

# **MAFWA Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention Committee Meeting Annual Report**

## **Meeting Time and Place -**

January 8-9, 2017  
The Wigwam  
Litchfield Park, AZ

## **Attendance – MAFWA States**

Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

## **Executive Summary –**

This year, a joint West and Mid-west States R3 Workshop was held January 8-9, 2017, at The Wigwam in Litchfield Park, Arizona. The purpose of the Workshop was to bring together the two committees working on R3 for WAFWA and MAFWA. Attendance at the workshop included 22 states and 73 attendees representing Western States, Mid-western States, Eastern States, Southern States, NGOs, Industry, Trade Organizations and Conservation Consultants, that are working on R3.

The Workshop opened with a welcome by Chris Willard, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

Next, Keith Warnke, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Megan Wisecup, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) provided Case Studies of R3 efforts in their states.

Each presentation consisted of:

- Problem identification
- Strategy Development
- Implementation Steps
- Results

Keith Warnke presented on the Adult Hunter Recruitment program and Megan Wisecup presented on the Apprentice Hunting Marketing Campaign.

Next, Dr. Loren Chase presented and led a discussion on research he has conducted to engage people in small game hunting.

During lunch, WAFWA HASSWRP Committee Chairman and ODFW Director Curt Melcher welcomed the attendees and noted R3 is critical to the state conservation funding model.

Also, during lunch, Nick Wiley, AFWA addressed the Workshop attendees and talked about how the R3 effort can make a difference.

John Frampton, President of the Council to Advance the Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS) addressed the Workshop attendees and talked about the efforts to find alternate funding and the Pittman/Robertson modernization legislation.

Lastly during lunch, Dan Forester, Archery Trade Association, addressed the Workshop attendees and talked about the Pittman/Robertson modernization legislation, particularly funding opportunities for R3.

Next, Bob Byrne, Bob Byrne Consulting and Phil Seng, DJ Case presented information about <http://locavore.guide> . They discussed the new tool and talked about the locavore 'movement'.

Next, Michele Beucler, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Matt Dunfee, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and Chris Willard, ODFW, led the Workshop in a R3 Professional Development Training: Engaging Stakeholders around R3. The Training consisted of:

- Strategies to increase localized stakeholder participation
- Facilitation and leadership of participatory collaboration activities
- Strategies that foster active alignment and prioritization around implementation steps

The training included a hands-on work-session with attendees breaking up into six groups to address needs of pretend target customer/skill/activities consisting of:

- Fly fishing
- Waterfowl hunting
- Rabbit hunting
- Upland hunting
- Pan fish fishing
- Deer hunting

The process included:

- Listing of customer needs
- Place needs on beginner board by area
- Dot voting
- Selecting five highest voted and place in effort / impact board by rating
- Selecting one and building competency mapping

After completion of the hands-on work-session, there was discussion and review of how it worked. The attendees suggested creating a webinar for supporting states wanting to replicate the hands-on work-session in their states.

This completed the first day of the Workshop

The second day of the Workshop began with an update of the National R3 Plan, by Matt Dunfee, WMI and Stephanie Hussey, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF). They presented information on how R3 efforts for hunting and shooting can be similar to R3 efforts for fishing and the two efforts should work together.

Next, Charles Evans, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and National Wild Turkey Federation; Jordan Burroughs, Michigan State University; and Jeff Lederman, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources presented on their State's efforts to step down the National R3 Plan. Each presentation consisted of:

- First steps & why
- Who was at the table
- The process and what was learned

Discussion was held after each report.

Next, Cyrus Baird, CAHSS provided a demonstration of the National Plan R3 website.

Next, Samantha Pedder, CAHSS and Matt Dunfee, WMI, provided attendees with information on how to get started stepping down the National R3 Plan in their states. The presentation covered:

- Building agency buy-in and engagement
- Building partner buy-in and engagement

Next, Chris Willard, ODFW, Megan Wisecup, IDNR, and Jason Kool, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Department presented information on the Hunter and Angler Participation Scorecards their states are using. The three states use the scorecards to track and review data on hunting participation.

The meeting concluded with a wrap-up and round-robin discussion on:

- Benefits of the joint WAFWA and MAFWA Workshop (helps identify common problems and provides a broader impact and network)
- Conceptualizing a R3 National Summit / Meeting
- Future needs

#### **Director Action Items –**

None at this time.

#### **Director Information Items –**

Discussion was held about the need for continued multi-regional R3 workshops similar to this workshop and possible a National R3 Summit.

The Workshop identified that States need to recognize that the R3 effort includes a broad coalition of state agencies, NGO's, trade and industry representatives and there is a lot of expertise and resources available for states that are interested in stepping down the National R3 Plan in their state.


**Time and Place of Next Meeting –**

To be determined. Discussion was held on a possible meeting in June 2017, in Nebraska in conjunction with the MAFWA Annual Director's Meeting.

**Appendices –**

Appendix 1: West and Mid-West States R3 Workshop Agenda – January 8-9, 2017

Appendix 2: MAFWA Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention Committee Contact List





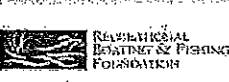

West and Mid-west States R3 Workshop




Hosted by WAFWA

Jan. 8-9, 2017

Litchfield Park, AZ

The Wigwam

Agenda

WAFWA HASSWRP Committee Chairman: Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Theme: Shedding light on what works

SUNDAY, JAN. 8, 2017	Presenter	Time	
Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping	Curt Melcher - ODFW	9:00	9:15
<i>Progress! Shedding Light on What's Working</i>	Chris Willard - ODFW	9:15	9:30
<b>Case Study 1: Wisconsin Adult Hunter Recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem Identification</li> <li>• Strategy Development</li> <li>• Implementation Steps</li> <li>• Results</li> </ul>	Keith Warnke	9:30	10:30
Break		10:30	10:45
<b>Case Study 2: Iowa Apprentice Hunting Marketing Campaign</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem Identification</li> <li>• Strategy Development</li> <li>• Implementation Steps</li> <li>• Results</li> </ul>	Megan Wisecup	10:45	11:45
<i>Case Study Wrap-up</i>	All	11:45	12:00
Lunch Provided		Noon	1:00
PR/DJ Funding ~ Potential Changes/Long-term Outlook	John Frampton, CAHSS	1:00	1:30
Locovore.Guide ~ Resources for Program Managers	Bob Byrne, BBC Phil Seng, DJ Case	1:30	2:00
<b>R3 Professional Development Training: Engaging Stakeholders around R3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to increase localized stakeholder participation</li> <li>• Facilitation and leadership of participatory collaboration activities</li> <li>• Strategies that foster active alignment and prioritization around implementation steps</li> </ul>	Michele Beucler, IDFG Matt Dunfee, WMI Chris Willard, ODFW	2:00	5:00
R3 Hospitality Suite		tbd	

Locavore, guide

Monday, JAN. 9, 2016	Presenter	Time	
<b>National R3 Plan Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan</li><li>Flyway Councils</li><li>AREA/RBFF Angler R3 Project</li></ul>	Matt Dunfee – WMI Stephanie Hussey - RBFF	8:00	8:45
<b>Stepping Down the Plan – Georgia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Steps &amp; Why</li><li>Who Was at the Table</li><li>The Process &amp; What Was Learned</li></ul>	Charles Evans – GA DNR, NWTF	8:45	9:45
Break	All	9:45	10:00
<b>Stepping Down the Plan – Michigan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Steps &amp; Why</li><li>Who Was at the Table</li><li>The Process &amp; What Was Learned</li></ul>	Jordan Burroughs - MSU	10:00	11:00
<b>Stepping Down the Plan – Minnesota</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Steps &amp; Why</li><li>Who Was at the Table</li><li>The Process &amp; What Was Learned</li></ul>	Jeff Ledermann – MN DNR	11:00	12:00
Lunch Provided		12:00	1:00
<b>Stepping Down the Plan: How to start</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building agency buy-in and engagement</li><li>Building partner buy-in and engagement</li></ul>	Matt Dunfee, WMI	1:00	1:30
<b>Hunter and Angler Participation Scorecards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Share scorecards</li><li>Lessons Learned</li><li>Development Status Reports</li></ul>	Various	1:30	2:00
<b>R3 Gap Analysis</b>	Facilitated Discussion	2:00	3:15
Break		3:15	3:30
<b>R3 Practitioners or Professionals?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What are we and what do we need</li></ul>	Facilitated Discussion	3:30	4:30
<b>Wrap-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Compiled state &amp; partner reports hand-out</li><li>Flex Items, actions, next steps</li></ul>	Chris Willard	4:30	5:00
<b>Other items to consider:</b>			

**MAFWA Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention Committee Contact List 4-03-2017**

LAST	FIRST	TITLE	STATE	EMAIL	PHONE	CELL
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**MAFWA Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention Committee Contact List 4-03-2017**

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Vance	Susie		Ohio	<a href="mailto:Susie.Vance@dnr.state.oh.us">Susie.Vance@dnr.state.oh.us</a>		
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			South Dakota			
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**2017**

**Annual Agency Reports**

# **Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

## **2017 Annual Agency Reports**

### **Index of States/Provinces Responding**

Colorado  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Illinois  
Manitoba  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
Ohio  
Oklahoma  
Ontario  
Saskatchewan  
South Dakota  
Texas  
Wisconsin

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**  
**2017 Agency Report**  
**State/Province: Colorado**  
**Submitted by: Bob Thompson, Lead Wildlife Investigator**  
**Date: 4/24/2017**

**Training Issues** - In the 2017 POST Academy there are currently eight wildlife officer and thirteen park ranger recruits attending the POST academy through the first week of May. The eight wildlife officer trainees will spend the remainder of the calendar year in specialized training to become wildlife officers. The thirteen park officer recruits will spend the next six months in specialized training to become parks officers.

Colorado faces the same issue of finding qualified recruits that most other natural resource agencies face. Colorado has high training standards and do not intend to diminish those to pick up more applicants.

**Funding and Staffing Issues** - CPW is an important and valuable agency to all Coloradoans and visitors. CPW provides services that affect everyone that lives in or comes to Colorado. This includes 42 state parks and more than 300 wildlife areas covering approximately 900,000 acres, big-game management, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, camping, motorized and non-motorized trails, boating and outdoor education. CPW's conservation efforts strive to balance outdoor recreation with wildlife and natural resource management and stewardship.

The economic return on investment of activities supported by Colorado Parks and Wildlife is massive. The agency's annual budget is about \$190 million which, in turn, supports activities that result in over \$6 billion in total economic effects (including state park visitation, hunting, fishing and wildlife watching), spread throughout Colorado, from metro areas to rural communities.

CPW receives no general fund or citizen's tax dollars to support wildlife management, state parks or outdoor recreation programs. As an 'enterprise' agency mandated in statute, CPW relies primarily on license sales, state parks fees or registration fees to support programs. CPW funding streams are required by law to be separate and we do not inter-mingle wildlife and parks funding. Wildlife funding is spent on wildlife programs and activities. State Park funding is spent on state parks operations and programs.

CPW's has faced funding challenges in the recent past and will into the future. CPW is projected to face increasing budget shortfalls in FY17-18 and into the future. The budget outlook is made worse by expected increases in costs such as personnel, health care, operations and utilities. And there are expenses such as dam repairs, building and property maintenance, new hunting and fishing access, and technological upgrades that are needed to maintain Colorado's world-class outdoor recreation opportunities. Maintaining our current level of service with increasing deficits will be increasingly difficult.

In summary CPW's current funding model makes us reliant on user fees to support our programs. Our agency is stream-lined and committed to providing the public with a high level of service, but this continues to be a challenge with current and increasing funding gaps. Financial sustainability for CPW is a key for maintaining our wildlife and outdoor heritage. CPW is currently in the process of implementing a strategic plan and exploring all options to achieve the goal of financial sustainability into the future (see legislation section below)

**Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** – Colorado is a destination state for the hunting of mule deer and elk. Colorado has some of the largest populations and largest antlered of these two species in the nation. Unfortunately this wildlife are often taken illegally and transported across state lines to the state where these subjects that poach reside. Colorado currently works closely with the USFWS and these other states where poached Colorado wildlife are taken in a cooperative law enforcement effort to bring these poachers to justice. Colorado also relies heavily on the Interstate Wildlife Violator compact, especially the failure to comply with the provisions of a citation, to assist in these law enforcement efforts.

**Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** - Colorado works cooperatively with many state agencies, federal agencies and other law enforcement/judicial entities. A great example is culmination of a case where two men from Colorado and two men from Tennessee have been convicted of illegal hunting activities. As a result, two of them paid substantial fines; one man will spend time in jail and another is performing community service.

All of the men could also lose their hunting and fishing privileges in Colorado and in 43 other states. The convictions followed long-term investigations by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The violations were committed over the course of a decade in prized Game Management Unit 61 where few elk licenses are available each season and many people wait 20 years or more to draw a tag.

GMU 61 is located on the Uncompahgre Plateau west of Montrose. "We take it seriously when poachers steal wildlife from all of us, especially when they are profiting from that poaching; and we will do everything we can to see that those individuals are brought to justice," said Renzo DelPiccolo, Area Wildlife Manager for Colorado Parks and Wildlife in Montrose. "Sometimes it takes years to investigate and settle wildlife cases, but that does not deter state and federal investigators from pursuing these crimes."

Beginning in about 1999 and continuing through 2011, Gerald Lee Sickels ("Sickels"), 42, of Nucla, operated as an illegal, unlicensed outfitter and took clients on multi-day hunts for which he charged \$1,000 to \$3,000. During that time, at least 17 bull elk were killed illegally in GMU 61 by Sickels and his out-of-state clients. At least one mountain lion was also killed illegally. Sickels instructed his clients to purchase other hunting licenses to help cover up the illegal activity.

Sickels and his assistant, Jay Remy Grierson ("Grierson"), 46, also of Nucla, were indicted by a federal grand jury in November 2014 for violations of the Lacey Act, a federal law that bans illegal trafficking of wildlife. They faced six counts of conspiracy and interstate sale of unlawfully taken big-game.

Sickels eventually pleaded guilty to one felony count of conspiring to violate the Lacey Act. On Nov. 7, 2016, he was sentenced in federal court in Denver to one year of “intermittent incarceration” and one year of probation for conspiring to violate the Lacey Act. Sickels must report to a local detention facility on all nonwork days, on all vacation days, and on all holidays during the one-year period. During the probation, he is prohibited from hunting or acting as a hunting guide. He also had to give up his 1997 Toyota pick-up truck and a Fleetwood camping trailer, both of which were used in the commission of federal crimes.

Grierson pleaded guilty to three misdemeanor violations of the Lacey Act and was sentenced in March 2016 to two years of probation and 40 hours of community service.

Ben Williamson (“Williamson”), 61, of Morristown, Tennessee, during a trip in 2004 to GMU 61, unlawfully killed two elk, one a 6x6 and the other a 7x8. In 2009, his son, Brett Williamson, 26, who did not have a hunting license, killed a 6x6 bull elk. He returned in 2010 and, again without a license, killed two 6x6 bull elk. The two men were charged with misdemeanor violations of the Lacey Act and each paid a fine of \$6,500. They also were required to forfeit their trophy mounts. Officers from the Tennessee Department of Wildlife Resources assisted in the investigation by conducting interviews and seizing evidence.

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Hearing Examiner will review each case and make a determination regarding suspension of the men’s hunting and fishing license privileges. Through a nationwide cooperative agreement known as the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, the men could lose their license privileges in the other 43 participating states. The case was prosecuted by the Environmental Crimes Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources Division.

**New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – Colorado continues to update and enhance the electronic forensics capabilities as “internet wildlife” crimes with all the social media outlets are ever increasing. The Law Enforcement Investigation Unit conducts all cell phone and computer forensics for parks and wildlife officers. Colorado contracts with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for wildlife/DNA forensics.

