

Section Two

**October 20, 2020
Zoom Meeting
And
Exhibits**

MAFWA Board Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2020
10:00 a.m. - Noon CDT
Zoom Meeting

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

(Agenda – Exhibit A)

MAFWA BOARD MEETING

Call to Order – *President Kelly Hepler, South Dakota called meeting to order at 10:03am*

Roll Call – *Ollie Torgerson* – Colleen Callahan, Illinois; Amanda Wuestefeld, Indiana; Pete Hildreth, Iowa; Levi Jaster for Brad Loveless, Kansas; Brian Clark, Kentucky; Dan Eichinger, Michigan; Dave Olfelt, Minnesota; Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri; Scott Peterson for Terry Steinwand, North Dakota; Jim Douglas, Nebraska; Peter Novotny for Kendra Wecker, Ohio; Kelly Hepler, South Dakota; Scott Hull for Keith Warnke, Wisconsin; and Christie Curley, Ontario. Also present were Ollie Torgerson, Executive Secretary, Roger Luebbert, Treasurer and Sheila Kemmis, Secretary. Others: Kelley Myers, Bill Moritz, Craig Czarnecki, Mark Chase, Jim Hodgson, Ron Regan, Russ Mason, Claire Beck, Rachel Combs, Faren Wolter and Jason Summers. *(Proxies – Exhibit B, Attendance – Exhibit C).*

Welcome to Pete Hildreth – *Kelly Hepler* – Welcome to our neighbor in Iowa. It is a rare opportunity for people to move up in the ranks and into these jobs, there are thousands of people working in our agencies. It is a blessed and unique opportunity. There will be days you wonder why you took the job but most days thankful every day when you wake up. We are all your neighbors and friends, feel free to give any of us a call. The incredible support we have had from AFWA and committees and subcommittees and I am sure you will continue on in that tradition of Kelley and Dale, so we have already marked you to various committees. *Pete* – Thanks, warm welcome from you and the entire team. Dr. Dale Garner instilled in me how important this group is at a national level and I was part of MAFWA on the public lands working group for 10 years. Good to see familiar faces. Look forward to participating in the future and making sure Iowa is part of the national discussion. Look forward to this group of professionals. *Kelly* – MAFWA truly is the leader in AFWA right now, at one time it was the Southeast, but now in the position, thanks to Jim Douglas who has been plotting this for years. President Sara Pauley is leading AFWA, the first time to have a woman in 126 years and our executive committee is loaded with dynamic women so that is even better. I'm proud to be part of this organization.

Agenda Review – *Kelly Hepler* – *No changes.*

Approval of October 8, 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting Minutes – *Jim Douglas, Nebraska moved to accept minutes, Brian Clark, Kentucky second (Minutes - Exhibit D). Motion carried.*

Kelly – When we had the meeting a couple of weeks ago, there is so much work that Kelley,

Craig and others have been doing so we knew we needed some special time for them. That is what this morning is about, to list where we are in events and where we are on research.

Kelley Myers – Before I get into the topics I want to note people who are here on this call. Craig, Jim and Mark are on the line this morning to contribute and share perspectives from being involved in these various initiatives. I also asked Bill Moritz to join us, he was very involved with the chronic wasting disease (CWD) value stream mapping (VSM) and he has been involved and engaged under new cooperative agreement with MAFWA for MLI. Claire is also with us.

CWD VSM Action Recommendations – *Kelley Myers (FWS) – (Exhibit E – Handout)*. I invite questions at any point. We have a few members of VSM team present, including Mark and Bill, there is Scott, Levi and Ollie; feel free to speak up if you have anything to add as well to encourage discussion and perspectives shared. Sara was involved in helping us get started and Jim through conversations with the steering committee. We held value stream mapping event almost a year ago, in Columbia Missouri, started because of a conversation that started in the steering committee, “Who are we, as Midwest Landscape Initiative?”; and do we work on these types of emergent, eating-our-lunch type of issues and how do we work on it together. Do we put energy into this as MLI, or focus more on long-term landscape level planning because this can quickly overwhelm because we know how many fires we put out a day? We decided to move forward using MLI as space to test this to try and take a sticky controversial issue that affects all the different jurisdictions differently and figure out if we could meet objectives. Met last December. This conversation has been happening for 20 plus years, depending on where you are. We wanted to make sure had voices of people engaged in this, who are credible, have authority when it comes to issue of CWD. You think of John Fischer; Colin Gillan with AFWA Health Committee, who participated by phone all week; Dr. Dale Garner; Mark Chase, who serves on Secretary of Interior Task Force on CWD issues. We had people who represented the Midwest Deer and Turkey Committee, the Midwest Health Committee, connections to AFWA through Jen and Jonathan, who is now with USGS. We had lawyers, biologists, researchers. We had Sonya Christensen who works with University cooperative groups that are plugged into CWD. We could have had more voices but needed to keep a manageable group. Sara was our sponsor and she provided us with facilitators who are specially trained in value stream mapping, which is a continuous improvement approach, a rigorous approach that has a definite process to go through some steps. In this event you try to get as much information out as possible to get a lay of the land, to figure out where you should focus more intentional analysis and research. In this case we wanted to see who was working where, on what, doing what. We have been in this response mode on CWD for 20 plus years, or a few years in some cases and has developed over time as a response. Not very often do we get an opportunity to step back, analyze it and see how we want to move forward. Challenge was not to talk about CWD specifically, not to talk about magic silver bullet or how to solve this, what research we need or what priorities we need to set. It was how do we, as an organization, work together across all different disciplines and jurisdictions in a way that complements each other, shares information in the best way and builds on great work going on. Having been in on a lot of different conversations with a lot of different groups since December there is tremendous work going on in CWD and more broadly in wildlife health. You have amazing staffs out there doing great work and are not always able to make connection with another group because everybody is working at the end of their rope, working at full capacity. Take staff off one function to go work on testing; take funds away from one program to into

more surveillance. When I was an attorney I litigated CWD so that took two attorneys who worked full time for almost a year on one case, took us away from all the other work we were doing. We are seeing first-hand how much workload CWD is and the need to get efficient and better organized around this and other diseases. Value stream mapping was very visual, had double conference room with maps all over the walls, lots of ideas and perspectives being shared. Right off the bat we had broader network, we had people meeting each other for the first time. We had Ryan Drum from USFWS, you may recall him from monarch work, he came because he set up science partnership across USGS, USFWS and states, he knows nothing about CWD but thought it would be great to have his perspective. We had great diversity of perspective, had better sense of where people were coming from and you were meeting people where they were and trying to understand. Some of the defenses you might have in place to protect your turf or to protect direction you think something needs to go; those things began to lessen over the week. We ended up coming up with findings and problem statements that we have been refining over the last several months and are finally in a place where we feel we can deliver them to you. We came up with four recommendations. We also wanted to know how effective value stream mapping was. I used it in Iowa, Missouri uses EPA and some other organizations are using and we adapted it for state government work. We wanted to know how effective it was across jurisdictions where change management isn't imbedded in the culture. Part of us stepped back to see how this was as a tool. We have tremendous professionals working on CWD today and all the work we did is not a criticism in any way, shape or form, people are doing what they can with the resources they have. People are doing amazing work, across state lines, within their states and across organizations. The goal of this effort was to take all of their work, draw more connections between them and advocate for work going on. See what is needed and amplify what is going on. The group identified a few things, like providing more support, keeping groups engaged and thinking about whether we needed to improve our response in coordination. Putting into the system and generating what it can, people are doing tremendous work, there a few things we can fine tune and tweak but not going to get much more out of it with what we are putting into it. In next steps we wanted to make sure we were communicating the results to as many groups as we can so individuals, states and organizations can tie into what works for them or what steps they can take. Ultimately we need to make decisions about the direction that MAFWA, member states and the Service want to go. Ultimately develop an implementation plan and do it. We answered the why, like why do we need to get more organized around CWD, with no more resources coming in how we get better. Group developed ideas about what could be done and we are at the how do we do it phase, that can go different directions depending on the support. We cannot say how important the work is that is going on and none of this is meant to be a criticism of current committee work or individual states activities. This is an opportunity for us to stop and pull back the cover and look at how we can to work together going forward. We have this system in a groove, going down a track, takes energy to move it off of those tracks onto different tracks. That is where leadership of this group and decisions of this group come into play. If we are happy going down the tracks there is a lot of energy in that, if we want to take it in a different direction we need to use energy to put it in that direction. *Sara* – Emphasize, you are amazing, I don't know what we would do without you and we cannot express enough gratitude. To everyone involved, a huge debt of gratitude. In these complicated issues that involve a vast majority of our members, 20 plus years in the making and there is so much history, personal and organizational. To have this opportunity to hit pause for a moment when we are all spinning so many resources and our heads are down because we are

doing our best to react and respond and fight this disease. But the opportunity as an organization and as members all dealing with this same issue, we can hit pause and have the safe space to say, what have we learned, what can we be doing better, how can we move forward together, what does the future look like is such a powerful thing. Don't want folks to miss what MLI exercise allowed all of us to do, to just have space and focus to take a breath to figure out what we have learned to date and how can we together make a difference going forward. The power of MLI.

Russ Mason – One of the other things that is important with this effort is it served as a catalyst for us to be able to identify other significantly multijurisdictional efforts going on across the landscape. Kristen Schuller's work with surveillance strategy that involved almost all of the Midwest states as well as others. Sonya Christensen's work on management, trying to align management strategies across MAFWA and some other areas of the country. One of the things MLI may be able to do in this effort is, now that we identified some of these things, to recognize other various efforts going on that in turn allows us to be efficiency advocates and effectiveness of what we will do in the future because there are certain things already well covered multijurisdictional and we can focus our efforts in trying to capitalize efforts in other areas.

Kelley – Great point. Some of that will come out when we start talking about what is already happening. You should all have a copy of these recommendations (*Exhibit E*) and there are also some key actions. The team wanted to put together what problem we were trying to solve. We worked through these and the process we went through, started with 60 pages of recommendations, decided that was unmanageable. A lot of details need to be flushed out, so we wanted to give a sense of direction group thought we needed to go, so we wanted to come up with problem statement, what overarching actions to solve it and more specific actions to get a sense of the direction, but these are not all of the actions. Whatever happens from here, if a desire to implement some of these, there will need to be a lot of work with other groups tying into existing efforts so not duplicative and we can draw connections between them and leverage each other. With the first action is looking at what might be working in a few places and seeing how this can improve for the rest of the region. One of the challenges of CWD is connecting scientific approach to historical and heritage use of hunting. We have different behaviors in both realms, so glad we have social scientists here today. We talked about how members should be, not throw out all the science, but how can we engage with hunting community, hunting industry, stakeholders, landowners, elected officials and interact with those groups in a different way to use them as a tool to further some of the angles. Taking their viewpoints into account, what they are willing to do, and build into approaches and engagement strategies. The discussion of acquiring expert services, looking at social science, human dimensions, change management, public engagement and utilizing some of those unique skillsets to design and amend management strategies that incorporate that public. Find out what your public is willing to do, instead of this is why you should take on these activities, what are you willing to do, what do you think is important and engage them in part of the message building. Part of that would be pulling people together and listening to them in ways we haven't before. We do a lot of polls and have different public meetings around the states, but what information are we taking in and how we are evaluating information, analyzing it and using it. Change a little if we change perspective a little. Crafting messages and partnering with industry groups. Melissa Bachman has been working with National Deer Alliance and messages and is seen as a trusted voice in this. How can we pursue some of these other avenues to build public trust on this topic? There are a number of success stories, so how can we create a venue where we can share and disseminate success stories. All of this takes coordination and resources as well as commitment from members, certainly

professional services potentially for change of management, public engagement and a lot of work from education staff to take on some of these actions. When we got into recommendation two, these actions were more around coordination. Recognizing that CWD is not going away, not singular incident, is part of us now and tolling our staff. The recommendation circulated around is how MAFWA could more effectively use its governance structure or committees that exist, direction from directors down to committees, recommendations from committees up to directors, to communicate and coordinate efforts within and outside of MAFWA boundaries. Everyone in this event recognized a lot of work happening nationally that would impact this work and what MAFWA does will impact national dialog and recognition that goes back and forth. Recognition that there are some parallel efforts and outcomes under way, multistate CWD research consortium, and how can that tie better into activities of other groups working on these. Since VSM event there was a four corners meeting, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa, who met to start talking about how to implement parts of this VSM and beyond in those four states. We are starting to see some of these efforts take off in a localized region. How can we build on that across the region? Some of the ideas here, some need to happen but you can pick and choose. One of the recommendations was to hire a coordinator, important enough that MAFWA should hire someone who wakes up thinking about CWD or more broadly wildlife health diseases with CWD as the primary issue today. Have that coordinator work across MAFWA committees and be responsible for helping implement a lot of ideas and strategies in this document. There are opportunities for Health Committee and Deer and Turkey Committee in MAFWA to have more informal communication. There are some shared members but no intentional co-meetings of those groups to come at this issue from their various perspectives. Potentially there could be a lot learned, there was a lot learned from just having some of these committee members standing up and talking at the event. We thought, wow, wouldn't this be amazing to see some of this work happen across the region on a number of issues. Talking about potential for forums and tools that might be available, not just for CWD but maybe beyond. We all know the value of attending a meeting, but how do you get the resources and outcomes distilled down in a useful way for people who didn't attend the meeting. Exploring some ways, especially now with virtual world we are living in, abilities to connect in different ways. Look into different tools and forums that might provide not just more dialog but more feedback and more back and forth between some of the groups working on CWD and wildlife diseases. If there was a decision to hire a coordinator this is something that person could help with. This idea of building on that four-corners meeting, meeting annually with neighbor states and maybe building momentum at that level and having it come up through MAFWA and having ways that gets communicated. How is that happening, what is happening and maybe using different memorandums of understanding to show coordinated action and build momentum around some of these ideas so not just a one-off, states talking but others realize what the states are doing. Something as simple as designating CWD coordinator or Wildlife Health coordinator in each state, something not done right now. Have one person who is the go-to person, an actual point of contact person who can share information and can serve on some of these regional groups to provide the voice of the state or organization can be really powerful. Sometimes that is a hiccup in the work. Looking at potentially a shared website, a place for common messages, not just wildlife professionals, but publics, your legislators or whoever might be interested in how we are talking about CWD. The CWD Alliance has already looked into this and it is not very expensive, looked into cost of putting something like this together. Having one place people can go, where states and individual organizations could have their specific information pages, but some messages are unified, one

place with the best of what we know about CWD. Then providing more lock-down areas where there can be more collaboration to help with forum idea from earlier recommendation. Finally, looking at importance of federal partnership. Not just about MAFWA but how everyone can find a table, USFWS, USGS, Forest Service, EPA, DOD, any groups who have responsibility for large land management, involved in research and development around disposing of disease material. How can we all get on the same page? There is no formal mechanism for that at this point. There has been a couple meetings and have all been extremely valuable but no formal gathering. That is something that might be for national level, but if we could pilot something in the Midwest we could get that conversation going and be valuable. *Ron Regan* – Add two data points. One is if the ACE Act is signed by the President, which could happen this week. That piece of federal legislation establishes a national CWD task force and any state that has confirmed positive CWD will be asked, through the Governor's office, to make two appointments to the task force. Because of generosity of USFWS team, Deb Rocque, and science application team in particular, we have start-up funding at AFWA to help with our capacity to work on fish and wildlife health issues and we are going to be engaging in conversations soon about hiring someone as employee or contractor, not full time but certainly a significant amount of time and part of that person's portfolio would be CWD. *Kelley Hepler* – Great work. One question is identity. Are you thinking of having a separate website outside of MLI or under MLI umbrella? *Kelley* – I have a conversation when we get to the end on the role of MLI going forward. We will talk about that. We envision website as a stand-alone and the CWD Alliance has hosted things like this in the past, don't want to say they would be willing to do this now, but a possibility. Maybe a place at AFWA or MAFWA, or standalone, there is a lot of different ways that it could look. It depends on tact of the approach, hiring a coordinator or consultant or working within existing resources would define where it would be housed. *Russ Mason* – A question to Ron on the ACE Act task force two participants from each state. Given how those funds play out at the federal level, do those two participants represent both the captive cervid industry and state natural resource agencies? Any definition around that? *Ron* – It is meant to be one and one, an appointment by the Governor, someone representing natural resource perspective and someone representing diversified agriculture or captive cervids. *Kelley* Recommendation three, a unified position. The recommendation from the team is that right now we are not sure if there is one but having a clear and consistent message on CWD and recognizing all the states come from different jurisdictions and histories in terms of what is tolerable for restrictions on hunting or method of take. Having a unified vision on CWD, the exercise of getting there might open conversation and have positive momentum. When in Iowa some of the first questions I got were, when talking to a legislative committee, what does Nebraska or Illinois do. Being able to have a credible organization that is scientifically based and has a position can help an individual member who is being scrutinized. Actions include adopting clear and consistent message, including explicit goals and metrics, being informed by MAFWA committees working on CWD. Being consistent with best management practices (BMPs) adopted at AFWA. Building on what community has been doing was the idea. Then taking next step further of formally adopting a few of BMPs. Recognizing baiting might be a controversial hot-button issue that some states are never going to be able ban, but maybe get 10 of 13 MAFWA states to do it. It starts to send a message and starts to create an atmosphere for change where you thought it could never happen. The idea was to start with a few a lot of states can get behind and reinforce credibility of those BMPs, build on what can unite the group and slowly add more as success is found. Build momentum around implementing the BMPs. This was

