

# Management

# TRACKS



News from the Organization of Wildlife Planners

## The Power of Collaborative Marketing and Communications Vehicles

By Joe Starinchak, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

As the only federal resource management agency that focuses exclusively on fish and wildlife conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) works collaboratively to conserve fish and wildlife for all Americans. Given the multiple roles of the agency, the complexity of the issues we address, and the funding emphasis on resource management activities, communications activities are often an afterthought. However, our two national social marketing campaigns are redefining the role of outreach and communications in our agency.

These campaigns deal with stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species, one of the most complex challenges we face as an agency. Nonnative aquatic species are introduced through many channels, and once established, can wreak environmental havoc, degrade aquatic resources, and make waters unusable for recreation. They can also impact human health. In the U.S., economists estimate costs at over \$100 billion annually, more than most other natural disasters combined.

Global economic linkages, the role of commerce, and differing wildlife values complicate the issue. For example, shipping introduces aquatic invasive species via ships' ballast water, aquaculture species

from pet and garden imports escape or are released, and by traveling to new areas, recreational users unknowingly spread these harmful species to other waters (e.g., zebra mussels attached to boats). This is compounded by the multiple federal, regional, state and local agencies that regulate the issue and attempt to communicate to the public about it amid conflicting, overlapping, and unclear legal authorities. While some segments of our population are aware of the invasive species problem, they often feel powerless to do anything because the many introductory pathways for invasives can involve significant economic activities, which one may have little or no ability to influence. Finally, the aquatic nature of these species means that impacts often are underwater and not realized until damage has already occurred, rendering invasive species and their implications literally "below the surface" in people's minds.

The government has struggled to make this issue relevant to the public. Outreach has historically been passive, agency-specific, and laden with technical jargon. This combination neither inspires the public nor provides the necessary buy-in for wanting to make a difference. While mechanisms like fact sheets, press releases, and Web sites may fulfill agency information obligations, research shows that these

tools create limited behavioral change with respect to public action on invasive species.

Millions annually participate in fishing and other water-based recreation. Another considerable segment actively keeps fish and other ornamental species. While these activities make significant positive contributions to our society, lack of awareness, understanding, or responsibility concerning their impact related to invasive species creates a problem that costs resource-dependent industries and taxpayers millions of dollars.

Research has identified water-based recreation and the aquarium hobby as potential sources and vectors for the spread of aquatic invasive

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## **2005-06 Officers and Directors**

### **President**

Larry Gigliotti  
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks  
(605) 773-4231  
Larry.Gigliotti@state.sd.us

### **President-Elect**

Dana Dolsen  
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
(801) 538-4790  
danadolsen@utah.gov

### **Treasurer**

Andrea Crews  
Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation  
(405) 522-0769  
acrews@odwc.state.ok.us

### **Secretary**

Verdie Abel  
Ohio Division of Wildlife  
(614) 265-7020  
verdie.abel@dnr.state.oh.us

### **Executive Committee**

Larry Gigliotti – SD  
Dana Dolsen – UT  
Andrea Crews – OK  
Verdie Abel – OH  
Shaun Keeler – NY  
Michele Beucler – ID

### **Regional Directors**

#### *Northeast*

Genevieve Pullis-LaRouche – USFWS  
(703) 358-1854

#### *Southeast*

Barry Sumners – TN (615) 781-6599  
Lynn Garrison – KY (502) 564-3400

#### *Midwest*

Phil King – OH (614) 265-6321  
Mary Lyon – MO (573) 751-4115

#### *West*

Rob Brooks – MT (406) 444-5786  
Chris Burkett – WY (703) 358-2338

### **Newsletter Production and Editing**

Juliette Wilson, Editor  
(970) 215-5153  
juliette\_wilson@comcast.net

Cheryl Kulus, Layout  
(970) 221-2823  
ckulus@juno.com

# The Prez Sez...

## *A few words from our president*

By Larry Gigliotti, South Dakota Department of Fish and Game

### **Let's get excited about OWP!**

While many wildlife agencies experience budget problems from time to time, triggering an evaluation of expenditures, I think that the value of OWP membership continues to far exceed the meager membership fees. But sometimes it helps to step back and take stock of those benefits from time to time.

