



Amanda Wuestefeld	Director Liaison	N/A	Committee Vice Chair
Josh Griffin	Committee Chair	N/A	Committee Recorder

Meeting Details

Meeting Date(s) and Location(s): *List dates of all meetings held in the past year. *500 Character Limit*

The 2025 MAFWA Private Lands Working Group Meeting was held February 11-13, 2025 at the Monroe County Convention Center & affiliated Courtyard By Marriott in Bloomington, IN. Private Lands, Public Lands and Wildlife Diversity Working Groups began at 9:00 am on the 11th, and concluded at 12:00 pm on the 13th.

Executive Summary

Information contained in this section provides an overall summary of the committee meeting including a judgment of the meeting's success compared to previous meetings. Photos or other additional documents that help convey the work of the committee in this past year should be noted in the text but added to the end of this document as an attachment to the Annual Report PDF.

**3700 Character Limit*

The 2025 joint Private Lands, Public Lands, & Wildlife Diversity Technical Working Groups convened from Feb.11-13 of 2025. Each group participated in a joint morning session of presentations on Feb. 11, before concentrating on breakout groups focused on each committees efforts in the afternoon of the 11th and morning of the 13th. February 12th consisted of a joint working group field trip to visit various relevant conservation efforts in Indiana.

The 2025 Private Lands Working Group Committee Meeting concentrated on identifying the greatest successes, opportunities, and challenges of each state's private lands program (see attached state reports). The Private Lands Technical Working Group Meeting began with a presentation by John Morgan from the National Grasslands Conservation Initiative (NBGI), who provided information on the Collaborative Conservation Initiative efforts and updates on RCPP AFAs managed by NBGI. From there, a group discussion occurred regarding Farm Bill funding and timing/challenges associated with federal funding at present. Afterwards, each state provided a presentation about successes, challenges, and opportunities in their state reports (attached). The last item of business included a robust discussion about a private lands training center or training framework. Detailed discussions occurred on this topic on both the afternoon of the 11th and the morning of the 13th. This last topic (private lands specific training) was in line with discussions from the 2023 and 2024 Private Lands Working Group meetings.

There were 20 attendees to the Private Lands Working Group Meeting From 8 of the 13 MAFWA states.



Director Information Items

*Information in this section should highlight the committee's progress to goals and objectives identified in the Technical Working Committee Charter, identify challenges or risks (perceived or realized) and include any other updates from Midwest state's or relative business discussed. *3600 Character Limit*

Overview

Any "successful" private lands program requires a foundation based upon **Funding, Relationships, Communication, Technical Assistance & Flexibility**. Agency administrators, landowners, conservation partners & stakeholders are critical components for such programs. All aforementioned components are required to facilitate the ability of a private lands program to successfully foster relationships with private landowners. Availability & consistency in funding & staffing are critical for private land conservation. Moreover, effective communication & the ability to meet landowners "where they are" provides the flexibility & skills necessary to implement conservation programs. Current struggles with secured funding & staffing create the greatest challenges facing private lands conservation throughout the Midwest Association Of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA).

Program Successes & Challenges

Successes

While each agency experiences struggles, they also experience successes. Common successes include dedicated & passionate staff & strong partnerships with passionate landowners, all working to address conservation needs & combat difficult resource threats. Each agency has customers who are knocking on their door, seeking technical assistance & asking for guidance & participation in myriad conservation programs. Such successes were highlighted during our recent technical working group meeting from each attending agency representative. These successes had common themes of reliance on Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) funds, Farm Bill funds, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds & the unique expertise of trained, knowledgeable staff. Common themes of interest in habitat development programs, recreational access programs, an onus on the importance of agency private lands programming, uncertainty with the future of federal funding & the need for unique training for private lands staffing were all identified & discussed.

Challenges

The 2 most common challenges identified by this working group included the uncertainty of federal funding & the need for specific training of new staff. Detailed discussion about Farm Bill technicalities & issues is common at these meetings. Such discussion didn't occur at this meeting due to pauses in federal funding & the uncertain future of the next Farm Bill. Much discussion occurred about "big picture" federal funding & impacts due to challenges with Farm Bill, WSFR & IRA pauses in funding. The MAFWA Agriculture Policy Program Manager provided a status update related to Farm Bill & IRA monies, as well as briefing the group about the upcoming "Farm Bill Fly In".

Training for staffing, recruitment/retention of staff & needs for a private lands training framework were discussed. A decision was made to delay any action item request for this topic until AFWA advances a similar national initiative relative to a Private Lands Stewardship Academy. Upon development of that, an "Action Item" request may be submitted to support & fund the AFWA based training academy & any enhancements or further training items necessary specific to MAFWA. To prepare for such a request, this working group identified regionally based training needs (attached).