starting to happen, the idea of getting committee groups together to look at CWD research consortium and have a way take what they are coming up with and compare that with what some of the management professionals are needing and seeing and having a way to have a feedback group. We have all of this research done and we have great work out there, at university and USGS science center levels and take that and make it actionable across a region. How is it shared and disseminated? How are priorities set around those goals? That is what this group is looking at. How can we use Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference for a separate CWD workshop or something to close the loop on work done? We are getting better at setting priorities and talking to each other as we are thinking about getting the work done. How are we sharing it on the back end? That is starting to happen but how can we make it more intentional. *Scott Hull* – There is more regional collaboration on research front than ever seen before which is fantastic. You have identified several of those initiatives and we are involved in several of them. The important thing is that those collaborations are more deliberately thinking about management and actions coming out. How to build in the communication about management actions right from the start, which is fantastic. Largely being done by research folks talking to research folks. I would advocate I think there needs to be an additional next step to be more deliberate about connecting those initiatives to management. It is happening but needs to go one step further and that is where some of the MAFWA committees could be involved and the role they can play here. *Russ Mason* – With the group being led by Sonya Christensen, there are a number of managers in that group, but we need to get that information out and develop a metric. The information is being shared, what isn't clear is whether or not that information is being incorporated into management programs. Secondly feedback as to whether or not it is working and what obstacles are to full implementation, taking further steps. That piece is important and goes back to original premise that there is a need for a little more sophisticated social science around some of the things we are doing. Ultimately, the science is pretty clear, that is not the problem neither is it that managers don't know what they are doing, they do. The issue is how, if there is a way, to provide effective communication to more likely engage the public and promote cooperation in ways we will all find helpful. *Kelley* – Recommendation four is looking at the idea of calculating costs. First the problem statement recognizing no one has adequate resources, everyone is struggling with CWD, it is the nature of the disease and how it spreads. To say CWD is here and there is nothing we can do about it might not resonate with public or maintaining credibility of our organizations to have an adequate response. There was an idea of making sure we have good evaluation of the financial implications of CWD response. Research and management, both in the here and now and down the road. Seeking to better understand economic impacts to agencies and communities. We understand there is a USGS project attempting to do some of this. Trying to take apples to oranges ways that different states account and how different organizations are set up and how they are approaching this to have a more comparative analysis across the region or a summation of how the regions is responding to CWD, in terms of dollars, staff time, etc. We want to reinforce the need to document current state-by-state expenditures. Looking at funding models that are available and opportunities out there so we are sharing grant opportunities or other creative ways to fund CWD. Making sure to coordinate where possible to minimize duplication. Having a sense of who is spending what and how might help with that. The second one we worked on the wording after VSM, some of the committees have not been involved in developing or providing feedback. We had a disaster plan, imagine 20 years in the future, deer hunting has fallen off either because of herd health or public health implication, worst case scenario. What are states doing to plan for a future where hunting revenues may drastically fall

off? What happens if it falls off and what are states doing to prepare for that and what partner organizations, the Service, USGS and NGOs, what are we all doing to prepare for states having a big alteration in the way they fund their agencies. That is what second action is about. Doing analysis of what is next. It can go into new models of funding and other work, at the very least being able to say to constituents that we anticipated something bad might happen and here is how we are planning for it. Summary of needs coming out of recommendations, all require commitment from MAFWA members. There is dedicated coordination and direction to committees, MAFWA board directing committees to change how they might be meeting right now if we were to take a specific action or to take a look at something. Also, more shared capacity from staff of different agencies. *Kelly Hepler* – When Ron and I had the opportunity last fall to sit down with Secretary of Interior and talk about a number of issues we did talk about CWD. The Secretary identified an overreaching concern and you touched on it. The concern is there a lot of people in the country that don't hunt and tolerate us because we have food coming from the field to the table. The concern would be, if we lose that connection then the tenuous support we have with relevancy would be lost. The broader loss isn't money, it's support and relevancy of where we stand as agencies. We need to identify that concern about how we keep relevant. *Kelley* - That came up in the group, connection to relevancy and overall support for agencies. You have had these recommendations and if you haven't visited with your staff who many have been involved in VSM event or may be one of the committees, they have been briefed on this. It was chicken and egg; we didn't want too far beyond the MAFWA board and committees to start developing implementation plans for how this could look. Here we are with where we go from here. I encourage you to visit with your staff about this and ask questions and you can talk to me. I am more the facilitator so don't have as much of an opinion, even though I worked with CWD for a long time. What does the MAFWA board want to do with this? There is a range of options. There is status quo, but just by virtue of having this event some opening up and immediate benefits; status quo is continuing down a road that will continue to produce results. With minor redirections to committees and staff resources that currently may be working on other things and dedicating them to this certainly could go further. Having coordination, someone to wake up and think about it every day could take you a lot further. If you are thinking about status quo then stop and let all of the different committees work and efforts go and results are out there and some of the committees can take them, but that is the end of this discussion. The conversation continues if there is interest in going down range of redirecting and possibly having dedicated coordination. The next step would be to sit down and develop implementation plan based what this group is comfortable with in terms of resources or redirecting staff. A lot of your staff are already working hard on this, so maybe augmenting staff to work on this management issue. Coordination could be a whole other level of expense. The next step would be to develop implementation point and find that funding. Whatever happens in MAFWA, there is correlation with what is happening at AFWA level and with DOI CWD task force. In this MAFWA CWD initiative that could have a million little bubbles showing different groups interrelating to make that happen and how organized you want that initiative to be. Kelly asked about the role of MLI. Back to the original conversation, when we were thinking about putting this together. The role of MLI is a space to have these discussions with core members at the table and help us unfurl what is possible. At the beginning it was anticipated that we would try to identify next steps and who could do what going forward and not for MLI to own it. Support in planning and continuing to hold it until decisions are made, we can do that. But there is a bigger conversation with MLI steering committee, with advice from technical committee, on continued

forum and what role MLI serves going forward. Complicated, I am here to deliver the outcomes as a facilitator to discuss next steps. MLI is more involved in providing forum and helping with planning and continuing to support what happens going forward to the extent there is a need for that. Open to your ideas and thoughts of what you have heard, what your tolerance or willingness is and your thinking. *Jim Douglas* – From Nebraska’s perspective, we don’t find anything negative about all of the recommendations. We should strive to enact all of them, realizing easier said than done. Think about, assume we enact all of them to some degree and had a coordinator, how much farther would we be, if we had already done this a year ago. Now figuring out how you are going to coordinate and bring together progress made because of having done it, towards the national task force, integrating with other regions. Is this going to end up being a model for other regions like we have with other things? Other regions, like WAFWA who have been dealing with CWD and doing lots of great work. How would the Midwest, and all the activities associated with this model of coordination, collaboration and governance coordinate with others who are also engaged? We need to move forward. Won’t find out what sticking points are and which of these recommendations are easier to pursue until you start. Would it be easier to start if you had the coordinator first? What is the real role of that coordinator? Would they be involved in designing implementation plan or how do we go about designing that? *Kelley Hepler* – Good comments. Anything else to share on this right now? *Kelley* – In terms of this discussion point, no. *Sara* – Completely agree with Jim and appreciate his thoughts. Let’s start. Question on coordinator. Is there still a role for MLI if they hear agreement to move forward on all the recommendations including coordinator? What are the alternatives, if we say coordinator, is that a new position with MAFWA, national coordinator as Ron talked about and we use another existing committee structure or entity like Russ mentioned, or is there somebody out there that can serve this role that is not a MAFWA person but can serve this functional role for us? The only caveat to Jim’s comments, but are there alternatives for coordinating function from MAFWA? Do we send Kelley and group back for alternatives? Not clear on that and who pays for that. *Kelley Hepler* – Want to hear from Craig as co-chair of MLI, Kelley progressed in a certain way beyond MLI and I have not yet. We have maxed Ollie out. Jim says move forward and I think that is the right thing to do but now the question is how we take this forward, which I believe general sentiment from directors. Hear from Craig from steering committee perspective. Not take it on but to lead discussions. *Craig Czarnecki* – May take this in a slightly different direction but still connects with Sara’s remarks. When we initially discussed the idea of MLI taking this on a year and a half ago, most of us were tentative about it. Glad we did it, but a few of us thought even then there could be a whole jumble of contemporary or urgent issues that could trail after CWD and different issues not related. We agreed to give CWD a first treatment to set the table in some way but I don’t think we ever thought through what happens after. Think that is what we are talking about here. I think ahead to what comes next year or year after, we have a methodology that is amazing that we can start using through MLI on behalf of MAFWA and its members. It is hard not to end up with capacity issues and questions. All of us, includes me and USFWS, well Kelley Myers here is more to do. Let’s take this into implementation and Kelley will be too polite to bring up her own concern, but it is something to think through. That is where there is a little bit of organizational structure, you have to figure that part out. We are onto something with this first treatment, we have set the table, how do we shift to additional capacity to carry it forward to a useful and productive end allowing Kelley Myers as overall MLI coordinator to continue with full portfolio or new issues that come up and need initial treatment. That is the challenge, bureaucratic, but it all comes down to people and capacity and how we

wrestle with that. *Jim Douglas* – I think we have to think about moving forward on this issue. Hone down recommendations to implementation thinking that it is going to take on its own life and character and that is why a coordinator is important. I have the same reservations about trying to put too much of this back into MLI substructure. You may find that some things about other communication efforts in MLI or different pieces where it can retain connectivity, but not on the shoulders of the main players from USFWS. That doesn't mean there aren't resources that come about because of increased funding. I wouldn't think it would be Kelley Myers, she may be one of the voices that help but not charged with bringing it through implementation. *Kelly Hepler* – I don't disagree. I think MLI still is the traffic cop on top. This is their first opportunity to take something very real and say, here is where it grew, where do you want it to go next. I just want to make sure there is a connection back to MLI. I agree with you and Craig, it is more of a process thing. *Dan Eichinger* – Thinking about what kind of human capital we have within MAFWA or MLI or others to help coordinator. Russ mentioned Sonya Christensen earlier, she is doing work in this space and we have done funding in the state of Michigan with MSU to fund a little work in this space and Bill Moritz was instrumental in helping get that set up. I think there are people out there and Sonya might be someone to talk to about that as she has a lot of understanding about this issue and is thinking along these lines. We saw some of the management problems associated with CWD and coordination across jurisdiction. Obviously she is well versed in research demands, beyond the management side. I think there are, within our known networks, ways to creatively figure out how to provide the human capital support for this good work Kelley and the team have already articulated for us. *Kelly Hepler* – Faren added chat about work that human dimensions people are getting together to discuss CWD coordination going on. *Russ Mason* – Already moving on to look at PFAS and PFOA using MLI framework. So, the question of how we tackle CWD is the new subject area isn't academic, there are other things already coming up that we want to use MLI brand to move forward within MAFWA. *Jim Hodgson* – Ron may have more information based on his folks on the Hill. As many of you may remember, the ACE Act does have money, up to \$5 million slated to come to this. We don't know specifics yet. Depending what the President does with it. I don't know what that means for the states and others yet. Ron, do have any more information? *Ron Regan* – I don't, I have read legislation a couple of times. The other thing in the bill is the establishment of the research study by the National Academy of Science, so another research or science dimension to this. No intelligence on expenditure of funds. *Jim Hodgson* – Are there guidelines? *Ron Regan* – No. *Jim Hodgson* – Something to keep in mind, there are some resources slated to come. I don't know what it means for states, MLI and MAFWA but as soon as we find out something we will let you know. *Mark Chase* – Some other information on human dimensions workshop that is being put on. Representation from MAFWA, there are representatives from Minnesota participating and Sonya is on the list to participate, December 2-4, virtual workshop. *Kelly Hepler* – I hope Faren can participate also. *Mark Chase* – I will pass that on to coordinating core team. *Kelley* – Helpful. I propose as way forward, have value stream mapping team that has been established, the next step in figuring out how to implement this, is to come back with more fleshed out plan with options, like what a coordinator should look like, who it could be, who had bandwidth to do this. Explore how we start to implement this. The team talked about whether we should come to you with a job description of what a coordinator does, or do it later, and decision was made to not be too presumptuous and didn't want to spend a lot of time on that if there wasn't support. I can go back to team to figure what next steps are to implement, still within purview of MLI and the space we have created, there is a responsibility with next steps and transition. I'm just not

sure value stream mapping team is the right team, some of the people are probably still right but may have some players not interested in helping with next step. Maybe we can open up to bring in other states not represented and other folks who might want to step forward. I can ask Bill Moritz to help me coordinate this and between the two of us we can figure out how we can carry this forward to bring you something that is more of a transition to future steps. *Bill Moritz* – Recommendations as presented serve as objectives in strategic planning, next step would be to come up with specific strategies, for example if you wanted to have an annual meeting about CWD research, one option would be to have it at Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference and report could provide annual update. On communications side there could be a couple of strategies identified there. If directors so desire we could put together some of the financials around it and potential sources of funding to round out that. In my opinion, recommendation four, about economics, could turn into a recommendation for either a national conservation need or further exploration if funding is approved at federal level and whatever match requirements might be. Each one of those turns into actionable items that then can be further fleshed out. Happy to help Kelley with that. *Kelley* – When we put value stream mapping together we asked for participation in limited engagement way, they get what they bargained for. Another reason to look at that team and who wants to stay involved and who else would benefit from having engagement. We can reconvene and talk about it and if any of you have organizations or people you want to be involved let me know and we will reach out to them as well. If it gets too big I will let you know. Bill and I will carry forward with how we would propose to implement this. It is hard to bring you all back together, but we can work through emails and work with Ollie on terms of procedure. You should have something to respond to pretty quickly, come up with a roadmap forward. *Russ Mason* – Suppose we move forward with a coordinator rather than coordination, what extent of MAFWA directors would be willing to cede some of their agency authority to recommendations of this person or group of people so we actually get things implemented. Very few states have a CWD coordinator, they have somebody multitasking, so are states willing to cede authority to implement recommendations of this individual as a parameter if we are going to invest in this? *Kelley Hepler* – The way Sara and Kelley talked about this, you try to get a number of states agreeing on common principals because we all have commissions, have different relationships so not sure ceding authority is the right language. The important point is there are some common principles we are going to agree to and try to work through in our states rather than spinning our wheels. We need to be careful of language when you get to that point. When we commit we will give power to be sure we are moving forward on these things. *Russ Mason* – Cede is the operational definition of what happens, but probably the wrong language. *Dan Eichinger* – Russ, is it fair to say, a good point and well made, to the extent we have regionally focused sets of actions that individual states are responsible for implementing and effectuating. All of that is going to be conditioned on how much operating and decision space each agency has to perpetuate that outcome. That is not even across the states so one of the challenges to regional coordination is the fact that political context I deal with in Michigan to implement, whether best practices or whatever we call them, may be profoundly different in other states to do the same. That is part of the ether we have to have eyes open about when we look at how effectively we are going to be able to implement to regionally define actions. *Kelley Hepler* – Technical part to implementing actions but common language, for the most part most states are doing it correct right now. Where the magic still needs to happen is with Faren and Mark and that group and how to get the messaging across to the people that there really is a concern. That common message, working with social science definitely is needed. I

see incredible benefit for doing that. *Russ Mason* – Start on surveillance, for example, great differences across the region in terms of what is being implemented, not just talking about economic capability, but techniques and strategies to surveillance. Start there and if all of the states more or less doing things in the same way, numbers would be more or less comparable across the region, a huge step forward. Then there is the management piece and a lot of that is well known, but obviously differences among states. A great opportunity just on surveillance side if states willing to take the guidance. *Kelly Hepler* – I agree, the ability to know who is coming into your state and ability to go back and communicate those other state hunters, that is a little bit of a challenge. *Mark Chase* – On Secretary's task force surveillance piece, we had wide sideboards recognizing this and what the federal role is. A couple of things that resonated was coordination of research because nobody has the money to do what is needed independently and the other one that resonated was surveillance. For a number of years, through the refuge system, we have provided funding to different refuges for more intense surveillance, so that is maybe a piece, with the right communication, that may be an area where the Service could help you where you need it. *Jim Douglas* – Discussion on coordinator interesting, it may be that different people have different ideas of what the role of coordinator would be. I was thinking of someone who is facilitating and marking progress and moving parts and pieces forward, especially specific recommendations for action. Brings up good point, if trying to develop consensus on things like research techniques or surveillance, who does the coordinator report back to? If not building consensus but just reporting back on what most states are going to do and why other states aren't going to do it. Whatever it is, who do they report back to, MLI, board of MAFWA, or who? An interesting question. Ask Bill Moritz and Kelley Meyers, along the lines of creating next steps on moving forward, what are their ideas of what a coordinator would do and when one should be in place, earlier, later or when? *Kelly Hepler* – We are detail-oriented people and we all want answers to the questions Bill and Kelley are going to chase. Let them do their work, we gave them general policy direction. We are not going to solve those today. *Sara Pauley* – Think Kelley and team have heard from majority, supportive of moving forward and leave up to team to come up with clear strategies on how to achieve it. Heard sensitivity about state authorities and yet need to come to consensus where we can and have overarching strategic plan in sharing best practices and that sort of thing. Encouraged that nodding heads saying move forward. We will answer additional questions as the working group has them. Appreciate conversation. *Kelley Myers* – Thank you for that discussion, taking notes, feel free to jot down lingering questions or comments and drop to me in an email or call me or Bill. We can take in additional questions or ideas. Your staffs are thinking about this too. The only other ask I have is, if you don't have someone currently involved and want to get them involved let me know. Bill Moritz and I keeping track, value stream mapping has been awesome. It has brought together perspectives from every level of an organization, it empowers change, basis for action and the ideas that come out on a Thursday or Friday your start to implement on Monday. There is all of these ideas to share, approaches and improving relationships and sometimes because of discourse you have over the course of the week, you have some pretty good fights, hardy discourse that then causes people to understand each other at a deeper level and actually improves relationships. There is a real value to value stream mapping. Some of the challenges is that it works best when you have a culture of continuous improvement and change management baked in. Not all organizations are there, so a couple states might be really on board with these principles where others are still buying in. It doesn't mean it's not valuable but that is a hurdle. Typically, the way it works is leadership endorses overarching solution or objective at the beginning; whatever you think is the

right way to do it, you will support. So, this is a little bit different in that the group was empowered to come up with recommendations but then there is these additional steps that need to take place after an additional buy-in and groups to talk with. It is a slower process happening across the region. Wanted to make sure you knew we were keeping this in mind as we are moving forward. How it is working.

