) Provide such other services as may be mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Section 5. The Recording Secretary shall perform the following services:

- (1) Record and publish the annual proceedings of the Association.
- (2) Record and retain the minutes of all meetings of the Association, and perform such other duties as are naturally incumbent upon the office.
- (3) Assist other officers and positions with correspondence and record keeping.

- (4) Serve as the custodian of all permanent files and records of the Association.
- (5) Other duties as assigned by the President.

Section 6. The Treasurer shall perform the following services for the Association and the Fund:

- (1) Be custodian of all funds of the Association and the Fund.
- (2) Establish and have access to Association and Fund bank accounts.
- (3) Draw all warrants for payment of claims properly presented and expend funds necessary to pay appropriately invoiced bills, provided such warrants are signed by a director selected and approved by the Executive Committee.
- (4) Invoice members and sponsors and collect dues and funds.
- (5) Review monthly account reports and monitor income and expenditures.
- (6) Prepare reports to the Executive Committee detailing income, expenditures and asset values.
- (7) Prepare and present annual budgets, financial and audit reports.
- (8) Perform record-keeping, reporting and filing actions to ensure the Association complies with its governing documents and any other relevant laws or regulations, including but not limited to any required filings with the state of Kansas or the Internal Revenue Service to maintain the Association's status as a tax-exempt non-profit organization and legal entity, and provide a report of any such required actions to the Executive Committee at its next meeting.
- (9) Develop, present and oversee budgets, accounts and financial statements.
- (10) Ensure that appropriate accounting procedures and controls are in place.
- (11) Serve as liaison with any staff and volunteers about Association and Fund financial matters.
- (12) Monitor the Association's investment activity and ensure its consistency

with the Association's policies and legal responsibilities; liaise with the Investments Committee and review reports submitted thereby.

- (13) Ensure independent examination or audits are executed and any recommendations are implemented; provide report of results at the regular annual meeting.
- (14) Make formal presentation of the accounts at the regular annual meeting and more frequently as requested by the Executive Secretary, the President or the Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **MEETINGS**

One regular meeting shall be held annually. The meeting will be held in and hosted by the state or province in which the President has administrative responsibility, or in such other locations designated by the Association. It is the intent of the Association that the costs of the annual meetings and related business functions may be paid by the Association. When necessary, special meetings may be called by the President or the Executive Secretary. Members shall be given 90 days' notice of regular annual meetings; 60 days' notice for special, in-person meetings; and five days' notice for special, telephonic meetings and telephonic meetings of the Executive Committee..

The Association may authorize members, affiliates and other groups to exhibit at its meetings, subject to the Exhibitor/Sponsor Policy approved by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **VOTING**

Voting shall be by states and provinces, as units. Each state and province shall have one vote. All voting shall be by voice vote, except that a reasonable request by any member state or province for a secret ballot shall be honored. Any matters of Association business requiring action in the interim between meetings may be handled by the Executive Committee, by majority vote of that committee.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **DUES**

Annual Dues shall be \$3,800 per member state and \$100 per province, payable in advance, at, or before each annual meeting; provided that annual dues may be suspended for

any given year by a majority vote of a quorum. Dues shall be adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Midwest published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Dues shall be adjusted using the annual change in the CPI-U for the month of January of the previous fiscal year. The annual dues for the upcoming year shall be reported at the Association's regular annual meeting by the Treasurer.

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## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Association shall be January 1 through December 31.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **QUORUM**

A quorum is defined as a simple majority of the states.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **AMENDMENT**

The Constitution and Bylaws (Bylaws) of the Association may be amended at any regular meeting by a majority vote of a quorum; provided, however, a written copy of such proposed amendment shall have been received by the President and the Executive Secretary and sent to members at least 30 days before the regular annual meeting or special meeting called for that purpose; and provided that such changes shall be effective only to the extent they are authorized by applicable law. Proposed Bylaws amendments should be presented to, or generated by, the Bylaws Committee and reviewed by the Executive Committee prior to submitting to voting members of the Association for their consideration. With approval of the First Vice-President, the President may call for voting by mail (including electronic mail) in lieu of a meeting. In this event, the 30-day notice shall still apply, the date of opening ballots shall be previously announced, notice sent to each member within forty-eight hours of vote tabulation by the Executive Secretary and all ballots shall be kept for one year following the vote.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **TYPES OF COMMITTEES/BOARDS**

Section 1. There shall be three kinds of committees: Standing, President's Ad Hoc, and Technical Working.

Section 2. The following Standing Committees shall be appointed by the incoming President within 30 days after assuming office, they shall serve during the period intervening between annual meetings and at such meetings, or until the purpose of each such committee has been accomplished and it has been discharged by the President.

- A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of six members of the Association: The President, First Vice President, Second Vice-President, immediate Past President, and two other members to be appointed by the President with specific consideration for geographical balance. Any state or province represented on the Executive Committee by more than one individual shall be restricted to a single vote on this committee. The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Association between its business meetings, make recommendations to the Association as necessary and shall perform such other duties as may be specified in these bylaws. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of the Board of Directors and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President as necessary. The Executive Committee may also act via conference call or by mail (including electronic mail). In the event that an officer of the Association or the immediate Past President separates from a member agency (or is replaced by that agency), their replacement in a member agency shall serve for the remainder of their term, with the exception of President. If the President separates from a member agency (or is replaced by that agency), their replacement in a member agency will serve in their place on the Executive Committee for the remainder of the term as a Special Board Member with voting rights, and the First Vice-President will succeed to President for the remainder of the term.
- B. The Auditing Committee shall be composed of three members: The First Vice President of the Association, who shall act as chairman, and two other members to be appointed by the President. The Auditing Committee shall audit the financial records of the Association annually and report the result of its audit at the annual regular meeting.
- C. The Resolutions Committee shall be composed of three members, one of which shall be designated as Chairman by the President. Copies of proposed resolutions should be received by the President and the Executive Secretary and sent to members for their consideration at least 30 days before the regular annual meeting. Courtesy resolutions and resolutions of a last minute nature may be recommended to the Board of Directors at the annual meeting. Furthermore, proposed resolutions for which an urgent need arises between annual meetings may be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration via mail (including electronic mail), provided members are given a 15-day notice. Members shall be notified of the vote outcome by the Executive Secretary within forty-eight hours of vote tabulation.
- D. The Awards Committee shall be composed of five members, one of which shall be

designated as Chairman by the President. The Awards Committee shall administer the official annual awards program of the Association.

- E. The Bylaws Committee shall be composed of at least one member, designated by the President. The Bylaws Committee shall recommend Bylaws changes to the Executive Committee for consideration.
- F. The Investments Committee shall be composed of three members. The President shall designate one of the members as Chairman. The purpose of the committee is to review investments, including the Jaschek portfolio, the Conservation Enhancement Fund, and other permanent assets of the Association and make recommendations to the Association per the investment policy statement. The Investments Committee shall make an annual report to the Board of Directors at the annual meeting.
- G. The Conservation Enhancement Fund shall be overseen by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be comprised of the Executive Committee plus one additional Association member appointed by the President. The purpose of the Fund shall be to support those activities of the Association which maintain and enhance the capability of all member states and provinces to develop and implement comprehensive fish and wildlife programs for all species of wildlife and their habitats. The Conservation Enhancement Fund Committee shall make recommendations for expenditures from the Fund for consideration by the Board of Directors at the regular annual meeting. The Committee shall report its activities, including no activity in the event there are no funds in the Fund, annually to the Board of Directors when making its recommendations.
- H. The Program Committee shall be comprised of four members, one from the host state of the previous annual meeting, one from the host state of the current annual meeting, one from the host state of the next annual meeting, and the Executive Secretary. The purpose of the committee is to assist the host state with developing presentation and discussion topics and suggesting speakers for the non-business portion of meeting.

Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees may be established as deemed necessary by the President of the Association or vote of the Members and shall serve until the purpose of each such committee has been accomplished and it has been discharged by the President or by vote of the Members.

Section 4. The Association may establish Technical Working Committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Association. Upon establishment, these committees shall adhere to the following:

- A. Within one year from establishment, each committee shall submit to the

Association for approval a Mission Statement, a list of specific responsibilities, and a description of operating procedures that will become part of the official minutes of the Association.

- B. All Technical Working Committees shall submit a written report electronically to the President and the Executive Secretary 30 days in advance of the annual meeting of the Association and may choose to conduct necessary committee business during the period between annual meetings as per their approved operating procedures.
- C. Each Technical Working Committee shall be automatically abolished by the first of August every three years unless reinstated by vote of the Association. As the end of the third year approaches, the Association shall assess the merits of reinstating the Technical Working Committee.
- D. Resolutions from Technical Working Committees for Association action shall be submitted to the Chair of the Resolutions Committee 30 days in advance of the annual meeting for consideration by the Board of Directors.

The Association recognizes the following Technical Working Committees (year of automatic abolishment in parentheses):

Climate Change (2019)

Legal Committee (20~~17~~20)

National Conservation Need (NCN) Committee (20~~17~~20)

Midwest Private Lands Wildlife Management Group (2018)

Midwest Public Lands Technical Working Committee (2019)

Midwest Wildlife and Fish Health Committee (2019)

Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group (20~~17~~20)

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers (20~~17~~20)

Midwest Furbearer Group (2018)

Wildlife Action Plan Technical Working Committee (2018)

Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention Technical Working Group (20~~17~~20)

## ARTICLE XII

### PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

Adopted 1936

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Amended 1942  
Amended 1944  
Amended 1949  
Amended 1954  
Amended 1960  
Amended 1964  
Amended 1969  
Amended 1971  
Amended 1972  
Amended 1975  
Amended 1976  
Amended 1977  
Amended 1978  
Amended 1980  
Amended 1987  
Amended 1993  
Amended 1995  
Amended 1996  
Amended 2000  
Amended 2001  
Amended July 16, 2003  
Amended July 13, 2004  
Amended July 13, 2005  
Amended July 12, 2006  
Amended July 18, 2007  
Amended July 2, 2008  
Amended July 1, 2009  
Amended December 23, 2009  
Amended June 29, 2011  
Amended June 27, 2012  
Amended June 26, 2013  
Amended June 25, 2014  
Amended July 1, 2015  
Amended June 29, 2016  
[Amended June 28, 2017](#)

**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
Mahoney State Park, Ashland, NE  
Attendance Roster**

Frank Albrecht  
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Steve Beam  
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Ryan Beam  
Guest

Claire Beck  
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Bob Bergholz  
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Tristin Chenault  
Guest

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Diane Draper  
Guest

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Jennifer Forster  
Guest

Lanier Forster  
Guest

Trent Forster  
Guest

John Frampton  
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Blake Henning  
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**Midwest Association of  
Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 25, 2017  
Edward T. Mahoney State Park  
Ashland, Nebraska**

**Sunday, June 25, 2017**

**Call to Order** – President Jim Douglas called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Quorum** – Jim Douglas, Nebraska; Terry Steinwand, North Dakota; Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri; Ray Petering, Ohio; and Keith Sexson, Kansas. Also present were Ollie Torgerson, Executive Secretary, Roger Luebbert, Treasurer and Sheila Kemmis, Secretary. Guests: Carol Bambery, Dale Garner, Ed Boggess, Todd Bishop and Lanier Forster.

**Agenda Review** – None

**Approval of May 9, 2017 Executive Committee Minutes** – *Keith Sexson moved to approve the minutes; Terry Steinwand second. Motion carried.*

**Financial Report** – MAFWA Treasurer Roger Luebbert presented the financial report. *Roger* - As of June 7, 2017: **General Account** used for conferences and special projects, last balance was of April 26, 2017 and had balance of \$138,990, receipts included: National Pheasant Plan contributions (IA, MN, ND, OR, SD, UT, WA, WI) of \$36,000 and interest of \$51 for total receipts of \$36,051; no disbursements for balance as of June 7, 2017 of \$175,041; note: this includes \$37,472 Kansas money, state pheasant coordinator funds of \$126,090 and National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee funds of \$45. In the **Conference Account**, last balance was \$148,802, receipts included conference registrations \$3,900, sponsors \$13,000 (Fresh Air Educators \$5,000, Kalkomey \$3,000, USFWS \$5,000), Southern Wings banking fee from Iowa \$500 and interest of \$51 for total receipts of \$17,451; disbursements included Delaney \$1,571, Executive Salary pay \$7,223, Treasurer pay \$2,546, North Central Section of Wildlife Society leadership workshop \$665, and conference charges for catering deposit \$534, credit card fees \$305, transportation \$2,380, and web site maintenance \$43, for total disbursements of \$15,267, balance as of June 7 of \$150,986. In **Federal Grant Account** as of April 26, \$53,800, receipts include NFWF reimbursement of monarch conservation strategy \$4,286 and interest of \$18; disbursements to pay monarch technical coordinator \$6,315; for total balance as of June 7 of \$51,789; designations of ending balance are state cash matching contribution for NFWA monarch conservation strategy of \$33,662. **Southern Wings Account**, a pass through account, receipts include \$10,000 from Iowa and interest of \$0.71; disbursements of \$500 for banking fee; balance as of June 7 of \$9,515 (since then paid out \$9,500 to ABF will be on next report). *Jim* – Do we send notices or solicitations to the states for Southern Wings? *Ollie* – Would come through AFWA and the Bird Conservation Committee, I think. We have not, but we have best participation of any regional association; we have eight of 13 states participating. Do you think we should be? *Jim* – Not sure, just wondering if time for us to send in money. Won't hurt

anything. *Ollie* – Have very good participation. *Roger* – Work closely with Deb Hahn and she rides herd over this. *Jim* – I will reach out and ask her. **Credit Union Share Account** is a place to maintain a minimum balance to be part of the credit union; it requires a \$25 balance. The **Money Market and Securities Account** and Conservation Enhancement Account which is interest and dividends income as well as change in market values, balance as of March 31, \$417,120. A lot has been going on in the brokerage world they are facing a new fiduciary policy I heard which has snagged up our statements and working with Shane and hopefully will get statements regularly in the future.

**2017 Budget Proposal** – *Roger* – Page 1, budget shows 2016 budget versus actual receipts and disbursements as well as 2017 budget and receipts and disbursements to date. Point out major variations, on receipts side: annual dues \$40,901, were much higher in the budget; 2015 receipts were in 2016 as well as 2016 dues. Large variance in hotel commissions is also due to 2015 and 2016 hotel commissions being received in 2016; administrative fees from contributions to National Pheasant coordinator program and 2016 Midwest Fish and Wildlife conference. Overall budget receipts were \$129,000, actual receipts were about \$179,000, due to timing differences. In disbursement major variance was fourth line from the bottom showing transfers of \$7,000, \$2,500 was state contribution to pheasant coordinator and deposited in wrong account and remaining \$4,500 was transferred to federal account to provide startup funds to cover difference from when payments were made and when reimbursements are received from USFWS and NFWF. Overall disbursements were \$119,000 and actual \$114,000, very close to what we budgeted. Page 2, reference showing calendar year 2017 with actual receipts and disbursements up to June 7. Page 3, is budget for upcoming calendar year. Description shows source used for each line for best number available. Receipts: annual membership dues from states and provinces are based on increased by consumer price index (CPI) change of 2.229%; affiliate dues based on 13 affiliates; sponsors/exhibitors and conference registrations are based on 2017 budget; hotel supplement, Southern Wings administrative fees and interest are based on 2016 actual amounts; NFWF monarch grant administrative fee is based on estimated calendar year 2018 indirect cost charge; for total estimated receipts are approximately \$129,000; disbursements: Delaney is based on contract, and other conference disbursements are same as 2017 budget; executive secretary and treasurer pay are changed due to CPI; executive secretary travel is based on 2016 disbursements; treasurer travel and recording secretary travel are same as 2016 budget; accountant fees for preparing MAFWA forms and insurance are based on actual 2016 disbursements; web posting and miscellaneous are same as 2017 budget; we have two new lines on this budget NCS-TWS leadership workshop \$1,000 and new sound system \$1,135; total disbursements are approximately \$126,000; for estimated receipts over disbursements of approximately \$3,000. The footnote points out that this does not include an administrative fee for the National Pheasant Coordinator program which is currently not scheduled to continue beyond 2017, but that could change. I will present this proposed budget to all of the directors during business meeting on Wednesday and also Treasurer's Report at that meeting. *Jim* – Do we estimate conference disbursements same as the revenues and hope we are better than that? *Roger* – Look at how it turned out prior year, sometimes expenditure is a little less and we are hesitant to lower the budget because of variation, but we follow trends. *Jim* – Based on last meetings. I think we will do better this time. Remind me *Ollie*, we talked about National Pheasant Coordinator program are we going to address that in the business meeting? *Ollie* – Not our program anymore, it is under national pheasant board, but we are doing banking for it. Contacted

Tony Leif, who is chair of national board, by note, but haven't heard back. He will be here representing South Dakota. Don't know if this is continuing? *Jim* – I think they want to, but haven't heard anything. Maybe they will discuss at next meeting. *Ollie* – We will hear from Scott Taylor too, he is on business meeting agenda. Assume we will continue to do state assessments, maybe add a state or two, not sure if we will continue to do the banking or not. *Jim* – Present to full board? *Ollie* – Useful to have recommendation from the Executive Board. ***Sara Parker Pauley moved to present the proposed budget to full board, Keith Sexson second. Motion carried.***

**Executive Secretary Contract** – *Jim* – Ollie's contract is at a point to consider if we move forward. Will ask Ollie's help on this, what is usual process for how it involves Executive Committee and full board? *Ollie* – The contract reads that the Executive Committee drives the car. I sent memo to the board summarizing my last 15 years and where we are at present. Up to Executive Committee to negotiate or not negotiate contract, starting July 1, but has to be completed by October 1. How you do that process varies, sometimes done by president, sometimes by executive session, done different ways so however you want to handle it; but the Executive Committee has to make the decision. *Jim* – Do the bylaws say anything about full board has to approve the contract? *Ollie* – No, spells out the duties; Roger's, Sheila's and mine, but doesn't say anything about that. *Sara Parker Pauley* – What are you thinking in that regard? *Jim* – If Ollie expresses interest in staying on, recommendation from Executive Committee or another committee? If we can do by Executive Committee, can be do part of it here and part of it by phone call, but has to be done by October 1. *Ollie* – Article II, section 2 on page 2, "The Association shall also establish position of executive secretary. An Association member agency may provide an individual to serve in this capacity or the Association may contract with a member agency or an individual to fill the position. This is a nonvoting position." It doesn't spell out anything other than that. Contract we have had since you decided to hire me has always been handled by the Executive Committee, but that can be changed in bylaws. Executive Committee has quite a bit of authority because we only meet once a year and Executive Committee meets six times a year. It would make sense to bring to full board because they are basically paying for the position through dues. *Jim* – Theoretically, can we make a decision about a recommendation today and bring to full board on Wednesday or do we have to advertise that? *Sara* – Under bylaws, doesn't specify, don't have to revise bylaws to specify because we are not changing anything; no time period. As far as timing, you can revise agenda before full board I am sure you have done that before based on Executive Committee discussions. There is no 24-hour notice for agenda addendum. *Ollie* – Full board can vote by electronic mail. You can call meeting with 10 days notice. *Jim* – If you feel comfortable indicating in this forum if you are interested in continuing. *Ollie* – I indicated that in email. *Jim* – I would like to appoint a subcommittee of Keith, Ray and Terry to discuss with you any recommendations or changes and bring back by conference call and move to 10-day notice to board if needed. Everyone is happy you are interested in staying on. *Ollie* – Thank You. *Terry* – Timeframe for us on that for bringing back to Executive Committee? *Jim* – Put you in lead on whatever you think is reasonable. *Terry* – Within a month. *Keith* – When do we have our next meeting? *Ollie* – Sometime in August we have a teleconference. Most of you will be in Snowbird at AFWA meeting in September so could do it there too.

**Monarch Leadership** – *Jim* – Happy and sad at same time, Bill Moritz will be representing Wildlife Management Institute on regional basis starting in August and will get to continue to work with him in that capacity, but has been active in this Association, most recently as lead role in monarch work, and also will be missed on AFWA Executive Committee as well as this one. A little bit of vacuum there and need to talk about moving forward on the monarch stuff. Also, coming up on the end of agreement time period for Ed. Don't know how much leeway or desire on WMI's part to allow Bill to keep working with monarchs, we should check with him and Steve Williams on that. Not sure what options are on extending Ed. *Ed Boggess* – Up in the air, USFWS looking at their budget critically, know they are talking about couple of things pertaining to monarchs with potential federal funding, one is FY17 money that could be added to pay some shortfall in some of my travel, Service is trying to help. Kelley Myers is talking to Bill, me and Ollie on that. Regional director Melius is out of office for a couple of weeks. Talk to him about extending, if MAFWA interested and funding available. *Sara* – Charlie Wooley will be here this week, will he know anything? *Ed* – Charlie is going to be here, no decision until Tom gets back, as he is national lead on monarchs as well as Regional director. Some potential here and part of it by Wednesday. *Jim* – What level of funding might be available? *Ed* – FY17 funding, \$50,000 range to use for some of travel and state coordination, have money in MAFWA NFWF grant for steering committee members to meet, but not bringing other staff together or technical work groups. Approved last week and populating those groups now, don't expect face-to-face meetings, but may if funds allow. Still looking at first draft of regional strategy by October. *Ollie* – Would \$50,000 include extension of your position past September? *Ed* – I don't think so. *Ollie* – Don't know if Tom Melius brought this up before he left for Russia. Undecided, as far as I know, but travel for technical work group to come to these meetings did come up. This is in addition to NFWF grant money. How much work will that mean for our treasurer? *Ed* – NFWF grant money primarily went to National Wildlife Federation; money for a couple of workshops for technical steering committee, one to occur in August so some bill paying associated with that, but it hasn't occurred yet. If more meetings, more bills that have to get paid. My cooperative agreement is under federal grant, this would add to that rather than NFWF. *Ollie* – Takes some of my time and Roger runs up against his hours too. Don't know how many people you are talking about, but Roger would have to process individual expenses. *Ed* – Karen Kincaid got some money from Iowa and others have some support, but could be technical work group meetings, 8-10 people traveling per meeting. A certain percent, 10%, comes to MAFWA, but if adds hours to you guys then that is a question for you to answer. *Ollie* – Will know more in a couple of days. *Jim* – Will know more about bill aspect, but wait for Tom to come back to have a phone call. *Ollie* – Possibly in the \$50,000 range right now. Obligated by when in federal budget? *Ed* – Not sure, have to be obligated pretty quickly. *Ollie* – We decide if we want to accept that money and amend the grant. *Jim* – Didn't know we had an actual offer to amend the grant. *Ollie* – I got a phone call. Sorry for last minute. *Jim* – That is a decision for us right now? *Ollie* – It is not, still trying to work it out at the Service. Then we will have to amend existing grant to accept the \$50,000. *Sara* – Can we negotiate that \$50,000? That is not going to give any additional time for Ed. *Ollie* – Interested in extending Ed, not sure if he is even wanting to extend, but we have good continuity in Ed and Claire and all of a sudden Bill is already leaving. Never a good thing to change leadership right in the middle; we need to retain momentum on this. *Ed* – Think extension of me beyond September 30 would require FY 18 dollars. *Ollie* – Couldn't extend out of this \$50,000? *Ed* – I don't believe so. *Ollie* – If we could would you be willing to stay on? *Ed* – Sure. *Jim* – We will set up call with Melius. *Keith* – makes sense to keep

Bill on too, even though working for WMI. *Ollie* – LCCs are going to be cut I heard, if Bill can't do it, maybe Kelley could do a lead on that. *Jim* – She is capable, but not up to us. *Terry* – Under what capacity if she is working for USFWS, perfect candidate, but what capacity? *Ollie* – She is under Craig Czarnecki now, maybe be lead on monarch steering committee. Can a federal person do that? *Ed* – I don't know, not a MAFWA decision, up to USFWS. *Jim* – I would entertain that idea, if the Service would; but have to have a huddle with her, Bill and Steve and whoever else. *Ollie* – Keith, make sense to you? *Keith* – Yes, up to Tom if she could be or would be assigned. *Ollie* – What do you think Ed? *Ed* – She has the background, ability and histories, but a federal and state role question; she has state trust and background. *Ollie* – Just a brain teaser. *Keith* – We had a state powwow and she was there in Kansas. *Jim* – Lot of things to fall together and different scenarios and talk to people at this conference.

***Bill Moritz, Michigan came into meeting.***

*Jim* – We need to have some informal discussions about matter we just talked about. We don't have all of the information we need. Bill, we have been talking about continued leadership on monarchs. Have parts moving in ways we didn't anticipate so will be talking to you on some things, the USFWS and WMI and it is all going to come together nicely. We will fill you in later.

**Midwest F&W Conf. Governance** – *Jim* – Everyone received letter from me on Midwest Fish and Wildlife conference governance, we will discuss again at full business meeting. Want to take advantage of Carol being here, she worked with Cindy on background on this. Carol, we are interested in aspect of running through 501 and so forth. *Carol Bambery* – Cindy will be here for the Wednesday business meeting. We had discussion several days ago about what do we do with this conference? Every time it is time to have a conference, had trouble getting hotel contract signed particularly; we have reluctance from attorney generals and state agencies to sign contracts for host states. Not precluded in the past host states from signing those hotel contracts. If we look in totality why we need to make any changes at all, conference has been run by fish and wildlife biologists since 1940s successfully so do we need to make any changes at all? If we do (because of liability exposure they may have) and should we make decisions for the conference or sign contracts, then yes, we need to make a change. Cindy laid out governance document, for your consideration, on how we might administer and move forward this conference. My recommendation is that you have to do something; to take the conference and tuck it under your existing 501(c)(3), the Conservation Enhancement Fund, which is really looking for ignition and that will give it new vitality. Make it a program of existing 501(c)(3) and give it some skeleton-type organizational structure as a program of your (c)(3). I am patterning my thought process after AFWA's AWARE account, which is a program nested under their (c)(3) We just acquired Project Wild, which is another program like AWARE. Then we execute between the program and the (c)(3) and it helps with IRS to actually sign an affiliation agreement, because some of the assets your (c)(3) would own would be used by that program; the board's decisions you might make as it relates to that program or conference. That would be one way of handling this situation. Cindy envisioned perhaps forming a separate (c)(3) to nest the conference under. It seems a bit redundant to do that; forming a new (c)(3) is complicated and expensive and forms a new entity or person under the law; which requires tax returns and other legal things that are sometimes a burden to do. I don't know if she and I are at odds, but she is advising we need some kind of governance. I understand we don't want to go too far

because we do have a successful conference with passionate people running it and have for a lot of years. The institutional memory could be better documented if you had more structure for the conference. *Jim* – It would probably change some of our accounting, do we presume in that scenario that all of the accounting for the conference would fall there? *Carol* – Another reason, like under your (c)(3) rather than under MAFWA, is because of exposure. Like Indiana, who wasn't able to sign contracts that year for that conference and you did, would you not rather have that on the back of your (c)(3) rather than you (c)(6)? Food for thought, we don't have to make decision, but recommendation from Executive Committee to the group at business meeting is needed if we wanted to move forward. *Jim* – My thought is, we should probably talk about it, but this another situation because we meet only once a year, we don't have the ability to put on directors' radar a couple of times before they are in decision-making mode. If we do this, the full array of directors has the ability to weigh in on this. Could have more thorough discussion at business meeting, but no final decision until following spring. *Carol* – All set for 2018 in Wisconsin. *Jim* - Not prepared to name people today, but will put together another sub-group of directors to work with you and others and bring forward recommendation for the directors; but discuss at business meeting. Does that sound reasonable? *Keith* – Who would we speak to that represents the Fish and Wildlife conference because it changes? Decide a year from now, changes year to year. It might be a good idea if we decide to go forward with it, but who do you inform? *Ollie* – You would have to inform your staff, at least those that host the conference. *Keith* – American Fisheries Society has always been a part of it. *Jim* – I had some of my staff reach out to counterparts in other states and had good input and suggestions on some things. We have to do some of that over the course of the next few months. *Keith* – State agencies take the lead in getting it all set up and they are members of the Association, but up to states to make decisions. *Jim* – There is potentially some options for running through 501, but also some options for having some different levels of involvement depending on situation in the state. We will talk about this again on Wednesday and will be asking some of you to be on a subcommittee.

**Next Meeting Date** – *Ollie* – After discussion, decided next meeting will be Tuesday, August 22, 2017 at 2:00 pm central time via teleconference.

**Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

**Minutes**  
**MAFWA Annual Meeting**  
**June 25 – June 27, 2017**  
**Edward T. Mahoney State Park**  
**Ashland, Nebraska**

*Final Program – Exhibit 1*

**Sunday, June 25, 2017**

MAFWA Executive Committee Meeting 5:00 pm (*Agenda – Exhibit 2*)

*President's Welcome Reception (MAFWA) – Sponsored by National Wild Turkey Federation*  
**Jason Lupardus** made a few remarks and gave away a few raffle items.

*Hospitality Room – Sponsored by National Archery in the Schools Program*

**Monday, June 26, 2017**

*Breakfast – Sponsored by Archery Trade Association*  
**Dan Forster** made a few remarks.

**GREETINGS and WELCOME to NEBRASKA**

**Welcome to Nebraska**

**Jim Douglas, President of MAFWA and NE Director** – Pleasure to host this conference and see great partners in the audience. Registration is new record for MAFWA and appreciate the attendance. Later today we will have Greg Sheehan, principal deputy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) join us; Noreen Walsh, Region 6 director is coming later today; Charlie Wooley, deputy director representing Region 3; and new face in eastern region director for USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services, Janet Bucknall. Other new faces: Keith Norris, government affairs director of The Wildlife Society; John Thompson, deputy chief of Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units. A lot of you been here before, likely in last five years because Nebraska has hosted the North American, AFWA's fall meeting, WAFWA; MAFWA, and park directors of the U.S. and is hosting regional park directors next year. Need to find a way to get you all to northwest Nebraska to Fort Robinson State Park which has great facilities to stay and meet in, 22,000 acres to roam around on and fish in, along with Forest Service land. Or the Sand Hills of Nebraska, one of the largest intact grasslands left in the U.S. For those of you who want to come hunt sandhill cranes someday you let us know and we will facilitate that. This park facility is a great venue and we will have some interesting evening events. Acknowledge sponsors, a page and a half including government organizations, non-government organizations and private industry that support our work through sponsorships and other partnerships on a regular basis. Also, the services they provide to us and how appreciative we are of everything they do. At a major level we have: Brandt Information Services hosting tonight at Henry Doorly zoo at African Savanna complex; Fresh Air Educators, all familiar with great work they are doing in

field of education, nature based education is one of the ways that Nebraska Game and Parks uses its park system, lot of aquatic-based parks and carry over doing fish and wildlife programs. Tuesday night going to a state park that has a shooting range, and we opened a brand new education complex and shooting range in park in western Nebraska last week. USFWS Region 3 is a major sponsor, we will have good discussions over course of next couple days about how together we look at conservation across large landscapes and how we collaborate. At the gold level: breakfast this morning hosted by Archery Trade Association; National Wild Turkey Federation sponsored last evening; Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium visiting this evening has been rated the number one zoo in the United States, but beyond what you normally think of the zoo does great work in conservation, for example black-footed ferret work and other imperiled species; Quail Forever and Pheasants Forever, we do great work together; Region 6 USFWS, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Region 9; USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services. Silver level: Bass Pro Shops; Canadian North American Wildlife Management Plan Partners; Ducks Unlimited; National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP); National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). Bronze: DJ Case and Associates; Gush Water Company who supplied all bottled water; Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, who started with small discussion in a motel room in Council Bluffs, Iowa and when you think about how conservation efforts start a lot of times it is a few people getting together with great ideas that follow through; National Rifle Association (NRA); Nebraska Big Game Society, will hear from them at lunch this week, in Nebraska partners with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation also, but a few big game hunters wanted to make sure more money was returned to the state and started their own big game society who has membership and raises funds every year and gives all of the money to Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for big game management; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Voss Signs; Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers; Mule Deer Foundation; National Wildlife Federation; and The Nature Conservancy. A great set of partners and many of these partners sponsor many conferences every year, a great commitment and we thank all of them.

## STATE HOT TOPICS

**Jim Douglas, NE** – Ollie’s favorite, he is really invested in hot topics. I thought about not doing that this year and found out that was not an option. **Ollie** – It is the highest graded segment of our program every year. **Jim D.** – I was only going to give it a half hour and that wasn’t enough so decided to give it an hour so I will regulate the clock. Want time on agenda to talk about newer tools we are using in helping us manage species across large landscapes. Many of those on the scene, but CHAT is one that has been used by the lesser prairie chicken world for quite some time and has a lot of opportunity to be used in some other ways for conservation. I am taking my Nebraska hot topic privilege to talk about CHAT and other tools. I am going to have Tim McCoy and Keith Sexson talk about this as well.

**Tim McCoy, NE** – Keith has been very familiar with CHAT, which stands for Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool. Nebraska is in both Midwest and Western associations and this started with the Western Governors’ Association with focus on providing a planning document for large scale conservation as a tool that could be used by external entities, which came up using energy corridors. They came up with a model using a flexible hexagon based method as a way to provide that high level planning tool when working on potential projects. USFWS didn’t find out

they were running into big problems until it was too late. We had experience in Nebraska trying to deal with wind and we went through process to do something similar with our own data. Benefit of CHAT is it has set up a system and network inclusive of the states because the issue they ran into quickly was state borders, from planning standpoint of an energy corridor. Worked through processes, looking at edge mapping and identifying differences. It has been a huge tool that has been used a lot and then developed further on lesser prairie chicken (LPC) stuff.

**Keith Sexson, KS** – Started as Western Governor’s initiative to bring together western states into some kind of a uniform mapping effort that could be used by various industries as they take on new projects; it was also georectified at state boundaries as well. Kansas and Oklahoma entered into pilot project with the funds provided to look at LPC range. Out of that effort, and using CHAT technology and information, we established eco-region looking at landscape and land cover. The four eco-regions for LPC: short grass, mixed grass, sand sage and shinnery. Within those, based on modeling in terms of habitat and location of birds, we established CHAT 1, 2, 3 and 4 categories for which were most crucial for LPC and building out from that. CHAT 1 is most important to protect and mitigate as we began to get into the listing issues. That whole concept of habitat assessment tool was used to establish within the rangewide plan that provides the maps and breakdown of areas used, as we began to work with industry and mitigating for impacts in those CHAT categories. CHAT has left Western Governors’ Association and found a home in WAFWA. There has been an effort to begin to look at that concept on a national level coordinated through AFWA, a big undertaking. Later in business meeting I will talk about status of greater prairie chicken (GPC) and sharp tailed grouse initiative we have started, a joint effort between WAFWA and MAFWA. Concepts of CHAT are an important part as we begin to look at those two species and the landscape in which they both exist; using this kind of tool to begin to establish the same sort of eco-regional concept for those two flagship species, understanding there are a lot of other species dependent on the landscape which these two grouse species exist. CHAT is one of those and we are trying to keep it up front and use for a number of different reasons and keep it updated. That effort is being held at Kansas University, Mike Houts who was instrumental in working with the Western Governors’ Association is helping to shepherd this and is continuing to maintain and update that tool as time goes on. **Jim D.** – As we continue to look at conservation of species across large landscapes important to make you aware of tools out there to be potentially utilized. Was a webinar also that WAFWA arranged recently that we advertised in Midwest states for some of our technicians who weren’t familiar with it and what the possibilities could be using that tool and others like it.

