

The Balance Wheel

Newsletter of the Association for Conservation Information

Summer 2007

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Make Plans to Attend ACI Conference in July

By Marianne Burke, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Greetings all! I hope this message finds you well and ready for the summer. ACI has been planning for this summer since we left Florida last July with high expectations and excitement about Massachusetts hosting the annual conference. Slated for July 8 – 13, this is one conference you don't want to miss.

Massachusetts is an old ACI friend and they are welcoming us with open arms. Ellie Horwitz, I&E Chief, and her staff have created an educational and informative agenda, and they have selected a serene and spectacular location for the conference. Eastover Resort in Lenox, Mass. is nestled between two mountain ranges with scenic views and idyllic temperatures of 75-80 degrees.

If the location doesn't draw you to this year's conference, the agenda certainly will. The focus is "The Changing Climate of Conservation" and every workshop and speaker will be addressing the challenges facing fish and game industries and our own agencies. The opening session kicks off with a slate of great speakers discussing the very topic of the conference—the changing face of wildlife and suburban interactions, the future of fish and wildlife agencies and the overall movement that brought our country's conservation movement to its current status. The topics get better as the day progresses with discussions on reaching the "urbs" experiential tourism and a "show and tell" session showcasing our fellow agencies and their successful outreach programs.

Two conference days are devoted to marketing and education. Tuesday, July 10 offers a day-long training session focused entirely on marketing our agencies. This day includes technical roundtable discussions, marketing outreach presentations and one-on-one interaction with the speakers and attendees. We will discuss how to develop and execute effective awareness campaigns, how to move our audiences into new behavior changes and take a look at a few campaigns that have been executed with successful results.

Thursday, July 12 offers a host of educational workshops focused on reaching our youth. Guest speakers from The Nature Network and Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection are scheduled to discuss the "No Child Left Inside" movement. Later in the day we move on to state education expositions, updates on the conservation education initiatives and how to evaluate your education outreach programs' effectiveness. And of course, in-between these two days are more workshops, speakers and field trips that are sure to pique your interest.

As I mentioned, the 2007 ACI Conference is one you don't want to miss. It is a terrific avenue for learning, networking and experiencing new programs from your counterparts nationwide. There is no other event or organization that offers the resources and contacts of ACI. We are a distinctive group of professionals that drive the education, information and marketing programs of our agencies. We are a unique clan and what better place to mingle and network with other clan members than at ACI.

For more information on the conference please do not hesitate to contact me, Ellie Horwitz or any ACI officer. You can also visit our Web site at www.aci-net.org. I'll see everyone in Massachusetts.

Happy summer
Marianne Burke, president



NATIONAL NEWS

50 Years of Wildlife Disease Study

By David Morland, Louisiana Division of Wildlife (Reprinted courtesy of Louisiana Conservationist)

In 1957 a unique partnership was developed between the game and fish agencies in the southeast United States and wildlife disease researchers at the University of Georgia. At that time a disease was causing unexplained mortality among deer herds in the northeast and southeast United States, and this partnership was originally established to investigate and study deer diseases. The mysterious disease was referred to as "Killer-X" and was of special concern for biologists since most states were involved in deer restoration projects. The 1950s and early 1960s were the years for peak deer restoration work in Louisiana. Joe Herring was a biologist with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and served on the Steering Committee that formed this partnership. While chief of the Game Division, Mr. Herring served as chairman of the Steering Committee.

Originally called the Southeastern Cooperative Deer Disease Study, the partnership changed its name in 1961 to the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS). Since then, SCWDS has developed into a premier multi-purpose wildlife disease research and service organization. SCWDS works in partnership with wildlife managers and game and fish organizations and agencies, at both state and federal levels, to investigate wildlife disease issues and problems. They help bridge the gap with wildlife issues that may cause concern for domestic animals and human health.



Wood duck reflects research to evaluate the ability of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (HPAI H5N1) to infect waterfowl. Studies using redheads, blue-winged teal, wood ducks, mallards and Northern pintails found that wood ducks were the only species to exhibit morbidity or mortality.