**State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** - In order to sustain Colorado state parks and wildlife opportunities, the legislature is considering a bill that would allow the Parks and Wildlife Commission the limited authority to address current financial challenges. Funding is needed to repair high-priority dams to ensure public safety and maintain recreational opportunities; support public access for hunting and fishing in Colorado; increase efforts to improve wildlife habitat; renovate hatcheries in order to continue stocking reservoirs and streams; continue inspection programs to keep Aquatic Nuisance Species out of Colorado’s waters; maintain and improve park facilities including trails, campgrounds and visitor centers; improve outdoor recreation educational programs to get more Coloradans outside; and, increase youth and adult hunter and angler recruitment. Colorado Parks and Wildlife relies on user fees, NOT general tax dollars. However, the fees have not kept pace with operational costs and inflation. Resident hunting and fishing license fees have not increased since 2005. Park entrance fees have not increased since 2010. Just to maintain current operations, CPW forecasts needing an additional \$14 million annually for wildlife and \$6.5 million annually for parks. The legislative proposal (HB 17-1321) would allow

the Parks and Wildlife Commission to: phase in resident hunting and fishing license fee increases (with a cap not to exceed 50 percent above the level of most existing fees); adjust prices and fees to keep up with inflation, keeping fees consistent with changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI); recoup transaction costs associated with all hunting license applications (not including over-the-counter licenses) by increasing the limited license drawing application fee up to \$20; create an annual resident senior fishing license, limiting the price to no more than 50 percent of the price of a regular annual resident fishing license; raise fees on select nonresident licenses to ensure those license fees are not less than the equivalent resident license fees; adjust select fines/penalties to reflect changes in license prices; create a motorized and nonmotorized watercraft registration fee to help pay for the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Program; and, phase in state park-related fee increases (with a cap not to exceed 50 percent above the level of existing fees).

**Cost Savings Initiatives** - Since 2009, CPW has cut or defunded 50 positions and reduced \$40 million from its annual wildlife budget.

### **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues –**

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#### **Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

##### **2017 Agency Report**

**State/Province: Environment and Climate Change Canada, Wildlife Enforcement (WED)**

**Submitted by: Kevin Buerfeind**

**Date: April 27, 2017**

- **Training Issues**

WED is increasing its partnership with the Justice Institute of British Columbia, which is a multi-agency supported college providing advanced training to Law Enforcement and First Responders. WED officers from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories attended the facility in March 2017 for the first time on a trial basis to assess recertification and scenario based training opportunities for conservation officers. The instruction provided was exceptional given the knowledge and recent experience of the instructors, and is consistent with new standards in organizational training where law enforcement agencies are partnering to learn and understand best practices from each other.

WED is moving towards a national training standard in which all officers are required to pass wildlife standardized legislation and advanced enforcement training at the national level in order to be designated. A recent course in February 2017 of the wildlife standardized legislation has shown an increase in learning potential and networking as officers across Canada are brought together for skills development.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

Staffing continues to be an issue for WED nationally, as previous government commitments to deficit reduction has a lasting effect on positions. Current losses due to attrition are not easily replaced, with many locations now having only 2 local officers for an entire province. Nevertheless, WED continues to invest into Intelligence in an effort to target our limited resources to ensure we are catching the worst offenders.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

WED nationally has increased its interaction internationally in response to the international issues associated to wildlife crime. The Director General for WED in Ottawa is currently sitting as the chair of the Interpol Wildlife Crimes Committee, and is seeing an increased interest across nations to curb wildlife crime as many iconic species are nearing critical threat levels.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

Due to a review of policy, WED was limited in covert investigation capacity for the past 3 years. A recent release of new and robust policy has resulted in WED identifying new opportunities to engage with partners on identification of files that require special investigative capacity. Recently, increased engagement with US State and Federal Wildlife Agencies has identified a number of opportunities to pursue potential offenders. This will also be facilitated by new MOU's with cooperating agencies for the sharing of information and intelligence to best focus our efforts.

Relative to these types of information sharing efforts are recent enforcement actions in the US which have Canadian connections.

<http://www.kotatv.com/content/news/15-Indicted-for-the-illegal-trafficking-of-eagles--420310033.html>

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

WED has been testing use of aerial drones for enforcement activities. Although there are potential challenges with flight paths and privacy issues, WED has successfully used drones in delineating water based spill zones that impact migratory birds. The visual footage from these drones is compelling and although not yet tested locally in Court, it is believed that the Courts will see value in the visual effect when evaluating evidence.

WED has initiated a new process on "project planning" for enforcement projects. The intent of this process is to formally capture in writing what essentially officers were doing in their heads – identifying targets and how to react to these targets based on the information and intelligence available, and then provide costs and efforts to each project. This will allow managers to assess viability of projects and also aid in budget forecasting. Given recent decreases in resources, it is incumbent on WED to adequately review and approve projects so that we appropriately allocate resources for the best impacts on offenders and conservations issues.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

Identification of new species and impacted habitat by the Canadian Wildlife Service under the *Species at Risk Act* will have a substantial impact on enforcement. A recent emergency order for the protection of an endangered species resulted in significant enforcement resources to be allocated to protection of that species. This reallocation of resources in mid-year will become increasingly apparent as more species/habitat are identified as threatened or endangered.

A recent Supreme Court of Canada case has impacted all of law enforcement as it sets rules around the right of an individual to trial without substantial delay. Although not specifically impacting WED cases thus far, the judgment has seen offenders having their charges stayed as the Courts struggle to implement the rules surrounding the judgment. Recent discussions with federal prosecutors have brought awareness to the issue and WED officers will proceed carefully when considering a case and when to lay charges and timelines for prosecution



- **Cost Savings Initiatives**
- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

Invasive species are increasingly of concern. Zebra mussels have now been identified in Lake Wpg, there are known threats at the border for other invasive species including snakeheads and certain species of crayfish, and salamander disease is potentially an issue due to potential imports of infected individuals.

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers  
2017 Agency Report  
State/Province: Illinois  
Submitted by: Rafael Gutierrez  
Date: May 1, 2017**

Training Issues

**New Hires:**

Due to the budget stalemate and potential layoff of 33 officers statewide, the trainees continue to obtain knowledge by riding with veteran officers but are unable to move forward in formalized field training until the budget stalemate is resolved and layoffs are either administered, taken away from possibility or ordered otherwise by the Governor's Office. Unfortunately during this unusual time, four of the trainees resigned for other positions with outside agencies.





**In-service Training:** Due to budget constraints, OLE training has suffered during the past year. The training section has only conducted mandated and critical training in order to make ends meet.

**Officer Safety Training:** The OLE training section implemented the new Instructor level firearms curriculum that was established and approved by command. We added 9 more Firearms Instructors filling many vacancies throughout the State. By implementing the new Instructor curriculum, we were able to bring fresh new ideas to the Firearms Program and develop new training for the field officers.

The DT and firearms staff again merged to provide scenario based training for all OLE officers and supervisors. The cross training was well received by all who participated as it provided officers a more realistic training scenario to enhance their skills.

The firearms staff is again providing the firearms qualification shoot for the OLE retired officers this year.

The OLE training section continues the training of defense tactics (DT) while researching new and improved training methods. The DT program is implemented quarterly on a region or district level allowing more flexibility for scheduling of officers training. We have added more instructors to fill positions vacated by promotion or retirements. We continued with the ground fighting techniques to improve officer safety due to increased statistics nationwide on altercations with Law Enforcement that ended on the ground. We continue looking to expand our DT program to include water based tactics that will assist if an officer ends up in the water with a subject.

**Field Training Transition:** All current Field Training Officers were given refresher training to prepare them to apply the new method and educate them on the new procedures and process which will save the Department in many ways both fiscally and operationally.

**Physical Fitness and Water Survival Program:** The training section is continuing to develop a program to implement a physical fitness program for all sworn officers to encourage each to participate in a fitness program and complete a wellness test each year. With the fitness program, water survival training is proposed to be implemented on a yearly basis as well.



**Computer Training:** The OLE training section continues to seek out computer training courses for officers to build skills in the ever growing digital environment which continues to result in numerous wildlife cases being detected and solved. Also, there has been a more timely and efficient submittal of division paperwork which has been greatly beneficial. We are anxious to utilize the new electronic Field Training Program which allows us to complete all necessary field training documentation digitally and submit it real time for more accurate reporting and quicker resolution to problems that may arise with a trainee. In order to comply with State Training Board standards, we have purchased a subscription to an online training called CourtSmart. CourtSmart provides monthly briefings on legal issues and requires each officer to complete a quiz on the information provided. By utilizing this online program we have reduced the hassle of sending officers to classes to meet the requirements and they can complete the training as free time allows.

**Outreach Training Programs:** The OLE training section participated in a few career fairs, and presentations in an effort to recruit qualified potential applicants for future classes.

The OLE training section rebuilt the internship program to better document the performance and activity of the interns thus promoting a more professional learning experience. College students who wish to pursue a career in Law Enforcement/Natural Resources apply for an internship of up to 12 weeks during which they ride with a Conservation Police Officer (CPO), watch, listen, ask questions, and participate in many of the duties of a CPO. These internships provide a wonderful learning experience to students who the IDNR OLE hope become future applicants.

The training section also works with many high school students who are trying to determine a career path. Upon request, high school students from around the state are scheduled to meet with a CPO or supervisor and are given an overview of the duties of a CPO as well as the mission of the IDNR and the Office of Law Enforcement.

The OLE training section offers training to outside agencies to assist in Conservation related enforcement techniques and methods of patrol as well as operational training for specialized equipment such as snowmobiles.

### **Funding and Staffing Issues**

The fiscal year 2016 budget reflected a decrease of more than \$7.8 million or almost 29% from the fiscal year 2015 allotment. However, these figures are misleading. With the ongoing fiscal impact and no official budget in place, all General Revenue Funds (GRF) were held by the Office of Fiscal Management (OFM) rather than being allocated to the various divisions. This was a strategic move implemented by OFM to allow them more flexibility to move GRF among the divisions as needed. A large portion of the Office of Law Enforcement's (OLE) personal services expenses are paid with General Revenue Funds. Funding for those personnel paid from General Revenue Funds was paid from the GRF lump sum that was held at the Office of Fiscal Management level rather than by the Office of Law Enforcement. Had these funds actually been appropriated to Law Enforcement, the fiscal year 2016 budget would only have been approximately \$1.1 million or 4% less than fiscal year 2015's numbers. With the continued loss of headcount due to retirements and therefore a decrease in personal services needs, this decrease in funds had no impact on Law Enforcement operations.

Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations were \$1.9 million, or almost 10%, less than fiscal year 2016's budget. The decrease was in the personal services and benefits lines and was the result of the continued decrease in Law Enforcement's headcount numbers. With fewer headcount on the rosters, the Office of Law Enforcement needs fewer dollars with which to meet personal services obligations. Therefore, the decrease in fiscal year 2017's appropriations will have minimal impact on the department's operations.

The Office of Law Enforcement's only significant issue in FY16 occurred with the reduction in our telecommunications line. This line experienced a decrease of more than \$200,000. The Office of Law Enforcement contracts with the Illinois State Police for dispatching services. This service typically costs in excess of \$300,000 annually. With the decrease in the telecommunications appropriation, the OLE was unable to pay for the dispatching services from the telecommunications line. Rather, we had to use Operations Assistance Fund money in FY16 to pay for this expense thereby using funds that should have been kept for the purchase of large dollar equipment items. Despite realizing a slight increase in the FY17 telecommunications appropriation, the Office of Law Enforcement will again have the same inability to pay for the dispatching fee, but this year Operations Assistance Fund monies will not be available as these funds are already allocated for equipment purchases. The Office of Fiscal Management has been made aware of this issue.

All operating lines in FY16 were slightly less than the FY15 allotments or flat to FY15 appropriations. With no budget in place, all divisions were required to keep expenses down. Spending was kept to the absolute minimum, and only essential expenditures were approved. As a result, the OLE's inventory of items such as report forms, citations, uniforms, and ammunition decreased significantly during fiscal year 2016. The Office of Law Enforcement will have to expend funds in fiscal year 2017 to replenish inventory supplies of critical commodities. Purchases of large equipment items such as laptops, boats, ATVs, etc. were also drastically curtailed in FY16. The OLE is resuming purchases of these types of expenditures in FY17 as well. Although the personal services lines decreased in FY17, the department's other operating lines (ie contractual services, travel, commodities, etc.) all saw slight increases from FY16 to FY17. Although the agency continues to operate under the directive of keeping expenses to an absolute minimum, purchases as identified above have to be made and should not be an issue in fiscal year 2017.

The OLE's Conservation Police Operations Assistance fund continues to provide a source of funding for "big ticket" purchases that are normally not obtainable with equipment line appropriations. With the limited spending from this fund in fiscal year 2016, the balance continues to grow to allow for some larger purchases in FY17. However, the Office of Law Enforcement is limited to the actual amount in the account up to the spending authority limit of \$1.25 million that can be spent from this fund on an annual basis (or the balance that is in the fund if the balance is less than \$1.25 million). This account, funded primarily through fines, donations and watercraft registrations, was established primarily to allow the Department to address its aging fleet of work boats, snowmobiles, ATVs, laptop computers and for the procurement of other items necessary for an officer to perform his duties. In FY 16, spending was very limited in this fund due to the ongoing budget impasse and the directive to

keep expenditures to an absolute minimum. The OLE is again making some purchases in FY17 to replace aging equipment.

Even with the addition of the new recruits, retirements continue to take their toll on the OLE sworn headcount levels. The Office of Law Enforcement sworn headcount will end fiscal year 2017 with 116 officers. At the end of Fiscal Year 2007, the Office of Law Enforcement had **167** sworn personnel on its rosters. This is net loss of 51 officers (or more than 30%) from our ranks.

### Equipment issues

Since its creation in FY13, the Conservation Police Operations Assistance Fund (CPOAF) has had \$4.2 million deposited into it with \$2.8 million spent. This fund is used to replace our aging fleet of equipment such as work boats, patrol boats, outboard motors, ATVs, laptops and other necessary equipment for CPOs to perform their job duties. Since its inception we have purchased 26 aluminum Jon boats, 17 new ATVs, 17 new Intoximeter RBT-IV portable breath testing machines, 96 sets of body armor, 150 rifle mounts for patrol vehicles, rifle and pistol ammunition, 150 first aid trauma kits, 10 patrol boats & 40 new mobile radios. No new equipment was purchased in FY16 due to the lack of a budget which allowed the fund to grow since we were not able to spend \$1.25 million. We average spending \$933,000 per FY.

All officers are issued laptop computers and would not be able to perform their daily duties without this critical piece of equipment. With the advanced age of the computers and the improvements in technology, the department has been on track with a 3 year replacement rotation. In FY17, we purchased 41 laptops and vehicle docking stations.

In FY17 we purchased the below equipment with CPOAF funds:

5 Patrol boats - \$610,373  
40 laptops/1 tablet \$119,019  
41 laptop/tablet docking stations \$55,176  
40 Motorola APX mobile radios \$210,000  
2 Outboard motors for R4 Patrol boat \$35,000  
Safety Education microfilm project \$48,500  
New phone/network system for the OLE Service Center \$50,000 (project not started yet)  
Total Purchases for FY17 - \$1,128,068

Projected FY18 Equipment Purchases:

Boats  
ATVs/UTVs  
Radios  
Laptops/dock stations  
Marine Sonic for R3 Sonar boat

## TRUCKS

Our current fleet consists of 127 patrol trucks/SUVs (12 of which are F250s and one F350), 2 patrol sedans and 13 plain (covert) vehicles for a fleet total of 142. The highest mileage vehicle currently in use today is 170,175 compared to last year's highest mileage of 155,292. The fleet's current mileage average is 90,134 compared to previous year's averages of 79,956 - 88,747 and 75,102.

The Conservation Police currently lease their vehicles from Central Management Services (CMS). In turn, CMS purchases replacement vehicles when current vehicles have reached the end of their useful life which is 8 model years old or 150,000 miles according to the program's guidelines. Since FY14, CMS has purchased 60 replacement vehicles or 42% of our fleet. It is our goal to replace a minimum of 25 vehicles per year.

We currently have fourteen 2017 Ford F150 Crew cab trucks on order along with one Ford Explorer (non-police pursuit) and one Ford Expedition (K9 unit). I requested CMS to purchase 35 new vehicles this FY, but due to the current budget issue, CMS only purchased 14. I expect to take delivery at the end of April.

## BOATS

The quantity of work boats to replace was reduced in FY17 from 60 to 34 by moving boats around within the state and transferring boats not being used to our Lands Division to use at state parks and wildlife management areas.