### **State Hot Topics**

**Aaron Buchholz, WI** – Spoke to Kurt Thiede who will be transitioning out of this role to Sanjay Olson who is our division administrator and he could not be here, but I am the deputy for the fish, wildlife and parks division. Last year our Secretary, Cathy Stepp shared with you how we were going to approach our continued staffing and budget problems. We had to address the fact that we had a business-minded legislature and needed to be able to communicate and reflect on what our work is in a manner that connects with them. We started process two years ago, after last biennial budget, digging in to do extensive core work analysis across entire agency; focused on strategic alignment of making sure the resources we have and putting those resources at highest priority needs and aligning with what customers want. Put together integrated design teams, leadership from fisheries and wildlife division to identify what were our core works, what

things we have to do statutorily, what our customers want and what are we doing that we don't have to do; hard decisions being made. Came through that process and certain themes started to emerge and for our division it came down to prioritization and specialization is where we are headed. Moving forward: habitat management, team prioritized throughout the state, no strategic effort in the past to decide where we were spending our dollars in the past, looked at geographically first and what best investment was in certain part of the state and did comparison of competing priorities within that district and when districts done did that on statewide basis and made decisions like, is grasslands in southern Wisconsin more important than barrens work in northern Wisconsin. Came out with ranking of all habitats in the state to focus in on where work could be done with resources we have available. There is a line where we are no longer going to commit department resources and are looking at partners to help with those areas we cannot fund. Moving into implementation phase now with full implementation in January 2018, this year is transition year. The other part of habitat management is specialization component; we have state parks, wildlife, fisheries and natural heritage conservation (NHC) which formerly was our endangered resources program; we wanted to focus in on biologists being the ones doing habitat work for entire portfolio of properties and division of forestry has important role for forested habitat as well. Had staff at state parks doing habitat work and are going to specialize that work to be done by fisheries and wildlife folks or if nongame species our natural heritage folks and let recreation specialists focus on their specialty. The flip side of that is on our wildlife and fisheries areas we are going to focus parks and recreation staff to be lead on public use infrastructure on those properties; coin property management into parks and recreation bureau across entire 1.5 million acre portfolio. Taking similar approach in law enforcement (LE) as well; we had LE in parks program and in facility and lands program that did property management on flowages and riverine properties, conservation wardens and forestry had some credentialed officers for fire control and timber theft; all of that will be specialized into our Conservation Warden Force and they will be the credentialed officers in our agency providing law enforcement capabilities on all of our properties. Parks is where we have that big need and looked at our workforce; sometimes had credentialed staff maybe who only did 50% or less LE work, but had to keep them all credentialed. Want to move to a model of having officers who will do 100% LE, which will allow us to save on a number of positions and will be big cultural shift. Equated down to shifts for all staff, biggest area of concern internally and externally if there would be enough coverage and public safety in our parks, but feel confidently that we can do that. Specializing prescribed fire with division of forestry credentialed staff for wildfire control work; presently had qualified staff in parks, wildlife and NHC program, cutting down on training, equipment and number of folks doing that, but still maintain a small number of credentialed staff in wildlife and NHC programs, recognized in specialized habitat they have the skill set we need, but not in state parks program. There have been other components and improvements made that I won't get into, but going into budget cycle, had successive budgets with significant position cuts and reductions and this is the best to show we are doing the best with what we have and not with having a license fee increase. Legislature has been struggling with transportation and school funding and our biennium started yesterday and we don't have a new budget; the good news is we are not the headline and they like what we have done and we have a lot to do to create the metrics to track and prove that what we are doing is going to save money; feel in a good position. *Jim D.* – Sounds like you are going to have to go through some of the cultural shift that is required to make that successful and probably lots of people here that

would be interested in talking with you about what is going on there and share some of their experiences as well.

**Tony Leif, SD** – Earlier this month, our Governor called a special session, our regular session was over in early March and right after that the Supreme Court came out with an important decision that affected our state, access to non-meandered lakes. Legislature came back two weeks ago to address this issue and whether the public should be able to access these non-meandered lakes. When South Dakota was surveyed, like any other state, federal surveyors came out and plotted out the state and if they came to a body of water that was large and deep, at least 40 acres in size and couldn't pass it easily, they would draw a line around it and beds of those waters became possession of state upon statehood; they also marked some other areas, you will see that if you look at USGS maps, non-meandered basins were marked in some situations, however the entire bed was marked as in fee title so it went into private ownership. As we had a wet cycle a lot of basins filled up and meandered bodies of water that were previously 3,000 acre lakes grew into 17,000 acres, duck slews that grew into 2,000 acre lakes that supported quality fisheries. Supreme Court decision came out in mid-March, a second decision, first one came out in 2004; it essentially said three things, the bed of these basins is owned by private citizens, the waters atop those private lands are held in trust by the State of South Dakota and that is up to the legislature to decide with what extent the public can use these waters for public recreation. It is a difficult situation for us to be in as an agency because we have a state that strongly supports private property rights. On the flipside is public trust resource responsibility that we have for waters that is the same as we have for wildlife. One of elements of the decision said that our agency, Game Fish and Parks, could not facilitate access to these non-meandered waters until the legislature acted. We took that, in consultation with the Governor's office that there were about two dozen of these non-meandered waters that we had boat ramps, we had purchased fee title to these properties and as these basins grew, developed access sites and they are productive fisheries. As a slew turns into a lake there are a lot of nutrients and a lot of opportunity for development of fisheries and we stocked a number of those waters and had natural movement of fish. About two dozen areas that we had to cordon off, put cable or chain across and spurred attention and action. It also became apparent how important these resources are to local economies and that was the driving force to get something done, not just for local bait shops, but restaurants and hotels. In Clark, SD, built a new hotel, driven by 14,000 acre lake that supports hundreds of thousands of man hours of fishing every year and we shut lake down and they interviewed that gal on the 6:00 news right after that and she said they had zero occupancy when they usually were packed. Legislature acted after a committee got together and dealt with issue and tried to figure out that balance; bill did not come out on one side or the other, bill not good, but not bad either. It took a number of those areas where we had previously developed fisheries and said those were open to public recreation, but it also said every other one of those non-meandering waters, some 2,000 acre lakes which support viable fisheries, were granted ability of those property owners who have bed of that lake under that portion to cordon off that area and preclude access. Better than where it started, where it was off limits without any type of markings, now a landowner does have to mark that area that is off limits to public access. In some situations that will allow for privatization of public trust resource, that is the trade off. We had 90 lakes, about 57,000 acres of managed fisheries, or places we recognized with fishing opportunities, and we got about 30,000 acres opened back up. Interesting side of this was the summer study group had put a sunset provision in the legislation to sunset in 2021; the House

passed that, but the Senate said we need to deal with this sooner and changed it to 2018; House would not concur and went to conference committee and after much discussion they concurred. The story is to be continued, this next legislative session the legislature will have to act on this entire bill again. I have been part of previous legislative efforts and this is tough because we have longtime ardent supporters of our agency, landowners that adamantly say that is private land, a clear line that should not be crossed, and the philosophical sanctity of property rights are held in high regard. Interesting few weeks and implementing that now. *Terry Steinwand* – Watched that with interest in North Dakota, you said they have to post those lakes that people can't fish on? *Tony* – Correct, there are two requirements, they are supposed to tell us if posting off limits so we can produce some type of online post and then they have to post them; in the winter not too tough on ice, but going to have to be with some type of buoy system. *Terry* – So it may not be the entire lake? *Tony* – It only can be that portion of lake above property that they own. Implementation will be a bit of a challenge.

**Wayne Rosenthal, IL** – No budget, second year of two years. We have a facility similar to this, Wren Lake, which we closed down. When I came on in 2015 one of the issues was we had to pay for propane to heat the facility, he didn't have the funds to pay that and we couldn't have it not heated so during the last two years we have had multiple inspections of the site. Because of the way the contract was written it was vendor friendly so if we were coming to inspect we had to let him know and he would pick the rooms we inspected; so all of the inspection reports looked good. He wasn't paying bills, wasn't paying into the maintenance fund because the rooms weren't filled the way they should be. They have a hotel, motel, cabins, conference facility and a kitchen. This last fall our real estate folks said they wanted to inspect everything and as they started going through the rooms in the hotel, 118 rooms on second and third floors, found six different types of mold in some of the rooms. The occupancy rate was down and every Tuesday they checked the emergency generators to make sure they worked; they would shut the power off and as the generators would come on, he shut generator off and power would come back on and all of the rooms were set to factory default, some at 50 degrees some at 90 degrees and those rooms were never checked and mold grew. We made the decision to come in and close down the place. There was a lot of discussion on how we were going to go forward. If we went in and cleaned it up and the state did it we would have to go through our capital development board and it would take over three years. I told them we wanted to advertise and whoever the successful vendor was would mitigate the damages, they would know the molds were there and get a 25-year contract and they could fix the way they want and get it done quicker. The other side of that is there were parts that needed to be refurbished and cleaned and they could start operating immediately. This started last December and last week had tour and people starting RFP process, we had 18 entities interested in because it sits right on Wren Lake, on Hwy 57. The parks and resorts were developed about 50 years ago and in the process the state always used them for conferences so state was providing a lot of funding; that stopped in the early 2000s. Parks and resorts that market themselves do a good job and are successful. This guy was dependent on the state and there was a \$5 million capital improvement project that was supposed to come, tied to previous administrations; he was the only one not paying his bills and we decided we needed to make a change. We have people who are interested that can turn this around. The bottom line is we failed to recognize this; because of contract issues and lack of occupancy he knew when we were coming and cleaned those rooms, but didn't clean other rooms until next person coming in so some rooms got really bad. We look forward to making a change there, but first thing was

convincing everyone we needed the RFP with successful vendor doing all of the mitigation because they can do it quicker and better than the state can. When you get involved in state government, even when everybody agrees, it takes forever and you get one person who opposes something it takes longer. We are in special session right now and we don't have a budget, have 4 or 5 days left to see if we will have one. *Jim D.* – We own this facility, but 75% of costs building it came from private donations, it needs refreshment and upgrading for next generation of park goers so we are in a capital campaign for \$37 million for this park and a few others near here. Being in the business of ownership of this type of capital development takes a lot of planning, running a hotel is tough business for the state. *Wayne* – And that is not the business we are in. A couple of the ones that are interested do a lot of wedding venues and Wren Lake is great for that because of the lake, and about 3-4 hours from Chicago. We look forward to a successful partnership going forward. Next one is Eagle Creek at Shelbyville, a \$15 million building and will take \$3 million to tear it down, but if successful at Wren Lake, hope to do RFP there too and they will tear it down and build something new or tear it down and be done with it. We need to work with our private partners.

*Mark Reiter, IN* – Last year, about two months before deer season, we had three cattle farms in southeast Indiana that ended up with bovine tuberculosis and they depopulated the farms and Wildlife Services did some wildlife sampling around those areas to see if wildlife species had been infected. They did come up a white-tailed doe that was infected. Our board of animal health went nuts over that. We had been sampling in that area because there had been outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis in the area before, but never found any in our sampling. We were pretty sure it was an isolated incidence, but cattle farmers are going nuts and are saying that wildlife is spreading disease to the cows. We put together an elaborate plan, one whole county and half of two others outside of it, to do sampling; figured we had 600-2,600 deer and bucks were higher valued samples and to get sample you had to cut deer on the head, hunters not happy. What we had to do was look for other ways to get samples other than a traditional check station so we worked with taxidermists, checked in deer and gave deer a number and worked with them to gather those samples. In the end, we were able to be 95% competent that bovine TB existed in the deer herd less than a quarter a percent, so essentially non-detectable. It drove hunters to cooperate with us because if we didn't get enough high valued samples we would have had to shoot some of those deer to get those samples. In last couple of years we have started a stewardship program where we are looking for citizen scientists to help because we are not going to get more staff to get what we need to get done; self serving that they cooperated, but hope to get more help interested in this way, especially in research field. *Jim D.* - Did you get all of your samples through hunters? *Mark* – Yes, we did not have to hire Wildlife Services. *Jim D.* – Does Wildlife Services want you to continue sampling for a year or so or not? *Mark* – Right at that point where we are trying to decide if we are going to do it again or not. There is a big benefit in doing it year after year because people get used to it, but the man power it took was a lot. *Jim D.* – With that low detection rate they probably won't suggest it.

*Dr. Dale Garner, IA* – Waiting for culmination of Supreme Court ruling; about five years ago the department was sued for potential takings on a captive facility shooting preserve, where we found CWD. We quarantined the facility and once it was depopulated we maintained that the fence should stay up for five years. We got overruled by an ELJ, the commission overruled the ELJ and it went to the district court and then to the Supreme Court. It came out two weeks ago

and the Supreme Court held a unanimous decision that there was no takings, but it also held split decision that the department didn't have legal authority to quarantine the land. When you think about chronic wasting disease and the ability for prions to maintain themselves in the soil for years, once the animals are gone that is one thing, but keeping that area from wild deer is another; the fence is down and the damage has been done now. In that ruling, the Department of Agriculture has jurisdiction over domestic livestock and their ability to quarantine as well and they will have the same problem if it comes to something down the road. It will be interesting to see if the legislature takes that on this year.

**Steve Beam, KY** – Our hot topic has been one for some time and is generally just small game management and expectations of the public and our agency's attempt to do meaningful small game management across the state. This is driven by declines in game birds, bobwhite quail and ruffed grouse are our two primary species (*Handouts – Exhibit 3*). Did road to recovery plan for bobwhite seven years ago and had good success with what we plan to do. Quail crashed in late 1970s and have been in long term decline; grouse have just been in long term decline since about the same time period. Obviously we know the driver is habitat factors, but we don't control enough of the habitat for us to be able to affect the change we need to do as an agency. We constantly hear from our sportsmen and the public saying we are not doing enough. In late 1990s we partnered with NRCS and in the last 20 years we have provided technical assistance to every landowner in the state interested in doing small game management; and provided financial assistance to a vast majority of those landowners. We are not seeing the type of response you would think. Central and western Kentucky is bobwhite quail; and eastern Kentucky, in mountains, is grouse areas. I have been in opinion for a long time that our small game is byproduct of whatever the rural economy is doing; if bobwhite quail fit in well to an agricultural system then we do very well. In some places in row crop systems we are able to impact that through Farm Bill programs and have been somewhat successful, but aren't going back to the battle days of agriculture that resulted in this boon for quail. We have had this quail plan for several years, but have been getting a lot of interest and pressure so looking at this and developed 10-year comprehensive plan for ruffed grouse. Where quail are tied to rural economy, grouse are tied to the timber and the mining industry techniques used in eastern Kentucky. Also, there is a big tie to grouse in land abandonment; after World War II tremendous numbers of farm families moved out of eastern Kentucky; they quit farming hillsides and making moonshine for a living, so a major change culturally that resulted in a lot of habitat. The 1960s and 1970s were the good old days for grouse historically, so may never be able to get back to that no matter what we do. What we have tried to do is make tie to fact that these birds are habitat driven. Have quail focus areas, we knew we couldn't work statewide, but those focus areas were widely successful, we saw increases in bobwhite populations ranging from 40-50% up to 800% increase, depending on the scale and type of habitat work. How successful we are going to be with grouse, I have no idea. The mining industry is not going back to doing small or contour mines that create a lot of edge and we are not going to have another period of land abandonment. We do have hope in how we manage timber resources in the east, low basal area cuts have gone away and they are doing selective cuts that often times is high grading, but trying to put all out blitz on timber management in eastern Kentucky. This grouse plan is solid and talks about partnership and working with private entities with the U.S. Forest Service to increase the type of habitat we need. We also need to make a concerted effort to manage for hunter expectations. Because we don't

control the land it is not something we can go out and accomplish in the way that habitat management needs to be done, on scale that is needed.

**Ray Petering, OH** – State agency versus state cat fight and we have a good one going back home. Wrapping up biennium budget bill this week, likely in next day or two and some of our “friends” in the legislature slipped in few things in the eleventh hour that were pretty damaging to our agency; a slap in the face to the sportsmen of our state. I was just on the phone to one of the legislative folks and we were able to get one of those pulled, but still working on some others. It got hot recently when the Sportsman’s Alliance, based in Columbus, Ohio led a run at resident and nonresident fee increase; they have 40 plus sportsmen groups signed onto a letter backing this, on fishing and hunting side. The Department of Natural Resources agency director, with Division of Wildlife being part of that, he and his guys have spent last couple of months burning a tremendous amount of political capital trying to stop that fee from going through. This guy never uttered the word sportsmen for the first six and a half years he has been in DNR director position and then takes a genuine interest in how sportsmen will react to this fee increase. He has used that as a tool to fight this, but in reality all about the fact that it is good for our agency so therefore they are against it. In trying to elevate this thing to see what the 10,000 foot view is really all about, we have talked about the relevance of conservation, and can’t go to meeting where plenary session was not part of it as well as presentations and breakout groups. The group of folks in this administration right now are so disconnected from the outdoors and conservation, what it is about and why it is important, that this is one of the ways it manifests itself. We tend to look at license and permit sales and get up in arms about those sorts of metrics that points to disconnect and relevance participation. There are lots of spin offs from the disconnect that don’t have anything to do with license sales. Trying to get this administration to understand that the Division of Wildlife is a conservation organization shoehorned into state government, and that the goal here is not like the goal of most state government models, in terms of smaller is better, tighter and leaner and all of those things. I have tried to explain to them that conservation in some respects is like cancer research, the goal is not to do less, but to do more. They don’t get that and want us to fit into how the rest of state government is run. They have basically stepped in and taken the steering wheel out of our hands and are running the show and it has resulted in World War III between a division of this department, unfortunately the Governor’s people see things the same way as the department people do. We are in a big pickle. The sportsmen have rallied in a big way with an article or two a week in the print media about this mess; articles calling for the DNR director to resign, articles calling the Governor out on turning his back on sportsmen and the way he has dealt with the Division of Wildlife. Social media has blown up big time; the kinds of things where in the past you would have gotten a reaction from government and something would have happened to fix this, but so disconnected they believe this is just a few people out there and they are not worried about that; it is a manifestation of this disconnect. Tony, what you were talking about is more of the same, public trust thing and people looking at that and thinking they don’t have any connection with those people. No ending or solution to this, but we are going to keep doing what we do. We are going to have a budget bill signed this week, then legislature goes home for summer, expect shoe to drop in July; it would be minor miracle if I am at AFWA meeting at the end of summer; I have put myself way out there knowing what the consequences are. I would rather have my head chopped off doing the right thing than just go along with these people. They don’t even agree with us about who we work for, not the sportsmen because they created and fund my agency,

they argue that we work for the director. This disconnect stuff has gotten some ugly faces as we go forward, relevance is going to be a big deal and if we don't figure out some way to relight those fires all of us are going to continue to fight with this type of stuff and maybe worse; ultimately don't know what the consequences of this are going to be. This is a warning shot that this stuff is going on out there. *Jim D.* – Many of us will take the time in the next couple days to talk to you more about this. There is a lot of threads as far as relevancy and who supports you. You are living through things we talk about on daily basis about building support base we need and reaching out to new constituency. Feel bad that is happening and you are right in the middle of it and fighting the good fight in the right way.

***Jim Leach, MN*** – Fee increase discussion as well, but in Minnesota we have some legislators that are still hunters and anglers so our discussion came out different than Ray's. It didn't look like it was going to be a good effort but in the end things turned around. We have a citizen's advisory committee that looks at our budget annually and makes recommendations to the legislature. They recommended that DNR develop a comprehensive fee increase. Our game and fish account that funds my division was projected to go insolvent in 2019. Typically that takes about two years for legislative process to warm up to the idea. The Governor told us we could go forward with a fee increase in January this year so we geared up and proposed it. Legislators saw it in their initial budget, went to conference committee, was sent to the Governor and fee increase was not included in the conference report so we thought we were dead. Legislature proposed some policy bills to limit DNR's acquisition authority for land, coupled with trying to take away our ability to regulate non-toxic shot, coupled with minnow importation which we look at as a primary source of spreading invasive species; with those three pieces they shot themselves in the head and got sportsmen riled up. There were calls, a lot of media attention that said this was the most anti-sportsmen legislature in the history of Minnesota. Next year is an election year for most of them and they didn't want that hanging over their heads and the Governor vetoed the conference bills and they went into negotiation with the Governor. The policy bills were removed and we got a fee increase; everything we asked for. Governor compromised on nontoxic shot instead of taking our ability to regulate it he placed a 2-year moratorium on our ability to regulate, a private industry was successful in postponing that, not happy with compromise. Starting with no fee increase and all of this negative legislation we feel we came out successful, a tribute to field staff that worked with private interest groups and sportsmen who rallied for us. In a three week period the legislature did a 180. This coming legislative session looking for trigger that automatically triggers a fee increase for funding for our game and fish account when it gets low; now that we educated legislature on what it is about and that it is not a pact and the user groups are willing to pay for it, going to look for trigger so we don't have to go back every four or five years and it is automatically increased. *Jim D.* – Nebraska got fee increases in legislation session that ended last year, but took a lot of convincing; Governor signed the bill, but we had to enact regulations to put it into access and he didn't want to sign the regulation and we had no recourse; worked out with help of sporting organizations.

***Sara Parker Pauley, MO*** – This is my first MAFWA and I appreciate the ability to be here. We are all dealing with many of the same things; but will talk about our strategic planning efforts. We are celebrating our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year so great opportunity for us with new administration and going out to citizens, which we will start doing August through October, in different open house forums to engage citizens and what they consider to be the top priorities for

conservation for 2018 and moving forward. Focusing right now on business side of running an agency, citizens want to know you are using their tax dollars wisely. With nearly one million acres, 1,000 conservation areas it is a good time for us to assess what we own; do we need as many parking lots and privies on all of the conservation areas and do we even know what is out there. A couple of different things are happening at the same time, which is leading us to focus more on business side. In part our Governor-appointed commission has dictated a more conservative policy on use of our fund balance so we are budgeting much more tightly than we have in the past; a greater call for accountability from citizenry and the new Governor and greater story telling on the stewardship side. New resource challenges include CWD and feral hogs that we didn't have to deal with 10-20 years or more ago, but are driving resource side and taking a lot of time and effort. Initiated strategic planning effort to identify priorities, we surveyed our staff in-house for ideas and got over 800 responses, 400 pages of great ideas. Our division chiefs, our outcome champions so they have interdivisional teams that are looking at all surveys we have done in the past as well as recent survey, engaging the public, and their responsibility with those four goals and 16 outcomes is driving strategy and activities. This will lead us into new planning effort in FY 2019, which starts in August when we go to our commission with the first budget workshop. We will do a round of zero-based budgeting and aligning conservation priorities with the budget. Adopting new tools as well, where technology can benefit the business side like it does the resource side; got approval from office of administration to acquire a new financial management system which will track both human resource and financial resource with priorities so we can better tell our accomplishments, which will be incredibly useful. We just acquired the new business intelligence tool which will allow dash-boarding, the visualization of how we are tracking priorities and what are barriers on a monthly basis and be a key way to communicate that message to our commission, staff and public we serve. Also, we have a new lands database we are creating to track legal documents and easements in one place. Also in development is new EGIS asset management tool which will finally put a GIS connector to each asset we own, so this will help as we are expediting infrastructure asset inventory. Our commission was not satisfied with our best estimate of 12 years to do a proper asset inventory and gave us two years to do it. We will do it with a lot of help from an external contractor. These tools will help us track all of these assets so trying to use tools where we can. What we heard from Wisconsin, after we established goals and outcome strategies we are getting down into activity level and that is where we do assessment, are these activities redundant within the agency, who should be taking the lead, are they still relevant moving forward and are our partners more appropriate to carry on an activity rather than the agency. We established a new position in the director's office, assistant to the director for operational excellence and this person has been on staff for about a month and will have responsibility to infuse continued improvement philosophies throughout the agency; we have taken unit chiefs through training and eventually all staff. We are tackling the biggest issue for us, CI process of how are we prioritizing new capital improvement infrastructure projects, what are criteria we are using, not only for new projects, but how are we determining who gets the money for maintenance and repair. This is just the beginning and that is taking a lot of our time. The commission support, in the past took CI budget to them and said here are the top priorities, but if they ever asked us how we established these priorities it wasn't clear what those criteria were; we will go back with clear criteria; they also said that moving into the future 75% of CI budget will go to existing maintenance and repair and 25% for new. *Jim D.* – Undertaking a lot of upfront work, important work that will serve you well.

**Bill Moritz, MI** – It is known, to some respect, that I am transitioning in August from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) replacing Pat Ruble, looking forward to that. I will continue to work on some DNR issues, including the monarchs. Michigan has done a lot of the things Missouri is working on, which sets the stage for broader conversation about public land discussions. Michigan has a cap on the amount of public land the DNR can manage and we are fortunate to have 4.6 million acres; forests, state parks, wildlife management areas, etc. There is a broader conversation out there about how much land should be in public ownership, whether federal or state agencies or local units of government. It is blurry because the general public doesn't know who manages what, public land is public land. Where public land is located and how much has been an ongoing conversation the last few years. We have a land management strategy that is in front of the legislature for approval that would remove the cap, but there are issues of access, biodiversity and payment in lieu of taxes; all part of complicated discussion. We need to think about how we make public land important for all of the citizens. Our traditional stakeholder groups get it and are our biggest champions. The general public likes public land for the quality of life it brings, access and all those things that are important, but we have not done a very good job explaining that. To really promote continuing to have a significant public land portfolio will depend on trying to figure out how best to communicate the values that come from public land. Practices or uses are fairly significant for folks and the public doesn't generally understand the difference between why they can't use an ORV on this trail until I hit federal land or some other land ownership. I think we will have to work more collaboratively to have a unified message on those values across all agencies. We are also looking at how we can increase values of public land, showing its relevance for local and state economies, connecting that public land could be the state park next to you, wildlife area and fishing area near you that drive local economy is really important to do. To have those case studies to communicate is something we have been working on and then that ties back to size of portfolio, but comes with challenges of how you pay for the infrastructure management. Last year the Governor had a 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure commission looking at infrastructure and water was one of the four areas, along with roads and technology and those sorts of things were in play. If you think about a state park, essentially it is as big as a small community, the number of people using water and sewer and things like that; how do we best manage that. You can always find dollars to acquire new, but routine operational stuff is the challenge. As we look at the size of our land portfolio and infrastructure, we will have to face tough decisions on how to best manage them. It is an evolutionary process, not an easy one time thing it is an ongoing look at your business practices to see how we can best explain that need in our budget cycle. Funding for infrastructure came easy for state parks; \$35 million set aside to start the broader conversation on infrastructure management at all levels, a critical need in the next 20 years. *Jim D.* – Appreciate comments about infrastructure, on national scene as discussion for the nation, but in lands and parks resources. In Nebraska we have a lot of needs and beginning to develop new water and sewer systems on some of the large park complexes and what used to cost a few thousand dollars costs millions now. Our state general fund support for parks is only about 14% of total we spend and means a whole new realm of fee increases or downsizing to cover costs. We have been purchasing wildlife management areas with proceeds from a habitat stamp required for hunting since 1976; originally spent about one-third of our revenue on purchasing land, one-third on operating and one-third on private lands programs, but we have to pay in lieu of taxes so we are spending more than one-third on taxes and that is going to affect what we do

with public lands as well. *Bill* – We are below our cap by a significant amount, but if you ask them what they are going to sell in order to have the money to buy or meet your cap that is a hard cultural question because nobody wants to give up anything. *Jim D.* – We had park funding problems a few years ago, and went to legislature to try and get more general funds to infuse into the park system and it wasn't happening so I closed many state parks around the state, which was a gamble, but it did bring attention. We had a line to walk communicating with the public and decision makers. Local economic impact from our resources is so great, but sometimes it takes dramatic effort or ongoing effort to try and remind people what that really means to local communities.

*Terry Steinwand, ND* – Follow what Tony said in a little different vein; legislative issue a lot of us bring up. During the last session, in North Dakota have biennial, every other year, sessions thankfully. In North Dakota we were the only one in Midwest, only one other in nation, where land is open to hunting unless posted otherwise. This was my sixth legislative session and fourth time where it was attempted to reverse that, all land is posted unless posted to hunting. It got to be a hot issue, which we expected because we had event called Dakota Access Pipeline Protest and we were involved in the law enforcement side. It raised the hackles of citizens and the Agriculture groups saw that as an opportunity to try that no posting bill again. I talked with the Senator that had sponsored the bill and tried to get him to pull it or change it to make it more friendly and he wouldn't do it until the last minute and then he only changed it that if you wanted it open to hunting you could post it and then it was open to hunting. The teaching moment in all this is every agriculture group was in favor of it and they were saying private property rights, like South Dakota, the time and expense. The sportsmen groups said the issue for them was who to contact because there are landowners living out of state. Most of land is posted closed to hunting. Ultimately what occurred is, you get a controversial issue and sportsmen's groups come out of the woodwork, and they did. Within two days my phone blew up and we opposed the bill, evidently I killed the bill, at least that is what I was accused of. I talked to a couple legislators the following Monday who said their email accounts were full telling them not to vote for this law. It actually died on the Senate floor and I have received direction from the Governor's office to resolve this issue. There are two trespass laws on the books, one is criminal trespass meaning they need verbal orders or posted no trespassing on private land, which was changed to have a heavier fine. The game and fish trespass law is actually more of a detriment in that you are charged with game and fish trespass which has same monetary fine as criminal trespass, plus a mandatory loss of hunting and fishing privileges for a year; the ethical hunter will pay attention to that. If anyone has any ideas on how I can resolve this in two years let me know.

*Keith Sexson, KS* – It has been quiet in Kansas. A year ago we implemented a fee increase across the board for our hunting and fishing licenses and permits. Our legislature sets the upper limit for our licenses and within that limit our Commission has the authority to make changes. It had been eight years since our last increase; we increased on an average of about 30% per license, but was well received and even nonresidents who come to hunt upland game and big game deer hunting didn't push back. The applications were still high. It did become an issue trying to index these things and not wait for eight years again. So we are in the process of trying to figure out an indexing process to keep up with inflation and not have sticker shock when you do raise these fees. On the other side of funding issue, in assessing wildlife restoration funds, about three to four months ago it became obvious that we had \$5 million in unobligated wildlife

restoration funds that needed to be obligated before September 2017 or be reverted. While I like to share with other states, this does not include reverting funds if possible. This included both unobligated and recovery funds. We went to work on that and have taken care of \$5 million simply by enhancing some of our private lands programs, reinvented private land habitat program and called it Habitat First. We get good cooperation from private landowners thinking about habitat work. Our walk-in hunting program is extremely popular and in a state that doesn't have much public land it is the answer to allowing people access to private land and is a PR funded program. It also gave us an opportunity to enhance our research needs in cooperation with universities in-state and out-of-state and in those cases the match is made by in-kind or waiving of indirect costs, which is helpful. We also got approval this year for a land purchase. The legislature has not been favorable for department to purchase land, a real hurdle for our opportunities to pick up pieces of land that are important in the state. This year, a change in legislature has opened that up to us and we did get authorization to purchase a piece of land in western Kansas, which was helpful in using unobligated funds as well. Cooperation and help we get from federal aid folks at Region 6 in Denver has been phenomenal in helping us get through some of these things and get paperwork through. What we know about the PR Modernization Act, for us would open some other opportunities for the use of those PR funds that would be important for programs in the state; hope that comes to pass. Shooting ranges, we don't have any problem using our hunter education dollars developing those; we are doing those mostly in state parks because of proximity to urban areas and have oversight within the park and use of friends groups to run them. We are finishing second one, a \$3 million project, but we have other shooting ranges in the state as well that we encourage and support. Sportfish restoration we are struggling in terms of federal match. It will be nice that we can at least pick up some of our needs for fisheries with increase in wildlife fee fund as result of fee increase. *Jim D.* – Something you said reminded me of a program in Nebraska with Pheasants Forever (PF) who are often solicited by state leader of PF to take some of the funds they raise to contribute to larger pots of money for statewide efforts. Recently they used such moneys to match PR and do work on state lands through contracts and that has been helpful. A lot of people talked about fee increases, acquired through legislative process, and we did that a year ago, but we got a lot of support from usual friends and other conservation organizations. When we did our statewide action plan we involved broad constituency groups to put together a group that meets regularly. Also, a couple of years ago we started a conservation round table that is informal, not authorized in any way; conservation arena folks talk about priorities of the state and meets every couple of months. Universities and the coop unit are part of that as well so they talk about research as well and that brought some of those same groups to the table. We got support on fee increase from The Nature Conservancy, Audubon and Farm Bureau, a lot of partners we don't normally get because of those other groups.

*Jim D.* – We have a little time left so go around room and ask each of you for comments on what the state-of-the-state is regarding collaboration with various conservation partners in your state. *Aaron (WI)* – Our relationship with stakeholders is strong and we invite them into almost an operational level. We have species advisory committees that guide on policy and quota decisions; at table with our biologists and research scientists. In Wisconsin we have statutorily created Wisconsin Conservation Congress which is advisory to the department, they are always at the table and we are committed to them; there are elected delegates in each of our 72 counties, five in each county and they are integral on county deer advisory councils we are implementing

now, a big partner. We have conservation round tables where we bring in stakeholders on discussions on hot topics we are working on and getting feedback from them. We can always do more, but engaged and an important part of our agency.

*Tony (SD)* – Kicking around conservation round table concept. Find it interesting too that you have fellow agencies, universities and federal partners too. We have a couple of ways we connect with private citizens and organizations; we have regional advisory panels, four in state mostly with citizens, who are often times connected to NGOs, but not formal representatives of NGOs. They have worked well for us but we seem to be losing momentum so discussing going to something comparable to this. What I find challenging, when we have a statewide group, is finding topics that are of interest statewide. Jim, your state is like ours, diverse from west to east; topics are often centric to certain areas of the state. When it comes to legislative efforts, we have a strong contingent effect like Terry talked about, like phone trees, but now are social media trees to rally the conservation and sportsmen communities and these are effective in getting email in-boxes filled up. South Dakota Wildlife Federation is a very strong lobbyist and is able to leverage importance recreationally, socially and economically. We have worked well with them, but could strengthen that even more. Whether at statewide or regional level, we alone as agencies are going to be ineffective without partners, which is probably the most overused and underutilized term we have. *Jim D.* – We kicked a lot of things around in round table about how they could do value-added conservation and identifying priorities. One thing they landed on was invasion of eastern red cedar into the grasslands of western Nebraska, which is essentially a statewide problem and there are other issues, like statewide water issues, but cedar invasion was something they could wrap around and develop action plans to move forward. *Tony* – One struggle with advisory panel was that they were advisory and when they came forward with ideas they thought were good, really were not, and it was challenging at times. You give them a certain amount of power and there is an expectation of action if they come up with something. Have you ever run into challenges with that group going off in a different direction than you would like them to go? *Jim D.* – Yes, but this group is not really advisory to Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, it is its own entity so to speak, and has its own issues. We are one seat at that table, but that can change over time because of its nature and because of the people involved representing the different organizations, there is mutual respect and understanding so right now it is working.

*Ray (OH)* – Recently, things are tremendously bright on conservation partner side of things; spent a lot of time and effort over last 10-15 years establishing and improving relationships with the diversity folks in Ohio and things are good between us and those folks, we know each other well and look at each other as friends. Then along comes this pollinator crisis; that is what we have chosen to be the rallying point to build a conservation coalition, it doesn't take any arm twisting at all to get people interested in participating in some way, shape or form. We have the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative that we are working on and a tremendous amount of groups signed on with that and are going to work forward with federal partners, NGOs, the sporting community and everyone; even Agriculture and the Department of Transportation, people you would never imagine sitting at the same table. Our intention is to push that as far as we can with what good it can do here and now for pollinators, but keep coalition together into the future and what it can do for conservation. If your eyes are open you recognize on the sporting side of things, where most of the funding has come from, in about 15 years the baby boomers are going to leave us and that is going to leave a huge hole in conservation funding. The bigger and

stronger this conservation coalition is going forward the better shape we are in to maybe look at different ways to look at funding conservation in the future.

