

# The Balance Wheel

Newsletter of the Association for Conservation Information

Summer 2006

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Bird Education Conference*

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## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

### **Make Plans NOW to Attend ACI Conference in Orlando**

*By Dave Chanda, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife*

Orlando here we come! The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has pulled together an outstanding agenda for the upcoming ACI Conference. With the theme "The Legacy and the Challenge," this conference promises to provide you with information and resources that you can take home and put to work in your state. Take a moment to look over the agenda, if you haven't already, and visit the conference Web site at [www.aci-2006.com](http://www.aci-2006.com) for all of the latest details.

Dealing with the media is a day-to-day event for many of our members. This year's conference will feature a day-long, hands-on training session to help hone your skills when talking to the media. In addition, Karen Schadow, the owner of The Voice of Success will host a session to help you improve your vocal delivery and ensure success with both the media and public speaking engagements.

Rumor has it that Steve "Wild-man" Wilson has been busy rounding up some terrific auction items for our members to bid on. The Florida folks have also pulled together some one-of-a-kind field trips, including a bass fishing trip, kayaking or bus tour of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and a trip to the Kennedy Space Center.

If you arrive in time, plan to drop in on the ACI Board meeting on Sunday afternoon to see what the Board of Directors has been up to. If you have a new or unique program that would work in other states, tell us about it during the "Show and Tell" session on Thursday afternoon. Even if you don't have anything to present, it's a great chance to see what other states are doing that might translate into a great program in your state.

After a wildly successful turnout in Utah, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (formerly know as IAFWA) will host a half-day training session to help you continue spreading the good news about your state's wildlife action plan. Once again, Martin Hamburger and Sarah Flowers from Laguens Hamburger Strategies and Media will be on hand to discuss methods for spreading the word on conservation and building statewide coalitions.

There are a number of other great sessions planned for the conference and I encourage you to visit the Web site and take advantage of the online reservation system.

Finally, it has been a privilege and an honor to serve as the president of ACI for the past two years. I have made many new friends, and I appreciate all of the support that the group has provided to me both personally and professionally. I look forward to attending future conferences and supporting ACI in whatever capacity possible. Thank you.

I look forward to seeing you in Orlando July 16-20!

David Chanda, Acting Director  
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife



## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Communicating About Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza**

*By David Eisenhauer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), US Geological Survey (USGS) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, along with USDA and Native Alaskan organizations, are working together this spring and summer to detect

when or if the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 virus, also known as “bird flu” appears in North America.

Meanwhile, state and federal government communicators are collaborating to develop and share key messages about HPAI with each other, the media and the public.

Health communicators are preparing for a possible pandemic. Wildlife communicators are discussing wild bird monitoring, migratory patterns and management and may have to discuss the present risk associated with the virus—still predominately an animal disease. Agricultural health communicators talk about the food supply and the safety mechanisms built into American poultry production.

“The challenge is informing without inflaming,” said Nicholas Throckmorton, a public affairs specialist in the Service’s Washington office who serves as a spokesman on HPAI. “As avian influenza intersects wildlife, human and domestic animal health, preparedness planning brings these three communities together closer than ever.”

The first step in effective HPAI communications is understanding the basic facts of the virus.

There are many subtypes of avian influenza. The specific one of concern—highly pathogenic H5N1 that has been found in more than 30 countries—is the focus of North American migratory bird surveillance. It is very likely that low pathogenic viruses, including those of the H5N1 subtype, will be found during this surveillance. These low pathogenic types are not significant for migratory birds and humans and are only distantly related to the specific HPAI H5N1 of concern.

Migratory birds can be infected with the virus and have moved the virus to new locations, but the role wild migrating birds might play in the movement and distribution of the virus to North America is unknown. Some believe that migratory birds from Asia, breeding in Alaska or mixing with North American birds in Siberian breeding grounds, could move the virus to North America, with its first appearance likely in Alaska.



*H5N1 sampling at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. (USFWS/Tyrone Donnelly)*

Sampling of about 27 species of migratory birds is being conducted at more than 50 sites across Alaska. Since 1998, more than 12,000 wild bird samples from Alaska have been examined for HPAI H5N1, 1,100 of these sampled since summer 2005. As of the writing of this article, HPAI H5N1 has not been found in any sample.

Species of birds have been prioritized for surveillance based on several criteria linked to potential risk of HPAI. These species risk factors include size of the population that winters in or migrates through Alaska, proximity to known sources of HPAI H5N1 in Asia, and the ability to obtain a sufficient sample number for sensitive detection.

“This is not a hit-or-miss effort,” said Karen Sullivan, with the Service’s Alaska External Affairs Office. “The surveillance plan was designed in such a way that if the HPAI H5N1 virus is present in Alaska, and we are able to obtain all the samples we plan for, we will have approximately a 95-percent chance of finding HPAI H5N1 if it is present in even as little as 1.5 percent of the sample population.”

