

**WAFWA Climate Change Committee
Meeting Summary
July 17, 2011**

In January 2011 the committee co-sponsored a WAFWA Directors' climate change forum that resulted in a prioritized list of needs for the committee to consider. The actions of the committee are a direct reflection of Directors priorities.

WAFWA Climate Change Committee Action Items to be completed by January 2012

Original Director Request: WAFWA will draft a **position statement of support for increased funding** to state agencies for climate change coordination with federal partners. The WAFWA Climate Change Committee can assist in drafting this position statement.

- **Action:** The committee will draft a letter of request to the federal agencies to help fund a position(s) either in the States or under WAFWA that could coordinate state involvement in federal western climate change initiatives. This letter will be provided to the Directors for review and approval at the January meeting.

Original Director Request: WAFWA will **request a statement from USFWS** on how they anticipate implementation of ESA and other regulatory programs to occur under climate change

- **Action:** Raise the concern of ESA and climate change to the AFWA ESA joint taskforce as an issue that needs further attention. WAFWA Climate Committee will be monitoring this effort and be available to support or provide input as appropriate.

Original Director Request: The WAFWA Climate Change Committee will develop a **positive “messaging” document** to support state agency existing efforts for climate change adaptation.

- **Action:** The committee will collaborate with AFWA Climate Change Committee on this project and submit western examples of state agency adaptation projects to the AFWA climate change committee in September. Examples need to be sent to Amber Pairis¹ by the end of August.

Original Director Request: Choose a team of staff from WAFWA states to look at existing WAFWA initiatives to examine how these initiatives integrate with climate change adaptation. The WAFWA Climate Change Committee can coordinate this effort.

- **Action:** Further discussion in January with Directors. In the interim in order to increase communication and collaboration with other committees the climate change committee will:
 - Increase coordination/communication with other WAFWA committees through liaisons from the WAFWA climate change committee to key WAFWA committees.
 - Communicate directly with the chairs of specific committees on high priority issues or activities that require the input of multiple committees.
 - Initiate and maintain a listserv for WAFWA climate change related activities

¹ climatechange@dfg.ca.gov

Other Business

- Chair will request extended time period to comment on national fish, wildlife, and habitats climate change strategy at steering committee meeting in September.
- Federal budget priorities: Committee agrees to keep the top five recommendations made at last meeting in July 2010.
- Geoff Haskett from FWS committed to talking with FWS Director Ashe about States' concerns over the boundaries of some of the LCCs.

Summary of Topics Covered

National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy

- Request that draft chapters are made available to states
- WAFWA committee should provide comment in a coordinated manner
- Concern about how far out the plan is looking and what kind of models are being used
- Need a more efficient method of communication
- Chair committed to providing additional means of communication to western states on steering committee activities through WAFWA climate change listserv and/or conference calls as appropriate.
- FWS commented that this is by no means prescriptive-an overarching strategy not a plan
- **Action:**
 - Request that the current 30 days comment period be extended.
 - More information on how this going to be used at the federal level

WAFWA Climate Committee Annual Update

- Need to follow up with Canadian partners to increase participation in this update.
- This update is an important vehicle to share state and regional needs with federal partners. Are the USFWS and NOAA receptive to the needs of the states?

Directors Forum: Committee reviewed list of proposed action items created by Directors at the forum. (See 2011 WAFWA Climate Committee Action Items_Proposed²). Discussion and action on these items is as follows.

Request for Climate change funding for greater state participation on federal initiatives

Directors' requested the committee write a letter requesting support for increased funding to state agencies for climate change. Specifically, if the federal government is focusing on LCCs and CSCs or other federal initiatives, they need the states to be involved if they are going to be successful. In order to provide effective and meaningful involvement on behalf of the states we need additional support in the form of resources to put staff in those kinds of positions.

Action: The committee will formally draft a request to the federal agencies to help fund a position(s) either in the States or under WAFWA that could coordinate state involvement in federal western climate change initiatives.

² <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/climatechange/wafwa/committee.asp>

ESA Letter

Directors' request: WAFWA will **request a statement from USFWS** on how they anticipate implementation of ESA and other regulatory programs to occur under climate change (Will climate change cause them to change how they enforce ESA? What are their expectations for the states?).

Discussion items:

- Designation of critical habitat-how is that determined?
- How is ESA going to deal with cc? Are there things that need to be informed or improved to deal with a changing climate? What about NEPA? Does that also need to be updated as well? Existing policies aren't well developed to deal with cc.
- Raise these concerns back to directors and ESA joint taskforce
- Raise this issue up to the business meeting for the directors to guide
- AFWA ESA white paper articulates these concerns. Use paper as a resource to identify what specific issues from the white paper need to be addressed.

Action: Raise the concern of ESA and climate change to the AFWA ESA joint taskforce as an issue that needs further attention. WAFWA Climate Committee will be monitoring this effort and be available to support or provide input as appropriate.

Engage and increase communication with other WAFWA committees

- Identify committees within WAFWA that might share topics/actions with climate change committee
- Build bridge with WAFWA T&E/wildlife diversity committee
- Chair will contact key committee leads and see if they are interested in creating a mechanism for greater communication and collaboration.
- Consider creating time on agenda for short presentations from key committees as it relates to climate change related issues.

Positive Messaging Document

Directors' request: The WAFWA Climate Change Committee will develop a **positive “messaging” document** to support state agency existing efforts for climate change adaptation. Messaging will emphasize how some existing state efforts already include actions that will help the state plan for and/or minimize the impacts related to climate change adaptation activities as well as new initiatives and research that states are working on to address climate change. The document will also discuss how climate change adaptation activities fit in with traditional longstanding agency programs, priorities, constituencies. ***Opportunity to collaborate with AFWA Climate Change Committee***

Action: Committee agreed to work with AFWA on creating a positive messaging document

Action: **Committee members** will provide a laundry list of possible examples for discussion with AFWA Climate Committee in September. Email examples to Amber Pairis³ by end of August.

³ climatechange@dfg.ca.gov

Additional Agenda Items

Climate Change Models

Discussion on the use of modeling and time periods for forecasting. Specifically, the use of long range models that are being used in ESA listings. Concern that we should be using models with shorter time ranges that are applicable to management.

Update: Climate Science Centers (CSC)/ National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center (NCCWSC)/Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC)

- Update from Leslie Dierauf on the CSC and NCCWSC. Presentation online at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/climatechange/wafwa/>
- State representative noted how much they appreciated the time the CSC staff were taking to listen to the states.
- USFWS representative provided an update on what LCCs have been created up to this point as well as an update on funded partnership work.
- Questions on where the USFWS stands on boundaries for different LCCs?
 - Is there a possibility of changing boundaries- flexible on state and other partner needs?
 - USGS staff noted that CSC are designed with fuzzy boundaries-move some regions into other to fund research across boundary lines.
 - **Action:** Geoff Haskett from FWS committed to talking with FWS Director Ashe about these concerns and agrees that there needs to be consensus from the stakeholders.