

Meeting Notes
Joint/Federal Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (JTF)
November 30 – December 1, 2016
Denver Airport Marriott at Gateway Park

1. Welcome and Introductory Remarks – Hepler/Rauch

Joyce Johnson has officially announced the retirement. Meanwhile Bob Curry will be taking over and be the contact point while looking for the replacement.

Action Item 9: Assign a replacement for Joyce Johnson – Bob Curry by December 31st, 2016

WSFR has assigned the new staff that will replace Joyce. *Pete Barlow* is now WSFR's JTF Support staff

2. Agenda Repairs – TRACS and WMI assessment was given more time than originally planned.

3. Status of Previous Action Items – Bob Curry

All action Items except Action Item 3 (See Below) are included in the agenda and will be covered.

Action Item 3 **Update on Industry and Partners Discussions re: Taxing Airguns – Carol Bambery**

In last couple meetings one of the issues that came up for discussions was about airguns and airbows used to harvest game, either they should not be subject to excise tax or if they are subject to the excise tax and we haven't realized it. Also, the other suggestions were to see if there was interest to change the PR to include them. One of things done for due diligence was to reach out to NSSF, specifically Steve Sanetti, to check if Industry and ATA would be interested on fixing the excise tax on these products. The review of the PR law and the Tax Code would indicate that they currently don't fall within our PR excise tax, they are not firearms because there is no explosion to discharge during the operation. NSSF/ATA are not interested on having airguns and airbows subject to excise tax. The airbows industry indicated that they are already subject to that and the arrows that are used with airbows are subject to excise tax. Unless JTF wants to continue to push this and get an amendment to the PR Carol didn't see an avenue to do this with the current regulations or statute.

Kelly suggested discussions on partnership between industry and conservation possibly included in the agenda for the next Industry/Agency meeting.

No further action is required by Carol Bambery on this issue.

4. WSFR Update – Paul Rauch

Updates on WSFR Staff

- Retirements:
 - Joyce Johnson
 - Hannibal announced his retirement. He will be retiring January 2nd after 45 years with FWS and he would love to hear from anyone.
 - Karl Hess is going to be retired sometime in March 2017.
- WSFR is not planning on filling the vacancies for Joyce and Karl at this point.
- The vacancy for the Chief of Division of Administration and Information Management has been announced. WSFR has done some revamping of the position description through the organizational adjustments.

WSFR Priorities

- **TRACS Review** is getting completed so the responsible staff can move ahead with the enhancement
- **Administrative Fee Review** that will be undertaken this year. This is included in the agenda (see below) for later.
- **Strategic Communication Plan** – WSFR is making sure not to spend administrative money on outreach and communication
- **Reduce the number of audit findings** with states – 267 open audit findings. This got the attention of IG and the Assistant Secretary. FWS has a plan, there has been a lot of coordination with FAC. There are always going to be open audit findings (it takes time to close) but having over 250 is not appropriate.
- **Policy Office** - This doesn't affect the states. This is a program separately funded from WSFR for overseeing policy and assistance to the service.

Discussions:

- Are the Audit Findings something that JTF could help out with?
 - All the states are cooperative. WSFR doesn't see it as a problem but it just needs more attention. Some of the findings involve legislation action that can take 1-2 years e.g. license certification.
- Are Regional Chiefs or FAC WG engaged in these issues? Can standardized communication help with resolving these issues?
 - FAC WG wouldn't be a good place to try to help resolve some of the open audit findings. States and regions have been missing for years the summary of current findings in audit cycles that could help them prepare to correct those. FAC WG would be a great form to provide that and through the communication strategy that we identified at WMI TRACS review we can make sure that these issues get out so all states are consistent.

Action Item 1: FWS will share the summary of current audit findings – Bob Curry by January 31st, 2017

Decision 1: Once a year FWS will compile summary audit findings and distribute to State directors and FAC through WSFR Chiefs

5. License Certification – Update and final decision (handout) – Ed Carter

The key components to the License Certification:

- **Basic Rules:** Any annual or trip license must sell for no less than \$2 per privilege (\$1 issue fee, \$1 revenue)
 - The language presented to AFWA includes a simplified standard that allows “for any license holder to be counted, the State fish and wildlife agency must establish that it receives a minimum of \$2 for each year the license is valid, for either privilege to hunt or to fish, and a minimum of \$4 for each year the license is valid for a combination license that gives privilege to both hunt and fish.”
- **Multi-year License:** *Multi-year licenses are eligible for certification based on the number of years the sell price will generate the \$2/year.*
 - For multiyear licenses, an agency would use the new standard to count license holders for licenses sold after the date that the State adopts the new standard. However, the draft language that AFWA approved would require that an agency use the current (August 1, 2011) regulation to count all licenses sold before adopting the new standard.
- **Free License:** *Free licenses are not eligible for certification unless the state agency is reimbursed at the cost of the public offered price of an identical privilege (licenses given by the legislator or marketing).*

Discussion:

- It’s important to keep the distinction for hunting license and fishing license. It has to be additive \$2.
- At what point do you determine what’s additive? Is it historically additive or only for new license? It has to be some kind of direction.
- Our goal for the states was to have same rules and play by the rules.
- We are basically saying, at the state authorities both licenses can count fishing license and can count hunting license and that dual privilege costs \$4 and that’s enough. Or are we going to the point that if we offer pheasant license and fishing license has to equal some amount of pheasants’ license and \$2 for fishing license. Every state has to sell the fishing license and hunting license that total \$4.
 - As far as free license, if it is free, you do not get to count it but if it is tagged to some other license and you are promoting it as a free license you need to show that you got \$2 for hunting and \$2 for fishing and states have to figure it out how to do it.
- **There is one addition to this document:**

If there is a veteran group that wants to be able to offer free licenses, then the state could make some kind of arrangements. What we are looking at is that the Fish & Wildlife Agency gave them \$2 per license. So if that group wants to buy all those licenses it would be up to the state to figure out how to do that, and as long as the state gets the \$2 it’s ok that person get the free license because someone is paying for it. If a third party reimburses it, it is easy but the question is if the state reimburses it can the state use funds other than license revenue funds?

 - Yes, as long as it is going to Fish & Wildlife Agency.

- ***Bundled or offered with another privilege:*** Licenses issued as bundled offer or in conjunction with another offering or privilege, must document the price of all licenses included in the bundle if both privileges are to be used for certification (A big game license which also includes a fishing license must indicate that a portion of the price includes at least \$2 for fishing license).
- ***Federal Rule:*** The federal rule will be issued in June 2017 with the final rule issued in June 2018. All states will be given two-year time frame to come into compliance.
- ***Implementation:*** A state may implement the certification changes as appropriate but may not change the license certification for license already sold. It may be necessary for some states to utilize two certification methods for the initial year.