2007 marks the 50th anniversary of SCWDS. Located in Athens, Ga., SCWDS is supported with funds provided by the southeastern states and from various federal agencies. Each state establishes an annual contract with SCWDS and in return for this monetary support, SCWDS provides their expertise with wildlife disease diagnostic and research services. The southeastern states include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Kansas, Ohio and Puerto Rico have also become involved with SCWDS in order to obtain wildlife disease services for their states. The reputation SCWDS has for excellence in wildlife disease research extends beyond the borders of the United States.

Most wildlife disease problems probably go undetected by hunters. Animals become sick, and if they are unable to recover, their remains simply decompose or are scavenged by other wildlife. Although they may not always recognize it, hunters are generally the ones to first encounter wildlife and disease problems. It is not uncommon for hunters to find something unusual when processing harvested game. For curious and concerned hunters, these findings often result in a phone call to the local biologist.

One frequent call we receive every deer season involves finding a large worm on the carcass of the deer. Nasal bots are fly larvae that develop in the nasal cavity of a deer after the fly has laid eggs around the nose or mouth of the deer. When fully developed, the larvae exit through the nose of the deer, fall out, burrow in the ground, and emerge as flies. When a hunter kills a deer, the larvae may migrate through the nose on their own or simply fall out on the carcass while the deer is being cleaned. Hunters often call to ask what the worm is and if it is safe to eat the meat. Nasal bots are not harmful to deer and do not present health problems for humans.

Most deer hunters are aware of the disease known as blue-tongue. This is a hemorrhagic disease of white-tailed deer and is caused by either the epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) virus or the blue tongue (BT) virus. The viruses are transmitted by biting midges. The disease generally occurs in late summer and early fall and the occurrence of it is related to the life cycle of the midge vectors. EHD occurs annually in Louisiana to some degree. Biologists work with clubs and landowners to document the disease in the state. Blood and tissue samples are taken from deer collected during annual herd health investigations. EHD was most likely the Killer-X disease causing the unknown deer mortality in the 50s.

In 2004, tissue and blood samples from a deer in St. Mary Parish were sent to SCWDS for examination. The BTV-1 virus was isolated from this animal. This was the first detection of this serotype in the United States. Further sampling and testing has occurred over the last two years. The test results indicate that BTV-1 is highly localized in the immediate area where the virus was first detected.

The progress made concerning wildlife disease and parasite problems is a direct result of the outstanding leadership and service that SCWDS has provided. SCWDS is in the forefront for chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing along with providing assistance for avian influenza research and monitoring. Both of these diseases have been in the national spotlight. SCWDS has provided their expertise with the wild turkey restoration program, the fur animal program, feral hog issues and migratory birds (ducks, geese and doves).

Dr. Frank A. Hayes served as Director for SCWDS for the first 30 years. Currently Dr. John Fischer is the director and works closely with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). Drs. Randy Davidson and Victor Nettles produced a field manual concerning wildlife disease problems (Field Manual of Wildlife Diseases in the Southeastern United States). This book quickly became a useful management tool for biologists across the southeast. Dr. Davidson recently edited the third edition of this book, which is available from the SCWDS office.

Another SCWDS book, Diseases and Parasites of White-Tailed Deer, was published in 1981.

I am very much indebted to the staff at SCWDS for their outstanding work and support given to LDWF during my 30-year career. Their efforts have given the wildlife community a better understanding of wildlife disease and parasite problems that are frequently encountered. Because of their work, the unknown Killer-X diseases have names, can be diagnosed, and their impacts to wildlife, domestic livestock and human health can either be reduced or resolved.



ACI CONFERENCE UPDATE

Welcome to ACI 2007!

By Ellie Horwitz, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

Welcome to the 2007 Conference of the Association for Conservation Information. We look forward to seeing you in Massachusetts!

You have read the notices and postcards and are probably wondering what to expect.