*Steve (KY)* – Things are strong in Kentucky and we have a wonderful relationship with our NGO partners. A good example, last week we had a wetland revenue meeting at one of our premier waterfowl areas; we are looking at a comprehensive, regional strategy for our three waterfowl areas that are on the Mississippi River. We were shooting for putting together 12-15 people on a panel and ended up with 51 people there. DU got heavily involved and we invited some neighboring states and we could not ask for a better relationship with DU and other partners. We have strong relationships. The Nature Conservancy director is former Kentucky fish and wildlife person and we have strong relationships there. In terms of the idea of working groups for getting input, our commissioner, Greg Johnson, is really big on pulling working groups together for a focus project or specific issue. We recently had a working group help us on contentious issues with elk. We have a deer working group because we are wanting to do some potentially major changes to deer regulations in the fall. On those working groups we are hand picking people to bring something to the table, with agriculture groups and other diverse groups like QDMA and average sportsmen. The monarch summit we had in Kentucky was fantastic; we haven't seen that kind of cohesiveness from the diversity community ever and we would like to keep that going. The League of Kentucky Sportsmen is our overarching hook and bullet, old school group and how we have worked with the interested public over the years, but that group is aging and they have had some leadership issues and their membership has fallen off. While they still have input in what we do, I don't think they have the political clout they once had.

*Jim L. (MN)* – The recent fee increase really solidified the relationship we have with our traditional partners in Minnesota, they came out of woodwork in support of fee increase, they carried it to the legislature and across the finish line. We are solidifying those relationships with those groups, but reaching out to other constituents, like the Latino, Southeast Asian and Somalian communities, primarily in the metropolitan areas; those are the communities we are putting the effort on and our outreach folks are working media so that those folks are getting messages directly on various events and activities to involve those communities. We are capitalizing on water quality initiative and how public lands benefit water quality and that is the constituency we think is out there that ties what we do with our lands to the people of the state, everybody depends on water so is a natural linkage. It brought everyone's attention to what is on the land and happens at your faucet.

*Terry (ND)* – Our relationship with NGOs in North Dakota is strong, but always a few bumps along the way. As several of you mentioned, in-state citizen involvement is becoming less and less, older guys don't have the energy or are dying and don't have the young guys to fill in behind them, a little concerning. It is really difficult to purchase land for conservation purposes, a bureaucracy in place and agriculture has more seats at the table than conservation. The entities that have helped us do that in the past are likely to become less and less viable so we have to find a different way to do that. We manage 220,000 acres in wildlife management in a 43 million-acre state, 90% plus private property and they don't want us to buy any land, which is one of our challenges. Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited are the primary partners, but we work with others who are tremendous partners. *Jim D.* – In Nebraska, traditional fish and wildlife sportsmen organizations went through that process of aging leadership, going from point with a lot of power with legislature and other decision-making bodies, to falling off a cliff. Almost serendipitously some sportsmen saw that and developed another organization and with thoughtfulness worked together with the older group and merged together. That process

happened even though we fought with them from time to time. When it came to a point when we didn't have an entity like that who had power at the legislature it was damaging to our causes, so seeing that rise up again was good. *Terry* – What was the genesis of that new group, was it a contentious issue? *Jim D.* – Yes, some issues where we had some help from NGOs, but couldn't organize the regular sportsmen. That became self-evident to some concerned sportsmen.

*Sara (MO)* – Missouri is like a lot of other states, a good crisis comes in handy to rally the troops. We need to make sure we are relevant in that messaging and it goes back to what Collin O'Mara always calls for, the conservation army. We have spent a lot of time talking about how we continue to increase the membership of our conservation army. Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), the National Wildlife Federation affiliate, continues to be our strongest voice and they do it in a variety of ways. They have a conference once a year where we bring all of the conservation partners together, work through committee structure and have resolutions that our agency and other entities consider. Recruiting the next generation, CFM has been beneficial through conservation leadership in developing interest at the high school age, college age and next generation of conservation leaders and that program continues to grow. Through CFM they have also started a collegiate conservation legacy group with a larger membership where they shoot out, through social media, legislative challenges and other conservation news. Several years ago they also instituted the Outdoor Action Committee (OAK), where CFM brings together state agencies and federal natural resource agencies to the table to establish priorities for the state as a whole. For us as an agency, in 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary forums, not just us are going out to talk, but are identifying key partners in those communities where we are doing those forums so they are telling story of conservation and what it means to that community overall. Having other voices, besides ours, is incredibly important, it can't just be government. We do have an agriculture round table so we bring together those partners that way. Missourians for Monarchs, like everyone else, has been a great opportunity to engage the agricultural community. In recent deer survey partnered with Missouri Farm Bureau, which was critical. We are also trying to expand to new audiences, one way we have done that is through regional planning commissions in multi-county areas who know key community leaders. They were instituted through statute primarily for transportation purposes, but they are looking for ways to engage state government with federal government; having conversations with them to make sure they know what resources are available at the regional level; we would fund them, but they would help us with those conversations. Renewing our relationship with extension service, they have existing relationships, so hoping to leverage there too. We spend a lot of time going out and talking to Chambers of Commerce and at county level as well and private lands division because we are 93% private ownership you have to have the people who know and work with private landowners every day; private land folks understand the value of conservation and what it means to them personally.

*Bill (MI)* – Fair amount of engagement with stakeholder groups, I would recognize Becky Humphries for doing a lot of work on improving transparency and that means working with partners so there are no surprises as issues immerge. Four years ago we did three summits; one was forest/economy summit, one was recreation summit and one was a conservation summit. We brought together folks to talk about the variety of issues that were challenging. On the recreation side was really an opportunity to talk about those infrastructure needs and how to manage that and that led to positive dialog among folks who work in the same space, but hadn't been in a room together and we have several boards and commissions. It was the first time our natural resources commission had been in the same room with the waterways commission to talk about

recreation. Sometimes those things are catalytic in creating opportunities. One of the spaces where there is a lot of potential for increased opportunity is to connect to the business community or main streets and to further engage that dialog to communities and businesses that either, depend on the recreation economy or hunting and fishing economy, those that benefit from it, because they can be the biggest champions for you. They are often times leaders in their communities so elected officials know them well, but we haven't talked about how we best engage them. The same goes for reaching out to diverse communities out there, culturally there is a need to recognize how to best interface with them. The traditional groups that show up at our meetings may not be the right way, we might need to show up at lots of meetings that might not be traditional to us and talk about what we do and why we do what we do. There is always room for greater work to explain what we do in a collaborative way. *Jim D.* – As we were engaging a variety of publics for a new habitat initiative we have going, we noticed that some of the Nebraska communities, especially midsize or smaller, sometimes there is a champion that works with us in conservation. In three cases in Nebraska it is bankers, we talked to those bankers and asked them why they were engaged in conservation, they are engaged in their whole community, they know everybody, so we got a list of bankers in the state and reached out to them, somebody you don't always think about reaching out to.

*Keith (KS)* – In Kansas we don't have an established advisory group, but we rely on constituent groups to address particular issues or come together. I echo what has been said about pollinators or monarch effort, we had our first summit in Kansas and brought such a diverse group together and we may be able to model after that for other issues going forward. We have great relationships with NRCS, FSA and Fish and Wildlife Service private lands programs in the state. Those are important to us so work is going on from playa lakes in the western part of the state to woodland issues on the Missouri River; those kinds of things were integrated into that. One thing we have in our agency, that I don't think anyone else has, is a tourism division who are always reaching out to local communities and that is where a lot of stuff happens. Through those efforts we have integrated hunting and fishing and other kinds of things into this totality of outdoor recreation. The work our tourism group is doing is promoting that kind of concept as well. You have hikers and bikers and pumpkin patches and that kind of stuff, but they are also hearing about hunting and fishing opportunities for outdoor recreation as well. They have been a benefit to us and hunting is big push, particularly when you have good pheasant populations which brings a lot of people into some of those small communities in the west.

*Dale (IA)* – We maintain a great relationship with the Iowa Conservation Alliance that we meet with, 30 plus conservation organizations and we have conservation boards, like mini-DNRs in each county so that helps. Our biggest adversary in Iowa is Farm Bureau. Monarchs has brought people together, like the commodity groups. One of the things Steve talked about is the aging conservation community. One of the things for us is our Senate used to be our strong point, but lost key members over the last couple of years and now the House is strong point for us. We had a license fee increase and it went through the House 92-6 and was killed and never saw the light of day in the Senate. Also, in legislature looking for champions to help; lost a lot of those type of people so rebuilding those relationships.

*Mark (IN)* – In Indiana our relationship with a lot of different partners is good, but mostly on a project-by-project basis. We don't have everybody organized well. I am talking about partners like other state agencies, federal agencies, TNC or beyond hook and bullet groups. We had an organization for 20 plus years, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee, which is representatives of clubs and some national NGOs like PF and NWTF, but those groups are

getting older and are not as active. It has been the same guys for 15-20 years and no one to hand their seat down to. It is not as good or as effective as in the past. We developed our SWAT a couple years ago and put it together with every potential conservation partner we could think of in the state and we hope to continue to organize all of those people to coordinate all conservation work in the state. Looking toward that, which is much broader base than the hook and bullet guys, to come together and work together for conservation in the future.

*Wayne (IL)* – The monarch initiative has brought together a collaborative, diverse group which is statewide and represents everybody, which is a good step in the right direction. Legislatively we have zero senators out of 58 with a farm or conservation background, so educating them is difficult. All of our NGOs are great to work with and would actually like to give us more support, but cutting through bureaucratic parts of the state that will, or won't, allow them to do that is the challenge for me and our agency; overall it is good. We are fighting Asian carp, we found one up north of the barrier and that is in the news and they are evaluating that; CWD continues to slowly move south and keeping that in check is always a challenge. Overall, if we ever get a budget, we will be in great shape.

*Jim D.* – Thanks everyone; heard great personal recollections of how these relationships help us as a state doing conservation work and also how these are going to help us as we move into more regional efforts, like monarch conservation and other things.

*Refreshment Break - Sponsored by D.J. Case & Associates*

### **NASP Works: Summary of 2017 Survey of NASP Students**

*Jeff Rawlinson, NGPC* – Roy Grimes, head of National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), had developed this and was going to give this presentation, but I am the next best thing (*Exhibit 4*). This year NASP conducted a study on participants of the program to better understand what the program is achieving, in terms of support for education, support for the program and millions of kids coming out of program, as well as hunting and shooting sports and archery as a whole. This program has been going on for 16 years, reaching 18 million kids in grades 4-12. What is the impact on state fish and wildlife agencies and how can we benefit over the coming years? In the study, 6,700 kids from states across the country gave feedback on general programmatic information, what program is doing for education, recruitment, retention and reactivation efforts and archery industry as a whole. Who are we talking about in this survey and what does information mean; different stages of participation in those pipelines. Over half of kids in program had no involvement in tournament shooting, some in competition in their own school. Not getting information from hard core archers that are part of NASP, but larger group of kids. NASP is causing millions of kids to engage in their first archery experience, roughly half, another 20% because of friend or relative; 70% have taken part in archery for first time because of NASP, which reinforces idea that in-school programs are important to recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts. R3 and archery as a whole, when asked because of NASP what activities are you already doing: 40% buying archery equipment; 25% have gone hunting or shooting with firearm or archery equipment; 60% participating in some type of outdoor recreational activity outside of hunting, fishing or shooting sports; above national average on all of these categories. Potential impact moving into future, because of NASP what are some things you would like to do: 35% would like to purchase their own archery equipment; 30% would like to participate in other forms of archery, like 3D tournaments or target archery; 33% participate in firearm target shooting; nearly 30% want to take a hunter education class; and the list goes on;

that is telling us something pretty important for state fish and wildlife agencies, NASP not preaching to the choir, but creating a choir; a new choir suggesting to us that they are very interested in some of the program ideas, culture and activities we provide that are near and dear to us. If you can get 30% of kids in any one direction that is significant, but when they are telling you this is what they want to do, it starts to make sense that we build efforts around this new audience that we didn't have 16 years ago. When you look at percentage of kids that don't do these activities that they are interested in and the reasons why; almost half said lack of time, which means they don't prioritize this as much as we would like them to. Things that are easier for them to do, like school sports, they have more time for that. Not as many resources available. Something that should bother us is they want to go hunting, but no one to take them; or not enough money; don't know how to get started; or don't have the skills; those are the types of things we, as state fish and wildlife agencies, can impact. What we are not doing is mating some of those efforts to this group of kids who say they want to do these things; how can we as state agencies build or pair our efforts to this. We are taking this seriously in Nebraska and over the last year have been looking at ideas and programs and starting to implement pieces of that to get kids out doing activities that are near and dear to us. Had discussion a few years ago with Jim on this about what kids were ready for, or not ready for, and before we had data we said bow fishing. Nebraska implemented a survey on our own and learned that over half of the kids in state who had taken NASP, about 35,000 kids a year, were interested in trying bow fishing. This study also suggested nearly 40% of the kids nationally are interested in bow fishing. Archery in the Schools knows that because they are starting a bow fishing in the schools program. There are a lot of things starting to help us to reach our goals with NASP. Take data and try to better understand how to mate existing efforts with kids coming out of this program. Over 18 million kids in last 16 years since the program started; 2.5 million annually in states across the country and if 30% of them tell you they want to go hunting or bow fishing I think it is a good idea to start looking at options so they can do these things. Created significant degree of inquiry, kids are finding state fish and wildlife agencies, getting excited about things we have to offer and interested in programs we have. Look at NASP as part of an important pipeline, moving customers from the start to a place to start down the pipeline where they continue to do these things without our support. Understand that to be the goal of our programs in Nebraska. With a little bit of work we can achieve important things from NASP moving forward. *Jim* – Great job filling in for Roy Grimes; NASP has been a long time silver sponsor for MAFWA.

**Keynote Address: Growing & Cultivating a Conservation Minded Constituency**

*Steve Williams, WMI* – First time I came to this meeting was 22 years ago and there still are some folks hanging on, the survivors. Have a house in Pennsylvania, but in Kansas as well so the Midwest is a big part of my life and probably where I am going to retire. Growing and cultivating a conservation-minded constituency (*Exhibit 5*), going to talk about how we become more relevant to society. A lot of people are interested in conservation and fish and wildlife, but not many people are actively engaged or funding it. I hope to challenge the status quo and what is the service we provide. The Wildlife Management Institute has five focus areas: science reviews; habitat management (developing early successional habitat, especially in northeast); play some role in conservation policy development (more at federal than state level); and host North American wildlife conference (for almost 100 years). We used to be big in publications of texts and books, now out of that. We provide project coordination and administration for states, joint ventures, landscape conservation cooperatives and some federal agencies. And finally, what

I do a lot of service to profession and partners. We are doing our best to provide what the community needs. We live in a changing world. Demographically, the human population in the U.S. has increased dramatically, doubling since I was born, and is increasingly urbanized. Used to be 20% urban, but now 85% of the country, changed dramatically in 30 plus years I have been involved. We are an older population than we used to be and minorities becoming increasing proportion of the U.S. population. A few years ago it was reported that there were more non-white kids entering kindergarten than white kids. The face of the U.S. is changing literally and figuratively. Throughout the country there is increasing cultural diversity. When I was entering the park I noticed it was packed, but saw a lot of different ethnic groups here. Along with that, society has changed dramatically, shifted from production economy to service economy, except in parts of the Midwest. Minority populations are having dramatic affects on government and society. Technology has changed a lot in last 5-20 years and few of us can predict where that is going to go. All of those things add up to a detachment from nature, maybe 4-5 generations detached from when families were living in rural areas and farmed or ranched. We are seeing that in states we think of as rural states; surprised to learn that Kansas really is urban state if you look at percentage of population. There have been books written about nature deficiency disorder, which we, as conservationists, need to consider when we deliver our programs. Question I pose, is conservation relevant to society today? If you look at surveys, people are interested in fish and wildlife, but most people not engaged other than hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers. I propose three measure of relevancy I want you to consider: funding; participation rate; outdoor/indoor activity proportionate. Federal discretionary funding, if relevant to the public there will be funding available to get your job done; if relevant would expect participation rate to at least remain stable or climb; and if conservation was relevant you would expect kids and adults to spend time outdoors in proportion to time spent indoors. In looking at graph on federal discretionary spending, it peaked in the 1980s, back when the hippies were around there is a lot of money spent on funding for environmental issues and that has declined dramatically, about one to two percent, all indications show that is going to continue to decline. In terms of participation, decline from mid-1970s until today; through efforts of folks like Jeff, who just gave a talk, and the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports, we are seeing uptick in participation, but again working hard at something that if it was really relevant to people I don't know that we would have to work that hard to recruit, retain and reactivate. Listened to conversations today in hot topics and everyone mentioned funding as an issue so you don't have the resources you need. Participation, a number of people talked about efforts to deal with that. Let's look at what we are dealing with, in terms of generations coming up. Two quick studies, The Nature Conservancy did a national survey of 13-18 year olds nationwide, 80% are uncomfortable to be in nature, 62% said no way to get there, 61% no natural areas in their area to visit. That is something we need to think about as a responsibility as a conservation agency. Obviously, Nebraska has provided time and money to provide natural areas for their residents. The second survey is the Kaiser Family Foundation of 8-18 year old kids; from 1981-1997 outside unstructured play was down 50%, in less than two decades; on average kids spend 30 minutes of outside play a day and seven hours in front of electronic screen. It wasn't like that for us because we didn't have electronic screens when we were kids. That is clientele and customer base we need to be thinking about. I ask you to think about these questions; lack of necessary funding to get the job done, funding for federal agencies has declined dramatically since the 1970s, there are four states that have state general fund support (Missouri, Arkansas, Virginia and Minnesota), whether lottery or percentage of a sales tax, which leaves 46 states out. Survey

after survey says that the public doesn't know the name of your agency, much less what you do and some think you are a federal agency. Things are happening in Congress that cements my decision that we are not as relevant as we need, should, or could be to the public. Have we adapted to this changing world? I am no expert, but I have worked for three different state agencies and I am familiar with a bunch of other ones and they are on a traditional agency structure organizational chart. Fairly traditional agencies were structured 40-60 years ago. If your agency was structured like this 40 years ago to deal with issues that occurred in society 40 years ago, you are dealing with a completely different set of customers today. Most agencies have biologists, geneticists, veterinarians and we know about habitat management, how to propagate things and do I&E. That is how you look at who you are going to hire to staff up. That is a function of how we define relevancy. We think we are relevant if we are managing wildlife populations, controlling overabundant populations, protecting sensitive species, have lots of folks hunting or fishing, and habitat management on private and public land, and it is. My thesis is, society defines relevancy in a different way. Society cares a lot about air and water quality and a whole list of things. It is not that you are not benefiting what society thinks is relevant right now, but the problem is we talk about, how many bucks per square mile, how many ducks are produced per wetland acre, how many trout per mile of stream, how many walleye eggs we propagate, etc. and that is what we are talking about inside the profession and all we talk about to the public. Why would you care, if you lived in New York City or Omaha, Nebraska, how many sage grouse are in western Nebraska? You probably wouldn't care at all. If we start talking in terms of the impact on quality and quantity of water, opportunities for outdoor recreation, public health benefits of open space; if we show how much we care about all wildlife--these things resonate with society. There is a vast array of science studies that indicate involvement with nature and engagement in the outdoors provides physical and mental health benefits. Mothers and fathers may not care about ducks, but care about the impact wetlands have on recharging ground water and filtering water and things like that. You can continue what you are doing, but frame it differently for the public because you are providing values. Dave Case and Mark Duda were on the phone as part of a discussion and they were going through decades of social research and I pulled out a few nuggets I thought were important. Overall, people care about ecological values of nature more than recreational values, actually care about it, but when you get them to prioritize it is not top of the list. What the public wants to know about fish and wildlife agencies is, are you taking care of all of the resources, you clearly are, but the public is not aware of that. They want to know, do we really care about the resources; you can craft messages and programs to let them know you care about fish and wildlife and are taking care and managing them. Water resources are a priority. Jim, what you passed in Minnesota was largely based on quality of water and that is what sold folks and we can take advantage of that. Public supports regulated hunting so be proud of our heritage, but acceptance and support depends on what species, the motive and method used; need to have better understanding of that. There are numerous studies out there on public health benefits to doing things outside and physical and mental well being. Research also shows that kids exposed to outdoors at young age, particularly with other kids, develop socially better than kids who are not. Not seeing examples of how we are using that information to direct our programs. That sets up where we are with the Blue Ribbon Panel. Fortunate to be on the panel, with other folks in this room, but we are talking about what is the right funding vehicle and how are we are going to do that. Why did we have to have a Panel to begin with, if relevant to the public we would have sustainable funding and wouldn't be in the mess we were are in. The first recommendation dealt with funding and Panel decided the second recommendation

should be, how we become more relevant to society. There is a committee of Blue Ribbon Panel that involves others that are tasked with trying to provide recommendations and options that state agencies may want to consider moving forward. The work was, in large part, an effort of the late Steven Kellert, a godfather of human dimensions conservation work who passed away earlier this year and was my co-chair; that and some other things got us late coming out of the chute. What some of us think on the Panel is we look at where we are traditionally, we think about items listed on left side and should be thinking about items on right (from slide); how do we become more relevant. I showed you slide of typical ecological/biological disciplines we are comfortable with, but a lot of other academic disciplines that deal with understanding that we could bring to bear to help us structure agencies or more importantly deliver the programs the public is looking for on what public is looking for. We have had experts in some of these disciplines explain to us how we could take their expertise and incorporate that into programs. What you do has impacts on public health, business and industry; talked about economics involved and business models for your agencies, education and childhood development. Start framing what you are doing, in terms of these other disciplines, outside of biology to become more relevant to society. Suggest that in the future, have segment of organizational chart with human dimension unit that deals with public surveys and analysis and how to use social media, marketing, with someone smart enough in resource economics to put dollar value on what you do, including recruitment and retention; a group that can help your agency be culturally relevant to the folks in your population. When I was in Kansas we had an issue; southwest Kansas is biggest meat processing area in the world, and there were large Hispanic and Vietnamese populations and we had a management team meeting and got to discussing law enforcement issues in that area with immigrants. As we talked about it somebody asked if we had regulations written in Spanish or Vietnamese; we expect folks to follow regulations when they can't even read them; we were not culturally relevant, but there are people who can help us along the way. A few years ago at a North American I had a Hispanic advertizing group talk at the meeting and they said it much better than I can; but culture relevancy is going to be increasingly important in all kinds of activities. How do we respond: we can keep doing things the way we have; we should be looking at nature based activities. Started in agency with just fish and wildlife, then wildlife only, and when came to Kansas they had parks also and I found it fulfilling because there is a different culture there. Take a look at your state park systems and see what they are doing to attract folks. Communicate through social media and going where people are. Where we are on the Blue Ribbon Panel, Tony Wasley, Nevada director, is co-chairing this and we are about to reengage the rest of the committee and what we have laid out is a process. One is we start defining what are relevant societal disciplines outside of conservation profession currently and compile and synthesize some of that literature and develop business models you can consider at state level and whether it fits within your agency culture and provide training modules to help you and your staff get fully engaged in these impacts. We hope we will have business models for you to consider that will have a menu of options to provide a description of value proposition, for instance if you hire human dimensions folks. I would like for us to be able to provide you value proposition, customers or public that person would help you address, even develop a position description. We are gathering position descriptions from state agencies that have human dimensions folks for you to consider. We will define the goals, objectives and outcomes and communication plans for those people with expertise that might fit within an agency and try to give you an idea of how what that return on investment is. You are going to have to convince somebody, your board, your commission, your legislature or your governor so we hope to

package this all together and make it as easy as possible should you decide to make that change in your agency. We need to acquire new social knowledge and skill sets, if you don't have human dimensions folks think about it and talk about it with other states that do and I think you will see they recognize the benefits. We need to respond to the needs and interests of all the public, not just hunters and anglers. Develop programs to interest broad constituency; see it right here at Mahoney State Park where you see so many different activities and you are drawing all kinds of ethnic groups, kids and all generations; not that everyone can have a park like this, but that is the idea you need to be thinking about. Take programs to where people live, USFWS has their urban refuge program, 85% of people live somewhere else and if you are not going to address them they won't be supportive. Develop messages to reflect values of the public; goes back to clean air and water, etc. Explain the decisions you are making in terms of what is the impact now and what is impact on future generations. Those of you who have followed any of the writings on wildlife governance principles, this tracks that and we are involved in providing that training to agencies and associations that are interested, it is the way forward. If you follow this cycle, be aware of how the world is changing; incorporate other disciplines that we don't have expertise into agency decisions; modify and integrate what the public you are dealing with looks like; and define what you do to your residents and that definition should talk about quality of life and mental and health benefits; with public recognition engagement and support; then on cycle to provide sustainable funding at appropriate levels. Look where we are today and think about what we aspire to be in the future. We can't do it alone and can't just do it with sportsmen and women, however how important they are to us, we have to reach out for broader constituency and a lot of it can be done by talking about what you are doing currently in a way people care about. *Jim D.* – Steve has been a practicing biologist, a program leader, state director, head of USFWS and now with WMI and his perspective is something all of us value greatly. He has done a great job of capturing, not just something we should ponder, but something we better get busy doing. If started doing it we better go farther on that chart. I have seen that circle chart two times, but need copy, and need to show to commissioners and constituency. *Steve W.* – Happy to share it, I can send it to you, Sheila or whoever. This is hard to get your head around, but if we can put together a simple cookbook menu for everyone, you may look at it and decide not to use part of it; we would like to have it so step-by-step and show experts you can contact to change your agency to be more responsive. *Tony* – Interesting trying to engage other publics. One of the biggest challenges, speak from experience because over two decades ago a previous director hired a human dimensions specialist for our agency; I was a field biologist at the time and wondered what we were doing and I didn't understand, the biggest challenge is internally, we have to try and convince our own staff of that. It took me awhile to figure out how valuable that position was and we have since expanded into some other human dimension areas. *Steve W.* – Good point, if successful as part of Blue Ribbon Panel effort, we will provide those resources to you so that you can explain to your staff why this is important, how they fit in with agency, how you can better connect with public. I hope we will provide those references and those kinds of information that will help you as leaders to get in front of your troops and explain why hiring someone who knows about demographic trends in humans; we are already good at following trends in deer and fish. For instance, what percentage of population of "X" state is American Chinese? What programs do you have to attract them? We know all about quail and other wildlife, but need to look at humans. *Dale* – At one time agency staff were looked at as experts, now when you talk about social media, if you don't have TV reality show or selling product, they have tools to do that they can do it better than us. *Sara* –

The Storytelling part of that is critically important as you mentioned messages and who is delivering the message is critically important; we skew the scientific facts that will not resonate with the public. The quality of life, the social science piece of that is having experts; difficult for state agencies that don't have funds when you talk about adding communications experts which are the first to be cut in budgets if legislature has anything to do with it. But it is not only human dimensions/social sciences, but ability to translate that in messages that resonate, that connect and tell the story effectively to the general public. *Steve W.* – Absolutely and I know what you are talking about because I have been there. For instance, trying to get fee increase because our fee fund is declining, what are we going to do; we are not connecting with the public so decide to cut out communications that will save us some money; then say, why can't we get a license fee increase, I don't understand why the public doesn't get it; then decide to stop the magazine because that costs too much money, but we wouldn't get rid of a deer biologist or a law enforcement officer. You have all seen it, we need to recalibrate. *Jim D.* – You spurred a lot of thought in different arenas. We hired human dimensions people, but it is not enough manpower to get done what we really need to get done. It brings to mind, in all of the arenas you are talking about, if we are going to message about air quality or water quality or do human dimensions it brings out whole new set of partnerships we need to develop because we won't be able to have enough personnel; need to partner with universities, partner with water quality agency and others to get the job done. *Steve W.* – It is a whole new paradigm.

*Jim D.* – Have directors gather for group photo.

### *Director Group Photo*

*Awards Luncheon – Sponsored by Ducks Unlimited and Canadian North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Partners*

***Jim Douglas*** – Short presentations from David and Dean, then Awards Committee Chairman Keith Sexson will present the awards. We want to thank Ducks Unlimited and Canadian Wildlife Partners for all they do.

***David Brakhage, DU and Dean Smith, Canadian NAWMP*** – made remarks.

***Keith Sexson, Awards Committee Chairman, Facilitator*** – Introduced award winners and presented awards to state representative if winners were not present..

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – Jerrod Alley, Kentucky; award accepted by Jerrod Alley.

Wildlife Biologist of the Year – Max Alleger, Missouri; award accepted by Max Alleger

Fisheries Biologist of the Year – Mark Flammang, Iowa; award accepted by Mark Flammang.

Spirit of the Shack – Thomas Draper, Missouri; award accepted by Tom Draper.

Excellence in Conservation – Joe Caudell and Indiana Bovine TB Team; award accepted by Mark Reiter.

Sagamore: None

Special Recognition – Kelley Myers; accepted by Kelley Myers.

Past President's Award will be presented to Jim Douglas, Nebraska at business meeting on Wednesday.

President's Award; given by President Douglas – Audubon Nebraska with special recognition to Marian Langan, accepted by Marian's daughter, Corrinne Kolm and Bill Taddicken, Director of the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary.

### **Blue Ribbon Panel Update**

*Nick Wiley, AFWA President and Florida Fish & Wildlife Director* – Start with Blue Ribbon Panel and our follow through on the recommendations, our highest priority. We have created brand for what that initiative is as we take ball from recommendation to delivery. Recognize Becky Humphries and Steve Williams who both served on the Panel and are still involved, Becky is working on committees and Steve is helping on the relevancy piece. Two main recommendations came out of that; first, get the money to stabilize and fulfill our funding needs and second was the relevancy. Funding is where I will focus most of the update. The new brand is Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife; we had to give it a name and have transitioned to that (*Handout – Exhibit 6*). We realized, as we were working through transition, that we needed a governance system so we created a steering committee made up of committee chairs from the Blue Ribbon Panel, director Carter Smith, Bob Ziehmer from Bass Pro Shops representing Johnny Morris, Jeff Graham, Colin O'Meara, Becky Humphries, Connie Parker, Steve Williams Jim Falstick and Tony Wasley to help make decisions moving forward. The legislative piece of this is the money; looking to file new bill by July 18 or 19, there is a legislative breakfast that is coordinated through the Congressional Sportsman Foundation where we want to make a big deal out this. Congressman Young from Alaska will be champion on this bill and Jeff Crane has done a lot of work in that regard. Congressman Debbie Dingle from Michigan also offered to support. They helped us last year by dropping the original bill. We have done a lot of work cleaning the bill up, were some wrinkles like eligibility for law enforcement, how the money would flow and match monies. The bill is ready to go, but working to get it dropped. Senator Barrasso with Environmental Public Works Committee and his staff will be helpful in getting something moving in the Senate. It has taken awhile to get to this point and some people are getting impatient, but our homework is done and will see more activity starting this summer. Dropping the bill gives more leverage and traction to kick off corporate fundraising and support to make this a full blown campaign. If we are successful, \$1.3 billion will be spread out across our states, which we need and would help us build back to where we need to be. Your staff at your agencies will be an important part of this working with partners. We built a planning tool kit, thanks to Carter Smith and his team in Texas working with Sean Saville, our campaign manager. The tool kit will lay out what you can do in your state to help push this campaign forward. A lot going on and see good things moving forward. This branding, the Alliance, we will be doing more to move that forward; working with a PR firm out of Louisiana and Texas who are doing a first rate marketing and communications job and PR plan. *Jim D.* – As we know political process sometimes takes shorter, or longer, time than we predict; we want to shine light on this, but we don't want to outrun our headlights. What should we as states and state partners be doing? *Nick* – We are going to get you an outline soon, a good planning document to show you how this is staging and the schedule and timelines. Right now, be thinking about getting grassroots awareness in your state where you get staff and partners to help; build awareness for what this campaign is all about and what we are asking for, how the money would be used, what

a benefit for conservation this would be; a game changer; a once in a lifetime opportunity like when they were contemplating federal aid, Pittman/Robinson. Next planning document will lay out the timelines and how we are going to stage all of the pieces. One of our other parties was working closely through this transition in administration at the federal level and AFWA and our team has been there and requesting meetings; some frustration of pace and getting leadership nailed down at national level and getting people nominated and confirmed. We were really pleased to see Greg Sheehan be brought in and appointed as principle deputy director at USFWS; he hit the ground running last week and we co-hosted a reception with Ducks Unlimited for him last Wednesday evening. A lot of new faces with the Department of Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but many who have been there that we have good friendships and relationships with. Things are starting to happen and will take a few months to flesh out the leadership roster so we will see some changes going forward in that regard. Trying to stay on top of that and make sure they know that our Association and our states want to have a voice. Had a cool event with Secretary Zinke a week and a half ago in New Hampshire at a Bass Pro Shop to celebrate federal aid funding and he presented a \$1.1 billion check to five state directors we had there. He is still learning and he gave a nice talk about how important our partnerships are and it gave him a chance to see how we all fit together and how important federal aid is. We made sure he understood that federal aid is money that comes from the sportsmen and industry to reiterate and reaffirm that. He is hosting an event to reaffirm how important our priorities are. He seems open and receptive, so we will see. You all received ESA modernization red line language because the Executive Committee, back in December, asked staff and a team to come together with ideas for what would change if we wanted to deliver on guiding principles that we developed. When you start digging into what you might change in the Act, it is not so easy; urge you to look at that and get us some feedback, heard from nine states so far. Do you really want AFWA as leading role in influencing ESA, AFWA staff wants to deliver what you want them to, but we need your help and feedback. Do we want a stronger seat at the table or a stronger role as a state agency; and what does that look like. We need your help framing that up because we hear the Senate may be framing up some language. If we don't get more feedback it will handcuff what we can do effectively. If we don't seize this moment I don't see time in near future where we will have a chance to influence ESA. There is a lot of rhetoric flying around about what they might, or might not do. Every year we celebrate National Hunting and Fishing Day, September 23; we have been asked by the honorary chairman, Richard Childress, to help out with that this year. He has recognized that R3 mentoring is a big deal that we should be highlighting, pushing and promoting; a lot of states are already creating a lot of action and buzz on that. Richard wants to leverage National Hunting and Fishing Day as a challenge to try to get hunters and anglers across the nation to pledge and take someone under their wing and teach them how to hunt and fish. We are working with him and some other folks that know how to do PR and putting together a package and tool kit that you will all have access to help push through your communication media to get the word out. Also, we want to pull together a linkage through National Hunting and Fishing Day website that links back to any mentoring R3-type programs within your states.

*Jim D.* – Welcome Noreen Walsh, USFWS Region 6, a great partner with many states in our conservation endeavors; this is the second time she has been here at MAFWA meeting.

## **The State of Youth Culture**

*Clint Runge, Managing Director of Arch Rival* – Arch Rival is a creative agency with expertise in youth culture; we help brands attract and engage young adults. We have two types of clients; cool clients like Red Bull and Adidas, brands people know and love. Tastes change and generations change and what they are asking for from brands change, but if companies aren't smart, it changes right under their fingertips. We help them stay relevant. We have a second type of client; the big brand that has been so successful for a long time that simply missed this change; or might be a new brand, we do a ton of work for Yeti that has a great new product, but needs to enter new markets before competitors hit them. In both cases, our job is to stir conversation and get buzz to make them more relevant with new audiences. Regardless of who we work for there is consistent thread of how do we tap into the elusive youth culture; everybody is challenged with this, not just you. Share ideas we use to put marketing plan we use with other companies so you can use them with yours. Start talking about youth generations, generational marketing gets to be a fuzzy subject. You have probably heard of Millennials, Gen Z or Gen Y, all different types of generations. Anyone over 52 would be in Boomer Generation, Millennials are 23-35; or 22 or younger are Gen Z. There are certain things you can track across a generation that are generally true, not everybody is exactly the same, but when you grow up in America there are things that have happened in cultures. The difference, for example, between Gen X and Millennials is the advent of digital technology. We all agree technology has radically changed our culture. The difference between Millennials and Gen Z is those born around 9/11 where things changed in America, if you were 5-6 at that time you are part of Gen Z. I will spend most of my time talking about older Gen Z and younger Millennials in college. High stakes identity crisis happening to young adults today, something you should be aware of because you can tap into this. Gen Xers are the parents of Gen Z and Gen Xers grew up with idea they either had to conform to society, or rebel against it. Those who rebelled became purveyors of subcounter-culture youth. They want to see that in their kids; Gen Xers looking at their kids as not just status, but homage to their own cool factor; they are dressing up their kids in cool t-shirts, cool baby gear, taking them to beekeeping camps and trying to come up with as many weird things as possible so the kids grow up cool as a reflection of them. Not saying that is bad for Gen Xers, just part of who they are, but their kids become a piece of that. The interest they put in their kids starts right there with Gen Xer parents. Success is everything to every generation, but the way we define success radically changes depending on who you are talking to. If I talk to my father, for example, he would say, for Boomer generation, the idea of stability and loyalty would reflect success in his mind. If I talk to Gen Xer like myself, it is the collection of things; I want a man cave, I want a nice car, I want that really good career, etc., that is the demonstration of success for me. If you talk to Millennials they will tell you it is not collection of things, it is the collection of relationships, the more people I know and the quality of those relationships become meaningful for that audience. The Gen Z for teens today changes again, it is about the collection of achievements, how much am I accomplishing and how well am I doing it; how happy am I with all of these achievements; if we asked them what it means to be successful, 86% would check the box that says feeling accomplished; that would be on the low end for my father. It changes radically throughout generations. If you are in a position of power, the decisions you make targeting young adults, based on the way you grew up or the way you see the world, you are missing what is happening underneath your footsteps. If I share nothing else with you today you could see that what is driving generations to participate in our programs/events/brands is different than what has driven yourself. You might start to change the way you talk about them.