Discussions:

- WSFR is taking the lead from the states on the implementation approach. It could be complicated; there is some concern on the training branch. It might take forever for some states to utilize the new rule.
- Do we have any feeling how many states are on board with the new rule?
 - Nebraska follows actuary tables. There is at least 80% of full licenses that can convert to new rule and that would be a benefit to the state.
- Are there any instances where states old system is more beneficial than the new system?
 - New Hampshire issues infant licenses (\$300 combo license). The state earns interest for first 15/16 years. In addition, there is a significant percentage of those licenses that never get used. However, if you go from 1yo to 80yo for \$300 at \$4 each year, there is a lost.
- The way the draft regulation is written now is that the states have to use the old system for the old licenses. The question is, do we want to take that away and say that all the states can convert every license that is already sold to the new system?
 - We might not be able to write specifically in the regulation how every state translates every license into the new system. Regional Chiefs might have to get together with states and decide on how to convert to new system and have it approved.
- We are changing the way the states are doing license certification. What legal way do you have to make changes?
 - The law is very specific on paid licenses. We are setting rules and referencing to AFWA to make a decision. Some states might not be able to use the old system and changing to new system might change the economics of the state. Likelihood, anybody preferring the old system wants to avoid the loss. We are not going to require anybody to move to new system. We want to work very closely and have AFWA Executive Committee give us their position and in good faith we want to put that in front of the public as a proposal. We have a strong feeling that if AFWA Executive Committee has this discussion in their meeting, they will give the states the option to choose what they want to do and that goes along with “Do no harm” position.
- The JTF members discussed the proposed language and concerns (such as audits, training, system maintenance) should State fish and wildlife agencies be forced to use two different standards under two different regulations to determine license

certification. The Service intends to publish a proposed rule by mid-January. The JTF prefer that the Service make the discussed changes before publishing.

- i. Further simplify the new standard approach by allowing States to adopt the new standard for all licenses sold, both under new rule and multiyear licenses sold prior to adopting the new standard.
- ii. Expect that States will adopt the new standard as soon as practical, but continue to give a mandatory date when all States must adopt the new standard (to allow for States that may need legislative changes).
- iii. Allow for States to notify their WSFR Regional Chiefs if there is a compelling reason to continue to use the current (2011) standard for multiyear licenses sold before the State agency adopts the new standard. (We feel most States will see the benefits of having one system for all licenses, but that some may have circumstances where it is not advantageous for “old” multiyear licenses. Considering the guiding principle to “do no harm,” we wish to allow this option.)
- iv. Not allow States to start certifying a multiyear license holder that was not eligible the year before the State agency adopts the new standard. (For example, a State sells a Sr. fishing license for \$10 in 2013 and the agency counts the license holder once in the 2014 license certification, but it is not eligible to be counted (under the 2011 rule) in 2015. The State agency adopts the new standard in 2017. The agency must not “reactivate” that license and count that license holder for the next 4 years.)

Action Item 8:

- a. Review draft summary and rewrite for license certification with JTF License Certification Team. Send summary and draft to Kelly Hepler, Carol Bambery and Silvana Yaroschuk. - Lisa Van Alstyne by December 8, 2016
- b. Present the summary and JTF recommendations to the AFWA Ex. Comm. for their approval. - Kelly Hepler by December 13, 2016
- c. Publish a proposed rule – Lisa Van Alstyne by January 20th, 2017

6. TRACS and WMI assessment – Jon Gassett

TRACS Assessment Draft was delivered to JTF members (Kelly and Paul were the only one to receive it well in advance) just prior to the discussion and not well in advance, so the JTF members weren't really prepared to comment on it. Jon Gassett briefed the members on the process and the outcomes.

This review, conducted by Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) at the request of the Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (WSFR-JTF) was tasked to:

- review and summarize the development and implementation of the TRACS performance-reporting database,
- examine and summarize the legal, administrative, and congressional authority for performance reporting requirements by the WSFR Program,
- coordinate an independent needs analysis for TRACS with select FWS staff and AFWA members in advance of a joint Meeting of the Parties. Meeting of the

Parties met in Denver on September 2016 and it was designed to bring the top leaders of performance reporting and federal grants programs to the table.

- Challenge applicable parties to objectively and critically review and evaluate their collective, essential needs as well as their ultimate wants prior to a joint Meeting of Parties.

Several challenges were identified to the continued development and implementation of TRACS. The challenges include:

1. Significant Communication Challenges - A communication plan for WSFR Program
There have been significant breakdowns and miscommunications among the Parties over the design, development, and implementation of TRACS. These breakdowns in communication have been both inter-party (between states and the FWS) but equally important, within the state (FAC and state Directors) and federal (WSFR-HQ and WSFR regional staff) arenas.
The participants at Meeting of Parties discussed on that challenge, came up with proposed solutions and also in one of appendixes there is communication plan template to create your own.
2. Process Challenge – Develop and Memorialize a Process for Amending TRACS
State leadership has been largely unaware and/or disengaged from the process of TRACS development of Strategies and Objectives for many reasons, several of which include: lack of awareness that they were being developed, disconnects between state Directors and their FACs and other TRACS committee participants, lack of interest or knowledge in the TRACS development process, and most importantly, lack of a clearly defined process for engaging and participating in TRACS development.

WMI found five adaptive challenges:

1. Integration of Strategies for Reporting in TRACS
Implementing the Strategies and Objectives will allow the Parties to focus on measuring grant funded performance measures (activity/task level → output/project level → outcome/program level) resulting in more effective and meaningful communication of conservation successes to audiences both within and outside the program.
2. Increased Level of Detail for Reporting in TRACS
The enhanced TRACS can provide a flexible, easy-to-use format for states to identify their own goals for conservation and public use, and their progress in meeting the goals, for use in communication and marketing about WSFR grant programs.
Program-level reporting by states in the enhanced TRACS system will help to meet OMB expectations for programmatic outcome reporting, and will provide meaningful high-level information for broader efforts to communicate conservation success stories and market the WSFR Program.
3. Outcome Reporting in TRACS and its Impacts on WSFR grants
States are concerned that they may be required to report on outcomes after a grant is closed (in some cases, years afterward), potentially increasing their workload and costs for reporting. To report outcomes (longer term) vs. outputs

(shorter term), states are concerned that reporting after grant closure may become required rather than optional.

4. Access to TRACS Data for Non-State Entities

Access to TRACS data by non-state users (industry and associations that do researches or work with states e.g. WMI) likely will remain an unmet need. Previously, FAIMS allowed access by outside entities to perform research and analyses on grant data. Industry desires to have data specific for their needs (i.e. user days, license data, user satisfaction, etc.) incorporated into the TRACS system. Industry understands the costs associated with collecting these data and does not wish to create a substantial financial or workload burden on either party to collect this information. However, they would like to see these types of data collected and made accessible for research to the extent feasible.

Providing access for non-state and FWS users will allow for research and surveys that are essential for the continued evaluation and achievement of the goals and objectives of the WSFR program and the states.

5. Increasing Workload Due to Duplicative Components of TRACS

Both state interfaces for WSFR grants (grant.gov, TRACS) require common information that currently has similar elements that must be input separately.

Removing duplication of data entry, to the extent possible, will decrease the workload on both state and federal partners and will result in a more efficient and effective WSFR program.

WMI and the review participants identified several Technical Challenges in the TRACS review process. Technical challenges identified included concerns over compliance with 2 CFR 200, the upcoming handoff of TRACS data entry to states, the perception that grants are not being reviewed or approved until entered into TRACS and the use of TRACS by entities with small numbers of grants. Most of these can be easily resolved at the working group level. The WSFRJTF should assign the resolution of these technical challenges to the appropriate working group of subject matter experts for resolution.

Back in the small group at the DC office meeting, Tom came with the idea of Drafting a Memorandum of Understanding between AFWA and FWS that affirms and continues a policy of cooperation and coordination among the parties for the continued implementation and proper function of grants performance reporting system (TRACS). A copy of this draft is attached as Appendix I.

