

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Climate Change Technical Working Committee Report 2017

Meeting Time and Place

The committee met by conference call on October 3, December 13, February 21, and April 20.

Attendance

Six states participated in the October and February calls, five states participated in the December call, and seven states participated in the April call (see appendix 1). Nine of the thirteen MAFWA states participated in at least one of the calls.

Executive Summary

During the conference calls, Committee members shared progress and obstacles in integrating climate change considerations into fish, wildlife, and habitat management. Actions conducted by individual states include:

- Developing and conducting workshops for agency staff and conservation partners on topics including climate change, adaptation strategies for species and natural communities, and climate change scenario planning.
- Conducting analyses to identify climate change resilient lakes and streams.
- Collaborating with state and federal agencies and conservation NGOs to develop a statewide wildlife and ecosystems climate change response framework.

Committee members have found this information exchange to be very useful, allowing each state to leverage the collective intelligence of the group. However, because a number of states do not participate on the Committee, they do not benefit from the information exchange and coordination.

In addition to sharing information, during the year the Committee collaborated on the development of a National Conservation Needs proposal, provided requested input on a project being developed by the Northeast Climate Science Center, and hosted a webinar on a regional climate change analysis being conducted by The Nature Conservancy.

During our April meeting, the Committee decided to forward a letter to the Directors for action.

Director Action Item

1. A letter to Ryan Zinke, Secretary of Interior, in support of the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center and the network of regional Climate Science Centers.

Director Information Items

2016-2017 Committee Efforts

The Committee collaborated with the AFWA Climate Change Committee to develop a National Conservation Needs proposal for the Multistate Conservation Needs Program. The proposal would facilitate the delivery of climate change adaptation training to state fish and wildlife agency staff and support the ability of staff to attend trainings. Very few state agencies have such training available internally and many states have expressed an interest in increased access

to training programs. This training would increase the ability of agencies to plan for and implement conservation action in response to climate change – one of the greatest challenges to conserving fish and wildlife resources going forward. Unfortunately, the proposal was not funded. There are plans to re-submit the proposal next year.

In 2015, the Committee identified four regional climate change research priorities with regards to fish, wildlife, and habitats in the Midwest. The Northeast Climate Science Center (NECSC) is developing a new project to address one of those priorities. The project will synthesize information on current and projected impacts of climate change on white-tailed deer and moose in the Midwest and develop management recommendations. During our April meeting, NECSC staff presented an outline of the project and received input from the Committee on additional items to consider. NECSC hopes to have the project complete within a year.

The Committee hosted a webinar in which The Nature Conservancy staff discussed their Conserving Nature's Stage project for the Midwest and Great Plains. The goal of this project is to use GIS analyses to identify climate change resilient sites and identify connectivity between the sites to facilitate long distance species movement in response to climate change. The project, which is at the midway point, covers all or portions of 12 of the MAFWA states. The results of the project will be valuable for helping to prioritize conservation efforts in the states, particularly State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) implementation. The SWAP coordinators of the 12 states were invited to participate in the webinar. The results of the analysis, including GIS data layers, will be available to states to use in their conservation planning.

Federal Budget

In response to a request for comments about federal budget priorities, the Committee supports an increase in funding for the following:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife, State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG). This program has funded proactive conservation for declining species including research and monitoring projects, land acquisition, and habitat improvement. This program has been used to develop climate change vulnerability assessments for fish and wildlife species and integrate climate change information into State Wildlife Actions Plans. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which would supplant the STWG program, is pending before Congress. However, until this is signed into law, it is important to continue and increase support for the STWG program.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Science Support (including LCC's). This program has produced information (e.g. vulnerability assessments) and partnerships (e.g. aquatic restoration, forest management) to assist managers in responding to climate change.
- U.S. Geological Survey, National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center; Department of Interior Climate Science Centers. See Director action item letter of support.

Coordination

The rotation of the Committee chair normally aligns with the host state of the Directors' meeting, which would be North Dakota next year. However, North Dakota does not have an active

representative on the Committee. Pete Jacobson, MN, has volunteered to chair the Committee for the 2017-2018 year.

Time and Place of the Next Meeting

In 2017-2018, the Committee will meet quarterly by conference call.

Appendix 1. Meeting Attendance

State	Name	Agency	Oct.	Dec.	Feb.	Apr.
Illinois	Ann Marie Holtrop	Department of Natural Resources			X	
Indiana	Brad Feaster	Department of Natural Resources				X
Iowa	Katy Reeder	Department of Natural Resources		X	X	X
Kansas	Vacant	Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism				
Kentucky	Vacant	Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources				
Michigan	Chris Hoving	Department of Natural Resources	X		X	X
Minnesota	Pete Jacobson	Department of Natural Resources	X	X	X	X
	Olivia LeDee	Department of Natural Resources	X			
Missouri	Audrey Beres	Department of Conservation		X		X
	Janet Sternberg	Department of Conservation	X			
Nebraska	Rick Schneider	Game and Parks Commission	X	X	X	X
North Dakota	Terry Steinwand	Game and Fish Department				
Ohio	Nathan Stricker	Department of Natural Resources				
South Dakota	Eileen Dowd-Stukel	Game, Fish and Parks			X	X
Wisconsin	Tara Bergeson	Department of Natural Resources	X	X		

Appendix 2. Organizational Guidelines

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES CLIMATE CHANGE TECHNICAL WORKING COMMITTEE

Mission: Advance wildlife and fish conservation in the member states of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) by providing a forum to facilitate sharing of climate change adaptation information, strategies, and resources, activity that will result in coordinated fish and wildlife adaptation planning actions and recommendations to MAFWA from the member states.