If you know teenagers today, if in a conversation with one, you might walk away from conversation and say, that kid/teen is remarkably mature for their age, they seem older than they are and highly responsible; it is the whole generation, if your drive to be successful is based on achievements, they picked up early on that they had to go do it, because the world is not going to hand it to them; they are achievers or go getters. From day one they have been trying to forge their own path and trying to make their way and they are good at it. When I went through the education system we were given a textbook and were told that everything we ever needed to know about a particular subject was in the book and we accepted that. Today education is much different, there is much more knowledge than what is in one textbook, there is Google and the internet; teachers have had to change how they educate and it becomes less about the knowledge retained by the professor or teacher to give to their students, and becomes more about how to help you filter what is out there, how to separate the truth from the noise. The teens themselves don't need the teacher to do it, they can do it themselves. If they want to learn about a new dance move, or about a new subject, they can find it online, they don't need the teacher anymore, but need the person to come along side them to make sense of it, still valuable role for education, but the way education is happening has dramatically changed. They are more self-starters. If they want to know how to fix the toilet they will watch a video on the internet and figure out how to fix the toilet. If they want to learn about a new subject that interests them, say stars, they will download an app that will teach them everything about stars. They don't need the same people the way they used to, they can go do it themselves, that is the way they have grown up so they don't know any other way. It is leading to this generation being very entrepreneurial in fact, 72% of them would tell you that they want to start a business. They either have an idea that completely disrupts a business that is currently going on, or they want to follow through with that; they have great ideas that change the game. Social media started around 2005, when Facebook really started to become mainstream and for the youngest side of our generation would now be around 12 years old; literally born with social media, born social means their parents, Gen Xers or older Millennials or Boomers, means we have been posting about this child since day one; we shared everything they have done on social media and they have grown up knowing nothing else. We don't know the full impact of being born social, but we do know that they look at social media and see entire history of what people have thought or said about them. We didn't have that kind of pressure. Immense pressure because they don't know if that is who they are, we all change over time; teenagers go through identity crisis. Not only were they born social, but grown up digital which means they have access to technology to radically shape their personalities as they have gone through this. So if they want to become somebody new they have digital technology that allows them to do that. A mind warp, I can change who I am using technology and social media to put a new brand of myself out there. This identity crisis, especially in teenage years, is a brewing mess and as we spend time talking to them they are trying to figure out who they are in this world, which leaves this idea of individuality. Because so much is being posted on social media and you are a teen trying to figure out how to stand out in a crowd, not just people at my school, but literally everybody, how do you stand out from that. You are trying to make your way, you are a self-starter, you want to become somebody, but how do you do that; so much pressure from that. If you are a teenager trying to figure out how you stand out in the world, crazy looking shoes seems like a good idea and I can become somebody because identity wrapped around shoes. Kanye West is a collaboration we do with Adidas quite a bit, if you are young, there are lines around the block for these shoes. If Kanye West is so ridiculous how come teenagers are willing to stand in line for his shoes; if there is one person

that doesn't care what you think, a person forging their own path it is Kanye West, and when kids buy his shoes that stands for something, it means you are also forming your own path and you are not going to let the traditional ways of life impact you. This is what teens are after, trying to find their own way and if they can do that in a shoe they will. They can do this in other ways and this includes your brand and programs you offer, they will gravitate towards it as well, I promise. Retail is even changing, you can text Stephan, share your social channels with him, Stephan will check you out and if you are cool enough then he will send you stuff randomly via text that may be something you want to wear, like a t-shirt; the point is they don't want to go down to Gap and pick a shirt because everybody is going to Gap, they would rather have a shirt that only 50 in the world were made and they were selected to be one recipient of 50 who actually get this shirt; that is worth a lot of money. Stats shows 62% of teens prefer unknown brands rather than known brands, they want individuality. Oddly normal is a term we use, if searching for identity in today's world it is pretty confusing; if you go on Facebook and select your gender there are 71 different choices; we grew up in binary world it was male/female, black/white, gay/straight, married/divorces, etc. Today's world is not that way there are all sorts and shades in between. When you are searching for identity and trying to figure out who you are you can imagine the stress in trying to figure out a simple question like gender and its confusing to them. I am just presenting the case of the reality of the world today, a debate that should be had. In searching for selfhood in a time where anything goes. There is a new pressure, for Gen Xers and older generations as well, you grew up wanting to be part of the mainstream; if you colored outside the lines you got made fun of; but now that has flipped, because you are searching for identity and part of the mainstream that is uncool. Everyone is searching for something that is oddly normal or different. What do you have that no one else has, or what skill do you have that no one else does; what makes you special. There is actually a completely new peer pressure that teens have that we didn't have; peer pressure to not fit in. Isaac is a known map maker of known terrorist zones of war maps and when CNN goes to use a map they use Isaac, who is 18 years old, his maps are default expertise. Isaac has never been to the Middle East, he has never learned the language, he learned everything through YouTube and Google searches, but he is the default expert on geography of terrorist zones. He's got something no one else does that makes him really interesting. Before, if Isaac wanted to tout this as being special map maker he probably would have gotten made fun of, a weirdo; but today he is able to find a whole generation of weirdoes like him. Another stat, 63% of Gen Zs say they prefer to be weird and stand out rather than popular and fit in and 70% say it is normal to be radical. Finding special things, like map making, the weird things teens are doing, makes them very interesting. The idea of borderless is one I like to talk about. When I talk to my dad about borders he instantly thinks of geography and that is natural, my dad was in the war and literally defines where one culture starts and another stops; he had friends who died paying for borders. Today's generations grew up with a different sense of borders, they grew up playing Xbox with people from all over the world; online right now with friends they have never met, or Google search any part of the world and see what it is like to be there; don't have the same sense of the world that we grew up in and are borderless in that way. I don't mean this in a political way, but the reason I tell you that is their ability to cross any kind of border, not just physically, is there and they don't have same restrictions we put on ourselves. If somebody says they are going to treat one group of people differently than another or ask people to act in a certain way that is instantly weird, not anything that they grew up with and they don't understand how to process that. The advantage you have here is you can start presenting wilderness, parks or hunting or fishing or

whatever, as something that is open to them; they won't see a border and will be now willing to try it, they will jump right in and get after it if presented in the right way. Even if they didn't have parents who traditionally are the ones that pass these ideals of outdoor life along they are now willing to try it because it looks different and is different, an interesting concept. The reason they will be supportive of this is through digital tribes. If I am heavily into map making there is probably nobody in my campus or school that does that, but the people who are, a handful of people who are passionate about maps, can be found online, we call them digital tribes. When we do our marketing programs we are trying to get into digital tribes, their support network of virtual friends, where you can be weird doing maps, be awesome at it and geek out on certain subjects. There is a digital tribe for every little weird thing you can come up with; and we want to get into those tribes to insert our brands, programs and messages and if they accept that we will get a lot of passionate followers. Third culture kids is not a new term. Traditionally used to talk about a child who was raised with two cultures present in the family household; dad from one and mother from another country, or could be missionary kids growing up in another country when parents are born in U.S., or people grew up in the army. That is what it traditionally meant. There are a lot of third culture kids, but there is something bigger brewing around third culture kids that presents a tremendous opportunity. It is teens who are straddling different value systems. For example, if Gen Xer grew up with movies that placed jocks against the nerds and there was no in between and you had to identify your personality. A lot of the movies take two people, a rich person and a poor person and put them together in a binary world and chaos ensues and they work it out and that is the movie. This binary world no longer exists in that way, the quarterback can also lead the robotics team in his high school, he is both the jock and the nerd (skate boarder girls in Pakistan, Faithful LGBT taking religion and gay rights and putting them together). It is not just him it is all of these responsible teens all doing something that is breaking the norm, from traditional ways we would split people, not only in one category. They are borderless and don't see the world in the same way. In the past could get scholarships on athletics (jock) or SAT scores (nerd); Taco Bell offers scholarships on other things, like art and creative people and changing life in other ways. Talk about couple of segments of youth generation that might be relevant to you; first is sports, if you have sons or daughters or grandkids, right now a lot of pressure in sports to excel and the only way to do that is to have singular focus. You probably grew up playing many sports and that was advantageous in different ways. Today if you want to be good at something you have to hyper-specialize early on, so kids as young as 10 are having to decide, am I going to be a basketball player or soccer player or whatever, they are having to choose early on. So 73% of Gen Zs say they prefer pursuing one sport deeply rather than a lot of sports superficially and this has an interesting impact on you. I don't think they are using all of their time that way, opening the rest of their time up for other things like video gaming or hobbies and this is a great opportunity for you to step into that. Talk about moneyball; even athletes that are pursuing one sport deeply, used to have to make it to the MBA or professional sports league to be famous, but now high school athletes are the new stars. They have their own platforms and social media, some high school athletes have over a million followers and are already a star and with that comes fame and money. They all believe now that they can be famous, they don't need anybody to do that they can do it themselves, the tools are all there. It has led to a lot of burn out, the pressure to perform at this level, at such a young age and the amount of time they are putting into something like gymnastics is burning these kids out; 27% of teen athletes quit because of burn out; they are good, but don't want to do it anymore. Drop and give me Zen; the sports world is realizing it is beyond just physical training they have

to have mental and emotional training as well. Burn out is happening so much they are trying to figure out how to bring peace to all of this and how to get kids out to relax; tough for a teenager today. There is a great interest for people to figure this out; everything from relaxation drinks, sleep is the new nutrition, highly responsible things we never would have done. Headspace is a gym membership for your mind, an app you can download which will give you tips and techniques throughout the day to bring Zen into your life. A link to startup called Powderhook actually helps people find ways to find mentors to get kids outdoors and has a lot of potential. There is a lot of interest in this and so much room for you guys to play here; there is an interest in solving the sports dilemma; they want to be active and do things, but they don't want the pressure built around it. You have potential to provide some interesting outlets for them. The big squeeze happens then, all of this hyper-specialization means there is a drop in organized sports (basketball, football, baseball), 83% in last five years. This doesn't say kids are playing sports less, still 75%, but instead of playing two sports only playing one, so natural drop in participation. About 75% of students want to play in the next level in college and only 30% can, just not enough room for everybody; so people have to drop out, it is only natural. Participation in youth sports has declined over the last five years; it is not just three big sports, but also soccer, track and field, softball, field hockey, volleyball, wrestling, all of these are seeing less kids participating as they feel the pressure to hyper-specialize. I don't know what that really means for your industry, but see huge opportunity; these kids need something to help balance this out. They are not going to spend time investing in another sport because not good enough to do anything with it, but here we have an opportunity to interest those kids. Specialized studios are popping up, like fitness and wellness, that everybody can be a part of and collaborative in a lot of ways. You see a lot of studios having to reinvent themselves, even a spin class is using technology to attract adults. We just did a project for Red Bull, video shows taking something boring like spin class and using technology to gamify it (spinning to light up lights) to create a new audience. This is something you could relish in, bring in technology; those hundred doing that class it helped bring an identity to them as an athlete or someone in the fitness world. What do you provide and how do create great content around those programs that they can share and help build their identity on social media. A new digital view; won't be able to go into how important digital and social media are for teens, college students and 20 something's today; assume you know that to be true. Want to share where we are headed next with this; as everyone joins social media you are acquiring new friends, basically everyone you have ever met in your life and this led to new pressure to stay in touch with all of these people, which means I am scrolling through and looking at their posts and added pressure that I need to have stuff to share with other people. Social media is getting to the point that the crowd is so big you can't just share anything anymore, pressure to post best photo possible, so spending time to filter photos to share. Adds up to a lot of wasted time, but such pressure to pay everyone back, "debt relationship"; a debt they owe to their followers; so you see people scrolling through their feeds trying to figure out how to repay the debt, and paying it with their time. With Millennials this is a much bigger pressure, with Gen Z teens there is an awakening, and they are starting to realize they don't need to spend as much time on their device and are being more responsible with it. Social media has become so important to 20 something's that they are sleeping with their technology, it is the last thing they do, check social media and text before they go to bed and the first thing when they wake up. The phone is in bed with them and they are literally sleeping with technology; that is how important it is to them; 95% sleep within arm's reach of the device, 47% miss sleep to engage on the device. 63% check phone messages without alert, every 15 minutes

even if not notified, just checking to see if they missed something. Now Gen Z is saying they see a lot of downside to that and digital detox going on; familiar with digital detox camps and programs where no phones or digital technology are allowed; there are hotels popping up where you can't use your phone inside them and some restaurants that make everyone put their phones in the middle of the table and actually a game played where the first one who checks their phone has to pay for everyone else's meal. People are looking for ways to disconnect, still need to be a part of it because it is their identity crisis, but looking for opportunities to disconnect; and you have some of that power. Looking for fresh approach on life; Australian model went out and debunked myth, our curreted view that social media is actual real life. Such a real interest in real life right now, kitchen campaign showed nice plate of muffins, then showed real world going on around it; brilliant, and connects people that have that pressure of burn out. The new economy is experiences, cool, first-to-do and meaningful experiences are getting social cred and you have a lot to offer in this realm; things that are different than what everyone else is doing and checks all the boxes for them. A cool campaign for Georgia, ten millionth tourist, as they landed they gave incredible experience, they got to meet president of Georgia, the country, and basically showed them everything. New experiences are what matters most. Australia has a problem with erosion on the beaches so a brand came up with a campaign to take glass bottles and grind them up into sand, tapping into environmental need and making people feel good about drinking their beer. Think of all the stuff you could be doing. There is a big interest in nature in the world, but different than how we engage nature, it is utilizing technology to their advantage; they want to go get lost but have a map of where they were, want incredible moment, but want to be able to share it right away as well. They want to capture it, but be there at the same time. It is a dilemma, interest in seeing nature, but with technology; it is not an either/or scenario. Utilizing what they know, they have grown up digital; everything that has ever made the world better to them has somehow had technology involved, so natural that if they explore nature, they also want technology at their side. It is not an enemy, it is something you can utilize. Content and messaging really resonates with people. *Jim D.* – Thought provoking for all of us. It makes us wonder, as slow as we move sometimes, if we are going to try and retrench in any way with our programs or events with our messaging; if we can move fast enough or do we know enough about next generation to start now on that. It brings to mind, Archery in the Schools Program, it is still cool because still minority of kids doing it, but what if the tribe gets too big and there needs to be something else cool; can we continue to refresh it and add coolness to it as we move forward.

### **Conservation Communications and Social Outreach**

*Christy Firestone, Communication Director, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission* (PowerPoint – Exhibit 7) – Within our communications team, we have three sections, we cover all marketing and advertising; public relations and outreach; and education including skills workshops, RDR and human dimensions. Listening to talks this morning there are a lot of diverse challenges and diverse stakeholders, between hunters, anglers, media and elected officials, but exciting time and we have great opportunities in front of us. Through communications we can build support and fulfill our missions. We have three goals within our communications plan: work to promote agency initiatives and programs to meet objectives through planning, marketing and public relations; work to motivate target audiences to participate in outdoor recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife viewing and visiting state park and recreation areas; and work to increase our key audiences

understanding in our mission, priorities and benefits we provide to the public and the resources we manage. There are multiple ways to accomplish this, through communications, brand relations, advertising, broadcasts and social media, website and publications; educate the public through public meetings, expos, outdoor skills programs and after school programs. We listen, measure and evaluate and work to foster internal communications. Our strongest tactic is social outreach and content marketing. We talked earlier about how we talk to different customers. About five years ago we partnered with Strategic Marketing and Research Inc. to segment our customers based upon not who they are, but their motivations for participating in outdoor recreation. We have two core audiences, outdoor enthusiasts, people who want to go hunting, fishing and camping, but don't need to be told to do it. We also have family outdoors which are people that participate in outdoor recreation as a family, all about family time. There is a growth audience are affable adventurers, people who are willing to try something new, are very social, but need to be asked to go along. An outdoor excitement group is people who are looking for thrills, adventure, competition, maybe trail runs, archery fishing or kayak fishing and those types of activities. What we have learned is we need to talk to growth audiences and it also resonates with our core audiences. Through social outreach and content marketing, it creates a two-way communication; provides information to our customers where they are, on mobile devices through different media outlets where they are getting their information, it provides customer service. Today's customers expect the same level of customer service via social media as if they were going to call or send an email. It also builds trust, people are expecting us to talk with them and not at them; they no longer want to be sold to. We share our story by delivering key messages for the agency. NGPC has five key messages in addition to our annual marketing communication priority. We provide opportunities, for people to have fun, to enjoy the outdoors and create memories. We help maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations and improve land and water habitats. Outdoors has annual economic impact of \$2.4 billion. We are innovative doing what is in the best interest of Nebraskans and resources we manage. We also help inform and educate to engage Nebraskans in the natural world. Whether through your own media channels, like newsletters, website, social media and editorial coverage is all making a promise to our customers. It takes our entire organization to help our brand keep its word by saying the same thing across the board. When we look at marketing communication priorities throughout the year, we develop a plan to make sure we are delivering all of our key messages through earned media, own media, social media and outreach. NGPC has a strong concept marketing program, we have content experts from all of our divisions that are writing about natural resources, conservation practices and opportunities for outdoor recreation, for opportunities, education and entertainment. When we start this we typically have a lot of content for our blog and magazine, but repurpose and share that on social and major media; and supplement that with our very strong photo and video library we have. So we pitch a story to our journalists, post to social media and newsroom, shared from their social media out and we continue to monitor the engagement. For example, in 2016 when we released an urban plan for pheasants, we received lots of national and statewide coverage; there was a good article that hit all of our key messages for the plan; we shared our post saying our new plan is receiving lots of national attention and it is doing great and from that promoted post alone it reached 275,000 people, had 275 comments, was shared 4,000 times and in addition was the most read story on Omaha World Herald's site. Social media and news media have really come together and that is why it is really important to have messages we are sharing on our blogs and repurposing that digital content and sharing it with the news media. A recent survey of global journalists, 89% said they are turning to blogs for

story research and in addition 65% go to social media, like Facebook and LinkedIn to find sources and stories to write about. Content marketing positions us as experts in our field and helps us build trust. Gregg Weiss, of MasterCard, said, “A brand that replies to my tweet makes more of an impact on me than a years and years worth of advertising could ever make”. When you are looking at places to share messages on social media, there are lots of options; Facebook with 1.9 billion monthly users. NGPC primarily uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Facebook is our largest and strongest presence, with nearly 70,000 followers, and fastest growing would be Instagram. When we look at who is consuming our content on social media, Facebook is 51% female, ages 35-44 followed by women ages 25-34; people making decisions for the family and how they are going to spend their time. On Twitter our followers are 70% male, 18-45; and on Instagram, equal men and women, mostly ages 25-44 and from metro areas, Lincoln and Omaha. Knowing who is using our social media helps us tailor content and messages to those individuals. Today we have FOMO, the fear of missing out, people want to know what is going on, who is going where; about social deficit; 84% of Millennials, 73% of general population are likely or very likely to plan a trip based on someone else’s photos or social media updates. People are on the hunt for meaningful experiences that they can share online. Our responsibility is to promote share-worthy experiences. We shared drone video from a partner that showcased our Cowboy Trail over the Niobrara River, and our digital manager put it together and asked people to tag someone they would share that experience with and it far surpassed what our expectations were, 2.5 million views and 53,000 shares; also repurposed same content to share on Twitter. Encourage our users to share their experiences online, we create a hash tag for NGPC that goes along with our promoted posts that we have for our state parks and any area; people like us to see what they are doing and they like to know we care they are having a good time. We have a place for this on our agency website so we can share and see what photos are being shared with us and we can re-share them. We have a large group of urban area moms that like to share photos of their kids and what they are doing outdoors; also younger males sharing their fishing photos that are set up creatively to get perfect shot; and a large general audience that likes to share amateur photographs, wildlife and landscape photos; and adventures of daily living. Today video is the most consumed content on social media so we have been spending a long time taking some of our longer format videos and cutting them down to a minute or minute and a half, so we can easily showcase our state parks and recreation areas, aquatic habitat projects and make them consumable in 90 seconds or less. Also, talked about growth audiences, but have not forgotten core audiences, or outdoor enthusiasts; we use Facebook for interaction with hunters and anglers; hosted event recently where people could tune in live to ask questions of one of our biologists; the 30-minute session reached 23,000 people and had 103 questions asked. Every January we have big game public meetings where people can come and ask questions and voice opinions on deer management, last Facebook live was held in a small town in Nebraska and had 40 people in attendance, 7,500 views and had 342 questions; a great way to take public outreach for core audiences and expand that and not be limited by geography. We also use social media to engage our customers and Nebraskans on conservation, wildlife and what we are doing through visually striking photographs. Through posting of our parks and nature-related photography we are able to get people to click and learn more and share their outdoor experiences with us. Facebook has also given us an opportunity to amplify our reach and promote audiences without fear of missing out. For example, National Marina Day on June 10; we created a Facebook event for that and nearly half of the people who attended the event said they heard about the event on social media; it also helps us gauge where people are

coming from and share event socially. A strategic content marketing program really helps us to further our reach, engage diverse audiences for stakeholders and build support for conservation and outdoor recreation.

*Refreshment Break - Sponsored by The Nature Conservancy – Great Plains Division*

**Panel Discussion: How do different disciplines and partners come together to reach a broader audience?**

**Jim D.** – Panelists will give five minute rendition of their perspective, then talk to each other about it and see if in agreement or new ideas; then take questions from the audience. *Introduced panel members.*

**Ed Boggess, MAFWA Monarch State Liaison** – Glad to be part of panel. Have a lot of experience over the years, most recently working on monarch conservation regional strategy, Mid-America Strategy, where we are trying to apply some of the answers to this question. What I have observed over the years; to bring different partners and interests together, you need common interest, not necessarily common values because by doing that we shut out individuals we can bring to the table; still trying to figure out how to do that more effectively. Need balance between organizing framework for what you are trying to do, whether high level plan or common set of information and background materials everyone can agree to and relates to the project with consistency; balanced with grassroots support to make things happen. Top down approach doesn't work. Need organizing framework, shared interest and then figure out how to get people pulling together to makes things happen. Congrats to Jim Leach, who is in my old position in Minnesota, for getting second fee increase in six years. I am sure that the department provided good information, but what carried the day was that fact that the people that shared that interest brought it forward from the bottom up to make that work. Need organizing presence with common shared messages and get going from ground up. In terms of disciplines, social, human dimensions, social sciences and surveys and building those capacities in our own agencies. Third party objective approach, challenge working with industry partners, but is where we need to engage; conservation and environmental partners. Need to learn how to engage agricultural partners, landowners and agribusiness, they are going to be key to whether what I am doing now is successful. Sharing a common interest, but not common value; partners may not care that much about monarchs or pollinators or conservation in general, but may care about how it will affect their businesses. For different reasons, people may have common interest they want to achieve.

**Pete Berthelson, Pheasants Forever, retired; Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund** – Clint's presentation was exciting and scary. Bringing together different disciplines and partners to reach a broader audience meshes nicely with Clint's presentation. This group has extremely unique perspective, to frown on or agree with this statement. This thing called pollinators, thinking about monarchs or honey bees, is single greatest conservation movement of my lifetime. When at zoo tonight welcome anyone's comment on this. In my opinion, represents unique opportunity for conservation community. Former employer blessed me with the opportunity of being able to go out and build different partnerships with different disciplines. Give example of width and breadth of people interested in this topic and builds on what Ed was talking about: monarch butterflies, honeybees, pheasants, quail, waterfowl and grassland songbirds. This thing called pollinators is a unique moment in time to bring together this unique set of disciplines; state and federal agencies, NGOs and for-profit businesses like the egg industry and commodity groups,

commercial bee keepers etc. It also pulls to together water quality, pollinator habitat and pollinator health has the opportunity to deliver water quality; soil health, right of ways and utility companies and farther than that. My office is in central Nebraska overlooks open space, but when I travel the country and visit something like Whole Foods, I learn about sustainability and what millennials, Gen Z and these groups are and what drives their purchasing decision and how this is going to drive so many things. This group's interest on working on pollinators has the opportunity to connect to things like sustainability. The public's interest and willingness to finance topics like this is something that has never been this high before. Jim referenced things we have talked about over the years; for instance, management of roadsides, like haying and things like that, the size of that rock in Nebraska is so large you need major equipment to move it. Pollinators is bringing those groups to the table in a way we have never been able to before when we wanted to talk about pheasants or quail or something like that. Funding behind this is from broad diverse interests. Unique moment in time to bring together diverse backgrounds like no subject before.

**Kelley Myers, USFWS, Tall Grass Prairie LLC** – A couple of years ago, received call from Ron Regan; Carter Smith couldn't make a meeting and I went to White House meeting on pollinators summit with transportation officials; I was minority in a room full of transportation officials. Two things hit me: they have a world of their own, just like we do and we had gotten this thing outside of an echo chamber. We can be in these meetings and be excited about a fish and wildlife issue, but when we are able to get outside to a different sector that is when we really accomplish something. With pollinators able to engage whole new group of people; transportation, oil and gas, energy, right of way crews, gardening clubs, mayors, everybody from every sector stepping up to this. In my role at Iowa DNR, I was director, but was first an attorney and would get involved in broad audiences out of necessity; reasons for people to come together to solve a problem. I had an amazing staff at Iowa DNR, so I was freed up in my role to think forward and to build consensus around issues and did give me the opportunity to jump into MAFWA monarch planning. Started working with broad groups within our state to put together plans, not just on monarchs, but everything; it was how we worked with groups inside and outside the agency. Always try to build a team around an issue and do a lot through consensus through pulling people together, because I knew one day I wouldn't be there. I have been able to pull that into my new role as LCC coordinator. I can't tell people to come to the table to talk about conservation they are there because they are interested, they care and want to be part of this conversation; we have broad groups talking. Get outside echo chamber to new and diverse groups; we can get each other pumped up for action, but we have to get other people who are our partners on the landscape. Bring it back to your teams, awesome opportunities here to talk and collaborate, but bring back to your teams and trust them. Iowa has funding crisis with Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund, it has been over 25 years, in some instances, since they have updated deer licenses and are in dire need of license adjustment. We had to go out and build support at grassroots level; meeting with staff and having honest dialog about status of trust fund, meeting with constituents and Conservation Alliance and trusting our team to talk to people who cared about these things. Knowing at the end of the day we were the Department of Natural Resources and there was an official position of the department, but knowing there are needs that our staff could better articulate than someone from Des Moines; critical to broaden the message and trust staff had well informed viewpoint and could share it appropriately. Maintain relationships, institutional integrity in relationships; not always going to agree with each other and reaching consensus doesn't mean reaching complete agreement. Maintaining who each individual entity is

as you sit around the table, remembering what your statutory charge and mission is and bringing that as a benefit and not capitulating or shrinking back from who you are as an agency or organization, to bear fully for partnerships forming at the tables. Knowing diagrams and circles don't completely overlap, but appreciating where they do.

**Ron Regan, AFWA** – First thing that came to mind was notion of relevancy. Owe Steve Williams a big word of thanks and encouragement on his leadership working group with Tony Wasley and others. When the Blue Ribbon Panel met three times in 2015 everyone thought it was going to be all about the money. There were folks in the room, like Dr. Kellert, who wanted to know why the American public didn't understand what conservation is all about and why state fish and wildlife agencies do what they do and why they need broader funding. At third meeting in Texas, Steve Williams and Steve Kellert came to that meeting when Blue Ribbon Panel had finally gotten to the money piece and they gave a presentation to drive home the point about whole notion of relevancy; it caught and didn't have one recommendation, but two. Second was all about relevancy. I connect the dots, because without reading the entire second recommendation, there is a clause that talks about engaging and serving broader constituencies; the gold standard when you talk about relevancy. I have been in this business 37 years, 26 years in Vermont and in the later part of career in Vermont I spent a lot of time thinking, will my department be an enduring, relevant institution 50 years from now; questions that have come up in various times and places. People don't know the difference between a forestry agency and a fish and wildlife agency; a parks agency and an environmental conservation group and the different work that they do. Something that has always nagged at me, owe Blue Ribbon Panel a word of thanks for wanting to take that on that task, an important one. Now, in Washington DC, when I walk to metro in the morning, a 7-minute walk in an urban environment, I might not hear English spoken; a huge proportion of Somalians, Ethiopians, Russians and others mixed into the community we live in; but I often think, what do they know about fish and wildlife, how could they have any exposure to it; and second, even though a lot of green space in Washington DC, , like Rock Creek Park, but most folks don't have a chance to visit there because they may not have a car or the buses may not go over there; so how can they hope to experience deer, raccoons or songbirds in a natural environment. Relevancy comes at two levels. When Ray was talking about the perils and pitfalls of managing in Ohio right now, he used the word disconnect. We are talking about conservation messaging in a disconnected world. How do we make conservation, nature, wild places and wild things relevant to people and the whole notion of a fish and wildlife agency? Three things I often think about: relationships and notion of bringing people together to figure out threads and build relationships is vital, some other states have done similar things that I didn't know about, like Kansas that Keith mentioned today. Those have to become mechanisms for trying to exploit, in a positive way, values and visions for the future through relationships. The other place I have seen it occur is with the business summit work we are doing with industry in trying to build relationships with traditional excise taxpaying industries to help them to better understand what conservation is about. The notion of crisis, a wonderful mechanism for bringing people together and the whole monarch, pollinator thing is really interesting. I took notes this morning of all the states talking about partnerships, how many times monarchs and pollinators came up when you went around the table. The shared vision, where I have seen that happen the best for an extended period of time, was with the old Teaming with Wildlife campaign, it went on for a long time and did deliver success, but not in ways we were thinking it might. Now we have the new Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife and it harkens back to the Blue Ribbon Panel and you see all three of these things knitted into one; relationship piece, reaching out to

communities you might not know or be that comfortable with, like oil and gas; the crisis piece when it comes to funding; and the vision for the future in terms of putting tools and resources in the hands of state agencies to do their work.

**Steve Williams, WMI** – Thank Ron for kind comments, but a lot of people involved in this issue and will help solve it. Hit a few disciplines that would help our profession if we could nail down and have a better knowledge of their areas of expertise. Economics, heard many directors talk about how their state agencies want them be more business-like. Until we can put a value on the services we help provide the public in job numbers; jobs can't be outsourced to foreign countries by definition; but until we put a dollar value on what we produce and jobs we produce we will always be at a disadvantage because we are competing for the same funds. The Forest Service and others are working on how you value eco-system services; let's not lose sight of that fact. Heard a lot about social research and we have to understand the people we are serving before we serve them well; I am not well equipped to do that, but I know there are people who know how to do that and we ought to be talking to them. The public health benefits we provide is what we do, there is no question about that, but we don't talk about it much and we need to think about who we partner with. Marketing, communication and outreach has come light years in last 10 years; but still know of agencies that are taking biologists and telling them they are communications experts and biologists are crappy communicators, need to look for people with expertise; it shouldn't be an afterthought, but forethought. Where do you acquire expert knowledge on some of these disciplines: reach out to universities, not just for fish and wildlife research, but for human research; state health departments, they could provide information to help better explain what you do for the public relative to human health issues; every state has state park system, maybe not within agency and has tourism or marketing board and if you have not touched base with those people you need to. You are a big driver of outdoor recreation in your state. Strongly suggest you form partnerships with those entities. Other partnerships, when I went to Kansas I had prior experience working with Farm Bureau, nothing like in Kansas and no experience with the Livestock Association; our relationship was tense as a fish and wildlife agency, but we built relationships and improved that; 97% of state in private hands so had to figure out what works for those organizations. Conservation round table Jim talked about is a lot of work, but right for broadening our constituency. State Wildlife Action Plans, process to put them together was in part an effort to do that and some states have taken advantage of it and some have other opportunities. In Massachusetts, not big hunting state, but is open to hunting unless posted; always big conflict between animal rights and the agency, landowners and the agency and the chair put together a guns and roses coalition and was able to pass a bond bill that assured that any public lands would be open to hunting, fishing and trapping; at 80 he saw that if you partnered with Audubon, Garden Clubs, Land Trust you can get things done; it worked. From WMI's perspective we have an early successional habitat program and when we go to sportsmen's clubs it's for grouse and woodcock; when we go to Garden Clubs, it for warblers and 50-60 other species that use that habitat. It is not hard to adjust your message and there is nothing wrong with that, you are talking the language that your audience is used to. We are having success because it is all about saving the habitat. Explain what you do in respect to what the public values, talk to hunters and anglers about creel sizes, etc., but when talking to the public it is bigger than that, we are doing much more than producing fish and game to hunt; we are producing clean air, clean water, sequestering carbon and things like that.