One benefit is the Annual Conference and Meeting. From my experience over the past dozen-plus years, the agenda has always been packed with interesting, informative, and relevant topics. But that's only half of the benefit from the Annual Conference. The other half is the opportunity to develop a network of professionals (and friends!) with accumulated mega-years of experiences from around the country. The issues and problems faced by wildlife agencies are often quite similar from state to state. The Annual Conference provides an opportunity for wildlife planners to get together and share ideas and solutions. And every year the Conference Proceedings provide its members with an updated contact list.

The professional network of wildlife planners is greatly enhanced via the OWP listserv, Web site, and biannual newsletter. The Web site provides an assemblage of information from past conferences and a dynamic, searchable contact list of OWP members. Have a question or need help? The listserv is a quick and easy way to reach out to wildlife planning professionals around the country.

Want to receive some training or provide training for your agency? OWP has two courses available: *Comprehensive Management Systems* and *Measuring Program Performance: Results-Driven Management*.

Another special benefit of OWP membership is the opportunity for leadership development. With OWP being a small organization, there is ample oppor-



tunity for members to take a leadership role. Serving on the OWP Executive Committee is an excellent way to gain some leadership experience.

New experiences...this year the OWP Conference will be in Canada (see page 7), which will provide an opportunity to see wildlife issues from new perspectives and expand our network of planning professionals. The 2007 Conference will be in Virginia and the agenda, which is still in the early phases of development, promises to be very relevant to current issues facing wildlife agencies. And, in the very early planning stages for 2008 is the possibility for an OWP-NARRP (National Association of Recreation Resource Planners) joint conference. I'm very excited about the possibility of making a professional connection with NARRP, which normally hosts a conference about twice the size of OWP's conferences. Just think of the possibilities of being able to expand our network of professional planners!

**Hope to see you all in Canada this May!**

# The Next Generation of Conservation in Missouri

By Mary Lyon, Missouri Department of Conservation

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has been preparing a new strategic plan over the last year. The title, *The Next Generation of Conservation*, is intended to mean that conservation efforts in Missouri have had a valuable history and are important both for Missourians living today and for future generations. In 1976, Missouri conservation was transformed when voters approved a one-eighth of one cent sales tax to fund broad fish, forest, and wildlife programs. Prior to that time, MDC's budget relied primarily upon hunters and anglers through permit sales and excise taxes on sporting equipment. With the passage of the sales tax amendment, all Missourians became shareholders in conservation, leading to a new blueprint for services called the "Design for Conservation." Over time, many accomplishments have been recorded, but the future challenges to Missouri's conservation resources may prove to be the most difficult yet. *The Next Generation of Conservation* is the Department's plan to step beyond the 1976 Design for Conservation while still continuing the work promised to Missourians

that was part of the sales tax vote. *The Next Generation of Conservation* has also been developed as an attempt to clearly communicate the Department's priorities with both Missourians and Department staff.

Although the planning process began over a year ago, the process of involving the public in guiding the Department has been an ongoing effort. In the past three years the Department has conducted 32 public meeting forums across the state, an additional 30 meetings on the Department's deer management strategy, and many other meetings and statewide surveys on opinions and participation. This information has informed Department staff about what Missourians want from the Department and what they demand for Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife resources.

In March 2005, the members of the Conservation Commission, many conservation-minded individuals, and Department staff were asked to answer nine strategic questions about the fish, forests, wildlife, people, and conservation work in Missouri. Some of the questions required more than broad thinking and were directly focused on what is happening today in Missouri. What are the greatest threats to fish,

forests, and wildlife in Missouri? How can the Department better serve each Missourian? What can the Department do to improve fish, forests, and wildlife to support the quality of life and strong economic conditions that Missourians expect? We received many ideas, thoughts, and suggestions. During a series of meetings involving Division Administrators, Department staff, and the Director's Office, these inputs were grouped into nine goal statements and 29 desired results statements.

A series of 58 specific and measurable actions have been identified and are being developed as examples of what the Department will do to work towards achieving the desired results. The examples play a very important role in making the plan emotionally engaging and relevant to both Missourians and Department staff. An important outcome of the process has been to develop a single document, with clear and succinct words that can be used in a variety of ways, to communicate with both Missourians and Department staff. The draft plan is still being refined and should be complete for distribution in the summer of 2006.