First and foremost you will enjoy the company of ACIers and other communicators from all parts of the country. If you have been to an ACI conference in the past you know what we mean and if you have not been to an ACI conference, you are in for a wonderful adventure with a stimulating group of very creative folks.

All of our agencies are facing changes, so we will begin the program by zeroing in on some of those changes – changes in climate, changes in attitudes toward wildlife, changes in expectations and changes in our audiences. You will be challenged by such experts as Dr. Stephen Nodvin of the International Union of Concerned Scientists; Rob Deblinger of the Mass. Division of Fisheries & Wildlife; Jim Martin of the Berkley Conservation Institute; and Charles Jordan of The Conservation Fund. As the opening day progresses, you will explore these challenges in greater depth with your colleagues.

Tuesday will be devoted to Marketing, an area almost all of us are involved with on a daily basis. ACI will offer both presenters and discussion groups to address the issues faced in marketing ourselves and our programs to new audiences in new ways. If marketing is not your thing, there will be working groups addressing Desktop Publishing with InDesign; an option to learn about presenting yourself with voice and drama coach Karen Schadow; and a session on Working with Editors. That evening, those who enjoy light music will have the opportunity to participate in a Berkshire Highlight: a dinner picnic on the famous lawn at Tanglewood where the Boston Pops Orchestra will perform one of their signature programs (there is an extra charge for this, but we have been able to secure tickets at a very reasonable rate).

Participants will break out into smaller groups on Wednesday, to visit some of Massachusetts' special places and to continue networking on the topics that have been raised. The six field trip options include a visit to the Springfield Armory (guardian of the tradition of fine firearms) and to Smith and Wesson's modern firearms academy. Another option is a trip to fish Quabbin Reservoir, a "wilderness" reservoir created in the 1930s with the damming the Swift River and the removal of six towns. This reservoir supplies more than 20 communities, including Boston, with wonderful drinking water while also providing an exceptional fishery. There will also be a "behind the scenes" tour of the Springfield Science Museum, allowing participants to learn the fine points of creating compelling exhibits (on a shoestring if you must). This group may also visit the Springfield Art Museum or the Dr. Seuss Museum if they choose. A fourth group will paddle the local Housatonic River to view local landscapes and wildlife. This is a slow, flatwater, meandering river with large stretches of protected shoreline. Those who prefer to explore on foot can enjoy the option to hike up Mount Greylock, Massachusetts' highest peak (3,491 feet -- we know it's just a speed bump for some of you folks!). And for those who want to hike or canoe in other locations and want to see things that are unique to the Berkshires, there will be a trip to the Norman Rockwell Museum, a Shaker Village and other unique sites. Regardless of what option you select, we will see to it that you return in time to enjoy dinner at Eastover and ACI's special auction. (What can you send or bring that will represent your state at this important event?)

Thursday's program will focus on outreach to youth, perhaps our most important challenge. Once again participants will be engaged, this time by Dr. Cheryl Charles, President of the Children and Nature Network and by Gina McCarthy, Commissioner of the Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection. There will be sessions on State Outdoor Expos, AFWA's Conservation Education Initiatives, Conservation through Faith Communities, New Communications Technologies, Working with Editors, and, because evaluation is key to all of our endeavors, there will be a session on

evaluating our programs. The evening will be capped with the Annual Awards Banquet and before you know it, it will be time to head back to your home base to apply the new ideas generated over the course of the week!

In between all of these events you will have the opportunity to enjoy Eastover's 800 acres of rolling hills and woodlands -- hiking trails, tennis courts, stables, swimming pools and other recreational opportunities. There are many reasons why the Berkshire area has a reputation as a vacation destination. Come on down/up/over and find out for yourself!

Please note that Conference Registration and Registration for Accommodations are separate. The Conference registration form is available on the ACI Web site or can be sent to you directly on request (contact us at www.masswildlife.org). Registration is \$200 until June 27th when it jumps to \$250. This form includes the sign-up for conference, field trips, and the Pops concert. Questions? Contact Ellie Horwitz [ellie.horwitz@state.ma.us]

For accommodations contact the Eastover Resort directly at www.eastover.com or (413) 637-0625

The special ACI rate is:

Single	\$125/night
Double	\$110/night/person
Triple	\$95/night/person
Children	Under 3 free
Ages 3-11	\$60

These rates include facilities use and meals!