Action Item 10: Comments to WMI on draft report of TRACS Assessment – December 5th, 2016

Discussions:

- There are only few technical errors that WSFR can send comments on but there is one big issue we need to resolve. We have to make sure that we get Dan and his colleagues as soon as possible what they need to move forward. We need to get to the bottom line of Strategic Objectives piece.
- FWS likes the Memorandum of Understanding as document that we can keep referring too. It will clearly codify what we agreed on and what were the issues.
- Bob Curry referred to the Conclusions and Recommendations of the review part:

Develop a Communications Plan for the WSFR Program

3. Establish a technical liaison group to meet the needs of technical communication for TRACS.

- This is not a recommendation for the FAC but it's a communication subcommittee group task. The way this recommendation is worded feels too broad to WSFR. There are 3 pieces to that:
 1. communication with JTF,
 2. how are we going to deal with future changes to TRACS, and
 3. how we are going to consolidate all groups (TRACS Working Group, all various working groups) to one
- JTF members decided that the three items that needed to be addressed in this JTF meeting were:
 1. Integrating strategies and objectives into TRACS reporting;
 2. Defining the level of details; and
 3. Resolve the outcome reporting issues.
- Referring to the states, there is significant concern with outcomes/objectives. So it's hard to move forward without hearing from the states and seeing a summary of the comments particularly on outcomes.
 - These comments are available. Tim will address those in later presentation. We are not looking at details today but more of the high level decision.

7. TRACS Working Group Comments review on the Review of Matrix - Tim

TRACS WG is in the process of completing review of matrix. 525 comments have been received so far. 29 states responded with specific comments to elements of matrix. WSFR received comments from all its regions. Out of 525 comments people were asked to comment on the fields. The result was that almost all were substantive and expressed a full opinion and the quality of comments was very helpful and informing. The comments were integrated in the matrix. There were three big issues that seemed to need discussion at the JTF:

1. **Qualitative** - WSFR use the information against a state. All states will answer "strongly agree", so what's the value; Extra workload because multiple state staff will need to review
2. **Target Species** - We have "over-simplified" the measures; Need to relate to our projects to conservation of species
3. **Habitats** - Habitat metrics will not be useful because "shape files" may not be consistent with project area; Need to provide a measure of amount and type of habitat being protected and restored.

There were some issues that received mostly of comments and needed attention, mostly technical, maybe not JTF attention.

1. **Boating/Fishing** - Separate fishing away from boating;
2. **Outreach/Com.** - Rework Outreach/Communications and Training/Education for better definition;
3. **Wildlife Damage** - Not a clean location; better definition and activities;
4. **Wildlife Disease** - Not a clean location; better definition and activities;

5. *Invasive Species* - Not a clean location; broader definition and activities;
6. *Habitat Structures* - More or less definition;
7. *WMA's* - Areas vs Acres
8. *Trash Collection* - Not a restoration activity!!
9. *R3* - Overlap with Outreach/Communication and Training/Education
10. *Land Disposal* - Questions about the "Lands Module"

Recommendation: Refer issue back to the TRACS Working Group (January 30 – February 01, 2017) with an assignment to review all the comments to determine if changes need to be made; or to refer the specific issue to WSFR Senior Management for resolution of referral to JTF.

Discussion:

- From the last JTF meeting in April we identified that there has been a disconnect in TRACS WG among the members. I'm a little hesitant to make a recommendation to kick this back to TRACS WG which you all identified has been isolated from everything else. JTF needs further discussion on that to make sure it's consistent. During the last JTF meeting the members came up with the idea of assigning a subset group that worked with Jon. G and others in DC.
 - “Jon G. volunteered to take care of the states' side. He had the opportunity to serve in that group as region 5 rep. TRACS WG never had intention to make policy. There is communication going on, but bridges have to be built to figure out whose responsibility is to report to the JTF or Directors what is going on with the Working Group” –*JTF meeting notes, April 2016*
- In summary from the meeting of the parties (Clint): We had a conversation on how to communicate strategies. Rather than reinventing the TRACS WG we were thinking on how to strengthen that. We could see if we can have states connect to us, formalize the process on the way that it connects getting its work out to all states for feedback before finalizing any recommendations. And formalize the process for TRACS WG to get stuff to this group.
 - We have had some struggles with TRACS WG succeeding but we did talk about using critical components to address the weaknesses.
- At the Meeting of the Parties we were struggling with what TRACS WG role is going forward and we clarified that role. But we will continue to encounter these conflicts. It is on AFWA or JTF to make the decision on what the TRACS WG role is going forward.
- Before leaving for the JTF meeting Lisa worked with the FAC WG and TRACS WG to get a perspective from both. The general perspective was that the TRACS WG met and talked about what came out of the Meeting of the Parties. What came out of TRACS WG in terms of recommendations that came to all states for comments was not necessarily what TRACS WG thought had left the meeting with. Lisa thinks that players are confused what the role is from FAC WG to TRACS WG or JTF. At the meeting of the parties we talked about legitimacy gap and the trust that needs to rebuild. We have to make sure that states voice is heard and presented properly.

- Tom thinks that coming out of the meeting of the parties there was a draft agreement and that was vested through the process.
- TRACS WG still remains confused what their role is and how it integrates with JTF, FAC WG and what moves forward. We still think that the communication chart we came up with at the meeting of Parties and used to get feedback for the Matrix Review worked. We haven't seen that level of feedback in a very long time. We just need to work on how TRACS WG fits in this new communication structure.
- So the question that Tim has from his presentation is: Are these issues to be addressed by JTF or do they need to be addressed by a technical body?
- It looks like there is still an open question about TRACS WG and we haven't finalized that yet.
- In Arizona we are very supportive of TRACS but we wanted to capture something that really is telling the story and inform the Blue Ribbon Panel group. I don't know if measures that we have currently picked actually are informing, where we can influence legislation at national level. We are struggling with that right now. Those measures seem very simple but how do they inform our legislator or congress. What came out of the Meeting of Parties that can help address this is that we could use other sources of information (rather than TRACS) that can help feeding in that.
- The question is, are these concerns you have listed identified by the states or the services? And are the recommendations coming from the states? Can we tell by percentage who commented on what? We also need to know what makes those concerns real concerns, because of quantity of comments related to the issue or because of the importance of question that people brought it up? Is there a Matrix that summarizes all the comments?
- Was Species Identification a state comment?
 - It is a combination of states and service comments.
- We need to do this as a team but we need to know the state perspective and service perspective, who is commenting on what issue.
- We don't need to dig in how many states/regions sent comments in, if we are all familiar with all these topics already and familiar with the pros/cons and there isn't a perfect answer then it's time for us to just make the judgment call and move on and have our explanation why we made that call if someone happens to disagree with us.
- What I'm trying to figure out is that is there anything in this format that we disagree? And we have to make sure Dan gets what he needs.