We currently have 22 patrol boats in use with 3 of them set up as sonar boats. In FY17, we purchased an additional five new patrol boats from Brunswick Commercial and Government Products for a total cost of \$610,373 compared to our FY15 purchase of 5 patrol boats for \$617,195.

We have 4 more patrol boats to replace in FY18 which will make our patrol boat fleet up to date.



### ATVs/UTVs

We have 47 ATVs/UTVs in our fleet. Twenty of these are 10 years old or older and need to be replaced.

### RADIOS

We received a FIRSTNET grant of \$376,437 to purchase 40 vehicle repeaters and portable radios due to the FIRSTNET project taking over the frequencies the repeaters operate on. We also purchased 40 mobile radios at a cost of \$208,676. The officers with repeaters will receive new repeaters and radios. New vehicles will also have the new radios installed. Going forward all new vehicles will receive new radios if the budget allows due to the pending end-of-life of our current Motorola XTL/XTS radios in December 2018.

### MISCELLANEOUS

In FY17, we purchased 32 Humminbird HELIX 10 G2N side scan sonar units with CHIRP technology for \$48,000. These units will replace units which are no longer supported by Humminbird.

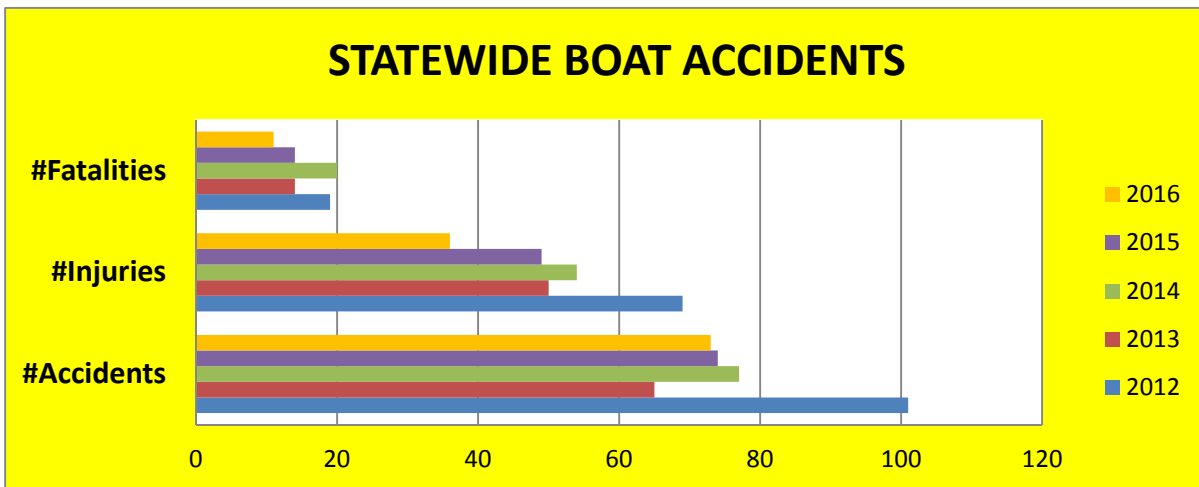
In FY17, we purchased 135 AimPoint Pro rifle optics for \$57,700. These will be deployed during the 2017 Spring firearm qualification. AimPoint provided two instructors, at no cost, for a 2 day range session to train our firearm instructors on the optic.



AimPoint Pro rifle optic

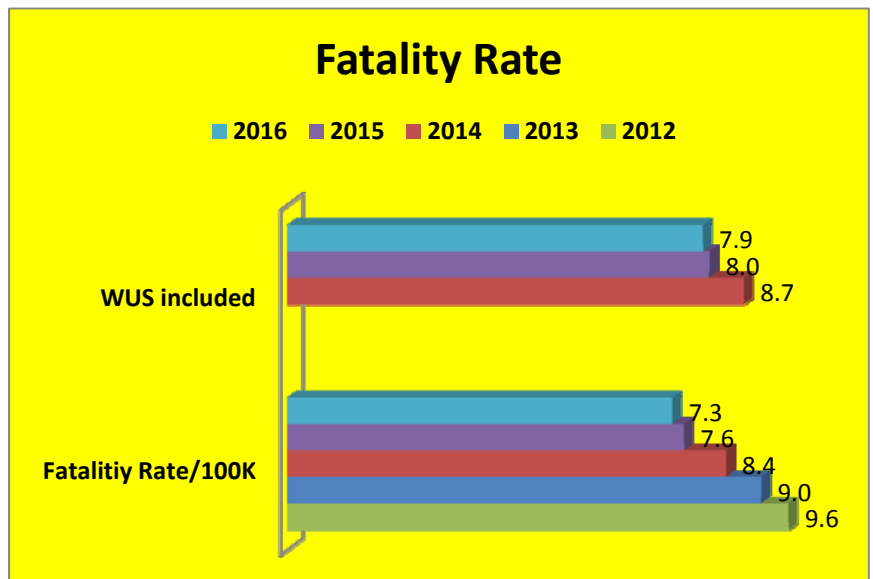
Recreational Boat Enforcement  
(Federal Fiscal Year 2016)

Illinois Conservation police investigated 73 boating accidents which resulted in 36 injuries and 11 fatalities in FFY 2016. Although the Department continues to show an overall decline in the number of accidents, injuries and fatalities over 5 years, it is important to review information to determine contributing factors impacting recreational boating and enforcement efforts.



*The graph above shows FFY 2016 boat accident categories, fatalities, injuries, and boat accidents.*

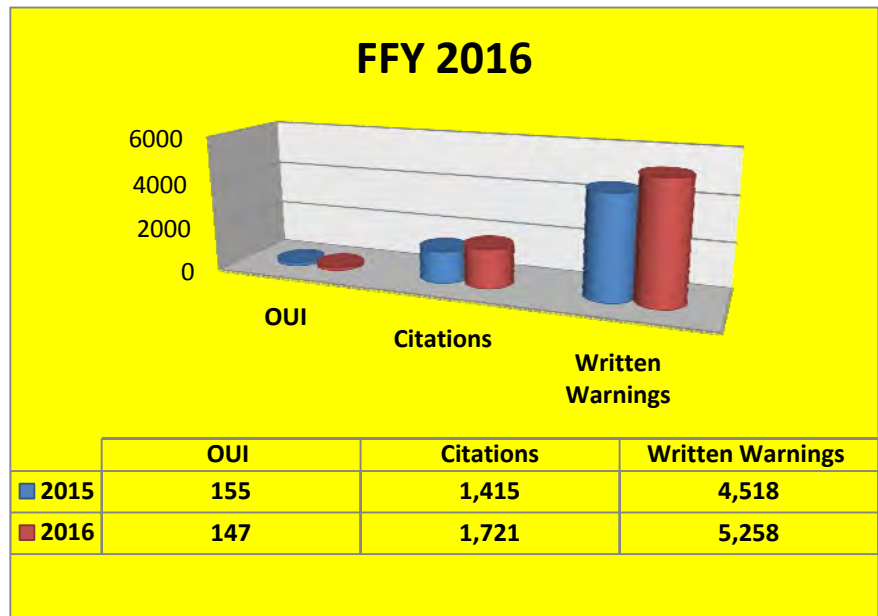
Illinois Conservation Police experienced an across the board decrease in boat accidents, fatal accidents and boat accident related fatalities in FFY 2016. Illinois' boat accident fatality rate based upon registered watercraft decreased slightly from 7.6 to the current level of 7.4. It should be noted this fatality rate does not reflect those watercraft covered by the Water



Usage Stamp. Taking these non-powered vessels into consideration, the actual fatality rate is closer to 7.9. See chart lower right.

Illinois Conservation Police citation and written warning enforcement increased from FFY 2015. Both Citation and written warning activity increased (**18% and 14%**) respectively.

Operating under the influence arrests decreased slightly from 155 to 147 (**-5%**). Personal floatation device and operating under the influence remained the top boating violations cited by officers.



Recreational Boat Safety hours decreased (**-1%**) from FFY 2015. Officer self-initiated boat inspections increased by **10%** over FFY 2015, and assigned registration investigations decreased by (**-24 %.**) Sworn personnel headcount remains at 127 with 104 of those Conservation officers and trainees.

Boating Patrol Log Report			
	FFY	Boat Inspections	Registration Inspections
2014	15,070	264	38,275
2015	15,280	306	42,379
2016	16,937	246	42,160

Registered Boats	
2014	252,094
2015	233,062
2016	248,948

Watercraft registrations increased in FFY 2016. FFY 2016 watercraft registration numbers jumped (**6%**) from the previous FFY 2015.



## **Summary:**

The statistics show stable headcount numbers but an increase in boating enforcement with the exception of a **(-5%)** decrease in OUI arrests. The increase in boating enforcement hours have reduced the number of overall accidents and injuries from the previous FFY 2015. Weather conditions and water levels have remained stable as well; creating ample opportunity for recreational boaters. The total hours worked on the Recreational Boat Safety Grant (RBS) decreased about **(-1%)** from 2015. A total of 42,160 personal service hours were recorded. Time spent on the program varies with available funding and manpower associated with administering programs, which can be claimed as expenditures towards the RBS Grant.

## **USCG Recreational Boat Safety Grant:**

In FFY 2016, the IDNR received approximately \$1,573,733. This money was used to support operations directly related to the enforcement, boat access and safety. There will be a carryover amount of \$143,140 which will be added to the FFY17 Grant for failure to meet the total grant match. The continued strife with no state budget was the primary reason for the carryover amount. The current USCG funding allocation for FFY 2016 is \$1,716,873.

It is important to remember the RBS program determines funding using the following criteria:

- 1/3 number of registered boat compared to other states/territories
- 1/3 previous years expenditures coded towards the RBS Grant
- 1/3 equal distributions of remaining funds equally among states/territories

## Homeland Security



### **State/Federal Interoperability:**

The Office of Law Enforcement (***OLE***) continues to serve as a member agency with the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (***ITTF***). In addition, the ***OLE*** continues to serve on the ***ITTF*** Transportation and Critical Infrastructure Security (formerly the Transportation Committee) and the Crisis and Prevention Committee. Serving on the committees allows the ***OLE*** to develop partnerships with other state and local law enforcement agencies to help prevent, respond to and recover from an attack on the waterways of the State.

In addition to communicating with fellow State agencies, the membership in the ***ITTF*** allows the cooperating agencies to identify special equipment and needs to mitigate gaps in emergency response and protection of critical infrastructure.

Similarly, the ***OLE*** has continued to serve on the United States Coast Guard Area Maritime Security Committees (***AMSC***) in St Louis, Chicago, Peoria and the Quad Cities. The ***AMSCs*** specifically deal with ports on waterways in which the State and Federal governments have concurrent jurisdictions. Working with the USCG also helps merge information and response assets, ultimately increasing the safety of our waterways used for commercial transportation purposes.



### **Training:**

- ITTF Transportation Committee Conference (E. Peoria) 13 Officers attended and provided watercraft demonstration and trained on Illinois River

- **Grants:**

N/A



### **Outlook:**

Homeland Security dollars continue to decrease as a result of budget restrictions at the Federal level. The ITTF has seen significant reductions in the amount of grant dollars awarded to the State. The USCG has experienced similar decreases in grant monies. The OLE will continue to seek additional funding through the ITTF as well as the USCG (Port Security) Grants in a continued

attempt to enhance response and mitigate gaps in security on the State's ports and waterways.

### **Trends in Illinois DNR Law Enforcement**

A major trend in law enforcement affecting Illinois is anti-law enforcement media & legislation which has resulted in a downgrade of public perception of police. For example, a bill passed in 2016 requires law enforcement officers to give pedestrian persons a card with the officer's name & badge number explaining the reason they were stopped. The law also requires the officer to

collect data, such as reason for stop, if the person was stopped, race and other personal identifiable information if arrested, cited, or given a warning and enter such information into a pedestrian stop database. Persons stopped for hunting or fishing violations were exempted from this requirement but not stops related to park enforcement, criminal enforcement, or other types of conservation related enforcement.

Because everyone now has a video or audio recording device in their hands (I-phone), police are more susceptible to being scrutinized within minutes of an encounter being posted online. More citizens challenge police authority. This has led to a trend for agencies to purchase body cams for officers.

Other legislation requires police misconduct to be reported into a state database maintained by the Illinois Police Training Standards Board. Agencies are also required to report instances of officer untruthfulness to the officers local States Attorneys.

Decriminalization of the use and possession of cannabis in Illinois is a growing trend. In the past couple of years, medical marijuana was legalized for persons with certain medical conditions. In 2016, possession of 10 or less grams of cannabis and related paraphernalia was decriminalized and made into a civil penalty punishable only by \$120 fine. Currently, there is pending legislation to make the use and possession of cannabis legal statewide.

Proposed 2017 legislation would require all agencies to report all seizures of property on a monthly or annual basis. The money collected from sales of asset forfeiture items would be put in one large pool to be distributed as grants to applying law enforcement programs or made available to social programs instead of proceeds being returned to the agency making the seizure.

Another trend is the lack of funding for agencies to operate. Illinois has been operating without state fiscal operating budget for the past 2 years and no end in sight. Illinois largest union, representing Illinois Conservation Police civilian employees, have voted to authorize a strike if needed.

A continuing trend is for law enforcement agencies to do more with less. Decreased funding and decreased benefits has resulted in loss of officer positions as younger officers leave for other jobs with better benefits or older officers retire. Police agencies in Illinois are having a hard time hiring qualified replacements to hire.

A growing trend is the amount of time officers are dedicating to investigating wildlife cases by the use of "Open Source Media" sources, such as Facebook. Officers are making dozens of cases by these methods with the assistance of other state DNR law enforcement agencies and vice versa.

#### Unique Cross Boundary Cooperative Efforts

Illinois has two officers dedicated to a task force for identifying and apprehending persons involved in the importation of invasive and disease susceptible aquatic life, primarily Asian Carp.

The two officer team is referred to as the Invasive Species Unit (ISU). Below is a synopsis of cross boundary cooperative efforts performed by the team.

- The ISU investigated a fish dealer in Northern Illinois who illegally imported over 600 Grass Carp from Arkansas into Illinois and stocked them in 27 different lakes and ponds. The dealer submitted falsified documents to the IDNR, and still imported the fish after his application was denied. The ISU also obtained invoices showing the dealer imported 1500 Crappie into Illinois from Missouri without the required VHS import permit. The case is currently pending with the Illinois Attorney General's Office.
- The ISU obtained business records and a confession from a Missouri fish dealer who illegally imported 1600 pounds of live Channel Catfish into Illinois from Arkansas without the required VHS import permit. The case is pending with the Illinois Attorney General's Office.
- A Kentucky bait dealer pled guilty in Federal court for selling Rusty Crayfish in Illinois and was fined \$1,500. This was a result of covert investigation conducted by the ISU with the assistance of the USFWS.
- The ISU executed a search warrant on a fish processing plant and conducted a complex inventory audit of the plant records based upon allegations the fish dealer was selling Asian Carp provided by contracted IDNR commercial fishermen for human consumption instead of fertilizer in violation of the contract terms between the IDNR and the fish dealer. The investigation revealed the dealer sold over \$10,500,000 in fish over a two year period without the required fish dealer's license or maintaining the proper business records; the company violated environmental regulations; the company had over 2.5 million pounds of bighead and silver carp acquisitions and disbursements unaccounted for from January 2014 – May 2016.
- ISU investigated a Kentucky fish dealer for importing and selling largemouth bass without VHS import permits or non-resident aquatic life dealer's license. The dealer imported 14,000 pounds of untested noncertified largemouth bass from a university aquaculture facility in Kentucky to Chinatown in Chicago. A tentative agreement between the company and the Illinois Attorney General's Office is for the company to pay \$10,000 in restitution to the State of Illinois.
- ISU investigated a Kentucky resident for importing and selling largemouth bass without VHS import permits or a non-resident aquatic life dealer's license. A tentative agreement has been reached through the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the Kentucky fish dealer to pay \$4,000 in restitution.

