

2023 Winter Meeting – Business Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2023

WAFWA President Jennifer Psyllakis called the meeting to order.

Roll Call by Executive Director Zach Lowe: Ben Mulligan (proxy, AK), Ty Gray (AZ), Heather Dugan (CO), Ed Schriever (ID), Brad Loveless (KS), Tim McCoy (NE), Michael Sloane (NM), Alan Jenne (NV), J.D. Strong (OK), Curt Melcher (OR), J Shirley (UT), Nathan Pamplin (proxy, WA), Brian Nesvik (WY), Jennifer Psyllakis (BC).

Welcome and WAFWA President's Remarks – Jennifer Psyllakis

Jennifer Psyllakis welcomed and thanked people for attending. Congratulated Allen Jenne for being announced as new Director of Nevada Department of Wildlife this week. Thanks and gratitude to WAFWA and New Mexico Fish and Game for a successful meeting. Thanks to Cindy Delaney for her support. Thanks to Gold and Silver level sponsors.

The purpose of the business meeting is to review the business during Winter Meeting and intentions moving forward. The expectations of Winter Meeting were to review the structure of the organization and review the ways WAFWA operates to ensure the foundation is secure before we expand and look forward to new opportunities. This set the context for the decisions made and necessary discussion.

The executive summary of this meeting will be sent out in the next 4 weeks. This will include meeting summaries including R3.

Executive Director's Report – Zach Lowe

We have had high expectations for WAFWA's rebuilding/refining of financial organization and bookkeeping processes. A collective effort from leadership prior to meeting has been focused on this scrub. The progress made with this effort has been visible in this meeting because we can now look deeper into strategic moves and thinking ahead. We have advanced business operations to increase efficiency from a staffing standpoint, and we can now strategically grow with Stacie Brew, WAFWA Director of Finance, and opportunity in the disease position with Arizona. We have an opportunity for landscape-level planning with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and working with Elsa Haubold to arrange that. Thanks to the WAFWA Executive Committee and other board members for their time and support. Thinking ahead, we need to start thinking about how we tell our story.

Minorities in Natural Resource Conservation - Brad Loveless

This committee started in SEAFWA with about 20 students. Concentrating on women and minorities early in their college careers can increase their relationship with the agencies. We will ask for a vote at the WAFWA Summer Meeting to ask if the states are willing to contribute about \$1500 per year for committee development within WAFWA.

Announcement by Jennifer Psyllakis

A collective thank you to Ed Schriever and congratulations on retirement from the agency. Ed spoke about the future of NFHAP and on keeping fisheries in mind when discussing WAFWA priorities during his remarks.

Directors Forum

- Support was given to Ty Gray to write a horse and burro position statement.
- A tribal engagement working group was created with Jennifer Psyllakis, Curt Melcher, J.D. Strong and Hank Worsch to gather the information on the of tribes and indigenous groups if and how they would be interested in participating in WAWFA and outlining next steps.
- It was decided that the Foundation for Wildlife and Fisheries in the West to be renamed as the WAFWA Foundation
- Zach Lowe will be performing an asset evaluation on the ranch.
- We will need to send a guidance to the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the America the Beautiful requested topics within the next month.
- The America the Beautiful Document that was circulated is a draft. If you have input on how this should change, please submit that in the next month.
- Nomination Committee Curt Melcher stepped up. To help create a process document to pass over to future committee chairs.
- Brian Nesvik, Wyoming is willing to serve as president, and Ty Gray is willing to serve as vice president in the next term.

Commissioners Committee

- Commissioners update from Karen Bailey of Colorado and Kim Thorburn of Washington. Thanks on behalf of the Commissioners. They first went over the state of the state reports and then discuss specific experiences of onboarding. The key takeaway is that serving as a Commissioner is an honor and privilege and also a great responsibility. They are interested in robust onboarding to be successful. They also had a public input process discussion. For summer meeting, they are grateful for the space and to continue discussions. Kim has applied to be reappointed. In Washington, they have a culture war against traditional hunters that feel threatened, and commissioners need to consider a diversity of values.