Small Group 1:

Dan needs JTF to make decisions on the following questions:

- a. Is there a critical flaw with the 14 common strategies developed for all WSFR grant programs?
 - The discussion evolved around what processes have been used so far to come up with 14 strategies and who was involved in that. Also there were discussions around the comments received on those strategies.
 - *Coordination-Administration* is one of main concerns that came up during the 4 conference calls with WG and WSFR staff. The question is whether we do coordination administration grants or whether coordination administration is a component of every grant and therefore not necessary to call that out.
 - The only other concern about represent is that some of those strategies are not grants. You do those things as part of other work. This is an important distinction but it opens the door because there are probably less than half of strategies that are part of the grants and more than half are enabling part of grants.
 - The other one was *Environmental review* could fit under technical assistance as far as a category.
 - The *stakeholder involvement* should be removed because they are covered by other categories. Not sure what caused us to split and lump decisions but I think it's a critical flaw. They were lumped based on feedback from last years. And now they want to split again. 18 categories which originally were lumped to 16 and now have been lumped into 14 were derived by strategies developed by AFWA.
 - *Species reintroduction* is a state wildlife grant driven and stocking is not reintroduction. *Stocking* is for recreational purposes mostly.

Decision 4: JTF approved the 14 common strategies developed for all WSFR grant programs

- b. Can we move forward with standardized SMART objectives (e.g. conduct XX studies/surveys by XXXX) for the 14 common strategies?
 - Every time you are counting it's going to be a different study what you are counting but in the same time we are not limiting the amount of supporting information to enter into the system. That's where you get the understanding of what one study meant for you versus 60 studies for another state. Unfortunately, that's the metric list. We have to have metrics in standardized way for national rollups. What is different with this, is that we have to decide if we are moving forward with this set and we are going to want more details somewhere in the system to back this up.
 - We have to make sure that even if objectives are standardized, are the measures standardized?

- When talking about meetings and technical assistance there are different ways you can quantify it. Roll it up to the level that you feel comfortable with or come up with a different way to keep track of it.

Decision 5: JTF approved standardized SMART objectives for the 14 common strategies

- c. Can we move forward with qualitative targets for the 14 common strategies to measure program effectiveness and progress toward desired outcomes? Qualitative targets are assessed at the project level and/or the program level (optional).

Qualitative targets fall in two categories yes or no and sliding scale.

- These are targets that mostly of time don't make sense. Why would states say anything else rather than it was good and there are no records on judging the process. So in our opinion this is a Service call. If service says it's valuable to do this, then just go with it.
- Is the information collected through these targets public or is it used for internal purposes?
 - Services are not planning on making this public except the highest levels.
- So imagine majority of states say agree/strongly agree and then we have the OIG audits coming out and say you failed the plan, you have poor performance reports and there is obviously a disconnect and if we look as outsiders in both reports it makes us question the effectiveness of the entire qualitative program that obviously the states are not being honest so all this report is a flawed.
- Why do we need to ask this question when what's important is the question if you made a difference on the ground or not? If we didn't do these, what would happen?
 - This is a four step child in outcome reporting. If we are not doing required outcome reporting across the board and we don't do this, we don't have anything.
- It's how you measure it in your world. Where we need to go is to push states into some measurable outcomes, there are some standardized outcomes we should focus on and maybe spread those across the country and just get rid of these kind of stuff and have flexibility on how we measure outcomes.
- There is a workload issue. Logistics and practicality of outcomes makes them being mandatory. If we get states comfortable with this which is the easy way out how much more difficult is it going to be to convince states to actually to commit to outcomes?
 - FAC WG and FAC meeting that just happened nobody really understand why they are asked to do that, how it serves the purpose for 5-year report. States are not ready to move forward with this.
 - The service thinks it serves the purpose and maybe they need to make that case again. The service needs to provide the answers.
- Has OMB asked for that?

- OMB has asked that we decide to establish the outcomes.
- So is this a want or a need? I'm not on board with that unless it's a need.

Decision 6: JTF didn't approve qualitative targets for the 14 common strategies to measure program effectiveness and progress toward desired outcomes. Also JTF voiced support for measuring long term outcomes.

- d. Is species identification by name or group (e.g. Greater Sage Grouse) at Activity Tag 1 required for appropriate strategies (e.g. Direct Species Management)? Assume an efficient way to select recurrent species/groups.

The reason why we came up with this is because of some comments that we are losing some details that is important specifically with regard to species and outcome. So in order to make up for that we should identify species required to be identified to address the conservation aspect.

The two strategies we identified were: Species Management and Species Stocking.

The JTF members agreed to move forward with these two strategies.

Decision 7: JTF approved the requirement to identify species for "Species Management" and "Species Stocking" common strategies at Activity Tag 1.

- e. Is quantification (i.e. estimated percent of total acres, doesn't need to be 100%) of broad habitat types (e.g. wetland, upland, etc.) required for appropriate strategies (e.g. Direct Habitat Management)

Dan has to make sure that this is for programing purposes only and not used to getting approved for a grant.

Decision 8: JTF approved the requirement to estimate broad habitat types (e.g. wetlands, uplands) for "Habitat Management" and "Real Property" common strategies. Estimates can be in acres and don't have to equal 100%.

- f. Recognition that estimated cost will be inputted at the grant level (e.g. federal and non-federal amount).

This was a decision at meeting of parties. The reason for being here is for acceptance. This is a recognition that we are changing our capabilities to higher level and correlate cost to specific activities. There is no capability for states to go to lower level right now.

Decision 9: JTF approved that estimated cost will be provided at the grant level (e.g. federal and non-federal amount).

Small Group 2: Defining the level of detail

- a. Ensure that revisions to cost reporting and the level at which it is done is cooperatively agreed to by the Parties.
- b. Focus on performance metrics for the immediate future. Once those are finalized, then consider how and at what level financial reporting in TRACS might work.
- c. Cooperatively define why voluntary programmatic/outcomes should be reported and how they are critical to the integrity of the WSFR Program
- d. Encourage states to engage their practitioners to receive input on how to best report project/output and program/outcome performance and cost metrics.
- e. Encourage states to use the current TRACS system process of tagging to demonstrate specific examples of performance and efficiency.
- f. Work with the five CMS states individually during TRACS enhancement to develop an efficient and effective reporting process that accommodates the CMS structure.

So looking at the solutions there are five bullets that better capture what the small group thought:

“Grant level costs that are imported from FBMS are currently satisfactory to meet the transparency needed for the grant and should continue to do so the enhanced version of TRACS. Revisions to cost reporting and the level at which it is done should be cooperatively agreed to by the parties” – we would add- “before changes are made in future TRACS revisions”.

This last sentence adds some context, for purposes of programing to make sure that financial reporting is at current level (the key point that we will only require costs at grant level is already in the list of our "decisions").

The next bullet that we felt stood in its own:

“Continued TRACS development should focus on performance metrics for the immediate future. Once those are resolved, finalized, and tested by the states, then the Parties should consider how financial reporting in TRACS might work and at what level it should be required”.

Not sure if it will be necessary to do additional financial reporting in the future.

The group felt these were two main points.

The next bullet says that:

“FWS should work collaboratively with CMS states and develop an approach for them to report as consistently with other states as they can. The FWS may have to work with the five CMS states individually during the TRACS enhancement to develop an efficient and effective reporting process that accommodates the CMS structure”

The only thing we would add to that bullet would be “*and is as consistent as possible with other decisions made regarding the purpose of the TRACS system*”.

The third bullet talks about outcomes “*The WSFR-JTF should clearly define why programmatic/outcomes (voluntary) need to be reported and how they are critical to the integrity of the Program by helping to tell the conservation story*”.

and it’s restates that they would be voluntarily – the group’s recommendation is to delete that.