To obtain this rate be sure to tell them that you are with the ACI meeting.

We look forward to seeing you!

We Need Some Auction Action!

By Steve "Wildman" Wilson, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

NOW is the time to start gathering your items for the 2007 ACI auction. A trip to your state would make a great auction item. Whether it is a week-long vacation in a get-a-way resort, a guided fishing trip, a guided hunting trip, a float trip, or just a couple of nights at your house, WE NEED TRIPS. So start putting together your trip and send all the details to the WILD MAN in Arkansas. (swilson@agfc.state.ar.us) Plans are to promote some of the trips via the listserv prior to the conference.

We also need lots of other auction items such as jewelry, framed art prints, books, fishing tackle, clothing, bird houses/feeders, hunting equipment, knives, camera equipment, sculptures, camping equipment...I think you get the idea!

So let's have some AUCTION ACTION!!!!!!



SKILL BUILDING

Weblogs: A New Species for Fish and Wildlife Media

By Rachel Brittin, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

What benefits do Weblogs bring to conservation public relations professionals? Plenty.

Once thought to be a fleeting moment in the history of Web site technology, Weblogs or "blogs" have evolved far beyond the boundaries of an experimental form of Web communication. In less than five years, the popularity of blogs has introduced new slang into our public relations dictionary. It's forced us to think outside the box and offers a way for traditional media to reach us in a very non-traditional way.

Blogs, by definition, provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics or local news. Some function more as personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images and links to other Web sites and media

related to its topic. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on photographs (photoBlog), sketchBlog, videos (vlog), music (MP3 Blog), or audio (podcasting) and are part of a wider network of social media.

Contrary to popular belief, a blog can actually be a very effective and controlled forum for providing information about fish and wildlife agencies. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of most blogs, but it is not a necessary ingredient. As the blog "author" you have the option to review and allow all reader comments beforehand and only you control whether or not it is posted. It doesn't require special software or much staff support. As a matter of fact, it doesn't require much of anything except for HTML code and a few moments of posting press releases, announcements and stories about fish and wildlife news. In return, you could receive thousands of readers per month.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies experimented this spring with the launch of a news blog. Deterred by the slang "blog," the site is known simply as "[Conservation News](#)" and is a place for environmental and conservation news and updates from the Association and its members. As a reader, you don't have the option of commenting on stories posted in Conservation News, but it provides a means for reaching thousands of reporters who troll the Internet for story ideas and news. To date, Conservation News has attracted an average of 120,000 readers per month and resulted in more than 300 links from other news blogs, including universities and online newspapers. In addition, Conservation News is linked to 30 newspaper articles and two TV news reports.

Just as blogs have been embraced by millions of businesses, organizations and individuals, mainstream media outlets have also embraced this Web technology. Visits to news sites such as MSNBC, the Providence Journal, Dallas Morning News and Christian Science Monitor show that these mainstream media outlets have embraced the Weblog as part of their editorial operations. These news organizations realize that blogs offer an opportunity for newsrooms to become more transparent, more accessible and more answerable to their readers. Meanwhile, freelance journalists and have found that publishing a weblog increases their authority and credibility in the eyes of readers.

A commitment to the open dialogue that weblogs instill builds a certain trust in the relationship between news media and audience. James Poniewozik, a Time magazine media critic, describes the trust perception gap between the audience and the media saying, "Journalists think trust equals accuracy. But it's about much more: passion, genuineness, integrity."

