

DRAFT MINUTES
Joint Federal-State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy
Courtyard by Marriott, 130 Clairemont Ave., Decatur, GA, 30030
December 10-11, 2018

JTF Co-Chairs Kelly Hepler (SD – absent), Paul Rauch (FWS)

JTF Members Bryan Burhans (PA), Bob Curry (WSFR HQ), Jim Douglas (NE – Acting as Co-Chair), Rusty Garrison (GA), Lisa Holt (AK), Glenn Normandeau (NH), Mike Piccirilli (R4), Clint Riley (R6), Colleen Sculley (R5), Greg Siekaniec (R7 – absent), Lisa Van Alstyne (HQ), Martha Williams (MT - absent)

Guests Tammy Brooks (FACWG Vice-Chair), John Frampton (CAHSS), Scott Knight (HQ), Marilyn Lawal (R4 – Notetaker, filling in for Christina), Matt Thomas (FACWG-GA-R4), Mike Sawyers (FACWG Chair), Tim Smith (HQ), Mark Tisa (MA), Christy Vigfusson (HQ)

Counsel Larry Mellinger (DOI), Carol Frampton (AFWA)

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DAY ONE (Dec. 10)

1. Meeting Kick-off

Douglas / Rauch

- Jim Douglas is filling in for Kelly Hepler. Christina Milloy has taken over for Pete Barlow as the FWS coordinator for JTF. She couldn't attend this meeting but will continue with that role.
- Paul Rauch: Hopefully we can move the needle on some items we've been processing the last few meetings and start some new ones.
- Jim Douglas: A lot of progress has been made based on good working relationships. Extended gratitude to those who worked on JTF issues between meetings.

2. AFWA Update

Douglas

- Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) has gained dozens of co-sponsors in the House and several in the Senate. The latest (as of a week ago) is that there is still a chance RAWA could be included in a lame-duck spending deal. In the new Congress we'll revive it if we need to.
- Modernizing Pittman-Robertson (P-R) For the Needs of Tomorrow Act:
 - John Frampton: A package may be put together this week, including range and conservation bills. The 4(b) section (regarding Wildlife Restoration funding) was removed from the bill at the insistence of Senate Democrats. If it goes through the Senate, Austin Scott and Paul Ryan will push it through the House. If it doesn't go through, we start over next year (Dems will be leading the House, but it shouldn't be that controversial).

- Farm Bill: It is likely that an agreement in principle will result in something. AFWA has not yet filled its Farm Bill program position, but there are some good candidates.
- Carol Frampton: There is some interest in directing \$50,000,000 for WSFR to administer to the States for Chronic Wasting Disease surveys and Best Management Practices implementation.
 - Paul Rauch: This may be getting some traction.
- AFWA's resolution on landscape conservation was designed to address uncertainty from the decommissioning of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. One result is regional associations looking for ways to coordinate and determine science priorities between FWS and the States (based on existing frameworks like the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy). MAFWA (Midwest) formed a science committee and a series of protocols for coordination. WAFWA's (Western) response is a work in progress.
- At one point it looked like we might have 20 new State directors. Now it's around a dozen. AFWA is developing a State Director orientation session (Feb. 3-4, 2019 at AFWA HQ in D.C.).
- Carol Frampton is leaving AFWA and taking a position with the National Wild Turkey Federation. In terms of legal strategy there will still be lots of collaboration. Her service on JTF-FA is highly valued. Lane Kisonak will continue with AFWA and the JTF.
- Carol Frampton:
 - At the recent National Assembly of Sportsmen Caucus meeting, Colleen Sculley's presentation on excise taxes was valuable to State legislators.
 - AFWA's Awards Committee created awards named for Stephen Kellert and Gary Taylor. AFWA's website will list the criteria for nominees.

3. WSFR Program Update

Rauch

- Preliminary apportionments have been signed and sent out.
- Wildlife Restoration (WR) receipts were down ~17% in 2017. Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) receipts were up ~2-3%.
- Wild card: The PAYGO Act (Pay As You Go - related to sequester), if it kicks in in January, would for the first time in many years trigger an additional hold-back to the sequester and apply to the bounce-back. Whether it kicks in and how much is unknown. It could lead to a slight difference in apportionments. (Office of Management and Budget will confirm in January.)
- Political positions in FWS / WSFR:
 - Margaret Everson has stepped in as the Principal Deputy FWS Director; she has a history with FWS and has hit the ground running, filling the gap from Greg Sheehan's departure.
 - Aurelia Skipwith was nominated for FWS Director. There most likely won't be a hearing for her until 2019.
 - Pending nomination (maybe) for Asst. Secretary of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks: David Bernhardt said DOI had a nominee in mind and would announce shortly. His/her hearing could be combined with Skipwith's.
 - Having permanent appointees after two years of rotations will be welcome.
- DOI reorganization:
 - Twelve unified regions have been officially adopted by DOI. They don't align with FWS regions but in most cases they align with State boundaries. These unified regions will

each have a Director who will report to the Deputy Secretary regarding permits, cooperative conservation, recreation, human resources, acquisition, and I.T.