Regional Science/Research Priorities – *Kelley Myers (FWS) – (Exhibit E – PowerPoint).*

Charge of President's Task Force was to address interrelated questions and how might the Association identify, evaluate and prioritize scientific research to guide the Association's conservation work and how might it best support the growth and development of regional and landscape-scale fish and wildlife. As a member of the Task Force we felt this was a lot of different things coming together. There was a lot of going back and forth and as soon as we thought we had answered all our questions we got more. Good dialog to be sure we were framing up the right questions. At the end of the day the vision was great because it is all interrelated. When you think about one you can't not think about the others. It was a lot of good discussion and Jonathan did a tremendous job leading that work group. We saw there was a potentially significant connection between what is happening at the region and the work AFWA was doing and that is where we tried to build all of the recommendations. There were a lot of members, a big group and we broke into sub-teams to work on recommendations as we got into it. It was well run and widely represented and we had additional contributions from Ed Boggess, making sure MLI was in line with work in Midwest and it was well documented. Talk about reactions since AFWA and when recommendations were unveiled and have conversation about where MLI and MAFWA are going forward with them. Recommendation 1) establishing shared national science priorities and looking at how AFWA science and research committee that Russ chairs is working across this wide community and with different regions to make sure priorities that come out of that committee are priorities of the members. Looking at things like the survey, doing it on a timeframe, reporting to the executive committee regularly so recommendations about science can be incorporated into decision making of governing body of MAFWA. Right now, Russ is in the process of assembling that team. A lot of work was done to identify the loops of how information is currently shared or could be better shared, building on other work from other committees, looking at grant processes as well. I am participating on that to discuss potential connections to regional collaboration. Making sure MLI and how our technical committee might be in position to help vet some of our region's priorities and how some of the priorities coming up from work groups might also feed into some big national priorities. *Russ Mason* – You are part of a smaller working group of the science and research committee. Jason Sumners and Lorisa Smith from Missouri are working with me on this. It looks like we are going to hold a meeting November 11 at 3:00 to get their input. Perhaps we will have one more. The idea is to have that process in draft form so we can take it to AFWA executive committee in December 14 at winter meeting. *Kelley Myers* – Other thoughts or ideas for MAFWA and MLI could be included in that discussion? *Sara Pauley* – That would be my question for Russ and depending on other members he takes this back to on smaller group working on this. Feeding into this is how the regional associations are involved and identifying research and science priorities and then the back loop of how we hear about what happens with these priorities, especially if they are funded or moved forward. My personal hope would be that the smaller group, gets into next recommendation too, that regional association would have a role and that role fleshed out in identification of science priorities. *Russ Mason* – That is the intention so

representatives from all four regional associations, from the Midwest, Jason Sumners, and several others from both fish and wildlife as well as federal agencies, intention is to bake that into the process. *Kelley Myers* – From here we could make sure to address questions Sara asked and make sure those are included in our discussions with the small team. *Russ Mason* – We have the technical committee meeting every other Friday at 10:00 and this is an opportunity to use their expertise to gather their thoughts and focus them up through you and me into that smaller working group. Jason is also part of that. *Kelley Myers* – Not every state is represented on that MLI technical committee and I want to make sure we have avenues to be collecting input from people not represented there. *Russ Mason* – Sara, as incoming president, what we intend to present in December is a draft that folks can look over. Through Jason and Larisa want to share what we think we are going to do well in advance of that meeting so if there are deficiencies or things we should address; things that are there but should be stronger, we will get your input so this meets your expectations. *Sara Pauley* – Appreciate that. Part of this is for those MAFWA members who have not been as involved to give them more context and understanding of how this will process will ultimately work together. To clarify, I said regional association, that is what I intended but I don't want to forget regional collaboratives like MLI and what the thoughts of the working group on utilizing those collaboratives as well. *Russ Mason* – Great point, the other regional associations don't have MLI, echoes and reflections of it in SE and NE, there are derivative kinds of activities going on in the Western Association. The Midwest has something unique in the MLI. What we have in the Midwest probably will serve as a template we will try to communicate to the other associations. *Sara Pauley* – They certainly don't have a Kelley Myers. *Kelley Myers* – Flattered and embarrassed. What we can do is when we come up with ideas and it is going to AFWA we will send along to Ollie so members can be informed and I will do the same with Service colleagues and MLI as well. Skip recommendation two and come back to it. Recommendation 3) is looking at SWAPS, required elements, best practices and potential for SWAPS to be used for more landscape level collaboration. Looking at elements to see what is good and not good about using them for broader purpose. Recommending steps to ensure SWAPS can meet the needs of partners and identifying tools to foster development of regionally integrated SWAPS. As a framework for regional collaboration and coordination. On the wildlife diversity committee Sara has already developed a working group, invitations have gone out. Work underway on this element. I served on the sub-team that helped come up with some of these recommendations. It is what we are looking at doing in MLI with regional species of greatest conservation need and your staffs have all been asked to fill out surveys. We started developing that methodology two weeks ago. We will be working over the course of the winter to see how we can take SWAPS across our Midwest region and start to work better together across geography and landscapes. Kate Parsons, Ohio and Katie Reeder are representing the Midwest and both of them are leaders on various work groups; Katie is our technical committee co-chair, so we have leadership of MLI being represented on next steps. That one is managed and we have a Midwest voice in that. *Jim Hodgson* – One thing that occurred to me, right now SWAPS in fifth year of 10-year cycle at least for Service's Great Lakes Region and both of director members, who went through last review, have since retired. The board may want to think about that sometime in the future as we start through this process, to replace those two liaison members on the SWAPS review team, Bill and Mark Reiter. They need to be replaced by MAFWA. We did find in the past that we used members regularly when amendments would come into the Service for SWAPS. *Bill Moritz* – Part of work I am doing for MAFWA on contract is to look at that sort of relationship here in the Midwest and make recommendations

concerning that. Jim and I have talked a couple of times and will continue to dialog on how best we can further integrate state wildlife action plans and work of MLI. *Kelley Myers* – Covered on recommendation three in terms of Midwest presence. Back to Recommendation 2). There is an appendix in the report with recommendation two that looks at four different collaboratives around the country in four regional AFWA geographies. MLI for the Midwest. An analysis of the organization and a part that shows how each organization is operationalizing the AFWA 2018 resolution referenced in this. Showing how it is complying, or not, with those tenants. Ed Boggess put it together and did a wonderful job of putting together a concise analysis of MLI for this purpose, which was part of the data collection. Recommendation coming out looking at conservation partnerships, collaboratives and how they can best utilize existing structure of regional associations moving forward. We are doing a good job here, we developed our charter consistent with that resolution, but there are probably places where we could improve. We are utilizing some of the MAFWA committees but is pretty informal. Not aware of any national effort on this recommendation to figure out how to push this one forward. How could we use MLI in this space to explore that relationship between MAFWA and MLI, solidify things and make things more intentional? Or do we like how it is working now and want to respond to this recommendation that it is working in practice. How do we want to approach the second one? Brainstormed some ideas and talked with different people. This is an opportunity as we look at MLI, relationship between MAFWA and MLI, maybe what we can start to do is look at it; it takes relationships, objectives and implementation of some things. Figure out where we are in the paradigm, see if staying true to that and if that is who we want to be. I can take this to technical committee to see what they might recommend, how to tackle this to make sure the Midwest is considered as we move forward. I don't know what venue there might be on a national discussion on this. Prepare for there to be one and have our technical committee ready to be thinking through it. *Kelly Hepler* – Makes sense to me. *Sara Pauley* – In that spirit, offer that we have been having conversations at the national level, with other partners like EPA, partners in research and development and their strong desire to provide resources where it makes sense and where we have shared priorities. As the team goes back to further flesh out next steps, add how can we at regional level add capacity with other federal resource agencies and/or NGOs. I know you are looking at that. What does better coordination look like among state, federal resource agencies and appropriate NGOs is topic specific or where shared priorities. *Ron Regan* – Sara cohosted call with national leadership of EPA in their research office, since then Sara has suggested to EPA the notion of doing step down calls with each of the four regional associations. Those are likely to happen after the first of the year and they are in line with Sara's suggestion about inviting other federal entities into some sort of conversation. I have been talking to Russ about recommendation one and it seems Russ and his team (Science and Research committee) have their arms sufficiently wrapped around that one. On recommendation two, I have a call tomorrow with Ken Elowe, retired deputy director in Maine and retired science lead at regional scale, wants to talk to me about can or if he might help in retirement on this recommendation. I'm not sure where that will go and there is other interest from that part of the world as well. *Craig Czarnecki* – That is something Deb is working on. It always gets back to capacity. Ken Elowe is still keen on that and doesn't want to stay retired too long. He is happy to come back and assist in some way and Deb is going to try to facilitate that from Wildlife Service Science Application Headquarters. Kelley said something important, she came up with easy three-step criteria on how to perceive how we are doing and how other collaboratives are doing. Do we have relationships in place, sense of goals and objectives, and are we working together to meet

capacity, decision support tools, the science that can then help us attend to those goals and objectives. For the Fish and Wildlife Service part, having folks talk informally about SECAs, MLI and Nature's Network in northeast, don't know if pushing off to the west too. Think through, from USFWS perspective, where are we offering assistance, where are we strong, where do we need to work a little. SECAs has a conservation blueprint, is there something we can learn from that. We have relationships and governance structure and now with CWD we have a way to look at some of the urgent issues and take stock of where we are. Is there something the Southeast can learn from that. Maybe there is something to that type of informal gathering that can help with recommendation three. Something we can think more fully about with MAFWA members through MLI interacting with folks in the Southeast, for example and see what can be shared. Not that the conservation blueprint should roll across the country and we are all doing the same thing, that is never going to happen. Maybe some things we can pick up and some things we can offer. *Kelley Myers* – You and Sara asked for review of task force recommendations. To Craig's point, there are a lot of conversations happening and we can try to figure out those good connection points, particularly with recommendation two. Is there anything else you want to get out of today's discussion, other than sharing and opportunity to have some dialog on it? *Sara Pauley* – Feel we have next steps identified, that was the important thing to me. Hear from you and members on support. Important to me to keep the ball rolling on recommendations. Seems like path is becoming clearer on each of these areas. Russ on recommendation one; working group on three; and Ken may be opportunity on two. Think about it, as you heard on conversation today and as you have additional recommendations, provide them to Kelly Hepler or Kelley Myers. *Kelly Hepler* – I appreciate support Sara has taken on this task force, you guys did an incredible amount of work and I agree Jonathan is incredible. To take next steps, for directors, this is becoming reality and that is the main thing, we are moving down this road and people need to engage, it is going to direct research on a national level as we have seen from discussion Craig was talking about, so critical. Kelley, one of these MLI coordination levels you could play, not drive it all but you are in the center making sure it all works. We are defining MLI as we go through time, changed a lot in last two or three years and still is. *Kelley Myers* – On number two, talked to Ed about his engagement and getting a couple of coordinators, like Craig is having a meeting with other groups, I will work with Ed to have a conversation with other Eds, maybe Ollie, Gordon and some other executive directors of other associations. We can have a talk around this as well and deliver something back. I want to thank everyone for your support and for letting us play with this venue. If you want to meet or talk about any of this we are trying to do I have an open door. Pete, I will be calling you to get you involved. Thanks Kelly and Craig for leadership. *Kelly Hepler* – Thanks everybody, I know you are all busy. I hope you all have a safe and happy fall, get outside. Directors and representatives, thank you for your time today.

Adjourn – *Meeting adjourned at 12:08 am*

MAFWA BOARD MEETING AGENDA

**October 20, 2020
10:00 a.m.—Noon CDT
Zoom Meeting**

<https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/97997492637?pwd=YlIvMlV0OUZFRUpxOEEmZGFydGtTQT09>

Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637

Passcode: 661522

Dial 1 669 900 9128 US

Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637

Passcode: 661522

Call to Order—Kelly Hepler

Welcome Pete Hildreth—Kelly Hepler

Roll Call—Ollie Torgerson

Agenda Review—Kelly Hepler

Approval of October 8, 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting Minutes—Kelly Hepler

CWD VSM Action Recommendations—Kelley Myers (FWS)

Regional Science/Research Priorities—Kelley Myers (FWS)

Adjourn

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www.kanwildlife.com

Brad Lowless, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

Memorandum

To: Whom It May Concern

From:

Date:

RE: Proxy - MAFWA Annual Director's Meeting

I hereby authorize Levi Anderson to vote my proxy at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Directors' Meeting on October 23, 2014 and to act in my stead, authorizing this person fully to do all things that I could or might do if personally present. I also authorize this person to do every act whatsoever necessary or proper to be done in all matters that may lawfully come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof. Further, I hereby revoke any proxy or proxies previously given by me to any person or persons.

Signature:

Printed Name and Title:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Lowless".

Send to MAFWA Secretary via email at: sheila.kennels@ks.gov

NORTH DAKOTA GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT

"Variety in Hunting and Fishing"

GOVERNOR: Doug Burgum

DIRECTOR: Terry Steinwand

DEPUTY: Scott A. Peterson

100 North Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-5035

Phone: (701) 328-6300

FAX: (701) 328-6352

Memorandum

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Terry Steinwand, North Dakota Game and Fish Department

Date: 2 October 2020

RE: Proxy - MAFWA Annual Director's Meeting

I hereby authorize Scott A. Peterson to vote my proxy at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Directors' Meeting on October 20, 2020, and to act in my stead, authorizing this person fully to do all things that I could or might do if personally present. I also authorize this person to do every act whatsoever necessary or proper to be done in all matters that may lawfully come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof. Further, I hereby revoke any proxy or proxies previously given by me to any person or persons.

Signature:

Terry Steinwand

Printed Name and Title:

Terry Steinwand, Director

Send to MAFWA Secretary via email at: sheila.kemmis@ks.gov



MEMORANDUM

ODNR-Division of Wildlife

Administration

To: To Whom It May Concern
From: Kendra S. Wecker, Chief
Date: October 19, 2020
Subject: Proxy - Ohio

I hereby authorize Peter Novotny to vote my proxy at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Board Meeting on October 20, 2020, and to act in my stead, authorizing this person fully to do all things that I could or might do if personally present. I also authorize this person to do every act whatsoever necessary or proper to be done in all matters that may lawfully come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof. Further, I hereby revoke any proxy or proxies previously given by me to any person or persons.

Signature:

Printed Name and Title: Kendra S. Wecker, Chief

State of Wisconsin
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
101 S. Webster Street
Box 7921
Madison WI 53707-7921

Tony Evers, Governor
Preston D. Cole, Secretary
Telephone 608-266-2621
Toll Free 1-888-936-7463
TTY Access via relay - 711



October 19, 2020

Subject: MAFWA Proxy

Memorandum

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Rachel DePalma on behalf of Keith Warnke

Date: 10/19/20

RE: Proxy - MAFWA Annual Director's Meeting

I hereby authorize _____ Scott Hull _____ to vote my proxy at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Directors' Meeting on _____ October 20th _____, 2020 _____, and to act in my stead, authorizing this person fully to do all things that I could or might do if personally present. I also authorize this person to do every act whatsoever necessary or proper to be done in all matters that may lawfully come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof. Further, I hereby revoke any proxy or proxies previously given by me to any person or persons.

