

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS



MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

JULY, 202~~2~~3

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

PREAMBLE

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

The Association established a foundation, Conservation Enhancement Fund (Fund), to be organized and operated as a 501 (c) 3 charitable, educational and scientific corporation.

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

The objectives of the Association shall be:

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

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

ARTICLE I

OFFICERS

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

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

ARTICLE II

OTHER ASSOCIATION POSITIONS

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

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

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

Section 4. The Treasurer, Executive Secretary, Recording Secretary and contractors are required to annually sign a confidentiality form.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE IV

DUTIES OF OFFICERS and OTHER POSITIONS

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association, appoint all special committees, preside at meetings of the Board of Directors, and perform such other duties as are

naturally incumbent upon the office to serve the Association and the Fund. Copies of the annual proceedings shall be forwarded to each member in good standing, with the cost of preparation and handling to be paid out of Association funds. All other copies are for distribution at the discretion of the host state or province.

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) Record and publish the annual proceedings of the Association.
- (2) Record and retain the minutes of all meetings of the Association and perform such other duties as are naturally incumbent upon the office.
- (3) Assist other officers and positions with correspondence and record keeping.
- (4) Serve as the custodian of all permanent files and records of the Association.
- (5) Other duties as assigned by the President.

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

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

- (9) Ensure that appropriate accounting procedures and controls are in place and comply with the Associations' Internal Controls for Cash Policy.
- (10) Serve as liaison with any staff and volunteers about Association and Fund financial matters.
- (11) Monitor the Association's investment activity and ensure its consistency with the Association's policies and legal responsibilities; liaise with the Investments Committee and review reports submitted thereby.
- (12) Ensure independent examination or audits are executed and any recommendations are implemented; provide report of results at the regular annual meeting.
- (13) Make formal presentation of the accounts at the regular annual meeting and more frequently as requested by the Executive Secretary, the President or the Executive Committee.

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ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

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

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

ARTICLE VI

VOTING

Voting shall be by states and provinces, as units. Each state and province shall have one vote. All voting shall be by voice vote, except that a reasonable request by any member state or province for a secret ballot shall be honored. Any matters of Association business requiring

action in the interim between meetings may be handled by the Executive Committee, by majority vote of that committee.

ARTICLE VII

DUES

Annual Dues shall be ~~\$4,160.02 per member state and \$110.22 per province~~, payable in advance, at, or before each annual meeting; provided that annual dues may be suspended for any given year by a majority vote of a quorum. Dues shall be adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Midwest published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Dues shall be adjusted using the annual change in the CPI-U for the month of January of the previous fiscal year. The annual dues for the upcoming year shall be reported at the Association's regular annual meeting by the Treasurer.

ARTICLE VIII

FISCAL YEAR

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

ARTICLE IX

QUORUM

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

ARTICLE X

AMENDMENT

The Constitution and Bylaws (Bylaws) of the Association may be amended at any regular meeting by a majority vote of a quorum; provided, however, a written copy of such proposed amendment shall have been received by the President and the Executive Secretary and sent to members at least 30 days before the regular annual meeting or special meeting called for that purpose; and provided that such changes shall be effective only to the extent they are authorized by applicable law. Proposed Bylaws amendments should be presented to, or generated by, the Bylaws Committee and reviewed by the Executive Committee prior to submitting to voting members of the Association for their consideration. With approval of the First Vice-President,

the President may call for voting by mail (including electronic mail) in lieu of a meeting. In this event, the 30-day notice shall still apply, the date of opening ballots shall be previously announced, notice sent to each member within forty-eight hours of vote tabulation by the Executive Secretary and all ballots shall be kept for one year following the vote.

ARTICLE XI

TYPES OF COMMITTEES/BOARDS

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

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

- A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of six members of the Association: The President, First Vice President, Second Vice-President, Past President, and two other members to be appointed by the President with specific consideration for geographical balance. Any state or province represented on the Executive Committee by more than one individual shall be restricted to a single vote on this committee. The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Association between its business meetings, make recommendations to the Association as necessary and shall perform such other duties as may be specified in these bylaws. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of the Board of Directors and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President as necessary. The Executive Committee may also act via conference call or by mail (including electronic mail). In the event that an officer of the Association or the Past President separates from a member agency (or is replaced by that agency), their replacement in a member agency shall serve for the remainder of their term, with the exception of President. If the President separates from a member agency (or is replaced by that agency), their replacement in a member agency will serve in their place on the Executive Committee for the remainder of the term as a Special Board Member with voting rights, and the First Vice-President will succeed to President for the remainder of the term.
- B. The Auditing Committee shall be composed of three members: The First Vice President of the Association, who shall act as chairman, and two other members to be appointed by the President. The Auditing Committee shall audit the financial records of the Association semi-annually and report the result of its audit at the annual regular meeting. An external audit by a CPA firm approved by the Executive Committee shall

be conducted every five years.