The fourth bullet – “*The WSFR-JTF should strongly encourage states to use the current TRACS system process of tagging (key words that are searchable and sortable) to demonstrate specific, examples of performance and efficiency*” - depending on what Small Group 1 was saying about – small group 2 would rephrase to say that at this level of detail we are not strongly encouraging or discouraging, it should be a tool available to states if they believe that that would help to tell the story on one of their grants.

Small Group 3: Resolve the outcome reporting issues in TRACS and its impacts on WSFR grants (Ed Carter, Lisa Evans, Bob Curry, Tom Busiahn)

- Considered the 13 recommendations on pages 54-55 of the WMI report under the heading “Resolve Outcome reporting issues in TRACS and its impacts on WSFR grants”.
- Agreed with all recommendations as written.
- Recommended the following to address recommendations B and C.
 - Distribute draft list of outcome measures to States and WSFR Regions for comment.
 - Use agreed-upon communication method – through WSFR Regions to all State Directors and FACs, as well as WSFR staff
 - Provide an explanatory cover memo co-signed by WSFR and AFWA leadership
 - Use a table structure to ask specific questions about each measure, such as:
 - Estimated staff time to collect data
 - Likelihood that a State will provide data
 - Technical feasibility of the measure
 - Suggested data sources for the measure
 - Request suggestions for additional measures not on the list.
 - Approximate timeline: Distribute draft outcome measures in early January 2017. Receive and analyze results prior to meeting of 5-year report editorial team scheduled for February 21-23.
- WSFR-HQ will draft the cover memo in consultation with Lisa Evans.
- Editorial team will prepare table of draft measures.

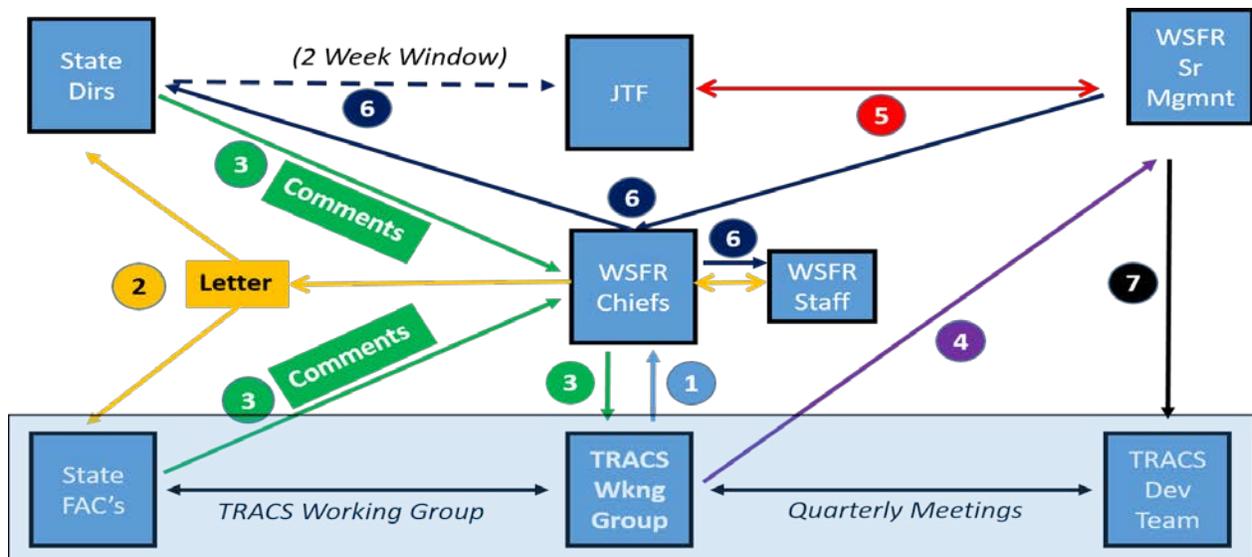
Action Item 2:

- a. FWS will develop list of outcome indicators for 5-year report – Tom Busiahn by January 15th, 2017

- b. Provide an explanatory cover memo co-signed by JTF co-chairs - Tom Busiahn and Lisa Evans by January 15th, 2017
- c. Distribute memo and draft outcome indicators to all State Directors and FACs through regional WSFR chiefs for review and comment – Tom Busiahn by January 15th, 2017
- d. Develop a streamline approach to collecting comments to draft outcome indicators – Tom Busiahn by January 15th, 2017
- e. Analyze results of comments on draft outcome indicators and provide to 5-year report editorial team and JTF – Tom Busiahn by February 20th, 2017.
- f. JTF will arrange a conference call to make final recommendations on outcome indicators and how will they be reported – Silvana Yaroschuk by March 1st, 2017

8. TRACS WG Composition and TRACS Communication Process – Tim

Tim provided a diagram of TRACS WG Composition and Communication Process and explained how the information flows. This was drafted at the Meeting of Parties for TRACS Review after few discussions and adjustments.



Discussions:

- Looking at the yellow line, why would the communication go to state directors through WSFR Chiefs and not directly from FAC?
 - The yellow line shows when WSFR is trying to solicit any input and it goes to FAC and State Directors through WSFR regional chiefs.
 - Usually when the letters come from WSFR Chief gets the attention of the directors.
- If there are any issues with TRACS we are not starting at the bottom, this is a policy consider body, we are not trying to get the basic information. It should come to policy people and that's what the state directors want us to do for them.

- What came from the Meeting of Parties was that people would like all states to see what's happening with TRACS even if nobody considers it a policy call. If it's a TRACS change every state should get a chance to see it.
- JTF is seeing it because it consists of State Directors, WSFR Chiefs, FAC, WSFR Staff so maybe there is some way to tweak how that correspondence is addressed so it's not just going to directors, FAC or WSFR staff.
- The other structural challenge you can see here is that you wouldn't suspect that most states would want independent comments on issues.
- The purple line (decision) that goes from TRACS WG should go in both directions: WSFR Senior Management and JTF (Co-chairs) to decide if it's a policy issue that JTF can address or one that service can make the policy call. That was the trouble from the past that service would make the policy call and the state would be puzzled as not being not what they recommended.

Tim will work on making few adjustments.

TRACS WG Composition: Continued effort to gain good state representation, recognizing travel challenges. New effort at including at least one "policy" level state person. The following picture shows a comparison between the current structure and proposed one. Red indicates the changes. We are looking at expanding resources.

Current TRACS Working Group Composition

*Established by WSFR Assistant Director, June, 2014
Meets quarterly; One meeting per year is an on-site workshop in Denver.*

Position	Federal	Non-Federal
Sponsor	Tom Busiahn	
Chair	Tim Smith	
Dvlpmnt Team Rep	Dan Hogan	
Program Advisor	Paul Van Ryzin	
Region 1		Brad Compton – ID**
Region 2	Nicole Jimenez	Sherri Crouch – AZ
Region 3	Fabian Romero	Jonathan Sorg - OH
Region 4	LeAnne Bonner	Matt Warriner – AR
Region 5	Ron Essig	Bob Longcor – NJ
Region 6	Otto Jose	Carol Bybee – WY
Region 7	Mary Price	Brad Compton - ID**
Region 8	Justin Cutler	Brad Compton - ID**
At-Large State #1		Nathan Soboleff – AK
At-Large State #2		Stasey Whichel - FL
AFWA		Mark Humpert
SOBA		Valerie Thompson
Fed/Non-Fed:	12 Members	12 Members

***Regions 1, 7 and 8 states have chosen to be represented by a single member.*

TRACS Working Group: Improving Communications

1) Composition: Continued effort to gain good state representation, recognizing travel challenges. New effort at including at least one "policy" level state person.