## Elections are Coming!

**Bios are online** By Lynn Garrison, Nominating Committee Chair

The Nominating Committee consists of Mark Burch, Brian Stenquist, and Lynn Garrison. OWP Operational Guidelines call for the committee to submit a slate of candidates to the OWP Executive Committee at least 90 days prior to the annual meeting. The slate of candidates was submitted to, and subsequently approved by, EXCOM during their conference call on January 20. Elections and voting will be con-

ducted at the Annual Business Meeting in Alberta in May. If an eligible governmental organization will not be represented at the business meeting, an absentee ballot may be used. Absentee ballots can be obtained from Lynn Garrison at [Lynn.Garrison@ky.gov](mailto:Lynn.Garrison@ky.gov) or 502-564-7109 ext. 484. Biographies for the four candidates are available online at <http://www.owpweb.org/docs/Category:Elections>.

### 2006 Candidates

#### **President-Elect:**

Bill Romberg (AK)  
Robert Brooks (MT)

#### **Secretary:**

Verdie Abel (OH)  
Barry Sumners (TN)



# Field Notes

Take a gander at what's happening around the regions.



## Minnesota

“Good Golly, Miss Molly,” we are busy in Minnesota, and we feel good! Here are a few examples of our planning-related work using the CMS questions as a framework.

### 1. “What business are we in?”

Clearly Minnesota DNR is in the public hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching (as well as the public timber, water, and recreation) business. Though successful, we may be entering the “ecological resource business” where we view the ecosystems (e.g., forest systems, grassland systems, river systems) as a “resource.” Such a view could improve our ability to manage for multiple natural resource products (e.g., wild animals, timber, and irrigation water) in a more equitable and sustainable fashion.

2. “Where are we?” Among a variety of inventory activities, we are creating a new stream survey manual that will guide our inventory of stream resources over the next decade. The new manual calls for collection of more sophisticated data to diagnose not only the game fish communities, but also other dimensions of stream health as ecological resources. We continue to collect important information on rare species through our county biological survey, and we are refining our natural heritage data systems to keep up with state-of-the-art practices.

### 3. “Where do we want to be?”

The most significant strategic planning process of late is the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). We are just going to print with our FWS-accepted strategy, “Tomorrow’s Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife.” The strategy has been well received, and we are looking forward to operational planning. In another strategic planning activity, we have started meeting with deer hunters about appro-

priate deer population levels. Last year’s three sessions will be followed by six more over the late winter and early spring.

4. “How will we get there?” Our move into operational planning for the CWCS will begin with conversations with field practitioners that helped create “Tomorrow’s Habitat.” We will explore how we can continue working together to actually create tomorrow’s habitat and enhance knowledge and appreciation of species in greatest conservation need. We are also creating new “trout stream habitat improvement guidelines” in collaboration with external and internal stakeholders. These guidelines will help operationalize our goals of improving the size structure of trout populations while also enhancing other resource products that flow from managed trout streams (e.g., bird habitats, stable soils).

5. “Are we making it?” The CWCS calls for a monitoring system to track how we are doing with species in greatest conservation need. Creating this monitoring system will be a major focus over the next year. We are also developing a monitoring system to examine how successful the state is with its “no net loss” policy. And the DNR continues to refine its department-wide performance indicator system (The Conservation Agenda), using it to communicate with the legislature and citizens about where we are, where we want to be, and how well we are “making it.”

## New York

At this writing, New York is eagerly awaiting word that our CWCS has been accepted by the FWS. Our initial feedback has been quite positive. We are deeply involved in strategic planning for implementing a new State Wildlife Grants program here at our agency, including new staff. We also recently

completed public comment on our 2005 State Open Space Acquisition Plan (OSP). The OSP is updated every three years, and includes recreational and natural resource protection priorities for acquisition statewide. Acquisitions that use state funds must be consistent with the priorities of this plan. This update of the OSP coincided with the final stages of our CWCS. The staff in two Divisions at the Department of Environmental Conservation collaborated to incorporate the protection needs of our 537 Species of Greatest Conservation Need into the priorities of the OSP. Finally, our Bureau of Fisheries is in the process of reviewing and updating our Bureau Objectives for the first time in 10 years. The review is sparking lively philosophical discussions among the Bureau managers.