- C. The Resolutions Committee shall be composed of three members, one of which shall be designated as Chairman by the President. Copies of proposed resolutions should be received by the President and the Executive Secretary and sent to members for their consideration at least 30 days before the regular annual meeting. Courtesy resolutions and resolutions of a last-minute nature may be recommended to the Board of Directors at the annual meeting. Furthermore, proposed resolutions for which an urgent need arises between annual meetings may be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration via mail (including electronic mail), provided members are given a 15-day notice. Members shall be notified of the vote outcome by the Executive Secretary within forty-eight hours of vote tabulation.
- D. The Awards Committee shall be composed of five members, one of which shall be designated as Chairman by the President. The Awards Committee shall administer the official annual awards program of the Association.
- E. The Bylaws Committee shall be composed of at least one member, designated by the President. The Bylaws Committee shall recommend Bylaws changes to the Executive Committee for consideration.
- F. The Investments Committee shall be composed of three members. The President shall designate one of the members as Chairman. The purpose of the committee is to review investments, including the Jaschek portfolio, the Conservation Enhancement Fund, and other permanent assets of the Association and make recommendations to the Association per the investment policy statement. The Investments Committee shall make an annual report to the Board of Directors at the annual meeting.
- G. The Program Committee shall be comprised of four members, one from the host state of the previous annual meeting, one from the host state of the current annual meeting, one from the host state of the next annual meeting, and the Executive Secretary. The purpose of the committee is to assist the host state with developing presentation and discussion topics and suggesting speakers for the non-business portion of meeting.
- H. The Midwest Landscape Initiative Steering Committee shall be comprised of five Directors and three senior representatives from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the MAFWA region. The Midwest Landscape Initiative is a collaboration of partners engaged in the conservation and management of fish and wildlife in the Midwest; it serves as forum to identify shared landscape-scale priorities and co-develop effective conservation actions to address them. The Steering Committee may include ex officio members and may form subcommittees, working groups, teams, or other collaborative approaches to aid in the development and implementation of effective conservation solutions for shared priorities.

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

committee has been accomplished and it has been discharged by the President or by vote of the Members. The Association recognizes the following Ad Hoc Committees:

- Feral Swine (established in 2013)
- Chronic Wasting Disease (establish in 2021)

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

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

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

- Climate Change (2025)
- Midwest Private Lands Wildlife Management Group (2024)
- Midwest Public Lands Technical Working Committee (2025)
- Midwest ~~Wildlife and~~ Fish ~~and Wildlife~~ Health Committee (2025)
- Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group (202~~3~~6)
- Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers (202~~3~~6)
- Midwest Furbearer Group (2024)
- Wildlife Diversity Committee (2024)
- ~~Hunter and Angler Recruitment and Retention Technical Working Group~~ Midwest R3 & Relevancy Committee (202~~3~~6)
- ~~Conservation~~ Social Science/Human Dimensions Committee (2024)

A R T I C L E X I I

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

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

Adopted 1936
Amended 1942
Amended 1944
Amended 1949
Amended 1954
Amended 1960
Amended 1964
Amended 1969
Amended 1971
Amended 1972
Amended 1975
Amended 1976
Amended 1977
Amended 1978
Amended 1980
Amended 1987
Amended 1993
Amended 1995
Amended 1996
Amended 2000
Amended 2001
Amended July 16, 2003
Amended July 13, 2004
Amended July 13, 2005
Amended July 12, 2006
Amended July 18, 2007
Amended July 2, 2008
Amended July 1, 2009
Amended December 23, 2009
Amended June 29, 2011
Amended June 27, 2012
Amended June 26, 2013
Amended June 25, 2014
Amended July 1, 2015
Amended June 29, 2016