*Ron* – Ed, based on many years in a state agency, what have you learned about trying to reach out to groups or embrace new constituents for new partners without alienating or creating anxiety among some of the old? *Ed* – That is one of the quicksand areas. Traditional stakeholders often are suspicious of bringing in nontraditional stakeholders because they are concerned that their influence will be diminished. Particularly, when traditional stakeholders, in Minnesota DNR, were paying for the entire budget of the division. Along the lines of the Congress-idea, we developed over time and helped to accomplish what you are asking is a round table; it started out as a fishing round table in early 1990s, was fairly regulation oriented; a few years later in wildlife starting doing round tables on controversial topics where we would bring in interests around issues like ATV use on public land or trespass problems. In late 1990s ecological services section also started having round tables with their constituency; at that time sections within a division but all separate divisions now; ultimately it merged into the annual fisheries, wildlife and ecological service, water resources round table. It is held in January every year, around time legislative session starts; a gathering of 400-500 people, it is the conservation event of the year and is by invitation, but we don't stop people at the door. All of the stakeholder groups meet for a plenary session and then there are breakouts for different interests. Over the years, that has built trust in relationships amongst those constituencies. Helped pave the way for constitution amendment in 2008. It was a gradual thing, but as possibilities arose it expanded and now an annual summit, no resolutions or committees, but opportunity to talk about issues of the day, whether water quality, water quantity, forestry, wildlife issues, fisheries issues, endangered species, etc. Plenary is designed to have common interests and main stuff happens in the hallways like many of these conferences. *Ron* – Have you tried to tackle prickly issues where there might be polarization, like lead, in that forum? *Ed* – Sure, we talked about ammunition, deer management, ground water appropriations; all those issues get discussed there, but it has never been intended or attempted to make it where everyone agrees, more to have open discussion on issues; good attendance by legislators and policymakers. We have not tried to use that group to make decisions or recommendations. *Kelley* – As we talk about hearing from different disciplines or partners and inviting different people to the table, are we prepared to use what we hear? Consumptive versus non-consumptive users, not look at it that way anymore. Are we prepared to do, or take action on, some of the recommendations we are hearing? *Steve* – The easy answer is, if you are not prepared to take action, then don't do it. *Jim D.* – Any other comments from directors or audience? *Rick Young* – Clock ticking on this process, direction on that or is Blue Ribbon Panel talking about timeframe? *Steve* – Ron will address first recommendation. On second recommendation, going great guns at end of 2016 and first part of 2017, but with passing of Steve Kellert, that threw a monkey wrench in what we were doing; we have regrouped and are starting to move forward again. There is no set timeline, but we all recognize the sooner we get after this the better off we will be. Working with Ron and Mark Humpert in trying to set up a meeting to bring the larger group together, a dozen or so state people and NGO people to flesh out the outline we have been working on and then bring in experts to fill the gaps and put meat on the bones. Hope to have draft by the end of this year, but it has to be vetted by a lot of folks. We want it to be practical and put it in the hands of state agency leadership and have it so they can understand it and say what works and what doesn't. Love to see progressive state agencies willing to step out and take risk and bring other disciplines into decision making progress formally and institutionalize that. It will catch on by showing success and by competition to better each other. Like to see process started in 2018. *Ron* – Other part of question, note of urgency in it and I share that. The Blue Ribbon Panel never said it had to

be done in 2-4 years, or whatever, but we assumed from operational standpoint that it would take at a minimum one Congress and as many as three. Last Congress, when we introduced the bill, was all about some preliminary messaging, testing the waters and getting sponsors of bipartisan nature to tee up for middle Congress, which we are in now in terms of three two-year Congresses. We are waiting for Congressman Young's staff to drop the bill, a legacy bill for him, and he is at point in his career where he wants to close the deal on this; we will have his power through remainder of this Congress and maybe another. Look for every opportunity in this Congress, once bill gets dropped, to see it get traction on its own, perhaps get imbedded in infrastructure bill or get wedded to some other germane legislation. We have been trying to get National Fish Habitat Conservation Act passed for six years now with no success. We all thought that was mom and apple pie legislation and there are still questions about property rights which make that bill hard to move. We may have to slide into that third period of time, not saying walk away after six years, but window where heat shield needs to come down, been fundraising under that with those horizons in mind. It won't happen overnight, but could happen in this particular Congress, but remains to be seen. *Jim D.* – Thank you panel, more thought provocation.

*Board Buses for Field Trip 5:00 pm,*

Offsite Dinner Event: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo

*Sponsored by Brandt Information Services, Tiffany Santagati & Richard Wise*

*Board Buses to return to Park 8:45 pm,*

*Hospitality Room – Sponsored by Bass Pro Shops*

Tuesday, June 27, 2017

*Breakfast – Sponsored by Kalkomey*

*Mitch Stobl* made remarks.

*Jim D.* – Welcomed Greg Sheehan, new principal deputy director for USFWS; acting director of USFWS; was active in WAFWA and Executive Committee of AFWA and many other venues. Also, welcomed Ann Hubbard, The Nature Conservancy board and Zoo Board and is active in conservation in Nebraska. Introduced Cheryl Morris, director of the zoo. Introduced Commissioner Rick Brant, one of 9-man commission representing southeast Nebraska.

*Jim D.* – Hear updates and other perspectives on monarch conservation. MAFWA is operating by virtue of two grants, one NFWF and one USFWS, to move forward with creating a plan for monarchs in central region and reaching out to WAFWA. Have Claire Beck, plan coordinator and Ed Bogges, liaison between efforts of the states and the Service. Also involved in governance is Bill Moritz, Michigan and Kelley Myers, now USFWS LCC coordinator, but continuing to work in monarch conservation.

### **Monarch Butterfly Initiatives**

*Kelley Myers, USFWS* (PowerPoint - Exhibit 8) – Tom Melius would love to be here but he is on a bucket list trip to Russia, sorry he couldn't be here. Charlie Wooley, deputy director is here. Trends is why we are talking about monarchs, downward trend of population. A couple years ago, several of us around this table began putting together plans and now have governance structure and are starting to tackle this problem; looking at pollinators as well. A listing petition filed in 2014, with 90-day finding that yes there was need to consider this species. There was a settlement in 2016 because the Service has 12 months to make a determination as to whether a species should be listed or not; didn't happen so settlement was entered into with a couple of the petitioners and now has until June 2019 to render final decision. Timeline shows we are in species status assessment (SSA) process, began looking at Midwest north core with focus now starting to look at other places around the country. Something that started with northern long-eared bat process was the Service invited a state person to be on the team; Dr. Karen Kincaid from Iowa sat on the SSA team and provided our specific information. SSA team is comprised of experts from within the Service and they seek expert information from outside as well. They are in the process of expanding that team to include state people from around the country; through regional Associations identifying different experts with biologist background to provide state-specific point of view. Expect piece analysis, determination of ongoing efforts, are adequate to ensure viability of the species; will happen next summer, with decision Fall 2018, and run through administrative processes in Spring 2019. Lot of work to happen before that. Coordination of this group to be able to come out with plans to be analyzed as part of that plan is critical. Looking at type of listing decision it will make, looking at resiliency, representation and redundancy because goal is to be sure viability of monarch in the long term, specifically in central corridor. California has an over-wintering monarch populations along the coast and there is another specific population in Florida. As far as conservation planning goes, influences are habitat loss and fragmentation and habitat quality degradation. Milkweed is important throughout the range, but not limiting factor, need nectar resources; may be abundant milkweed which they need to reproduce, but need food along the way; need diverse nectar resource, limited insecticide

exposure and over-wintering habitat loss in degradation in California and Mexico is of particular interest to us. The Service has engaged with Mexico and Canada and there is a tri-lateral commission that meets on this. If they don't have habitat in Mexico; literally one mountain side where they roost in the winter, then we don't have a migration in the Midwest. Map shows how the population is broken up and represents a lot of the Corn Belt where resources are needed, and includes entire range of mid-continental eastern butterfly. Critical to have all of these states involved, what happens in Midwest is essential, but everyone involved in east U.S. ensures resiliency component, if something happens in central corridor there is still refuge in eastern U.S. to ensure viability of the species. Broken up into eastern and western and Florida population. Targets are to support the six hectare winter population; looking at what area they are covering when roosting in those trees, it has been as low as one. That will require an additional 1.6 billion stems of milkweed along that corridor to accomplish that; to accommodate larger population will require additional milkweed and nectar resources. Some work underway to be sure we are protecting that forest in Mexico. In Western it is about maintaining over-wintering sites along the coast, working to make sure they have habitat; this isn't just a Midwest issue; active work to make sure there is engagement in west. As far as conservation planning there is a Tri-national Working Group and state wildlife and fish agencies, the largest partner to USFWS with 29 state action plans done, or in the process, and regional strategies are coming online. Also, work going on in west to see if there can be some alignment there. Adopted all hands on deck approach with paper being published where USGS talks about all the sectors that need to be engaged; not just an agriculture issue, rights of way and can't be solved by putting milkweed on I-35; it is going to take urban, agriculture, rights of way and suburban areas trying to put habitat every place they can find to keep land working while conserving migration. Partners and monarch joint venture group are essential including groups that have been traditional petitioners working alongside states to make sure good conservation is happening. Wendy Caldwell, coordinator for Monarch Joint Venture, has been at crux of this. Funding from 2015 to 2017, USFWS has spent \$10 million, USDA \$4 million, NFWF \$10.9 million with open solicitation to them with results expected in August or September. Also, the Monarch Joint Venture has raised funds to partner projects annually. Expanding conservation and have Monarch Conservation Science Partnership which is a group that is meeting in Ft. Collins that includes states, academic, USGS, federal scientists, NWF mayor's monarch pledge which is about cities with urban refuges and million pollinator garden challenge; also zoos involved. Monarch Joint Venture is working to organize partners. Conversation has been about monarch, game changer in conservation and exciting to be part of, but understand leading edge of bigger issue with pollinators. Neat to see how conversation shifts over the years, starting dialog on larger pollinator issue. Tom Melius has taken national lead on this from Region 3 because of proximity to the issue.

### **Bees and Butterflies**

*Pete Berthelson, Conservation Blueprint LLC* (PowerPoint - Exhibit 9) – My goal is to give broader perspective on who your partners can be. Pollinators are a new kind of glue that bind together lots of different efforts. If we want to solve this issue using the same tools we have used for the last decade, we won't be successful; it will take innovation and a new way of looking at habitat. Talk about Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund, a new unique partnership formed to get great pollinator habitat on the ground and do in a way that is cost effective and provides better pollinator habitat, better weed competition and can demonstrate how pollinator habitat can be established with new technology. When landowner enrolls they get free pollinator seed, an

annual rental payment and planting incentive payments. We design seed mixtures with new technology and innovation, has higher pollinator values. Landowners can sign up for 3-6 year contract. Represents wide range of partners on board, including commodity groups, agricultural industry, for-profit businesses and others. When project established, if landowner enrolled 40 acre project, 20 acres is established with a mixture designed for honey bees and 20 acres designed with mixture to benefit monarch butterflies; both species benefit and use both sides, but they establish differently. Monarch mixture is designed with native plants that take a little longer to establish, so plant in two different projects. Yesterday, I made statement, single greatest conservation movement in my lifetime; the most important reason is the width and breadth of groups involved in this. In order to get where we need to be we need to think about how we design and establish habitat a little differently. Map shows over a four-year period, 24 million acres was converted to crop ground that wasn't crop before, mostly grasslands and unfortunately Nebraska leads the nation in conversion of grassland acres into crop ground; if we overlap that map with monarch butterfly map it is the same area. Spending time talking about monarch butterflies, but also looking at managed hives of honey bees; have a long way to get there and trending in opposite direction. Annual losses are typically 40-50 percent. Have friends who are beekeepers and if you go back 10-20 years, sustainability comes to mind, critical needs going on and always comes back to habitat. Pollinators reach out and pulls in incredibly broad audience, water quality will become even more important and pull those issues in; right of ways and utilities and their interest working on roadsides and railroad companies, they are coming to us, not us going to them; soil health is another opportunity, putting pollinator habitat on the ground will bring significant benefit to the soil. Sustainability is biggest issue to help us deliver wildlife conservation needs. When people willing to pay more to buy sustainable foods or eggs from free ranging birds, think about the opportunity to connect to those people with what we do every day. When have we, in wildlife conservation, reached out to people concerned with sustainability and told them we were their best friends and doing what they want, a missed message we haven't gotten to those people. Critically important issues to millennials and Gen Z, etc.; think about how to communicate that we are doing those things. How to get habitat onto the landscape; we can work with precision agriculture, if looking at field it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see conservation and pollinator habitat can increase farm income. In 2013, looked at 181 acre field on Minnesota corn farm, looked at actual yield monitor data of out combine; red is part of field that is costing more than getting out of it and farmer amortizes those losses across the field and hope that green high yield areas carry the day (graph on slide); we went in and put just red areas into CRP and actual results showed increase on return on investment of 116%. There is room for conservation on every farm and ranch in the country and we need to strategically talk to landowners, when margins are tight and commodity prices are down, that is an opportunity to have this kind of conversation and strategically think about putting pollinator habitat on there. We can bring in water quality, soil health and sustainability and other things; by the way if you care about pheasants that fits within this state pheasant plan; it all comes together, but need to think about how to chat about it a little differently; brings together diverse audience from people who care about pheasants to people who care about eating eggs from chickens not in a fence. Pollinators, pollinator habitat and pollinator health is the way to tie that together. Doesn't matter whether talking about precision agriculture, water quality, soil health, pheasant management, quail management or pollinator habitat; all of these issues come together with commonality, which can be pollinator health and pollinator habitat. Need all hands on deck approach to win. The way we have been doing pollinator habitat for the last decade, is not going to solve the issue;

look at things differently. When we do get habitat projects on the ground, in an era where we are losing grassland, strive to make habitat we put on the ground the best it can be because these are big issues we need to get across. What a significant opportunity we have in front of us. *Jim D.* – Incentive program you described, where is that available? *Pete* – Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund comes with flexibility so doing projects in state parks, on right of ways, golf courses, zoos, structured to work on private lands, because of flexibility we can work with any kind of partner in any area. *Terry* – In butterfly mixture, is milkweed in that and if so what is reaction of agriculture producers? *Pete* – Other than the state of North Dakota, nobody has complained about milkweed, but has been a conversation about exclusion of milkweed there; that won't happen, not only one in there, but multiple species. I understand history and perception of milkweed in agricultural fields, but that is not an issue anymore, when you use the right species in a mixture, suggest showy milkweed for North Dakota that won't show up in grassland and will never become a factor in cropland. There are ways to strategically design mixtures to address those concerns. *Scott Peterson* – Concerned about neonicotinoids on pollinators? *Pete* – Partnership is working with ag industry, Monsanto, DOW, etc. and my perspective since having personal relationships with them has changed a little bit. If we had a magic wand and could wave it over agriculture and say neonicotinoids were gone, what we used to have is worse than that; not that simple to say that is the problem, but is an impact, no question. In the honeybee health world has the biggest impact, but impacts on native pollinators are unknown. Instead of applying across whole field, apply to strategic portion within the field, maybe a specific plant within the field; there are negative impacts because it is designed to get rid of critters; but you don't see signs on field that say, don't enter within 48 hours of spraying, like we used to have with aerial applications; has an impact, but better than alternatives. *Kristal Stoner* – Agency relevancy and reach broader audiences, truly capitalizing on this audience, are we doing a good job? *Pete* – Yes and no; yes, have you ever spent two hours before talking about an insect? Yes, we are making advancements and having great conversations about it. But also no, have we ever thought about how this issue can take what we are already doing for other species, but we haven't talked about it to people or made pitch to the public to connect it. In my 35 years as a wildlife professional, what I wanted on landscape for habitat hasn't changed, but how I talk about it has and so is who I get to talk to. I gave presentation in Brookings, South Dakota, heart of pheasant country, and if talk had been about how to have great pheasant habitat would have been 20 passionate people in the room, but was a presentation about pollinators and had over 200 people; it wasn't me, it was the topic. This is our moment in time, change how we talk about it and have a bigger impact and do the same things we want to be doing. *Jim D.* – More thought on how to expand our audiences and conserve variety of wildlife we care about.

### **Monarch Conservation Updates**

*Ed Boggess, MAFWA Monarch State Liaison* (PowerPoint slides 1-5 - Exhibit 10) – Go over history of AFWA's and MAFWA's involvement in this issue and turn over to Claire on what we are doing. There has been a lot of work over last couple of years. USFWS petitioned in August 2014; in September 2014 AFWA passed a resolution encouraging monarch conservation; additional work over next six months or so; and joint memorandum from AFWA and USFWS in March 2015 to states encouraging monarch conservation into their programs where appropriate. Early work was done quickly to make sure people were organizing and aware of the needs and urgency of the issue. In October 2015 report completed, commissioned through the Threatened and Endangered Resources Committee, Director Wiley was chairing that committee and

Jonathan Mawdsley with AFWA helped to survey all of the state agencies; 49 states as Alaska doesn't have monarchs or milkweeds; of 49, 46 were already incorporating monarchs into their programs in one form or another. In Fall 2015 states engaged with Monarch Joint Venture and five members were appointed to the Board, representing the four regional associations and AFWA as a whole, Kelley Myers was that representative. The role for this group, MAFWA; were still involved in northern long-eared bat issue at that time, another listing decision issue and Tom Melius was also the national lead on that issue as well; 39 states, similar process; Michigan was a big leader on long-eared bats and MAFWA had a meeting in Minnesota to help organize that effort. With monarchs, MAFWA decided to host another meeting which was held in Iowa and Kelley hosted that in Fall 2015. Applied for NFWF grant, partially successful and hoping to hire a coordinator, but we didn't get funded, but we did get money that primarily went to the National Wildlife Federation, a cooperative endeavor with MAFWA and Pheasants Forever; got money to do a regional workshop to follow up the one MAFWA organized. In 2016, applied for another NFWF grant to hire a coordinator and in June last year there was a decision by this group to seek the USFWS grant that I am operating under; to provide coordination among the states and between the states and the Service. In summer of last year, also started species status assessment and state representation was included with Karen Kincaid and I also sit on that group. Tom offered at the North American, to expand state engagement with that group so the Northeast has added a representative and the Western and Southeast are talking about that. Last summer we were successful with second NFWF grant which allowed us to hire a contractor for a couple years to work on developing the regional plan. Kelley and Bill were designated as director leaders on this effort and in December 2016 we hired Claire. In the first six months of 2017, we had regional workshop in Texas to work on Mid-America Conservation Strategy approach and executive committee of this group acted at North American to set up governance structure and the Northeastern formally designated representatives to work with the 13 Midwest states and three south-central states. In April we applied for another NFWF grant to carry the plan Claire is going to talk about into the next phase of reporting, but we won't know about that grant until September. Have Technical Steering Committee, Board of Directors and Executive Committee formed and are adding ex officio and technical workgroups to that structure now.

*Claire Beck, MAFWA Monarch Technical Coordinator* (PowerPoint slides 6-12 - Exhibit 10) – Mid-America Regional Monarch Conservation Strategy is designed to be in alignment with the Service's policy for the evaluation of conservation efforts; the way the Service formally looks at what voluntary conservation is out there on the ground currently while doing their species status assessment as well as what is formally planned to be done in the near future. We are contributing to that in what we are doing now and what we have plans in place to do to inform that species status assessment process. Hoping to leverage the authority of state wildlife agencies and the resources of many partners to get 1.6- to 1.8-billion milkweed stems on the landscape to support over-wintering habitat of 6 hectares in Mexico. Have first draft of strategy to be completed in October, to be complete by May or June of 2018, which gives a full year for the USFWS to look at that before they make their initial listing decision in June 2019. The northern area of map is called the north core and is believed to be the most important breeding area for monarchs and that is where the majority of 1.6 billion stems will be placed; the strip in the south-central region is the important migrating area through Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas and is called the south core. Our strategy is looking at entire eastern United States, but with focus on north and south core regions. You have seen other maps showing

northward migration in spring and southward migration in the fall and summer breeding area and this is another way of looking at that same information. States participating include the 13 MAFWA states as well as Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. And NEAFWA states are participating because Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland have some north core counties in their states and are part of the key breeding area. All hands on deck approach, looking at milkweed stem density land use cover types and USGS and USFWS have developed a modeling tool, looked at stem density currently and what could be out there if more effort put into it; then do math, if we put in effort in north core how many additional milkweed stems can we get. Had a work group meeting in Wisconsin a couple of weeks ago and went through scenarios to figure out how to use this tool and where to put our milkweed restoration efforts to get to 1.6 billion; hopefully will be included in the plan. We know we need to concentrate on all sectors, but how much milkweed and what types of land is needed to reach this number in the north core; will have metrics based on milkweed stems. In the south core it is not believed milkweed is necessarily the limiting factor and will be looking more at acres and monarch habitat that includes milkweed. In both of these not just talking about milkweed, but milkweed imbedded with diverse nectar and forbs resources; milkweed stems is convenient way to measure monarch habitat. Because this is in eastern U.S. and corn belt area, private lands are going to be key to reaching this goal so is a big focus of regional strategy. Have regional section of strategy and each state will have their own section where they can go into more detail about what they are currently doing and strategies going to be used to reach their milkweed stem and acreage goal. Regional section will have more details on monitoring, supporting adaptive management, governance and budget. A lot of this will come from states and built into regional plan; reinforcing that this is bottom up and top down plan. Many states are creating their own statewide monarch and/or pollinator plans, but also regional strategy to work together to provide framework to reach piece requirements for the USFWS and creating structure states can fit into, but states are best positioned to develop strategies and partnerships that work well for their own state; will not be dictated at regional level. MAFWA has built governance structure with Board of Directors, 13 MAFWA states plus Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas and one representative from NEAFWA; developing ex officio advisory members; Executive Committee is subset of the Board of Directors; have Technical Steering Committee made up of state wildlife staff and other partner organizations such as National Wildlife Federation and Pheasants Forever. Right now in process of developing technical work groups that will actually work on each of the individual parts of the plan and that will be made up of state, federal and NGO partners as well. *Sara* – All states are continuing to look for creative opportunities; talked about private lands and rights of way, but announcement this week in Missouri is large cities in U.S. are under consent decrees for violations of the Clean Water Act; Saint Louis no exception so as part of consent decree with EPA and state as part of their non-point source storm water reduction plan, 1,000 abandoned lots will be renovated into urban gardens and pollinator habitat as part of that. A great example, of how in urban areas there can be a legal angle to get larger cities under consent decrees to reduce storm water pollution, to partner to benefit urban citizens and pollinator habitat as well. *Ollie* – This is a good example in MAFWA of how our individual state members step up to assist our association and in the case of Claire, the Ohio Division of Wildlife, Ray Petering, has offered Claire office space and support, thank you.

## **Midwest LCC's: An Opportunity to Improve Regional Collaboration and Action**

*Jim Douglas, NE, facilitator* – Touched on items related across landscapes, not a new topic, but as we ask ourselves the question on how we move forward and what models we use for conservation across large landscapes. We are developing planning efforts for monarchs across landscapes lead by states and partners with USFWS; examples across the nation with lesser prairie chickens and eastern cottontails and things like that. What role have landscape conservation cooperatives played in any of these efforts and what roles might they play, what does future hold for landscape conservation cooperatives, how can they be value-added and many other questions related to that. Put together another panel discussion with Kelley Myers, Tall Grass Prairie LCC, Brad Potter, Upper Midwest and Great Lakes LCC, Bill Moritz, Michigan and Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri. Had communication primarily with Kelley on this topic.

*Kelley* – Invite Charley Wooley, deputy director, he is co-chair on Tall Grass Prairie, to come forward and say a few words.

*Charles Wooley, Deputy Regional Director Region 3 in Minneapolis* – Appreciate being here; I have had the pleasure of being LCC co-chair for the last seven years, worked with Kelley and Mark Miller, former Director of Illinois DNR; with Kelley in her role in Iowa DNR. It was a wonderful experience, I got to know Ted LaGrange with our activities and have had direct engagement with seven of the directors at the table through LCC process in the past. We have had success, done good work in a collaborative nature, but the President's budget is tight and LCCs are proposed for elimination. There is an uncertain future and we, in the USFWS, are sun setting LCCs at the end of the fiscal year. Panel will be asked, if we had success, why; is it because of working at landscape scale, because collaborative in nature on the way we work on issues, because we dealt with bigger issues in science-based manner? That will be part of the panel's job. We have embraced idea of collaboration, this way of doing business, engaging state partners, Bill Moritz had front seat on this with northern long-eared bats, that engagement of state partners grew out collaborative nature of LCCs. The reason we turned to our state partners to talk about the future of northern long-eared bats was because of underpinning of collaborative work done through LCCs. Seeing the same thing evolve as we are talking about monarchs; have a tough listing decision to make in a couple of years, but underpinning of working with state partners has been very helpful in bringing this all together to look at it in landscape scale, collaboratively and with science-based organizations. Same thing has happened in the Great Lakes, had same approach with LCC. As we sunset LCCs, there are good things we have learned; talk about things learned, jettison what didn't work, and focus on things that have united us and kept us working together as a team.

*Kelley Myers, Tall Grass Prairie LCC Coordinator* (PowerPoint - Exhibit 11) – When originated this idea, it was to take a hard look on how LCCs could improve. Came with open mind on what can we do to make it better. Since then, got budget direction that LCCs won't be around, which left us with the question, how are we going to continue to collaborate so we modified this session a little bit. I will give brief overview to show where we have been operating. Our function is to provide coordination and science capacity and technical expertise; have vision of landscapes capable of sustaining natural and cultural resources for current and future generations; and our mission is basically to develop and provide integrated science-based information about implications of different stressors we see on landscape, to be able to provide good sound management advice so ultimately the entities sitting at the table can implement strategies they deem most appropriate. It is part of an international network, all over North

America; had experience with entire network as LCC co-chair as state director but also sat on national LCC network council. The way LCCs are currently structured is: coordinator, science coordinator and may be some additional support staff like GIS specialist or program manager; all LCCs have a steering committee comprised of state fish and wildlife directors, other DOI programs, other federal agencies, a broad and diverse group as some have transportation officials, some have wind or oil and gas industry, depends on the issues. There have been some efforts recently to get agriculture groups at the table, and ours has state department of agriculture. Idea was to get a broad and diverse group, non-traditional voices, at the table to provide input on priorities and needs of an area. Usually there was a science committee or technical advisory or working group that would do the work between steering committee meetings to address issues, to determine what research needs were appropriate or to carry out projects. Midwest has three: Plains and Prairie Potholes (PPP) LCC, Tall Grass Prairie LCC and Upper Midwest and Great Lakes (UMGL) LCC. Seven years in the making, both PPP and UMGL were among first. We have had major accomplishments and have been able to come up with Gulf Hypoxia Conservation Blueprint with four other LCCs to look at how we address issues like nutrient reduction, a big issue with states and EPA, while finding wildlife benefits through some of the practices. Connectivity planning for the Great Lakes; monarch butterfly conservation planning; and efforts to take statewide action plan and coordinate them around pollinators or other species to find that regional SWAP coordination by using state priorities. There has been a national academy of science review released last year about LCCs and was generally supportive of idea of landscape approach and make a series of recommendations including clarifying differences of joint ventures and climate science centers; work ongoing at council level to address some of those recommendations. There was discussion of an AFWA joint task force for AFWA and the Service to engage on how to improve delivery of LCCs from state perspective, but was tabled in executive session in December 2016 and had no further action. This summer there was a directive to all LCCs, JVs and boards and commissions throughout the Department of Interior to stop all meetings to ensure compliance with FACA and other secretarial and executive orders, which affected meetings planned for April and May until after September, which is pretty common when a new administration comes in. We have current fiscal year 2018 budget of USFWS which was supposed to eliminate entire science application program, which is parent to the LCCs. Paused to take a look at what the future of our collaborative conservation efforts; what is Department of Interior's role, state fish and wildlife agencies' role, with respect to how we move going forward. Challenges, based on discussions happening: states have primary jurisdiction over fish and wildlife resources, but they don't necessarily have authority to act outside their borders: DOI has been interested in acting proactively with partners to reduce the number of species listed and to enhance migratory bird sustainability through these collaborative and voluntary processes, but not explicit statutory direction to do so. NGOs are important partners, but don't necessarily have that responsibility like states or Service would have to manage public trust resources. States are increasingly finding themselves in these leadership roles; big problems to solve across multiple jurisdictions. We have adjusted to issues around species in need of greatest conservation, which requires planning and coordination and implementation across large landscape. That leaves us with this discussion; we structured into function, structure and priorities because that is the future; what is our function, how do we build a structure around that when priority is identified, to relevant groups. Turn it over to panel members to share perspective and invite audience to be part of that.

**Brad Potter, Upper Midwest & Great Lakes LCC Coordinator** – Thanks for invite to bring my perspective to this conversation and I am looking forward to hearing from other panel members and audience and hopefully carry forward ideas that come out of this conversation. Dialog continues as we rethink and move forward with collaborative conservation issues.

**Sarah Parker Pauley, MO** – Great opportunity to get fresh perspective, having only been in chair at Missouri Department of Conservation for about seven months. I have an interesting history with this, I was working with DJ Case and Associates as a project manager and helped Dave Case facilitate with USFWS on their strategic plan on climate change when LCC concept came to light for the first time; I do remember some of those conversations. Those discussions centered around needing the science, needing the data and needing forum to share the data with other states. In our own agencies have siloed data collection systems and we don't, as an agency, know what data we have, how that might inform decisions for the agency and we all wrestle with that internally. Conversations were centered around climate change and what was facing all of us in the world of conservation and we have heard, "all hands on deck" numerous times. It is important as much as we are resource strapped that where there is good information that can help form decisions that we have some mechanism to collect and share it to inform all of our decisions. All have stories to tell; when I started my career 20-some years ago, my first role at the department was to help coordinate an effort with both state and federal natural resource agencies to strategically plan and coordinate our natural resource efforts across public lands where we shared boundaries by eco-region and look at incentive plans and how that might impact private lands. We started in the Ozarks, so there was a cry of how dare our agencies talk to each other and how dare you share information and that was worrisome to some of our stakeholders, so that effort went away, but we figured out ways to have that conversation. Another example of that, in my role as director of natural resources, tried to do that at the watershed level, and again concern on how data is collected and shared. It is always going to be pendulum swing of the role of government and role of how we use the information. Concerns I have heard from staff, is to try and better understand the role of the LCCs versus joint ventures versus climate science centers. In talking about where we store this information, what is best science, where are areas or gaps in that where we need to gather more information to make better informed decisions. For conservation staff in Missouri, it is distinguishing the role between joint ventures, LCCs and climate science centers; what is the difference and who is doing what; clarification of those functions is important for us. We have limited staff resources, a lot on our plate, so if we understand the value-added nature of LCCs and what are we as a state getting from our involvement; have to feel it is an important use of our time and we are getting something out of it. Ultimately, states have responsibility, but if in forum of NGOs, industry and others are we equal partners; that is a bit challenging. At the end of the day, we have statutory or constitution responsibility within our states to manage fish and wildlife. Who are the decision-makers was challenging; who is establishing the priorities and who ultimately has the responsibility. Another comment I heard was if we could concentrate on one or two priorities, and that be meaningful for the states, going back to make sure it is an effective use of time as we commit staff to these efforts. Once we have products or good information pulled together, how is it disseminated back out to states and their partners so they are seeing benefits or results of their efforts and seeing products coming back to the states for us to make better decisions as a result of those products. Communications loop was identified as an issue as well. If there is already an entity or organization that has a role outside of LCCs we shouldn't be duplicating the efforts.

From my perspective, it is disheartening to hear decision being made, because the function the LCCs served is now more important than ever. Information sharing and where we have science gaps is going to have to lead our decisions going forward; how are we collecting those as natural resource agencies and other partners; how are we going to share that information, the science capacity piece of that and leverage resources in planning effort aren't crossing state boundaries or political boundaries. How are we, as stakeholders, going to sit down together and share information and help plan to leverage resources and expand our capacity? The function and role the LCCs play is now more important than ever. I hope you are hearing, despite the concerns, that it is natural for any new organization or structure to wrestle through, what is the best way to do it. Functions are more important than ever.

**Bill Moritz, MI** – Go back to question of Kelley's, what is the future of collaboration; I think very bright. Increasing awareness that we will have to work together on a broader regional structure to get conservation addressed for many species; knowing we can't manage for one species at a time and will be habitat driven. Collaboration on broad regional level efforts will be both habitat and species oriented. We have been, for the last decade, looking for right models or structure to do that. As we developed the monarch approach, we had the New England cottontail, lesser prairie chicken, sage grouse, a lot of models were out there for how we are going to accomplish it. State authorities are state-by-state with state-level strategies serving as the workhorse document, but to have an overarching strategy that goes across broader landscape is essential to show connectivity. As we continue to move forward what the technical structures will need to be is something we continue to percolate. LCCs were a structure that was pioneering in recognizing that need that was coming and yet, whether talking about bats, butterflies or moose being nimble enough to create structures that address specific projects or conservation needs for a short duration, "all hands on deck" because many hands make the problem easier to solve and is a key approach. As we go forward look carefully at successes and challenges for some of the existing structures that have been built to see what is going to work and which ones can be improved from learning from others.

**Jim D.** – If we look at structures that have been successful that went across a broad array of authorities and partners, joint ventures have been successful and one thought that came to mind was there was some trepidation from public and state agencies when those were being formed, but not a lot. Mission was pretty focused, evident and was shared and accepted. Over time, joint ventures have expanded their missions and allowed to evolve into that and that wasn't without fits and starts; even going to all bird conservation. Is it possible in some ways LCCs were formed with foresight, but perhaps not good definition and acceptance because of lack of clarity of the mission? They got off to rocky start that it hasn't fully recovered from, for some reason. **Bill** – In my opinion, two of the greater collaborative projects were the flyway councils, in place for a long time and the Great Lakes fisheries work that has been done. I remember early in my career that those who had the best data won the fight, it wasn't collaborative. Sara makes a good point, we are beyond that, it is time to share information. There will be differences of opinion on interpretations using the best available science; there rarely is a unanimous voice on how to solve things. It takes time to evolve, to collaboration instead of competition, which has been the growth over a period of time. **Jim D.** – Sometimes the success of the structure depends on where authorities lay. At the heart of discussion on LCCs is, partly where do the authorities lay. In larger conservation efforts, like monarchs and others, is multi-state so at the table are all these other partners and that is why we gravitated to regional associations; each state is represented in

a broader geographical context. For LCCs, each state is not directly represented, represented in other ways. Does that tell us anything on how we move forward with regional conservation collaboration and do something like an LCC in the future? *Kelley* – When started looking at monarch conservation, and even now, we want to look at what systems already exist; what does MAFWA provide or any other organization we participate in, what do JVs do, so we can decide if we can use those systems or make modifications to set priorities and come together in state conservation needs. Can you use them to perform that function and build project around that. My challenge is, how you still keep that long range view. My job as LCC coordinator, you don't even know I exist, because we can identify those issues today and try to come up with solutions before they become problems of tomorrow. That doesn't make you very appealing because you can't look to success because your success is avoiding the issue in the first place; ability to have long range view and anticipation. We, as natural resource managers and directors, never had that opportunity because we are putting out fires every day. How do we use the systems we have in place to still have that long range view and how can we accomplish that. When I was co-chair and sitting on national network council, I had my criticisms, exactly what you just pointed out, my concerns and coming into this role as coordinator, a different viewpoint; where can we be better. The original impetus to come here today was to look at ourselves and evaluate how we can deliver better. Now at a different point, if LCCs go away so what now? Even more imperative is what systems are available, what can regional associations or AFWA do to support this, or do we look elsewhere in federal government or look to other regional academic institutions or to NGO partners; everything is on the table. Taking a hard look at what existing frameworks are, even if Associations all deliver a little different what can the membership benefit from using those organizations. *Sara* – Jim, you hit on it well, with joint ventures we understand the why they were necessary. Yesterday we talked about how crisis brings us all together, like chronic wasting disease or monarchs; directors tend to be bigger picture thinkers and I wish I had capacity of some of my biologists to understand details. I spend a lot of time worrying about the future and what are we not thinking of that we should be thinking of now, but we don't have that capacity often in our agencies to think long range thoughts and what we should be thinking across our borders. If we are all convinced of the why we need this function; I think we do and heard Bill say the same thing; collaborative conservation and thinking decades ahead and what we do today to protect landscape level habitats and identify issues that may be forthcoming; may need to be thinking about now. Somebody needs to be doing that. There have been task forces and you have better history of, have there been other options; back to climate science centers, what do they do and is that a role. Are we all convinced that the why is important to all of us? A host of options to move forward, maybe we call it something different, naming may not be that important. If we are convinced we all need to be more collaborative on how we share information and plan for the future; identify gaps in our science, communicate together as decision makers, then maybe it is just a matter of what it looks like in this next generation. *Jim D.* – Thinking about challenges we have across large landscapes, occupies individual time and thoughts, but often we don't find the amount of time necessary to collaboratively share our thoughts on those things. Some forums and entities that exist are doing great work, when I think of AFWA committees doing good work and they move the ball forward in many ways lots of time, but also I know from being on some of those committees that there is not the time during meetings that exist to focus in the way we are trying to describe; and often not the time in regional association meetings that meet once or twice a year. It does seem like there has to be a way to connect the good work of AFWA, regional associations, partners, NGOs,

the Service and USGS in more strategic fashion, something that looks toward the needs of the future. It will always run up against the fact that when you are planning, it is not hopefully in crisis situation, and if not we sometimes don't even go to those meetings when called. The challenge is to find forum, or format, that can provide the functions you are describing on information and mission has to be well defined for participation to be accepted. Coordination required needs a lot of discussion too. Ron, any comments? *Ron Regan* – Good, glad you organized this session, it has been helpful. It is interesting that AFWA is pretty good at managing consensus issues. In my ten years, everything from marine protected areas to lead to whatever. This one we have never quite been able to get under so AFWA has never taken formal position on this. I think we should try to do what you are beginning to do today, look at lessons learned, look at points you all made and see if something new or different that might grow out of this. Meeting coming up in Denver where that conversation will occur and we will have some staff there to participate in those discussions. Part of problem why AFWA had a hard time managing throughout the states, with some kind of consensus, was it had a hard time figuring out what the purpose of LCCs were. It seemed like from the beginning and over time there were various iterations of what the mission of LCCs was. Then you had preservations of new inputs, like surrogate species, which created mini crisis's of their own in terms of giving state directors concerns about where all this stuff was driving to. At least two major national sessions with director of the USFWS at that time trying to work through those things and tamp down the fires that were immerging and keep train on the tracks. We are going to have to put some time and thought into what happens next; nothing, or something different. One of the things that did come up, in one of those sessions with the previous director Dan Ashe, was the notion of how well the flyway council system worked. There had been talk about trying to somehow morph LCC construct more akin to flyway system work and the partnership between states and the federal government, which now has 50 plus years of working together. Maybe need to circle back to that and see if something can be built. *Bill* – None of us where here for the early years of the flyway councils, but their first ten years might have been as rough as some of the stuff we are going through now. *Jim D.* – Well said, not only on the perspective you provide on the Association's role and discussions with the states and the Service, but also the fact that this should be lessons-learned exercise that hopefully continues into more substantive discussions on where we go from here and how we meet the functions we identified and what roles different entities play. Hope this started some of that thought process. *Bill* – One of things I want to make sure and recognize is regional structures of USFWS Region 3 and MAFWA and other regional structures, work well for having a direct form of communication, even though cascading process; regional structures are fairly critical for whatever comes next. *Sara* – The beauty of federal cooperation, we work together toward common goals and what you have heard today is let's figure out the next generation, what it might look like, let's not throw the baby out with the bath water. Remember core functions and importance of that and remember states want to maintain their authority and make sure that whatever this next iteration is that the mechanism serves as support to states in their role in fish and wildlife. Hopefully the future is figuring out the better path forward and continuing the strong function of sharing information, disseminating information and working collaboratively. *Kelley* – Loved my role in Iowa as director, a difficult decision to leave that, but I believe in the idea of collaboration, but was not necessarily bound to every way our LCC was conducting business. I had lots of ideas on what we could do better and wanted to hear from other people on how we could do better. This idea of working together on tough, hard problems and finding steps to solutions, is what drove me to the job and the mission of the work. Being

able to be that state voice and bring my perspective to larger scale has been incredible. I appreciate comments today and being able to talk today. I do take direction, appreciate dialog and continuing the conversation because there are so many partnerships, so much work and momentum going on behind this idea of landscape or regional or collaborative and so many partners at the table who aren't in government who contribute. Making sure we have meaningful ways to incorporate all of these viewpoints and understanding that the Service and the states stand in these jurisdictional roles. Moving forward is incredible and will be interested to be part of the conversation as long as I possibly can. *Brad* – Purposeful conversation, wanted to hear comments of folks in the room and I am here to continue to listen and hear your perspectives on the work you have done with LCCs or joint ventures, my past experience; interested in helping to continue to facilitate this conversation. The future of collaboration is still yours and my role and responsibility is still here to help and continue to facilitate and think about that future. Please pull me aside and have a chat. Thanks for your comments; I already have a paper full of ideas. *Jim D.* – Thanks panelists.