- The Secretary has a vision that's being implemented. There could be some value but there are some unanswered questions.
- By July 2019 processes will be in place and the Interior Regional Directors will be in their roles.
- WSFR will support DOI on the reorganization and do its best to make it work as transparently and smoothly as possible for the States. WSFR contacts for any given State shouldn't change.
- Responding to budget constraints, FWS's administrative side is seeking to combine all of its administrative operations into a single entity instead of 8 regions and headquarters.
 - Guidance, policy, and training will be incorporated into the joint administrative operations. WSFR will be generally unaffected.

4. Review Action Items from April 2018 JTF Meeting Curry / Van Alstyne

- [see JTF action items document, 12.10.2018 (Curry)]
 - 1. Cost-sharing program income interpretive guidance ► Completed, on Federal Aid Wiki.
 - 2. Online Hunter Education as match, alternative valuation approach in development ► (Lisa Holt had planned to investigate alternatives to valuation. An administrative transition and the recent earthquake caused delays, but her current assessment is that there are no ways so far to value contributions other than the way that was discussed in Spring 2018).
 - 3. 50 C.F.R. 80 ► Comment review has been completed, and the package has been routed for Regional office review, and final routing to the Federal Register with changes made and certain items deferred. Once published, life should be easier for the States (they won't have to split up their years).
 - Lisa Van Alstyne received the hard copy but it hasn't been cleared to publish yet. The Asst. Secretary has been supportive of the package.
 - Mike Sawyers: What items can be shared with Federal Aid Coordinators (FAC)?
 - Lisa Van Alstyne: Not the draft, but the list of deferred items (provided).
 - Lisa Holt: What's the plan for deferred items?
 - Scott Knight: Lease and equipment issues received significant questions showing a lack of consensus and awareness among the FAC community; not a lot of policy work to do, just outreach and education.
 - Lisa Holt: Encouraged the use of the JTF communications protocol so State Directors and all FACs can take part.
 - Bob Curry: We're looking internally to see how best to do that. Nothing's going to move forward until we know what our priorities for the year will be.
 - Paul Rauch: JTF Issue Identification and Decision-Making (Issue ID/DM) feeds into this as well. We'll figure out a better path for next time.

- Lisa Van Alstyne: We'll work on definitions as we go along.
 - Mike Sawyers: Will the deferred items be resurrected?
 - Lisa Van Alstyne: Not in the near future, unless something is triggered.
- 4. WSFR funding / Canada guidance ► Larry Mellinger reviewed the guidance, and it was finalized and distributed in July 2018.
- 5. June conference call to endorse TRACS Working Group charter, performance reporting questions, data entry transition sub-group, State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Effectiveness Measures ► Phone call was held with 17 members.
- 6. Wildlife Damage Management proposed manual updates ► Discussion needed before it goes out for review.
- 7. Fatal flaw comments on issue ID/DM protocol ► No fatal flaw comments. The protocol will be incorporated into the JTF Charter before the Spring 2019 meeting (starting this January, after agreeing on a process this meeting).
- 8. Reversion questions ► AFWA members met via phone call, draft questions formulated.

5. Reversions

Douglas / Carol Frampton

- [See list of questions prepared by Jim Douglas, 12.6.2018]
 - Main question: Should there be concerted outreach to States to learn how to mitigate reversions or better use funds? Are the listed questions the right ones?
 - An informal survey effort through AFWA's Trust Funds Committee could address some of these questions. (SWG + land deals that don't work out = most urgent.)
- Discussion:
 - Paul Rauch: WSFR has the information down to the account and State level (responsive to most of Jim Douglas's questions). The question is whether there's any value in that information to answering why reversions occur. Can we use it to get ahead of the problem? Some might be unavoidable, e.g., issues in the Midwest with some States' budgeting processes, for instance.
 - Do States view it as a problem that needs to be solved? WR reverted funds go toward migratory bird conservation.
 - Mark Tisa: What's the magnitude? For States that do revert, how have they engaged? Is this a problem where no one's asking for a solution?
 - Paul Rauch: On a case-by-case basis the States engage. For JTF it came up with a request to share reversion information outside of State Directors .
 - Scott Knight: Factors rising to the JTF level include the guidance allowing the cost-sharing method for program income to assist States by providing another option for obtaining match (JTF helped there).
 - Paul Rauch: Should we share State-level information outside of Directors? Outside FACs?
 - Rusty Garrison: With FACs, sure, but not with anyone else.
 - John Frampton: \$10M has reverted per year on average over the past 6 years. We need to find out where P-R dollars go in migratory birds. It's been hard to get hold of numbers.