Amended June 28, 2017
Amended June 27, 2018
Amended June 26, 2019
Amended October 8, 2020
Amended June 30, 2021
Amended June 30, 2022
[Amended June 28, 2023](#)

RESOLUTION #2023-1

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT OF A MIDWEST CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the future of fish and wildlife populations and their myriad of associated outdoor recreational opportunities and important public benefits hinges upon the success of state fish and wildlife agencies and partners to individually and collectively protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats across the Midwest landscape; and

WHEREAS, the capacity of state fish and wildlife agencies and partners to accomplish these goals rests in large part on the development of capable and effective professionals that can engage and build trust with others inside and outside of their organizations; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of the National Conservation Leadership Institute has proven to be an effective leadership training model for the natural resource conservation management community at the national and executive-level; and

WHEREAS, through the development of the National Conservation Leadership Institute, participating natural resource professionals are better equipped to provide effective leadership and belong to a network that can engage on complex issues; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to continue their efforts to foster and support the development and enhancement of critical leadership skills amongst all levels of fish and wildlife management professionals across their member agencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorses an effort to establish a team consisting of employees of member states to perform a needs assessment of a regional leadership program, in cooperation with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency's Management Assistance Team, National Conservation Leadership Institute staff, and/or US Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center. The needs assessment will include identification and prioritization of the types of leadership skills that are needed for mid-level professionals in member agencies. The team will also provide examples of other existing programs that are similar in nature, including sample curriculum and cost for program implementation and maintenance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, once the needs assessment and accompanying information is completed and submitted, the Board of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies will consider whether to move this initiative forward, and if so will determine next steps.

RESOLUTION #2

ENSURING EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH ADAPTATION

WHEREAS, fish, wildlife, and their habitats are being threatened by the impacts of changing weather patterns and climate; and

WHEREAS, climate across the Midwest has changed and continues to change at a scale and pace that is without recent precedent; and

WHEREAS, these changes are directly affecting and will continue to affect, wildlife, fish, and their habitats, and indirectly, by multiplying other risks (e.g., invasive species); and

WHEREAS, thoughtful changes in management to better meet the needs and risks of a changed or changing environment (adaptation) is needed for the future sustainability of fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, seeking efficient and resilient ways to adapt will help us better meet our Trust responsibilities.

WHEREAS, in the face of change at a scale and pace that is without recent precedent, our decisions will need to consider different scenarios, instead of looking at how things worked in the past; and

WHEREAS, articulating adaptation strategies that are being implemented will facilitate better communication and understanding with stakeholders; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies hereby

1. Urges that staff within their agency take at least the Regionwide Training held by the MAFWA Climate Committee.*
2. Urges that staff who develop plans or set management direction within their agency take the Statewide Training held by the MAFWA Climate Committee.*

**Please see the MAFWA Climate Committee Training Plan Overview for Directors document for a summary of the trainings.*

Award Committee Report
Monday, June 26, 2023
Lambeau Field, Legends Club Room
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Members of the Awards Committee are: Kendra Wecker, Ohio; Pete Hildreth, Iowa; Tim McCoy, Nebraska; Brian Clark, Kentucky; and Christie Curley, Ontario. I want to thank them for their assistance in choosing the winners. We had 18 nominations for the five main awards.

Award winners are:

The Wildlife Biologist of the Year award is given to the individual who has shown an unparalleled initiative towards the better understanding of wildlife and their conservation. There was a tie for this award, so awards go to **Bob Ford, Ohio** for effective leadership, positive attitude and promotion of science-based stewardship, implementation of disease surveillance area response plan of detection of CWD in NW Ohio and management of wetland restoration projects.

and

Joe DeBold, Missouri for performing two full time positions, Urban Wildlife Biologist and Wildlife Damage Biologist, as well as volunteering to assist with feral hog elimination efforts, grouse trapping efforts and CWD culling.

The Fisheries Biologist of the Year award is given to the individual who has shown an unparalleled initiative towards the better understanding of fishes and their conservation. This award goes to **Keith Koupal, Nebraska** for his innovative research and excellent communication skills, as well as working with partners to help conserve and manage the fish communities and associated natural resources for the reservoirs of Nebraska.