*Refreshment Break – Sponsored by National Rifle Association*

### **Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Report**

*Ron Regan, Executive Director* – Focus talk on a new initiative at AFWA, Project WILD (PowerPoint – Exhibit 13); also gave each of you an AFWA Strategist (Exhibit 12), which is all the high profile stuff we think you should know about. Our president, Nick Wiley, covered the big picture stuff in detail yesterday; Endangered Species Act work, new administration and work of the Blue Ribbon Panel or as we are calling it now, the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife. Have folks from AFWA team here: Carol Bambery, in-house general counsel; Dean Smith; Davia Palmeri, young face and wiser than her years portray, she has fit well in four years she has been with us, she mainly works on climate change adaptation and energy portfolios; and two people who are new, Chris Moyer who is not an AFWA employee per say, he is employed by the U.S. Forest Service on a one-year shared position detail helping to take a peek at policies, procedures, guidance and guidelines between the states and Forest Service, what's worked and what hasn't and where are things and places ripe for improvement, excited to have this kind of collaboration occurring, one of the first work products will be unveiled next week at WAFWA, the state of MOUs between states and Forest Service, lessons learned and what we should do with them for the future; and Elena Takaki, new Project Wild director. Three announcements: make plans to be at annual meeting, new principal director at USFWS Greg Sheehan doing great work while still in Utah and helped prepare us for a great meeting at Snowbird, travel support for directors and think about going out a day early to get acclimated to high elevation because base lodge is at 8,000 feet. Second, Dan Forster mentioned in his remarks at breakfast yesterday another big priority we hope will gain steam is the PR modernization bill, Keith talked about looking forward to that bill's passage and AFWA is all-in trying to make that happen, you will be getting memo from me in next week or two about next steps in terms of contacting your delegations. Finally, John Frampton asked me to remind you that there will be national R3 symposium in May 2018, maybe here in Lincoln, Nebraska. Project WILD, we have three new staff people, Mark LeFebre and Kelly Reynolds who came with Project WILD, they are based in Texas, hope to keep them in Texas, but transition them into the Texas Parks and Wildlife office to give them a collegial atmosphere to work in and to save some money. Elena, the brand new director at our Washington DC office, she came to us with long

career in environmental education and Project WILD including tour of duty with Maryland DNR, she has proven to be a great fit for us. Give shout out for director of Nebraska for work of Lindsay (Rogers), she served on our hiring team and was a great help to us in navigating the acquisition of Project WILD and getting our feet firmly on the ground. *Jim D.* – Lindsay was also named Project WILD coordinator-of-the-year this spring. *Ron* – Most of you aware of Project WILD, a widely used, important conservation education program. When Project WILD folks reached out to us 18 months ago to see whether or not we would like to take them over, we did a lot of soul searching, certainly risks financially and otherwise; we put together a working group from AFWA executive committee to help staff work through the issues. Carol Bambery and John Lord were the two principals doing due diligence for us and had a discussion at our annual meeting last year; ultimately decided to make this happen and it took about six months to make it all fit. It fits with our strategic priority, strategic plan, fit with work of Blue Ribbon Panel and we believe it is a great opportunity for us to be good stewards of great conservation education plan. We hope to see it grow and recover some of its standing across the country. Took over on March 1, recently held a coordinator's meeting in Front Royal, Virginia a few weeks ago and are actively looking for new opportunities to build bridges again with core constituencies. It is housed in different agencies and organizations and in a couple of states there is no Project WILD program. As we have materials coming out on this work in the near future, we want to listen to what you think can make Project WILD better and have discussions with you to help make sure it is important to your work. Have transitions going on with operations, doing business planning to make sure we have a financially sustainable program, and doing strategic planning to boot. Wrapping arms around this great program, figuring out how to make it better and make sure it is on good footing from financial standpoint and make sure it will deliver goods and services that are important to you. Those are kinds of things Elena is going to want to talk to your teams about. Expect Project WILD guide to come out in January, originally scheduled to come out this summer and we decided to postpone it until we had a chance to have legal responsibility for Project WILD so we could help shape some of the messaging and content in the manual. Big subject of discussion at the coordinator's meeting was, are we basically ready to go. Project WILD has appealed in the past for financial support, you will see where some support has come from. We are interested in trying to integrate the North American model, or enhance that kind of work in the future curriculum materials. Thank you for great hospitality, as always. *Jim D.* – Thanks for update and all you do for the Association. There is confidence that AFWA is going to bring the right governance oversight and financial stability to Project WILD to ensure sustainable future.

### **MAFWA COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Ollie Torgerson, MAFWA Executive Secretary, Facilitator* – You will get survey, by email, for evaluation of this conference, important to fill that out to help us plan conference in North Dakota; it will come from Delaney Meeting Event Management. MAFWA has 13 working committees and reports are fired off quickly, but that doesn't diminish the work your staff does on these committees. Committee action items will be handled here during committee reports except for resolutions, we have two that will be discussed today, but not voted on until business meeting when Terry presents resolutions committee report. Sheila has a printed booklet containing all the reports, they are also on the website. Each MAFWA committee has a Director/Liaison assigned to it.

*Ollie* – Committee director liaison is Don Pereira, Minnesota DNR. There is one action item and it is not in the report because it came separately; it is a letter for your consideration.

Climate Change (Report - Exhibit 14) – ***Rick Schneider, Natural Heritage Program Manager, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – The Climate Change committee met four times by conference call and had nine states represented in at least one or more of the meetings. During the meetings the members shared progress and obstacles in integrating climate change considerations into fish and wildlife conservation in each of our states, a valuable exercise for the committee. Touch on three items our committee is engaged in. We collaborated with AFWA Climate Change Committee, primarily with Davia Palmeri, we are developing a national conservation needs proposal for the ability to facilitate delivery of climate change adaptation training to state fish and wildlife agencies staff and to provide travel support to attend training; proposal was not funded this year, but are going to try again next year to increase ability to address this serious issue. Second, in 2015 this committee developed four top priorities of research in the Midwest for fish and wildlife in regard to climate change. Last year, the Northeast Climate Science Center (CSC) developed a new project to address one of those issues we identified as a priority; it will synthesize information on the current and projected impacts of climate change on moose and white-tailed deer in the Midwest and develop management recommendations. During one of our meetings, Olivia LeDee, Northeast Climate Change Center, and two of her staff gave a presentation on the outline of this particular research project and sought feedback from our group on ways to improve and tweak that. Third, hosted webinar in which Kim Hall of The Nature Conservancy presented on a large project they are engaged in the Midwest region which affects 12 of the MAFWA states, entirely or partially, called Conserving Nature's Stage, to identify climate resilient sites around the region and identify connectivity between them so species will be able to move in response to climate change; a large scale GIS analysis. We invited all of SWAP coordinators from each MAFWA state, who each provided data, to that webinar. The output of analysis will be useful in conservation planning and will be available to states. Action item, letter to Ryan Zinke, Secretary of Interior (Exhibit 15), in support of National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center and network of eight regional centers. The national center and the eight regional centers' mission is to provide natural resource managers with information and tools to help them address climate change impacts to fish, wildlife and habitat. The letter highlights value of these centers to state wildlife agencies, particularly in the Midwest; in an appendix to the letter we provide some specific cases where research projects have been completed where results have been used by state wildlife agencies. Letter is asking for support, funding and general support for national and regional centers. Also, in addition there was a proposal in 2016 to create a separate Midwest climate science center. Currently, the MAFWA region is covered by two, the North Central which covers western part and the Northeast which covers the rest of the states, plus all of New England, 22 states. The issues of those states are quite different, so was a proposal for a new Midwest center and asking for support of that as well. One of the points we make about climate science centers is that they are very collaborative and they engage natural resource managers, particularly in getting input on what issues should be researched and which topics are important. For example, at Northeast center did a project that we proposed initially, they came back to us for additional information, so good at getting information that state agency managers need, in addition providing key critical research capability that states don't have. Climate Change Science Centers are crucial as we move into the future because climate change is going to continually and increasingly impact our ability to conserve wildlife. *Ollie* – Have an action item so we need to discuss the letter. *Jim D.* –

Request is to send letter so open that up for discussion. Do we know what the treatment of CSCs is in proposed administration budget? *Rick* – Proposed budget is for 30 percent reduction in their budget, currently eight CSCs and proposing to reduce that to four. *Jim D* – Is the basic ask to continue funding at current level or continue adequate funding? *Rick* – For centers to receive sufficient funding to support and carry out their meaningful work, that is the financial ask and another ask to support addition of new Midwest CSC. Realizing the president’s budget will be different than what comes out of Congress, we have cc’d the House and Senate chair and ranking member for the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. *Jim D.* – Does the budget identify which centers will be closed? *Olivia/Rick* – No. *Jim D.* – Since it doesn’t ask for particular dollar amount, but sufficient funds, and doesn’t propose closing all CSCs, I could support this. *Wayne* – What is likelihood of getting additional center when going to close half of the current ones? *Rick* – That announcement came out after we drafted the letter. *Wayne* – Do we need to readjust the letter based on that fact? *Jim D.* – It could be adjusted to reiterate that we need to retain service for the Midwest states, if closures occurs. Care about all of the states, but we are Midwest Association. *Bill* – Add on end, request to carry on meaningful work for Midwest region. *Rick* – On second page is specific request for Midwest center. *Jim D.* – Suggest you take that out and add in the other spot. *Bill* – The first request is fairly open, just asking for continued support. *Jim D.* – Replaced by additional language at the bottom. We could have further discussion if we have a motion. ***Bill Moritz, Michigan moved, Dale Garner, Iowa second.*** *Tony* – Good letter and good approach, have reservations because a lot of different things happening at federal level with the budget, a lot of different programs are being cut and some eliminated, we just got done discussing that. How do we place this in proper context, is it better for us to have an overall federal budget priority letter opposed to just focusing in on one committee? A credit to the committee that did the work on this, yet if we are silent on other matters pertaining to the federal budget, does that mean this is our priority? *Jim D.* – Had same thought, but not sure we are well positioned in our committee structure to develop a total prioritization of the federal budget. *Bill* – How is AFWA going to respond for proposed budget? *Davia Palmeri* – Still working on our budget, but there are less than 10 pages that cover all of AFWA’s interests; this will be part of our comments. *Jim D.* – Tony, I agree with sentiment, but not sure we are in a position to do what was suggested by your questions. Not sure I am of the opinion to not express this desire; the committee came forward with it and I generally agree with it. *Dale* – If you don’t ask you won’t get, so go from there. *Jim D.* – Ollie, has Association ever prepared a document that more holistically weighs in on federal budget priorities? *Ollie* – Bill Moritz has seat on federal budget committee and I always ask committees for input on federal budget priorities each year, but we don’t get much, other than from Wildlife Health committee. *Rick* – We put it in our report. *Ollie* – So we had two committees respond. Bill, do you have any comments on federal budget committee; we do not as an Association make comments? *Bill* – Nothing to add. *Jim D.* – Call question. *Bill* – Live in interesting times. It would be best to listen through various committee reports because there may be other federal budget requests and related issues that emerge and think about, during our business meeting having a comprehensive letter similar to what was just described that articulates several points and concerns. Maybe a paragraph and a more thoughtful letter about overall budget impact. I suggest we table this until business meeting. *Jim D.* – Is that a motion? ***Bill – Yes, I withdraw to replace as long as my second agrees. Dale – Yes, I agree.*** *Jim D.* – Would you like to describe the replacement? *Aaron* – Would we be considering the modified letter we just discussed tomorrow? *Bill* – Thinking about pulling a paragraph or two out of it to make it part of a larger comment letter on the

budget. *Aaron* – If we are going to do that I would like the opportunity to see edited letter to read before we make a decision on that. *Bill* – This is a withdrawal of motion to replace with something else tomorrow. *Tony* – According to Roberts Rules, you don't need to replace it, you can simply withdraw it without a substitute. *Jim D.* – You could do either. ***Motion withdrawn.*** A number of people want to bring this up again, perhaps in larger context tomorrow. *Rick* – One last thing, there is a handout Olivia brought, a summary of some of the research in Midwest that Climate Science Centers have done, useful to Midwest agencies (USGS report – Exhibit 16).

*Ollie* – Dale Garner, Iowa is director/liaison.

Deer and Wild Turkey (Exhibit 17) – ***Kit Hams, Big Game Program Manager, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – We don't have any official action items, so just a report. Our whitetail deer herd is one of the smallest in Midwest, number 12, but our mule deer herd is the largest in the Midwest, just under 10,000; whitetail is 25,000 with North Dakota right behind us. Welcome to Mahoney State Park, a great example of some of the best deer and turkey habitat in the state. Also, an example of a deer-proof fence along Interstate 80; there are a lot of deer hit on highway and that 8-9 foot fence has been successful for us for the last 10 years. Committee thanks you for your support; we have been meeting for 41 years and I have been attending for close to 20 years. Kentucky hosted last year in Carrollton, Kentucky, their first year of hosting. They have terrific whitetail and elk populations, but have many dead ash trees. We just started with emerald ash borer here in Nebraska. We share a variety of issues at meetings and major topics over the years have included: hunter recruitment, especially with youth hunts and inexpensive youth deer permits; managing hunter expectations, when I see 1,000 plus people at a Wisconsin deer meeting it makes me appreciate our meetings with 5-50 people in attendance. Disease issues are growing, chronic wasting disease (CWD) is not looking good, no cure and nothing on the horizon and it is in 9 of our 13 states, maybe 10, and spreading. Hemorrhagic disease remains on the landscape and is significant in drought years. We lost about a quarter of our whitetail herd about four years ago. Ninja worm or ring worm significantly affects our mule deer and at times have lost up to 30 percent of our mule deer herd; we are in a lull right now and benefiting from that. Predation issues, coyotes have spread to the southeast and mountain lions are spreading across upper Midwest; most of ours are in western end of state, but have one here about 70 miles from Missouri River. Crop damage; deer/vehicle collisions, look forward to Farm Bureau report each year. Captive deer and high fences, feeding and baiting are problems we wish we never had; the spread of disease at bait sites and movement of deer in captive industry have been a major source of movement of CWD across the U.S., 25 states are now CWD states. Antlerless harvest and herd reductions are always a major topic of issue and some states have to work a lot harder at it than we do; we don't harvest more than 25 percent antlerless; trying to grow whitetail herd and are going to continue to allow our mule deer herd to grow. The trap and transplant of deer has mostly ended, but still ongoing with turkeys. The biggest issue I deal with is, where are Merriam turkeys; we have turkeys across the state and you can find something that looks like a Merriam's anywhere in the state, an interesting response, look for one with white tail feathers and you can call it what you want. Mortality events, we generally don't have that, but is generally a major influence in the Midwest. Our biggest issue is CWD, brought report put out by Alliance for Public Wildlife, printed in March, Valerius Geist out of Calgary in one of the authors (Exhibit 18), take one or 50 if you want them, love to distribute to people in this group. CWD is going to continue to spread; to control that will be to reduce our deer herds to younger animals where infection rate is lower; the one benefit of Nebraska having a low density deer herd

is CWD does not seem to move rapidly across the landscape. The first case of CWD was 13-14 years ago in upper northwest captive facility with well over 50 percent infection rate and that unit now is at about 4-5 percent and we will sample it again in another year. Unfortunately, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska are only states with low density deer herds. A problem we will be focusing on for a long time. Over the last 10 years, deer harvest in 13 MAFWA states has ranged from 900,000 to 1.1 million whitetail bucks, 2015 was about 1.05 million. Whitetail herds are stable and that is good news.

*Ollie* – Our President is director/liaison.

Feral Swine (Exhibit 19) – ***Sam Wilson, Furbearer Program Manager, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies established the Midwest Ad hoc Feral Swine Committee in 2013. Many of the people in this room recognized the opportunity to completely eradicate feral hogs in Midwest because these populations were newly formed and imported by people or have spread from adjacent states. This is an opportunity Midwest states have that many states in southeast would love to have. I want to thank you for your support of this committee and of the mission, which is to develop results driven in science-based management actions to prevent introduction and spread of feral swine and promote eradication of existing populations in the Midwest. The goal for the Midwest, in most cases, is eradication. The committee met this year in Orange Beach, Alabama at the first national Wild Pig Task Force Meeting. There is also the International Wild Pig Conference and these two meetings happen every two years, staggered, so feral hog meeting every year that we can attach our committee meeting to. Things have been changing rapidly in the feral hog eradication world; the last couple of years states have transitioned into the integration of feral swine elimination efforts funded under the 2014 Farm Bill, now fully underway with USDA APHIS Wildlife Services' personnel dedicated solely to feral swine control or elimination and it has provided funding for a number of states. Fortunately for us, we eradicated our feral hog population so didn't get much of that funding, a good problem to have. We use these meetings as networking opportunities to share information between member states and biologists who attend. I have a few information items, but no action items. One is the issue of using KAPUT a warfarin-based toxicant, a poison to control feral hogs. In Texas the EPA approved the use of KAPUT, something that was unexpected and it brought up a lot of controversy. Our group is in the process of developing a guidance white paper on warfarin-based toxicants to control wild pigs and there is concern for non-target wildlife. Since the meeting they attended, the manufacturer of KAPUT voluntarily decided not to pursue the sale of KAPUT in Texas for legal reasons and in part they have a market for feral hog meat and didn't want people to ingest this either; on hold in Texas, likely for two years because that is legislative cycle. We will keep our eye on that and keep you informed if anything changes. Second information item, listed as action item in report, but doesn't require a vote; charged with developing a management plan on sound scientific and proven methods to eradicate feral hogs; our group decided to table this charge in favor of continual evolution of more effective pig control techniques and ever increasing body of knowledge for ongoing research; increasing efforts of National Feral Swine Damage Management program and recent development of National Wild Pig Task Force. We want to make sure we have our ducks in a row before we finalize the plan. Last thing I will mention, another information item: encourage directors and biologists to think about paradox in controlling wild and feral hogs where some landowners are not cooperative with feral hog control efforts, which creates defacto refuges on these properties. Some of these properties not

working with member states also receive conservation dollars for wildlife management and habitat management. Might be worth the thought of creating wording, if states with landowners that harbor feral hogs and do not allow eradication, they may not be eligible for conservation and other wildlife dollars.

*Ollie* – Kurt Thiede, Wisconsin is the director/liaison.

Furbearers (Exhibit ) – ***Sam Wilson, Furbearer, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – Meeting was held in Decorah, Iowa and Iowa staff went above and beyond; 35 participants attended workshop with state furbearer biologists from 10 MAFWA states and also a biologist from Arkansas who came to talk about spotted skunk and efforts to quantify their distribution around the country. We believe there is a need for state wildlife agencies to maintain furbearer biologist positions and support travel to Midwest Furbearer Workshop. We believe it is imperative to promote quality furbearer management and research in each state. In director information items, the primary subject at most recent meeting was that in 2016, we had been asked to consider a large carnivore committee that would address changes in status for research or distribution for wolves, bears and mountain lions. We decided against creating that subcommittee, but had discussions again with additional input and our group has decided we will address these three large carnivores each year in our annual report, in the following ways: incorporate sharing of significant information at Midwest Furbearer Workshop, including presentations on distribution, changes in large carnivore harvest, seasons and protected status. In this report, at end in Appendix five, we provided information on the status of these large carnivores in their states, that includes whether or not species are protected, if harvest season, estimated population if available and section for update for new information about these species. Our intent is to use the Midwest Furbearer report to also inform you on these three large carnivore species from this point on. A few other information items, but not touch on all of them: research into working with Wildlife Services to avoid otters in beaver trapping mainly in Kentucky; the Southeast region is possibly interested in collaboration of muskrat research in other regions, particularly the Midwest, there has been a decline in muskrat populations throughout their distribution in North America, some states fine, but others not. We discussed population modeling and collecting trapper effort data as methods we could use to estimate populations of bobcats and river otters region-wide so biologists are discussing if that is cost effective and will provide good information. Update on gray fox genetics, there were conservation organizations that suggested there was a separate subspecies of prairie gray fox so biologists collected samples of gray fox in Midwest and submitted them to Dawn Reding at Luther College, she ran genetic analysis that preliminarily showed that western and eastern gray fox are distinct, but no evidence for prairie subspecies. Had Blake Sasse from Arkansas Game and Fish talk about the need for information on distribution of spotted skunks; this animal was common in early 1900s, but much less common now so we encouraged biologists in all of our states to try and determine spotted skunk distribution. *Ollie* – Has Service been petitioned on spotted skunks yet? It seems we are petitioned on everything these days.

*Ollie* – Mark Reiter, Indiana is the director/liaison.

Hunter & Angler Recruitment & Retention (Exhibit 21) – ***Jeff Rawlinson, Recruitment and Retention Program Manager, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – In the past year one of goals was to bring MAFWA and WAFWA committees together; we realized a lot of national leadership occurring in both committees on hunter and angler recruitment and retention,

spanning across the entire country and we wanted to bring those leaders together to discuss efficiencies in our efforts, learn from each other and help determine, in leadership capacity, what the next steps might be for this ongoing issue. The meeting was held in Litchfield Park, Arizona at the Western Association winter meeting and was a large success. We were excited to get everybody together and begin this discussion on greater collaboration efforts that we haven't had in the past. The meeting started with representation of various case studies, R3 efforts from across the MAFWA and WAFWA states, in terms of strategic programs that are now matching a fast growing still young science, in human dimension work and R3 and how those are blending together in a few states to provide some interesting results and warrants more study and modeling to expand to other states. Discussed benefits that could occur to R3 efforts across the states with Moderation of PR Act, as well as entertained an exercise on professional development; felt it was important and could be expanded through webinar or more activity in future meeting to other states. What it challenged R3 practitioners to do was instead of some of the Ad hoc ways programs have come together in the past, but to focus specifically on a particular target segment or audience or customer, what perception of the problem is, what need is and how address that need through an R3 programmatic effort, an eye opener to practitioners to start thinking in more strategic terms. We may be able to expand that into a future effort with other states as well. On second day, we got into review of hunting and shooting sports recruitment, retention and reactivation plan and some of the ongoing efforts in some states to implement that plan. We began to realize, pretty quickly that some states are struggling with enormous size, maybe complexity of the plan and where to get started. We were focusing on a few states that created step-down plans that are most applicable and supportive of that states needs with respect to R3, understanding the plan is pretty broad and overreaching and encompasses quite a bit. All states may not need or be able to implement all actions within the plan. A lot of efforts learning how some states stepping down the plan, how some states viewed the plan prior to that effort and potential need for other states in terms of education and how to begin stepping down the plan in their own areas and regions as well. Important as more states adopt efforts within the plan and begin tweaking or changing some of R3 tactics or expanding upon or enhancing some of R3 programs and activities. We began a discussion on next steps and critical needs across the country. The MAFWA and WAFWA committees, for the most part, have had quite a bit of leadership in R3 community over the last couple of years. As important as it was to bring those people together to begin discussing strategically how we might move forward with newer science and efforts, understanding what is working and what hasn't been as successful on moving needle on the dial for us; while good for these states and partners, probably good conversation for entire country to be engaging in. One thing we see in a lot of these meetings is a lot of R3 free practitioners, discussion on wisdom of what we realize is critical, R3 practitioners and marketing people and other agency staff that are heavily involved in R3, not just R3 practitioners doing programs, but bringing all of these people together; bringing more industry and NGOs together. Discussion about holding a national summit on R3 and everybody in committee agreed that would be worthwhile to expand this discussion and start wrapping everybody around the science we have today and start tailoring our efforts around that science.

*Ollie* – This committee has been in force since 1944, long standing committee which is larger than geography of our Association, but has been effective committee. Wayne Rosenthal, Illinois is director/liaison.

Law Enforcement (Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers (AMFGLEO) (Exhibit 22) – **Craig Stover, Law Enforcement Chief, NE Game and Parks Commission** – The best committee out there. Our meeting wrapped up last week in Missouri. There were nine states represented: Missouri, Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Ohio, Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Texas. Round table discussions and training was held on a variety of topics, including relevancy in the role of resource law enforcement, intelligence services, identifying partnerships, emerging threats, pre-employment training, constitutionality of fish and wildlife compliance checks, and complex field investigations. While there were no new resolutions the group is working on a mobile app for wildlife field forensics manual that will be handy if able to get that put together. The 2018 meeting is slated to meet with this group in North Dakota, 2019 scheduled in Colorado to meet with investigators group and 2020 they will meet in Ohio on their own. Update on Wildlife Violator Compact, hopefully in near future Nebraska will be applying to become a member after passage of recent legislation here in May. *Ollie* – How many states and provinces are active members? It was 28 at one time. *Craig* – I can't tell you, but there are several. The meeting was light this year because of conflicts with commission meeting and legislation and those types of things, normally we get a pretty good turnout.

*Ollie* – Keith Sexson is director/liaison. They held their meeting here in conjunction with us. Legal (Exhibit 23) – **Tamara McIntosh, IA Legal Counsel** – This is my first time serving as the chair of the MAFWA Legal Committee, taking over from Chris Tymeson. In 2016, the legal committee met in conjunction with the director's meeting in St. Louis. Committee had informal and free flow discussion on a variety of topics including northern long-eared bats and amicus briefs, legal issues surrounding lesser prairie chickens, wolf delisting and injunction against the USFWS, cases of interest on trapping and CITES out of Montana, endangered species liability on dogs running bears and a guiding ban in Kansas. We had seven states attend last year and only have five states attending this year, so while I have the floor I am going to make the case for all of the directors here to encourage you to send your attorneys to subsequent meetings. I have four reasons why you should do this: indicative of that list of topics we discussed last year this is an incredible opportunity to educate each other on issues not unique to one state; to strategize and inform each other on past experiences; persuasive arguments in those jurisdictions that may apply to your state; provide case law and general support so we are more successful to serve you, our clients on issues we share. Likewise, it is a great opportunity for us to network with each other, as in all settings if I send out an email request and they know me, they are more likely to take time out of their busy day to answer my questions, provide case law or law issues or experiences to me. It can't be stated how invaluable that is. Your attorneys are most likely required to have CLEs, which are continuing legal education, some states require 15 or more hours to maintain your license and your attorneys are going to be taking time out of their day to attend these CLEs, but by attending MAFWA or AFWA we have been able to successfully petition state bars to give us credit and is more important to their practice and more beneficial to you, the client, than them taking time out to go to the convenient one down the street that may be on successful OWI defense, but possibly good to know after a good night at the hospitality event. Finally, it is an excellent opportunity for client engagement and the ability to better understand the issues, frustrations and policies facing the agencies as a whole. There is nothing better than an informed passionate attorney that can understand what the client is facing. While I am sitting here, not directly pertinent to legal issues per say, but it is helping me better understand what my field biologists, fisheries biologists and law enforcement agencies are dealing with, answering

and expecting. It really is a great use of your budgets. The hottest topic yesterday was, we have no money, so I understand it is a hard choice to send your attorneys here, but it is the best use of your dollars. *Ollie* – I agree with what you said. We have a policy here that our committees are authorized for three years and then you decide in bylaws committee whether to retain those committees. If they are not active, you are likely to not retain them. I don't know how this Association could function without having a good legal committee, so send your attorneys to these meetings.

*Ollie* - The President is director/liaison.

National Conservation Needs (NCN) (Exhibit 24) – *Jim Douglas, Chair, NE* – Thank Ray Petering, Ohio and Kelly Hepler, South Dakota for their assistance on this committee. Back in February, with help of Executive Secretary, we solicited proposals from membership for NCN priority admission for consideration by the National Grants Committee. About that same time period, or immediately preceding that, MAFWA was approached by North American Bird Conservation Initiative leadership to potentially co-sponsor a submission, which we decided to do. The submission was entitled, Grassland Conservation and Awareness: Enhance, Protect, Conserve and Restore a Diminishing Ecosystem. The need was well presented and statement of need and everything was prepared, it was broad enough to include a lot of things that are important to all of us. Like grassland conservation, pollinator enhancement, upland game bird and other grassland bird conservation, etc. It was a good submission, but ultimately was not selected for final NCN; I did list what was selected in my report. I appreciate everybody's input into that. As we go forward we want to think hard about what our NCN submissions should be, important for us to be vigilant and continue to submit NCNs. Those selected are fairly broad and very national in origin and the one we submitted fit that bill, but there are so many to choose from and few dollars that are ultimately going to be distributed in these categories.

*Ollie* – Again, our President is director/liaison.

CITES (Exhibit 25) – *Carolyn Caldwell, OH, MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Rep* – The CITES technical work group has been in existence since 1992, 25 years in this committee. MAFWA has been part of technical work group since 1994, 23 years; and I have been a part of it since 2003. CITES committee is made up of one person from each of the four regional associations as well as Deb Hahn with AFWA; Bob Broscheid, director at Colorado is our state delegate for the United States delegation that participates in CITES at the Conference of the Parties. We divide and conquer and participated in five different meetings last year; we don't all attend all of the meetings, it is not practical. We also conduct business via emails and numerous conference calls throughout the year. CITES is international treaty that deals with international trade, not domestic trade, of plant and animals species that are on three appendices for CITES. There are roughly 30,000 species listed, of which 25,000 are plant species and 5,000 plus are wild animals. Of those three appendices there are limits of what can be traded, Appendix I species there is virtually no trade allowed with 500-600 species on that list; Appendix II is the largest, trade is allowed but there are permits required for that to happen; and Appendix III is a list generated by the range country, so the U.S. could list something if they are wanting to get information on the amount of trade that is occurring in that species so they can determine if any additional measures would be needed or no additional measures would be needed; a way to track the amount of trade. Information items included in the report: black bear permit process, similar to many things we do in CITES, a long process, we initiated conversations back in 2014 with the

USFWS to determine if something similar to the river otter and bobcat export program should be in place for black bear based on surveys in cooperation with the furbearer committee. We surveyed the states to determine how much potential international commercial trade existed for black bear, it was not deemed that there was an adequate amount of commercial trade from this country to warrant a national export program. We then went back and looked at the process to see what we could do to streamline the process for state agencies that are trying to export hair and other scientific samples outside of this country; they need an export permit to do that, so how can we expedite that process. During discussions with USFWS we have made some strides in trying to expedite the permits for the states, but states are still required to get an export permit and it is being done on an individual state basis, we haven't been able to get national authorization, but we are doing what we can to help streamline that process and will be helpful for your bear biologists. Another item, within this country we have 57 species of terrestrial and freshwater turtles, which makes up 18 percent of entire global population of turtle species and there continues to be pressure on turtle species because turtles are one of the highest traded taxa for food consumption, medicinal purposes, traditional medicine and pet trade, so we have seen continued demand for wild caught and commercially available turtle species for those three purposes. In 2006, USFWS listed all species of map turtles and alligator snapping turtles as an Appendix III species to track trade. In 2016, they added common snapping turtles and three species of soft shell. The point I would like to make is folks are now required to have a permit to export that product, as of March they had only received one application for an export permit. From my standpoint I am questioning, are they being exported and if so are we going to get a big slug of permits at the very last minute; is it significant domestic demand and we are not going to see a lot of trade of these species or are they being moved out of the country in other forms. Another item is upcoming ginseng workshop that is going to be hosted in West Virginia, July 11-13 and some state fish and wildlife agencies actually have administrative authority over ginseng, but other states don't; it is Dept of Ag or commerce, it is a wide variety of state agencies that administer that program. What is common for wildlife agencies is if you have ginseng growing on public lands somebody is trying to harvest it, from that standpoint there is some value in staying engaged in ginseng topic because it is a resource on a wildlife area or lands that are managed by our agencies and we need to stay diligent on making sure that is done legally and done sustainably. The USFWS has offered financial support for state agency coordinators if your state agency administers the program. We have a new CITES representative from the northeast, Rick Jacobson, who some of you may know, I haven't met him yet, he was just appointed. We have had at least three conference calls, but looking forward to face-to-face meeting with him soon; pleased to have him on board.

*Ollie* – Bill Moritz is director/liaison so will be looking for new one.