- ISU continues to investigate a Kentucky resident for importing and stocking of noncertified VHS largemouth bass and bluegill without import permits or a non-resident aquatic life dealer's license.
- ISU assisted Wisconsin DNR with an investigation regarding an Illinois wholesale fish dealer illegally buying and selling fish in Wisconsin.
- ISU assisted Colorado Parks & Wildlife with an investigation regarding an illegally taken trophy (Samson) elk. ISU conducted the background investigation and interviewed the suspect for Colorado. It was determined the subject had fraudulently purchased a resident elk tag. ISU seized the elk for Colorado.
- ISU assisted a Cook County CPO with a license fraud investigation regarding a Minnesota resident. The Minnesota resident had a driver's licenses in both states and purchased resident hunting licenses in both states. With the assistance of Minnesota and a review of land records it was determined the subject was a resident of Minnesota.
- Illinois DNR is currently working with Indiana, Ohio, and the USFWS on a Commercial Roe investigation.

#### State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement

Illinois legislation in 2016 saw a small number changes in resource law. These included allowing hunters to take more species of game birds on public hunting grounds, adding more methods for the take of catfish, creation of a youth trapping license, mandatory trapping education for those born on or after January 31, 1998, and extending the youth turkey season to two weekends instead of only one. From the general law enforcement side the most significant change dealt with the possession of cannabis.

Public Act 99-0866 allowed the Department of Natural Resources to permit hunters to take bobwhite quail, chukar partridge, and gray partridge on public hunting grounds. Currently in Illinois the Department is allowed to permit controlled hunts (in which birds are released into hunting areas) only for pheasants. This bill allows the Department to also include other types of game birds. This will allow IDNR's conservation partner organizations to utilize state sites for hunts. For example, if Quail Forever wants to hold a youth hunt with released birds on public ground, it is now legal to do so.

Public Act 99-0867 added catfish to the list of aquatic life that may be taken by pitchfork, underwater spear gun, and bowfishing methods.

Public Act 99-0868 allows young hunters age 18 and under to buy a Youth Trapping License. The youth must still abide by all wildlife laws and codes and must be accompanied by, and under the



close supervision of, a parent, grandparent, or guardian who is 21 years of age or older and has a valid Illinois trapping license. This act also removed the requirement of a trapper education course if no trapping license had been held in the previous three years and instead mandated those born after January 1, 1998 to take a trapper education course prior to obtaining their first trapping license (unless they lawfully possess the youth trapping license).

Public Act 99-0869 combined the application for both deer and turkey landowner permits. It also requires the Department to hold a youth turkey season for two consecutive weekends, instead of only one weekend.

Public Act 99-0697 took effect July 29, 2016, and amended violations of possession of cannabis 10g and under, possession of cannabis paraphernalia in certain circumstances, and DUI/OUI for under the influence of cannabis only. It is still unlawful to knowingly possess cannabis. However, if a person is in possession of 10 grams of cannabis or less they are now guilty of a civil law violation. If a person is in violation of the civil law portion of the possession of cannabis, any cannabis paraphernalia seized during the violation for that offense shall also be guilty of a separate civil law violation. Along with the change to make these civil law violations, was the requirement to expunge those violations twice a year, effecting many OLE policies.

Cost Savings Initiatives - None

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers  
2017 Agency Report  
Conservation Officers Service  
Manitoba Sustainable Development  
Jack Harrigan  
Chief Conservation Officer  
May 24, 2017**



**• Training Issues**

Manitoba Sustainable Development continues to accept recruits trained in various outside agencies and academies. This year we anticipate a number to train through the Atlantic Police Academy. Last year's three (3) new recruits graduated from the Winnipeg Police Service Academy training and have since finished their on the job training and started as full time Officers.

New defensive tactics / officer safety training was introduced this year with 11 of our instructors being certified through 'Setcan' in Principle Based Subject Control. The instructors will use this certification in future training of all our Conservation Officers. As well, this year at centralized training the Department included a Winter Emergency Vehicle Operator Course specialized for driving in our climate and conditions. Firearms standard qualifications were conducted by in-house officer instructors.

Retaining instructors remains a challenge due to turn-over and regular duty work priorities.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

Recruitment and Retention of full time Conservation Officers remains a challenge with vacancies due to resignations, retirement, and decreasing applicant numbers. In the last year, 2 full time Conservation Officers have resigned to take positions in other jurisdictions. Currently, of the 120 Conservation Officer Positions, 11 are vacant, 18 officers are eligible for immediate retirement, and approximately 26 will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years.

The Conservation Officer Service operating budget has remained the same to date.

New tablet computers remain suspended for lack of new funding and delays in implementation of the TraCS software.

Night patrol efforts were doubled, including several more night flights, in order to address increased illegal night lighting activities and being a higher priority with the new government.

Expenditure management and a hiring freeze that were instituted last year remain in effect

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

Social media postings of illegal and legal wildlife harvesting, and the public reactions to these, led to several resource enforcement actions. Night hunting by rights based harvesters continues to come under public scrutiny by various lobby groups and municipalities, some wishing to see it banned outright. The Department is now planning a consultation process with indigenous communities and other interested parties to examine night lighting practices.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

No specific cross-boundary cooperative law enforcement investigations occurred this past year.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

An RFP to implement an electronic hunting and fishing licence system tendered last year has now been accepted. Once formally approved and implemented, it will be a significant improvement as there is currently no electronic database for officers to access licensing information.



- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution) proclaimed in 2016 allows restitution to be collected after a person is convicted of an offence where specified fish or wildlife was unlawfully killed. The restitution collected is over and above any fine ordered by the court and cannot be waived. Monies collected are deposited into the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund. In September 2016 notifications began going out to those convicted and to date the new program has raised approximately \$35,000.

The Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation will no longer be the only marketing opportunity for Manitoba's commercial fishers and *The Fisheries Act* (Manitoba) will be amended accordingly. This move from a single desk buyer to a multi marketing option will enable fishers to sell to whomever they wish once they have obtained a special license to do so. It is anticipated this will take effect the fall of 2017.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

Increased select high visibility peak period enforcement activities and more teleconferencing continue in an effort to save money and ensure resource enforcement and public safety standards are met.

A \$70,000 grant was obtained through the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund disbursement process that enabled the Department to purchase 10 dash cameras for officer use.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

Talks with other government departments continue for a proposed Provincial call centre operation and call-in and call-out protocols for on duty Officers in order to help address safety concerns including working alone.

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

**2017 Agency Report**

**State/Province: Minnesota**

**Submitted by: Colonel Rodmen Smith**

**Date: May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

- **Training Issues** – NASBLA--airboat training, tactical watercraft training and Pursue and Stop training. All officers participated in Critical Incident Training (CIT) dealing with persons with mental illnesses.
- **Funding and Staffing Issues** – Funding continues to be a challenge with dedicated funds tightening. Game & Fish License fee increases not being well received at the legislative level.

At this time not able to predict if they will pass. Current staffing levels are at 75%, legislative initiative to get more money to bring staffing up to 100%,

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**—Keeping up with technology.....
- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**—AIS issues across state borders and the import/export of minnows and farmed cervidae (Deer Farms).
- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – Our new records management system allows us to track cases, review and provide information requests to outside agencies in real time. We have just set-up a License Revocation Notification system—the RMS automatically receives all game & fish convictions in the state (from all agencies) and scrubs a report to notify us on any revocations that may apply.
- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** – Continued pressure from Tribal governments to expand treaty rights.
- **Cost Savings Initiatives** – With our new Revocation Notification System we have saved staff time & resources by replacing work done manually by work being done electronically.

We have moved the majority of our permits into an electronic format that an officer can produce and print in the field right from their squad. This reduces printing and mailing costs.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**—An increase in the market of cutting spruce tree tops and birch poles for commercial sale and use.

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## **Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

### **2017 Agency Report**

**State/Province: Missouri**

**Submitted by: Larry Yamnitz**

**Date: April 28, 2017**

- **Training Issues** – For the fifth consecutive year, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is conducting a training academy. The academy is Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certified and consists of conservation law, boating operations, waterfowl school, firearms training, land management practices, trapping, fish kills, defensive tactics, etc. Pending successful completion of the academy, fourteen conservation agent trainees will graduate at the end of September.

Protection Division held a statewide conference for all Division personnel in 2017. Training and discussion took place on a variety of topics including; *The Wildlife Code of Missouri*, 2017 Charge Code changes, and two special field investigations.

Protection Division also graduated two supervisors from the National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy (NCLELA) in September. Both graduates rated the program as excellent. Two additional supervisors are attending the 2017 NCLELA. Chief Larry Yamnitz also served as a coach for the 2016 International Conservation Law

Enforcement Chief's Leadership Academy and is scheduled to travel to Thailand to assist with an ILEA Academy.

**Funding and Staffing Issues** – The Department's budget has remained stable over the last few years. Protection Division currently has 210 FTEs and while we haven't been able to add new positions, we have reallocated existing positions to better accomplish our mission. Our Confined Wildlife Enforcement Unit is in their third year and has been effective in providing firm, fair, and consistent enforcement of confined wildlife and commercial permit regulations. We've also extended our Special Investigations Technical position for another year to assist Protection with technical support and on-line special investigations.

Salary continues to be an issue for all Department staff. Department Administration is working with the Conservation Commission to address this important issue. The Department has engaged CBIZ consulting firm to analyze our current compensation system and job classifications. This Department-wide job study will provide Administration with recommendations for the Department's Total Rewards system. To support the process, all salaried and hourly employees completed an online Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) to provide the consultants the necessary job-specific details.

Protection Division is also completing a Job Task Analysis for our conservation agent position. Data from this project will be used to update our Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) to more accurately reflect the law enforcement duties and responsibilities of the agent position.

Diversity in employment continues to be a priority for the Department and our Discover Nature Girls Camp (DNGC) programs are helping us connect with a more diverse audience. Due to their popularity, Protection conducted nine girls camps in 2016, including an urban Discover Nature Girls Camp held in St. Louis Region.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** – In 2016, Missouri's Operation Game Thief (OGT) program received 938 violation reports which resulted in 93 arrests and \$6,050 in rewards paid. The OGT trailer was utilized at nine special events throughout the state.

During the 2016 deer season, 4,280 hunters donated 198,277 pounds of venison to Missouri's Share the Harvest program. Conservation staff, in addition to our program partner, the Conservation Federation of Missouri, is continually working on securing funding for this valuable program. The Governor of Missouri continues his active interest in Share the Harvest and has assisted in bringing more public awareness to the program.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** –

What started as a single poaching incident in Kansas in December, 2015 turned into a considerable, multi-state poaching investigation that spanned almost nine months. "Operation Geronimo" started with a single deer spotlighted in Kansas. The deer was transported back to Missouri, and when conservation agents learned of the violation, they served a search warrant on the subject; including his residence and cell phone. Based on the cell phone search, agents recovered 2,700 pages of text messages, 850 photos, and numerous videos which documented approximately 250 wildlife violations involving deer, turkey, catfish, and crappie. The investigation revealed fourteen total poaching suspects with violations in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Saskatchewan. In August, conservation agents simultaneously served search warrants at various locations throughout Southwest Missouri to collect evidence and interview associates. When the smoke cleared the following wildlife charges were filed:

237 Missouri charges filed in 11 counties on 14 subjects  
26 Canada charges  
13 Nebraska charges  
9 Kansas charges  
7 Federal charges  
292 total charges for violations occurring between Aug-Dec 2015

The primary subject was charged with 86 violations in Missouri, 6 in Kansas, 4 Lacey Act violations, and 10 violations in Canada.

At the request of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, fifteen Missouri conservation agents assisted in providing security for Governor Eric Greitens' Inauguration Ceremony on January 9, 2017. This was the first time Missouri conservation agents have been asked to assist other agencies in providing security at an inauguration ceremony.



- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – Protection Division continues to embrace technology to better protect Missouri's fish, forest and wildlife resources. The "Agent Mobile" application combines our S3 permits system, arrest record, written warning, and Telecheck databases into one format that conservation agents can access via their iPhones. Protection has been working with our IT staff to create an electronic incident reporting system to be added to the Agent Mobile and Agent Online programs.

The Department continues to promote electronic hunting and fishing licenses, with electronic deer and turkey permits available again this year. Our MO Hunting app allows for electronic invalidation (notching) of deer and turkey permits and the ability to telecheck deer and turkey directly from your mobile device. Paper permits are still available and can be printed from a home computer. The Department also implemented a "Conservation Permit Card" in 2017

which is a refillable licensing card valid for most hunting/fishing licenses with the exception of deer and turkey permits. Initial reaction from the public has been positive; however enforcement challenges exist when trying to scan QR codes from an agent's iPhone when signal strength is weak.

Protection Division is now outfitting agents with Ford F-150 SuperCrew Cab trucks. These vehicles better accommodate today's law enforcement equipment needs including digital and analog radios, and dual long-gun mounts. We have also transitioned to a new field uniform that is more practical for every-day field wear yet still presents a sharp, professional image for Missouri conservation agents.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement –**

Missouri's 2016 Outstanding Conservation Agent, Donnie Tiller, was recognized on the floor of the Capital in April. Agent Tiller, along with his wife Gail, Chief Larry Yamnitz, and Deputy Director Tom Draper, were present while Representative Patricia Pike presented Agent Tiller a House Resolution honoring his service to the citizens of Bates County and his selection as Missouri's Outstanding Conservation Agent. This is the first time a conservation agent has been recognized on the floor of the Capital.



- **Cost Savings Initiatives –** Protection Division currently has approximately 120 Protection Volunteers who assist conservation agents and other Department staff with projects including; enforcement patrols, outreach and education programs, training scenarios and wildlife surveys. The volunteer program continues to be a valuable recruitment tool.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues -** Protection Division continues to work diligently with Wildlife Division and other partners on feral hog eradication efforts in Missouri. Cage trapping and aerial gunning continue to be effective control measures. Department staff and partners killed 5,358 feral hogs in 2016. The Conservation Commission also passed regulations prohibiting the taking of feral hogs on all lands owned, leased or managed by the Department in an effort to further reduce the incentive to transport and release feral hogs on Department areas.

During the opening weekend of the 2016 November firearms deer season, MDC initiated mandatory sampling of deer harvested in 29 counties throughout the CWD Management Zone. This resulted in the collection of over 19,200 tissue samples from hunter harvested deer. CWD has now been found in northeast, central, west-central and east-central Missouri. The first cases of CWD in Missouri were detected in 2010 and 2011 in captive deer at private big-game hunting preserves in Linn and Macon counties. A total of 11 cases were confirmed in captive

deer at the facilities. The total number of Missouri free-ranging deer that have tested positive for CWD is now at 40. Protection Division continues to be very active in CWD containment efforts serving as Incident Commanders and on landowner contact and shooting teams.