The Spirit of the Shack award is given to the individual who exemplifies the ideals of the great conservationist and educator, Aldo Leopold, and who has contributed to conservation in a superior way. This individual should epitomize stewardship and dedication to fish and wildlife conservation. This award goes to **Dr. William (Bill) Jensen, North Dakota** for providing strong leadership in wildlife conservation and education, development and analysis of big game datasets and research projects provided to statewide, regional, and national working groups, as well as being a great mentor sharing his knowledge and expertise.

Excellence in Conservation award is given to the agency that has shown excellence in conservation through a specific project. Each member agency

would select one project completed in the awards year that exemplifies the goal of fish and wildlife conservation. This award also has a perpetual plaque. This award goes to **Ohio Division of Wildlife, H2Ohio Program** for improving water quality statewide by reducing nutrients entering streams, rivers, and other waterways, as well as the creation, restoration and expansion of wetland and riparian buffer habitats. *Todd Haines and Mike Reynolds, Ohio DNR accepted this award.*

Special Recognition – There are no special recognition awards this year.

Sagamore of the Forest, Fields and Streams

“A sagamore is the head of northeastern Native American tribe. The word is generally synonymous with sachem, although sometimes a sachem is considered a chief of the first rank, and a sagamore one of the second rank. Sagamore can also refer to great man among the tribe to whom the chief would look for wisdom and advice.”

This honor is bestowed on any Director or upper-level staff member that has contributed significant service to MAFWA. To qualify for this recognition, recipients must provide 4 years of service to MAFWA, have a 75 percent meeting attendance rate and serve on one or more committees.

This award goes to **Colleen Callahan, Illinois** for her service contributions to the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Past President Award

This award goes to **Colleen Callahan, Illinois** for her leadership, dedication and commitment as president of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

2023 MAFWA President's Award (presented by Amanda Wuestefeld)

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation in recognition of more than 30 years of commitment to inform, influence, and defend policies that protect and promote outdoor traditions.

The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year (presented by Casey Kruger, AMFGLEO President) award is given to the individual who in the past year has shown superior leadership, initiative, and dedication in their duties. This person should personify achievement, public service, education, and above all, natural resource conservation. Presented by AMGLEO President. This award goes to **Bryan Lockman, Wisconsin.**



MIDWEST
Association of
Fish & Wildlife
Agencies

**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Awards Nomination Form (2023)**

I nominate: _____ Bob Ford _____

Award (check only one per form)

Spirit of the Shack

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Excellence in Conservation

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Mike Reynolds

Organization: Ohio Division of Wildlife

Title: Executive Administrator of Wildlife Research and Management

E-mail: Mike.Reynolds@dnr.ohio.gov

Phone number: 614-265-6744

I nominate Bob Ford for MAFWA Wildlife Biologist of the Year for his effective leadership, positive can-do attitude, and promotion of science-based stewardship in the implementation of our Disease Surveillance Area response plan to the detection of CWD in his District in Northwest Ohio and for his management of several wetland restoration projects as part of Governor Mike DeWine's H2Ohio Initiative to improve water quality.

Unfortunately, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was discovered in the wild deer herd in Wyandot and Marion counties, Ohio, in December 2020 and by 2023 a total of 18 wild deer have tested positive. The Division of Wildlife implemented its CWD response plan to increase testing of deer with the objective to slow the spread of this deadly deer disease, determine the prevalence rate, and the geographic distribution of the disease in Wyandot, Hardin, and Marion counties.

As the CWD response plan team leader in NW Ohio, Bob Ford was tasked with planning, organizing, and coordinating field staff schedules for collecting tissue samples for disease testing at the Killdeer Plains WA controlled hunts, from mandatory disease collection sites, and additional targeted deer removals by field staff during March. Bob and his team played an important role working with adjacent landowners and members of the local community to explain the facts about CWD, to gain the cooperation and support for our testing and targeted removal efforts, and worked with private landowners to obtain permission for culling operations to remove deer from these private lands. Over 30 landowners have enrolled allowing access to over 16,000 acres for the culling operations to occur. These private lands are primarily located within 1 mile of positive CWD deer. In addition, Bob and his team worked with private landowners to initiate a special private landowner deer removal period where private landowners were permitted to remove additional deer from their own property after hunting seasons. All deer collected were submitted for CWD testing. Bob coordinated deer processing and donations of more than 5,000 pounds of venison to 8 local food banks for deer collected that did not test positive for CWD. Bob continues to play a lead role and uses his incident command training in this science-based effort to reduce the spread of the disease and protect Ohio's deer herd.