- Scott Knight: NRA is willing to document the type of work involved for valuation purposes.
 - Larry Mellinger / Scott Knight: Base value, plus specialization by State.
 - Paul Rauch: There'll always be some subjectivity. Actual cost helps.
- Lisa Holt: On a State basis, we can calculate the cost of delivering hunter education per student. Doesn't matter NRA vs. Kalkomey.
 - Jim Douglas: The course is like a product, necessary for a service the State is administering. Development costs for the product have to be amortized. It's not equivalent to how much it would cost the agency to develop the product itself. That's the cleanest way to think of it now.
 - Rusty Garrison: We're agreeing to allow use of NRA or other third-party product to match. The debate is how to value it.
 - Clint Riley: Yes, and this reflects a consensus in favor of actual cost.
- Bryan Burhans: With students paying a Kalkomey fee, how do we show what the agency puts into it?
 - Lisa Holt: It depends on the grant and the agreement with Kalkomey. Kalkomey also puts in event planning, field activity scheduling, etc. as part of contracts.
- Mark Tisa: How is NRA online hunter ed match not "one and done"?
 - Scott Knight: NRA invests coding time to develop the program. (Documentable, amortized.) It will then need to be updated, with ongoing annual costs (server, coding and administrative staff, etc.). Costs would decrease after Year 1, but would spike again with needed revisions. This is hypothetical but based on experience with systems development.
- Lisa Holt: What if some States don't want to use it for match? Can that value be allocated to other States?
 - Scott Knight: The value has to be allocated equitably whether or not a State uses it as match.
- Jim Douglas: Is the group generally comfortable with the concepts outlined in the White Paper? If so, can Paul Rauch start working on implementation questions?
 - Generally.

ACTION ITEM: Issue guidance for NRA or other third-party free online hunter education valuation (actual cost) as donated match. WSFR will develop that guidance in a format to be determined (including allocation). Though valuation and determination of the period of performance of the federal award may not be as simple as for program income cost-share, it could follow that format. Then put it through JTF communications protocol.

7. Performance Reporting Questions

Rauch / Smith

- Tim Smith: The questions went through the JTF communications protocol and fatal flaw review. Some changes were made [see edits document, 6.27.2018]. Most were stylistic, or adding "if applicable". One substantive action endorsed by JTF: Remove Question 2—"Please describe and justify any changes in the implementation of your objective(s) or approach(es)." Further discussion was requested for this removal.

- Paul Rauch: This looked like a consensus version in general, but the phone call was inconclusive. The relationship between Qs 1 and 2 is important to compliance with regulations. It needs revisiting because removing it felt like going against the consensus.
- Discussion:
 - Scott Knight: The reporting questions are a leap of faith from both sides. Breaking out #2 makes it certain not to be overlooked, and would capture any changes to a project that don't require a grant amendment. (This reflects the TRACS WG consensus.)
 - Lisa Holt: Didn't think there was consensus in the TRACS WG.
 - Scott Knight: It wasn't unanimous.
 - Lisa Holt: JTF thought that changing our approach might lead to programmatic audit issues, and requiring States to provide project change information through TRACS would be bad.
 - Scott Knight: See 2 C.F.R. 200.328(b)(2); 200.328(d)(1)-(2).
 - Paul Rauch: There were 2 years of discussion that led to creating Q2 and then a phone call that led to removing it. The decision to remove came from a misunderstanding of the regulatory issue.
 - Mike Sawyers: TRACS WG worked on this a lot, and went back and forth on it several times. Without having the regulations at hand it's hard to decide.
 - Lisa Holt: Regarding the C.F.R. citations, the difference between "goals" and "objectives" was a reason to remove Q2. Developments as discussed in C.F.R. would require grant amendments.
 - Colleen Sculley: Sometimes there are big grants with many parts, some of which make no progress for legitimate reasons. These might not require amendments, but the deviations should be reported. Q2 would capture those changes.
 - Jim Douglas: Q2 doesn't go directly to the C.F.R. language. "Implementation" isn't the only reason objectives might not be realized.
 - Lisa Holt: Q1 was meant to get at the C.F.R. language and we don't need Q2 to report information that doesn't need to be reported.
 - Jim Douglas: If we want to use Q1 to ask why progress wasn't made in a given area, we have to add "why" to the question.
 - Scott Knight/Rusty Garrison: Just use the C.F.R. language?
 - Tim Smith: We looked at 2 C.F.R. 200.76, and drafted 2-3 alternatives.
 - Mark Tisa: Are Qs 1 and 2 mutually exclusive?
 - Scott Knight: No, they can apply to a lot of different situations.
 - Rusty Garrison: Option C allows for objectives that have not yet been met yet but are on target.
 - Lisa Holt: Q1 asks for a narrative, right? Not a percentage?
 - Scott Knight: Correct.
 - Mike Piccirilli: Replace "implement" in the preamble with "establish" in the briefing.