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

**2017 Agency Report**

**State/Province: Nebraska**

**Submitted by: Craig Stover**

**Date: 5/1/2017**

- **Training Issues**

- Our police academy has extended their training to 16 weeks. As a result, they now sponsor only three classes annually instead of four. This change has created a backlog for all law enforcement agencies and the waiting list continues to grow.
- Our current Field Training Officer process is 14 weeks in length and we utilize a combination of the San Jose and Reno methods. We recently added a mentor component to all new hires, encouraging direct access with another officer who has recently completed the same process that they are going through. Boat accident and hunt incident training is now required for any new hire to complete within the first two years of employment.
- Within the next five years, with the exception of one person, our entire cadre of supervisors will retire. In anticipation of this turnover, we recently put together a FTO program that directly targets this group.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

- Financial support from our legislature continues to dwindle placing more of a burden on our cash funds. While our budget has remained relatively static, we are seeking approval to add one conservation officer position that will be the first increase in over twenty years. At this time, it appears that this request will be approved as long as it is entirely cash funded.
- In an effort to better utilize available coast guard funding support, a greater emphasis has been placed on water safety and boating. In support of this shift, four conservation officer positions are now dedicated to boating safety and education.
- Supervisory pay compression (the pay spread between contract field officers and exempt first line supervisors) continues to be an issue. An eleven percent spread between these two classes has dwindled to only four percent with minimal relief in sight. This creates concern in filling future vacancies at this important level.
- A reduction in the number of districts from five to four has created large geographic areas with a ratio of roughly 1:14 (supervisor to field officer). This large span of control has made it difficult to maintain adequate supervision over field personnel.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

- We continue to expand our use of alcohol related grants throughout the summer months to subsidize our fieldwork. Involvement in traditional enforcement efforts such as thefts, vandalism, assaults, etc. are on the increase. Cross-jurisdictional cases with all law enforcement agencies (traditional and fish & wildlife) remain a priority.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

- We continue to prioritize joint enforcement meetings with adjacent states and jurisdictions (4-state, tristate and tribal). Recent legislation introduced by a local sportsman's group has been passed in our legislature and recently signed by the Governor allowing Nebraska to finally become a member of the Wildlife Violator Compact.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

- The need for computer and cell phone forensics along with social media related investigations continues to increase. During the past couple of years, we have expanded our use of remote video monitoring which has proven to be a very effective tool in resolving issues at a reasonable cost.
- We have one certified ground pilot and recently began experimenting with drones. Operating policies and procedures are yet to be developed. Initially this tool will be utilized in a non-enforcement capacity with exception of search and rescue operations or public safety. Cell phone tracking (Mobile Mach) is currently being testing. This tool has a variety of potential uses at a reasonable price of roughly \$75 a year.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

- In addition to the recent adoption of the Wildlife Violator Compact, the legislature increased fines for several big game species (deer, antelope, and elk). Both of these improvements resulted from a couple of gross overharvest cases from a couple of years ago. There have been no changes or recent challenges to our authority.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

- As previously mentioned, we have increased our efforts in the boating safety and education arena to better utilize grant monies. Currently we are under an in-house sequester limiting the spending of Game Cash dollars. This measure was implemented to address the dwindling balance. A recent increase in user fees should help to minimize this impact in the future.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

- Some progress has been made in expanding our long-term investigation capabilities but more work needs to be done. A recent / ongoing investigation cross-referenced permit

purchases with big game check station data. Permit purchase dates were compared to check in dates and times. Roughly 220 individuals were identified. At this time, approximately 99% percent of the possible violations have been proven true with a number of additional ancillary cases pending.

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

**2017 Agency Report**

**State/Province: North Dakota**

**Submitted by: Chief Game Warden Robert Timian**

**Date: May 1, 2017**

- **Training Issues** – The Enforcement Division field-training program was submitted to the Peace Officer Standards and Training board and was granted credit for training hours. New officers who finish the field-training program are now receiving 225-250 hours of POST board training credit.

The division's annual in-service has traditionally been held in the winter. We will now start having in-service during the summer every other year. This will allow different and more applicable training to occur.

Recent changes to the POST board licensing process have caused some issues with the hiring/field training timeline. In the past, new game wardens were hired and sent to the academy soon after the hire date. Rules now require that new game wardens qualify with their sidearm prior to being registered for the academy. This has forced the division to start the field training process prior to academy registration. With limited academy space, new wardens are finishing field training before they can get into the academy. This is not ideal and we will continue to try to adjust our hiring/field training process to work with the POST board licensing requirements.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues** – We have hired five new District Game Wardens, one Game Warden Pilot, and one full time temporary game warden and are now fully staffed. The full time temporary warden has been through all required training and is working in the field, and will be able to move into a full time position when one opens.

While the majority of state agencies have faced substantial budget cuts, we have been fortunate and have not had any significant funding issues. The biggest issue for us will be that there are no pay raises likely for the next biennium.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** – Operation Dry Water was a success in 2016 and we will participate again in 2017.

Even with the downturn in oil activity in the state, and fewer new "residents", we continue to see an increased number of cross border investigations.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** – The Department and Division were heavily involved with the Dakota Access Pipeline protest in southern Morton County. From mid-September through mid-March, we had a minimum of three game wardens who were dedicated to protest duty every day. These officers worked on rotating five-day schedules. Other officers responded as needed. At one time, twelve wardens were working the protest. This is about 45% of our field staff. The Department also had six side-by-side



utvs, two boats, and one snowmobile dedicated to the protest response. The enforcement division Cessna 182 and pilot flew surveillance shifts. Approximately 7,500 warden hours were dedicated to the protest by game wardens and a cost of approximately \$450,000. The Department of Emergency Services reimbursed the Department for the expenses.

The Investigations Section continues to work with multiple states on cross border investigations, and new MOU's have been written and approved with several states.

Our Missouri River Patrol task force, which utilizes local law enforcement paid volunteers, has been a great deterrent on the river through the Bismarck/Mandan area. Calls for service and complaints have decreased with the additional on the water patrols. The funding however for this project may be getting cut through the legislature and we will need to make the necessary adjustments to the program for coverage and overtime availability.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – All of our District Game Wardens now have new MDT's utilizing computer aided dispatch and video recorders in their patrol vehicles. We also have video recorders in two Boston Whaler patrol boats. These systems have been a great benefit to the wardens and have improved officer safety, work efficiency and prosecutions.

We are currently researching new night vision/thermal optics and a new groundhog surveillance camera system.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** – The 2017 legislative session started with numerous bills that would have affected our game wardens but most were killed or amended. Significant new laws that will affect our wardens include:

All abandoned property that is seized or confiscated on Department Wildlife Management Areas can now be auctioned after being held for 90 days. The proceeds will go to the Report All Poachers program.

Watercraft towing a person on skis or an inflatable craft no longer need a second person for an observer if the watercraft is equipped with mirrors allowing an unobstructed view to the rear.

Watercraft for hire no longer need to be specially licensed and inspected by a game warden annually.

In the fall of 2016 North Dakota voters approved a medical marijuana bill. The legislature has been tackling the additional laws and procedures that go along with this. Law enforcement officers throughout the state will need additional training on how to deal with the new laws.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives** – We continue to use grants and reimbursable funds to pay overtime to wardens when possible.
  - **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues** - We continue to de-brief and have after action reviews of our involvement and response to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. We anticipate that there will be some new and unique training and equipment issues that will arise that are not normal for game and fish law enforcement.
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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**  
**2017 Agency Report**  
**State/Province: Ohio**  
**Submitted by: Ken Fitz**  
**Date: 4/28/2017**

- **Training Issues**

The Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy requires 20 hours of specific training topics this year in addition to our regular training program. These required trainings include:

- Trauma Informed Policing (6 hours) or
- Practical Application of Force (4 hours)
- Officer & Community Wellness (4 hours) – must choose one
  - Blue Courage (4 hours) or Procedural Justice & Police Legitimacy (4 hours)
- Legal Update (2 hours)
  - Agency directed, no preapproval required
- General Law Enforcement (4 hours)

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

The ODNR Division of Wildlife is funded through license fees for 95% of the budget. The last increase in license fees occurred in 2004. To help utilize our funds in the most efficient manner, we have looked for more efficient means of accomplishing our goals, delayed major purchases and put on hold plans for hiring wildlife officers. We are currently at 134 commissioned officers, when fully staffed we have approximately 160, including an officer in every county (currently 5 vacant counties), 4 plain clothes investigators in each district (currently 5 vacant investigators), 8 investigators on Lake Erie, (currently 2 vacancies) and an “at-large officer” in each work unit (currently 14 vacant positions).

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

Cooperative efforts continue between our special investigations unit and investigators from the Department of Public Safety, Liquor Control. We often discover violations which are outside of our wildlife authority as part of special investigations.

Wildlife officers continue to participate with other local law enforcement as needed, helping with traffic crashes, manhunts, drug eradication, and search and rescue. In addition we participate in a number of community policing events, conservation club events and other public displays and events.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

Ohio continues to be an active participant in the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact, and serves as the secretary for the compact. With permission of the Compact Chair, Ohio represented the compact at a meeting of the Great Lakes Fish Commission Law

Enforcement Committee in discussions with representatives of the Great Lakes Council of Governors and Premiers.

Ohio has provided, and received, assistance with numerous other states on a variety of cases involving deer, turkey, and commercialization of wildlife and fisheries violations.

We participate in several “Tri-State” meetings with adjacent state wildlife enforcement agencies. (Ohio-Michigan-Indiana; Ohio-Indiana-Kentucky; Ohio-Pennsylvania-West Virginia) These meetings establish networking between officers of the other states.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

We are implementing a pilot bike patrol program. Many public fishing opportunities occur in up-ground reservoirs or rivers which have bike trails next to them. This pilot program will allow us to quickly and quietly interact with these anglers, in addition to other members of the public, including those on public hunting areas. Magee Marsh Wildlife Area on Lake Erie is a world-class bird watching destination, with 90,000 visitors expected in one month. The bikes will be used as means of patrolling parking areas and contacting the public during this very busy time. Initial training and equipment costs for this program is less than \$8,000.

As part of the states Multi-Agency Radio Communications System, old vehicle radios have been removed and all new portable radios and vehicle mobile radios have been installed. To provide for officer safety, the new portable radios feature GPS locating ability, formerly available only in the vehicle radios. The cost for the Division of Wildlife portion of the upgrade is \$1.8 million.

At the same time as the radio upgrades have taken place, we have been involved in an agency-wide implementation of Motorola P-1 Records Management System. Previously we had no state-wide records management system. We will now be able to view and share records from across the state and from other enforcement officers within the agency

We have purchased and begun using remote trail cameras which may be monitored via a secure website. Made by an Ohio company, the appropriately named Buckeye Cam allows 5 separate cameras to send signals to a transmitter up to a mile away. The signal is then transmitted via cell signal to the website. These cameras have proven to be very useful for the detection and deterrence of illegal activity on public hunting areas. Their use has resulted in a number of cases being made.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

None to report at this time.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

Meetings have been scheduled with other agencies across the state, and with other divisions of ODNR to share intelligence and resources.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

**2017 Agency Report**

**State: OKLAHOMA**

**Col. Bill Hale**

**Prepared by: Capt. Bryan Wilkerson**

**Date: May 1, 2017**

The following report covers the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 (FY2017) for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Law Enforcement Division.

**AGENCY OVERVIEW:**

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Law Enforcement Division game warden's primary responsibility is to enforce the State's wildlife laws. Game wardens also participate and assist in all phases of the Wildlife Department's operations and programs.

The division consists of 118 employees, with a field force of 90 game wardens, 16 game warden supervisors and 8 district chiefs. Central office staff includes the chief, assistant chief, operations manager and one secretary.

In addition, the agency has a reserve force consisting of 40 reserve officers who are agency employees assigned to various divisions whose primary duties are other than law enforcement.

The division operates with a straight-line chain of command.

**TRAINING ISSUES:**

All new game wardens undergo a four week training and orientation at Department Headquarters in Oklahoma City, then ten weeks in a Field Training and Evaluation Program with a Field Training Officer, two weeks of which the new game warden will spend working with his Lieutenant. In addition, they also attend the 600-hour Oklahoma Basic Law Enforcement Academy, all-totaling nearly 30 weeks of training prior to solo assignment.

All game wardens are required by state mandate to complete twenty-five hours of law enforcement training and two hours of mental health training each calendar year. In addition, all supervisors are also required to attend twelve hours of supervisory training each year. New supervisors are required to attend 24 hours within one year after promotion.

All commissioned wardens and reserves are required to train and qualify annually with issued pistols, shotguns and carbines. In addition, game wardens must also attend an annual 8 hour defensive tactics refresher course.

## **FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES:**

Funding remains basically unchanged from the previous year. We are fortunate that we are a revenue based agency and not experiencing any funding shortfalls.

Ten new game wardens were hired during this period; the open positions are a result of retirements. We currently have one warden vacancy.

We were able to purchase 20 Chevrolet Silverado four-wheel drive extended cab pickups and 3 crew cab pickups. Seventeen of the trucks have been converted to use CNG. The state now has a mandatory Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) requirement for most state vehicles. The CNG requirement cost the Division \$10,200 per vehicle for each aftermarket conversion for a total \$173,400 additional cost for vehicles. The fuel savings fluctuates as the price of CNG to gasoline changes. Compressed natural gas continues to be a more economical option to gasoline. The equipment installed on this years trucks include LED light bars, tool boxes, locking double gun racks, and grill guards. We purchased nine radios three high-band, three low-band and three 800 megahertz radios to replace aging equipment.

We replaced one hundred and twenty 517 EOTECH rifle sights, with the Aim-Point PRO rifle sight at no cost to the agency due to an equipment recall by EOTECH.

We are currently researching body worn cameras to document contacts with the public and critical incidents. We are continuing to replace self-inflating PFD's with new hydrostatic inflatable models 25 new PFD's were purchased.

## **MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS:**

Wardens are increasingly using social media to detect wildlife violations, with the proliferation social web sites and services in combination with a younger generation of wardens; we expect this trend to continue. The cases tend to fall in to two distinct types, the first being a posting to sell wildlife or wildlife parts and the second a posting which shares an illegal activity with friends or other online contacts.

## **UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS:**

The division continues to cooperate with every state in efforts to combat fraudulent license applications and interstate wildlife violations.

We continue to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in enforcing the federal laws occurring in our state.

## **NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

We implemented a law enforcement Facebook page edited by selected game wardens. The page continues to be instrumental in developing leads in wildlife cases from the public, and serves as a method to provide feedback form the public on our law enforcement efforts. The benefit of social

media is the low cost to the agency and the ability to disseminate focused information to interested constituents.

The Department continues to conduct the hunter education course on-line this has decreased the demand for traditional classroom courses taught by game wardens.

## **STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

New legislation and administrative rules:

The legislature passed a law that modifies the meeting requirements from 12 times a year to nine times a year by the wildlife commission. We are working against proposed legislation that limits enforcement powers on private lands and relaxing rules to night taking of feral hogs.

## **COST SAVING INITIATIVES:**

Fuel costs continue to be a concern in Oklahoma. Game wardens are encouraged to use time management and to work wisely while conducting their patrols. Fuels saving initiatives have been implemented to help offset costs, including the installation of CNG conversions, which will greatly affect our fuel bill.

## **OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:**

We have formed a committee to update the division's Procedures Manual. The committee assigns sections of the procedure to members who then meet once per month to evaluate the procedure. We plan to complete this work sometime in 2016.

Enforcement of the illegal harvest and sale of paddlefish eggs for caviar continues to be a major enforcement issue. Game wardens maintain an increased enforcement emphasis during the annual spring spawn to help curtail the illegal activities associated with the illegal caviar trade.

Game wardens are involved in several Department programs that involve the recruitment and retention of anglers and hunters. The programs include an annual Wildlife Expo held each September in Guthrie, Oklahoma, and regional and annual Archery in the Schools statewide tournaments. Both programs require an enormous amount of manpower and associated costs in these popular and worthwhile projects. Other programs include the annual Wildlife Youth Camp, STEP programs and Aquatic Education. The recruitment and retention of fishermen and hunters and the sale of licenses to them is vital to our agency.

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## **Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**

### **2017 Agency Report**

**State/Province: Ontario**

**Submitted by: Rick Ladouceur**

**Date: May 17, 2017**

- **Training Issues**

- Ontario Police College – Basic Constable Training for all new recruits.
- Training provided - Enhanced Marine Safety Training
- Training provided - Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR)
- Training provided - Influential Police Leadership Training.
- Training provided - Enforcement Branch Foundations
- Training provided - Invasive Species Act
- Training provided - Indigenous Peoples Awareness Training
- Training provided - Respectful Workplace and Diversity Training

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

- Enforcement has French, Chinese and Aboriginal Conservation Officer positions to better reflect the diversity within our client base.
- The Branch has been continuously maintaining a field compliment level of 180 COs in the province.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

- Priority on Species at Risk, Invasive Species, including traditional Fish & Wildlife matters (hunting safety and moose)
- Continue our supporting relationship with Niagara Escarpment Commission and Petroleum Services

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

- Sitting member of Great Lakes Fisheries Commission – Law Enforcement Committee
- Six party agreement with federal and certain US states.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

- In 2017-18, officers will begin to use the molle on their body armour carriers. Staff can move the portable radio from the duty belt to the molle, which reduces stress and pressure points on an officer's hips and back, and improves access to and protection for the radio.
- In 2018-19, officers will transition from a Panasonic tough book to tablet. Branch enforcement vehicles will be equipped with a docking station for the tablet.
- In 2017-18, the branch will issue patrol pants to officers with a drawstring and gaiter to reduce contact with ticks.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

- Ontario's Invasive Species Act came into force late in 2015 with supporting regulations coming into play in late 2016. This legislation puts controls on the importation, possession and movement of 3 species of invertebrates, 9 species of plants and 8 species of fish. Conservation Officer training in the application of this legislation is on-going.
- A regulatory amendment under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in 2017 now prohibits the harvest of snapping turtles, an activity that had been permitted under the authority of a sport fishing licence.
- A recent Supreme Court of Canada decision now requires that all provincial prosecutions be completed within 18 months of charges being laid. The Ontario Enforcement Branch case management program is being used to ensure that this timeline is met.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

- The following costs are managed and paid for centrally, which lead to work load and cost efficiencies:
  - o Salaries & benefits
  - o Vehicle insurance costs
  - o Private-sector prosecutions
  - o Cell phone bills
  - o Infrastructure costs
  - o Training
  - o FleetNet radio
  - o Recruitment & relocation costs
  - o Capital
  - o Marketing & promotions



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**AMFGLEO LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**2017 PROVINCIAL REPORT – SASKATCHEWAN**  
Submitted By: Glen Pranteau, Intelligence Officer

**AGENCY OVERVIEW:**

In the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, Resource Management and Compliance Division there are 191 law enforcement positions from Chief to seasonal conservation officers. Of this number, there are 142 full time conservation officers and 49 seasonal positions. Full time conservation officers are also deemed Special Constables under the Provincial Police Act and can enforce federal and provincial acts and regulations. Seasonal officers are appointed Special Constables status but it is generally restricted to provincial parks.