Bob has also played an important role to promote the importance of the H2Ohio initiative as a project manager for an H2Ohio project at the Andreoff Wildlife Area in Wyandot County and a group drainage project affecting the wildlife area. Bob has worked tirelessly with local residents, county commissioners, local soil and water conservation district, and Ducks Unlimited personnel to promote the benefits of H2Ohio projects from a water quality and wildlife habitat perspective in the planning and design phase of these projects including participating in public meetings about the projects. He has been involved with several other H2Ohio projects in Northwest Ohio including a \$1 million GLRI grant to replace the pump structure and pump at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area; the Magee Marsh lakefront dike repair work; Toussaint Wildlife Area Duck's Unlimited restoration; initial planning of the Little Portage Wildlife Area restoration; and several additional H2Ohio projects.

Bob has taken all these additional projects on in addition to his "regular" work duties as Wildlife Management Supervisor. Bob has done a tremendous job with these stewardship projects and has promoted the importance of water quality and healthy wildlife populations in Northwest Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mike Reynolds, Executive Administrator of Wildlife Management and Research



MIDWEST
Association of
Fish & Wildlife
Agencies

**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Awards Nomination Form (2023)**

I nominate: Joe DeBold

Award (check only one per form)

Spirit of the Shack

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Excellence in Conservation

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Alan Leary

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Wildlife Management Coordinator

E-mail: alan.leary@mdc.mo.gov

Phone number: 573-522-4115 ext. 3693

- 1. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual/agency meets the criteria for the award:**
- 2. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work, or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.**

Name: Joe DeBold
Title: Wildlife Damage Biologist
State: Missouri

After transferring to a position as a Wildlife Damage Biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Joe continued to perform the duties of his previous position as the Urban Wildlife Biologist in the Kansas City area. While performing the duties of two full time positions Joe still stepped up and volunteered to go to southern Missouri for four weeks to assist with feral hog elimination efforts. Feral hogs are a top priority for MDC. Joe also volunteered to go to northern Wisconsin for a week to assist with grouse trapping efforts for a reintroduction project that MDC was conducting. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is another priority for MDC, Joe volunteered for seven – 3 day CWD targeted culling shifts in north central Missouri.

Joe is very active on the Community Conservation Team in the Kansas City Region. This Team works with historically underserved communities that typically have not had a lot of access to nature. They do various projects like cleaning up vacant lots, restoring native vegetation, removing invasive species, and creating green spaces in areas that haven't typically had a lot of them.

His approach to a growing issue with urban coyotes in the St. Joseph area was very innovative. He proactively worked with the City Council to set up some public meetings with groups in that area to educate the residents on how to prepare for and deal with urban coyotes. This helped residents feel more comfortable when they saw coyotes in their neighborhoods. He also worked with City Councils in other parts of his region to set up public meetings to educate those residents on urban coyotes.

Joe assisted a number of communities and City and County Parks in setting up managed deer hunts including the first for Johnson County Parks, Shawnee Mission Kansas, and Warrensburg, MO. These hunts have helped to control overpopulations of deer in urban areas that can do damage to property and cause vehicle accidents. He assists with the orientations and instructional presentations for the hunters prior to the hunts.

He serves as MDC's recovery lead for the peregrine falcon. Joe has assisted a number of businesses in constructing and installing nest boxes for the falcons. He coordinates with these businesses each year to secure access so he can band the nestlings. He always makes it educational and enjoyable for the businesses by inviting some of their staff to observe while he bands the nestlings.

Joe is very knowledgeable and regularly gets asked to give presentations and trainings on human/wildlife conflicts and trapping. He gave a trapping presentation to a Master Naturalist group and because of his approach and how he delivers the information he received very positive feedback even from some participants who were apprehensive about the topic at the start. Joe also provided animal control training for several municipalities so they could manage nuisance wildlife for their citizens.

Joe is an extremely hard working, reliable employee who continually goes above and beyond. He always volunteers to assist with Department priorities like CWD, feral hogs, Community Conservation, and anything else that comes up. He is very knowledgeable and provides excellent customer service.