ACTION ITEMS: Amend Question 2 to read: "If established objectives have not been or will not be met, please state the reasons why." *refers to 2 C.F.R. 200.76 (Performance goal, which is defined as "target level of performance...").

8. Wildlife Damage Management

Piccirilli / Williams / Van Alstyne

- Lisa Van Alstyne:
 - A FOIA request a few years ago resulted in opposing interpretations of FWS manual language on WDM / predator control. A WSFR team devised an approach and brought it to JTF, then to the regions for comment and then back to a JTF sub-team to make it less restrictive. JTF discussed it in Spring 2018, and anticipated not going to regulation. This product was shared at the WSFR Chiefs meeting, and there were concerns. One major concern: WD payments were not discussed. A lot of activities could become eligible, and ambiguities could develop (back to square one). The document here doesn't reflect mark-ups by the WSFR Chiefs. Concerns exist with compliance, State legislatures.
- Lisa Holt: This process doesn't reflect the JTF protocol.
 - Paul Rauch: We wanted to get the product to a better place before using the protocol.
 - Lisa Holt: That approach caught the States off-guard in South Dakota in 2017.
 - Lisa Van Alstyne: We ran into the same surprise aspect with the WSFR chiefs.
- Larry Mellinger: The FA Chiefs' concern wasn't the wording of the changes, but the concept of taking FWS manual ineligible activity (w/ exceptions) and turning it into eligible activity (w/ exceptions). This emphasis shift opens the door to States funding lots more WDM. This in theory doesn't change anything, but the emphasis shift matters.
- Clint Riley: A lot of the concern from the chiefs was that they're heavily involved in helping agencies protect against legislatures who want to make WD payments. Despite the need for a biological justification and management plan, this may undermine that role and require WSFR to tell States that their biology is insufficient. Unintended consequences may result.
- Bryan Burhans: Has grave concerns with this change. White-tailed deer, Lyme disease, etc. It's bad for an independent agency with a big pot of money that could be used by a governor or commissioners with new priorities. This opens up Pandora's Box.
 - Paul Rauch: This statement is consistent with what we've heard from some chiefs.
 - Lisa Holt: It's already allowed in the current language.
 - Bryan Burhans: Not de-population.
- Mark Tisa: Has the same concerns as Burhans, re: shift of default. Received calls from other New England Directors concerned about this issue.
- Colleen Sculley: There's always a challenge with meaning and interpretation. In the Northeast, WDM has been generally seen as ineligible, and over time it has become eligible in limited circumstances when one species was managed to benefit another (e.g., managing foxes for piping plovers) without a blended benefit of human and wildlife health. If the current manual chapter isn't understandable and being consistently interpreted, then that needs to be addressed in some manner.
 - From office historian: In 1997 P-R was said to imply that WDM is not an intended use (Jim Beers) unless necessary for restoration or establishment of wildlife populations.
 - Lisa Holt: Regional needs differ.
 - Jim Douglas: Was thinking along Beers' lines. Sees little agreement nationwide from State Directors on this issue. Results will take a long time. We can drop the ball or move it and see what happens.
 - Lisa Holt: It came up through the Issue ID/DM process so it has to proceed.