Signature:

Printed Name and Title: _Keith Warnke, Administrator, Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks_

Send to MAFWA Secretary via email at: sheila.kemmis@ks.gov

Comes, Rachel

Subject: MAFWA Board Meeting (10a - noon CDT)
Location: <https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/97997492637?pwd=YlIiVMIvOUZFRUpXOEEdmZGFydGtTQT09>

Start: Tue 10/20/2020 10:00 AM
End: Tue 10/20/2020 12:00 PM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Meeting organizer

Organizer: Comes, Rachel

Required Attendees: Comes, Rachel; Amanda Wuestefeld; Brad Loveless; Brant Kirychuk; Brian Clark; Christie Curley; Colleen Callahan; Dan Eichinger; Dave Olfelt; Jim Douglas; Warnke, Keith - DNR; Hepler, Kelly; Kendra Wecker; Rob Olson; Sara Parker Pauley; Terry Steinwand; Torgerson, Ollie - MAFWA; speterso@nd.gov; Levi Jaster@ks.gov; Scott Hull@wisconsin.gov; Pete Hildreth@dnr.iowa.gov; Wolter, Faren ^{SD GFP}

Optional Attendees: Roger Luebbert; Bill Moritz; Ed Boggess (home); Claire Beck; Kelley Myers; Craig Czarnecki; Charlie Wooley; Walsh, Noreen; Ron Regan; John Lord; Jen Mock Schaffner; Lane Kisonak; Jonathan Mawdsley; Mark Humpert; Jim Hodgson; Angela Settles; Covrett, Jamie; Depalma, Rachel M - DNR; Heather Young; Judy Tkaczyk; Pickart, Kelsey M - DNR; Kim Rasler; Lynn Timm; Megan Greenwell; Rhonda Maples; Sheila Kemmis; Sheri Henderson; Tami Evans; Claire.Beck@dnr.ohio.gov; Traxler, Charles; Negrych, Agatha (ARD); Conner, Conni J; Chase, Mark; Peter Novotny@dnr.ohio.gov; Mason, Russ (DNR)

zmMeetingNum: 97997492637

Jason Summers

rachel comes is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/97997492637?pwd=YlIiVMIvOUZFRUpXOEEdmZGFydGtTQT09>
Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637
Passcode: 661522

Dial 1 669 900 9128 US
Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637
Passcode: 661522
Find your local number: <https://state-sd.zoom.us/u/adhMdo2PsF>

Join by SIP
97997492637@zoomcrc.com

Join by H.323
162.255.37.11 (US West)
162.255.36.11 (US East)
Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637
Passcode: 661522

MAFWA BOARD MEETING AGENDA

October 20, 2020
10:00 a.m.—Noon CDT
Zoom Meeting

<https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/97997492637?pwd=YlIvMlV0OUZFRUpxOEEdmZGFydGtTQT09>

Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637
Passcode: 661522

Dial 1 669 900 9128 US
Meeting ID: 979 9749 2637
Passcode: 661522

Call to Order—Kelly Hepler

Welcome Pete Hildreth—Kelly Hepler

Roll Call—Ollie Torgerson

Agenda Review—Kelly Hepler

Approval of October 8, 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting Minutes—Kelly Hepler

CWD VSM Action Recommendations—Kelley Myers (FWS)

Regional Science/Research Priorities—Kelley Myers (FWS)

Adjourn

Sheila ✓
Rachel ✓
Kelly ✓
Ollie ✓
Colleen ✓
Scott Hill ✓
Peter Hildreth ✓
Sevi Jaster ✓
Amranda ✓
Roger ✓
Kelley M ✓
(SD) Jaron Wolter ✓
Christie Curley ^{Ontari} ✓
Pete Hildreth ✓
Scott Peterson ✓
Bill Mority ✓
Brian Clark ✓
Jim Rodgers ^{MS} ✓
Craig Cernocki ^{MS} ✓
Russ Mason ✓
Claire Beck ✓
Sam Eichinger ✓
Jim Boug ^{MS} ✓
Ron Kegan ✓
Mark Chase ^{MS} ✓
Dave Olfelt ✓
Dave ✓

MAFWA Annual Board Meeting
Friday, October 8, 2020
8:00-12:00 a.m. CDT
Zoom Meeting

(Note: The 2020 Midwest Director's Annual Meeting was cancelled due to the impacts of the COVID 19 virus. Therefore, this annual business meeting was postponed until October and conducted virtually via Zoom Conference.)

Friday, October 8, 2020

Agenda (Exhibit A).

MAFWA BUSINESS MEETING

Call to Order – *President Kelly Hepler, South Dakota*, called the meeting to order at 8:03 am.

Quorum – Amanda Wuestefeld, Indiana; Todd Bishop, Iowa for Dale Garner; Brad Loveless, Kansas; Brian Clark, Kentucky; Russ Mason for Dan Eichinger, Michigan; Dave Olfelt, Minnesota; Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri; Terry Steinwand, North Dakota; Jim Douglas, Nebraska; Peter Novotny, Ohio for Kendra Wecker; Kelly Hepler, South Dakota; Keith Warnke, Wisconsin; and Christie Curley, Ontario. Also present were Ollie Torgerson, Executive Secretary, Roger Luebbert, Treasurer and Sheila Kemmis, Secretary. Others: Ron Regan, John Lord, Ed Boggess, Kelley Myers, Bill Moritz, and others (*Proxies – Exhibit B*).

Agenda Review – *Kelly Hepler, South Dakota* – Plan was to have annual meeting at Custer State Park the middle of June, hoped to have it now, but didn't work, hope to be there next summer. Virtual meetings are trying and we have been on a lot of them. Sheila let people know that approximately 9:00 is time for awards, so wherever we are in the agenda we can do those. Yesterday was an historic day, had women's team in Chemistry awarded Nobel Peace Prize for the first time. One of the ladies was saying that she was talking to a counselor in college and said she wanted to be chemist and was told that was a man's field. Now, years later she is accepting this award, which is incredible. Last night there was a civil U.S. Vice Presidential debate and had a woman of color debating, the first time in this country. Move to today, AFWA is 122 years old and Sara Pauley is the first female president because of her qualifications. Also, for the first time, Colleen Callahan is the vice chair of AFWA's executive committee. Impressive and a long time coming. Congratulations Sara and Colleen.
No changes to agenda.

Approval of July 1, 2020 Virtual Meeting Minutes (*Exhibit C*) – *Terry Steinwand, North Dakota* moved to accept minutes, *Jim Douglas, Nebraska* second. ***Motion passes.***

Treasurer's Report – *Roger Luebbert, Treasurer* – MAFWA Treasurer Roger Luebbert presented the financial report (*Treasurer's Report - Exhibit D*). This report summarizes actual receipts, disbursements and account balances for all MAFWA and Conservation Enhancement accounts for the most recent completed fiscal year, MAFWA uses a calendar year so this report

is as of December 31, 2019. If you want to see something different, I am open to do that. The first page is account balance summary of all MAFWA and Conservation Enhancement Fund (CEF) accounts. It shows end of 2018 cash balance, overall change amount and amount ending December 31, 2019. The first is banking services account which handles special projects that do not involve federal funds, the big player is National Pheasant Coordinator as well as Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow. This account used to handle the profits for the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (MFWC). At end of 2019 those prior balances we were holding were transferred to CEF account; a decrease of \$45,000, we moved MFWC funds from 2012, Kansas funds we are holding for them, about \$34,000 so biggest reason for decrease. This balance can be volatile depending on special projects we have going on. A lot of these funds are designated or held for some other entity. The next account is conference account, our main operating account and receipts coming in are from annual directors meeting, membership dues, banking fees and indirect costs reimbursement from banking services account or federal account. Disbursements are annual directors meeting expenditures, executive secretary and treasurer pay and travel, recording secretary travel, liability insurance, tax preparation and website maintenance. This account went down quite a bit, \$118,000, but footnote describes that we moved \$160,000 into our investment money market and securities account. We did that for two reasons 1) to be invested; and 2) wanted to keep balances we have at the Credit Union under federal insurance coverage of \$250,000. This does not imply our credit union is weak, just good policy. Next is Southern Wings account, states contribute to this and those funds are disbursed to American Bird Conservancy, we do withhold 5% banking fee as we do with all of our special projects. Next is federal grants, that went down because we had a NFWF project winding down at end of 2019 and it had state matching funds, federal grants are 100% reimbursed so we don't have to carry those matching funds anymore. Credit union share account we are required to maintain a \$25 minimum balance. Next is big account, money market and securities account, increased quite a bit, \$160,000 due to transfer and the rest from investments. Had a good year. Below is CEF accounts, our 501(c)(3) foundation. That credit union checking account started off with a penny and moved money from share account to checking account so we could make payments. Next is share account, beginning balance is \$55,000, 11 states contributed \$5,000 each as seed money for MFWC and made some payments. CEF also has an investment account, not a lot in it but it did earn about \$893, balance of \$5,500. The footnote at the bottom talks about the transfer. Keep in mind designations for some of these accounts, earmarked for other entities or special purposes. Run through rest of pages quickly, line numbers on the left for reference. Page 2 is banking services account which handles National Pheasant Coordinator, Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow and others and several Ohio projects. Disbursements are National Pheasant Coordinator and Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow and administrator 5% banking fees to conference account. Balance is \$141,000 and lines 22-28 list the designations of about \$121,000; the top one, 2019 MFWC funds belongs to Ohio and has been moved to CEF and so has the one from Minnesota for upcoming conference. Difference between \$141,000 and \$121,000 are MAFWA funds. Page 3 is the conference account which is our main operating account. Receipts from 2019, line 5 is annual directors meeting we had in Ohio, actual receipts was \$92,000, and membership and affiliate dues, banking fees and indirect cost reimbursed and a little interest. Disbursements, line 19, is disbursements for annual director meeting, \$47,000. Total receipts \$92,000 and disbursements \$47,000, had a very good conference. Have executive secretary pay and travel; treasurer pay and travel expenses, recording secretary travel, insurance, tax form preparation, website maintenance and miscellaneous. Transferred of \$160,000 for

balance of \$89,000. Southern Wings account, a pass-through account, receives contributions from various states which are disbursed primarily to the American Bird Conservancy after deducting a 5% banking fee. Sent out invoices two weeks ago for the contribution. Typical balance is very small. Federal grant account, have state contributions for monarch NFWF project that we were finishing up at end of 2019. Have federal reimbursement from USFWS and NFWF reimbursements for monarch project, \$175,000 in receipts. Disbursements for state liaison pay and travel; monarch coordinator pay and travel; monarch planning travel and meeting expenses; steering committee participation; and indirect cost transfer to conference account. Designations is confusing, around \$22,000, but a little timing difference, we still had a NFWF reimbursement to come in for \$19,000. Page 6 is the credit union share account where we have \$25 required minimum balance at end of 2019. Page 7 is our big account, our money market and securities investment account showing interest, dividends and capital gains income, about \$37,000, a change in market value, increase of \$64,000 and the transfer of \$160,000 from the conference account. The balance as of December 31, 2019 was almost \$700,000. Page 8 is conservation enhancement fund 501(c)(3), foundation accounts, checking account at the credit union, these accounts were established in 2018 and hosts contributions from the states; the new procedure for handling the Midwest Fish and Wildlife conference. Line 2 shows transfer from CEF credit union share account of \$41,000, and interest for total receipts of \$41,013. Disbursements include fees, deposits from MFWC conference and Kansas used \$10,000 of funds we were holding, \$30,000. The bottom part of the page is the share account which shows the transfer from the conference account on line 12 and on line 15 the disbursement to the CEF. The checking account has almost \$41,000, interest was \$14. Disbursements were hotel deposits and Kansas used \$10,000 of their money, so total disbursements was \$40,000 and we have an \$11,000 balance. On bottom, share account, beginning balance of \$55,000 (\$5,000 from 11 states) and transferred from conference account those Kansas funds, \$32,000 and interest was \$234 and transferred \$41,000 to the checking account for ending balance of \$46,000 and of that \$22,000 is being held for Kansas. Page 9 is the conservation enhancement fund investment account held at the broker. Started with \$4,600, had dividends and capital gains; holding reporting fee of \$50 and change in market value of positive \$800 for balance of \$5,500. If you want different format or timeframe I am open to that. *Kelly* – Roger received a phishing attack a couple days ago he received an email supposedly from me asking him to send \$2,400 to somebody in South Carolina; it looked real. Ollie sent it to me and it was fraudulent. Roger stopped the action going forward. What is troublesome is it shouldn't have gotten to that point. How do we help Roger from an uncomfortable position like this? We have to have a back-up in there. This is the first time it happened, but it was awkward. Don't know if there has been any follow up on where the money was supposed to go. We need to talk about this and buffer so that doesn't happen again. *Sara Pauley* – Similar thing almost happened to me, where my financial services staff got an email from the director saying to withhold their paycheck and send it to another account. This is a national, world-wide scam, using executives and going through financial staff who maybe don't feel comfortable questioning executives; typical scenario now. We do need to talk about it. Now that Roger on alert, we have checks in place, contacting Ollie or president directly, or whoever is making the inquiry. We can talk about something more formal. *Roger* – I usually do a check with Ollie and he caught it. I am alert now. *Ollie* – Really a good thing, Roger checks with me on almost everything. Discovered this was fraud, was not from Kelly, payment was in process but able to stop it, because of time frame, it should have been a red flag. *Roger* – I am up to speed. *Kelly* – Want to help you so we have a fallback position. In some places two people have to sign

the checks, not suggesting that, but do need to talk about this some. Lesson learned. *Brad Loveless* – If people have references for financial people who let them get away with stuff, send them my way, I can't get away with anything with my folks.

Audit Committee Report – *Keith Warnke, Wisconsin* – Kendra, Dale and I met in July, we sent a list of revenues and expenditures over our director of planning, we don't have a CFO, and she reviewed the funds, Roger coordinated with Karen and she came back and indicated that she was pleased that MAFWA had an independent audit. The information that Roger provided agreed with our accounting records. She had a few short questions because she was unfamiliar with claims, taxes and some ownership of equipment bought with the grant, also no withholding from paychecks, but we don't have employees, we have private contractors. Minor points and Roger shot right back with easy answers. She encourages us to continue annual audits. We appreciated her straight forward and positive attitude, happy having desk audits and independent audits because it gives us double protection. Very positive report. *Kelly* – Consistent when I looked at it too. Reinforcing that we have a good system in place.

Contracted Audit Results – *Ollie* – Board requested we do a professional, independent audit we budgeted for it and contracted a firm in Jefferson City, Missouri to do it. I listed Kelly to report results of the audit, which were quite good. *Kelly Hepler, South Dakota* – Nothing stood out, happy with controls in place, no suggestions to change things. *Roger* – Two minor suggestions, one to develop a deposit log to have someone log in the checks before I get them and put them into QuickBooks. So now the Missouri Department of Conservation financial services has a staff person doing that and staff at credit union is tracing log to actual deposit. Yesterday, Missouri internal auditor reconciled, she is making that deposit log part of that, so got that process tight. Other suggestions was NFWF reimbursements, I was logging into accounting system the date I submitted it and they suggested it be the date paid. Very minor things. *Ollie* – We budgeted \$15,000 for audit and it came in significantly cheaper. Desire is to do professional outside audit every three to five years, it is budget item and will need to be in the budget. *Kelly* – Jim, is that what we are doing in WAFWA too? *Jim* – Not 5 years, 3 years is a good time period, past presidents and investment leaders change and it doesn't cost that much. *Kelly* – Three years unless we hear something different. *Ollie* – It was conducted and was a successful audit. If we have a change in staff that may be a good time to do one. Three years is fine.