## Utah

Over the past six months the UDWR has received FWS approval and acceptance of its CWCS. Recently we distributed over 140 paper copies and 200 CDs to various stakeholders, partners and agency staff. Our habitat restoration work continues unabated, although there has yet to be developed a standardized method for tracking projects as they are completed for reporting purposes. A similar concern exists for tracking, recording and accessing the results of population enhancement projects affecting sensitive aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species. The major challenge in the next year is to ensure that the accountability system of completed conservation action projects is beta tested and put online. Such a system needs to encompass all CWCS species and habitats projects (data entry, verification, storage, and retrieval) so a reporting framework is adopted division-wide that will enable us to

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## Field Notes

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examine our progress, both successes and failures. Although the state has a huge general fund surplus, our agency is facing a shortfall due to salary and cost-of-living adjustments, necessitating program and staff budget cuts. Key senior staff positions are being vacated by employees retiring; of these, some are left temporarily vacant to recoup funds, and those less crucial go unfilled.

### Vermont

Vermont is on the verge of adopting its third Strategic Plan. The plan will cover the period of 2006 through 2010. Learning from the Department's previous strategic planning efforts, we made changes in the approach. This strategic plan will be for five years to allow sufficient time to implement the plan. The plan was divided into four areas of products and services provided by the Department. The areas were ecosystem, recreation, safety, and management, each with its own set of goals and outcomes. Finally, indicators were developed for each outcome as measures of Department progress, but an effort was made to limit the number of indicators. The plans have become progressively easier to develop, including the public input process.

### OWP MISSION

To help improve the management of fish and wildlife agencies and to help support the professional lives of the people that participate in our organization.



## The Community-Based Collaboratives Research Consortium Conference

By Margo Matthews, MAP Enterprises

When I saw Dana Dolsen's information on the OWP listserv about a conference of the Community-Based Collaboratives Research Consortium that was to be held in Sedona, Arizona, last November, I was instantly intrigued. Public involvement in wildlife management decision making is a topic near and dear to me. I wondered what this research consortium was all about and how its work might apply to my own work on this topic. What better way to find out than to attend their conference?

My first question was, what does the consortium mean by the term "community-based collaborative"? I found at the conference that it seems to mean different things to different consortium members, but the Consortium has a working definition, which I have condensed to the following:

*[A community-based collaborative is] a group that is voluntarily convened within a community to focus on a resource management issue(s) or planning involving public lands or resources, that is brought together to influence the protection and use of natural resources; membership includes a broad array of interests and participation by local stakeholders.*

My next question involved who the Consortium is and what it does. The Consortium was formed in 1999 as a group of researchers, facilitators, community collaborative groups, environmental organizations, and agencies that wanted to learn more about collaborative processes that influence the management of public resources. The idea was to bring together the fields of conflict resolution and the social and natural sciences to study these collaborations. I learned that the Consortium has done an excellent job of fundraising, enabling it to fund a number of graduate students to conduct research and to hold the conference at an exceptionally low price. Administrative support for the Consortium is provided by the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia.

The conference presentations varied in quality and applicability to my area of interest in wildlife management decision making. The most useful to me were several that studied collaborative processes to determine success factors and principles. A few delved into aspects of collaboratives that were too esoteric for my interest. A highlight of the conference was a wonderful training session on "Learning Community Fundamentals," presented by Innovative Leadership Solutions. Another highlight was a luncheon address by Bruce Babbitt, former Secretary of the Interior, who spoke about drawing from past environmental protection experiences to guide us in the future.

The Consortium has published a 70-page guidebook entitled *Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates*, which outlines how to design and conduct a collaborative process. They also publish a biannual journal. More information about the Consortium is available at <http://www.cbrc.org>.

## Social Marketing

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species. Studies show that participants in these activities will take action to prevent nonnative introductions if they know what to do. Conversely, without proper information, people will not act to prevent this problem. To promote prevention behaviors that will limit the spread of aquatic invasive species like zebra mussels, hydrilla, snakeheads, and others, the Service, under the auspices of the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, has led the collaborative development, implementation, and evaluation of two national partnership campaigns, *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!*<sup>TM</sup> and *Habitattitude*<sup>TM</sup>.