Position	Federal	Non-Federal
Sponsor	Tom Busiahn	
Chair*	Tim Smith*	
Dvlpmnt Team Rep	Dan Hogan	
Nat Prog Advisor	Paul Van Ryzin	
Region 1		Brad Compton – ID**
Region 2	Nicole Jimenez	Sherri Crouch – AZ
Region 3	Fabian Romero	Jonathan Sorg - OH
Region 4	LeAnne Bonner	Matt Warriner – AR
Region 5	Ron Essig	Bob Longcor – NJ
Region 6	Otto Jose	Carol Bybee – WY
Region 7	Mary Price	Brad Compton - ID**
Region 8	Justin Cutler	Brad Compton - ID**
At-Large State #1		Nathan Soboleff – AK
At-Large State #2		Stasey Whichel - FL
AFWA		Mark Humpert
SOBA		Valerie Thompson
FAC Wrg Grp Rep		Paula Nicholas - CO
JTF State Policy Rep		()
Nat Traing Advisor	Scott Knight	
Nat Prog Advisor	Christy Vigfusson	
Nat Prog Advisor	Brad Gunn	
Fed/Non-Fed:	14 Members	14 Members

**Chair is non-voting, except in ties.*

***Regions 1, 7 and 8 states have chosen to be represented by a single member.*

- How different is FAC WG from TRACS WG?
 - FAC WG representatives are nominated/selected by each region and it is more of technical group (e.g. grant managers).
- So the question is, at what level are FAC? We are asking these people to perform certain tasks.
 - All people in the WG are technical people but when you add couple policy people you fill some of that gap.

- The question is whether this group is equipped to make policy consideration we even recognize as policy at first place. But this has to work in concert with the other side in sense that rather than solve that problem by assuming there is one or two key people sitting at the table that will recognize that, lower the bar by saying that if anything ever happens with the TRACS let the technical team work on it but they are going to send it out to all the states and all the staff and there is going to be a chance for everyone to see it before it moves forward with implementation.
- Do they feel they have been asked questions that they should never answer?
 - There are two things: first, having some way to give issues to this group. There is recognition that they can't address everything based on skills, knowledge and abilities. This process addresses the major frustration, what we do with this stuff? The second one (varies state by state) is engaging their director with FAC. How to make that work and get that information.
- JTF members had few concerns about the AFWA representation in FAC WG and to look into that in the future. JTF has to nominate a representative as a representative at FAC WG. The concern for FAC WG representatives from JTF is the financial support for the states.
- TRACS WG is not a standing group, in long term this group will end after it achieves its purpose. We will need to build a sunset clause at the charter for the WG, but we will have to wait till the TRACS WG meet.

Action Item 3:

- a. Identify a JTF representative for the TRACS WG and – Kelly Hepler by December 15th, 2017
- b. Address AFWA representation in the TRACS WG – Kelly Hepler and Carol Bambery by December 15th, 2016
- c. Address FAC WG representation in the TRACS WG – Lisa Evans by December 15th, 2017 - The FAC WG has decided that Mike Sawyers, from Massachusetts will be the member to serve on the TRACS WG. Mike will be a great addition to the team as his state has been reticent to adopt TRACS - this is a viewpoint that should strengthen our final product and I know he will be an active participant.

Decision 3: JTF approved diagram for TRACS WG communications

Decision 10: JTF approved TRACS Working Group to review comments received and revise the Matrix as appropriate for those items NOT addressed by JTF Decisions. TRACS Working Group will utilize the TRACS Communications diagram for any unresolved issues and will report back decisions consistent with the diagram.

9. Administrative fees for WSFR – Paul Rauch

The Fish and Wildlife Service will work collaboratively with the States to complete an evaluation of administrative funding needs for the WSFR program. The results will inform the need for future requests for funding adjustments. WSFR will retain a contractor to perform an unbiased, collaborative assessment of program management needs, including 3 components: 1) statutory, regulatory and policy requirements (*Compliance*); 2) services provided to states and other partners (*Support*); and 3) additional value added program initiatives (*Value*). The Service will be the final decision maker, but the assessment will be done in a collaborative manner to include input and feedback from other key stakeholders including States and industry.

The Service expects to select the contractor in early 2017, and to receive the contractor's final report by July 31, 2017. A 2-hour "listening session" has been scheduled for the North American conference in March to seek input on State needs. The FAC Work Group has also been tasked (through AFWA's Fish & Wildlife Trust Funds Committee) to update its 2013 paper on what States need from the WSFR program. After completion of the review, the Service will brief appropriate AFWA committees at the September 2017 annual meeting, and initiate development of a collaborative legislative strategy with States and industry.

This is not the final document yet so if there is an issue or recommendations feel free to send them in before the document is finalized.

- Whatever result of the report is, what will be the step forward after that?
 - If what the Service ends up with, requires legislative changes in some way the Services would like to begin with the process by earl fall/beginning of fiscal year. So going backward we are trying to get this report done, finalized and agreed to during fiscal year 2017 and for 2018 the Services will work with whatever is available to work with to get whatever changes needed and aim for all changes to take effect in 2019.

- Action Item 6:**
- a. Provide comments on draft MOU to Tom Busiahn – JTF by January 16th, 2017
 - b. Prepare a general updated draft of MOU – Tom Busiahn by February 28th, 2017

10. Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendations/Proposed Legislation/Administrative Requirements – Tom Busiahn and Lisa Van Alstyne

At the JTF spring meeting there were some discussions on what WSFR would need to do to implement HR5650. FWS WSFR staff initiated a draft evaluation, needs and actions for implementing HR 5650 if it should pass. This draft white paper was presented to and discussed with the JTF on Federal Assistance.

To sum up few things:

- WSFR believes that regulation would not be necessary to implement the act. There were different points of view on that. Someone from AFWA staff was thinking that 50CFR80 would be the controlling regulation but WSFR doesn't think that would be

the case. There is enough specificity in WCPR legislation that we can implement as is and come up with a rule later.

- The other thing is that WCPR requires that a State must develop and implement a wildlife conservation strategy. We believe that “State Wildlife Action Plans” will fulfill the requirement of WCPR for a wildlife conservation strategy, so that’s already in place.

The paper and discussions raised additional questions and concerns about how FWS staff would implement the bill because they are not consistent with some of our underlying assumptions and expectations.

The white paper includes information on the use of administrative funding regarding the grant management, policy and oversight, training, performance reporting, audits and other costs.