MIDWEST
Association of
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Agencies

**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Awards Nomination Form (2023)**

I nominate: ___Keith Koupal_____

Award (check only one per form)

Spirit of the Shack

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Excellence in Conservation

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Richard Holland

Organization: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Title: Assistant Division Administrator – Fisheries Research
E-mail: Richard.holland@nebraska.gov
Phone number: 402-471-5501

- 3. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual/agency meets the criteria for the award:**
- 4. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work, or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.**

Keith Koupal – Award Nomination

Over the last couple of decades, Keith has dedicated his career to working with partners to help conserve and manage the fish communities and associated natural resources for the reservoirs of Nebraska. He has engaged and cooperated with numerous groups such as Natural Resource Districts, power companies, irrigation districts, municipalities, universities, local landowners, general public, and his fellow staff of the various Divisions of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. to fulfill project goals and objectives, communicate findings, answer issues and make specific management recommendations to further the conservation and management of these fisheries.

Keith excels at engaging partners and staff in all aspects of his work. He is an excellent communicator and aptly adapts the content and message of his research and management presentations to his specific audience, whether engaging fellow scientists or lay public. His early career work as an education specialist has given him a strong foundation and ability to transfer the knowledge he gains from his research and management projects he has conducted. Keith's excitement concerning his work is readily transferred to the people he works with and the audiences to which he presents.

Keith is widely recognized as a highly knowledgeable fisheries Biologist, an innovative researcher, and an excellent communicator, not only locally by Fisheries Division and other Commission staff, but also by numerous partners on a regional and national level. He is constantly sought after to provide technical assistance to our management, production and research staff, deliver updates on fisheries projects, and to act as a front person to lead a wide variety of agency initiatives. He rarely, if ever, declines an opportunity to work with and help others and constantly seeks to develop meaningful working relationships with other researchers and managers.

Keith's role as an adjunct faculty member at multiple universities demonstrates his eagerness to help, and this has been extremely important in the development of research projects that yield applied management recommendations and deliverables. Although advancing meaningful science and being an academic liaison to improve partnerships are important in and of themselves, Keith's willingness and elite ability to mentor students is something he should be most proud of. His contagious enthusiasm and inviting demeanor (while provide real-world challenges) has been extremely important to many students' and young biologists' professional development. Keith's career achievements are and will continue to be long lasting through the many individuals he has trained that have continued their careers in natural resource conservation roles throughout the U.S.

Keith Koupal – Research and Management Projects

Harlan County Reservoir Limnological Assessment

- Extensive long-term monitoring, focusing on community assessment of the physicochemical attributes, zooplankton, and predator-prey interactions involving the fish community
- Use of coves by the sportfish community and the connectivity between the coves and the main body of the reservoir
- Evaluation of the use, design and longevity of artificial habitat structures (i.e. Georgia Cubes) versus natural habitat structures (large woody debris)

Lake McConaughy evaluation of Sportfish Populations

- Determination of the spatial distribution and spawning habitats of white bass and other sportfish throughout the reservoir
- Relative contribution to population recruitment of stocked white bass and walleye versus natural recruitment within the reservoir and their persistence over time
- Documentation of white bass population dynamics within the reservoir and the inflowing river
- Development of a predictive map for the survival of stocked white bass and walleye at potential stocking locations throughout the reservoir and the river / reservoir interface

Conservation of Plains Topminnow in Nebraska

- Construction of a broodstock pond for the rearing of Plains Topminnow, a species of conservation need in Nebraska
- Reintroduction and assessment of success at historical Plains Topminnow sites
- Development of a statewide management plan for Plains Topminnow

Assessment of Yellow Perch stockings in I-80 Lakes

- Document the population dynamics, recruitment and survival of Yellow Perch stocked in I-80 lakes
- Compare food habits and dietary overlap between Yellow Perch and Bluegill



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**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Awards Nomination Form (2023)**

I nominate: Dr. William (Bill) Jensen

Award (check only one per form)

Spirit of the Shack

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Excellence in Conservation

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Stephanie Tucker

Organization: North Dakota Game and Fish Department

Title: Game Management Section Leader

E-mail: satucker@nd.gov

Phone number: 701-220-1871

5. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual/agency meets the criteria for the award:

I am proud to nominate Dr. William Jensen for this year's *Spirit of the Shack Award*. The purpose of the *Spirit of the Shack Award* is to recognize superior contributions to conservation as a steward and educator. I believe Bill is the embodiment of the *Spirit of the Shack Award*.