Investments Committee Report – *Jim Douglas, Nebraska* – We have Keith and Brad on this call who made contributions to this. Dan Eichinger valued part of committee too. Asked Roger to have some documents to put up. Met a couple of times virtually since the last board meeting. Decided to take a fresh look at investments to see if we had good understanding of investment philosophy being followed and make sure committee understood the nature of investments. Have third party investment advisor also look at these reports. To start out with, latest report from Shane Hessman (Exhibit E). General nature of investments is securities and bonds; 38% of portfolio is in 14 individual bonds, as of September 20, \$272,000. These bonds have an annual interest rate return of 6.4% (list of bonds on report). Also, 54%, \$379,000, is invested in 11 mutual funds, primarily American and Lord Abbett funds, including large and small company stocks. The remaining part 8% is in a federally insured money market account with an interest rate of 0.15%. This portfolio has done well historically and has tripled over the 14 year period. Questions from investments committee, what are bond ratings, mostly triple B; what risk on

bonds is and are these held by companies that are fairly stable in this volatile environment. Looked at investment risk and we also reviewed investment philosophy done quite a while ago. History shows beginnings of the dollars in these accounts (*Exhibit F, Jaschek Fund History, Guidelines and Investment Policy*) and there were instructions. *Roger* – The guidelines talk about the purpose of the fund. *Jim* – It is general, and the board further defined that. The Investment committee is not suggesting we need changes to the investment policy. *Roger* – It had a 75% fixed income in 2006 and the current one is dated in 2016. *Jim* – We asked ourselves if we want to make changes in how we allocate the investments between stable and volatile funds and part of that depends on keeping good track of what is happening with the markets. There are some investment firms or advisors that provide detailed reports to customers on what is happening in the market to make you change our minds. Not getting those detailed reports from Shane but did talk to him about those. He is not big on providing those types of reports but would provide them if we asked him to; but would cost us some money. He doesn't make very much money on making our investments. He hasn't done a bad job. Ask Brad to weigh in on third party look we had and whether getting enough information on investments to make the right decisions. *Brad* – I serve on Kansas Land Trust Board and they work with an advisor, Tony Hayden, who has grown the board into an investment strategy, taking risks we want to and producing work we want to do. He supports conservation organizations in a pro bono way for Kansas Land Trust. When I got on this investment committee with Jim and the rest of the team, I was weighing what I was seeing from Shane, who has given us what we asked for, and what we were getting from the other board I served on. I asked Tony to look over our investments and he did an evaluation. He asked our philosophy, which is broad; he wants to help. He is affiliated with Raymond James and he said, from his perspective, our return is low for our level of risk. Two options he recognized; for that level of risk we could get better returns or have higher earnings, he thought he could get that with no more level of risk. Since then, we asked if we were to make a change in approach and work with him what would it take. He forwarded documents to let us know what pathway to go. We talked with Shane, he is faithful to us and taking a low key approach, stable and modest with reporting. No one suspects anything going on, but he has a low key approach and doesn't charge us much, put money in funds that are stable and he doesn't have to manipulate them or do much, he has been modest on reporting and I don't think anybody suspects that there is anything improper going on. On monies we have, it seems like we might need a greater level of oversight and reporting of clarity and transparency in future going forward. *Jim* – For example, talked about things investment advisors look at in volatile times like these, compared annual rate of return to a volatility index that professionals use to determine if you need to make a move; they do a wide variety of analysis. It depends on whether we want that kind of analysis and advice moving forward. We could ask Shane to do that or contemplate making a larger move. We don't have a precise recommendation. Hard to speak for someone not here, Dan has desire for more information more in line with what Tony presented. Want direction, should we do a deeper dive with whole board into investment philosophies and ask pertinent questions to be sure we have the philosophy we want going forward. *Kelly* – Want general direction and more formal action at a later time. Thoughts on options? *Jim* – Roger, any comments? *Roger* – I think investment committee it is good to look at this again, needs review. Our current broker, seems reluctant to provide information and that concerns me a little. Like to see us take a deeper dive. *Kelly* – I concur with that. Dan is treasurer for AFWA and executive committee as well, that is absolutely right. Reluctance from firm we are dealing with. Sound advice. Not hearing firm direction from anyone, audit committee needs to go down the path and look into this. Ollie, when is next

executive committee meeting? *Ollie* – During North American, in Grand Rapids or virtually in March. *Kelly* – Jim, have investment committee bring further directions back to executive committee in March. *Jim* – In the interim there is some things we can do; consolidate existing philosophy and history and share with board members. There are specific questions we can develop to gain more insight on whether that is what we want to continue to do going forward. May be some questions about what we want in the future. We have a growing account, ability to move some of those dollars into programs and projects, not that shortage we might consider, but philosophies on choosing those, goes hand in hand with how fast you are trying to grow money. Getting information on if we were to move \$800,000 to another investment company how would you go about that because tied up in certain kinds of investments. *Brad* – Good marching orders, we can work with that. *Dave Olfelt* – If we change financial advisors what kind of process would we go through to select that firm? Brad had investment specialist look at this but how would we pick someone else? Could committee do investigation on that as well? *Brad* – Can look around, they came to us with interest in helping a conservation organization. Tony, who we were talking to recently, will have no problem reaching out to others and getting a feel for what they would charge for fees. A fair consideration. *Kelly* – Good question, that should be part of due diligence and come back with recommendations.

Bylaws Committee Report – *Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri* – Bylaws are very straight forward (*Exhibit G*), executive committee recommended full board make final edits. Change date on first page, added recognition of CEF and added statement about Conservation Fund foundation and “the fund” language was added. Changes related to description of executive committee, a lot of changes in directors, so kick out word “immediate” which allows greater flexibility. Changed dates on committees. Took out legal committee, engaged at AFWA level and not at our level, intention to use annual meeting or North American meeting to have full committee meet, and meet before or after that committee to stay on top of things, but they didn’t feel need for separate committee. Dates changed to extend committees. Approved name change of Wildlife Action Plan Technical Committee to Wildlife Diversity Committee and amended date of this change to the bylaws. *Sara Pauley, Missouri moved to approve revisions, Brad Loveless, Kansas second.* *Kelly* – Minor but good editions. *Ollie* – What about NCN committee, should we delete that, recommending extending to 2023, but don’t think that committee will be active. *Sara* – Not call it NCN, but still a need for board to have discussions on priorities. Probably not call it NCN, but hold place until after October 22 meeting, when recommendations will be coming out of President’s Task Force that will lend to this discussion. *Kelly* – Agree, no NCN, but will still need to identify regional priorities and roll them into national discussion. Three recommendations coming out of Task Force on how we engage regional associations and that engages Kelley Myers and we deal with those. Change title at that point and talk about potential human dimensions committee too. Leave it in as a placeholder and come back to it. ***Motion passes.***

Resolutions Committee Report – *Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri* – No resolutions, approved two back in July.

Awards Committee Report and Award Presentations – *Kelly* – Unfortunate part of zoom meetings, like how we do business in the Midwest, it is unique, and to be able to show accolades they deserve. Suggest, if possible, work with people in your agencies to recognize people from

your state; that doesn't take away from what these people deserve. Thank you for nominations. *Terry Steinwand, North Dakota* – Typically do this during a noon lunch, great nominees and tough to choose one. Credit to Kendra Wecker, Dale Garner, Jim Douglas and Brian Clark for scoring and Sheila Kemmis for keeping us in line. Sheila came up with idea of instead of plaques this year we would do actual statue-like awards. There were well written narratives in these nominations (Exhibit H, report and winning nominations).

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year goes to Jason McCullough, Michigan DNR. We can break down Jason's award into four very important categories - Achievement, Public Service, Education, and Natural Resource Conservation. Jason takes the basic pieces of information and turns them into quality game and fish cases ending with successful prosecution. A successful example was a deer illegally taken on a military preserve where he garnered the support of civilian employees and Jason was able to obtain a confession from the individual. Jason is also heavily involved in the public service sector where he's often called upon to assist with special assignments including career days, science fairs, local chiefs' meetings, disabled veteran hunts and the list goes on. He has also worked with another conservation officer to establish a hunter education program for the local Amish community. One of the items that caught my eye was his involvement with a young man that had Hodgkin's lymphoma and Jason delivered Christmas presents to the individual and he now wants to work as a conservation officer when he grows up. This is truly the variety of activities law enforcement is involved in on almost a daily basis and also shows that Jason, like many of law enforcement individuals across the nation, can have a lasting effect on how natural resource agencies are viewed.

Wildlife Biologist of the Year is Alan Leary, Missouri Department of Conservation. You can sum up the award winner in this category in one phrase - Feral Hog Eradication and Bear Aware Programs. In concert with the USDA, Alan renewed the Missouri Feral Hog Partnership, which gained momentum in the vision of total removal of feral hogs from Missouri. While the effort was formally coordinated it became apparent to Alan that a formal strategic plan was needed to better coordinate the growing intensity of removal efforts and convey the need for investment in removal and communication efforts. Alan was an integral part of this effort. At the same time, Alan drafted a Departmental regulation prohibiting hunting of feral livestock on lands managed by MDC. As you can imagine, this wasn't necessarily popular with some but Alan remained professional and on point with the communication plan in an atmosphere that was less than congenial. As if that weren't enough, he was also instrumental in the development of the Bear Aware Program. There had been several negative community encounters with juvenile bears which resulted in the death of the bear and were largely due to the public lack of awareness of how to respond to the presence of bears. Alan worked with staff to implement a successful communication plan as well as leading staff to develop bear nuisance report guidelines that empowered staff to respond to different situations. And with a vision as to what might occur, he coordinated Wildlife-Human Incident Training and established regional teams equipped to respond in case of a wildlife-human attack. These are just a couple examples of the tremendous job Alan has done and continues to do.

Fisheries Biologist of the Year goes to Jacob Davis, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP). As is the case of many of us in this profession, Jacob started his career as a summer intern and then worked as a seasonal for GFP and was subsequently hired as a fisheries biologist in Rapid City, where his focus has been research and management efforts on trout in the Black Hills. As is crucial in our profession, Jacob has built and maintained strong relationships with Department staff and a wide variety of external partners. His positive, can do attitude along with strong

interpersonal skills have made him an important part of fisheries research and management activities across the state of South Dakota. Since joining the department, Jacob has been the lead author on four peer reviewed journal publications as well as co-authoring three publications. The three qualities that make Jake an outstanding fisheries biologist are his ability to really listen, his openness to change and his willingness to collaborate and he has the ability to work with urban professionals as well as rural blue-collar workers. He hears what they have to say and takes it, and them, seriously. A few of the examples of his ability to work with others is the forging of a partnership with various federal and local entities to develop a partnership that ultimately led to discussions about increasing over winter flows to increase survival of brown trout in Rapid Creek as well as garnering financial contributions to stream habitat projects, including increasing stream connectivity and installation of in stream habitat. Additionally, he engaged the hydraulic engineering faculty and students at the SD School of Mines and Technology to evaluate changes in stream hydraulics resulting from overwinter releases. As if that weren't enough, Jake has used the Advanced Fisheries Management class at SDSU to help evaluate the effectiveness of an artificial lures only, catch and release section of Rapid Creek on wild brown trout. And finally, due to Jake's willingness to listen to hatchery staff suggestions, changes in fish stocking sizes and numbers in the Black Hills have greatly increased angler satisfaction.

Spirit of the Shack, Joe Paul, Wisconsin DNR Warden. Joe represents our profession because of his dedication to protecting our natural resources as well as his commitment to promoting outdoor opportunities, especially for youth with life threatening illnesses. As is apparent from Joe's title as a warden, his work emphasizes public safety and the protection of fish and wildlife and their habitat. He does the job in a highly skilled manner and has a reputation as a thorough a trusted law enforcement officer. While he's doing his job as a warden it's always accompanied by a dose of compassion. If you receive a citation from Joe, it will probably come with some good advice and an understanding ear. Joe is good at his job but he excels at community involvement and public education and his ability to build relationships. He works with a variety of people and groups as well as internal and external partners. He understands that protection of the natural resource is more than catching violators but involves working together with our customers to help them learn about the resource and develop an appreciation for them. Joe not only works for opportunities to help people discover our natural resources; he finds ways to lead the effort. His work in this area has helped veterans, kids and their families discover - or rediscover—the wonders of the natural resources in Wisconsin and beyond. An example of how Joe works in promoting the outdoors is working on a project called Oconto River Kids. He worked with a local landowner, whose godson was receiving treatment for leukemia and also observed how other kids were struggling with serious illnesses. Joe led the cause to help provide outdoor opportunities for those kids. They started by providing bear hunts and the interest soon spread and they developed partnerships that helped build wheelchair accessible hunting blinds, receiving donated bear tags and taking kids outdoors across the state of WI. This program has grown thanks to Joe since when he transferred stations he quickly began recruiting volunteers in his new area. The program has given hundreds of kids and their families opportunities to enjoy outdoor opportunities that would normally be out of reach due to physical impairments. The examples of Joe's commitment to the resource and the people are numerous but a well deserving recipient of the Spirit of the Shack Award. Sheila shared that Joe was hurt in a use-of-force confrontation; he will be okay but off duty right now.

Excellence in Conservation winner is Give Adventure Grant Team, Indiana. As the name implies, this is truly a team award. The goal of the Give Adventure project is to foster a conservation ethic in an underserved Indianapolis community by installing native plant and wildlife habitat at a traditionally underserved school. The project was made possible by a \$10,000 grant from the Indian Natural Resources Foundation. With the success of the first project a second grant application was submitted and the team subsequently received an additional \$14,000 grant for Reconnecting to Our Waterways to further project funding. The team led efforts to engage the school and others in planting plugs in the front pollinator garden, sensory garden and a monarch waystation. The team also worked to develop the text and design three bilingual interpretive signs that were installed to highlight the pollinator garden, wetland pond and monarch waystation. The team also led an effort to host a workforce development day for a non-profit organization working with underemployed youth ages 15 to 25. The event involved outdoor activities for youth including fishing and bird watching and a presentation by DNR staff highlighting DNR staff, their career paths and networking opportunities. After the event, students reported an increased knowledge of the purpose and goals of the DNR. They also provided a Project WILD workshop with 55 teachers at the school previously mentioned to introduce teachers to the school's habitat installations and provide training on how to incorporate the habitats into curriculum plans. All of this occurred during 2019 and culminated in a community festival at a park adjacent to the school. Approximately 50 community members attended and in post event surveys attendees indicated that the event helped them learn about outdoor recreation opportunities, the importance of native plants for their community and that it was very informative. Although the grant specific project commitments have ended, the team still plans to stay engaged in ongoing habitat maintenance and partnerships with the school and associated entities. Team members involved in the effort were Jenn Domenich, Megan Dillon, Colleen Hartel, Elizabeth Middleton, Morgan Sussman, Rachel Woodworth of Indiana DNR Julia Kemnitz of USFWS and Phyllis Boyd of Groundwork Indy.

Special Recognition Award goes to Kyle Kaskie, GIS Program Specialist for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. Kyle is a dedicated and valued staff member who can visualize, interpret and analyze the need for R3 strategies in the outdoors. He's recognized for his technical expertise of dashboard creations to track public class attendance of GFP programs and license sales. His use of these data analysis products create powerful and encompassing overviews of trends, progress and goals that have become the standard for staff use statewide. He created and maintains the State Record Fish dashboard, which is a public facing product that not only show the location of state record catches but provides a name, date and photo of the trophy fish reported to GFP. Other applications that Kyle provides technical expertise on includes waterfowl, hunting unit, and research maps. Kyle's creation of the Class Attendance Dashboard through ESRI applications is a fantastic way for staff to track class participation, timing and locations throughout South Dakota. Previous records were handwritten and unorganized but with Kyle's creation they are now streamlined and readily available for review and citation by GFP staff. Most recently, Kyle created the Recreational Licensing dashboard. This allows staff to track recreational license sales in real time and offers a filterable experience so any user can find exactly what they need. His work is truly pioneering for any agency within South Dakota and can be considered a shining example of how his motivation and a need for data display and visualizations play a part in all facets of our MAFWA states projects and initiatives. (*Exhibit I – PowerPoint with photos of awards*).

Kelly – Congratulations to winners, apologize we couldn't share with you. President has latitude to go out and choose somebody who has done some outstanding things for the Association, an outstanding professional. Kelley, I can't thank you enough for all of the things you have done since I have known you. First you were a good director and when you went to the USFWS we really started to see you go. Can't be happier because it was the right move for you personally and professionally and the Midwest. Worked on President's Task Force, the Midwest Landscape Initiative, you are life blood making that work. You are intellectually powerful and a nice person. Talking about empowered women and how great they are, you stand up as one of those heroes. Thank you for everything you have done for us. Congratulations. *Kelley* – Holding back tears, unexpected and unnecessary. Thank you but I couldn't do this without relationships and trust, I see Todd and team I know who was always standing behind me. This group is part of the team that makes all of this possible. I wouldn't be doing this without Ed, Craig and Claire and others; award shared with a lot of people. Thrilled for what we are doing and thank you for your leadership, to trust us and see what is possible. *Kelly* – Old school, you come up through the ranks as a fish or wildlife biologist and work your way into the ranks of administration. The people on the phone have taken different paths, it is good because we are getting a diverse path coming in to lead agencies and get diversity of thought. We have made a lot of progress. Last award; we talk about people behind the scenes, the heroes that make it all work, Sheila, since I have been involved in MAFWA, you and your husband Dan have spent so much time making us look good; volunteer year after year and are always cheerful; incredible work ethic. We can't thank you enough. You typically work away and we don't hear from you so you don't get the recognition we really want to give you. This last award goes to you for all of the volunteer time you put in, the help you have been, you have done it so graciously. Thank you from all of us. *Ollie* – I want to share the plaque. Sheila has been a true workhorse for our Association. How many years Sheila? *Sheila* – Since 1999. *Ollie* – We appreciate you and Dan, your husband, who always comes with you to the meetings and helps set up the sound system and he is fun too. So, this award is to both of you in recognition of all you have done for us for all of these years. I also want to thank Kansas for allowing you to do this, a significant contribution to MAFWA. Thank you Sheila, hope you keep on doing it. *Sheila* – I appreciate that, thank you. *Brad* – You get to understand a little about what we get to enjoy every day in Kansas, Sheila is a gem and every time we get to see Dan it makes our day. Thank you for recognition. *Kelly* – My hats are off to all of the recipients, to get peer recognition, doesn't get better than that. Thank you.