Objectives:

1. Provide a forum for the discussion of how fish and wildlife agencies are addressing climate change in member states, including how agency staff view the role climate change plays in conservation, and how climate considerations are integrated into agency organizational structure, policy, and planning efforts.
2. Define common priorities, develop coordinated strategies, and seek multi-state grants to address climate change threats to fish and wildlife and their habitats in member states (as identified in their climate adaptation plans, if such plans exist).
3. Stimulate an exchange of information among member states on legislation, administrative rules, adaptation and mitigation activity, education, funding and research related to climate change and fish, wildlife, and habitat.
4. Ensure coordination and cooperation among member states and federal agencies in dealing with programs to address the likely impacts of climate change.
5. Work closely with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Climate Change Committee, the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, and other regional committees, institutions, organizations and groups working to address climate change.
6. Stay up-to-date on climate change issues that impact fish and wildlife and inform/advise the Midwest Association of Wildlife Agency directors on pertinent issues and solutions.

Membership: The membership of the MAFWA Climate Change Technical Working Committee (MAFWA CCC) is open to employees of member states and provinces. Member states will be allowed one vote each, regardless of delegation size. Representatives of federal agencies, research institutions, conservation organizations, and other individuals may be invited to attend Working Group meetings.

Officers: The MAFWA Executive Committee shall appoint a Chair each year. The Chair shall be an employee of a member state agency. The Chair and his/her member agency shall provide clerical support needed for conducting committee business and shall maintain a file of all minutes of committee meetings, correspondence and other items as necessary. The Chair's responsibility shall include, but not be limited to, organizing a minimum of one MAFWA CCC meeting per year, maintaining committee files, preparing necessary correspondence and preparing a report of all CCC activities for submission to the MAFWA Executive Committee. The MAFWA Executive Committee shall appoint a Vice-Chair. The duties of the Vice-Chair will be to assist the Chair as required, assume the duties of the Chair in the event that the Chair is unable to perform those duties, and to succeed the chair when her/his term is over.

Sub-Committees: Ad-hoc Sub-Committees may be appointed by the Chair to investigate and report on specific issues. Sub-Committees will be appointed by the Chair upon review of requests from members of the Executive Committee for specific Committee action.

Meetings: The MAFWA CCC will meet at least once per year. The meeting may be held in any member state or in conjunction with other regional or national meetings that are timely or to

reduce travel costs, or be conducted by conference call or webinar. The schedule and duration of each meeting will be determined by the Chair after consultation with other members of the Working Group. Notice of meeting dates and locations will be made available to members far enough in advance to enable them to secure out-of-state travel authorization for attendance.

Meeting Agenda: The program will be organized to permit adequate time for discussion of agenda items. Each Working Group meeting should include a short (10-minute) report from each state on the status of climate change-related projects in that state. Other topics on the agenda will reflect current issues related to the relationship between climate change, fish and wildlife, and habitat, as well as progress toward meeting the objectives of the Working Group. The Chair may request special reports from states and individuals on current topics. State and special reports will also be submitted in written format to facilitate sharing them with agency directors, maintenance of proper files and provision of reports to other appropriate persons. Guest speakers may be invited to Working Group meetings to make presentations on topics of interest. Short field trips may be arranged in conjunction with the meetings.

Attendance: To enhance an atmosphere of participation and exchange of ideas, attendance from all member states and provinces is strongly encouraged.

Business Meeting: A formal MAFWA CCC business meeting will be held in conjunction with any Working Group meeting. The business meeting will discuss and determine specific recommendations to the MAFWA Executive Committee. Recommendations to the Executive Committee must represent the majority view of member states/provinces. Each member state with a representative in attendance will be allowed one vote. Invited agencies, private citizens, NGOs and others in attendance are not eligible to vote.

Report: Following any MAFWA CCC meeting, the Chair will prepare a report for the Executive Committee of the MAFWA. The Chair will also send a copy of the report to all members of the Working Group. MAFWA CCC members should brief their own administration immediately following the Working Group meeting. The report shall contain a summary of the information presented at the Working Group meeting, items covered in the business meeting, any recommendations from the Working Group, appropriate handouts obtained at the meeting and names and address of all attendees. This report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee not less than 30 days before the MAFWA Directors Annual Meeting.