



# MIDWEST

## Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

### 2021 Midwest Directors' Annual Meeting DRAFT AGENDA FOR VIRTUAL EVENT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 2021

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	<p><b>MAFWA Business Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call to Order and Roll Call</li> <li>• Agenda Review</li> <li>• Approval of 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes</li> <li>• Treasurer's Report – Roger Luebbert</li> <li>• Audit Committee Report – Keith Warnke (WI)</li> <li>• Investments Committee Report – Jim Douglas (NE)</li> <li>• Bylaws Committee Report – Sara Parker Pauley (MO)</li> <li>• Resolutions Committee Report – Sara Parker Pauley (MO)</li> <li>• Awards Committee Report – Terry Steinwand (ND)</li> <li>• Executive Secretary's Report – Ollie Torgerson</li> </ul> <p><b>Old Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-Continent Monarch Strategy Report – Ed Boggess</li> <li>• National Wild Pheasant Plan Update – Scott Taylor</li> <li>• Midwest Fish &amp; Wildlife Conference – Sara Parker Pauley (MO)</li> <li>• Midwest Landscape Initiative – Jim Douglas (NE)</li> </ul> <p><b>New Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 Budget Approval – Roger Luebbert</li> </ul>
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	<b>Break</b>
10:15 a.m. – Noon	<b>MAFWA Business Meeting (CONTINUED)</b>
12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.	<p><b>Save the Dates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* South Dakota Spotlight Video (2022)</li> <li>* Wisconsin Spotlight (2023)</li> </ul>



**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 Sumners. *(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.*

*Kelley* – 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 – PowerPoint)*. 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 F*) 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. *Kelly 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? *Kelly 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. *Kelly 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 Larissa 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*