Executive Secretary's Report – *Ollie Torgerson, Executive Secretary – (PowerPoint - Exhibit J)*. We were at North American in Omaha last March when virus hit and shut everything down. Middle of planning for annual conference in South Dakota and registrations dropped or were delayed, as were sponsorships, out of state travel was banned and airline reservations were cancelled or changed, people were afraid to travel, and there were county restrictions on group size. So, the decision was made to postpone the conference to October. But, the virus had its way with us and we reconvened board and made decision to cancel conference, the first time since World War II. We will hold 2021 conference at Custer State Park in South Dakota. We had a successful conference at Maumee State Park in Ohio in 2019. We welcomed four new directors, Amanda, Keith, Brian and Dave and welcomed promotion of Charlie Wooley to Region 3 Regional Director of USFWS. Ron and I travel to meet new directors; however, Charlie and I went to Iowa to meet Kayla Lyon; Ron and I went to Madison Wisconsin to meet Preston Cole

and Keith Warnke. One of most important items last year was Midwest Landscape Initiative (MLI) co-chairs Kelly and Craig, key to making this work is capacity, you have to have people. Thanks to contributions from USFWS, Kelley, Ed, Claire and Bill. Also launched Mid-America Monarch Conservation Strategy, which is now imbedded in MLI. Also, MLI tested as forum to deal with complex, multijurisdictional large scale issues, and chronic wasting disease (CWD) chosen as the issue and value stream mapping as a process to help manage decision making with Sara and Kelley taking the lead. Will discuss MLI more deeply on October 20. Conducted financial audit, completed successfully. I operate on state of Wisconsin computer system, after operating our web site on it for eight years, and we were notified by state that online hosting company was insecure and they shut down our website, hired a different hosting company, back online and hopefully not issue in the future. Another busy activity is our new relationship with the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (MFWC); last one held last January, a successful conference. Our Foundation assumed oversight of this conference, we have a committee chaired by Sara Pauley, with Kelly Hepler and Dale Garner as members. They negotiated a 3-year contract with Delaney Meeting and Event Management for next three years for MFWC. Challenges with Covid continued but planned for St. Paul for January meeting. Transition of president occurs in October, had successful transition last October from Kelly Hepler to Kelly Hepler, and next week will have another transition from Kelly to Kelly; he stayed president. This is the first time in history to have same president for three consecutive years. Important job of president is to make appointments, 53 in all. In addition to assisting the president, grant and contract work is increasing duty for me, for hotels contracts, insurance, grants, audits, contracts is taking more of my time. We are a small organization and we operate on \$160,000 annual budget and we get a lot done. Annual conference planning takes much of my time in the first half of my year. We will resume working with South Dakota Game and Parks and Delaney Management about the first of the year to plan next conference, hopefully in person at Custer State Park in the Black Hills. This includes raising sponsorships, right now at \$60,000 each year, a major activity of mine. We recruited one new affiliate, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. Next conference scheduled for June 28 to July 1, 2021 at Custer State Park. I would like to recognize the contributions of Dale Garner who retired last week. Tremendous leader for us, in addition to serving on executive committee and CEF board, he has served on Audit , Awards, NCN, Midwest Fish and Wildlife conference committees, plus he was director/liaison to Health and Deer and Wild Turkey committees as well as two posts at AFWA, National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative representing us and on National Grants committee. What a work horse and a great friend. We are going to miss him. Fortunate to have Roger Luebbert and Sheila Kemmis. *Kelly – Echo what he said about Dale.*

Break until 10:00

OLD BUSINESS

Mid-Continent Monarch Strategy Report – *Bill Moritz, Michigan* – Reminder upcoming December anticipating finding on status of monarchs. Ed and I were talking about scheduling a virtual monarch board of directors meeting to talk about communications around that. Put together notes in 2019 when we originally anticipated a finding so we will dust those off and see if there is any need for change and communicate with the directors. I retired from Michigan two years ago and time to have a director serve as chair of the board instead of me, happy to help

until that selection is made. *Kelly* – I would like you to continue for now and I will let Keith deal with it when he takes over. *Bill* – We had a brief report from Roger on status of NFWF grant, have Ed report on mechanical side of that. *Ed Boggess* – MAFWA was involved in a series of NFWF grants starting with one Kelley Myers helped with when she was the director in Iowa, there actually was a grant the year before that when I was MAFWA president, a partial grant but the part we got went to the National Wildlife Federation and that allowed us to host our kick-off meeting in Texas, which worked well for the Mid-America Strategy which covered not only the 13 Midwest states but also south-central states that are core to monarch first generation breeding and fall migration, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, as was the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Historically, MAFWA started project with commitment in 2015 of \$10,000; USFWS kicked in some money and Iowa hosted an organizational meeting and NFWF allowed us to have that organization meeting and hire Claire Beck as the technical person. Then we got a subsequent NFWF grant. All of those have closed out. NFWF grants required one-to-one match or in-kind or cash, so states were asked to contribute suggested amounts, some contributed more, some less, some in-kind. At end of that we polled all of you about the remaining cash match, did not spend it all, and your decision was to put money into an account, roughly \$20,000 left. Dale suggested using that after the finding decision in case we need to get people together. We finished NFWF grants and Claire and I are still working on Mid-America Strategy as part of MLI duties. Just a reminder, some money left to use at appropriate time. *Kelly* – Ron, anything to offer from AFWA’s perspective? *Ron* – Nothing to add.

National Wild Pheasant Plan Update – *Scott Taylor* – (*PowerPoint – Exhibit K*). We are a relatively new partnership; the National Wild Pheasant Conservation plan was finished in 2013, written by national pheasant tech committee which is pheasant biologists from across the country. That plan was approved by MAFWA and AFWA directors, fund raising began to support a plan coordinator position. Funds were secured 2015, in 2016 agreement made between MAFWA and Pheasants Forever (PF). I am PF employee but they bill MAFWA for salary. I was hired in April and started the management board that summer. The board is made up of administrators from agencies that contribute, as of 2020, 20 states as well as PF. Funding-wise in good shape, invoices went out in May and total \$105,000 this year. We did fund raising this summer for next 3-year term which will be invoiced annually 2021, 2022 and 2023. Funds collected are a year ahead, should get us through 2024/25. Haven’t heard from Indiana or Minnesota as regards to their support, losing New Mexico out of the partnership as they have few pheasants, other than that in good shape. A few states do not, for administrative reasons, make multiyear commitments (TX and CO) but expect them to continue their support. Thanks for support and pledged amounts. Our mission is to foster science-based, socially-supported policies and programs that benefit pheasants, pheasant hunters and communities. The past year highlights included helping to administer a multistate research project designed around the question of whether roadside brood surveys reliably predict population size and hunting prospects. When there is a mismatch between what surveys are telling us, what forecasts are and what hunters are experiencing there are R3 implications for that as well as agency credibility. Member states had that question, seven states contributed funds to support a graduate student at Iowa State, collecting data in 13 states and next year will be final year of data collections and hopefully will have results by this time next year. We are also trying to raise the flag on small game hunter R3, like to build more attention. If you look at trends of small game participation, lost more than 160,000 hunters per year on average over the last 25 years plus. The decline in

small game hunting participation is driving the decline in hunting participation as a whole, so this deserves more attention. Garnered support for AFWA resolution last year to look at this issue more closely. Worked through resident game bird working group of AFWA and bird conservation committee and hunting and shooting sports participation committee to not only sponsor the resolution and develop document to identify a set of key questions and issues on small game R3 hunter declines and recommended actions that AFWA and affiliates could take to understand and address this issue. Continue to work on document and will have it prepared for consideration in March. Decided to do a major revision of the national plan, written before partnership, now that Farm Bill is in the books we want to look forward to what we want to accomplish and concentrate on as a partnership. We had a joint meeting of the management board and technical committee last October in North Dakota to talk about common needs. Out of the meeting we developed a problem statement, a set of objectives, issues and prioritized work items. Went through prioritization process this spring and fall. We identified 16 new and 9 ongoing work items. We are also developing and improving state scale habitat pheasant abundance model to better quantify predictions and what happens when acres of habitat of different types are gained and lost and what that means for pheasants and hunter participation. There is a version one of original plan, working on version two. Had video conference with tech committee yesterday to start vetting that and also development of a conceptual chain of influence model to put pieces together. Trying to affect habitat, hunter R3, and protect under R3, agency function and policies. Hope to get draft of revised plan before management board, which is chaired by Russ Mason of Michigan, in March. *Terry* – Is it possible to put that slideshow on the MAFWA website or send it out? *Scott* – I can share with Ollie or anyone who requests it directly. *Amanda* – Said Indiana hadn't paid, haven't seen those invoices so I am not sure where they go. *Scott* – I think you paid your 2020 invoice, we are looking for pledges for the next three years. *Sheila* – Anyone making presentations, please share those with me after the meeting. *Kelly* – In South Dakota we dropped our brood surveys this year, couldn't tell you if it was a good or bad year. We are participating in work coming out of Iowa State, had professor on the phone in one of our Commission meetings, he is good and we are anxious to see how it goes. The 10 areas of brood surveys we did this year were off the charts. It goes together, if we are seeing good numbers in South Dakota, we see good numbers in Kansas or Nebraska, for example. Looking forward to getting reliable numbers that would be great. Our brood survey has been done since the 1940s. Happy with science on that. Like that you are calling out small game, which is a big deal; we are running an aggressive marketing campaign on that. When the management board gets back together I wouldn't mind having Emily and our tourism department come give you a briefing on marketing approach, spending about \$2.1 million. We are tracking individuals, residents and nonresidents, out of pheasant hunting group. If you want time to have us talk about that in management group sometime let me know. Love to see pheasants, makes my heartbeat faster.

National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHP) Update – *Doug Nygren, Kansas* – Represent you with two roles with fish habitat partnership, I am on Reservoir Habitat partnership executive committee and NFHP executive board at national level. The reservoir partnership is a mature partnership functioning at high level, 10 years into this effort now and running like a well-oiled machine. Accomplishments include a nationwide assessment of all reservoirs in the country and that information is available on our fish habitat website. That assessment allows someone to look at a particular lake, look at impairments and figure out what can be dealt with cost effectively.

That is available in hard-back book and on the website; a best management practice manual. Six states in MAFWA who received grants from the reservoir partnership, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Iowa. I have a report from Jeff Boxrucker, coordinator for the partnership, I will have Sheila send out (*Exhibit L*). Currently, nationwide, we have 130 chapters in 31 states affiliated with reservoir fish habitat partnership, which can be a regional group, national organization as well as state and location groups and individuals. We have quite a reach and working across the landscape on impoundments nationwide, the only one as opposed to regional species oriented. NFHP at national level, 20 partnerships under umbrella. The executive board working on revising 5-year action plan, including 2-year work plan for the board members to help them moving forward. Well under way and then two weeks ago passing of the ACE (America's Conservation Enhancement) Act will affect additional conversations and revisions to that document. Have strong sense of program was looking for partners not only to provide in-kind and leverage but also people who wanted to make financial contributions to fish habitat work nationwide. This year Bass Pro Shops set up a small grants program and made \$50,000 available this year to fund small projects across the nation. Wisconsin received one of those for Gilbert Creek trout habitat improvement as part of fishers and barbers partnership. There are six partnerships that lie within Midwest boundaries. America's Conservation Enhancement Act that just passed will hopefully be signed by the President soon. That Act has money for NAWCA, invasive species and CWD but also codified the National Fish Habitat partnership into law and will provide \$7.2 million a year for next five years through the partnership. It also provides \$2 million to five federal agencies to provide science and technical assistance to the partnership, Forest Service, USGS, USFWS, and NOWA, and will provide additional funding and is not going to come out of \$7.2 million, not sure if coming off allocation or a separate allocation to help support federal efforts. NFHP having virtual meeting later this month, October 19-22, workshops and board meetings to look at legislation to figure out what it is going to mean and how it will change the way NFHP is operating and does business. We have more questions than answers on how this is going to roll out. There will be a new board, with some of same members and new members added. As soon as the Act becomes law, the current board has no status anymore but we anticipate we will continue to do our work as needed as we transition into the language and execute the Act. Questions have come up that we hope to get answers for over the next few weeks; not sure how much board will receive to operate the partnership for operations, unclear where that will come from, if out of \$7.2 million or somewhere else. One-to-one match federal to nonfederal and that has a lot of implications because a lot of projects and partnerships in place have used Corps of Engineers money for in-kind operations. Match requirements will be interesting to see how that rolls out. It has not been determined how the board is going to be prioritizing projects and funding amongst the 20 partnerships. There are quite a few additional hoops the board will have to jump through, reporting requirements to Congress. The administration of money is going to shift from the USFWS to the Board itself. Other concerns about how we handle 501(c)(3) part of NFHP. The way the language is written it appears that money will become the property of the U.S. government so hopefully we will have something in place to make sure any money donated to efforts will be under the control of the executive board. Those are issues that need to be answered. How USFWS adapts to money no longer coming to them, quite a few coordinators are USFWS employees and there are questions about what their role will be. Exciting that it is codified and in law, hope to grow \$7.2 million to \$80 million, but first step was to make it official under the Act. *Kelly* – This is 12 years in the making, perseverance is the word, when people think about conversation legislation you can't get

discouraged if it doesn't happen the first two or three years. This Congress is one of the better congresses we have had for funding conservation packages, Recovering America's Wildlife Act will probably become the greatest; it has bi-partisan support and wonderful pieces in land and water conservation up to this point. This is a lot of work, Doug and I working on this for 12 years. Hats off to you and your diligence, Doug. Excited about this and know that some people in the USFWS may be concerned what this means. We have a partnership with the Service and we are not going to break that. It makes more sense to have this part of the Board. Hadn't thought about 501(c)(3), will work on those issues. Great work.

Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (MFWC) – *Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri* – Listed as a conference, but CEF board of trustees, myself, Kelly and looking for replacement for Dale. Money made at last conference, netted \$23,000 in profit from 2020 conference, typically Board would distribute to TWS and AFS for travel grants. Held off because in a bind with contract in place for 2021 St. Paul conference. Until we understood penalties we might have for breaking that contract because Minnesota has decided to do the 2021 conference virtually. *Cindy Delaney* has some news and updates on that. *Cindy Delaney* – Back and forth with the Intercontinental Hotel and the River Center since June because we knew this was coming. We can't offer them a rebook because of rotation schedule, talking about an outright cancellation and they are playing hardball. They came back and offered a \$10,000 penalty if we cancel right now. The way the language of the contract is written they say we can't invoke the Force Majeure clause until January. If we agree to pay the \$10,000 to each, \$20,000 total, postpone that until January and we can't enforce Force Majeure, if things haven't gotten better, then we pay in January. Basically, I countered and I haven't heard back from either of them. We have to move forward with the virtual meeting, the Minnesota team can only support us virtually. We have a lot of technical talks, so we ran a budget with that penalty in it and they will still make about \$17,000 if numbers come in where we want them to. Full speed ahead on virtual meeting, just debating whether we lawyer up and threaten more or get some sort of counter-offer with a delayed payment. Meg working with host team for over a year now. *Sara* – That amount is significantly lower than what we heard before. It is probably time for us to get back together and decide what we want to do on travel grants, but no travel. *Cindy* – I suggest you do student scholarships, numbers for Southeast meeting are down, so that might incentivize students to use towards registration would be great. *Sara* – Helpful, Kelly, I will circle back with you and Ollie. *Kelly* – Frustrated with this hotel, all that has gone on in that city and to come back and try to play this game when everyone else is going out of their way to work as a good community and business partners realize we all have to get through this together. *Cindy* – It is frustrating to me because we have brought two groups to them in last four years, Citizen Science Association, a couple of thousand people and AFWA's annual meeting. We love St. Paul and want to go back, but not going to get us back if they do this but they don't seem to care right now. *Kelly* – A lot of short-sighted businesses right now. I don't mind lawyering up and we have a great one on the phone. *Sara* – It should be another spectacular conference and Minnesota is getting the program put together. *Ollie* – I looked at Force Majeure clause for the Iowa conference coming up the following year, who knows what virus is going to be like, but more flexibility in 2022 MFWC with hotels in Des Moines. We've got to keep eyes open on hotel contracts, this was a wake-up call for us and we need some strong language to place in the contracts. *Cindy* – We actually have some great clauses, which have gotten better this past year with Lane's help, but sometimes we

can't negotiate those clauses in, some properties are not flexible. As we grow with Lane and through Covid pandemic we will certainly have stronger language. *Kelly* - Thanks for your help.