Blogs often serve as a barometer for mainstream news. Sentiments first expressed on weblogs show up in the mainstream media days or weeks after they first surface in blogs. Similarly, the mainstream media share stories in such a fast-paced news cycle that even important news events fall off their radar screen after 48 hours. Blogs keep stories alive by recirculating ideas and reassembling them with new angles, insights and even newsworthy revelations. For example, it is widely known that weblogs were credited with interesting the mainstream news media in the racially insensitive remarks by Sen. Trent Lott that eventually led to his resignation as Senate majority leader.

Since it seems as though weblogs are here to stay—at least in years, rather than minutes—there are a few things to keep in mind when building your blog:

- First, decide if your blog will allow comments.
- A blog entry should evoke further thought (relevant press releases, discussions and announcements)
- Think about perspective (keep track of who's reading your blog)
- Write tight headlines - encourage interest
- Link to the context
- Make available through RSS (Real Simple Syndication)
- Quote indirectly and link
- Review other like-minded blogs for conversations provoked by your blog
- Create buzz

To learn more about Weblogs and the media, check out the list of [books](#) below:

- ***We've Got Blog: How Weblogs are Changing Our Culture***
by Rebecca Blood, John Rodzvilla
- ***We the Media: Grassroots Journalism By The People, For the People***
by Dan Gillmor

- ***Who Let The Blogs Out?: A Hyperconnected Peek at the World of Weblogs***
by Biz Stone
- ***Advances in Intelligent IT: Active Media Technology 2006***
by Yuefeng Li, Mark Looi, Ning Zhong
- ***Leveraging Mobile Media: Cross-Media Strategy and Innovation Policy for Mobile Media Communication***
by Valerie Feldmann
- ***Podcasting Hacks: Tips & Tools for Blogging Out Loud***
by Jack D. Herrington

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies would like to know if you've got a Weblog! Please email us at rbrittin@fishwildlife.org. Thank you!



STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Color of Tomorrow: Embracing Diversity

By Lydia Saldaña, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Jim Stewart, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

One of the most challenging issues facing natural resource agencies in America is a lack of diversity in those who participate in outdoor recreational activities and those who make up the professional conservation workforce. According to U.S. Census projections, the Hispanic and Asian-American populations will triple in the next 50 years and the white population will drop to about half of the general population. At the same time, the ranks of hunters and anglers who support state conservation efforts continue to decline, and are made up primarily of white males. Statistics compiled by the National Survey on Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation indicate that 75 percent of hunter/anglers are male and 88 percent are white. Only 5 percent are Hispanic, 4 percent African-American and 1 percent are Asian Americans. These trends should alarm anyone concerned about the future viability of the North American conservation model that depends on license fees and other related funding from those who participate in outdoor activities.

Increasing the diversity of outdoor recreationists and those who choose a conservation-related career must be addressed if we are to maintain our relevance in America. We can no longer do "business as usual" as new markets demand new strategies and new thinking. How do we connect with these new audiences and create opportunities for participation and recruitment? What tools do we need and how do we take those first critical steps?

These questions have been discussed with increasing frequency within conservation circles. The Education and Outreach Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is taking a more active role in leading the discussion and championing change. A roundtable discussion convened at the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference in Portland, Oregon this past March explored the topic with a variety of experts. The panel was composed of community leaders, Forest Service professionals and outreach specialists from various public agencies who spoke about the opportunities to reach out to these new markets and the broad range of effective outreach efforts already underway in the Pacific Northwest.

Stay tuned for an upcoming broadcast/webcast from the National Conservation Training Center on Wednesday, June 27. The broadcast will continue the diversity discussion with a panel of national experts to further explore effective outreach strategies.

Dr. Beverly Hobbs is the director of the Oregon Outreach Project based at Oregon State University (OSU) and has been involved in outreach to the Latino communities for more than 10 years. She discussed the Oregon Outreach Project that is connecting Latino youth and their families to 4-H programs.

"Our goals for these efforts have always been to increase the statewide capacity of OSU Extension to support community-based programs for Latino children, youth and families," Dr. Hobbs said. "One of the things we have learned is that it is very important to make a long-term commitment and not just try something for a limited time and give up if it doesn't immediately prove effective."