The Conservation Officer Service is managed by a Director and is comprised of seven compliance areas entailing 46 field offices. Each compliance area is supervised by an Inspector (who is a conservation officer) and field offices are supervised by Sergeants. Sergeants may be responsible for the conservation officers in the 1 – 3 field offices in his sub area. Each field office has a minimum of two conservation officers and up to six (including the Sergeant) depending on the activity of that district.

The Enforcement and Investigations Section is managed by a Chief/Director. Included in the section are the Investigations Unit (covert and plain clothes), Intelligence Management Unit, Environmental Compliance Unit, Wildfire Investigation Specialist and the K9 Unit.

The Safety, Education, Recruitment and Training Section, is managed by a Director. Included in the Section are the Training Unit, Compliance Education Office and the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator

**TRAINING ISSUES:**

- Saskatchewan is a member of the Western States Project that trains officers in environmental protection. It continues to send conservation officers and environmental protection officers for this training when approved by the ministry for out of province travel.
- Saskatchewan hosted the Western Canadian Law Enforcement Academy (WCLEA) at Candle Lake Resort, north of Prince Albert, from 2015 - 2017. This is a 16 week course designed to qualify the candidates as a conservation officer. WCLEA started in 2007 and up to 2017 has turned out 241 graduates who qualified to be full time conservation officers in their home province. There was 10 graduates from Saskatchewan this year. The provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have sent students to WCLEA. All students typically must have a resource management diploma or degree, resource law enforcement work experience, criminal background check, pass the Minnesota Multiphasic

Personality Inventory (MMPI) Test and pass the Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation (PARE) test before they can attend the academy.

- In the 2017 training cycle, officers transitioned from the Safariland Level 3 leather holster to the Safariland Level 3, ALS synthetic plastic holster.

#### **FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES:**

- 1.5 million has been designated in the budget for the new enforcement Records Management System that will eventually replace our current Resource Infraction Program (RIP) system
- \$300K for ministry facility improvements
- 25k allocated to conduct aerial surveillance for resource and environmental infractions.

#### **MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS:**

- Water drainage concerns are becoming an issue in central and southern Saskatchewan as above average snowfall and rain the past number of years has made it harder for farmers to properly drain the runoff. This has resulted in illegal drainage practices being carried out.
- Oil industry discharges into the environment have also become an issue. There are thousands of kilometers of new and old oil pipeline in Saskatchewan. Aging pipeline infrastructure and pipelines crossing waterbodies and aquifers has increased the number of investigations.

#### **UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS:**

- Two US officers assisted in an uncover capacity in Western Saskatchewan. The case involved an illegal outfitting investigation.
- A Saskatchewan officer assisted Manitoba Conservation in an uncover operation in eastern Manitoba in a case involving hunting big game in a closed area.

#### **NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

- The use of specialized camera equipped drones by trained officers from the Enforcement and Investigation Section in various types of investigations has proved very beneficial.
- Seasonal officers have been issued IPAD's. They now have the capability to validate angling licenses, email, check legislation, and receive law enforcement data from dispatch operators.

## **STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

- A court decision involving an Indigenous person is being appealed to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. The case involves whether a First Nations person has a right to hunt on private land that is not visibly in use.

## **COST SAVING INITIATIVES:**

## **OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:**

- A significant oil spill from a pipeline that leaked into the Saskatchewan River and caused three cities and several towns to shut down their water treatment plants for two months. Investigators from the Environmental Compliance Unit were involved in all facets of the investigation.
- Illegal big game outfitting continues to be an ongoing issue. Numerous investigations have in outfitters paying 10's of thousands of dollars in fines.
- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) has become a major issue. Zebra mussels have now become established in two bordering jurisdictions. Training is ongoing for Conservation Officers in decontamination procedures and other aspects of AIS. Public education and roadside inspections are planned for the 2017 season.

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### **AMFGLEO/WAFWA Law Enforcement Annual Report**

#### **State Report – South Dakota**

*By: Andy Alban*

*Law Enforcement Administrator*

*Division of Wildlife*

*South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks*

This report covers the period April 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017, for the State of South Dakota, Department of Game, Fish and Parks - Division of Wildlife - Law Enforcement Program.

## **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

Are officers 100% Wildlife Law Enforcement or Mixed: **Mixed**

Straight Line Reporting Structure: **No** – Line (Regional Supervisor positions are not required to be LE) and Staff (LE Program) structure

Number of Officers: **78 total officers in Wildlife Division:** 53 CO's, 12 District CO Supervisors, 4 Regional CO Supervisors, 1 Training Supervisor, 2 Regional Supervisors, 1 Regional Program Manager - Habitat, 2 CO Specialists, 2 Investigators, 1 LE Administrator.

## **TRAINING ISSUES**

### *New POST Training Requirements*

In January, 2016, the South Dakota Law Enforcement Standards and Training Commission mandated that all officers must complete at least two hours of training in the area of crisis intervention/mental illness every two years in order to maintain certification. More and more active shooter-type training is offered, as well as online training for dealing with persons having a mental illness or those who are emotionally disturbed.

### *Natural Resources Law Enforcement Major – South Dakota State University*

In August, 2015, South Dakota State University (SDSU) became the fifth institution in the nation to offer a four-year degree program to prepare students for careers as game wardens. The curriculum is designed to provide students with a strong academic foundation that integrates natural resource management, conservation, and law enforcement. There continues to be a need for qualified candidates in the conservation law enforcement field and for these students to have natural resources, law, and sociology coursework. Approximately 72 students were enrolled during the 2016-17 academic timeframe, up from 51 the previous year. The first program degree is expected to be awarded in 2017. Over 100 students are projected to be enrolled in the major by 2019.

### *Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC)*

We have started our own, in-house, EVOC program by sending five instructors to Oklahoma to become certified. While we are still planning on working with the South Dakota Highway Patrol, we feel there is benefit in having our own EVOC instructors within the agency. Now that the entire group is certified, we are formulating a plan for the first training session.

## **FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES**

### *License Sales Update*

Nonresident small game licenses are a major source of revenue (almost 1/3 of the operating budget) for the division. Sales usually fluctuate with the pheasant population index in the state. The decrease (20%) in pheasants in 2016 resulted in a decrease (4,000 fewer or 82,959 total) in the sale of nonresident small game licenses.

The state deer herd received a big blow in 2016, when epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) was confirmed in 21 counties across the state. Over 2,000 dead deer were reported to agency staff. As a result, the department offered voluntary refunds for deer licensees. Over 3,000 licenses were refunded, which amounted to a \$143,000 loss in revenue.

### *Conservation Officer Turnover*

We experienced some turnover within our workforce of Conservation Officers over the past year. At this time of this document, 52 of 55 field positions were filled. We have three CO Trainees at various stages in the training process to fill those vacant duty stations. Our officers begin their tenure by attending the State Law Enforcement Academy, in Pierre, and there are three sessions offered each year. The Wildlife Training Officer Program (field training) is approximately 15 weeks in length. It takes roughly eight months to fully train an officer before

they are placed in a solo duty station; from pre-academy to academy to post-academy to field training.

## **MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS**

### *Agency Strategic Plan*

The agency implemented a strategic plan in 2016, with a mission to provide sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities through responsible management of our state's parks, fisheries and wildlife by fostering partnerships, cultivating stewardship and safely connecting people with the outdoors. The vision is to conserve our state's outdoor heritage to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations. Founding values include excellence, integrity, stewardship, and compassion. The four main goals and objectives are: 1. Provide Outdoor Recreational Opportunities, 2. Serve as Stewards of our State's Outdoor Resources, 3. Inspire Confidence, and 4. Foster Professional Excellence.

### *Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Issues*

The Department significantly increased efforts to effectively manage and slow the spread of AIS throughout 2016. The infestation of zebra mussels in Lewis and Clark Reservoir increased. A survey of boats in the marina indicated that approximately 85% of berthed boats now have zebra mussels attached. One of the main regulatory initiatives was to require all drain plugs be removed or opened, except when on the water or involved with launching/loading a boat. Initial compliance in 2015 was rather low and enforcement was educational in nature. Beginning in July of 2016, we began issuing citations for AIS violations. During the period from September 15, 2015, to September 14, 2016, over 7,000 man hours were dedicated to AIS enforcement efforts. Some of this included enforcement details at boat ramp locations. Over 150 citations and 200 warnings were issued for AIS violations during this same period. Compliance is expected to increase with the change in enforcement strategy.

### *Parks Law Enforcement Workgroup*

We have partnered with our Division of Parks & Recreation to work on several law enforcement-related issues through the formation of a workgroup. We now have eight full-time park ranger positions within the agency, some of which will focus on wildlife law enforcement issues during periods of greatest need. We have also increased the cross-functioning of conservation officers to assist the Parks Division with law enforcement during major events such as the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup and the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, as well as providing periodic patrols through the parks during the course of normal angler/boater patrol. In return, the Wildlife Division has received assistance from park rangers during saturation patrols, road checks, and major season openers.

### *Operation Dry Water (ODW) Efforts*

The department participated in the nationwide ODW effort on the weekend of June 24-26, 2016. ODW is a national outreach and enforcement campaign with the goal of raising awareness of the dangers of boating under the influence and removing impaired operators from our nation's waterways. Statistics include:

- 11 waters targeted during operations
- 57 officers involved
- 449 vessels contacted
- 16 boating citations issued (6 of which were for boating under the influence)
- 52 warnings issued

## **UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**

### *Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC) Update*

South Dakota has been a very active participant in the Compact since joining in 2004. In 2016, our state reported 444 violator names to the database. During that period, 5,706 violators were entered nationwide in the Compact. Considering those figures, South Dakota entered approximately 8% of the Compact names.

### *Turn In Poachers (TIPs) Program Update*

The South Dakota Turn in Poachers (TIPs) program continues to be operational and callers who have knowledge of illegal hunting and fishing activity could be eligible for rewards. The program provides an important avenue for citizens to report hunting and fishing law violations, and in the process, prevents the loss of wildlife that can result from illegal actions. In the annual reporting period from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016, the TIPs program reported 449 investigations initiated through citizen reports, leading to 193 arrests, \$30,794 in fines and \$13,900 in civil penalties. Callers can remain anonymous, and are eligible for rewards in cases that lead to an arrest. Rewards may range up to \$300 for big game and start at \$100 for small game or fishing violations. Higher rewards may be offered in extreme cases. Last year, over \$4,495 in rewards were paid.

The TIPs program has been going since 1984, and in that time citizens have generated over 11,000 investigations that have led to 3,900 arrests. Over \$161,000 in reward monies have been remitted to tipsters since program inception. Each and every call is a vital part of the work to preserve our natural resources. Individuals may call the TIPs hotline at 1.888.OVERBAG (683-7224) to report violations, or report via the TIPs website at [tips.sd.gov](http://tips.sd.gov).

## **NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The department purchased Taser Axon Flex 2 body cameras for all officers in 2016, with implementation expected in spring of 2017. The decision was made for various reasons:

- Documentation of encounters between the general public and Conservation Officers. This documentation can resolve complaints in a more expeditious fashion or even prevent potential frivolous complaints. In turn, the cameras improve officer accountability by providing supervisors with an additional evaluation tool.
- Improved officer performance, safety and training. Video provides a training medium that can benefit all officers by reviewing past encounters thus allowing for self-critiquing of officer safety tactics. Additionally, video can provide critical details of use of force incidents, including potential crucial evidence in the event of an officer assault or a line of duty death.
- Enhanced prosecution of criminal cases by providing video documentation of the crimes our officers handle. Video footage provides the court with actual statements and not hearsay (he said/she said). The ability to actually see actions or hear words is compelling for a judge or jury.

## **STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES, AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### *Recreational Use of Non-Meandered Water Overlying Private Property*

A Supreme Court order stated that the South Dakota Legislature must determine whether members of the public may enter or use any of the non-meandered water or ice overlying private property for any recreational use such as hunting or fishing. The court also state that neither the public nor landowners have a superior right to use water and ice overlying private property and that the department cannot facilitate access to those waters. It is up to each individual to read the court's decision in its entirety and assist the Legislature in whatever capacity requested to resolve this issue of paramount importance to our state. This has caused the department to:

- Discontinue facilitating public access via boat ramps and docks placed on these (approximately 25) non-meandered waters
- Discontinue fish stocking on these non-meandered waters, as well as creel surveys
- Remove lake maps and other public use information from the GFP website and other publications
- Discontinue providing fishing reports for these waters
- Rescind all fishing tournament permits and deny any future permit applications for fishing tournaments and special events on these lakes

### *2017 Legislative Session*

The 2017 Legislative Session saw a number of bills introduced that had potential effects on our agency. Notable bills that passed include a landowner allowance to take fish without limit on waters that inundate their property and a revision to the area where nonresident waterfowl licenses are issued. Bills defeated include: an act to provide for the transfer of certain landowner hunting licenses, an act to restrict the department from purchasing land, and an act to provide for the permitting of waterfowl outfitters.

### *2016 Legislative Session*

Below is a summary of applicable legislation that was enacted in 2016.

- Senate Bill 58 – An Act to revise certain restrictions for the use of night-vision equipment for hunting under certain conditions. This bill amends the artificial light/night vision statute (SDCL 41-8-17) by creating an allowance for an additional guest (no more than two) to accompany the landowner or occupant. It also allows a wider range of firearms (must be less than .225 caliber) to be utilized by guests that are accompanied by a landowner who is 18 years of age or older. No age requirement was placed on landowners in regards to shotguns using shotshells or rimfire cartridges.
  - Senate Bill 71 – An Act to revise the provisions regarding the issuance of small game licenses and fishing licenses to certain veterans at reduced fees and to revise certain provisions regarding special pheasant hunts for disabled veterans. This bill amends the eligibility requirement in SDCL 41-6-10.2 for the reduced-fee disability small game/fishing license from total disability to a minimum of 40% or more. The bill also amends the provisions of SDCL 41-11-5.5, disabled veteran pheasant hunting season, by adding a day (1 or 2 days now) and amending the eligibility requirement to mirror that of the aforementioned disability small game/fishing license (40% or more).
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**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law  
Enforcement Officers  
2017 Agency Report  
State/Province: Texas**



**Submitted by: Lieutenant Jason B Jones – Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Department – Law Enforcement Division**



## **Training Issues**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Law Enforcement Division (TPWD-LE) continues to encourage and promote relevant training to ensure Game Wardens are prepared to meet the demands of their job.