- Bryan Burhans: P-R's unique business model should be part of this discussion.
- Mike Piccirilli: This comes down to eligibility determination. Regional chiefs' relationships with State directors should be open enough to decide these issues. We don't need this white paper.
 - Rusty Garrison: With this redline, there wouldn't be discretion for regional chiefs, right?
 - Mike Piccirilli: The Director would decide to submit or not submit a proposal to the Regional Office for funding with WR grant funds.
 - Bryan Burhans: But then the Director might get fired.
- Lisa Van Alstyne: This started with predator control in AK and grew from there. The intent of the WSFR Team document was to convey that WDM was anything benefiting the public, and that was ineligible, but then when other issues came up with WD and payments and management separately, it became a question of justification.
 - Bryan Burhans: PA uses P-R money to deal with Chronic Wasting Disease. Current rules protect the agency.
- Colleen Sculley: We need a product to go out to a broader audience to get feedback and see what applies to a geographic area or an agency. The concern is that there's a draft that people are nervous about. Should we do more scoping?
 - Lisa Holt: That might have been a good way to start.
- Paul Rauch: In Spring 2018 there was a consensus among the small group but not a broader one. The WSFR chiefs were so updated. Next step was to put it in the JTF protocol. We still can, or we can do nothing, or we can go back to the drawing board.
 - Clint Riley: Communication with our constituencies is in order for any of the above options. Such communications would include pros and cons and different viewpoints.
- Jim Douglas: The red-line mostly clarifies for population reduction. Has it been generally decided that damage compensation is off the table?
 - Lisa Holt: Yes.
 - Colleen Sculley: Payments are not explicitly excluded now, so as a regional chief, couldn't say no if the State said it was critical to management.
 - Lisa Holt: Is that the biggest concern? Should we close the door by explicitly disallowing it?
 - Bryan Burhans: There's not a lot of case studies here. What's broken?
 - Lisa Holt: Inter-regional discrepancies.
- Paul Rauch: We're tip-toeing to a minefield. This may need more work before it goes to the JTF communications protocol, even if it's as a split decision.
- Colleen Sculley: Changes in leadership (loss of institutional memory) has worsened this problem.
- Paul Rauch: Summary: There isn't agreement on where we should be on this issue. There's concern that the proposal opens Pandora's Box. Lisa sent out more background information last night. We need to figure out what is our next step. Scoping? Reconcile the small group from Spring 2018? End our efforts?
- Jim Douglas: At the AFWA level, doesn't have a good sense of how many feathers are being ruffled on the State side. If we want to know more, we'd have to delay our process.
- Carol Frampton: AFWA does best when there's consensus on an issue vetted through committees up to Executive Committee and the Business Meeting. We did that with license certification. If we go for committee review up to the North American meeting, that would be ideal.

- Lisa Holt: This issue was not vetted widely before it was brought to JTF. In March we can figure out if there's a widespread problem with current guidance. There needs to be clarity, but maybe not an overhaul.
 - Paul Rauch: A call for issues might suggest that WDM using PR-DJ has risen up, but may require further input from State Directors to see if it's an issue JTF should address. Issue ID/DM requires 30 days, and then we can see what % of States are interested.
 - Jim Douglas: Then we can do AFWA committees.
 - Lisa Holt: Then we can go to Spring 2019 JTF meeting w/ more info.
 - Jim Douglas: Also, this issue includes population management.
 - Bryan Burhans: The definitional issue of population management is causing some of the rift.
- Colleen Sculley: For the scoping process, one piece seems to be whether the policy needs clarification, but another seems to be whether we can reach agreement on eligible/ineligible activities. Also, who would develop the vetting document / questions asked?
 - Jim Douglas: The Feb. TFCWG meeting would help. It might take a few AFWA rounds.
- Lisa Van Alstyne: A lot of NGOs are watching what we do on predator control. We need a solid administrative record.

ACTION ITEM: Produce a proposal to use the Issue ID/DM process and AFWA's committee structure to scope out this issue (need for clarification and what we can agree on re: eligibility) and work toward having more information for the Fall 2019 JTF meeting.

DAY TWO (Dec. 11)