Hobbs discussed the importance of developing relationships within the Latino community and how important it is to take steps to ensure that programs are culturally responsive. She also discussed different recruitment strategies that have worked for the 4-H program.

Her message was reinforced by Mario Magaña, a regional 4-H agent in Oregon. Magaña's personal story is a compelling one. He was a migrant farm worker who spoke no English 10 years ago. He heard a Spanish-language radio spot from OSU one day while picking apples and was inspired to finish his GED. He then went on to earn a bachelor's degree, and then a master's degree in Forestry and Adult Education. He now serves as a direct contact in Oregon State's outreach program raising awareness and creating opportunities for youth in the Latino community.

"The broader vision of these programs is to create an opportunity for Latino youth to explore continued educational options and guide them to careers through studies at community colleges and universities," he said.

One of the strategies Magaña uses is a 4-H summer camp that exposes Latino youth to different environments, introduces new information and provides opportunities for them to learn about postsecondary education and ways to fund it while at the same time engaging them in fun and challenging outdoor educational activities.

The Oregon Outreach project has an excellent Web site that provides additional information about the project. Visit <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/oregonoutreach/index.html>

Another topic that resonated among panelists and attendees was the need to diversify the workplace. Mark Baumgartner is a program manager for the international lumber giant, Weyerhaeuser, and he outlined efforts to increase the diversity of their workforce. Weyerhaeuser funds a program at OSU that introduces Latino students to opportunities within the forestry industry. Program participants experience events such as overnight educational campouts to local forests and field trips to OSU to learn about the College of Forestry and the career fields its graduates are prepared to enter. The program has resulted in students enrolling in the forestry program, which has funneled minority interns and potential employees to Weyerhaeuser.

"Weyerhaeuser has made an investment and a commitment to introduce Latino youth to the opportunities within our industry," said Baumgartner. "We are doing 'kitchen table outreach' here which means spending time and talking with the kids *and* their parents about careers in forestry. These efforts are paying off and we hope we'll see an increase in applications to OSU's forestry program and an increase in qualified applications for employment with Weyerhaeuser."

The takeaway message from the panel discussion is that there are many opportunities to reach and engage these new audiences. When we reach out to them in a culturally responsive way, their interest in learning more about participating in outdoor recreational activities is evident. It is clear that natural resource agencies need to look outside traditional channels and embrace new outreach strategies including forming new partnerships and delivery channels that speak directly to these audiences.

While the overall decrease in participation among the traditional fish and wildlife audience needs to be addressed, these emerging markets provide valuable insight and opportunity to stabilize and even grow participation numbers. More importantly, as our population becomes more diverse, focusing attention and resources on this issue will ensure that the face of our constituent base and our employees more closely resembles the "color of tomorrow."



TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE UPDATE

Take it Outside! Getting Media and Members of Congress into the Field

By Rebecca Brooke, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Filling the sky with their haunting call, thousands of sandhill cranes descended in the red dusk of a chilly March evening to roost on the bare banks of the Platte River. The birds, journeying along their migratory route from Texas to

Alaska, were oblivious to the half-dozen reporters and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R. Neb.) in a nearby bird blind. "Incredible!" and "This is the most amazing thing I've ever seen!" were the whispered remarks repeated for much of the three hours spent watching the birds. Up and down the river, three other blinds also held reporters and members of Nebraska's Congressional delegation and their staff.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's recent Teaming with Wildlife media tour was a resounding success, attracting over 20 reporters and 50 members of the Nebraska Teaming with Wildlife Coalition for a day of State Wildlife Grant site visits along the Platte River where the annual migration of the sandhill cranes created a striking backdrop to the ongoing conservation work. News stories on the need for greater funding as well as the new conservation partnerships and great work of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission showed up in every major paper in the state over the next several weeks.

"We were very pleased with how this turned out," said Jerry Kane, a Public Information Officer for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. "Getting reporters out into the field got us some great press on our Natural Legacy Project – our state wildlife action plan – and also the need for greater funding for wildlife conservation. It was a huge success."