Bill has worked for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department as a public servant for the past 33 years. Prior to his career with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, Bill worked for the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR, and the National Park Service. Throughout his career, Bill strived to use the best available science to help guide management of wildlife. Additionally, he is the “go-to” source of information about the ecology and history of big game management in North Dakota.

Bill has contributed greatly to wildlife conservation and education by development and analysis of long-term big game datasets, conducting research projects that improved population monitoring, harvest management, and habitat, publication of popular and peer-reviewed articles, and leadership within statewide, regional, and national working groups.

Bill also takes a personal interest in mentoring early-career professionals and sharing his knowledge and expertise. Bill is a conduit to the ecology of North Dakota’s wild places through his activity in his church and the Boy Scouts of America. Additionally, Bill has mentored numerous graduate and post-doctoral students.

By any measure of success, Bill’s accomplishments throughout his career are beyond admirable. Yet, Bill never seeks credit for the work he does, and instead, is content with the personal knowledge that his success is success for all of us. It is my hope and desire that we can give him some meaningful recognition for the many ways in which he has shaped the wildlife profession across our state and region. Accordingly, I wholeheartedly recommend Dr. Bill Jensen for this year’s *Spirit of the Shack Award*.

6. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work, or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.

- In 2012, Bill founded an annual 1-day event called Teddy Roosevelt Family Day. Teddy Roosevelt Family Day a free event with over 30 booths where families can learn about and try activities such as archery, fishing, waterfowl identification, dog handling, wildlife radio tracking, water safety, etc. Since its inception, Bill has coordinated and hosted this event which is attended by more than 900 people each year.
- Bill has authored or co-authored over 30 peer-reviewed journal articles, countless popular articles, agency reports, professional presentations, and 1 book.
- Bill has served as Principle Investigator on over 15 research projects with universities across the country.
- Bill served as an Adjunct Professor at 2 universities in North Dakota and 1 in South Dakota, and as an Advisory Board member at 2 other colleges within North Dakota.
- Bill frequently guest lectured on big game management to wildlife students across North Dakota.
- Bill worked with our private lands biologists to take information learned from decade’s worth of big game research and monitoring in North Dakota and disseminate it in practical

ways to improve wildlife habitat on private lands. This included the development of brochures and updates to our websites for landowners, ranchers, farmers, and wildlife enthusiasts.

- Bill served as a Committee Chair, Executive Board Member, and President of the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society.
- Bill spearheaded the formation of the TR Award to recognize conservation-minded youth who are active members of the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts or 4-H.



MIDWEST
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**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Awards Nomination Form (2023)**

I nominate: Ohio Division of Wildlife H2Ohio program

Award (check only one per form)

Spirit of the Shack

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Excellence in Conservation

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Kendra Wecker

Organization: Ohio Division of Wildlife

Title: Chief

E-mail: Kendra.wecker@dnr.ohio.gov

Phone number: 614-265-6304

1. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual/agency meets the criteria for the award:

At its core, H2Ohio is an effort to improve Ohio's water resources by strategically addressing serious issues that have been building for decades. Some of the challenges that the initiative is working to correct include harmful algal blooms on Lake Erie caused by phosphorous runoff from farm fertilizer, failing drinking water, wastewater, and home sewage treatment systems due to aging infrastructure, and lead contamination for old water pipes and fixtures.

In 2023, the Ohio Division of Wildlife celebrates 150 years of conservation. The agency traces its roots back to 1873, when it was launched as the Ohio Fish Commission. Those first conservation pioneers could hardly have predicted how Ohio's habitat would undergo large-scale changes.

That's where H2Ohio becomes so important. Launched in 2019, the main role is to reduce the amount of nutrients entering streams, rivers, and other waterways. One major component to successfully reaching this goal is the creation, restoration, and expansion of wetland and riparian buffer habitats. Wetland habitat acts as a natural filtration system. As runoff water flows through the complex system of soils and vegetation, nutrients are naturally drawn out and stored. In addition, wetlands and riparian buffers slow down the movement of water and are particularly important in reducing the negative impacts of flooding events. An acre of wetland habitat can store up to 1.5 million gallons of water. Much of the initial H2Ohio effort has been focused on the Maumee and Sandusky rivers and the Lake Erie watershed, with additional coverage in the Ohio River watershed.