1. Shared Vision Update

Rauch

- Starting in 2016 FWS was vetting a legislative proposal to increase funding for WSFR administration by raising the cap in the Improvement Act. Concerns included dissatisfaction with TRACS, poor and inconsistent communications with States.. There was a need for more information beyond the need to fund FTEs. A program management analysis (using PWC) began at the North American meeting in 2017. Comments from 48 states, 24 NGO reps, and 64 WSFR employees resulted in a "desired future state" based on program identity, strong relationships, high coordination, effective staff, and high transparency. AFWA's Trust Funds Committee (TFC) updated a States' Needs Document pertaining to WSFR, which supported this effort. The final report was briefed at the North American in 2018, and the TFC chartered a Visioning Team to move forward. The Team produced 5 principles and brought them to the AFWA Annual Meeting, where they were endorsed by the full membership. Further steps in the process are planned for FY 2019.
- Since the Improvement Act, WSFR has been good at managing the program in tandem with the TFC, JTF, FAC WG, and TRACS WG, developing high-level policy for specific issues while ensuring standardized flexibility. But WSFR is not as efficient or consistent as it could be. During the fall WSFR HQ/Regional chiefs' meeting we developed ~30 potential actions that are being considered, but that's more than is realistic to do all at once, so these are being distilled down. At the 2019 North American the team will report to the TFC. At the spring FAC/chiefs meeting there will be more discussion. Accomplishments will be reported at the AFWA Annual Meeting

2019. The focus now is on evaluating processes to create program-wide consistency in grants (the #1 need identified in States' Needs Document).

- The TRACS Enhancement is the #1 priority in FY 2019, so that has to be successful. #2 is the Strategic Communications Plan. Both of those fit well with the Shared Vision. Then we will be able to determine whether existing resources are adequate or whether we—WSFR, States, later industry as well—need more.
- Ed Carter was on the Visioning Team and made the point that existing mechanisms for coordination need to be honored.
- Discussion:
 - Jim Douglas: WSFR's partners are grateful for the thoughtful approach to this effort. There used to be a perceived lack of transparency. This helps. What are the "touch points" for decision-making?
 - Paul Rauch: The reporting process that occurred over 2017-2018 could continue over the next few years (an iterative process), using the AFWA meetings and committees.
 - Bob Curry: Will send out the shared vision document to the JTF, as well as the States' Needs Document.
 - Mark Tisa: What is the ultimate measure of success?
 - Paul Rauch: When we have to decide whether we need more resources or not, we know what gaps exist (if any) or decide to continue as is and say there are things FWS cannot continue to do. That decision will be by consensus.
 - Jim Douglas: Two kinds of success: 1) consensus on what services are needed, and 2) continual revisiting of program values/benchmarks.

2. CAHSS Update

John Frampton

- CAHSS developed a national plan that came out a few years ago, looking at State capacity and strategies for R3. More recently, an Implementation Working Group (IWG) with 24 members was created, mostly with mid-level people in NGOs and agencies. In October the IWG had a meeting in Oklahoma City, and now there's an 18-month period to create a strategy.
- In May CAHSS put on a symposium, which ought to be held every other year (next one in Spring 2020, where the IWG's report will be released). There was some trouble getting people to help with the national plan, but lots of people want to be part of the implementation strategy. R3 is the most important tool for State agencies to keep conservation alive. Lots of States now have R3 coordinators. Some States have had numbers go up, and some have developed statewide plans, or brought in NGOs and industry.
- We missed the boat on youth involvement in shooting sports through schools, competitions, and State programs (100,000s of kids). CAHSS will engage more with those groups and create more opportunity for diversity.
- R3 community site: Started ~2 years ago, and now has 1,700 members registered. Part of CAHSS's Multistate Conservation Grant goes to a contractor to manage the site, media, etc., who started yesterday. Samantha and Cyrus are great and she will be as well. (Saves \$40,000 per year from the prior vendor.)

- Performance report: For simplicity, this report takes the place of the performance report on the 4(b)/4(c) funds from States that go into CAHSS.
- Discussion:
 - Possible R3 guidance:
 - Paul Rauch: Do we need guidance on eligibility related to R3? WSFR discussed this internally but thought it might not be a problem. What might be helpful?
 - Lisa Van Alstyne: WSFR got feedback on questions about eligibility and inconsistencies. We should all get on the same page. R3 is an emerging tool so static guidance might or might not be the best way forward.
 - John Frampton: P-R Modernization will clarify a lot of things. Things are usually worked out now at the regional level so there aren't a lot of major problems. We've worked w/ regions on Secretary Zinke's initiatives. Managers and constituencies want the same things—to find what works.
 - Paul Rauch: Are there any eligibility issues for R3 at the State level?
 - Lisa Holt: AK is going to test the waters with R3 on the SFR side. There is no guidance yet, so this is something that Issue ID/DM might bring up. More questions might exist on P-R as between sections 4 and 10. Several years ago we did a white paper on this.
 - Lisa Van Alstyne: There was guidance issued under Hannibal Bolton in 2010 but it may be outdated. NCTC did an R3 workshop, and it became clear that some R3 people are not traditional recipients of WSFR funds. R3 is not an activity in and of itself, but a lot of activities support R3. Clarifying those might be useful.
 - John Frampton: Maybe look at the 2010 guidance. Right now CAHSS treats State contributions as federal dollars.
 - Jim Douglas: There has to be a balance between not waiting too long to formulate guidance and not jumping in without necessary background.
 - Christy Vigfusson: The CAHSS Q&A issued by Hannibal Bolton in 2010 will be updated (performance period, technical issues).
 - Paul Rauch: We will see if R3 comes in through the Issue ID/DM process. Maybe P-R Modernization will pass soon. Then we can decide if new guidance should be on the agenda for Spring 2019. But there doesn't seem to be burning urgency now.
 - John Frampton: Things are happening fast. Everyone wants to define R3. CAHSS has resisted that because it's a process, not a defined entity.
 - Lisa Holt: Found a 2013 white paper that could be a good start for guidance.
 - Colleen Sculley: As States show an increasing emphasis on R3, there's new and different questions coming in. Eligibility questions are about specific activities (e.g., licensing systems, outreach vs. marketing, pen-raised birds, etc.). Let's stay focused on the narrow activity questions.
 - Jim Douglas: Focus on an activity associated with a defined goal.
 - Paul Rauch: It's hard to know what questions will be asked in the future, in terms of doing a preemptive guidance document.