Discussions:

- The most frequent questions are the allowable expenses, the matching (75/25) and land acquisitions, and there will be some enforcement component.
- HR5650 is a simple one, there will be money put in the WCRP account which is in legislation, it’s in the books and it’s liberal on the way funds can be used. The match can’t come from hunting license revenue; it has to be a different source.
- One of the FAC asked if this was going to replace SWAG but you are saying that it’s going to be a broader use for these funds. This is up to the congress. It can replace SWAG.
- A new piece of funding is going to be nested under PR and we are looking to a new earlier piece of legislation that created that nest to begin with and now we are putting new \$\$ into it so the threshold question is to what extent do we want to be prudent and to make sure we do not want to carry over provisions of that original legislation that nested the money in PR to begin with, one of which you just identified (the 75/25). If that impact is problematic to the states and it is, then let’s take some steps to fix that as we go forward and bring the new money in, thereby retaining the pieces that we want of the original and have it supplemented by new pieces that we want to attach to this new money. We need to be smart going into it. So when questions come up such as are there any of PR rules limitations that are restrict to the states use of the WCPR. There is still time to fix all the issues as they pop up.
- How do we collectively as a group be smart? Who is going to be involved? Is there a process in place?
 - Larry Mellinger and Carol agreed on working close together. As the issues start popping up they will be sharing that information and accumulating a list by what they currently have on these issues. That’s the legal piece of it and beyond that it is a question for the JTF co-chairs to establish on.
- We have a broad coalition and this question lead to ExComm and we have to introduce it again. The suggestion is to take this to AFWA President and explain, in hurry we did what we did, that the legislation is 15 years old and there is a different world now and some of the rules are useless. The AFWA President could assign some people to work it out and have a subset to work on that. Since this topic is included in the ExComm meeting agenda the white paper will be included in the ExComm binders.
- There are two points that are not in the white paper:

1. There is no competitive component, they are all apportioned funds
 2. It replaces states travel and wildlife grants appropriation
- It looks like we are going in the same direction. We just need to be organized on this. We need to double check with Ron if this White paper identifies some of the issues.
 - The service can't advocate for the legislation unless we have the White House endorsement.

AFWA staff are diving deeper into these issues and developing a briefing paper in close coordination with JTF FA and AFWA leadership to better articulate FWS perspectives and expected implementation, intersections with existing statutes and regulations, states' needs and expectations as well as recommended actions and possible changes to the bill text to ensure states' needs and expectations are met.

11. Use of new funding from HR5650 for law enforcement work – Carol Bambery and Larry Mellinger

Law enforcement piece is a piece of a broader topic. What is confusing about HR5650 is basically that they jammed a different grant program into the wildlife restoration program and said that everything applies except when doesn't apply. It makes the law enforcement become difficult because of the history of law provision on law enforcement goes back to 1955 that didn't necessary contemplate this program.

The original provision from 1937 says that to maintain wildlife restoration projects established under the provision of this act should be the duty of the states. So there was no money available for maintenance of projects, in 1945 they mandated to say that up to 20% of states funds could be used for maintenance of projects and in 1955 it said up to 30% and they added a provision specifically saying "Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, funds apportioned to a State under this chapter may be expended by the State for management (exclusive of law enforcement and public relations) of wildlife areas and resources up to 30%" and in 1970 they took away the 20% and 30% and maintenance and management could be up to any level but management was still exclusive of law enforcement and public relations. Putting that into the regulations it basically says under prohibited activities, activities that are ineligible for funding, law enforcement activities, public relations activities, activities primarily for purpose of producing income, activities that encourage oposition for regulated fishing, hunting and trapping. Under the existing regulation the law enforcement activity is prohibited as activity in itself but if it supports a grant/program/project purpose it theoretically could be funded as an exception under this existing regulations. But if this becomes law, FWS has to either come up with new regulation or amend 50CFR80 to specifically deal with this. There is clearly portions of part 80 that wouldn't apply at all with regard to license revenue and certification. Major thing would be eligible activities in current regulations under PR, DJ or the new act. What is unconceivable were the codified of definition of wildlife conservation restoration program and definition of wildlife restoration project. Conservation program is subset of wildlife restoration project where you would think would be the opposite, that conservation restoration program would be broader. It's all predicated also on wildlife restoration plans and programs that the states submit. So we are not sure if there have been any criteria issued by the service as to what programs will include under this act and what will be approvable.

The fact that the funding is basically a subaccount from the same Trust Fund is not problematic, but it becomes more difficult when the language of the original 2000 Act basically amends PR.

Discussions

- If it doesn't go under the Trust Fund does the bill have to be written to create another trust fund that would have the same language?
 - This will be a subaccount under Wildlife Restoration account. The intent of congress was to keep it separated, pretty much a firewall between PR and new money.
- Would it have to be reauthorized on some regular basis?
 - It will be a permanent indefinite appropriation as written.
- It will be a problem for states that don't have anything but license revenues to match those funds.
- So it sounds like there are few things JTF needs to think about. We got this effort to try and putt together a group of folks to start considering how do we want to mold this going forward but also to think about on backside what are the requirements in term of regulatory changes. As for priorities, we have to make sure we have a consensus, message and an approach.

12. Issue or Non-issue: PR funding to purchase pen-raised birds for use in hunter education programs – Carol Bambery and Tom Busiahn

An action item from the April 11-12, 2016 meeting of the JTF requested a report from WSFR and AFWA on the question: “if WSFR has rejected state grants because they requested PR funding to purchase pen-raised birds for use in hunter education programs.” Regional offices were canvased by WSFR-HQ, and State agencies by the FAC Work Group.

Results are shown in the document sent to the JTF members before the winter meeting. In summary, a few Regions have either rejected proposals in the past, or have informally communicated that this is an ineligible activity. Currently most or all of the Regional WSFR offices would approve of a proposal to buy pen-raised birds for Hunter Education, but have not received such proposals in recent years. A few States and WSFR offices indicated interest in clarification of policy. The JTF should consider recommending that this question be addressed in the update of 50 CFR 80. The way to address it would be developing a policy interpretation paper on eligibility for pen raised bird release for Hunter-Ed purposes. This will help to have consistency among the states.

Action Item 4: Move ahead with a policy interpretation paper on eligibility for pen raised bird releases for hunter ed purposes – Lisa Van Alstyne by March 1st, 2017

13. Council for the Advancement of Hunting and the Shooting Sports – John Frampton

We have 33 sponsors for the PR Modernization act. We are hopeful that it will get through this year. We will push both senate bill 2690 and House Resolution 4818 as soon as they get back in sessions. We need to continue build cosponsors. There is lots of resistance but there is

lots of support. The key is to provide funding so we can work at national level to really focus on national ideas. There will be more flexibility on using the funds.

The R3 community Website (nationalr3.com) is up and running where groups can communicate to each other. So far there are 564 members in that website. CAHSS submitted a proposal at MSCG program and got approved. The Council will use this grant to focus on the implementation of the Plan by, 1) assisting states in drafting step-down plans and 2), managing national R3 communications through a professional, web-based platform that will collect and share information about R3 programs and activities of state wildlife agencies, NGOs and other R3 partners.

CAHSS and WMI are setting up workshops in various states to try to bring states staff in to brief them on R3 activities. Few workshops have already happened and the states are interested on these workshops so 8 more have planned for upcoming year.

The Draft Annual Performance Report has been completed sent for review.

We conducted a conservation study with RBFF and they are tracking what we have done in hunting and shooting side developing an R3 program for fishing and boating. We are still pushing states to make contributions. We are still pushing states to make contributions.

John brought in the Council's idea of a Technical Advisory Group that they would like to establish and utilize it that will not answer directly to all 50 states but to Joint Task Force. The Council's Technical Advisory Group would be composed of 4 FWS staff and 4 state staff (FAC). We have already 3 FAC appointed and we need JTF to appoint one more. Joyce was working on identifying FWS staff but since she is retiring we are hoping the replacement will keep working on it.