- On January 9, 2017, the 61<sup>st</sup> Game Warden Academy began with 41 Game Warden Cadets and 11 Park Peace Officers. The trainees will endure 30 weeks of extensive Training in State and Federal Laws. Upon graduation the individuals will be certified Texas Peace Officers and Commissioned by Texas Parks and Wildlife.
- Approximately 70 Game Warden and police communication operators have been provided access the FBI's National Data Exchange (NDEx), in an effort to increase capabilities related to information and intelligence sharing. The agency recently held four NDEx courses to train officers from around the state. This is part of a larger effort to increase the sharing, reporting, and utilization of information and intelligence internally and among partner agencies.
- Current total of 56 field Game Wardens trained as swiftwater technicians with 52 being additionally certified as swiftwater boat operators. Current total of seven swiftwater boats.
- Continuing improvements in hoist operations using Airbus AS350 B3e. One pilot certified to conduct hoist missions. One Game Warden hoist operator and four Game Wardens certified as helicopter rescue technicians. Currently training three more hoist operators and nine more helicopter rescue technicians.
- All Game Wardens have been tasked with attending Officer Water Survival. The division is working diligently on this task with having over 400 Wardens already completed.

## **Funding and Staffing Issues**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Law Enforcement Division maintains a force of over 500 Game Wardens statewide. As with many agencies TPWD-LE works with senior management, legislators, and constituents to ensure the strong tradition of Texas Game Wardens endures during difficult economic times.

- TPWD has recently had several training blocks that were taught to the cadets by the Game Warden Training Center (GWTC) staff, Game Wardens and Special Team Members, which is a very important aspect of staying connected internally. Examples are Officer Water Survival (OWS) utilizing OWS instructors, GWTC staff, and the Dive Team. Also recently Boat Operations and Swiftwater was taught in concert by field personnel, academy staff and Specials Teams (Maritime Tactical Operations Group MTOG and Swift Water Technicians).

## **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

Significant advances have been made by TPWD-LE in support of major conservation law enforcement trends. Whether working traditional conservation law enforcement efforts in federal

waters or working border operations, Game Wardens continue to adapt and excel as their job duties change and expand. A few examples of TPWD-LE involvement in these trends include:

- Non-Game conservation enforcement continues to be increasing. TPWD continues to work with USFW on operations such as Wild-Web. This is a concentrated multi-day effort focusing on the illegal trade on the internet. An example of similar efforts was TPWD assisting with a multi-year USFW Lacey Act case. In this case an organized group illegally trapped Alligator Snapping Turtles in Texas and transported back to Louisiana to be sold.
- CID investigations also continue to increase in the area of illegal commercialization of our resources. A recent example involves a case where numerous charges were filed on a Houston restaurateur that purchase thousands of pounds of illegal red snapper.

### **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

TPWD-LE continues its involvement with several cooperative enforcement efforts with federal and state partners which include:

- Texas Game Wardens continue to maintain a strong working relationship with our partners at the United States Coast Guard. In 2017, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was recognized for the significant number and type of assets deployed along the gulf coast. Texas Parks and Wildlife maintains 380 equipped vessels with the capabilities to be used in a myriad of situations and environments. Texas Game Wardens are present on each of the USCG Sector Area Maritime Security Committees within the state and work with all the partners to share intelligence and conduct directed operations. The Texas Game Warden Maritime Tactical Operations Group (MTOG) recently trained with USCG Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT) east on deep draft ship boarding's and takedowns. Texas Game Wardens continue to maintain a number of Memorandum's of Agreement (MOA) including one which allows our agency to communicate on the US Coast Guard Encrypted radio channels.
- TPWD continues to maintain a presence along the Texas-Mexico border and in the Gulf of Mexico, serving as a force multiplier alongside local, state and federal partners. Game Wardens are uniquely situated and equipped to fill a vital niche on both water and land. This includes navigating the waterways and patrolling the back country areas in rural Texas. In addition to performing their vital conservation law enforcement duties, Game Wardens encounter drug trafficking, human trafficking and human smuggling activities.

### **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement –**

- TPWD has increased use of new technologies to investigate wildlife crimes such as body worn cameras.
- TPWD allowing TV access to our daily duties (**Lone Star Law**) has increased the public's knowledge about our jobs. The series has had a positive impact on recruiting for future Game Wardens. The knowledge the public has gained from learning many aspects of

Game Warden duties will help provide more “eyes and ears” out in our communities watching for possible wildlife crimes.

### **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

- The 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature began on January 1<sup>st</sup> and is expected to conclude its business on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The Legislature has taken up a number of bills that would have a direct impact on the Departments operations including, expanded oyster regulations, changes to captive deer breeding regulations, some water safety regulations and a myriad of other changes. Some of the more unique bills being considered are allowance for feral hog hunting from a hot air balloon, the sale of venison by captive deer breeding operations and mandatory life jacket wear for all persons born on or after Sept. 1, 2003. Texas Game Wardens are also following closely the budget bills making their way through both houses. Current estimated shortfalls have produced a very conservative initial budget which will require some belt tightening over the coming biennium.

### **Cost Savings Initiatives**

- Use of online training opportunities to save on travel expenses.
- The Law Enforcement Division has been aggressively implementing SharePoint as an online two-way CJIS-secure collaboration tool. It allows disparate teams to join in discussion groups, document sharing, and even simultaneous editing. This decreases travel/meeting cost.
- The division has also implemented Skype for Business. This allows video/conference calls at no direct cost. Screen sharing is also enabled. So wardens may get together in workgroups to have ad hoc meeting without any travel costs. Bandwidth remains a concern; the division is upgrading servers and going to open market to increase bandwidth at lower costs.
- One Drive is scheduled for a 2018 rollout. Thus will enable Game Wardens to store CJIS-secure data in the cloud. It will decrease risk, as items are stored securely online. It will also speed up laptop replacement, since old laptops will no longer be sent to headquarters in advance for data transfer.

### **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

- As CWD regulations continue to change increased efforts from LE include facility inspections, testing requirements and monitoring the movement of breeder deer.
  - LE complaints concerning managing wildlife from aircraft. These seem to revolve around feral hog management operations, which allow payment for this activity. TPWD recently streamlined the permitting process by developing an online system. This reduced our landowner authorization approval process from days to minutes.
-

**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers**  
**2017 Agency Report**  
**State/Province: Wisconsin DNR**  
**Submitted by: Chief Warden Todd Schaller**  
**Date: May 1, 2017**

- **Training Issues**

- All current Law Enforcement staff was trained in ground defense tactics. This is new curriculum included in the basic academy for new enforcement officers.
- A new tactical training and equipment policy included a process of remedial training to address officers who do not initially pass the mandatory qualifying shoot.
- We currently have about ½ of our field officers equipped with Tasers with plans to continue to phase in Tasers to each new recruit class.
- Based on agency wide law enforcement consolidation we've started the first phases of recreational property LE training (domestic, motor vehicle ...)
- Wisconsin has partnered with MDNR on 3 NASBLA boating certification courses – pursue/stop, air boat operation and tactical operator.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

- With the Department Alignment process, BLE is further diversifying into 3 new funding sources, with Forestry (10 FTE), Parks (17 FTE), and Southern Forests (6 FTE). The transition will be very fluid and we will need to adapt as we change work responsibilities. However, our history of establishing and tracking goal hours will help here. We will need to watch fiscal fidelity closely as we go. However, long term, these funding sources may turn out to be more stable than traditional Fish & Game funding.
- Several statewide conservation partners are working with legislators on a partial license fee increase package. Any fee increases within the proposal has a connected outcome or product.
- Per a request within the 2015-17 biennial budget WDNR submitted a Fish/Game Account report to the legislature. The report included; current funding, current expenditures, ideas from other state agencies, potential ideas to consider. This report helped generate the partial license fee proposal listed above.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

- **Birch Pole Harvest** – The Wisconsin DNR warden service sponsored a Law Enforcement symposium and information sharing session on the illegal harvest of Birch Pole timber from North West Wisconsin. Due to the ornamental market boom white birch sticks 100” in length less than 4” diameter have been highly sought after. Markets as far away as China have been confirmed. The meeting was attended by MN DNR, USFWS, USFS, LCO Tribal Conservation Wardens, GLIFWC Wardens, Sheriff’s Deputies from 5 counties, County Foresters and DNR Forestry staff. The group discussed strategies to enforce the widespread theft of Birch Poles from State, County, and National Forests.
- **Wild Ginseng** – The illegal harvest and sale of wild ginseng continues to be an issue even after the wild ginseng initiative in WI couple years ago. Even with lower prices this past year diggers continue to harvest ginseng without a license, harvest while revoked, trespass, and harvest during the closed season. Wardens are also finding a large portion of illegal ginseng harvesters are involved in the use of meth which makes ginseng enforcement

contacts and investigations even more dangerous. WDNR continues to provide dealer training and looking to host harvester training prior to the 2017 season.

- **Increase in teenage youth committing serious wildlife crimes –** (Army investigator assisting in Germany) Wardens John Schreiber and Kevin Christorf worked on numerous youth poaching cases throughout 2015-2017. One case that stands out is a case the wardens worked on for over a year due to developing new suspects, involved in a large scale deer poaching ring. Teens ranging from the ages of 16 to 19 years of age were found to be actively and consistently involved in shining and shooting deer at night with archery equipment predominantly in the outskirts of urban areas of Chippewa County. The wardens developed 14 different suspects actively involved in illegal nighttime deer hunting activity along with numerous other hunting violations which were all part of the same friend group. Throughout the investigation the wardens determined that many of the teens involved were sneaking out of their residences late at night, every single night of the week to go out and attempt to shoot deer at night from motor vehicles. Multiple suspects involved in this case, which were found to be the most egregious violators had already been contacted by Wardens for previous illegal hunting activities and either had been revoked or were currently revoked during the investigation. As an example of the enormity of this case, one of the Criminal Complaints filed (on one suspect) with the DA's office alleged 100 Criminal offenses and one included 241 forfeiture violations. The wardens worked closely with other law enforcement on this case and also worked with a US-Army Special Agent Criminal Investigator who assisted in the interview of a lead suspect who was stationed in Germany with the Army after committing these crimes. This suspect lied to US Agents and failed a polygraph examination administered by the US Government. During interviews of these suspects, suspects told wardens themes such as: "They liked to poach deer because it was exhilarating." "They correlated poaching deer with video games such as Call of Duty." "They were bored and it was just something their friend group did for fun". Word has traveled from current youth who knew these suspects to the wardens. The theme has been that current youth will continue to poach deer at night and that they would poach more secretive and get away with more learning from their older classmates mistakes. The wardens worked on other similar cases and have apprehended the same suspects numerous times even after they have been revoked, equipment and deer seized, charged criminally and paid fines. It has been a challenge in educating and enforcing the laws with youth who do not seem to have consequences change their behavior and outlook. The wardens have used stepped enforcement processes in these cases as in warnings and education to citations and education to criminal charges and equipment seized and youth continue to commit serious wildlife crimes.
- **Significant regulation changes** of traditional conservation laws;
  - In person registration of animals to phone in registration
  - Self-printed paper licenses and permits
  - Simplified tagging regulations, such as no longer requiring a back-tag for deer hunting
  - Shooting hours vs hunting hours
  - Firearm transportation deregulation
  - Potential issues associated with shining while in possession of firearms with proposed constitutional carry law.
  - No longer required to validate permit when a goose is harvested
  - Allowing tree stands to be placed on state land without the requirement to be removed daily.
  - Crossbows allowed for all hunters
  - Statewide trolling permitted

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

- Recently a two year joint agency investigation was completed involving Wisconsin DNR wardens and GLIFWC wardens concerning illegal trapping methods. The case included several search warrants and a great deal of man power from both agencies. The suspect was successfully charged in both state circuit court and tribal court. This case marks one of the first times that a tribal member had his off reservation hunting and gathering treating rights revoked for three years by the tribal judge.
- The Wisconsin Conservation Warden stationed in Hayward recently worked with the LCO Tribal Conservation Chief Warden to investigate a suspicious fatal snowmobile accident on a lake which is partially located on the reservation. The swift response by both officers late at night, preserved evidence and brought closure to the affected family.
- WI DNR's Environmental Enforcement staff and Investigative Team collaborated on a complex civil and criminal fish and game case involving a captive wild animal farm. This integration allowed the civil violations to be handled through the department's stepped enforcement process through formal issuance of a Notice of Violation, Enforcement Conference, and Enforcement Conference Summary Letter. The joint efforts between Environmental Enforcement and Investigative staff led to a successful resolution of the case.
- Environmental Enforcement and Conservation Wardens worked with a rehabilitation organization on wildlife rehabilitation violations. The civil violations were handled through the department's stepped enforcement process which included formal issuance of a Notice of Violation, Enforcement Conference, Enforcement Conference Summary Letter and subsequent citation. The enforcement actions resulted in the organization revising their volunteer handbook, improving training and increased oversight of their volunteers. A captive wildlife citation was issued to a board member of the organization.
- Project Revco - The purpose/goal of Project Revco was to look at individuals in Wisconsin who had purchased Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) approvals while their chapter 29 approvals were revoked (either through a court system or administratively). A court ordered revocation meant an individual was revoked by a judge's order, while an administrative revocation meant the individual was revoked through the WDNR for failure to pay a previous WDNR citation. In addition, Wisconsin residents who were revoked in another state and that state is a member of the Wildlife Violator Compact are also included. For persons who were revoked administratively, Project Revco only looked at individuals who were revoked for non-payment of previous WDNR citations and did not investigate individuals who were revoked for non-payment of child support, etc.
- Project MOOSE – The purpose of this investigation was to investigate resident license fraud utilizing the Department of Motor Vehicles driver's license information for those people that moved out of state and compared that information against our Wisconsin DNR license files. We identified 1292 suspects and have completed 746 cases to date. In excess of 1/3 of all cases have resulted in citations. Total citations have well exceeded \$200,000 and license restitution due to the department from the citations has exceeded \$50,000
- WI/MI wardens worked corporately on active commercial fishing investigations including deployment of WI ROV to inspect MI trap nets during the closed season. This brought

attention to incidental catch of these nets during the close season. Also WI has helped MI with their attempt to rewrite their commercial fishing laws by providing advice and supporting data.

- WI wardens worked with IL wardens on Wholesale Fish investigations with development of transfer of information. In addition, WI provided training to IL on how WI conducts wholesale fish dealer audits.
- WI is looking to deploy its web based Commercial Fishing Electronic Fish Harvest Reporting System (EFHRS) in the near future. The system has also been demonstrated to Lake Superior Tribes that fish Wisconsin waters as a possible system for their commercial fishers
- With the recent turn over in WI investigators, WI and its newly formed team and MI investigators had meetings to exchange of information. The investigators identified and started working on common boundary water issues.
- WI wardens provided training to the Great Lakes Fish Commission LE Committee members on how WI conducts wholesale fish dealer audits.
- The WI wardens were requested to assist in the investigation of illegal waterfowl guiding practices on the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Three guides have recently been charged in federal court on illegal waterfowl guiding activity after the lengthy investigation spear-headed by the USFWS Special Agents, whom went undercover to hunt with these guides.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

- BLE recently sold its older, heavier thermal imagers and purchased much smaller handhelds from the generated sales. These units will be much more user friendly by fitting in the shirt pockets of the wardens. These tools can be used for search/recue, finding hunters in the woods, checking for fisherman below a dam, checking to see which ice shacks are in use, and more.
- BLE has been selling our old shotguns and using proceeds to purchase tasers. The shotguns were at end of life, and would have needed significant expenditures to repair them for additional usage. Instead of investing further into these old guns, we determined we would only have rifles for long guns, and use the remaining value in the shotguns to purchase much needed tasers.
- BLE continues to invest in the Mission Ready Team concept. We have 5 specialized teams (Tactical Boat Operator, Tactical Flight Officer, Statewide Tactical Team, Personal Protection Team, and the Remote Underwater Vehicle Team). This concept falls in line well with most "Specialized Services" divisions at most larger law enforcement agencies. This structure recognizes and improves our calls to public safety and changing environment.