- Showed the current membership, discussed changes in the list and milestones met since the Spring 2018 meeting and JTF endorsement of the Matrix and Transition Plan.
- TRACS sub-groups: multi-state/year/funding grant implementation, State transition guidance, facilities matrix, lands matrix, species list, habitats list, performance reporting questions, training/education, R3, SWG EMs, international, public viewer, TRACS leadership, etc.
- On target to go live in November 2019, but there's still work to do.
- All single-year grants are being handled at the regional level. Starting in July 2019, the TRACS WG wants to start working with individual grantees and regions to make sure grant proposals will be structured well for TRACS.
- Discussion:
 - Scott Knight: In early January, we'll publish the work plan and seek comment.
 - Paul Rauch: Confident that this effort will pay dividends, thanks stakeholders for their support.
 - Scott Knight: Mike Sawyers' availability has been key.

5. Communication Protocol for Lands and Facilities TRACS Matrices

Smith

- Presented on real property grant management matrices, building on the OIG report on DOI's tracking of data for land purchases with grant funds. OIG's findings were concerning (methods of tracking varied by program, and land inventories weren't fully reported).
 - This report changed the timeline for lands and facilities modules, which will allow WSFR and States to maintain inventories, improve record-keeping, track, and report land use and disposal, and meet federal requirements without using Form 429.
 - TRACS may be the least burdensome way to meet reporting requirements.
- The JTF communications protocol is triggered because this requires finer level of cost reporting than agreed to in TRACS MOU.
- Discussion:
 - Scott Knight: Depending on the action (reporting, disposing), many different forms might be required. The SF 429 would require a report per grant action, which could get out of hand quickly if many actions are taken on a single property. For annual or 5-year reports, we can present the States with lists (by WMA or by property) and the States can answer all questions for each property at once. This should be more streamlined. The one hot-button issue is likely to be the federal/match cost piece, which JTF needs to discuss. When the draft Department rule comes out early next year, it will have a requirement to implement the SF 429 or a DOI-approved alternative pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.
 - Jim Douglas: What finer level of cost-reporting is required?
 - Scott Knight: Federal share and non-federal share (Box 14(f) on SF 429).
 - Mike Piccirilli: How far does this go back on land acquisitions?
 - Scott Knight: All the way back for land. For facilities, WSFR has advocated that it only go forward.
 - Mike Piccirilli: If we have hard copies, what does that mean?