Private Lands (Exhibit 26) – ***Eric Zach, Agriculture Program Manager, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – We had a meeting May 2 - 4, 2017 at Fort Robinson State Park, they were gracious hosts; 11 of 13 states represented. We started with joint meeting with public lands folks and heard several reports and presentations about Nebraska's Natural Legacy Plan, mountain lion research, big game topics and Berggren pheasant plan. We split into separate sessions and the private lands work group had a lot of items to talk about, a big year for that group because work on Farm Bill is starting to kick into gear. One of first things we heard was an update from Scott Taylor on the National Wild Pheasant Plan; he did a recent survey that requested member states to disseminate which items in our Farm Bill priority policy paper were highest priority and

increasing CRP acreage cap was number one on almost everyone's list. We also heard a Farm Bill update from Andrew Schmidt, AFWA program manager, he indicated the House of Representatives is already holding hearings, same as Senate, and the Ag Committees want to see a Farm Bill towards the end of this year. In March, directors ratified our 2018 Farm Bill policy paper, appreciate that, it was a lot of hard work from member states, as well as other states across the country. We also talked about conservation reserve program, we are reaching 24 million acre cap and have limited ability right now to sign up acres; the only thing you can sign up is the CREP program; hope that will change after fiscal year on October 1. Heard some monarch updates from each state, most states in the midst or just finishing up plans; heard new initiatives and new ideas for other states to take back and implement. We have two information items: want to reiterate and encourage directors and staff to use the 2018 Farm Bill priority paper as you work with partners in your state and other state agencies, to get message the out. The Farm Bill is an important piece of legislation. Other item is, we understand, as a group, that adding 12-16 million acres of CRP is a big lift, but we understand the need is there, there is science behind it and we will be looking at cost saving measures as a CRP working group, a subset of this private lands committee, to further message and make it more palatable because it is an expensive endeavor.

*Ollie* – Mark Reiter is director/liaison.

Public Lands (Exhibit 26) – *Alicia Hardin, Wildlife Chief, NE Game and Parks Commission* – Speaking for long time public lands chief who recently retired; we have filled the position so happy to keep things moving. No action items, but have a few information items. One of them is about drones, the good, the bad and ugly with drones; a lot of discussion about the good parts, how they can be useful in wildlife management in research, population and habitat monitoring; looking at using them for interior ignition for prescribed fire; marketing with drones, Pete was good about showing habitat improvement and other things. There can be bad things about drones: used during hunting and interfere or conflict with hunters; interfere with fair chase where people can use them to see where the wildlife are and radio back and forth; and can be used to chase wildlife and move them around. Some ugly things could be physiological impacts to wildlife, critical habitat or critical areas and times when wildlife need to not be disturbed like nesting and those things; also with critical species where we don't want them moved or disrupted. Because of that we had a discussion on whether there are currently regulations and rules and most states said nothing specific on drones, but a lot of other regulations that exist on airborne hunting acts and use of electronic devices, fair chase and hunter harassment that maybe aren't strong enough in some areas. We would like to take this back and think about it more in public lands group, other agencies and within our own agencies to have more discussions on how we can, in a positive way, but potentially regulate so not used in a bad way. Within our agency we came up with a list of things, three pages long, in wildlife division of the good things we could use drones for. We want to continue to document some of the research coming out and continue to look at conflicts and bring something to you, possibly a resolution, in the future; keep that on your radar. Another item that always comes up is conflicts between different user groups on our public areas; things from Pokémon Go to geocaching to horseback trail riding and things like that going on in our wildlife management areas; we want people outdoors, want them to be there, we don't want to discourage that, however some of these lands were purchased for the purpose of habitat conservation, sometimes for critical species or game management. So can be conflict of users so something we want to keep thinking about that and trying to clarify how

these lands were acquired, without alienating other groups, but also, as we are acquiring them, be aware of intended purpose in some of those grants. The last item was a resolution for neonicotinoids on public lands that passed last year to encourage additional evaluation about discontinuing their use on state managed lands; would like to ensure that is still on your radar to encourage looking at that in your own states and discontinuing use on your own lands. Another item that came up was federal budgets, not a lot of discussion, but encouraged group to think about how federal budgets impact public lands. A lot of land we manage is with BOR or BLM or other federal agencies and it is important for us to take a look at funding involved there because that helps us help them to manage their public area lands. *Jim D.* – Comment on drones, there could be a lot of crossover and discussion about drones between private lands, public lands, law enforcement and some other arenas because it is such a large policy question in many ways. I encourage some way for you to talk to other committees as well. The perception of drones and basic invasive privacy is something to add to that mix. I will mention interesting thing in using for prescribed fires; the cooperative fish and wildlife research unit in Nebraska has been working with different uses of drones and one of the things they developed was drones that could drop incendiary balls and they have given demonstrations; in fact last year did a prescribed burn and starting backfires, using drones. This is something that deserves further discussion. *Terry* – When we got back from last year’s meeting we did implement the neonicotinoid restriction and we found out you have to special order seed because everything is treated out there anymore and the cost has increased, but we fully support it.

*Ollie* – No director liaison, need someone to step up. One action item, a resolution.

Wildlife Action Plan (Exhibit 27) – ***Kristal Stoner, Wildlife Diversity Program Manager, NE Game and Parks Commission*** – We typically meet annually and met last May with twelve committee members present. One of the primary concerns this group is focusing on is Alliance for Fish and Wildlife and Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, so most of our conversation focused on that. We should actually meet more frequently, so will start to have conference calls quarterly so we can be more responsive. The action item we have is that the committee respectfully requests consideration and adoption of submitted resolution to MAFWA for support of recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on sustaining America’s diverse fish and wildlife resources and ongoing work. In addition to that we have information items: as mentioned our liaison position is vacant, learned yesterday most folks in this group are Generation X and like to go rogue, apparently, so we need a director/liasion. As we talk about Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations and as we talk about new funding source, in the meantime we have state wildlife grants and that is the bread and butter of state wildlife action plan implementation and those funds have gone down; while we are geared up and ready to go to support Blue Ribbon Panel things we can’t lose sight of the fact that we have state wildlife grants and it is an annual appropriation and have to ask for support every year. We ask directors to continue to be aware of annual ask for support of those state wildlife grants. There is a decrease of funding levels we saw in 2010, it was 90 million; since then it has been an average of \$60 million. We have seen, consistently between House and Senate about a 35 percent rate of support through dear colleague letters, the metric for measuring that support, but in Midwest states our representation is a lower proportion, only 25 percent support, so keep that in mind. If we get Blue Ribbon Panel funding that may not be the end all there because that funding level at \$1.3 billion is still only at 75 percent of what was calculated to implement wildlife action plans. Please keep in mind that other funding sources or collaboration opportunities are out there and we still need to be looking for

those for action plan implementation. Map is ring around Nebraska map (Appendix 4 in handout), which highlight states that have passed a resolution to support Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations; congratulate states that have already gone through that. Nebraska is waiting for bill to be introduced; we also wanted to provide an example to follow through, provided Kansas resolution in report appendix, to do those in your own states. Also, for your information, there is going to be a meeting of SWAP coordinators coming up this October; and going to be a fly-in for directors coming up this fall, date to be determined. Be aware that the fly-in is to support Blue Ribbon Panel and bill that gets dropped, hopefully in July, in support of that. There is a significant amount of collaboration happening between USFWS Region 3, states involved in that and Upper Midwest Great Lakes LCC who have met and identified three priorities for conservation to implement state wildlife action plans. The three things identified are grassland restoration, as well as pollinators and mussel conservation. They are moving forward to see how they can work across those boundaries to implement state wildlife action plans. Committee wants to applaud everyone here on the support and leadership on monarch and pollinator conservation. With state wildlife action plans there is a revision document from the USFWS that tells states that when you revise your SWAP, here are the steps you have to do and there are different categories of revision you can do. They are in the process of revising that and anticipate that is going to be finished by AFWA meeting in September; think they are going to simplify a few things, which will make our lives easier so we can do small changes, like just adding or deleting a species of greatest conservation need with a lot less process involved; so we can be much more nimble and adaptive. *Jim D.* – Refresh our memory on action you are requesting. *Kristal* – Committee respectfully requests consideration and adoption of submitted resolution, titled “Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Support for the Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources”, a formal acknowledgment of supporting Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations. *Ollie* – Will vote tomorrow during business meeting, but discussion should happen now. *Terry* – Ollie sent out two resolutions, this one and one on CWD last week. *Jim D.* – Appreciate submission of the resolution.

*Lunch – Sponsored by Pheasants Forever  
Remarks by Dave Nomsen*

### **MAFWA COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)**

***Ollie Torgerson, MAFWA Executive Secretary, Facilitator*** – Final committee report, Dale Garner is director/liason. Have one action item.

***Wildlife and Fish Health (Exhibit 28) – Kelly Straka, MI DNR Wildlife Veterinarian*** -

I try to make a point of not contradicting law enforcement, but our committee is by far the best committee that MAFWA has. We had 26 people attend our meeting April 17-18, 2017 at Bellevue, IA, representing 11 states and three federal agencies as well as two of our three Canadian provinces; we also had four people attend via webx. We meet for two days and day one we give our state disease reports and everybody shares information and as a veterinarian it is exciting to talk to vets in other states because we have different areas of expertise and none of us were taught this in vet school academically; we learn a lot on the job so it is important to have a support group. Day one we covered disease reports and they can be found in the appendix. Day two we started talking about CWD, we always do, all year long; we have one formal meeting a year, but talk weekly about what we are dealing with and finding what the new science is

showing. Dale gave coverage of Iowa CWD management program; Tami Ryan did the same thing for Wisconsin; and Erik Hildebrand did it for Minnesota. Those three states gave a run through of some of the challenges and situations they are facing in their states. We had two folks invited from Iowa State University, Dr. Jim Adelman gave an overview of an interesting project on HPAI, highly pathogenic avian influenza, in small mammals and birds around poultry facilities and wetlands; and Dr. Julie Blanchong who talked about three different projects she is looking at: one looking at landscape genetics of deer in Iowa and whether or not you can ascertain some disease risk situations from what you can learn about genetics, pneumonia in mountain goats and whether or not that is a concern of big horn sheep pneumonia and what role mountain goats might play, and white nose in bats and what we know about wind power affects on bat populations. Spent afternoon talking about HPAI again Dr. Adelman spoke. Had Dr. Tom DeLiberto come from USDA Wildlife Services and give overview of AI, HPAI and other viruses and you should have a chronology of evolution of those viruses in your report. Also had Bryan Richards with USGS gave an overview on CWD across the country looking at the number of positive captive facilities, number of positive states, a national picture of that. Exciting things came out of meeting, we had a couple of action items internally, talked about putting in for some grants to get some CWD education materials to have consistency throughout the states. Unfortunately, Michelle Carstensen who has been the chair of this committee for five years, has stepped down, but Dr. Dan Grove of North Dakota is stepping up as Chair and nominated me as vice chair. We have an information item, best management practices to minimize disease risk during wildlife captures, not talked about amongst biologists or wildlife health professionals, but role could we inadvertently be playing in increasing the disease spread; this came up in 2015 when we had HPAI situation and a lot of attention was on waterfowl capturing and banding and how we can make sure we are using good biosecurity as wildlife professionals; we talk about agriculture professionals who have responsibility, but so do we. We put together this information item to basically lay out some of the considerations you or your staff should make when looking at wildlife capture and handling events; hope to play with this more and make it more user friendly, but for now a good reference for you. Finally, we did have a resolution come out of the committee to discuss now and vote on tomorrow. Resolution in support of restricting importation of hunter harvested cervid carcasses to minimize the risk of chronic wasting disease spread. This resolution is asking, as a committee we feel it is important that the states have consistent language amongst the states on importance carcass movement can play for the spread of the disease. We have 33 states across the country that ban importation of intact carcasses from any state known positive for CWD; 11 states that move it a step further and say you can't bring in deer harvested outside of our boundaries and other states fall in different realms so looking for consistency in the language. Michigan is moving in this direction, we did modify some of the language from other states in that we are allowing quarters to come in as long as there is no part of the spine, exception for quarters that are cut and wrapped as long as no spine attached. (*read resolution*). *Sheila Kemmis* – Need to change date to 28<sup>th</sup> instead of 27<sup>th</sup>. *Jim D.* – States should consider that, would not be a mandate by virtue of belonging to the MAFWA, but strong consideration. *Terry* – The way I read it, is it is urging states to adopt what Kelly was talking about, similar to neonicotinoid. *Ollie* – If this approved, what are we going to do with it as an Association? Are we going to ask president to send it to all directors of fish and wildlife agencies in the country? *Jim D.* – This is intended to be nationwide? *Sara* – To notify the directors that is our position? *Jim D.* – Notification of our position. *Ollie* – Some states have already done it. Discussion or questions? *Jim D.* – How many states are CWD free? *Dale* – The ones that aren't

looking. *Kelly* – I will say 24 are CWD positive. *Jim D.* – To do this we would explain state of affairs to our commission board and then ask our them to pass regulations and one of the questions they would ask would be, how is hunter supposed to know which states you can't bring something from? My commission is always concerned that we are passing regulations that are easily understood and complied with by public. Is there any entity that we know of that is distributing information to hunters in one place where they could find that information? *Kelly* – Question was, any entity we can direct hunters to? One of things we can use in our field is CWD Alliance, they do keep that information as up to date as possible. In Michigan, the disease lab posts twice a year an updated cervid regulation table that shows all the states and what that states requirements are; that is on public website of the CWD Alliance, but how many hunters are going to go to that we don't know; what we have done in Michigan as well is putting up billboards along the interstate, across our borders, for people coming back into Michigan can see that we have regulations and restrictions in place. One of the things I harp on constantly, is it is not only important to talk about regulations but education aspect for carcass disposal. Even if you are in a state that doesn't have full blanket ban, you are still pushing forth that education message of practicing safe disposal and directing people on how to find more information. *John Fischer* – Not sure what the document was, but there was something from AFWA Health Committee recommending that states all include that information in their hunting brochures and encouraging their hunters to become familiar with regulations in the states in which they are hunting and in states they are driving through because in some of those states you are in violation if just driving through. Not sure where that went from Health Committee. *Ron Regan* – We sent it out. *Fischer* – It originated in Michigan. *Bill* – We incorporated it. *Jim D.* – That may be a good reminder, with the same messaging.

*Ollie* – Thank presenters and committee members for their good work. Might be a good idea to entertain a motion to accept all reports.

***Dale Garner, Iowa moved to accept all committee reports, Mark Reiter, Indiana second. Approved.***

*Ollie* – Always delighted to have John Fischer, SCWDS, University of Georgia to update us on wildlife disease issues.

#### Current Wildlife Health Issues

***Dr. John Fischer*** (PowerPoint – Exhibit 29) – I was going to talk about four or five wildlife diseases, but since I got here I have only been asked one question, about the macaque study on chronic wasting disease (CWD). I will get you up to speed on where we are now and talk about a couple of recent research studies making the news. To summarize, CWD has been found in wild cervids in 21 states and still detectible in 20 states, New York only success story; they had a couple of positive captives and a couple of positive wild animals back in 2005 and they hit that area hard and have not found any additional positives since then. Last year found CWD in new areas in states where we knew it already occurred, Minnesota was a huge disappointment because it used to be in the same club as New York, where that had detected the disease in one wild animal in 2011, outside a captive facility and have done a lot of testing and last fall came with more positive wild animals in southeast part of state, a dozen or so. *Jim L.* – We have 11 and two captive cervid facilities as well. *John* – Uncertain where that focus of CWD originated, but according to big game biologist it does not appear it is contiguous with one single wild animal from five years ago; it is in proximity of Wisconsin. Missouri found some more cases scattered across the state outside of their endemic area in the north-central portion, a few in

eastern part of the state south and west of St. Louis in Franklin and Jefferson counties and some outliers in the southwest at Lake of the Ozarks in St. Clair County. Unmanaged CWD foci continue to expand and prevalence in those foci increases. In last couple of years started to see peer review publications on population impacts; folks who say this is not a big deal and you got nothing to worry about, but reassuring to know we can document these population impacts and use that information hopefully to strengthen policies about preventing and managing CWD. We have an instance in northern Illinois where targeted sharpshooting has been somewhat successful keeping prevalence level low in affected area while slowing the spread of the disease. There have been some other management areas in Colorado where a similar approach has been taken over a number of years; to sustain; one and done projects have not been successful at all when managing CWD in the wild. When we look at CWD in captive cervids, found in 16 states since 1997, first state was South Dakota where they traced infected animals from South Dakota, went to Saskatchewan where they spread the disease from the herd that imported those animals to 38 additional captive elk herds in Saskatchewan. Since 1997, we have had a total of 87 captive cervid herds and since 2014, when USDA herd certification plan was fully implemented, we have had 22 herds, about one quarter of the herd detected in just last three years versus first 20 years or so of CWD. There is some bias in there with increased testing going on, but still concerning to me. In current federal fiscal year we have had CWD detected in seven additional captive cervid herds and four of those were certified by the USDA and state agriculture agency as being at low risk of having CWD, but had CWD. You will hear people talk about certified-free or CWD-free herds, but there is no such thing and no language like that in the federal regulation, they are regarded as low risk of having CWD. You will not even find anyone that will say an animal is free of CWD; you get one of two results back, positive or not detected, not negative result. We are also awaiting publication of USDA's revised CWD program standards for public comment. A number of organizations, including AFWA, Boone and Crockett Club, a number of individual states and a number of NGOs commented on a draft and we found some big problems with it and are waiting to see if any of those problems have been addressed when it is formally published, hope to reexamine before it is rolled out. Map showing CWD, as we know it, in North America, circles around captive herds in counties detected in wild since 2014. CWD was detected in Norway for first time last year initially in reindeer and a couple moose and since then detected in a couple more reindeer during testing of hunter harvested animals; another animal announced just last week. They have an ambitious plan to exterminate the affected reindeer population, they feel it is a recent emergence of the disease there and for that reason they don't believe they have significant environmental contamination situation. They also have a geographically isolated population due to mountains and other physical barriers, so that is there plan so see how it works. Two research projects that have gotten a lot of attention recently. One was done by USDA's agriculture research service in Ames, IA and they inoculated pigs at the age of two months with CWD material; 39 animals, 20 received inoculated intracranial, directly into the brain and the other 19 were fed CWD positive material. They culled at half of those pigs at age of six months, market weight hogs, and they were able to detect CWD prion in the hogs. They tested three different materials, mesenteric lymph node, tonsil and retropharyngeal lymph node and found CWD agent. They used sensitive techniques to do this, not standard, and found in three-quarters of the mesenteric lymph nodes in a little under half of the pigs when they tested tonsil and retropharyngeal lymph node. They drew some conclusions that the CWD agent accumulates in lymphoid tissues of pigs and it can be detected as early as four months post challenge. The pigs did not develop clinical disease and they ran the study for six years and

didn't see clinical disease, so they either don't develop disease or has to be prolonged incubation period. More significantly, they say the infected pigs possibly shed prions into the environment at any time after they could detect that infection and that lymphoid tissues of pigs could serve as potential source of CWD activity in non-human animals and food chains. You can access the abstract of that report at website link on slide. The study everybody is talking about these days is collaborative study between researchers at University of Calgary in Canada, Canadian food inspection agency, similar to our USDA in this country, and a number of collaborators in Germany. They inoculated macaques with CWD material in a number of different ways; material from elk and also from whitetail deer. They used four different inoculation rounds, one was intracranial (or IC), oral, skin scarification to mimic injuries in exposure and blood transfusion. Expensive study using 20 macaques. For those receiving oral, it was brain from deer that definitely had clinical signs of CWD or muscle from whitetail deer that looked perfectly healthy. If you look at the study, and give you link where you can watch this presentation; this report was presented at international conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, you will see a slide that shows the muscle and shows nerves within the muscle has a positive reaction for CWD agent and the author explains that those are spinal nerves, that means that muscle is probably back straps Kelly was talking about, close proximity to the spinal column and nerves were positive for CWD agent. The ones fed the muscle, got about 5 kg over course of two years, about 200 grams one time a month. In results, so far they have killed or culled, or one or two have actually died, a total of ten animals out of 21, they have complete examination results from five animals. They have ten animals remaining, seven years post challenge and no clinical signs whatsoever, including animals inoculated with skin scarification or transfusion plus some other animals. Two of intracranial challenged macaques had both microscopic lesions of CWD and positive, red staining in photo on the right, the photo on left with big holes, have neurons and vacuoles and spongiform change; a specific stain that lights up CWD in tissue. These animals also had clinical signs of CWD and a number of neurological abnormalities. When looking at the three macaques that have full results, one was fed brain from animals that looked like they had CWD, two were fed muscle from deer that looked perfectly healthy; all three had clinical signs of CWD and had microscopic lesions, characteristic of CWD and were positive for CWD agent by special staining in brain and spinal cord and in some of the nerves I mentioned. In contrast to the study out of USDA, these authors didn't draw any conclusions, leaving us to form our own conclusions or waiting until they have had a chance to look through the rest of the animals. There are some interesting aspects, some of these animals had diabetes, some that developed CWD, some that are still alive. Not first nonhuman primate study of CWD, disease was produced previously in squirrel monkeys, previous research in macaques in which the macaques did not develop CWD, haven't compared studies. You can watch presentation, an hour and 31 minutes, it is straightforward on the materials, methods and results, but no conclusions or summary data. Where does that bring us and what is next? This caught the attention of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and USDA. CDC had three people in Scotland at conference and USDA-Vet Services has a guy detailed to CDC and there was a memo generated from Atlanta from CDC to wrote to Jack Shere, deputy administrator for Vet Services, advising him about what is going on. There is a lot of interest and during the week of July 10, a webinar during which the author of that study will be presenting some information and answering questions; state wildlife agencies will be invited to attend, and that information will come to you from AFWA. CDC is discussing changing language in information to hunters on website, currently it reads, as far as preventing exposure of humans to CWD agent, it tells hunters to consider having deer or elk tested for CWD

if it comes from an area where it is known to occur, changing to recommend that you test the animal if comes from area known to contain CWD. Leave you on positive note. Talk about Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, on July 1 celebrating 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, could not be prouder of our organization or be any happier or luckier that I get to work there. Also, proud that we have five states who are members of SCWDS around this table. *Jim D.* – Trying to figure out how to introduce my commission to this information? *John* – Information on macaques study? *Jim D.* – Yes, interested in thoughts on that since they didn't talk about conclusions. How and when to I start introducing this new information? *John* – As soon as possible, if don't hear from you they are likely hearing it from someone else and someone is asking them questions. *Dale* – Fortunate enough to sit on committee and also be representative for the Midwest for the directors; I update my commission on all the new stuff every month because I think it is in their best interest to know that. When it came to this study, I talked them about what the study said, told them how much DNA macaques and humans share and left it at that with more to come. You can't say anymore than you have. There is a lot of changes coming along in the course of this. The thing with swine was done right in our backyard. *Jim D.* – I update my commission regularly also, but potential response to this, we are amping up our communication on testing to the public, what their options are and at one point subsidized monetarily testing for the public. *Dale* – That is one of the things CDC might recommend to hunters. We also know that Wisconsin is a perfect example, where people have been in that area for a long time and may have forgot about it and we know in some of the western states where it has been around for awhile they don't have them tested. Our job is to provide the information of what people do. One thing I get concerned on is somebody mandating that your agency test every deer you harvest, that gets very expensive. *Jim D.* – We have low prevalence, and I think there has been a lull in public thinking about this disease. It opens up whole new arena of amping up, at least in communications. *John* – One thing I forgot to mention is CDC as they discuss changes in their guidance to hunters, they are in contact with public health outfit in Canada too in order to try and keep things consistent between our two countries.

*Refreshment Break – Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation*

### **FEDERAL PARTNERS SESSION**

*Jim D.* – Greg Sheehan is going to start with federal report. Greg most recently served as the Utah director and some of us knew him as a budget and fiscal analyst; a good and varied background and has served on a lot of committees of AFWA and at WAFWA on budget and finance committee. He is going to bring a lot of perspective from the west from background in the states to his new job as principle deputy director and current acting director of USFWS.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

*Greg Sheehan, USFWS principle deputy director* – Today is day seven on the job. What a wonderful conference, I had never been to a Midwest, the friendly nature is great, and everybody is happy and gets along. At WAFWA everyone is fighting with each other and the feds, so I thought that was normal; good folks out there and many directors here are at WAFWA as well. Congratulate Jim Douglas and staff for hosting a wonderful conference, a beautiful location and everyone is helpful; congratulations it takes a lot of work to put one of these together. I didn't know a year ago I would be moving from Utah to Washington DC, each day I wake up and wonder what I am doing there; I know what the reason is now, I learned it when I

got here today. I have been working on the AFWA conference in Snowbird, Utah for this year for about two and a half years working with Ron Regan and Cindy Delaney and it is finally here. Right when I was thinking about what my introductory speech would be I am not there anymore. The North American in Spokane, the president of AFWA, Nick Wiley showed up with a broken foot and pushing a cart around; I showed up here and here is Jim with a broken foot and pushing around a little cart; so the reason I am actually at USFWS is because if we would have had it in Utah this fall, I would have a broken foot and be pushing around a little cart. As I jump into this role, I spent many years in the states, with conservation groups here in attendance and others that aren't working close together, I see them as friends and partners, as people I have always done business with, who help us be successful, we share missions and work together and with states; really to collaborate with anyone who will collaborate with us. I am now in little different role, but look toward to same friends and partners to move forward. I hope we can foster increased collaborative efforts build a few relationships that have broken down a little bit and get back on track and moving forward. I am looking forward to being part of that. The folks at Fish and Wildlife Service have been kind to me, no one yet has been anything but helpful to welcome me and show me the ropes. It is a good time for wildlife management in the country. Things you may have seen in news media, the direction Secretary Zinke is driving the Department of Interior: first is budget reductions, President Trump is trying to strive for a balanced budget and he asked his cabinet members to go back and look at their agencies and bring forward the underpinnings of getting to a balanced budget. We are well aware that we continue to increase our national debt because we are not living within the budget each year. The USFWS, and others, had to come up with some of the money, well over \$200 million for the next fiscal year just in USFWS, a big cut for a year and an ongoing cut. Many of the folks in the director's office looking at how to adjust budget and make this work and some of that was done a couple months ago. This has already been discussed in Congress over last couple weeks and incumbent upon Congress to decide if this is the time when they are serious about having a balanced budget or if there are programs they feel are worth retaining that will continue to grow the national debt. That is the reality we are all confronted with as it is debated back in Washington. USFWS isn't that big and if you take \$120 million off the table that affects a lot of employees; recommendations on eliminations of LCCs, as well as other programs; it reached into grants and took those off the table, not a fun thing to deal with. Don't know where this will all end up, but feel confident we will work through that and try to make this work in coming months. It causes you to reevaluate your core functions, to make decision on what we have to keep doing. Do we have to keep running refuges and national fish hatcheries and ecological programs and when these kinds of decisions come down you have to decide what you can't live without. That is the budget side of what we are hearing. Had one hour meeting with Director Zinke last Thursday; he is big supporter of public land and he wants them to stay public and he made that loud and clear; also access for sportsmen is top priority for this administration. That is tricky to do, I have been on the state side of trying to support sportsmen's access for a number of years. In our state we tried to look for critical pieces of land that we want to get our hands on that bind a small piece of land that can give access to thousands of acres. There have been a number of programs through the Farm Bill in recent years that have worked towards that, but there is still a commitment here and encourage states to look hard for those opportunities to exist. The Secretary of the Interior is asking us to create 13 regional ecoregions or watershed regions to look at consolidation of resources and bring different bureaus into the same place, a command center approach, equates to army and marines, seals and others who were co-located together in some form or fashion and

were able to move more effectively as a team. Work taking place internally to see how that would look, no long term plans for that sort of thing. If it works we will find out how and where as it is implemented. Grizzly bears, proud to announce reached Yellowstone grizzly ecosystem and grizzly bears were delisted Thursday; congratulations on that, know doesn't affect states in the room, but those are the kind of big wins we are looking for to show ESA is not a perpetual death trap for species that will never come back under state jurisdiction or authority. There are a lot of people out there who are not supportive of delisting actions, but good work on that. As Jim mentioned coming in as deputy director, don't know when there will be a director, but once one is named they will go through long and grueling Senate confirmation process; for now I am it. I would ask you as states and conservation partner groups in the room, I need to hear from you, what is you need or having problems on so we can start addressing them now because the clock moves quickly in life. Don't wait a couple years to take something on, be the first guy in line, a better time and place to get your issues heard and on the table.

*Noreen Walsh, Region 6 Director* – First public chance to say how pleased we are to welcome Greg to USFWS. Also, thanks to Jim and Ollie for warm welcome to this meeting. Some of you I know and some I don't know very well. We cover four Great Plains states and four Rocky Mountain states so we overlap MAFWA and WAFWA states. I am Midwesterner by birth, 22 years in Michigan, but transplanted to Denver; 27 years in USFWS and my background is a wildlife biologist and I have been fortunate to be all around the country. My philosophy is we try to work in partnership and finding common ground is the way we can develop the most durable and long lasting results for conservation; develop things that last. We some folks think of the Service they think we are purely regulatory agency. Last week spoke at a meeting where the speaker before me said that the USFWS only had tools available to stop things and I had to get up after him and take respectful difference of opinion. There are plenty of tools in our toolbox that are designed to facilitate conservation and partnership with you and designed to help us work together to catalyze and support the efforts of the states and others. I asked my folks, when faced with a conservation challenge or priority to look in their toolbox and pull out the tools of communication, collaboration and compromise when necessary so we can build strong partnerships that will bring long lasting conservation for future generations. I want to share a few examples of the places where we are trying to work in partnership with state colleges. The first thing that comes to mind is Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, our private lands habitat restoration program. We are fortunate throughout the Midwest to work with dedicated state wildlife agencies; in particular in Kansas working with dedicated landowners and KDWP to do good things in southwest corner on prairies and playa lakes to work with producers on lesser prairie chicken habitat and work to restore playa lakes for migratory birds and up to Flint Hills where we have partnered with Keith's team to bring scientific information to support additional conservation on grassland birds and prairie fishes. Also, in the Flint Hills our Partners for Fish and Wildlife program is working with producers and implementing some integrated weed management practices that will benefit producers and pollinators. We have spent quite a bit of time in this meeting talking about pollinators and I was inspired by sessions this morning on monarchs and other pollinators and also by the panel discussion yesterday afternoon; Pete Berthelsen challenged us with his assertion that pollinators are the single greatest conservation movement in his lifetime, I am not inclined to argue with him about that, he is right that the issue will touch so many people and interest groups and helps widen the circle with people who have a common interest, what is needed for conservation success. Compliments to MAFWA for great

work as an Association and individual states have done on pollinator populations in Midwest and special thank you to Ed Boggess, Karen Kincaid, Claire Beck and Bill Moritz and others for their leadership. Across the Great Plains and throughout the Midwest people are pulling together around monarchs and the Service is working on pollinators as well. Our grassland easement program partners with landowners to protect an average of 56,000 acres of grassland each year, almost all native prairie and we appreciate the states, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and many other partners in that endeavor; we tend to think about ducks when thinking about that program because this is prairie pothole region. Every acre we are conserving together, is not only benefiting ducks but native pollinators as well. For monarch conservation specifically our Partners for Fish and Wildlife program is investing about \$170,000 a year and \$50,000 a year committed to Nebraska and we are proud to be working with Jim and his team on, what I understand is going to be a full proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for additional resources to continue working on monarch conservation. Our fisheries work in partnership with the states, we are happy to partner with Terry Steinwand and North Dakota Game and Fish on fishery production on our hatcheries; at Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery continuing four decades of cooperative working relationship with the state, including record production of walleye, pallid sturgeon production that benefits restoration and recovery efforts for that species in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. At Gavin's Point, South Dakota our fish hatchery is producing all of the pallid sturgeon for the lower basin restoration efforts this year, helping continue restoration through Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri; also able to fix water supply problem that posed a threat of zebra mussels allowing hatchery to ramp up their production of paddlefish to meet the requirement from South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. I want to switch to national wildlife refuge system and work in partnership with the states; in particular work with Nebraska with rainwater basin folks and Jim's team work together to collaborate to restore wetlands on the Massey Waterfowl production area, including hydrologic restoration, water management structure, livestock management, native seed restoration and outreach opportunities. The work we did together accomplished both objectives in the state wildlife action plan as well as the objectives in our comprehensive conservation plan for wetland management district, a win/win for both of us. *Jim D.* – Thank you for that. *Noreen* – That example is particularly important to me because it illustrates the power of us working together and finding common ground and doing what we can to move the ball along together. Those of you familiar with rainwater basin know that public wetlands, both state and federal, make up only one percent of the area, however they provide over 80,000 100-use days for migratory bird hunting and pursuit of resident wildlife. Because we were able to work together with Nebraska 50 percent of available habitat located there for 8.6 million waterfowl that depend on rainwater basin for spring migration, is better off to support those species. Working together we are making a significant difference in rainwater basin. I have been inspired and heartened listening to presentations and to think about all we hold in common in interests for wildlife conservation. Looking into the future concerned because those of us who care about fish and wildlife conservation are greatly outnumbered by people outside this room who don't care. Continually feel pressure thinking about how we can widen that circle, how can we go forward together and bring more people into the realm of those who care deeply about it. In the panel yesterday about bringing together different disciplines to reach more diverse audiences was pretty thought provoking and inspiring. Ed said we need to find where we find interests that intersect. We don't have to have all of our values in common, just need to find where we intersect and capitalize on those. As Kelley said, find where circles overlap and the vin diagram, not just talking to

ourselves in the echo chamber but reaching out to others to bring them into fold so we widen that group of people that will actually care about and support what we are trying to do for future generations. One thing I know for certain, as we think about challenges we are going to face in the future, while working to broaden the partnership and circle of people, we can't afford to be fractured or have divisions within the conservation community between the federal and state sides or any other direction because people who don't care greatly outnumber us and we are united we are going to go forward more strongly to achieve those things we have set out to do. Thank you for letting me be part of your meeting, it won't be the last time I am here. My region ends at Nebraska, I don't go any farther east, but you know Region 3 takes over. Want Charlie Wooley to share a few things of great interest to those of you who border the Great Lakes, an update on Asian carp.

***Charlie Wooley, Region 3 Deputy Director*** – Greg, welcome to USFWS, an honor to have you. Jim thanks for hospitality, wonderful venue and wonderful meeting. Last Thursday, at 10:30, contract fisherman working for the Illinois DNR and with a DNR biologist captured an Asian carp, a silver carp nine miles south of Lake Michigan. This fish had probably moved up through the Illinois waterway system and probably moved through the Army Corps of Engineers electrical barrier, we don't know for sure but is in the realm of possibilities. This fish was found 35 miles north of previous record for silver carp in the Illinois water system; this is concerning, but not catastrophic. It does show the power of partnership for us to have such precise information where I can stand here and say the time this event happened, where fish was captured and where the previous silver carp was found in the Illinois waterway system. For the last eight years USFWS has been working with almost all of you folks here at the table through our Asian carp regional coordinating committee to stop the advancement of Asian carp towards the Great Lakes. This is a big issue, not only here in the United States, but for our Canadian friends as well. The last thing we want to see is Asian carp get into the Great Lakes and upset the balance of one of the world's greatest commercial sport fisheries. We have worked with Minnesota, Kentucky on the Ohio River, Ohio on Lake Erie, Wisconsin on Lake Superior and southern Lake Michigan,, Illinois (which is ground zero), Indiana and Michigan. We talk about Lake Michigan because we have a coordinating committee that allows us, as USFWS biologists, to be invited guests and invited technical assistants to all of you at the table. We know that when we bring biologists on board for first day as USFWS employees we let them know these are sovereign waters of your states...in these areas are sovereign waters of your states and our biologists understand that. When they get out there and start working arm-in-arm with your folks and start to do collaborative work, they understand they are not to give direction, not develop policy, not there deciding what is going to happen in regulatory management sense, they are there with opportunities and skill sets and funding so we can share to address this issue. For eight years we have been working as co-chair of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee with state partners and it has been seamless, even though a tough issue. The last thing I thought I would be working on was a species everyone wants to kill, the only thing worse is probably sea lampreys. I look at everyone involved with monarchs with a certain sense of envy because everybody loves monarchs, everybody wants to help propagate them and restore them. Here we want to draw a line in the river system and not let them get into the Great Lakes. It is a pleasure to be able to say that we have positioned ourselves, in last eight years, with all of you to do that. We have challenges ahead of us, but we do having funding in base funding that allows us to do an extensive amount of sampling and survey work. We provide money to Wayne and his staff to

hire those contract commercial fisherman to do this type of work and in the process of trying to make sure we get even more resources to Wayne and his staff to help with this because it is so important. We have an opportunity to thwart this movement north, hoping we will do that, we do have signs that pop up every once in a while that are disconcerting, we go out and identify what is happening and make adjustments. Wayne, your staff and our staff and the Army Corps of Engineers have been on the waters, in this area where this fish was found, since daylight on Monday and will continue to be out there for the next two weeks doing extensive sampling. We will give them a few days off for 4<sup>th</sup> of July so we don't bother people out there fishing, so we don't impact public recreating there, but will have extensive survey and sampling regime in place where we can work cooperatively with Wayne and his staff. The theme is advancing conservation through wonderful collaborative nature that we have here in the Midwest; proud of that, it takes a lot of hard work, it takes a lot of reminders to people as they start to expand and start to talk about the role of the USFWS, that they are aware that is role of state of Ohio or Wisconsin, etc.. Our role is to pitch in and help and fill in the voids and assist where requested. *Wayne* – Last one found in 2010 and when they did a DNA test on that it came out of Louisiana. This one they will have the DNA results in mid-July. Until then they are going to continue to look for more.