- Wardens used the training received at the warden conference on bullet analytics to determine the caliber of rifle used to shoot a deer from the roadway, after hunting hours and during the closed season. During a subsequent warrant where several calibers of rifles were found, only one matched the information obtained as well as the rifling marks.
- BLE is leading the efforts on purchasing and rolling out new ruggedized Panasonic CF20 to all permanent law enforcement officers in the agency.
- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**
  - Private Property Rights seem to be getting a lot of attention, and while nothing is known at this time which proposes changes to our authority, we are paying close attention to this issue.
  - Constitutional Carry – WI’s Legislature is exploring through Senate Bill 169 a revision to allow carrying a concealed firearm without a permit. The bill recalls several weapons prohibitions, such as carrying a firearm while shining, entering a refuge while shining, etc. The bill is claimed to do two things: removes barriers to the exercise of a constitutional right and simplifies the law.
  - Recently, threats to one of our wardens resulted in the filing of a restraining order against the individual. It was a unique approach and one that was supported by the agency and facilitated through the State DOJ and the local District Attorney. The restraining order was obtained and was effectuated through the defendant’s attorney and the DA.
  - Natural Resources Board decision to change the rule from hunting hours to shooting hours. In brief, this change will require higher burden of proof to show that a person was indeed hunting beyond or before the legal opening/closing times.
  - Recruitment: WI DOJ Law Enforcement Standards Board has formed a statewide recruitment initiative to further explore tools to recruit and hire law enforcement officers in Wisconsin as WI LE Agencies are struggling to meet their needs. WI DNR is starting to see it in our full time recruitments and it is impacting part time recruitments significantly. Items being explored are improved recruiting methods, increased wages, and academy sponsorships.
- **Cost Savings Initiatives**
  - Fuel savings – In about 2012 or so, we began our efforts to actively manage our fleet costs in multiple ways including: more fuel efficient vehicles, paying our accident repair costs directly from our operating budgets instead of rolling back into the fleet rates, and trying to affect driver behavior to improve fuel efficiency. We have moved some managerial staff and urban field staff into sedans or small SUV’s (Impalas and Ford Police Interceptor). We have also worked to get our least fuel efficient trucks out of fleet, and replaced by more fuel efficient ½ ton pickups. The result has been an overall MPG increase by nearly 1 mile/gallon. When combined with other savings such as managed crash repair costs, BLE has lowered our fleet rate by 5 cents/mile since FY15, which equates to a savings of \$150,000 per year.
- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**
  - WDNR LE Consolidation – WI DNR has gone through a core work analysis resulting in several significant changes within WDNR related to specialization and prioritization. As a



result all law enforcement services, staff and functions within WDNR are being consolidated within Bureau of Law Enforcement – BLE – Conservation Warden Service). The consolidation will shift FTE resources from Forestry, Parks and Facility/Lands based on historical work and LE effort in forest protection and recreational property enforcement. The net change being 33 positions coming to BLE.

WDNR and BLE is currently working on the implementation process with 2017 being a transition year with full implementation in 2018-19.

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## MAFWA Legal Committee

Chair            Keith Sexson, Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Boating, Kansas  
Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Vice-Chair    Chris Tymeson, Chief Legal Counsel, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and  
Tourism

### Report:

In 2016, the Legal Committee met in conjunction with the Director's Meeting in St. Louis, MO. The Committee had an informal and free-flow discussion on northern long-eared bats and amicus briefs; discussion on legal issues surrounding the lesser prairie chicken; wolf relisting and an injunction of USFWS; and cases-of-interest on trapping and CITES out of Montana. Also, the Committee spent time on Endangered Species Act liability, on dogs running bears, and a guiding ban in Kansas.

There were seven attendees at the committee meeting, and all agreed increased participation by other states in the future would be beneficial.

# National Conservation Needs (NCN) Report-2017

In February of this year, Executive Secretary Ollie Torgerson assisted MAFWA's National Conservation Needs (NCN) Committee (Jim Douglas, Ray Petering, Kelly Hepler) in soliciting proposals for a NCN priority submission for consideration by the National Grants Committee. The National Grants Committee convenes at the North American Conference each year and prepares a list of the priorities for the State Directors to approve at the annual business meeting.

This year, MAFWA was approached by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and asked to co-sponsor a submission entitled "Grassland Conservation and Awareness: Enhance, Protect, Conserve and Restore a Diminishing Ecosystem". MAFWA's NCN Committee and Executive Committee were afforded the opportunity for coordination and submitted some strategic edits to accommodate language related to the conservation of monarch butterflies which were accepted and integrated into the proposal. A copy of this proposal is attached. The joint proposal was approved by MAFWA's Executive Committee and submitted on time to the National Grants Committee.

The NCNs selected and approved by the State Directors did not include our proposal. The selected NCNs which establish the states' funding priorities for the current grant funding cycle are attached.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies solicited Letters of Intent to address the selected NCNs. I advised Ollie Torgerson to check with MAFWA Committees prior to the April 1, 2017 deadline about any intentions to submit Letters of Intent relative to the selected NCNs. We were not made aware of any such intent.

In reviewing the NCNs selected for this year, I think it is noteworthy that NCNs selected seem to be characterized by very broad titles and statements of national need. We should provide opportunity at some point in the future for more in depth discussion of how to move forward in the NCN solicitation and submission process. This concludes the report for the NCN Committee.

## **Grassland Conservation and Awareness: Enhance, Protect, Conserve and Restore a Diminishing Ecosystem**

**Submitted by:** Bird Conservation Committee, co-submitted by MAFWA

**Statement of Need:** The grasslands of North America include diverse ecosystems like tallgrass, mixed-grass, and shortgrass prairies, desert grasslands, hardwood and pine savannas and private agricultural hay and pasture lands. These ecosystems have experienced persistent, long-term erosion in both quantity and quality. Threats such as agricultural intensification, invasive species, climate change, energy development, urbanization, and other development continue to take their toll; for example, based on World Wildlife Fund's 2016 Plowprint Report, 53 million grassland acres have been lost since 2009 in the Great Plains alone. This has led to alarming declines in a variety of grassland-dependent species (notably birds and pollinators, several of which have become candidates for listing as threatened or endangered), revealing an urgent need to raise awareness and develop strategies to stem the loss of our nation's grassland ecosystems, and to restore grassland functions as wildlife habitat. Since a significant proportion of our intact grasslands are privately owned, conservation efforts must involve local communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of their intended investments and outcomes.

**Desired Proposals:** Grant recipients would compete for Multi-state Conservation Grants (MSCG) to:

- Quantify recent changes to grassland ecosystems (loss to conversion, fragmentation, and invasion); assess their condition, quality, and distribution; and improve tools for remote sensing.

- Identify grassland habitat needs (acreage, condition, distribution, priority areas, etc.) and conservation tactics (enhancement, easements, restoration, etc.) to most efficiently achieve the goals and objectives of State Wildlife Action Plans, state pollinator plans, and/or multi-state wildlife planning documents (e.g., national bird plans, joint venture plans, etc.)
- Create support systems (e.g. landowner cooperatives, inter-agency communication opportunities) to deliver grassland conservation on private and public land to improve ecological condition, restore natural processes, and prevent the decline of intact, healthy grasslands for the benefit of multiple species through Farm Bill programs, foundations, states and other funding entities.
- Develop ways to track and share conservation delivery efforts to measure the impact of programs and conservation plans on programmatic, bird population, habitat, and human dimension objectives
- Raise public awareness of the importance of healthy and diverse native grasslands, and coordinate and focus federal initiatives (including Farm Bill programs) to maximize impact and results
- Fill in key knowledge gaps for grassland bird conservation, including fine scale distribution, habitat requirements, migratory connectivity, limiting factors, and population response to management and other impacts, such as ancillary benefits to pollinators.
- Increase understanding of human perceptions and decisions related to grassland management, conservation outcomes, and incentive efficacy, particularly regarding grazing lands

**Desired Outcomes:** Desired outcomes of successful proposals would include:

- Expansion and improvement of effective and efficient grassland conservation programs and monitor the impacts of these programs on both ecological functions and human well-being
- Full implementation of existing strategic grassland conservation plans designed to support specific regional and national wildlife population goals, and development of new plans, where needed.
- Increased public appreciation and support of functioning grassland ecosystems
- Promotion and support of agricultural practices like holistic grass-based livestock grazing operations that have been demonstrated to sustain birds, pollinators and other species of concern
- Advancement of science regarding limiting factors and management of healthy, diverse native grassland for wild bird populations and multiple species benefits, including pollinators

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# **2017 MAFWA Committee Report on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

## **MEETINGS TIME & PLACE**

AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2016; Philadelphia, PA

Joint State/Federal CITES Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee  
CITES 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP17), September 2016; Johannesburg, SA  
82<sup>nd</sup> North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2017; Spokane, WA

CITES Technical Work Group Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee  
Trilateral Committee for Wildlife & Ecosystem Conservation, May 2017; Ensenada Baja California  
CITES Interagency Coordination Committee, hosted quarterly by USFWS in Washington DC  
CITES Technical Work Group also conducted business via numerous conference calls

## **CITES TECHNICAL WORK GROUP REPRESENTATIVES**

Carolyn Caldwell- MAFWA (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative)  
Rick Jacobson- NEAFWA (Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection)  
Buddy Baker- SEAFWA (Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries)  
Jim deVos- WAFWA (Arizona Game & Fish Department)  
Deborah Hahn- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies  
Bob Broscheid- U.S. CITES Delegate Representing the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies and  
International Relations Committee Co-Chair (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

## **CITES OVERVIEW**

International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars annually. Trade is diverse, ranging from live animals to a wide array of products derived from them including food products, fur and leather goods, tourist curios, and medicine. CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international trade treaty enacted in 1973 to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten species' survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. These require that all imports, exports and re-exports of CITES species have to be authorized. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but for whom trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES countries for assistance in documenting trade.

International treaties impact state fish and wildlife agencies and represent a continuous and pressing challenge to resource management. Left unchecked, additional regulations and burdensome oversight will result from restrictions adopted through these international treaties. For example, some state management and harvest decisions for bobcats and river otters stem from domestic restrictions resulting from CITES actions taken more than three decades ago. The original intent of CITES was to ensure globally sustainable use of natural resources. Over the past decade, NGO participation (e.g., HSUS and the Animal Welfare Institute) has greatly increased

and pushed a protectionist/no use approach in CITES for well managed species. Protectionists outnumber sustainable use advocates 6:1.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Office of International Affairs, administers CITES for the United States. The USFWS solicits input and feedback on issues of importance from the state fish and wildlife agencies through the CITES Technical Work Group of AFWA's International Relations Committee. The Technical Work Group consists of one representative from each of the four regional associations who work on behalf of states in concert with the USFWS on CITES matters. This state-federal partnership has been effectively working since 1994.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW**

CITES updates presented in greater detail include: 1) Expediting Black Bear CITES Permits; 2) Native Freshwater Turtle Species in Appendix III; 3) State Coordinators Meeting and Ginseng Symposium; 4) Rick Jacobson Appointed as the NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative; and 5) CITES 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP17).

## **DIRECTOR ACTION ITEM**

No action Items at this time.

## **DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Expediting Black Bear CITES Permits**

In 2014 conversations were initiated between the states and the USFWS Office of International Affairs Division of Management Authority on the practicability of creating state level "blanket" CITES authorizations for the export of black bear parts for commercial purposes such as now occurs for bobcats and river otters. Following extensive surveys of the state wildlife agencies it was determined that the level of interest in commercial trade of black bear was not sufficient to warrant a procedural change in CITES permit issuance processes. However, from these discussion it was determined that there was a need to streamline processes for issuing permits to state fish and wildlife agency research programs which were shipping black bear parts internationally for scientific purposes. As a result the USFWS agreed to set up a "Master File" system similar to that used for turtles and alligators. The Master File system was only marginally successful in reducing the CITES permit turnaround time for state agency researchers. In 2016 the CITES Technical Work Group reentered conversation with the USFWS to determine if there where additional measures that could be implemented to streamline the process. It was revealed that one of the process delays was related to fact that the Division of Management Authority was necessarily required to forward all permit requests to the Division of Scientific Authority for a "non-detriment finding" before processing the application. The Division of Scientific Authority agreed to entertain a request for a "General Advice" on collection of hair samples from live bears. A General Advice would simply be an advanced approval that would eliminate the need for these permit requests to be vetted through the Division of Scientific Authority which would theoretically reduce the permit issuance turnaround time. The Division of Scientific Authority later determined that they preferred to address requests for a General Advice on a state-by-state basis rather than a single General Advice for the entire country. In February of 2017 the Division of Scientific Authority issued its first General Advice for black bear research samples to the state of Louisiana. In April they supplied guidance to the states for how they should individually request a General Advice. While we had hoped for a nationwide General Advice, we are optimistic that the new process will decrease the overall time required for state agency black bear research programs to get CITES permits to ship samples to genetics labs out of the country.

### **Native Freshwater Turtle Species in Appendix III**

There are 57 species of freshwater and terrestrial turtles in the U.S. which constitutes approximately 18% of the global turtle species. While the highest concentration of turtle species is found in southeastern Asia, the diversity of turtle species in the southeastern U.S. alone ranks as the second highest concentration of species in the world.

Turtles are traded primarily for food consumption, traditional medicines, or the pet trade. A significant number of tortoises and freshwater turtles are listed in CITES Appendices I or II and all marine turtles are listed in Appendix I. Including the freshwater turtle species listed by the U.S., a total of 26 species are listed in Appendix III. In 2006, the U.S. listed the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) and all species of map turtle (*Graptemys spp.*) in Appendix III of CITES. Effective November 21, 2016, the common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Florida softshell turtle (*Apalone ferox*), smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*), and spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*) were also listed in Appendix III.

Export of CITES Appendix III species requires a permit issued by the USFWS Office of International Affairs Division of Management Authority. As of March, the USFWS had only received one export permit application for softshells and/or common snapping turtles.

### **State Coordinators Meeting and Ginseng Symposium**

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is a CITES Appendix II listed species. Ginseng root is exported in larger volumes than any other native CITES plant species. The majority of American ginseng harvested is exported to China. The USFWS Office of International Affairs Division of Scientific Authority will host a meeting on July 11<sup>th</sup> with State agency coordinators responsible for administering American ginseng programs. The meeting will be followed by a 3-day symposium to present current research and document new information about the conservation, cultivation, and commerce of American ginseng and other Appalachian forest botanicals.

### **Rick Jacobson Appointed as the NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative**

Since 2008, Jack Buckley the Director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife served as the NEAFWA representative. In May, Rick Jacobson was appointed as the next NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative. Rick has worked for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection since 1987 including as Assistant Director of Fisheries Management (2000-2009) and as Director of Wildlife Management (2009-Present). He holds a B.S. degree in Biology from the University of Wisconsin, an M.S. in Fisheries Ecology from the University of Connecticut and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Connecticut. He has served as the Chair of the Northeast Wildlife Administrators and President of the Northeast Division of the American Fisheries Society, and currently serves as Chair of the Atlantic Flyway Council and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. He is also a Fellow with the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

### **CITES 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP17)**

The MAFWA and SEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group representatives and Deb Hahn (AFWA) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies at the CITES 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP17) held from 24 September to 5 October 2016.

CoP17 was the largest CITES meeting to date, with more than 3,500 participants representing 152 countries and more than 200 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well



as the media. Delegates considered 90 agenda items and 62 species-listing proposals submitted by 64 countries. During CoP17, the CITES Technical Work Group also participated in the North American Region daily briefings, several CITES side events focusing on traceability of wildlife and their products, livelihoods, and the sustainable use of wildlife. At the conclusion of CoP17 we meet with the Chinese Delegation to discuss trade impediments to North American wild fur. We were joined by the Canadian Delegation and by The American Fur Resources Council. The Chinese officials participating in the CoP indicated that they would work with us towards a positive outcome.

Throughout the CoP we strived to enhance global understanding of the role of state fish and wildlife agencies and of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This is important because of the potential for CITES decisions to directly impact state fish and wildlife agencies.

The CITES Technical Work Group continues to see an erosion of support for sustainable use of wildlife resources which is a fundamental principal of the CITES treaty. In addition, documents presented at the CoP bring “enhancement” measures into the Treaty. So unlike CITES implementation to date which require countries to show trade is not detrimental to the survival of a species in the wild, now some proposals are asking countries to demonstrate a conservation benefit to the species from international trade. It is a subtle but important distinction.

A complete report of the meeting was previously provided to the Directors.

#### **TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

CITES 29<sup>th</sup> Animals Committee Meeting, July 2017; Geneva, CH

Respectfully submitted by,

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