To address the many challenges, we adopted a systemic view and identified the various leverage points for effecting change. We built broad support through our collaborative strategic planning process and combined social marketing, strategic communications, branding, and evaluation processes. By acknowledging our limited communications capacity, relatively small budget, and the need for a proactive, empowering approach, we have worked to harness the power of diverse interests to speak with one voice about this complex issue, simultaneously engaging the target audience for each campaign to become part of the solution in protecting our waters.

Through our campaign brands, we've simplified the aquatic invasive species issue and made it the focal point of the social product we created: environmentally responsible behaviors relevant to the target audience. The brands have allowed us to connect the issue with behaviors and provide multiple public, private, and nonprofit conservation interests with a turnkey communications vehicle that can be integrated into their public awareness efforts so we can leverage their outreach capabilities and communications networks. By emphasizing prevention, we avoid the definition debate and promote solutions. The customizable cooperative campaign marketing materials help

partners embrace each campaign and take credit for the message while providing additional informational support via the respective campaign Web sites ([www.protectyourwaters.net](http://www.protectyourwaters.net) and [www.habitattitude.net](http://www.habitattitude.net)). Our overall approach has engaged businesses and communities to adopt the philosophy of "thinking globally while acting locally" by promoting local actions that prevent aquatic invasive species from entering local waters while still supporting recreational use.

During the development of both campaigns, we focused on positioning them as vehicles for the entire conser-



vation community to support. This leveraged our collective abilities to raise awareness concerning invasives and promote prevention. By becoming a formal partner, organizations can access many different cooperative marketing materials, multiple versions of the campaign brands, up-to-date information about the campaigns, how the aquatic invasive species problem is affecting different parts of the country, and what is being done about it.

Also, we made strategic decisions that in the long run will enhance the campaigns' effectiveness and the public's awareness of the issue. The first was our recognition that if the conservation community is going to have success in dealing with this issue, we need to focus more on producing

measurable results and less on taking credit. As a result, our design and implementation processes accounted for many of the aforementioned issues and allowed us to gain support for stepping down and evaluating these campaigns on many different levels.

The second decision addressed ownership on a different level and affected the Web sites, which are incorporated into the respective brands; they are not "dot.gov" sites. Our informal research showed that people felt alienated by our using technical terms and acronyms to describe the issue, leading them to conclude that their actions would not matter, and only government could address this expanding problem.

With both of these campaigns, we are breaking new ground. On a national level, the campaigns have rallied traditional and non-traditional organizations of the conservation community around the concept of prevention as the key for addressing the aquatic invasive species issue. Combined, both campaigns have attracted some 320 partner organizations to help promote the prevention messages. *Stop*

*Aquatic Hitchhikers!*<sup>TM</sup>, by itself, has attracted 271 partner organizations, and *Habitattitude*<sup>TM</sup> has enlisted the active involvement and support of the pet/aquarium and nursery/landscaping industries. Government at every level (and internationally, New Zealand's Department of Conservation), nonprofits, businesses, professional organizations, and industry leaders such as Patagonia (domestic and international) are formal partners.

At the state level, where the proverbial rubber meets the road, we have been able to leverage external support to evaluate both campaigns. With *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!*<sup>TM</sup>, through the shared leadership of the state fish and wildlife agencies, the International

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## Social Marketing

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Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA), and the Service, a multi-state conservation grant was awarded to the IAFWA to (1) step down the campaign and evaluate its effectiveness in four pilot states and (2) help the regional associations affiliated with the IAFWA develop a stronger presence in addressing this issue. Each of the four pilot states chose *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!*<sup>TM</sup> to serve as the public face for their aquatic invasive species programs. By working with a group of contractors, we designed a process to provide ownership for the host state fish and wildlife agency while customizing the campaign to fit its priority needs dealing with different species and target audiences of concern. With the state fish and wildlife agency as the lead, we are finalizing the implementation and evaluation components of each

pilot state process and will have results to share this spring.

In addition to assisting the pilot states, *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!*<sup>TM</sup> served as a catalyst for enhancing coordination and communications between state agencies addressing this issue, between states within a region, and between states and the Service. The second component of the grant brought state and Service fisheries and law enforcement staffs together through collaborative workshops to enhance communications and leverage their unique authorities and responsibilities for addressing aquatic invasive species. As a result, each of the Regional Associations affiliated with the IAFWA now have a formalized committee to address aquatic invasive species issues.