Nationally, the Service is working with other federal and state agencies to enact a strategic plan involving the departments of Agriculture, Interior and Health and Human Services to monitor bird populations for the earliest possible detection of the H5N1 virus if it enters this country. The plan contains five major strategies:

- **Testing wild birds that have died or are sick** offers the highest and earliest probability of detecting the H5N1 strain should it be introduced into this country by migratory birds. This strategy expands existing programs to investigate disease outbreaks.

- **Sample testing of live wild birds** will target those species that represent the highest risk of being exposed to, or infected with, the H5N1 influenza strain because of their migration patterns. Many populations of migratory birds that nest in Alaska spend winter in parts of Asia where the virus is endemic.
- **Sample testing of hunter-killed birds** at check stations operated by the Service and state natural resource agencies supplements the samples from live wild birds.
- **Monitoring and testing of sentinel animals** such as duck flocks that can be placed in wetland areas where they will commingle with wild birds. The ducks are then monitored and tested for the virus.
- **Environmental sampling** monitors water and/or fecal samples from waterfowl habitat.

The plan also calls for using poultry flocks raised in backyards for noncommercial purposes and duck flocks placed in wetland environments as sentinels for early detection of the virus. Additionally, in 2006, 50,000 samples of water or feces will be collected from high-risk waterfowl habitats.

All of the monitoring data will be placed in a national database, which will be available to all agencies, organizations and policymakers as well as scientists who are trying to better understand and track the spread of such viruses.

In addition to assisting with wild bird sampling, protocols to protect people are being developed and the Interior Department has a departmental pandemic influenza plan to ensure continuity of operations.

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center has issued guidelines for hunters and Service personnel or volunteers when handling wild birds. The precautions for Service personnel or volunteers handling wild birds begin with basic good hygiene:

- Work in well-ventilated areas indoors or upwind to the extent practical outdoors.
- Wear rubber or disposable latex gloves while handling birds.
- Use protective eyewear or a face shield when possible while handling birds.
- Disinfect work surfaces and instruments between locations.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while handling birds.
- When handling birds from mortality events, wear coveralls, boots, particulate mask, eye protection and gloves that can be disinfected or discarded after use. Containment of infectious material, including proper disinfection before leaving the site and disposal of carcasses and other infective material, is essential.

All of this information needs to be shared among federal and state agencies, as well as communicated to the media and the public.

To that end, the Service has developed an internal communications plan for HPAI, which is part of the agency's overall response plan. The national headquarters public affairs staff has developed HPAI fact sheets, talking points and Q&A sheets for distribution to regional offices and state game and fish agencies, as well as a Web site that addresses wild bird management and monitoring and public safety.

In addition, the Service is part of an interagency communications working group that includes representatives from the Service's Alaska Region, USGS, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). The interagency group is a vehicle for providing leadership on wildlife agency external communications regarding HPAI in wild birds.

"The goals of the group are to establish a network of communications professionals who know each other and the issue, have common messages and materials, and have a plan for how to handle the external communications demands that wildlife agencies will face," Throckmorton said. "Information is the best remedy for uncertainty."

*Portions of this story were reprinted with permission from Refuge Update, the National Wildlife Refuge System quarterly newsletter.*

#### Resources

U.S. Government  
[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

Department of Interior  
<http://www.doi.gov/issues/avianflu.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
<http://www.fws.gov/home/avianflu/>

## Update on State-level Efforts in Avian Flu Monitoring Network

In response to a request posted on the ACI listserv, several states submitted updates on Avian Flu Monitoring efforts. If you would like to have an update included on your state's efforts, please send an email to [dottiehead1@yahoo.com](mailto:dottiehead1@yahoo.com). We will run it in a future issue of *The Balance Wheel*.

**New York:** The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is working with other state agencies and the federal government to monitor the occurrence of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

During the 2006-07 waterfowl hunting seasons, NYSDEC technicians will be visiting hunters in the field in selected areas to request assistance in monitoring the health of waterfowl in New York. Hunters will be asked to voluntarily allow NYSDEC to take a small sample from ducks and geese to be tested. This is being done to monitor waterfowl for the potential occurrence of avian influenza. NYSDEC is also monitoring pheasants.

This type of work will be done throughout the country to support the national monitoring plan.

**Louisiana:** The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has developed an Avian Flu Early Detection Surveillance System to check for this virus in wild waterfowl and shorebirds as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's avian influenza monitoring network.

LDWF's system will consist of collecting 1,000 waterfowl and shorebird cloacal swabs this coming waterfowl season as part of the broader Mississippi Flyway Avian Flu Surveillance Plan. LDWF plans to target species most likely to mingle with birds from Asia on breeding grounds or migration routes that could transport the virus down the Mississippi Flyway to Louisiana. LDWF will trap ducks, collect shorebirds and sample ducks and geese harvested on public hunting areas this fall to collect swabs.