State wildlife action plans - Jennifer Newmark of Nevada

- The group reviewed the guidance document. They are requesting a time limited committee or working group. To allow space for them to meet a 3 year commitment and then reassess the need after that. Previously, this effort was included in Nongame and Endangered Species Committee. If the state is member to multiple associations, they need to decide which they will go with. Comments regarding the likelihood of all states in WAFWA utilizing the WAFWA system to assign reviewers. Cortney needs to reach out to straddle states to confirm.

Initiatives

- Wild sheep initiative – Daryl Lutz of Wyoming is the new initiative lead. Brian has agreed to a two year term, where Daryl remains a full employee of WY and the money goes toward travel, publications, etc. This is already set to go. We wanted to make sure that the need met the initiative. Brian is now the director sponsor of this group. After two years, we will reassess if he will remain Director Sponsor.

- Western Native Trout Initiative – Therese will be retiring in the next year. This is a big workload to transfer and she has agreed to help with onboarding process. We need to start the hiring process now in order to allow for this overlap. This group also needs a director sponsor.
 - Follow-up: Zach met with WNTI steering committee and asked them to break down WNTI as it stands to its specific pieces of work. Encouraged that Therese’s replacement be hired before Summer Meeting so that Therese can work alongside new hire to help with onboarding.
- CHAT - Chanda grew CHAT in new ways and decided to retire this as an item of work. The scope of geospatial skills that serves the organization has been archived and remaining funds will allow for maintenance. Chanda is now the director of operations of the CCAA and a geospatial specialist within WAFWA. We should celebrate that CHAT did what it was intended to do.
- Grasslands – Bill gave an update this week discussed ESA issues. The Big Ecosystem Qualifier catches a lot of work. Need to map a strategy to address this as a catchall with associated work.
- Sage – Both the ecotype and the bird. WAFWA has done a lot of work (San and the states), but we need to know where to go to next. Need to reassign a chair for the EOC. Look at strategies for immediate and long-term effort. Executive Committee will discuss a chair and assign along with cleanup. Sagebrush EOC will be meeting in March at the North American.

Mule Deer Working Group – Jim Heffelfinger

- Jim sought approval of the fact sheet that was distributed. There will be more new upcoming drafts this summer. The deer and Elk working workshop. Is May 15th through 18th in Flagstaff, AZ.
 - Vote: Approval of fact sheet: Ty moved, JD seconded. Motion carried.
- Walmo Book is being updated. This effort has taken the last four years. The ecosystem and management of black tailed deer in North America has a May 15th published date. Proceeds from this book will be directed to the Mule Deer Working Group. This group will need a new director sponsor with Ed's departure.

Other Business

- Governance work will go out for review. With 30 day review.
- Deputies were invited intentionally for this unit of work. They will be reporting out their findings for directors by the North American.
 - Follow up: this report is in the Executive Summary report from this meeting provided to Directors and Deputies
- R3 will be meeting at the conclusion of this meeting and they will provide a report out of this months meeting by summer meeting.
 - Follow up: this report is in the Executive Summary report from this meeting Directors and Deputies
- Winter meeting: It was discussed and voted that we move the timing of winter meeting to early December and compressed by one day. And also avoid existing commitments. That we discussed.
- Western conservation leadership. Heather Dugan will chair and Jim Fredericks will vice chair. Brian is stepping away. This program is upscaling capacity. In the coming year, there will be

multiple course offerings and formats in diverse target audiences. We will include Ali's report out from this meeting in the minutes.

- Include suggestions and recommendations for chair and director chair for committees and working groups in the Governance review process due this month.

Closing – Jennifer Psyllakis

Closing: For the next 100 years, this organization will be more complex with more values that need to be considered. We are looking ahead at this process and dialogue in the future. We will need put more in than what you want to expect to get out. The steady, strong foundation of WAFWA is being secured, and we see benefits of this. Of this foundation, the Mule Deer Working Group, is an example. Looking ahead to next summer, how can we as membership create the vision for the future? Shifting gears to our next charge.

- Vote: Motion to adjourn by Ty. Brian seconded, so moved.