Future Needs

This working group stands ready to provide input into any new Farm Bill proposals. The working group also is prepared to cater regionally based training needs of new staff.

Time & Place of Next Meeting



Committee Workgroups

Identify workgroups that are associated with this TWC. Provide a brief 2-3 sentence summary of work accomplished in the past year. A workgroup is a smaller team that supports the goals and objectives of the TWC and is necessary and needed to help accomplish the work. It may include additional members not in the TWC but must be lead by a member of the TWC.

**650 Character Limit*

Workgroup Name (1)

States Member Lead

Sub-Committee To Address MAFWA Staff Training Needs

John Kaiser-Ohio

This sub-committee has worked to guide & direct the specific needs of MAFWA related to the pending Private Lands Stewardship Academy & what training framework is necessary to maximally train new staff within MAFWA state agencies. Work consisted of coordination & communication with AFWA efforts & identifying regionally based training needs. MAFWA members working on this sub-committee include John Kaiser, Jennifer Prenosil & Josh Griffin. Lisa Potter & TJ Walker have assisted in the past. Shane Behler, AFWA Agriculture Policy Program Manager, has also assisted with coordination.

Workgroup Name (2)

States Member Lead

Requests for Action

List below any accompanying documents attached to the annual report. Note: All formal requests for action by the MAFWA Board of Directors must complete the appropriate forms with approvals by MAFWA Executive Committee prior to the Annual Board Meeting. Ex. Committee Charter, Request and Risk Assessment. See page 12 of the TWC Guidelines Manual for timelines and details.

**1300 Character Limit*

No actions are requested at this time. Note that a future request for action may occur pending the results of AFWA efforts to create a Private Lands Stewardship Academy. Such a request in the future may include financial support and broader Association support related to regionally based training curricula for new private lands staff within MAFWA state agencies.

Proposed Meeting Dates/Times/Location

Dates and times the TWC will meet in the upcoming year.

No more meetings are scheduled at this time for 2025.



Committee Member Name	Organization
John Morgan	National Grasslands Conservation Initiative
Shannon Zezula	Natural Resources Conservation Service-Indiana
Brianne Lowe	Natural Resources Conservation Service-Indiana
Kim Lampert	Natural Resources Conservation Service-Indiana
Cassie Hauswald	The Nature Conservancy-Indiana
John Kaiser	Ohio DNR- Division Of Wildlife
TJ Walker	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
Jennifer Prenosil	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
Ethan Dyer	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
Jacob Stewart	Kentucky Department Of Fish & Wildlife Resources
Haley Frater	Wisconsin DNR- Wildlife Management Program
Amber Knutson	Minnesota DNR-Division Of Fish & Wildlife
Nick Baumgarten	Iowa DNR- Wildlife Bureau
Scott Radford	Missouri Department Of Conservation-Private Lands Programs
Josh Griffin	Indiana DNR- Division Of Fish & Wildlife
Trevor Laureys	Indiana DNR- Division Of Fish & Wildlife
Patrick Mayer	Indiana DNR- Division Of Fish & Wildlife
Zach Voyles	Indiana DNR- Division Of Fish & Wildlife
Jason Wade & Nathan Yazel	Indiana DNR- Division Of Fish & Wildlife



Agenda

*Provide meeting information from the past year in the space below. If additional supporting documents are needed, please combine into a single PDF and use the space below to document what is attached. Before final submission to the MAFWA Executive Secretary. *4000 Character Limit*

MAFWA Private Lands Working Group Breakout

February 11-13, 2025

Monroe Convention Center & Affiliated Courtyard by Marriott, Bloomington, Indiana

day 2/11/2025 1:30-4:30

Tuesday 2/11/25

Introductions and Welcome 1:30-1:40

NBGI (RCPP Updates: Collaborative Conservation Initiative updates) 1:40-2:00

Farm bill Update (What's the latest?) 2:00-2:45

State Updates (Please complete the entirety of your state report but come prepared to present 3 greatest success stories and 1 largest challenge/hurdle for your state's private lands efforts) 2:45-4:00

Directors' Report & Action Items (Includes discussion about private lands training center) 4:00-4:30

Breaks are informal; Refreshments available

Thursday 2/13/25

Continuation of Farm Bill and State Program Discussions 9:00-10:00

Develop Action Items for Directors' Report 10:00-11:30

Break with Refreshments 10:15-10:45

Concluding remarks & adjourn 11:30-12:00



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MAFWA Public Lands, Private Lands, & Wildlife Diversity Working Groups Meeting