**California:** The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has been working closely with multiple state and federal agencies on the West Coast to develop surveillance, monitoring, response, research and communications plans for avian influenza. The DFG Web site includes a section to educate people who have regular contact with wild birds about the issue: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/avianflu/index.html>

The California-specific surveillance plan follows the strategy for the Pacific Flyway (based on the U.S. Interagency Strategic Plan). DFG has been collaborating with wildlife agencies as well as the USDA and California Department of Food and Agriculture to ensure that sampling is thorough without being redundant. Targeted live species include: northern pintail, mallard, Aleutian cackling goose, western sandpiper and dunlin. Hunter-harvested targeted species include: northern pintail, American wigeon, American green-winged teal, northern shoveler, Pacific brandt, and Aleutian cackling geese. The planning effort also includes establishing notification protocols among all agencies and research facilities to ensure sampling results are shared in a timely and consistent manner.

DFG's communications plan also developed collaboratively. The communications plan, Web site, fact sheet, and PowerPoint presentation were created with input and review from state and federal agencies governing health and human services, food and agriculture, natural resources and even parks and recreation. All efforts focus on consistent messages with strategies for pre-detection, detection and response scenarios. Notification protocols have been put in place, and DFG has initiated training for all staff that are first contact for the public. Constituent-specific efforts (e.g. hunters, wildlife rehabilitators) are beginning, and other state natural resource agencies have adopted the PowerPoint presentation as a baseline for training their staff on avian influenza and influenza events.

**Florida:** The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), is part of the team monitoring for bird flu in Florida and has stepped up surveillance of free-ranging birds and priority species. FWC is working in cooperation with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Health, National Wildlife Health Center, Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, University of Florida, and wildlife rehabilitators on this surveillance initiative. Many wild birds involved in die-offs are being collected, examined and tested for many wildlife diseases.

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## Florida's Exotic Species Public Awareness Campaign

By Judy Gillan, Conservation Stewardship Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 850-539-9595 or [judy.gillan@myfwc.com](mailto:judy.gillan@myfwc.com)

Florida's Exotic Species public awareness and education effort is very young and still developing, growing and changing. But here's a little history and status of where we are with developing a statewide public awareness campaign.

It was the urging and commitment of Herky Huffman, then-chairman of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) that elevated exotic species to an agency top priority. Last summer FWC executive director Ken Haddad met with several other Florida agency directors to discuss exotic species. They agreed to form an interagency public awareness team, with FWC taking the lead.

By September 2005 all agency appointments were made and the interagency team held its first meeting. The team includes personnel from the FWC, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, several water management districts, Florida Dept. of Transportation, University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, The Nature Conservancy, Everglades National Park and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Although we are a separate entity, we are working very closely with the scientific group, Florida's Invasive Species Working Group.

Once we began to research the issues we realized how huge a challenge this would be for us in Florida. The first thing we needed to do was get a handle on what each agency believed the priorities to be (species and pathway for introduction), who our target audiences are and what materials are already out there. Without funds to conduct a real needs assessment, we devised a form to poll the agencies. This was a very helpful beginning to understanding the big picture.

While we all believed we needed an overarching tag line and a mass-communications campaign, we also agreed we didn't know what Floridians know, think and feel about exotic species. A public opinion survey was needed. Looking at work done in Hawaii and Oregon, we created a survey instrument that would be implemented utilizing an existing FWC marketing research contract for Web-based public opinion polling. The survey is still under review, and we plan to implement it this summer.

We use a panel of agency stakeholders (FWC and partner agencies) as well as a random list of the public for such polling. We are also looking for ways to fund several focus groups where we could further refine the target audience and probe their perceptions and test messages and story boards. Our hope is that this research leads us to an overarching campaign theme and approach that resonates with Floridians and embraces everything from climbing ferns and fruit flies to iguanas and pythons. More targeted projects would be left up to the individual agencies such as the Dept. of Agriculture addressing (for example) citrus canker at its agency level or FWC tackling exotic pet releases. An overall public awareness action plan is being developed but won't be completed until the public opinion research is completed.

Given much pressure to move forward, we applied for and received a grant to produce a high-visibility pilot in Central Florida, which includes developing an eight-page tabloid insert for placement in a Friday edition of the Orlando Sentinel and running a 30-second spot in certain theatres in the counties where the Orlando Sentinel is distributed. The 30-second spot was previously developed by The Nature Conservancy, and its message - "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" - is about invasive aquatic plants. TNC allows others to modify the last frame to reflect their agency information. To view the spot, go to <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/outreach.html> and click on Gill Man. To test message recall we will survey some of the moviegoers on site.