Midwest Landscape Initiative – *Kelly Hepler, South Dakota* – Uplifting positive topic, amazing where we started from and where we are now and a lot of it due to the efforts of Kelley and the great partnership with Craig and the USFWS. Kelley – (*PowerPoint Slide – Exhibit M*). Thank you, share a slide and keep this brief. Ed and Bill standing by to provide updates as well. Update on working group since the last time we met in September and July, will cover time sensitive those reports. Our at-risk regional species of greatest conservation need (RSGCN) project is underway. We contracted Karen Terwilliger Consulting who helped with the Northeast and Southeast associations. It was a miracle of contracting, it happened so fast, caught off guard with timing. What we are doing is a little different than what happened in NEAFWA and SEAFWA by getting Service participation from the get-go. The NE states came together and put together a regional list and then presented that to their Service colleagues and it worked well. Folks in MAFWA region and different programs of USFWS come together. We don't want to dilute the survey state voice in this important work so Brad Potter and I are working behind the scenes with Claire Beck to make sure we get a unified Service perspective. We are asking for three responses from each state. Some work has gone out to threatened and endangered and diversity folks are meeting this week. We are in process of looking at methodology on how we are going to work the next year to come up with this list. One of the big foundation blocks on how we are going to set more species or habitat-specific priorities going forward, so this is important component of work. The habitat assessment team is working with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln to develop a survey tool to get a sense of all the different tools out there. It became clear no shortage of tools out there, team is getting a sense of what is available, what is being used, why using them, why not using them, some spent considerable funds to develop. This is beyond USFWS, USGS and states and possibly Department organizations like Forest Service, EPA and others. Wind team is off to the races, meeting couple weeks ago and every state represented, both Service and state and USGS all in attendance to go over first cut of the work plan. They have four products they are working to develop with assistance of our consultants. Creating four ways for states to engage in this workgroup, whether community of practices, as a member, a reviewer or feedback loop; thought drivers of group, much more robust and starting to develop products. Need input from states and your staff, getting great feedback. I will work with Kelly or Ollie to put out requests to specific states, only works if we get a lot of input from everyone, get broad-based input. So far working and doing okay, want it demonstrative of whole region. Strategy development: MAFWA charged MLI to develop a comprehensive action plan, so we are taking working groups and their action plans and integrating them, a lot of nuance. Ed Boggess and I have been talking with USGS, we have a member on technical committee who has agreed to figure out if there is a way to work collaboratively to come up with robust way to integrate these action plans and still keep the original intension of work group in them but make them scientifically rigorous and scientifically based. So, actions we are proposing are hopefully more acceptable to scientific community. Upcoming events, SEAFWA having symposium and Southeast Association Adaptation Strategy is going to be highlighted along with local. It was originally be held in Missouri so using opportunity to highlight great work going on in Missouri and locally that is scaling up into regional efforts. I was asked if we would connect MLI with what is going on with that in an attempt to further our edges and coordinate across broad regions. There will be a full day of discussions from local tools, scaled up regional models and how all

working together or possibly could be doing better. If you have an opportunity to go it is going to be virtual and attendance can be remarkable in virtual settings. Also, participating in Mississippi River Flyway Grassland Bird Roadmap development, we are involved and engaged, don't know where effort will go but there is a lot there. The team working on this under the grant has some deadlines coming up but beyond that want to be thinking what our engagement is with groups like this. Ed and I continue to work with that group where we have some connection. In a couple weeks I will be briefing you on CWD findings. *Ed Boggess* – We have gotten core direction from the steering committee that there is a desire for MLI to develop a communications and engagement strategy and a robust website that would be a source of information internally for agency partners and other people that want to work on MLI. Claire and I are working with Kelley, Ollie and others to put together a team of communication engagement strategy team that would consist of technical MLI folks representing all of the work groups, At-risk, Habitat and Wind and communication professionals, some staff, thanks to Missouri and Michigan, and the USFWS; a small team populated. Also discussed efficient way to do this is to bring on a communications consultant, so working on a request for information from potential consultants. If any of you have ideas on potential consultants we could ask for a request of information that could lead to a request for a proposal for a consultant, we are interested. Aggressive timeline to do this, like strategy development to be efficient and streamlined with help of consultant. Working on preliminary draft by March to bring to MAFWA executive committee and steering committee and complete strategy by the time this board meets next summer. Similarly, with the website, this is one mechanism for implementing our communications and engagement strategy, looking to have website designed and initially populated by next summer and live by September. Exciting, may be call on some of you or your staff more as we go forward. Working out how to select the appropriate consultant(s), could be more than one consultant, one to work on strategy and one that works on the website. There may also be some longer term issues of hosting, maintaining and updating the website. Next step is to bring back to this group. *Kelley* – Jim, said important to have communication and having a plan to talk across programs and talk internally, so this is our attempt to give energy to that. If you have staff that want to be involved in this, Ed and Claire have been putting together an internal team and would appreciate people coming forward to be that consultative body to help us out. Going forward, having a network of communication professionals across the region is something we don't have right now. This is the beginning of putting people together to build something and then maintain network going forward. Helping form our priorities, because communications staff see a broad swath of the agency and can help put things in perspective. This is beginning of good work we know has been needed. Vision and governance is next piece, Bill working on that. *Bill Moritz* – Couple of different objectives, 1) development of vision statement as well as identify current and emerging issues for conservation. I have put together an approach to do that but need to set up meeting of steering committee and walk through that process and be able to report back out soon. 2) Look at governance model we have in place and make recommendations for improvement. The way I am approaching that is to participate in as many meetings as I can and look for opportunities to improve communication among the various entities within the MLI as well as externally. You will see activities soon to start narrowing down these pieces so we can have information available for upcoming year. *Kelley* – The second part is looking at how we include notion of continuous improvement of operational efficiency. The idea that it is never too early to look at how we are functioning and how we can make sure we are meeting the intention. In the hopper are extra things we are working on that are starting to take shape. We are going to be talking in a

couple weeks about the AFWA task force recommendations that came out in connection to science and research priorities and some of the landscape efforts. Potentially new take on SWAPS and looking at SWAPS in new ways. I held a first meeting of professionals from around the region related to PFAS, not just Great Lakes states, an issue happening everywhere in lots of different ways and in varying levels. Some groups working on this for years and some new to this and it has a lot of eerie similarities to CWD. As that shapes up and we know what form it might take I will brief you more. Ed and I working on staffing and capacity planning, came out of retreat this summer with steering committee. It is a dialog piece and part of internal planning with USFWS who just started our new fiscal year, may be good to working off a continuing resolution budget so that is what we are planning around. We are starting to look at our capacity and where we want to grow in certain areas. Ed and Claire have been coming to our internal meetings to see how we work together as a team and where we can share some resources across our regions, with states and partnerships in MAFWA and how we can become an innovative team. Ed and I will be talking about MLI staffing plan and outlines of how we are organized now across work groups and hopefully will prepare some visuals that will help you see where we need help and where you might have staff with expertise, recognizing everybody is over-taxed and no one has extra bandwidth. If interest in leadership opportunities or growth opportunities to participate in some of these teams. Set value in your staff working on some of these initiatives and I will provide refined opportunities so you can see who might best fill some of those gaps.

Kelly – Incredible, nice work. I want to ask you what is coming up in the next section, Faryn works with me and is good at her job and she is interested in getting a broad working group in the Midwest for social science, which I appreciate. We have been talking about the need, besides the communication piece, social science and all the work we are doing. Between now and when we take that topic up I want you to think about having this being a satellite working group to this, attach it to this exercise. Number one thing, as far as research in the Midwest, is this. Get working group assigned to this team and have them work under your purview.

Kelley – Good timing, I remember Sara’s words earlier when we talked about social science as a stand-alone priority or how we wanted to look at it; it was weave it into the fabric of every part of MLI. The USFWS, before Covid, had this amazing summit where we brought in social scientists and people who were social science champions from around the country to talk about the role social science needs to play in conservation. There are networks developing and in the process of bringing on a recent graduate who interned with us over the summer and one of things I want her to do is start thinking about a network across the Midwest, so there is going to be a lot of good opportunities there. Open to talk about it and open to your ideas; tremendously needed.

Kelly – She moved during Covid, to an area where she didn’t know anyone and was isolated; it is hard to onboard at that time, a unique thing you are never prepared for. She is talented and has a lot of energy and I want her to be able to spend that energy and learn from other people and get that network growing, that will help her professionally and the whole team. Ollie, we could talk about that now since I have kicked that off.

Ollie – Go ahead.

Forming Human Dimensions Technical Working Committee – *Kelly Hepler, South Dakota* – Kelley, I will put Faryn in touch with you and see if we can come up with a recommendation to share with directors and see if that is in keeping with their vision. Looking for help on technical side, communications support and social scientists and whether they want to be engaged in that network or not. Not interested in having a separate group but assign it to MLI because that is where the action is happening.

Ollie – Depends on whether you want to form another committee

within the Midwest Association called the Human Dimensions Committee or not. If you want to do that then that requires the Board to take action and you would need to name a temporary chairperson. According to our bylaws they would need to have a mission statement and operating procedures and bring that back in a year for Board to approve. It depends on where you want to go with this. An official standing committee of MAFWA or subset of MLI that is not an official committee. *Kelly* – I am leaning towards turning it to MLI. *Ollie* – That is fine. *Kelly* – If there is enough enthusiasm at that point and interest from other states then we can go back and ask if we want to make this a standing committee and go through the formal process you identified. The immediate need, may be one or both, may be separate standing committee this is what they would be working on. Let's go down and road and see where it progresses. *Ollie* – Your staff person could work directly with Kelley's new staff person in the USFWS to help set that up. *Kelly* – Faryn will be excited she has a lot of energy and will be very good. *Jim* – Good idea to start with it included in MLI to keep it going. We have personnel that want to contribute to this and be part of a network. The social scientists that exist in the states also have access to other networks, we work with universities a lot, from a capacity standpoint to get some things done. They will bring more potential personnel and resources to the table. I found in social science arena, from state agency perspective, you don't have as much capacity as you need to do all the work needed. Prioritization becomes a big issue. Starting with MLI, at least we could get priorities figured out and where to go. *Sara* – Kelley has already included that. I am in complete agreement with direction you are headed on social science and human dimensions, appreciate your leadership there. I was going to mention call earlier this week with EPA on research and development and how they can be of greater assistance to state fish and wildlife agencies is one of the areas they mentioned. A lot of research in area they are interested in that intersects with us. As looking at membership we could help make a contact there. Talk about on 22nd, related to potentially greater capacity EPA could provide on PFAS. *Russ* – A good idea. Michigan further along than a lot of states in dealing with PFAS and related derivatives. Our standards, because of political reasons, are more than EPA has been able to accomplish. I think they probably do have useful information they could share. *Kelly* – Sara, to be clear we are talking about the meeting on the 20th, not 22nd correct? *Sara* – Yes, whatever the date is. *Ollie* – It is October 20, 10:00 am to noon. *Kelly* – Thank you all for your work.

NEW BUSINESS

Non-lead Partnership Recommendations – *Keith Warnke, Wisconsin* – MAFWA approved joining the non-lead partnership as a supporting partner in July. Subsequent to that, we tasked the R3 committee and Wildlife Health committee to work with non-lead folks to come up with path going forward of what that partnership would look like and what it would involve for us and our commitment. Commitments can be in-kind or financial support and we didn't know how the partnership was going to work and we wanted to explore that. The two committees met with the non-lead partnership on a call in August. Had a robust discussion of what was going on in other parts of the country, what other states are doing, what other entities are working on non-lead partnership and how that could work over the long haul. What we settled was to have the non-lead partnership send links to resources so we could do resource sharing, do promotional resource on MAFWA website or through other means through Midwest states. We got that list of resources, interesting things, pamphlets on use of lead, mission and science behind non-lead ammunition, why it was developed, what it was good at and how it has been improved over the

years and links to some of the other partners and how they are involved with the partnership. We left it that these two committees would have to reconvene and make recommendations to MAFWA board of directors. Time to reach out to Megan Wisecup and Lindsay Long and ask them to reconvene their work groups to come up with recommendations to bring back to the Board. *Kelly* – Good work, appreciate you following through on that. Nothing official at this time besides information.

2021 Budget Approval – *Roger Luebbert, Treasurer – (Proposed Budget - Exhibit N)* – First two pages shows budget versus actual for 2019; budget status for 2020, receipts and disbursements; and 2021 proposed budget. Page one is 2019 budget, shows actual and has line numbers along the left for reference. Line 5, total conference receipts, budgets \$85,000, actual was \$92,000, favorable variance of almost \$6,700. Everything beyond that was spot on. Had a few more banking and administrative fees than budgeted, primarily projects that popped up after budget was approved. Line 16, total receipts, budget was \$159,000 and had actual receipts of \$177,000, favorable variance of \$18,000. Next page, 2019 disbursements; line 21 annual directors meeting disbursements, budget was \$56,000 and we spent \$47,000, favorable variance of \$9,400. Some of unfavorable variances, line 24 was executive secretary travel, unfavorable variance of \$2,900, reason is we had a higher turnover of directors, so more travel than normal. Another unfavorable variance was treasurer pay of \$1,400 because after the budget the executive committee approved increased hours to 450. Everything else is pretty much in line. Line 35 total disbursements, budget of \$152,000 and spent \$135,000, so \$17,000 to the good. Overall, we through receipts would be over disbursements by \$6,600, but was over by \$41,000 so we had a \$35,000 favorable variance. Remember, earlier we transferred \$160,000, partly due to having such a good year in 2019. Move onto 2020 budget, as of September 22, 9 months into the year. Line 5, total conference receipts, budget \$85,000, we cancelled conference but did have some sponsors and some registration fees totaling \$35,300, which we will apply to next year's conference but will give refund if requested. In the process of getting membership dues and administrative fees, tagging those in federal banking account and at the end of the year I will transfer them, we should be okay. Next page is 2020 budget disbursements, line 21, annual directors meeting, budget of \$54,000 and spent \$7,800 and probably won't spend much more; \$600 to Delaney for setting up this meeting. Pay for executive secretary should be close, probably won't spend travel, also true for treasurer's and recording secretary's travel. The CPA audit, we had \$15,000 budgeted and it cost \$5,400, so \$10,500 won't be spent. The firm that did the audit prepared our tax return, so that was less expensive than in the past, saved \$500. Had an unfavorable variance for liability insurance but this is a three-year policy we paid for. We thought receipts would be less than disbursements by \$3,300. I think we will end the year with receipts exceeding disbursements by about \$9,000. The 2021 proposed budget, on far right is explanations for each line item as to how we arrive at the number. To the left of that is budget number and for historical purposes, 2020, and 2018 and 2019 actual. The budget for 2020 sponsors was \$56,000, we took 2020 budget minus what we received in 2020, so new money for sponsors we think is around \$25,000. Conference have \$1,800 already received so new money would be about \$27,000. If you look at total conference receipts the budget for this year is \$85,000, we think new money will be around \$53,000. Lines 5, membership dues is increased for consumer price index, 2.5%. Line 6, if this budget is approved, this will be the dues for next year, \$4,111.10 for states and provinces will also be up 2.5%. Everything else is basically based on the 2020 budget. Overall, total receipts \$163,000 was budget in 2020, we think around

\$131,640 for 2021. The last page shows disbursements; line 21, total conference disbursements is pretty much the same as 2020 except increasing Delaney coordinator fees for consumer price index. Executive secretary pay increasing 2.5% for consumer price index; executive secretary travel we shot for the middle, \$7,000 in 2020, expenditures were almost \$10,000 in 2019 so we bumped it up \$1,000. Treasurer's pay increased by 2.5% and travel is the same. Recording secretary travel we are using 2019 actual, a little higher than the budget. Tax preparation fees using 2019 actual. Audit for \$15,000, finished so nothing set aside for next year. The executive committee requested we install a new item; annual director's meeting website be redesigned for \$2,000. Insurance we had a 3-year policy we paid so don't need those funds. Everything else the same. Total budget disbursements of \$155,000, we think that receipts will be under disbursements by about \$24,000, so this is a deficit. We should have enough cash in this conference account to handle this and if not, plan B would be to go to investment account. This is proposed budget so can change if needed. ***Sara Pauley, Missouri moved to accept budget as presented, Amanda Wuestefeld, Indiana second.*** *Ollie* – I doubt I will be spending that much travel money, hard to predict and depends on how many directors turn over. Lost Iowa director so an opportunity to travel, but don't know if Ron and I will, given virus situation. *Kelly* – Roger is trying to be up front about possible deficit. ***Motion passes.***

Kelly – Christie, not very often we get a director from Canada joining on these, anything you want to share? *Christie Curley, Ontario* – Appreciate the warm welcome and the opportunity to engage. Getting massive value for our dues. What was discussed today is quite similar on what we are facing in Canadian provinces. Lots of uncertainties in terms of how we are going to engage with folks and continue to enhance and retain going forward. Looking forward to digging in more to conversations and appreciate the opportunity. *Kelly* – It really is value-added MAFWA has one of the smallest amounts of dues in Association. The Midwest mafia is pretty much running AFWA right now, which is a benefit. A lot will get done and it will be frugal, we are doing everything we can to make this country better.