February 11-13, 2025

Monroe Convention Center & Affiliated Courtyard by Marriott, Bloomington, Indiana

MONDAY 2/10/2025

TRAVEL TO BLOOMINGTON, IN

MEALS ON YOUR OWN & PROSPECTIVE INFORMAL SOCIAL AT CONFERENCE HOTEL

TUESDAY 2/11/2025

Registration Open 7:00 – 9:00am

BREAKFAST AT CONVENTION CENTER 7:30-9:00

WELCOME 9:00-9:10

INDIANA DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE HISTORY & OVERVIEW: 9:10-10:00

Amanda Wuestefeld, IN Division of Fish & Wildlife Director

BREAK WITH REFRESHMENTS 10:00-10:15

PUBLIC LANDS KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: 10:15-11:00

Kalli Dunn, Goose Pond FWA Overview & Kevin Shettle, Chinook Coal Fire

PRIVATE LANDS KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: 11:00-11:45

Trevor Laureys, Indiana Conservation Partnership & Indiana NRCS Program Highlights

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: *Like Sands through the Hourglass* 11:45-12:30
- A Conservation Journey at Kankakee Sands

Cassie Hauswald, The Nature Conservancy - Indiana

LUNCH AT CONVENTION CENTER 12:30-1:20

BREAKOUT TO WORKING GROUPS 1:20-1:30

WORKING GROUP BREAKOUTS 1:30-4:30

Informal Breaks with Refreshments

DINNER AT CONVENTION CENTER 5:30-7:00

WEDNESDAY 2/12/2025

BREAKFAST AT CONVENTION CENTER 7:30-9:00

PUBLIC & PRIVATE LANDS TOURS & BIRDING OPPORTUNITY 9:00-6:00

Box Lunch and Refreshments Provided

DINNER AT CONVENTION CENTER 6:00-7:00

THURSDAY 2/13/2025

BREAKFAST AT CONVENTION CENTER 7:30-9:00

PUBLIC LANDS, PRIVATE LANDS, & WILDLIFE DIVERSITY BREAKOUTS: 9:00-12:00
DEVELOP ACTION ITEMS FOR DIRECTORS' REPORT

Break with Refreshments 10:15-10:45

ADJOURN 12:00



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MAFWA Public Lands, Private Lands, & Wildlife Diversity Working Groups Field Day

February 12, 2025

WEDNESDAY 2/12/2025	9:00-6:00
BREAKFAST AT CONVENTION CENTER	7:30-9:00
<i>Travel to Stop 1</i>	9:00-10:00
TOUR STOP 1: Indiana Private Lands Access (IPLA) Tracts (2 locations)	10:00-11:00
<i>Travel to Stop 2</i>	11:00-11:30
TOUR STOP 2: Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area (History & Overview continued)	11:30-12:15
LUNCH AT GOOSE POND FWA SHOP (Including restroom break)	12:15-1:15
TOUR STOP 3: Birding Opportunity at Goose Pond FWA	1:15-3:00
<i>Travel to Stop 4</i>	3:00-4:00
TOUR STOP 4: Loggerhead Shrike Specific Efforts (A Unique Perspective)	4:00-4:45
<i>Travel to Convention Center</i>	4:45-5:45
DINNER AT CONVENTION CENTER	6:00



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MAFWA Private Lands Working Group Breakout

February 11-13, 2025

Monroe Convention Center & Affiliated Courtyard by Marriott, Bloomington, Indiana

TUESDAY 2/11/2025	1:30-4:30
INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME	1:30-1:40
NBGI (<i>RCPPI Updates: Collaborative Conservation Initiative updates</i>)	1:40-2:00
FARM BILL UPDATE (<i>What's the latest?</i>)	2:00-2:45
STATE UPDATES (<i>Please complete the entirety of your state report but come prepared to present 3 greatest success stories and 1 largest challenge/hurdle for your state's private lands efforts</i>)	2:45-4:00
DIRECTORS' REPORT & ACTION ITEMS (<i>Includes discussion about private lands training center</i>) <i>Breaks are informal; Refreshments available</i>	4:00-4:30
THURSDAY 2/13/2025	9:00-12:00
CONTINUATION OF FARM BILL AND STATE PROGRAM DISCUSSIONS	9:00-10:00
DEVELOP ACTION ITEMS FOR DIRECTORS' REPORT	10:00-11:30
<i>Break with Refreshments</i>	10:15-10:45
CONCLUDING REMARKS & ADJOURN	11:30-12:00