Realizing this precedes having our overarching tag line, we are simply calling the newspaper insert "Florida Invaders" and providing several subheadings that address some pathways of exotic species introduction such as "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers," "Never Release Exotic Pets" and a section on "Florida Friendly" landscaping. There is introductory information about why Florida is especially vulnerable to exotic invasions, the economic, ecological and recreational impacts, along with some examples of invasive species and importantly what individuals can do to help. The centerfold is an interactive "What's Wrong with This Picture,"

### Other Resources for Invasives Information

[www.iswgfla.org](http://www.iswgfla.org)

[www.habitattitude.net/](http://www.habitattitude.net/)

[www.protectyourwaters.net](http://www.protectyourwaters.net)

[tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/outreach.html](http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/outreach.html)

[www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org)

illustrating a Florida suburban home, yard and family with many invasive exotics no-nos. For each no-no there is an explanation with what people can do instead to help. There will be a prize enticing readers to visit a Web site and answer our questionnaire about the insert. We anticipate publishing the insert this summer or early fall.

Another approach we all agreed on was a universal Web site with links to all our agencies and a section on public awareness and education for posting links and downloadable material. The Florida Invasive Species Working Group (ISWG) has developed such a site and is allowing our public awareness team the option to post on their site once we are ready. To view the ISWG go to <http://iswgfla.org/>. FWC is also updating its exotic species Web site, and we are currently researching and developing a section containing resources for educators and teachers.



## **SPECIAL SECTION**

### **Guiding the Future: The Conservation Education Strategies**

*By Nancy Herron, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

Sobering headlines are hitting the news daily – global warming – energy crises – water wars – “nature deficit disorder” afflicting our youth. We can either get depressed, or get busy!

The future of conservation is as much in the hands and hearts of people as it is about managing land, water and wildlife resources. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) is taking a bold step forward, and with your help is tackling this head-on. Its 56 state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies put forth a series of actions which led directly to *The North American Conservation Education Strategy* to unify and strengthen conservation education efforts of its member agencies and partners. This is a first-of-its-kind, large-scale effort that focuses on conservation through the lens of fish and wildlife resources, management and responsibility.

Bolstered by a three-year multi-state grant, dedicated professionals across the country are actively working on the plan's five strategies: 1) elevating the value of conservation education; 2) advancing AFWA's conservation education agenda; 3) achieving excellence in conservation education; 4) maximizing partnerships; and 5) securing funding.

Hot off the press is an agreed-upon list of fish and wildlife ecological concepts that will provide a foundation for learning objectives across the country. The list was forged from concepts included in the most popular conservation education programs currently used by fish and wildlife agencies. Twenty-six states and multiple conservation organizations reviewed the list to pick the best of the best. AFWA's Education, Outreach and Diversity committee then reviewed and endorsed the concepts. The result is a set of concepts, definitions and top 11 -- common ground that paves the way for programs to share resources and leverage marketing and information campaigns.

The top ranking concepts are (not ranked in order of importance):

- In North America fish and wildlife are public trust resources managed by governmental agencies;
- Since most wildlife live on private lands, private landowners play an important role in sustaining and improving habitat;
- Sustainable natural resources depend on the support of an informed and responsible citizenry;
- The health and well-being of fish, wildlife, and humans depend on the quality of their environment;
- Loss and degradation of habitat are the greatest problems facing fish and wildlife; therefore, enhancing and protecting habitat is critical to managing and conserving them;
- Conserving biodiversity is important;
- Fish and wildlife can be conserved and restored through science-based management which considers the needs of humans as well as those of fish and wildlife;

- Everyone impacts fish and wildlife and their habitats and as human populations grow, impacts on natural resources increase;
- Regulated hunting, fishing and trapping are important tools for managing some wildlife populations and habitats;
- Within the United States, state fish and wildlife management is funded primarily through hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and through federal excise taxes collected from the sale of hunting, target shooting, and fishing equipment and motor boat fuels;
- Wildlife-based activities, such as hunting, fishing, viewing and photography provide people with millions of days of outdoor recreation each year and generate billions of dollars for the economy.

Next step priorities will be in these areas: ensuring that conservation education reaches its potential as mission-critical to agencies; maximizing partnerships and elevating conservation education within agencies so that when budgets are tight, education doesn't get the biggest squeeze. This year will see an enhanced guide to developing stewardship, based on research and "Best Practices for Boating, Fishing and Aquatic Stewardship Education." The popular USFWS course on practical program evaluation and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point online version will be customized especially for fish and wildlife agencies education practitioners. There will be a model to develop measurable outcomes for the top core concepts. And on the horizon is a marketing effort to leverage conservation education efforts on a national scale.

Conservation education is one of the most vital tools for shaping long-term conservation and enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources. AFWA recognizes the role of ACI in furthering this goal. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, contact Sharon Rushton, [rushtonsr@aol.com](mailto:rushtonsr@aol.com).



## ACI CONFERENCE UPDATE

### **ACI Conference is Sneaking Up on You!**

*By Henry Cabbage, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission*

Get ready for the ACI conference of the century, and make your reservations now because you don't want to miss this one. Call the Sheraton Safari Hotel at 1-888-354-1356 or e-mail [stay@sheratonsafari.com](mailto:stay@sheratonsafari.com) to reserve your room at the special conference rate of \$99 per night. (Be sure to mention you're with the Association for Conservation Information.) You can also book your room online from the conference Web site. Keep reading if you want to know that Web address.