- Scott Knight: We can't just give access; that would violate the Improvement Act. But we need to make an organizational decision for whole of DOI.
- Mike Sawyers: This will be a lot of work, but if it's better than SF 429, as a minimum WR State it's an improvement. But including costs is different than the MOU.
 - Jim Douglas: The property isn't DOI property.
 - Scott Knight: We're talking about grant-funded property (federal interest).
 - Colleen Sculley: We've been buying land with WSFR since 1938. We've argued that the cost of the land is meaningless because if the State ceded control it's based on current fair market value. So cost-share has been important. But valuation would be inaccurate.
 - Scott Knight: DOI anticipates we can make a database appear all the way back no matter how much work it may be.
 - Colleen Sculley: The records get clearer around the 1980s.
- [Discussion re: filling gaps, importing records.] TRACS WG can strategize.
- Paul Rauch: A potential action item may be making States aware that when the draft regulation hits the Federal Register in Jan. or Feb., they can submit comments.
- Carol Frampton: We should take this through the regional associations (e.g., Gordon Batchellor in NEAFWA (Northeast)), get to the State Directors, and start formulating a joint message.
 - Scott Knight: We need to make clearer why this is happening, host webinars, explain to FACs, increase awareness.
- Colleen Sculley: Re. timing, is the final regulation going to set design requirements different from what we're proposing?
 - Scott Knight: No, the wording in the regulation is that we'll use the SF 429 elements or slightly different alternatives.
- Scott Knight: Once the wireframes are finalized, we might give leadership a tour of the modules we can construct, to create comfort with them.
- Lisa Holt: We had a desired outcome of using the JTF communications protocol. This proposed action item is different. Do we support collecting financial data for this purpose only? What is the scope? We need a record.
 - Scott Knight: Cost in the matrix can go through the communications protocol with a cover letter for context re: deviation from MOU.
 - Tim Smith: There's not a whole lot to comment on through the protocol yet, but it's good to give people context.

ACTION ITEM: (a) Use the JTF communications protocol for cost, and maybe legacy and forward-looking data in the Matrix, and (b) take the issue to the regional association administrators and AFWA, and encourage State appraisal of the proposed regulation on real property grant tracking this winter as it pertains to real property and facilities acquired with WSFR funds (depending on date of regulation publication).

6. WSFR Program Viewer Update

Rauch / Smith

- Presented on WSFR public viewer based on TRACS MOU, which is well underway. There has been interest from industry in what information will be available to help tell the WSFR story. We

want to be consistent with the MOU while getting more detail on the requirements for the build. We'd like to put together a group with people from the States and trade associations to have that conversation. AFWA can lead this effort. (Ron Regan has offered.) The Trust Fund Committee Working Group meeting in early February can be a good starting point.

- Industry wants some of the data that the MOU specifies will not be displayed, so we have to figure out what can or cannot be changed.
- Discussion:
 - Scott Knight: When we roll out the Enhancement, there won't initially be any data.
 - Paul Rauch: We need to come to an agreement on what will be included so we can build the right instrument.
 - Carol Frampton: The States aren't concerned about sharing information with industry, but rather about materials available for public consumption usable against the States or FWS. (Litigious plaintiffs.)
 - Paul Rauch: Industry might need to hear those concerns; States are a better messenger. We can help facilitate that conversation.
 - Jim Douglas: The message back to Regan should be that, if this approach is right, that diverse State representation is welcome.

ACTION ITEM: AFWA will form a working group with State, WSFR, and trade association representation to figure out what State data can be used on the program viewer to tell the WSFR story.

7. Wrap-Up, Review of Action Items and Decision Points

- **Existing business:**
 - Issue ID/DM loose threads:
 - Rauch: Does this need any edits? Or should we just append it to the Charter?
 - Riley: The only comment received wasn't an edit to the document so much as an observation that lots of stuff can happen in one State that doesn't lead to a full JTF process but that JTF can address and should be aware of in case it happens later. We can come up with an action item on that but it doesn't have to delay implementing the Issue ID/DM.
 - Rauch: The timing gap between the request for State input and the FAC WG / WSFR chief review is awkward.
 - Clint Riley: This was meant to see if an issue is one-State or multi-State. And the JTF is not prevented from taking on issues from other sources. AFWA committees can help the FAC WG / chiefs by generating data.
 - Lisa Holt: The timing is awkward. It doesn't have to be full FAC WG / chiefs. JTF needs more time for background material development.
 - Paul Rauch: Maybe we should use the 30-day call to ID issues that will be seriously discussed that fall, not that spring. (Expand the timeline.) Also, the spring JTF meeting can be 2-3 weeks after the FAC WG meeting so they get first crack.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Produce a “straw man” for Issue ID 30-day call to be shared with JTF for feedback, and clarify that issues identified are for the Fall JTF meeting. Append the protocol to the JTF charter.

- **TRACS WG CHARTER SIGNED.**

8. Selection of Format, Time and Place for Spring 2019 JTF Meeting

- Paul Rauch: Kelly Hepler requested a location closer to SD. There’s often a Directorate meeting in April but it hasn’t been scheduled yet. We may have to adjust.
- Colleen Sculley: Is FAC WG / chiefs before or after the JTF?
 - Rauch: FAC WG / chiefs should meet before the JTF. Apr. 29-May 1?

SPRING 2019 JTF MEETING: Apr. 29-May 1 in Denver. Lane will send a save-the-date.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.