With *Habitattitude*<sup>TM</sup>, we are in the beginning stages of implementing this campaign. Currently, we are working collaboratively with all components of the pet and aquarium industry, NOAA's Sea Grant program, and other partners to promote the campaign nationally and to step down and evaluate the campaign in two pilot states. Early results of our baseline survey for *Habitattitude*<sup>TM</sup> show three major findings: (1) aquarium hobbyists and water gardeners contribute to the aquatic invasive species problems, (2) they are willing to become part of the solution by adopting environmentally friendly prevention behaviors, and (3) *Habitattitude*<sup>TM</sup> will be an effective communications vehicle for promoting these behaviors.

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# 2006 OWP Annual Conference and Meeting

*Planning for Wildlife Conservation in Cultural Landscapes*

**Radisson Hotel  
and Conference Center  
Canmore, Alberta, Canada  
May 14 to 17, 2006**

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) analyzed and summarized the many serious environmental challenges facing our world. It also pointed out opportunities for improvement and gaps that can be filled. In particular, it suggested that better environmental management could be achieved by integrating ecosystem goals within broader planning frameworks and by improving decision-making processes. It also emphasized the need to improve awareness and understanding of environmental threats and opportunities among decision makers and the general public.

The foothills and valleys of the Rocky Mountains provide a clear example of competing demands within a landscape of high cultural amenity and

environmental values. Resource development and urbanization are inexorably changing wildlife habitat conditions, usually irreversibly. Wildlife management agencies are acutely challenged to deal with these pressures. Developing effective plans and policies to conserve wildlife and other natural assets is made difficult by the large number of agencies involved at various levels (federal, state/provincial, municipal), complex mosaics of land tenure and jurisdiction, and the inexorable need by governments to reduce costs and generate revenues to pay for public services.

Using the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains as a backdrop, the 2006 Conference will explore how fish and wildlife agencies can more effectively grapple with the realities of our times and contribute to more positive outcomes for both society and the environment.

### Participants will gain

- new ideas and approaches for effective public engagement in stewardship and conservation;
- enhanced appreciation for various perspectives of ecosystem management;
- valuable insights into mitigating uncertainty in large scale modeling for wildlife; and
- an opportunity to explore principles for cultural landscape assessment and planning.

### For information contact:

**Ms. Melody D. Wenet**  
OWP 2006 Conference  
Faculty of Environmental Design  
University of Calgary  
2500 University Drive N.W.  
Calgary, AB Canada T2N 1N4  
Tel. 403.220.4388  
fax 403.284.4399  
email: [wenet@ucalgary.ca](mailto:wenet@ucalgary.ca)

**Hotel registration deadline is April 30. For more conference information and to register, go to [www.owpweb.org/AnnualConf/2006conference.php](http://www.owpweb.org/AnnualConf/2006conference.php).**

For more OWP news, visit [www.owpweb.org](http://www.owpweb.org)

## **CWCS: The View from Arlington**

By Chris Burkett, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The October 1, 2005 deadline arrived and, happily, all 56 Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies were submitted on time. Since then, the National Advisory Acceptance Team (NAAT) has been working to review these documents as quickly as possible. As of January 23, the NAAT had reviewed and made recommendations on 49 of the Strategies. Of these, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) director has made a final decision on 32. So far, over 71 percent have either been approved by the director or have been recommended for approval by the NAAT. The remainder have ei-

ther been Conditionally Approved or recommended for Conditional Approval by the NAAT. Barring some unforeseen circumstance, the NAAT is scheduled to finish its initial review of all the strategies at its February meeting in Atlanta. After that, one additional meeting may be necessary to review the revised documents that were Conditionally Approved.

At the national level, a number of efforts are underway to support the Strategies and the State Wildlife Grants program. Service personnel continue to meet with Congressional staffers to

help elected officials understand the value of the Strategies and the conservation opportunities they represent. Likewise, Service personnel are promoting the Strategies within the Service, the Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies to make resource managers aware of the Strategies and explain how these documents could facilitate their efforts. Finally, a number of Service staff are involved in drafting new administrative guidelines to assist states as they move from planning and writing to implementing their Strategies.



**J. Wilson**  
**Organization of Wildlife Planners**  
**2249 Iroquois Drive**  
**Fort Collins, CO 80525-1842**



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