Orlando probably is the most fun city in the world, and we've hand-picked the perfect spot to host it. The hotel has live alligators in a tank in the lobby. It has the longest some-kind-of-waterslide in the world, and there is this desk off to the side in the lobby, and if you go over to it and sign up, you can get \$80 for sitting through a time-share sales pitch.

In the interest of preparing you for this event, I took my lovely wife through the sales pitch, and found it to be very low-pressure. That is until we said "Nah, not interested." That's when some guy came out of the woodwork making all kinds of offers that would take the sting out of the investment in an Orlando timeshare unit. There was the usual stuff about swapping your timeshare time in Orlando for a timeshare slot in some exotic land or whatever, and it wasn't all that bad a deal...but we were there for research, not real timeshare investment options, so we kept saying no. The salesman kept coming up with more attractive options, but we kept saying no, so they eventually gave us the \$80.

In all fairness, they probably made the most attractive timeshare offer we've ever had, and my wife and I have sat through a lot of these pitches, just to get the free goodies they give us for listening, so if you might be interested in a timeshare arrangement, consider this one. If not, and you have high resistance to salesmanship, you can pick up \$80 by investing a couple of hours in showing up for this one.

Another thing you might want to consider when you come down for this conference is that through our contacts with NASA, we have arranged for the launch of a Delta rocket from the Kennedy Space Center a couple of days after the

conference. The launch will be visible from Orlando, or you can trek over to the space center for a closer view. Stick around a couple of days after the conference and you might see something spectacular. In fact, NASA, at our request, has tentatively scheduled a space shuttle launch sometime around the conference.

OK, NASA has its own agenda and didn't really schedule these launches around our conference, but they will be spectacular if you stay to watch them.

We have lined up incredible speakers, programs and activities for the conference, and the field trips and other events will be world-class. You want to go bass fishing? We have bass that eat Volkswagens for lunch, and we'll take you out to catch some of them. You want to view wildlife? We have animals that occur nowhere else in the world. You want to shake hands with Mickey Mouse? We'll arrange it. You want to swim with the dolphins like Flipper? Come on down. You want to see sea turtles? We have them. You want to learn a better way? Joan Guilfoyle will be there with her yoga classes after hours to help us all find inner peace or something.

Hospitality room? Are you kidding me? This is Florida. We know how to run a hospitality room better than anybody else, and we'll put our best efforts out for you.

Oh yeah, the conference....What about the conference? Is there any justification for peeling a few bucks off the state's coffers to justify sending you to the conference?

Well, yeah. How about bird flu? Some of the experts say it's coming this fall, and we'd better be ready. That's the subject of one of the sessions. There'll be an all-day session on dealing with the news media, and three sessions focus on marketing. There'll be sessions about partnering for better outreach, taking advantage of volunteers, improving your public speaking and presentation skills, agency Web sites, trails and interpretive tools, evaluating your education programs, Teaming with Wildlife communication strategies, collaborating with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation and roundtables on magazines and other publications.

We have some knock-'em-dead speakers for you, including keynoter Richard Louv -- a futurist and journalist focused on family, nature and community. He is the author of seven books, including, most recently, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder" (Algonquin).

If you have a success story or a new idea to share with the group, sign up for a 15-minute block in the Show and Tell session and tell us all about it.

And don't forget to send or bring items for the auction. You can't put on a conference like this without a successful auction. Go to the Auction page on the conference Web site (or see Karen Parker's piece in this issue of The Balance Wheel) for details.

You can register for the conference, book your room and get more information at the conference Web site, ACI-2006.com. Early registration is \$225 by June 9 and \$250 after that. The hotel reservation deadline is June 21 to get the \$99 conference rate, but the rate applies three days before and after the conference.

Bring your spouse; bring your kids; bring them all to Orlando for the July 16-20 ACI conference "The Legacy and the Challenge."

### **We're Ready to Collect Your Auction Items!**

*By Karen Parker, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission*

We're planning a great conference in Orlando next month, and we want to have the best auction in the history of ACI. But we can't do it without your help. Now is the time to send us the auction items you've collected so you'll have room to collect more.

Besides the usual assortment of framed art, jewelry, knives, fishing tackle, hunting equipment, bird feeders, videos, camping supplies, clothing, t-shirts, hats, books, sporting goods, games, etc., we really need trips. Whether it's a guided trip down a scenic river, a hunt on a private ranch, a few days at one of your state parks, or just a great night out on the town, please donate. Visit the Auction page on the Conference Web site to see what's available. ([www.aci-2006.com/auction.htm](http://www.aci-2006.com/auction.htm))

After packing your items carefully, send them to:  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
ATTN: Karen Parker - ACI

3377 E. Hwy 90  
Lake City, FL 32025

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Parker at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Her number is (386) 758-0525, and her e-mail is [karen.parker@myfwc.com](mailto:karen.parker@myfwc.com).