To date, the Division of Wildlife has spent \$51 million to create 265 projects for H2Ohio and a companion program, Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This impacts 11,176 acres and has restored 5,750 acres of wetlands, and treated a further 35,593 acres of upstream drainage. This habitat is not only important in ensuring clean and healthy water resources for us but is also critical for numerous wildlife species. Considered one of the world's most biologically diverse ecosystems, over 90 of Ohio's threatened and endangered plant and wildlife species live in or depend on wetlands. And don't forget about the thousands of other species found in wetlands.

Once a prominent feature of Ohio's landscape, wetlands have been reduced to scattered fragments. Prior to European settlement, wetlands made up nearly one-fifth of the state. This included the Great Black Swamp in northwest Ohio, which covered an area about the size of Connecticut. Some accounts say that the canopy cover of this forested wetland was so dense that walking into its expanse turned day into night. The Great Black Swamp was tamed over time through innovations in subsurface drainage which reduced the amount of water that pooled on the landscape. A vast drainage network containing thousands of miles of buried subsurface tile and man-made ditches keep our roads, homes, and farm fields from being covered in standing water. These innovations made northwest Ohio habitable but consequently dramatically increased runoff.

Since the 1800s, more than 90% of Ohio's original wetlands had been lost. And with this reduction in habitat, came a swift decline in countless wildlife species such as trumpeter swans, otters, sandhill cranes, most waterfowl species, and much more. In the last century, state, federal, and private landowners have diligently worked to restore wetland acres to the landscape. And while restoring all of Ohio's wetlands is not feasible or desired, the increase in habitat has allowed for the return and recovery of many wildlife species. Trumpeter swans again nest in the Lake Erie marshes, and river otters are found in 83 of Ohio's 88 counties. Species such as the bald eagle have made remarkable comebacks and are now common throughout the state, in part because of available habitat.

2. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work, or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.

Under the leadership of Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio is leading the nation by investing millions of dollars to improve water quality statewide. H2Ohio is Governor Mike DeWine's

comprehensive, data-driven water quality plan to reduce harmful algal blooms, improve wastewater infrastructure and prevent lead contamination. The Ohio Division of Wildlife plays a pivotal role implementing wetland restoration at an unprecedented rate to help reduce harmful algae blooms.

Since European settlement, Ohio has drained over 90% of its wetland habitats, including the 1.5-million-acre Great Black Swamp in northwest Ohio. While this change in the landscape opened some of the most productive agricultural ground in the Nation, consequences to water quality and wildlife habitat began to unfold in the coming decades across the state. Many large waterbodies, including Lake Erie, suffer harmful algae blooms, endangering drinking water resources for millions of people.

Since the inception of H2Ohio in 2019, the Ohio Division of Wildlife has been restoring wetlands using two different mechanisms: grants and the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (LE CREP). Lake Erie CREP is a federal program that provides 15 years of soil rental rate payments and cost share for the establishment of several different types of conservation practices on agricultural lands with a cropping history. To further incentivize the establishment of wooded riparian buffers and wetlands, H2Ohio funds are used to provide a one-time incentive payment of \$2,000 per acre. With the added incentive, the number of landowners interested in wetland restoration increased by over 300%. In less than two years 153 landowners signed up to have 2,740 acres of wetland and 94 acres of wooded riparian buffers restored. These restorations are treating nutrient laden runoff from over 14,000 acres of watershed.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife has also been working with partners around the state to implement 71 H2Ohio grants valued at \$44,535,827. These projects are restoring over 4,600 acres of wetlands that will treat nutrient laden drainage from 35,393 acres of watershed. As restorations are developed and constructed, the Division of Wildlife staff are also working closely with researchers from the Lake Erie and Aquatic Research Network (LEARN) researchers to quantify how well each restoration is achieving desired water quality improvement goals. This effort to understand the relationship of wetland restoration and water quality is one of the largest research efforts in the Nation.

In total, the Ohio Division of Wildlife is implementing \$50,203,827 in H2Ohio funding on 224 wetland restoration projects that are restoring 7,340 acres and filtering runoff from 49,393 acres. This success is possible thanks to our 150-year history of building partnerships in conservation, adhering to principles of science-based stewardship and striving to protect Ohio's resources for future generations.