Field trips are one of the most effective ways to show not only media but also elected officials and their staff what is being done on the ground to help wildlife. They can be a powerful tool in making the case for new and greater agency funding. Showcasing your on-the-ground projects and meeting your conservation partners gives elected officials a real, first-hand understanding of what conservation is all about and is a great story for a local reporter.

"We do a field trip for Congressional staff every year to a state wildlife grant site and have found that it's a great way to demonstrate the real success state fish and wildlife agencies are capable of when given funding," said Naomi Edelson, Teaming with Wildlife Director for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "I would recommend field trips with Congress members as well as state legislators and media to any agency as a way to build credibility around your wildlife action plan and raise awareness of the need for new and greater funding for wildlife conservation and related recreation and education."

The Association is happy to assist any state interested in coordinating a media tour around their state wildlife action plan. For a step-by-step guide to putting together a field trip and other background material, visit: <http://www.teaming.com/tools/fieldtrips.html>

'Preventing Wildlife from Becoming Endangered' the Goal of Two New Web Sites

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is pleased to announce the launch of two new Web sites. The www.wildlifeactionplans.org Web site provides detailed information on the state wildlife action plans and partnerships forming to ensure their implementation, and the revamped www.teaming.com will be the online home for the Teaming with Wildlife coalition and provide information on the need for new and greater funding to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. We hope you will find these Web sites a useful resource!

www.wildlifeactionplans.org

The state wildlife action plans were completed in 2006 by each state's fish and wildlife agency and contain information on low and declining populations of wildlife, their habitats, threats and the conservation actions needed to prevent them from becoming endangered. The new Web site www.wildlifeactionplan.org provides detailed information on every state's wildlife action plan and the partnerships being built to implement them. It is a clearinghouse where state, federal and local partners can obtain information on projects addressing the priorities within the wildlife action plans and provide models for working together to move priority actions forward.

www.teaming.com

The newly revamped www.teaming.com site is the communications hub for the 5,000-organization-strong Teaming with Wildlife coalition. This Web site will interface with www.wildlifeactionplans.org and give timely background on why new and greater funding for wildlife conservation and related recreation and education is a national imperative. The Web site includes detailed information on federal wildlife funding programs and pending legislation, information on every state's Teaming with Wildlife coalition, state-level funding initiatives, upcoming coalition events, a newsroom with press releases and recent media coverage and outreach tools for state and national coalition leaders.

Have any questions or comments? Email your feedback to teaming@fishwildlife.org

Wildlife Agencies Pleased as House Subcommittee Approves Appropriations Markup

by Rachel Brittin, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, led by Chairman, Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.), approved the Interior Environmental Appropriations bill in May with significant proposed increases for fish and wildlife conservation, including \$85 million for the State Wildlife Grants Program, \$42.6 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and \$5.2 million for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.



The pygmy rabbit is one of the 151 endangered species in Washington, home state for Rep. Norm Dicks (D)

“We were heartened to see the dramatic changes for some of these important fish and wildlife programs,” said Matt Hogan, Executive Director of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “The additional funding for these programs will help us more adequately fund our nation’s conservation needs.”

For the state fish and wildlife agencies the markup is a significant victory for the **State Wildlife Grants Program**, funded at \$85 million. This program is the nation’s core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. This year, 162 members of congress, including 60 senators—representing both parties in every part of the country and in urban, rural and suburban areas—signed on to a letter supporting \$85 million in funding. This record level of funding for State Wildlife Grants has been reached only once before in 2002 and represents a substantial increase from the \$67.5 million in FY 2007.

“This is a significant step forward, providing critical funds for states to manage wildlife resources more effectively and to address specific threats to wildlife around the nation,” said Rep. Norman Dicks (D-Wash). “Now that the state [wildlife action] plans have all been completed, this increased funding will help implement these important conservation measures.”

In addition, the state agencies were pleased with the appropriated funding for the **North American Wetlands Conservation Act** at \$42.6 million. This funding will ensure that the Joint Ventures are able to carry out high priority wetlands habitat projects.