## **SKILL BUILDING**

### **Sowing Seeds for Future Hunters**

*By Melissa Schilling-Manager, Recruitment & Retention, National Shooting Sports Foundation*

"Build it and they will come" is an idea that once resonated throughout state wildlife agencies. If you provided superior hunting opportunities, sportsmen would flock to them.

Unfortunately, we no longer live in a "Field of Dreams."

As hunter numbers fall or stagnate nationwide, we must work together to address the future of hunting. The National Shooting Sports Foundation has stepped up to the challenge with the Hunting Heritage Partnership (HHP).

Since 2003, HHP has funded hunter recruitment and retention efforts in nearly 30 states with grants totaling \$1.4 million.

HHP is a grant program administered by NSSF, with assistance from the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation that provides funding to state wildlife agencies to create greater hunting opportunities and put more hunters in the field.

NSSF's job is to help wildlife agencies deliver real and measurable results. Our goal is to fund hunter-related programs tailored to your specific needs. HHP can help increase:

- Hunter access to public and private lands
- Incentives to keep current hunters hunting
- Recruitment of next-generation hunters
- Programs that create more opportunities to hunt
- Communications programs geared toward recruiting and retaining hunters

"With your participation in HHP, we see possibilities and hope for the future of hunting," said Doug Painter, NSSF president.

A highlighted example of success utilizing HHP and addressing challenges would be Pennsylvania's *Mapping Hunter Access*. Pennsylvania has access to large amounts of public and private lands where anyone can hunt within 20 minutes from home. The problem is that few hunters know about it.

Using a 2003 HHP grant, Pennsylvania invested in the latest computerized mapping software to create detailed maps for hunters. Maps show public access points for all 67 counties. Hunters can pinpoint spots using county and secondary roads, waterways and landmarks. In addition, hunters can differentiate among types of hunting grounds, identifying those needing landowner permission versus ones with walk-in access.

Pennsylvania will make printed maps available at low cost. Also, the agency Web site will feature the maps; hunters can "zoom in" for closer inspection and print directions.

Pennsylvania is at the head of the line when it comes to using such technology to improve hunter opportunities.

### **States that have received funding through HHP 2003-2005**

Alaska - \$30,296
Alabama - \$71,000
California - \$50,000
Connecticut - \$20,093.90
Florida - \$15,000
Hawaii - \$47,560
Indiana - \$77,860
Iowa - \$7,000
Massachusetts - \$19,000
Michigan - \$66,978
Minnesota - \$15,000
Montana - \$55,000
Nebraska - \$75,000
Nevada - \$50,000
New Hampshire - \$54,000
North Carolina - \$15,000
Ohio - \$107,000
Oklahoma - \$20,000
Pennsylvania - \$161,800
South Carolina - \$16,000
South Dakota - \$35,000
Tennessee - \$82,500
Texas - \$44,000
Vermont - \$21,000
Virginia - \$64,310
Washington - \$48,867
West Virginia - \$7,000
Wisconsin - \$17,000
Wyoming - \$60,000

Another success was a program implemented by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife, which received an HHP grant in 2003. The division used its grant to create a pilot program to increase participation among young hunter education course graduates with little or no social support for hunting.

Indiana DNR staff selected youths by mailing a survey to recent hunter education class graduates. Out of thousands who responded to the questionnaire, 30 were invited to participate at two hunts in northern and southern Indiana.

At both events, each youth and parent was paired with a volunteer hunter education instructor as a mentor. Mentors offered one-on-one advice, safety tips and instruction. Events provided hunting, safety and ethics demonstrations; live firing on a shooting range; and the chance to go afield. Mentors taught youths how to clean and prepare game. After events, mentors were given the opportunity to take each parent and youngster on a pre-paid pheasant hunt at a game farm.

Post-event surveys show that Indiana is on the right track. If participants show signs of adopting hunting due to the youth hunts, the programs are worthwhile. By seeing what works, the agency can shape efforts to build future hunters. The DNR has developed methods for measuring how graduates fare down the road.

HHP helped Indiana to develop and test a mechanism to:

- 1) Identify youths who are interested in hunting but don't have social support for hunting in their immediate family;
- 2) Pair them with hunting mentors at Indiana Youth Pheasant Hunts and Workshop events;
- 3) Provide opportunities to hunt again beyond this single-day event;
- 4) Determine whether this process results in their becoming active hunters over time.

You can increase your odds of receiving HHP grants by designing project proposals based on HHP's "Most Effective Methods" (MEMs) research-based guidelines for recruitment and retention projects - available on the NSSF Web site ([www.nssf.org/hhp](http://www.nssf.org/hhp)). NSSF has refined the guidelines to put more resources and research at your disposal.

Proposals based on best practices are more effective at recruiting and retaining hunters, as well as building support through your agency, stakeholders and partners. HHP projects that follow these guidelines are more likely to achieve on-the-ground success.