Another thing that is interesting is the portion of money that comes from shooting sports and what comes from hunting. A recent study shows that 77% comes from shooting sports. This number justifies the big amount of moneys that the states are putting in shooting ranges. You are going to continue to see more questions coming from states, why aren't more funds going the shooting ranges? We are trying to push on PR modernization so we can have more funds go to range development and there are lots of discussions about that also putting a cap on that, 25%.

- The Services need factual basis on shooting sports vs hunting to have a leadership discussion on this and come to a consensus opinion.

14. Working with WSFR, States and Industry – Jon Gassett

- WMI is continuing the work to connect industry with state fish and wildlife agencies and services as far as the nexus of excise tax funds. WMI is organizing the Annual Business Meeting bringing the leaders from industry, state fish and wildlife agencies and service together to discuss the issues and get those to the services to be addressed. WMI received another Multi State Grant to continue this work.
- Now it's time to tackle few things such as dealing specifically with excise tax issues where some states collect it and some other states don't. This is an unfair competitive damage when that happens. This is a two problems approach where one is to see if there is a law that needs fixing so we make sure that those things don't happen and also it is the enforcement component to make sure these things don't happen. And the other one is to work directly with industry people to see what the problems are and how they tackle those so there is consistency across the regions.

- WMI is focusing on branding effort for WSFR creating a brand where everyone can see the image/vision and understand what fuels the conservation in this country. Two years ago there was a commitment from ATA/ASA with \$500M each to start that process forward to build that brand and also to work on PR/DJ modernization act to free up some of the language that prohibits states from using some of the PR/DJ funds.
- Also on the IRS tax issues, WMI is contracting Mitch King who is transitioning out of ATA to sit and work with IRS these issues. Another component that will come up in the discussions and it has been discussed a lot in this meeting is the TRACS and how industry fits into that and what type of products they would like to see in the public TRACS feature so they can engage the successes.

Discussions

- How do you see the industry participation in this effort, as a continued reasonable level or as taking off?
 - It varies, AFWA president asked the question if instead of having the all-inclusive Fish and Wildlife business summit we could focus in certain things such as recreational shooting ranges. Maybe it would help if had separate summits: Sport Fishing and Boat Summit and Hunting and Sport Shooting Summit or something like that so we can get CEO from these industries to focus on certain issues.
- In the original vision for this, was there a component of it intended for education of industry?
 - Yes. Over 10 years, state leaders know who the industry people are. They communicate with them more frequently and have the relationship. Also WMI built a database of industry wide partners so the states can find information they need.

15. JTF Spring 2017 meeting – Kelly Hepler

WSFRE suggested the last week on April 2017 since it's a joint meeting with WSFR chiefs. Also they suggested to host the meeting in Northeast and Glenn could help host.

Considering that commute would be challenging for some, Kelly suggested meeting in the middle part somewhere. Members agreed on South Dakota. The date still to be decided. Kelly Hepler will check on facilities in Custer State Park.

JTF has to consider that the ExComm Retreat might be taking place the same week so JTF has to coordinate with AFWA when deciding on the date.

Action Item 5: Next JTF meeting, April 24-28, 2017. Check with Custer State Park – Kelly Hepler

16. Parking Lot and/or new issues for JTF Consideration - Kelly Hepler and Paul Rauch

License Certification

- Jim expressed concerns on Federal Rule for License Certification: The federal rule will be issued in June 20-17 with the final rule issued in June of 2018. All states will be given two-year timeframe to come into compliance.
The question is: will the new system be required for any license sold after that date?
 - Yes
- So for licenses sold previously under implementation it says: A state may implement the certification changes as appropriate but may not change the license certification for license

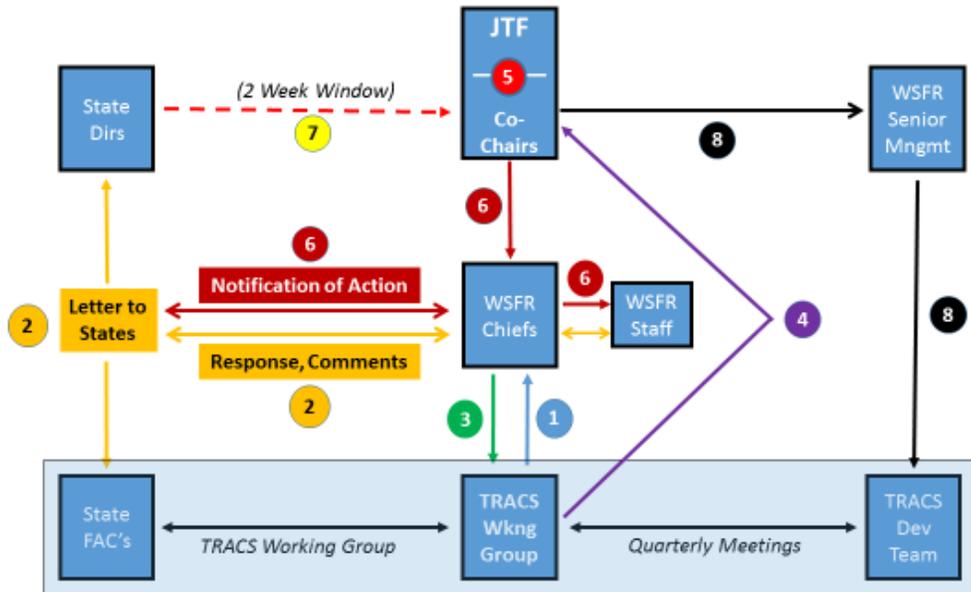
already sold. There is a two categories situation for licenses already sold: states that have sold the senior or infant licenses that will be worst off if they change to the new system and they would be better off if they keep the old system and it says they will not be able to change. And the other category e.g. Nebraska that would be better off if they convert already sold licenses to the new system. Can we make the change to the new system optional?

- For those license holders do we want to encourage the states to use the new system unless they have a compelling reason to stay with the old system? Or do we want to say choose at will and seek permission if you should?
- What is the purpose of seeking permission? How do we clearly label what is the default?
 - Maybe it's better to say notification rather than permission.
- What is the current scenario for the licenses that don't meet the new requirement?
 - If they have to get to the legislation changes, we are giving states 2 years to do that.

Memorandum of Understanding between FWS and AFWA on TRACS

- It needs to be well crafted on what's voluntarily or mandatory. For now, it will be voluntarily because we are not ready collectively to move to mandatory but, there is a desire amongst the groups to move that direction.
- We need to assess the feasibility of even making it mandatory, are we staffed to do it, do we have the outcomes correct, so putting it in the MOU to become mandatory it's unnecessary at this point. You could say it's voluntarily and let the culture of the organization decide it if it becomes mandatory.
- By April 2017 we will have the assessment results and we can match MOU to what we learnt from that.
- Do we want to include the decisions we make in the meeting included in the MOU?
 - If we go back to the decision points we made they don't look MOU worthy but they do need to be codified so everyone is in the same page what was decided.
- It will be wise to have a MOU to capture the core elements and then just have decisions included as addendums.

TRACS WG and communication chart revision



Action Item 7: Decision points and Action Items during JTF meeting will be distributed following JTF meeting to state directors, WSFR Chiefs – Kelly and Paul

Decision 2: Decision points and action items from JTF meeting will show a linkage to MOU