Sara – Quick reminder to complete fireside chat survey, deadline is Monday and we have 33 responses. *Kelly* well done today, Thanks *Ollie, Roger, Sheila* and others for good work.

Kelly – I asked *Amanda* if she would volunteer to represent MAFWA on AFWA executive committee and she said yes. More horsepower *Sara*, no reason you won't succeed. Thanks *Amanda*, we had a meeting yesterday, and I should have had you set up before that, I will catch you up *Amanda*.

Kelly – Working with USFWS partners at 1:00. Great engagement. *Cindy*, thank you for your support. *Jim* – I will probably be coming into Zoom meeting this afternoon a little late. *Cindy* – Different Zoom link this afternoon, log off and come back on.

Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

CWD Value Stream Mapping Recommendation and Proposed Actions, September 2020

BACKGROUND

The Midwest Landscape Initiative (MLI) is a forum comprised of state fish and wildlife agencies of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) and related regional US Fish and Wildlife Service directors and staff, intended to align efforts to the extent practicable around shared priorities. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a shared concern of the MLI leadership, who recognizes that many organizations and agencies are engaged in research and identification of best management approaches in addressing CWD. This event was intended to help all the organizations working in CWD research and response find some additional ways to coordinate going forward within the Midwest geography but with national efforts in mind.

SCOPE

This event, held December 2-5, 2019 in Columbia, MO, examined various research, prevention and management, and communication efforts ongoing or in development for addressing CWD, within the boundaries of the MLI (or MAFWA), occurring at state, federal and non-governmental organizations. Participants evaluated how those efforts interact, where opportunities exist for improved collaboration and what venues, forums or organizations may be most appropriate to communicate efforts, outputs and outcomes within the MAFWA region.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

CWD continues to be found in more locales within and outside the MAFWA region. Efforts to address the disease are primarily specific within the state where it occurs. Management, communication and research responses are largely bounded by the affected state's legal authority, cultural legacies of deer management within that state, and financial/staffing resources. MLI, as a forum intended to align efforts on landscape level issues within the MAFWA region, was asked to make recommendations to improve efforts to act consistently, share consistent messages and direct limited resources to more effectively address CWD across our various jurisdictions in the MAFWA region.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand existing authorities, priorities, basic functions, associated partners and users for the major CWD prevention, response and research efforts ongoing in the Midwest (and beyond, as relevant)
- Compare goals of various efforts, including prior coordination efforts, and organizations and document gaps in research, prevention and management, and coordination opportunities
- Identify areas of greatest need for further/improved collaboration (intra, interagency and external partners/stakeholders)
- Develop, or detail what should be included in, a framework for communication of research, legal authorities, and prevention and management needs occurring across or arising from complex multi-jurisdictional issues

GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Develop a list of recommended actions to improve communication, coordination, research, and prevention and management of CWD in the Midwest among all the various organizations working on or responding to CWD. (Leave the event with a list of actions to take, even if not for the MLI to manage, to ensure that state fish and wildlife agencies, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and partners have appropriate responses and are best able to coordinate research and management around CWD.)
2. Develop a framework, if needed, for an intra and inter-agency plan, including communications needs, related to the programs, priorities and gaps/ventures identified to facilitate meaningful and effective CWD efforts and authorities.
3. Report all findings to the MLI Steering Committee, the AFWA Wildlife Health Committee and Wildlife Health Initiative, other appropriate AFWA Committees, and the appropriate MAFWA Committees.

PARTICIPANTS

Sponsor	Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri Department of Conservation Director
Facilitator(s)	Ginny Wallace, Missouri Department of Conservation Charles (Chuck) Anderson, Missouri Department of Conservation
Team leaders	Kelley Myers, MLI Coordinator Jason Sumners, Missouri Department of Conservation
Members	Mark Chase, US Fish and Wildlife Service Ryan Drum, US Fish and Wildlife Service Matt Dunfee, CWD Alliance and Wildlife Management Institute John Fischer, Wildlife Management Institute Colin Gillin, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and AFWA Health Committee Scott Hull, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Will Inselman, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Levi Jaster, Kansas Department of Parks, Wildlife and Tourism Tamara McIntosh, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Bill Moritz, Wildlife Management Institute Nick Pinizotto, National Deer Alliance Bryan Richards, USGS Mike Tonkovich, Ohio Department of Natural Resources Sonja Christensen, Michigan State University

Members not present at VSM Event but assisting in subsequent discussions:

Jonathan Mawdsley, AFWA
Jen Mock Schaeffer, AFWA

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED ACTIONS:

MAFWA has been a leader in addressing complex, multi-jurisdictional challenges; chronic wasting disease presents such a challenge. However, our system of CWD research, management, response and coordination in the MAFWA region is producing an insufficient response and not for lack of effort or passion. We have tremendous professionals in every corner and from every profession engaged on this. But we need draw more connections between the work, provide more support, advocate for their needs and amplify the messages they are trying to share. If we want to improve our response and coordination, we are going to need to add resources and change how we are approaching the coordination and/or implementation of CWD research, management, response and funding.

The Recommendations included below encompass what the VSM participants believe it will take to achieve the Goals and Desired Outcomes for the event. We designed them based on the history of the Midwest and MAFWA supporting these collaborative actions where there is a need.

An overview of the Recommendations is as follows:

Recommendation 1: MAFWA members should engage with the hunting community, related industry stakeholders, landowners and the public by exploring and using change management and public engagement expertise to help understand and incorporate motivations and values that shape behaviors in those communities to enable implementation of effective disease management strategies.

Recommendation 2: MAFWA should more effectively utilize its governance structure and authority to coordinate and communicate efforts, outputs and outcomes of CWD actions within and outside MAFWA boundaries; MAFWA should serve as a hub for regional CWD-related activities. Parallel efforts and some outcomes of this effort are already underway (e.g. Multistate CWD research consortium, USDA APHIS request for proposals, 4 Corners meeting of MAFWA members (NE, KS, MO, IA)).

Recommendation 3: MAFWA should define a clear and consistent position on CWD, including what MAFWA considers a successful outcome in light of the nature of CWD, and MAFWA's member states should align research, response and management where possible to endeavor to accomplish it.

Recommendation 4: MAFWA should evaluate the financial implications of CWD response, research and management.

A more thorough discussion of these recommendations, including some proposed actions to implement them, follow. As a final note, implementation of these recommendations will require robust engagement with various groups represented on this team and others to ensure the methods of

implementation for these recommendations are effective, feasible and accomplished in a manner that will allow for the greatest participation among the states.

RECOMMENDATION 1: MAFWA members should engage with the hunting community, related industry stakeholders, landowners and the public by exploring alternative approaches using change management and public engagement expertise to help understand and incorporate motivations and values that shape behaviors in those communities to enable implementation of effective disease management strategies.

Problem Statement: Established CWD management goals may not be attainable without broader support from authority figures, the hunting community and the public. Engagement with the public on this issue has been limited and is often not collaborative in looking for ways to address CWD. Hunters and the public need to be part of our solution, but they will want to know that any behavioral changes they are making will be worth their sacrifice. They may also have more influence with decision-makers than agency personnel. In addition, transmissible fish and wildlife diseases often require management actions that are outside of the historical authority given/delegated to state wildlife agencies. If authority does exist, stakeholders are often opposed to actions that they perceive will be detrimental to their enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources. Stakeholder buy-in has been challenging but is of paramount importance.

Proposed Actions:

1. Acquire expert services, including human dimensions and social science, to assist MAFWA and its member states with change management support and public engagement in an effort to design and amend CWD management strategies that incorporate and build public will and buy in.
2. Pull influential hunters, landowners and industry representatives together from around the region to hear them and their concerns. Identify what information is available and what varies from state to state. Use these discussions to evaluate management actions and potentially identify additional science needs.
3. Craft our messages taking these gatherings and surveys into account and recognizing that the messages may not be positive, but they must be sincere. Partner with industry groups and media personalities who are regarded as trustworthy by the public.
4. MAFWA member states should assemble, share and disseminate success stories and provide information about what actions (or inactions) individuals, landowners and other organizations can take or have taken to slow the spread of CWD.

RECOMMENDATION 2: MAFWA should more effectively utilize its governance structure and authority to coordinate and communicate efforts, outputs and outcomes of CWD actions within and outside MAFWA boundaries; MAFWA should serve as a hub for regional CWD-related activities in the region.

Parallel efforts and some outcomes of this effort are already underway (e.g. Multistate CWD research consortium, USDA APHIS request for proposals, 4 Corners meeting of MAFWA members (NE, KS, MO, IA)).

Problem Statement: Chronic wasting disease management and wildlife disease health issues for MAFWA members are here to stay. Just as state agencies can no longer treat the occurrence of CWD as an isolated or singular incident, neither should MAFWA. CWD and disease management tolls existing staff and resources. Leveraging and coordinating resources and priorities is critical. In addition, we are not going to be able to legislate or regulate CWD consistently. Therefore, we need to utilize the existing committees and shared systems more effectively to address the challenge now and into the future.

Proposed Actions

1. MAFWA should hire a coordinator to provide support for communication and coordination of Wildlife Health responses, with a current emphasis specifically on CWD, across the MAFWA Committees and the MAFWA member states and to support the implementation of the recommendations herein.
2. The MAFWA Wildlife Health Committee and Deer and Turkey Committee should increase formal communication between them and with their member states and partners. They should also clarify committee roles as they may impact effectiveness of other regional and national collaboration and utilize any resources made available in Proposed Action 6 of this Recommendation to allow for improved sharing of information coming out of those committees.
3. MAFWA should review forums and tools in which information is shared from the committees to the directors and modify or develop such forums or tools to provide more effective dialogue and feedback between the directors and the committees as information is shared and decisions are made. This could be a task for the coordinator described in paragraph 1 above to address and accomplish.
4. MAFWA member states should meet annually with neighboring states to discuss local issues related to addressing priority CWD issues within their state and across the other states.¹ Where possible, MAFWA member states should develop Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with neighboring states to agree to take coordinated actions in response to CWD. This could range from management tactics to reduce prevalence to coordinated response to positive cervids along shared borders.
5. Each MAFWA member state should designate a CWD coordinator who is responsible to share information, ensure state information on CWD is accurate and provide meaningful input to any

¹ An example of this meeting would be the recent Four Corners meeting held by Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa and Kansas. This meeting was successful, in part, because it was action-oriented and pulled together a blend of staff responsible for CWD response.

shared messaging effort. This person should not be the director though it would ultimately be the discretion of each MAFWA member state to determine who should be the point of contact.

6. MAFWA member states should support the development and maintenance of a shared website that provides basic information about CWD as well as provides a state-specific page for each MAFWA member state that could provide state-specific information. The site would be intended to provide a restricted access virtual location for collaboration, communication, information sharing, and conducting business among MAFWA committees, member states, their contractors and partners with additional open access opportunities to share information with the general public.
7. MAFWA should engage with the appropriate regional experts within FWS, USDA, US Forest Service and the US Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate disease management, deer management, identification of research priorities, and impacts of policy decisions (i.e, carcass disposal). A joint sub-committee or ad-hoc working group of the Wildlife Health and Deer and Turkey Committees could be a forum for this action.

RECOMMENDATION 3: MAFWA should define a clear and consistent message and position on CWD, including what MAFWA considers a successful outcome in light of the nature of CWD, and MAFWA's member states should align research, response and management where possible to endeavor to accomplish it.

Problem Statement: No clear or unifying vision or approach to CWD exists across the MAFWA region, and response and management actions are disparate from state to state. These inconsistent and sometime conflictual responses have stymied implementation of best management practices to address CWD and has undermined trust agencies are trying to build with their constituents and stakeholders. While a list of "Best Management Practices" has been developed and adopted nationally for CWD, many state agencies are not able to implement these BMPs due to issues of authority or a lack of public or peer support. At the same time, agency staff and interested public desire science-based communication resources in order to respond to questions that arise regarding CWD consistently and without over-burdening disease specialists on agencies' staffs.

Proposed Actions:

1. MAFWA members should adopt a clear, consistent message and position about CWD, what causes it and how to minimize and/or slow the spread of it, and MAFWA and its members should share that message liberally. The message and position should include explicit goals and metrics and should be informed by MAFWA committees working on CWD, based in scientific facts and the best available research and should be consistent with findings or conclusions made in the Best Management Practices adopted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in September of 2019 (AFWA BMPs). All member states should use this common message and position, and non-traditional modes for dissemination should be explored by their communication professionals.

2. MAFWA should formally adopt the AFWA BMPs, reflecting the voluntary nature of the BMPs provided for in the AFWA resolution adopting them. MAFWA should select two to five (or more) of those BMPs it considers essential to implement, recognizing that within-state authority and support may take time to achieve and recognizing that the selection of two to three of the BMPs does not diminish the importance or effectiveness of others. Over time, MAFWA could consider implementing other BMPs. MAFWA should track participation related to implementation of the identified strategies and report annually. MAFWA should make adjustments to which strategies are encouraged for adoption as needed.
3. MAFWA should form a small, ad-hoc group of select members from the CWD VSM participants and the MAFWA Wildlife Health Committee and Deer and Turkey Committees to coordinate specifically on a research prioritization and reporting process. That groups should:
 - a. Coordinate with the CWD research consortium developing out of Michigan State University to reduce duplication of effort but also connect the MAFWA Deer and Turkey Committee to those research discussions.
 - b. Conduct a gap analysis of ongoing or relatively recent CWD national and regional research, with a particular focus on human dimensions and connecting the general public to the basic messages and with input from deer management and disease management professionals, alike.
 - c. Facilitate discussion, with broad participation, for annual review of research ongoing, discussion of research needed and planning for priority needs. The forum could be the framework currently in development by AFWA, the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, a separate CWD workshop, or the MAFWA Annual Directors' Meeting with results to be shared at MAFWA Annual Directors' Meeting and to be used in establishing regional or multi-state grant priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

MAFWA should evaluate the financial implications of CWD response, research and management.

Problem Statement: No individual agency has adequate resources to solve CWD challenges within their borders but there is an expectation that state fish and wildlife agencies are planning for and are ready to respond. A comprehensive assessment of current expenditures and related return-on-investment will benefit agencies anticipating additional investment into CWD response, research and management. As cervid hunting is important to overall agency revenue streams, such analyses should also consider impacts to the revenue side of agency budgets.

Proposed Actions:

1. MAFWA should seek to understand better economic impacts to agencies and communities, including landowners, business associated with hunting and wildlife watching and the general public who benefit from conservation investments of hunting, that wildlife diseases, and in particular CWD, may pose in terms of reduced herd size or reduced hunting opportunities, in an effort to expend communication and justify management actions. To the extent possible and

relevant, MAFWA should engage in existing national or regional efforts underway to accomplish the same.

- a. MAFWA should document current state-by-state expenditures on CWD response, research and management activities.
 - b. MAFWA should document current funding models and opportunities for CWD.
 - c. MAFWA should coordinate with other organizations engaged in similar efforts, within, outside or beyond the Midwest region to ensure Midwest issues are accounted for and to avoid duplication of effort where possible.
2. MAFWA should create a CWD long-range plan that addresses far reaching and potentially dire consequences related to CWD, such as declining herds and/or falling revenues due to lack of hunting participation, that could threaten current management approaches to CWD, specifically, and wildlife management, more generally; and identify opportunities to better coordinate management plans and identify additional research needs to address those consequences. MAFWA should refine the CWD plan, as necessary.

DRAFT

Briefing Document for MAFWA

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE VALUE STREAM MAPPING UPDATE

September 2020

In December 2019, a group of wildlife management and wildlife disease professionals, representing state and federal fish and wildlife and research agencies and institutions, gathered in Columbia, MO, to examine various research, prevention and management, and communication efforts ongoing or in development for addressing Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) within the U.S. boundaries of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The group utilized a business improvement process, called Value Stream Mapping, to facilitate this exploration.

During that week and in subsequent virtual meetings, participants evaluated how various existing efforts interact, where opportunities exist for improved collaboration and what venues, forums or organizations may be most appropriate to communicate efforts, outputs and outcomes within the MAFWA region as they relate to CWD and wildlife diseases.

The Midwest Landscape Initiative sponsored this effort, utilizing its forum to bring issues of shared concern between the states and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to the fore and committing resources to facilitate this process.

The group has developed a list of recommendations and proposed actions to meet the objectives of this event. A summary of the recommendations include:

- Improved engagement and reliance on the hunting community, industry stakeholders, landowners and the public to better understand and incorporate their motivations and values into CWD responses;
- Improved governance and coordination of CWD actions within the MAFWA boundaries;
- Clear positions and messages on CWD and coordinated strategies to achieve what MAFWA defines as success with respect to CWD; and
- Improved understanding of actual and potential financial implications of CWD.

These recommendations will be delivered to the MAFWA Board for consideration.