Anyone can download the MEMs guidelines to use as a resource manual to help state fish and wildlife agencies develop HHP programs and projects. MEMs can build effective programs as part of larger efforts, develop projects apt to receive long-term support and create success stories to campaign for permanent, matching funds on Capitol Hill.

For more success stories and information on the Hunting Heritage Partnership program, please visit [www.nssf.org/hhp](http://www.nssf.org/hhp) or call the National Shooting Sports Foundation at (203) 426-1320.



## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

### **The Association's Changing Image**

*By Rachel Brittin, Public Affairs Director, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

A month ago, on May 1, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies had a facelift. However, instead of a Hollywood nose job or chin implant, the Association opted for a name change, logo update, new brochure, press kit and a new Web site.

The final vote on the name change took place in Columbus, Ohio during the annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Meeting in March. April was spent preparing for the change, and spreading the word to our membership base.

"The name change is intended to more directly reflect the Association's membership," says Executive Vice President, John Baughman. "Our voting members really are found only in North America and are made up mainly of state fish and wildlife agencies. Dropping the word 'International' allows for a shorter, less confusing name."

The Association's name change does not affect the strategic mission of the organization, which includes an International Relations Program and both Canadian and Mexican members. In fact, the Association is hopeful that the increased visibility will allow new opportunities to show the collaboration of efforts among all of North America's fish and wildlife agencies.

"As we have been since the 1930s, we're still very involved in working with Canada and Mexico," says Baughman. "In today's world, everything is so globally connected; it would be a mistake for us to change our mission. Wildlife knows no boundaries, and it is important that we work collaboratively for conservation."

According to the staff, our partners and members, and judging by the influx of phone calls from the media, the Association's new name seems to be better received than first anticipated.

"For more than a century the Association has been part of some of the nation's most important conservation actions. We are hopeful the new name will continue to increase the visibility of the great work by the collective fish and wildlife agencies we represent," says Baughman.

For more information about these and other changes, please visit, [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org). The new Web site features a "Members Only" section where all of the Association's members can post meeting minutes, share documents and find all the contact information (Excel Spreadsheets) imaginable. Get connected, become a member!



## **TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE UPDATE**

*The following updates were submitted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)*

### **Teaming with Wildlife Heads Back to ACI**

Teaming with Wildlife is heading to the 2006 ACI Conference for a second installment of media training on the state wildlife action plans. On Monday, July 17 from 1-4:30 p.m., Teaming will bring back their national communications and polling experts to share new advocate polling information, examine the year's media coverage successes and look to the future with new interactive training exercises and tools to take home.

"We have a few special surprises this year," says Naomi Edelson, Teaming with Wildlife Director at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "Not to give it away completely, but we have a video showcasing the amazing work many of the state fish and wildlife agencies have done to ensure their wildlife action plan is recognized and some fun group activities to get creative juices flowing on action plan outreach."

Pollsters Dave Metz and Lori Weigel from Fairbanks, Maslin, Maulin and Associates and Public Opinion Strategies will also return for a second year to present their findings on an Internet poll that tracked the opinions of wildlife advocates, or people who are already interested in wildlife issues. The survey, which included questions about the state wildlife action plans, was completed online and reached more than 6,000 members of the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Izaak Walton League, and many more.

Also returning are Martin Hamburger and Sarah Flowers of the communications firm Laguens Hamburger Kully Klose. They plan to train interactively on new ways to pitch to the media on the state wildlife action plans. Even those ACI-ers who are seasoned media relations gurus may not know some of these tricks.

"We plan to provide some exciting new information at the ACI training this year, and I'm looking forward to hearing feedback from last year's successes and experiences," says Edelson. "The campaign has really only just begun, and we're hoping to set a tone of success for the next several years."

Finally, Teaming with Wildlife also plans to share a "coalition media kit" to help you get your coalition partners involved and in the wildlife action plans media campaign. The kit will include materials to help you train others to talk about the action plan and wildlife conservation, how to reach out to the media, how to approach an Ed Board, and much more.

If you have any questions or suggestions about the Teaming with Wildlife training, please contact Naomi Edelson at [nedelson@fishwildlife.org](mailto:nedelson@fishwildlife.org) or Rachel Brittin at [rbrittin@fishwildlife.org](mailto:rbrittin@fishwildlife.org).

## **Call to Action! Major Cut to State Wildlife Grants**

In response to severe cuts to State Wildlife Grants in the U.S. House of Representatives, the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition has launched a major campaign: "Get Wildlife Funding Back on Track." This Senate-focused campaign will help us hit a home run for wildlife by organizing a different state coalition tactic for each of the next five weeks. Our campaign timeline and strategy can be found online at [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com).

We hope you'll join the state coalitions in calling your Senators right now! Urge them to RESTORE FUNDING FOR THE STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS PROGRAM TO \$85 MILLION.  
(Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121)

Use the following points to make your message to the Hill staffer:

- The State Wildlife Grants Program supports cost-effective and proactive approaches to wildlife conservation, conserving wildlife and the places they live before they become rarer and more costly to protect.
- We need robust State Wildlife Grants funding to implement our state's Wildlife Action Plan, recently completed by scientists, conservationists and sportsmen working together to conserve wildlife and vital natural areas for future generations.
- State Wildlife Grants is the only federal program aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming endangered in every state, making it a mission-critical element of the Interior Department's Budget.