The subcommittee agreed to the president’s request of \$5.2 million to fund implementation of the **National Fish Habitat Action Plan**. This national aquatic conservation effort is modeled after and seeks to emulate the success of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. To date more than 500 organizations have signed on as partners to this effort.

In April, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies testified at a hearing for the House Interior Environmental Appropriations Subcommittee, offering its state fish and wildlife agency perspective on the Appropriations bill and its proposed increase in funding for conservation. Each of these recommendations emphasizes the importance of the states’ interests in more proactive conservation, advancing landscape-level conservation and forging new partnerships.

One recommendation of the Association’s was to boost the **Landowner Incentives Program (LIP)** to \$25 million, although the president recommended no further funding for the program. In the end, the subcommittee agreed with the administration providing no funds for FY 2008. In past years, LIP has worked to forge unique partnerships between state and federal agencies and private landowners, including water rights holders, and is being used to emphasize the opportunity and importance of proactive conservation of at-risk species in private watersheds and landscapes.

For more information about appropriations please call Rachel Brittin at (202) 624-7744.



News of the Weird

If you encounter bizarre headlines from your state that we can include in future issues of The Balance Wheel, please send the story or a link to Dottie Head, TBW editor, at dottiehead1@yahoo.com. A few caveats: 1) they must involve agency personnel and 2) they

should be humorous, but not tragic....in other words, nobody was seriously injured or killed. Enjoy!

What's in Your Wallet?

By Scott Pengelly, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Minnesota DNR Conservation Officer (CO) Paul Kuske came across a snowmobiler who was stuck in a ditch. The owner claimed his snowmobile was registered, but couldn't find evidence of that in his billfold. While the owner was fumbling through his wallet, a folded up piece of paper fell out, which CO Kuske recognized as a DNR ticket. The ticket, issued by another CO, was for failing to register the snowmobile. Kuske added a second ticket to the snowmobiler's collection.



UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

2007 ACI Conference, July 8-12, Eastover Resort, Mass.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Annual Director's Meeting, July 7-12, Flagstaff, Ariz.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) Annual Director's Meeting, July 15-18, Minocqua, Wis.

2007 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Annual Conference, Sept. 16-21, Louisville, Ky.

International Boating & Water Safety Summit, April 16-19 2008, San Diego, Calif.



OTHER NEWS

ACI Website Gets New Look

By Dottie Head, Editor, The Balance Wheel

Changes are brewing on the ACI Web site at www.aci-net.org. In the next few weeks, ACI will be going live with a new site that will make keeping membership listings up-to-date much easier. The URL will not change, but the site is going to look a bit different. While you will still find conference information, The Balance Wheel, discussion forums, a list of officers and other items on website, it will also be possible for members to update their state's information on the Web site without going through a middle man (actually, it's a middle woman named Nancy Herron.) Over the next few weeks, ACI will be asking each agency to designate one person that can be responsible for keeping membership data on that state up-to-date. A notice will be posted on the listserv when the new site goes live, so be sure to take a minute to check it out and let us know what you think!



MEMBER NEWS

Chris Chaffin Leaves The Outdoor Channel and Starts Chaffin Communications

Chris Chaffin, 32-year outdoor industry professional, recently resigned his position as Vice President of Public Relations and Conservation for The Outdoor Channel. He has formed Chaffin Communications, Inc.--a public relations/communications/marketing company focusing on the outdoor community.

Chaffin Communications, Inc. applies Chris Chaffin's 32 years of professional experience and connections in the outdoor industry to help conservation, wildlife and outdoor entertainment organizations succeed in today's market. The company provides consulting and a well-rounded list of services to meet public relations, marketing and communications needs. Chaffin brings his skills in those areas plus proven partnership development experience with state wildlife agencies, the hunting/shooting/firearms industry, and the outdoor television/entertainment industries to the new company.

Chris can be reached at Chris@ChaffinCommunications.com; (321)729-0280 office or (321)506-5500 mobile.

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