*Jim D.* – Thanks to all persons representing the USFWS, not only those that spoke, but those here today. We appreciate your support, cooperation and look forward to collaborative efforts moving forward.

### **U.S. Forest Service**

*Scott Spalding* – Don't feel quite like Greg, but only been here for two months. I am the Assistant Director for Renewable Resources, Steve's assistant. I hale from Montana, Region 1, northern region of the USFWS and I'm out here on a detail for four months. It felt like I have been drinking out of the fire hose, things have been pretty intense. Our region covers a broad swath of land, three major sub-regions, the Lake states, the southern tier Midwestern states and throw West Virginia and Pennsylvania in there, and northeast, New York, Vermont and New Hampshire. A lot of great opportunities to interact with state resources, with other partners on conservation; unlike the west, those big swaths of public land are not out there. The one thing I have noticed out here is that the Forest Service has the partner-thing down pat, better than they do out west. My first visit to MAFWA is a little bit like Greg said, spent more time at WAFWA and seen some interesting meetings where it does feel like there is more tension, not that people don't get along, but issues can be pretty hot out there sometimes. There is a good vibe of collective collaboration here. I will highlight a few national issues that affect our region. Since the election, our agency, Department of Agriculture Forest Service isn't as far along in some of the change. We have Sonny Purdue in place, but we don't have an under-secretary yet, we have an acting person; once that person is in place we expect to see where the agency is going to go. Our regional forester, Kathleen Atkinson was called to Washington DC to be deputy chief in acting stint for next couple of months, followed by Beth Pendleton from the Alaska region. We are still not hearing a lot about changes that will be coming. In spite of uncertainty there are a few overarching principles that have been telegraphed from our administration and things we are going to continue to focus on. One of the broader things is continued work with shared stewardship, both in and outside of Forest Service. Green lines as it relates to fish and wildlife management, vegetation and fuels management, using an all-lands approach and we have some tools for that. Most of you have heard about good neighbor authority, came out of the Farm Bill

and allows for direct sole source contracting between the Forest Service and state agencies. Region 9 is one of the leaders in the nation, but I think we can use it more. We have used it a lot for vegetation management, not just for fibers, but can be for wildlife habitat, for early successional habitat so need to start to explore those areas of emphasis. And if done right we can really start to improve some of the restoration and vegetation combined outputs. We also have the joint chiefs initiative that allows for direct work between the Forest Service and private landowners using two funding sources, which has been a big boon to work across the green lines and not just do work within the Forest Service. We also looked to continue and advance our National Wild Turkey Foundation relationship and partnership. We have helped fund and bring on biologists who have fledged their wings and broadened their own funding and done a lot of good for restoration both on and off Forest Service land. There are opportunities to grow that partnership. Number two, the importance of rural economic health, luckily the Forest Service is well positioned to take advantage of that. A lot of our lands are in rural areas and rural areas have been dependent on recreation opportunities as well as vegetation management and infrastructure, and jobs to some extent. In Region 9, we have done a pretty good job of staying fairly even in terms of expectations with timber production. Number three, expectation for increased pace and scale of landscape treatments, not without whole lot of extra money, going to be a challenge especially in area of vegetation management. We have some real expectations that over the next few years we expect to see our target increase, over time, and how we best engage in that increase in an integrated way as fish and wildlife vegetation managers. There are challenges out there, but unique opportunities. Capitalize on oak hickory restoration, if done well you can get accelerated benefits of pollinators, including monarchs, as well as benefits to avian species and other wildlife that depend on that ecological state. A few specific examples of things we are working on, Noreen mentioned fish, good to hear, did not hear a lot about fish during this meeting, but aquatic landscapes are equally as important. The Forest Service's fisheries program is about ready to roll out their new fisheries strategy. AFWA just facilitated a briefing on that with some of the state fishery chiefs. If any of you have heard of the Rise to the Future Strategy that came out in 1988, before that fisheries were on a different trajectory. We were cutting the heck of out things, eroding landscapes and there were a lot of problems and fish folks didn't have a real stake in the game. At some point in time communities and people who live in those communities get upset enough that the pendulum swings back and Don Beck had the vision to try and help that pendulum swing back. We went from 80 biologists in 1988 to over 340 in the late 1990s; a fisheries budget of \$10 million to \$8 million and got a ton of good mileage out of that strategy, but it is dated. It served our needs at the time, a lot of new management issues out there like non-native invasive species, climate change and we didn't have recreational fisheries built into that, this whole idea of strong partnerships and how to engage in that. We did bring in recreational fisheries group, Fishnet, where we had strong partnerships with recreational fishing industries, but that fell off radar after awhile. Now we feel it is time to refresh that vision and strategy, we feel we have the support from the chief at this time, and looking at later fall completion of that. Will see how that goes and if see if things related are culled out, specifically related to climate science cutback or not, that remains to be seen. We heard a lot about monarchs and pollinators and I think we can be players in that as well. When I first came on two months ago, I sat down and visited with a bunch of our staff on things they were working on and one of the things that came to my attention was, we have a national framework monarch strategy. Very general like we heard about today, step-down strategies, and had monarch strategy pretty close to the finish line, but our director didn't quite know where to go with it next. Concerned that it

would force the hand too much on managers. I looked at the document and how they dealt with opportunities, scientific uncertainty and our small place in this broader landscape and I thought it was done really well and looking at how to get that to the finish line. We are working with our regional forester, with directors in regional offices, with forest supervisors and district rangers on public relations campaign to try to demonstrate how beneficial this can be to their integrated work and contribute to things they need to be concerned about and not single resource sort of management. The Washington Office completed that in 2015, broader framework which is intended to elevate the visibility and provide internal guidance for monarch conservation on forests and prairies of eastern region. A lot of our units are right in that mid-America core habitat, not big swaths of land, but we got to play the partner role in doing our share out there and not ignoring that. The first part of the document provides background of species status threats and eastern region's role in detecting and improving that core breeding habitat. We have a team of four botanists that have worked this. The second part of the document prioritized the medium and low goals and objectives for both Forest Service units and the region so we can try to be strategic. It gives us some things to work toward and benchmark against. The third and final part of the document summarizes very specific operational BMPs that are in there for most common Forest Service activities, such as road maintenance, prescribed fire, pest management, timber harvest, very specific things that we can raise awareness that aren't necessarily going to take a lot more money, but can provide some really good ecosystem services on the ground and will help us move the dial on some of our Forest Service landscapes. It is going to provide a trackable measurable target for monarch conservation; we talk about the 1.6 billion stems of milkweed, we will have other targets in there, but milkweed is part of that. It will track acres of milkweed plants, acres of pollinator habitat enhanced, improved or modified, provide goals for future planning documents and implementation projects. So we, as the Forest Service, don't play the largest role in monarch conservation, there are a lot of land types within our proclamation boundary that can contribute to monarch breeding and migratory habitat, open lands, wetlands, roadside corridors, rangelands, etc. Potential for us to target specific sites on the forest that we can strategically plant to milkweed, which may be a GIS exercise we can explore with some of our other partners and have some of that technical expertise to help highlight where you are going to get the biggest bang for the buck. We meet with USFWS next week to talk about the strategy; they have heard about it and they are going to look at it through that lens of the policy for evaluation of conservation efforts. As we get closer to time of listing, to have some of these other efforts in place and moving forward, fall along and pretty actionable, are going to be things that are looked at favorably by the USFWS. Hopefully the regional document efforts that stem from this will be a strong compliment to Mid-American Regional Monarch Strategy that we heard so much about and that MAFWA has been such a strong proponent of. Don't forget about the pollinators and we have to start looking at that as well, a bigger lift for us and tougher for us to get our head around, but want to try and get one of these things to the finish line where leadership supports it, is visible. They act upon it and then we see what our role can be with pollinators. We are trying to get more into the focus on North American bat acoustic monitoring strategy; done a lot of bat monitoring either in the winter hibernacula or more random acoustic monitoring throughout the summer, but not able to do anything with that. North American bat strategy, Forest Service, USGS and other partner efforts had a gridded system that helps you see where there is biggest bang for the buck for putting some of these instruments out there; monitoring bat populations. We are working with the Forest Service southern research station to try to do a power analysis to see what we need to do on our forested landscapes to monitor so we

can actually, with some statistical power, look at trends over time. Bats continue to be high visibility and a few more on cusp of listing. We are going to have representation at the ginseng conference in West Virginia in July. Fish passage has been in our wheelhouse, connectivity and movement of fish has been a huge issue in Great Lakes states; two years ago we completed our 1,000th AOP (aquatic organism passage) project through focused campaign through BLI called CLMG; we had partners that pushed for that in Congress; something we can show direct benefits from and looking toward that next thousandth AOP accomplishment down the road. Thanks for having us, fun being here; thanks for hospitality.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services**

**Janet Bucknall, Eastern Regional Director** (PowerPoint - Exhibit 30) – Started with APHIS 29 years ago after I finished my masters degree at University of Minnesota, first job was in Wisconsin working on goose damage management and beaver removal to rehabilitate trout streams, so the Midwest is where it all began for me in my profession. This is my first MAFWA meeting, you knew my predecessor Charlie Brown who retired a year ago and is living in Texas. Here this week with Gary Littauer, assistant director for the western region, Jason Suckow could not make it this week. Some of the technical areas I will talk about are livestock protection work update on M44; feral swine; Great Lakes restoration initiative; cormorants; and budget. First, M44, for us livestock protection is one of our critical areas and part of our heart and soul is to work with ranchers to help them reduce predation. We do that work in every state in the west and increasingly in the east in Virginia, West Virginia and the northern tier Great Lakes states with wolf management. Some of may have heard of issues we had over the winter with one of our tools, M44, one which occurred in Idaho, one in eastern Washington or Oregon and another in the northern western states. The one in Idaho was the unintentional take of a pet dog of a 14-year-old, a horrible situation; it caused us to take stock and slow down use of those tools momentarily to implement some interim guidelines. Last Thursday we rolled out our revision of our policy on use of that tool. Those revisions are wise right now and we are going to restrict use of that method M44 within half a mile of an occupied residence, which is the biggest change, but there are some other items like improving signage and proving degree we understand property boundaries. In MAFWA states we used M44 in Nebraska and North Dakota, but not in eastern states that are part of MAFWA; the only eastern states are Virginia and West Virginia. There hasn't been media coverage on that roll out; typically the use of M44 is in the winter. The next topic is feral swine and I didn't realize until today that you have a feral swine committee and I was happy to hear update from that committee's work. In 2014, APHIS Wildlife Services started its first nationally coordinated feral swine program; we receive \$20 million appropriation from Congress which has enabled us to step up the degree we collaborate with states. Our foundational tenant was we were going to seek partners in every single aspect of the work and we have done that. In last two years we have funded work, either by Wildlife Services doing the work or by grants to different states, in 41 different states. This project is representative of work Wildlife Services is doing now and into the future, based 100 percent on collaboration and in all of the states where we work we do so by working closely with other federal land managers, Forest Service, on refuges and with state wildlife management agencies and areas and with private landowners. Work is set up where activities conducted in states, when successful and feral swine are reduced or eliminated the resource in the program moves to other states where needed. That collaboration and agility characterize this program and will likely characterize all

of the programs we have going forward. One of the highlights of this work is close collaboration with states, we have Wildlife Services national feral swine steering committee and enjoy representation from AFWA; Chuck Yost from Tennessee and Greg Anderson from Virginia on that committee. In every one of our states we also have either a Wildlife Service's gathered up steering committee or the state agency has a feral swine committee; the backbone of feral swine programs. *Jim L.* – When you have detection status, what do you do? *Janet* – In the MFAWA states, key shows detection status, is a state where previously we had feral swine, worked collaboratively with the state and removed all feral swine from a state and called detection status because we continue to monitor for that for at least two years before we determine that there is no feral swine in that state. In Wisconsin at detection status, there are still some swine in captive herds that we will continue to work with. Throughout the U.S. feral swine levels are based on estimated populations in the state and range from 0 to 5, in MAFWA the highest levels are 3s, in Missouri and Kentucky. In Missouri embarking on exciting collaborative project and I want to recognize Sara and her group who has assisted on this; working to develop an excellent collaborative project which will start July 1. Putting 15-20 folks in the state to work with the state to bring forth strategic plan to eliminate feral swine in their state. That is a model program, which we hope to see in other states, but will be different based on each state. We appreciate the trust you put in Wildlife Services to proceed with that. The second technical area program is the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), an EPA initiative starting in 2010; we worked collaboratively with five MAFWA states and in FY17 we received funding from EPA for \$1.2 million. The work is in three focus areas, invasive species, near shore health and habitat and the work ranges from gulls, Canada geese, predators and cormorants to achieve those goals. In terms of the GLRI we are working with EPA and other federal agencies on that to develop plan three, 2020-2024, hopeful that plan can continue. The last technical area is cormorants; as many of you know the USFWS depredation orders were vacated about a year ago. The order identified migratory bird permits as an acceptable remedy for fish farmers in the south and folks in the north who were having habitat damage and resource loss from cormorants. Wildlife Services is working as a cooperative agency with the USFWS who is the lead agency conducting environmental assessment to move forward on that effort to enable the Service to issue permits to help folks with cormorant problems. Here in the Midwest and in Great Lakes states as well as New York and elsewhere have issues with cormorants on free swimming fish, other fisheries resources, habitat, wild rice, etc. We are hoping that process will be going full steam through the summer, looking forward to having a draft possibly this fall for public comment and review and final in the winter, which is great timing for aquaculture states who are dealing with cormorant damage on their fisheries. Last note is about budget, the FY17 appropriations bill was signed in early May and emphasizes priority areas with feral swine, a \$5 million increase from \$20 to \$25 million; national rabies management program had an increase; and aquaculture, which is primarily to help folks in the south with cormorant damage had a little more than a half million dollar increase. Those are the increases we were excited about. With all federal agencies the FY18 budget is still evolving, concerning because our budget is proposed to be cut in half nationwide, not sure how that will turn out. We do commit to doing the best we can with the resources we get, we try to minimize the impact of budget cuts on our services, especially with work with the states. *Jim D.* – Remind me of what happens procedurally to have a state determined as status changes from one phase to another in feral hogs? *Janet* – We have a national feral swine program manager, Dr. Dale Nolte who some of you may know, in each state we have a steering committee, at least a thinking group around feral swine, and early on in this

program, 2014, all of our Wildlife Services state directors worked with your staff and other federal entities to pull together best estimates of feral swine populations in every state. We had to figure out way to divvy up funding so the right about of resources went to the states that needed it most; to start initial funding divisions and allocations. As we worked in those states as we worked with committees and relationships with state agencies, if populations decline or in some states feel we have removed all of the feral swine it wasn't a call that Wildlife Service's made unilaterally, we worked collaboratively with the states to come to a consensus agreement, if we felt eliminated that state is called detection status and we monitor for 2-3 years after that. If state were to move from level 3 to 2; that would be done through coordination and communication and consensus with steering committee. *Ray* – Wildlife Services staff in Ohio are absolute rock stars and fantastic partners, thank you for that. *Janet* – Thanks for saying that out loud. Andy worked with me when we were starting a controversial project at JFK airport to remove strikes with gulls and we needed someone of his caliber there. He always has good words to say about your people as well and on CWD over this past summer.

*Jim D.* – Ask vice president to move into this position, have something to take care of. *Terry* – Sam Wilson will give us an update on mountain lion research in Nebraska.

### **Mountain Lion Research in Nebraska**

*Sam Wilson, NGPC* (PowerPoint - Exhibit 31) – Interesting to talk about mountain lions, the fourth largest cat species in the world and native to Nebraska and lower 48 states. They are a pinnacle predator, only tigers, lions and jaguars are larger. We have this large cat living in an agricultural state like Nebraska and we haven't had them for approximately 100 years so it is interesting to see how our agency, the public, big game hunters and agricultural interests respond. Things have changed quickly over last 25 years and I will talk about history and research we are doing now. Quick timeline, mountain lions were native, but eradicated by settlers by 1890s, entirely gone by early 1900s; didn't detect any presence until 1991. We got our first modern confirmation in northwest corner of the state when female was killed in that area. In 1995, the state legislature listed them as a game animal with protection under game law. In mid-2000s they began colonizing the Pine Ridge, happened in a few of the prairie plains states, also South Dakota and North Dakota in late 1990s and early 2000s. One population in Pine Ridge and in 2013 and 2014 we began seeing evidence of resident breeding populations in the Niobrara River valley in the north central part of the state and in Wild Cat hills which is in the southwest. We initiated research in 2010; since 1991 investigating observations made by the public, if evidence of mountain lions we would confirm, if no evidence list as unconfirmed. The history in Nebraska, there were historical accounts of mountain lions in state, in 1890 settlers on Niobrara and Loop Rivers reported seeing mountain lions; in 1886 a note in a newspaper reported a mountain lion weighing 230 pounds was killed near O'Neill; in 1887, another note from a newspaper stated a mountain lion was killed by W.M. Long south of Rushville, in the Pine Ridge area. The interesting part of that, along with 1890 note by D.W. Lindeman that a lion was killed near the head of Soldier Creek, both are in Pine Ridge which is what we consider the best habitat in the state, near source populations in the west. The cats returned in part because prairie species recovered throughout the 1900s, proper game management, big game animals, game laws, protected prairie species, but deer were scare in 1900, not enough to support lion populations, we were lucky to have any deer at all. Change in management in mountain lions across western states in 1960s and 1970s when they went from a bounty animal to an animal that was protected

by game law. They did recover in those western states. I want to remind the public, if there are rumors of transplanting mountain lions that Nebraska is bordered by three states with large mountain lion populations and they can walk in at any time; and that happened in 1991, right near D.W. Lindeman sighting, so good habitat remains there. Recent expansion in Midwest (map from slide) green is established distribution, gray area that fans out from western states is where they have been expanding into over the last 25 years; in Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota there are a few island populations, but most of these animals that dispersed out have been young males and you can't have a population without females. Three females have been documented outside established breeding range over the last few years. We have a female that has been in southeast Nebraska for a couple of years and we are tracking that through trail cameras, taken DNA samples and I will talk about her at the end. Also, a female documented in Missouri and Tennessee. *Dale* – They just shot one in western Iowa this morning, a female. *Sam* – Our experience in Nebraska, as far as recolonization by looking at confirmed presence of mountain lions that we documented by evidence of the cats themselves. In 1991 one confirmation in northwest part of state; 1992/1993 one or none or a few in the west because that is where source population likely is; in 2000, still random, mostly in the west, but not really bunching up until about 2005. In 2005, we started looking at Niobrara River area and Pine Ridge and by 2006 we saw something different here. Instead of seeing single confirmations randomly dispersed, we had repeated confirmations that are consistent with an animal with a home range there, not consistent with animal dispersing through an area. It was detectable here, so expect detectable in other Midwestern states with home ranges of mountain lions, particularly with trail cams these days. Over time, more confirmations are stacking up in Pine Ridge and a couple of other areas. The types of mountain lion confirmations we are getting; trail camera photos took off in about 2006 when they changed from 35mm cameras that would last five days on batteries, now have digital cameras and public puts out thousands so we collect all of that information and confirm from those. Some are hit by vehicles or accidentally trapped and we run genetic surveys. If you look for local reproducing populations, you can get a large amount of data fairly easily. Examples of dispersing animals covering incredible distances: there is an excellent radio collaring program in the Black Hills and one was hit by a train in Oklahoma, one hit by semi near Valentine, Nebraska, one killed by vehicle in Saskatchewan Canada and an animal that went through Minnesota, Michigan and New York and was killed by a vehicle in Connecticut, that animal was confirmed through DNA. It clearly shows animals can cover great distances and could show up anywhere in the lower 48 states. An overview of past research, we have been investigating presence for nearly 30 years, in 2010 ran our first genetic survey and created suitable habitat model, repeated genetic survey three times. The genetic survey consists of us taking scat-detector dog, hike him through best habitat in Nebraska and when we find a sample we GPS locate and send to genetics lab; through that we create a population estimate and can also identify breeding females because as survey is repeated we learn the age of some of these cats and can see parent/offspring relationships; and also a minimum number. The results from these four surveys has shown there are between 22-33 total animals in Pine Ridge only, not entire population and we have populations in two other areas and unknown number wandering the state as well. We have suitable and unsuitable habitat areas. The northwest strip is called the Pine Ridge, north central is Niobrara River valley and in southwest and west pan handle is Wild Cat Hills and a few other areas, cedar canyons that look descent and so does some of our riparian corridors. Much of state does not appear to suitable habitat for mountain lions. Our goal in management is to maintain populations over the long term as we do with all game animals;

manage like other game animals, deer, elk and big horn sheep, and that includes hunting seasons when appropriate. In 2014, was our only hunting season, we had four harvest units and newly formed populations in two of those areas and we didn't have any population estimate for so we blocked those off and did not allow harvest. We allowed harvest in Pine Ridge with established population and prairie unit were we didn't detect females so allowed harvest there. In Pine Ridge two males were harvested in first season and allowed dogs. Season in unit two only allowed boot hunt and a female was harvested, she was wearing a tag from South Dakota, which showed we are connected. In prairie unit harvested an adult male and a female over by the Iowa border. We sold 2,600 permits and all proceeds went towards research and management. We also sold a permit at auction. The year we had our harvest season in 2014, we had based the number of no mortality that we would expect off population from previous years and guessed what that would be and prescribed what we thought the hunt should have. However beyond the harvest we still would have had a record number of mortalities that year, 10 of 16 animals were females, because of that we did not hold harvest since. We are creating a population estimate again this year. Additional research, running GPS collaring statewide, a lot of that is happening out west; also creating camera grid surveys; and continuing scat-based genetic surveys. The objectives are to obtain best population estimate to compare with genetic estimate, using capture mark it capture with collared animals and genetic detections will be recapture. We also want to have Nebraska-specific data for impacts to prey species, in Pine Ridge in particular where we have big horn sheep, elk and mule deer, which are high profile; that will run until 2019. We presently have 14 mountain lions with working collars, 12 of those in Pine Ridge area and two in Wild Cat hills. We ear tagged 16 kittens over the last couple of years, thousands of GPS locations, investigated several hundred kill sights which shows us what the mountain lions are eating, and documented movement between Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming so it shows we are not isolated population, we are connected. Camera trap surveys are designed in a grid, each grid cell gets a camera and as populations expand or contract we can detect that, also we can detect breeding because if we get a picture of a female with kittens or two cats together will show animals are breeding. There is one female 70 miles south of us right now on the Missouri River, in 2016 documented she was a female through a blood sample that collected through tracks in the snow, but was not a good enough sample to tell the individual so I went back out in 2017 and got hair samples and did identify the individual. We have no evidence of males or kittens in this area, but that could change in the future. We are monitoring with trail cams. Mountain lions are expanding into and exploring the Midwest, prairie prey species are abundant, mountain lions are adaptable and resilient, we have them in three areas we know of in Nebraska and fairly large scale research project taking place and the future looks secure for mountain lions in Nebraska. *Terry* – Doing similar study in North Dakota you are talking about with GPS collars, trying to get a better population estimate also. I'm sure your big game people are as in love with mountain lions as ours are, don't like them too well and our ranchers don't like them, but are becoming more tolerant of them. We have had a consistent hunting season on mountain lions for about 10 years now; we reduced our quota a little bit because population is declining, but ranchers becoming more tolerant; mule deer are primary prey species. *Jim L.* – Bar graph, could you go back to that, I have a question. *Sam* – On mortalities? *Jim L.* – Yes, in 2015 and 2016 there is a disparity between males than females. Any ideas? *Sam* – I think the sample size is so small that randomly we could get a few females one year and a few females the next. I don't remember particular reason for that. *Terry* – You said black box was in hunting mortality; what were the other causes? *Sam* – We had some incidentally trapped and some found dead where we couldn't

determine cause of death. We had an illegal take; a number of reasons but unfortunately all stacked up in one year. *Tim McCoy* – That was two years after we had big fires in Pine Ridge and that same year we had a lot of cats that died; they were in people’s yards and they were afraid something was going to happen to them. Those were unexpected and a lot of those were young females; it was an odd year. *Blake Henning* – Wondering what they are eating, is prey mostly deer or are they eating elk or what? *Sam* – Mostly deer, which is what we expect and seen so far. There was one incidence with lion and a calf and we removed that cat; turkeys and maybe a couple elk, and a few instances where they are eating big horn sheep and they overlap in habitat, but primarily deer. *Tony* – What is your documented evidence of breeding population in Niobrara? I say that because we have never been able to detect anything in south central South Dakota. *Sam* – When we ran our genetic survey there in 2012, results showed multiple females in the area, which we didn’t know before that and parent/offspring relationships and that indicated could be producing females. Since then we have opportunistically been collecting scat samples and we detected additional females and males and when we have our with trail camera array up we see cats continually. It seems consistent with cats that have a home range there, multiple females, some of which are related so we are looking at that. I will let you know if they start heading north. *Tony* – One of the best tools we have these days are the trail cameras. Tons of people come in and say they have lions, and we tell them to give us proof because we can’t manage a population based on hearsay. These days with trail cams everywhere, there is no way a lion is going to slip in and slip out of an area. *Sam* – Definitely couldn’t make it through in the fall when everybody puts trail cams out.

### **Nebraska’s Outdoor Venture Park Project and Related Programs**

*Tim McCoy, NGPC* (PowerPoint - Exhibit 32) – You have heard Jim talk about this a little bit; it is an exciting time for us in our parks system. I am going to give you an overview of this project, a big capital campaign for our agency. Just starting work, some in this park which you may have seen as you were driving around. We are focusing on welcoming next generation of park goers, we see our parks as a gateway for people and families that are disconnected with nature. This project was identified as doing that as well as additional programming and activities to provide that structured introduction that families need or people who haven’t been outside for awhile need. Our parks are huge attractions for families and we are trying to bring families back outside. We know parks are preferred destinations; places they want to go, they find them healthy, enjoyable and relaxing and we see more and more demand for providing those educational and naturalist activities in our parks. We have expanded greatly throughout our park system. What we see is that it generates a whole new group of visitors coming from program to program, but they want that structure. Most of us didn’t grow up with that structure, it was running around outside and playing in the dirt and getting muddy; our park visitors want a bit of both of that. We want to provide those opportunities and venture parks. They also want some exhilaration and excitement and we are trying to provide that. Part of the reason we are trying to provide that is to target teenagers; when you bring a family of kids out to a park there are a lot of things that attract parents and younger kids, and sometimes we have left teenagers out. We are trying to find those activities so we draw them in with families; we provide them opportunities to get excited. We call this our venture park project and there are several zones we are focused on in all the parks we are working in. A discover zone, about learning and playing; provide opportunities to learn and play outside with educational activities and interaction and connect those people. It is not just with kids, we get all ages. Encounter zone, where they can go plan,

catering to where they are out on their own learning in a safe environment within a park where we can watch them and give them a chance to go out there. They want family time and an opportunity to build those traditions and make memories. Those are the things that people who come into our parks want to do and they want to take advantage of those programs. They want excitement, so we have some excitement zones in there and trying to make those for all ages. An imagination zone, that is where the kids get to play in mud, crawl in creek; we are trying to design features that will encourage that sort of outdoor play where they can make mud pies and can get as dirty as they want and we will provide a shower station for them. Those are the sorts of things we are thinking about. Last but not least, serenity zones, places where you can quietly sit back and relax, put your feet in the water and enjoy a peaceful time maybe with a glass of wine. We see our parks as that venue. We are working at Mahoney State Park, one of the center points of the venture parks; later we going over to Platte River State Park. We also have Louisville State Recreation Area and Schramm Park State Recreation Area with Ak sar ben aquarium, which is a big feature for us in terms of outdoor education activities. There are about 1.5 million people within an hour's drive of this, great location, and we are also utilizing this as a way to provide different features in these four parks so when people come and stay for several days we want to encourage them to go around that park system, don't just come to Mahoney and stay the whole time. Maybe go to Schramm and take in the aquarium and nature center. The work going on at Mahoney State Park activity center, see dirt work on end of the building, that is an expansion to that building and the big reason for that is to put in a new climbing center, a new activity to draw people in; set up with climbing walls, bouldering, some competitive climbs and self relay system so once people come in and get training they can climb on their own; also we will be monitored climbs. It will provide some of the tallest indoor climbs in the region so will be attraction to bring folks to the park that may just come for that and we are okay with that because we want to expose them to all the other things we do in the park. Another feature we have started work on: seen grading on hill is to create a new sledding hill with some new snow-making equipment; we have one on the other side of the park and we really needed some additional upgrades to that in terms of snow making system, so doing this and will have good nearby water supply, contoured hillsides for some free sledding, also creating a more manicuring sledding off a starter hill and including two lanes that will be an artificial surface with a misting system to provide some year around opportunity. The next feature we are really excited about, had jumps and starts on this but have contract with Go Ape as a vendor who is going to come in and build and operate a concessionaire a rope system, a diverse aerial course with zip lines; we want to tie in education aspect of the forest with this, but another new activity to bring people out to the park. It will be set up with at least three different levels, maybe more, and also bringing in an auto-relay system so you never actually have to manually unhook as you go through this system. There will be graduated skill levels and a lot of different excitement. We have a design team from them coming from France that are in the process of designing the course right now and starting construction late summer or early fall; looking forward to have that running next year; one of the largest courses they have done and largest in the Midwest. Moving over to Platte River State Park, we are in the process of building glamping cabins, glamorous camping; camping in a really nice cabin in a secluded area. They want to be isolated, set up for couples, tastefully decorated and one of the features is the bed can actually be rolled out onto the deck under the canopy if someone wants to do that and sleep under the stars, excited about this. Another new feature we are going to provide in the park is over on the Platte River on one of the hillsides in an excluded area hope to design several cabins with nice view of the Platte River.

Another activity that we will be building at the end of the summer, is taking the old pool at Platte River and replacing it with a two level splash pad, a trending activity and provides a different feature for us targeted at a different age audience than our big wave pool here at Mahoney. Given the distance, we believe it is a feature we can build there, we will also have shade structures and a birthday party area, that pavilion will provide some additional activities. One thing completed at Platte River at Jenny Newman Lake is what we call crawdad creek, a dual function artificial creek which helps oxygenate water from a pump that goes into Jenny Newman Lake and set it up with wading pools and ponds; set up to do good interpretation and we also extended and rebuilt the fishing trail access around the lake. Had official opening Memorial Day weekend, had educational activity to introduce this to people; had a great crowd, plans to last hour and half, lasted three hours, kids and parents were in the water and the kids had to be drug away crying and screaming; we've won when something like that happens. We were able to tie that in with some existing work we had going on with that lake. The biggest part of the first thing we are taking on is our interactive exploration center at Schramm; we have long had an aquarium and a small nature center there and this is one of our largest projects in our first phase. We want to enhance our ability to do interpretation of aquatic environments, expand focus on our terrestrial components and provide a classroom for education activities in this facility. Hope to have an open feel for people to move around in it and a completely reworked aquarium where we are trying to reflect our aquatic ecosystem, river ecosystems to show a large river system, a smaller stream system and a lake ecosystem along with other tanks showing interesting fish. We may use some of them to try and provide some aquatic invasive species and also some touch tanks to provide opportunities for visitors to touch and feel some of those things and features like pop-in windows, especially for kids to stick their head in there or crawl in there and feel like they are part of that system. All with the thought that we can encourage them to go out and explore the river. Interactive displays with trees and terrariums and hands-on activities for kids and families to provide great education opportunities, but make it as fun as possible. At Louisville we are working on developing a floating playground, an area that has multiple small ponds which are old sandpits that we utilize with a swimming beach and to add a feature like this, a pay to play feature, just to provide another type of excitement and activity. It is one of our highest demand parks, in terms of the amount of camping use, a day use activity that will help draw people in, but another feature people can use. We also want to add other water activities not in same area as this, like paddleboarding and kayaking with rentals there for people to be able to try those experiences and get them out on the water. Other projects in first phase, working on some bike trails and challenge course trails for bike riders at Platte River. Put in as many natural playgrounds and challenge features and trails throughout the park system, another great feature we want to add for kids to get them playing and doing the things we did, but in more of a controlled environment. Working on a lot of interpretive programming and on access sites to the Platte River, which ties in much of this corridor; working on canoe/kayak launch sites at Schramm and Platte River State Park, an airboat and canoe/kayak landing site at Louisville. Also, working with some other partners to eventually get more canoe/kayak access further up the river for those who want longer floats. We view this as the new recreation destination, an education destination; education and outdoor activities are a huge part and we want to bring kids into the outdoors and have fun. We want to be that place, whether from Lincoln or Omaha or traveling; they may come to stay for a day, but we want them to go out and have lots of different things to experience; go do fun stuff, do educational programs, or self-guide and do things they want to do; a real opportunity for us because we have parks in our agency so this allows us to tie

them in. At Platte River, great opportunity for first family-friendly shooting range in a park, just opened our one at the other end of the state near Scott's Bluff and have another one at Ponca State Park and it is really important for us to provide those other activities in a safe environment. *Sara* – Fantastic, I applaud you; this is some creative ways to engage folks. How much is private funding versus public funding? *Tim* - \$28 million of \$35.3 million project is private, so we have a lot of help. Our Game and Parks Foundation took this on as a large capital project and are very close to being finalized with it. It has been exciting, challenging and a lot of work and we will have an investment of about \$7 million from parks in it too. There was some previous work done with our legislature to help get some deferred maintenance money that helped make this possible because at the same time we have completely redone the water at Platte River State Park and are getting ready to redo the sewer system. We have done wade pool resurfacing here and getting caught up on deferred maintenance; that was critical for our Foundation to step up and work with donors because those basic infrastructures have to be there. *Sara* – How many state parks do you have? *Tim* – We have eight state parks and 77 areas. We have a lot of our smaller areas that just have camping and water and are very seasonal, but we have several state parks that have year around lodging on them. *Keith* – Is there a fair amount of airboat traffic on the North Platte River? *Tim* – There is some, one of the biggest demands we hear for airboat access is actually for safety issues because we have floaters and tubers; it will be a dual purpose public ramp and there will be some opportunities there. We have a fair number of airboaters, but sometimes that stirs up another hornets' nest of conflict; but the safety issue of providing that access for floaters. *Ron Regan* – When AFWA had its meeting in Omaha and we did the director's activity and shooting, were we at Mahoney or Platte River? *Tim* – You were at Platte River State Park right after we had developed that, it was brand new. We have had you at Mahoney for portions of meetings before, maybe a retreat here, but we have had a lot of meetings here in last five years. *Terry* – Thanks to all of the presenters, great job. Buses board at 5:15.

*Board Buses for Field Trip 5:15 pm,*

Offset Dinner Event: Platte River State Park

*Sponsored by Fresh Air Educators*

**Bill Creighton** made remarks.

Outdoor Heritage Education Center – A Friendly Shooting Sports Competition  
Walter Scott Lodge – Dinner

*Hospitality Room – Sponsored by National Shooting Sports Foundation*