A sample letter to FAX (mail takes too long) to your Senators is available at [www.teaming.com](http://www.teaming.com).

As you know, the State Wildlife Grants Program provides the funding the state wildlife action plans need to conserve the wildlife and natural places that enhance our own quality of life. Unfortunately, the House Interior Appropriations Bill cuts State Wildlife Grants by almost one-third from the President's recommendation of \$75 million and to an amount \$35 million less than asked for by the 226 members of Congress asked for in this year's Dear Colleague Letter. For the state wildlife action plans to succeed, we must ensure that the Senate provides much more than the \$50 million recommended by the House.

Please forward this action alert to other lists of wildlife enthusiasts. If you're reading this message and your organization or business is not already a member of the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition, you can join at: [www.teaming.com/join.htm](http://www.teaming.com/join.htm). Stay tuned for more alerts over the next month as we work to get wildlife funding back on track!

## **State Wildlife Grants Five-Year Accomplishment Report Released**

The Association is pleased to announce the release of the State Wildlife Grants Five-Year Accomplishment Report, generously designed and printed by the Ohio Division of Natural Resources. On its fifth anniversary, this accomplishment report examines the State Wildlife Grants Program and highlights:

- 1) The proactive nature of the State Wildlife Grants Program;
- 2) The cost-effective approach State Wildlife Grants bring to conserving wildlife;
- 3) The partnerships created by State Wildlife Grants projects

The report is being distributed to every member of Congress and will be mailed to state directors and Teaming with Wildlife contacts over the next several weeks. It is also available on the Teaming with Wildlife Web site and can be downloaded by clicking from the AFWA Web site.

## **One-Year Later Meeting Save the Date**

This summer, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and US Fish and Wildlife Service will be hosting the Wildlife Action Plans "One Year Later" Meeting.

Two years ago, all of the states and territories came together for the "One Year Out" Meeting in Nebraska City, Nebraska, to share ideas, exchange information and develop innovative approaches to the completion of the state

wildlife action plans. This meeting kept momentum behind the wildlife action plans and helped every state and territory get over the finish line.

Finishing the wildlife action plans was just the beginning. Now we need to translate them into on-the-ground projects and actions in every state. The "One Year Later" meeting will help us continue moving into this new phase. The meeting will be an invaluable opportunity for your agency to gather information and share ideas with other states – and your state's representation at the meeting will be critical to the overall success of the wildlife action plans nationwide.

When: July 31 – August 2, 2006  
(Meeting begins morning of July 31 and ends at noon on August 2)

Where: National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Who: Every fish and wildlife agency, along with representatives of partner agencies and organizations

Detailed travel information and agendas are coming soon! For more information contact The Association.



## UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

**Outdoor Writers Association of American (OWAA) Annual Conference**, June 17-20, Lake Charles, La.

**2006 ACI Conference**, July 16-20, Sheraton Safari Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

**Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Annual Meeting**, Sept. 17-22, Snowmass, Colo.

**National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Conference**, Sept. 22-27, Louisville, Ky,  
[www.nasbla.org/conference06.php](http://www.nasbla.org/conference06.php).

**Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Annual Meeting**, Nov. 5-8, Norfolk, Va.

**Bird Education Conference**, February 6-10, 2007, Austin, Tex.



## MEMBER NEWS

### **Chris Chaffin Promoted**

*From The Outdoor Wire*

Management of The Outdoor Channel (TOC) is pleased to announce that Chris Chaffin has been named Vice President, Public Relations and Conservation, effective March 20, 2006.

TOC President and CEO Andy Dale said "Chris has brought important insights about and experiences in the outdoor industry that have helped us build stronger relations with conservation agencies and outdoor organizations. These qualities contribute to make the Channel a better provider of quality, family-oriented, outdoor entertainment—and a better citizen of the outdoor community. We are pleased to add his unique background and abilities to The Outdoor

Channel leadership team."

Chaffin joined TOC in 2002, following 20 years with state wildlife management agencies in the West and as Director of PR and Conservation Partnerships for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in Connecticut. He was promoted from the position of Senior Director, PR and Conservation.

"In his time at the company, Chris has worked hard to build relationships in the outdoor industry and with sportsmen's affinity groups. He has also established important charitable programs, which is our way as a corporation to "give back" to a community which has been pivotal in our success. With this new position, we eagerly anticipate doing even more to strengthen the outdoor community and expand TOC's positive outreach efforts," Dale commented.

Chaffin will continue to work out of his Florida-based office but will spend time in the California headquarters as needed. He can be reached at [cchaffin@outdoorchannel.com](mailto:cchaffin@outdoorchannel.com); or (321) 729-0280.

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