



WAFWP



Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals Summer 2007

President's Corner by Steve Bell

Michael Hutchins, Executive Director/CEO of The Wildlife Society (TWS), wrote an article titled "Who is a Wildlife Professional?" in the spring issue of the "The Wildlifer". In that article Mr. Hutchins articulated something we all know; the profession is changing. He pointed out that the conventional view of a "biologist" limits the profession to those with a degree in biology or closely aligned fields.

In the last several years the challenges faced by wildlife [and I might add fish] professionals tend to be anthropogenic in origin. Mr. Hutchins concluded that TWS should broaden their diversity of potential members to include specialist from non-traditional disciplines that understand the scientific principles of natural resource management. Although it's not an exhaustive list, he cites some specific examples such as psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and educators.

As a Habitat Biologist sometimes I think I can better relate to Margaret Mead than Marlin Perkins. Amongst conventional fish and wildlife biologists there has been a growing respect and appreciation for the expanding role of scientific technicians, whose duties and responsibilities have grown as much as their biologist counterparts. TWS is in the process of collaborating with the North American Wildlife Technicians Association to develop a certification program for wildlife technicians. As TWS and other professional societies discuss the merits of an emerging membership, WAFWP has already adapted to meet our changing times.

When I began my Presidency we were the Washington Association of Professional

Biologists and we only represented the biologist series. A few years ago we opened our membership to other positions with similar interests such as scientific technicians and research scientists for example. This was a recognition that our professional interests and concerns are more alike than they are different.

A few months ago I sent a letter asking for testimony on how your duties have changed in recent years. The overwhelming trend, as you already know, was that our duties have increased and our roles have been blurred with other disciplines; engineers, policymakers, sociologists etc. WDFW with the support and urging of some unions will ask DOP for an upward adjustment in our compensation to recognize our expanding duties.

On a personal note this will be my last article in the President's Corner. After two terms and four years it is time to pass the gavel on. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the membership, the board and staff for all your support. Thank you for letting me represent you. It has been an honor and a privilege.



E-MAIL ADDRESSES

We are always looking for better ways to communicate with members. E-mail is fast, cheap, and efficient, but we do not have a comprehensive list of member's HOME e-mail addresses (We cannot use agency e-mail for union communication). If you would like to be included in the e-mail updates, please send your home e-mail address to wapb@olympiaonline.org



WAFWP



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Annual Meeting Reminder

As a member of WAFWP you are entitled to attend the annual meeting on state time provided you do not use a state vehicle to attend. Lunch is provided. We will be holding elections for several board positions. You may bring your election ballots with you if you have not mailed them prior to the meeting. The meeting will be August 21, 10:00 to 2:00 at the Olympia Center in Multi-Purpose room B. Be sure to get a free parking pass from the Olympia Center or bring quarters for the meter to avoid a parking ticket.

DIRECTIONS:

I-5 Northbound

Exit 105 (Port of Olympia)

Left at stoplight onto Plum St.

Left on State Ave.

Right on Columbia St.

222 Columbia St. NW

I-5 Southbound

Exit 105 B (Port of Olympia) onto Plum St.

Left on State Ave.

Right on Columbia St.

222 Columbia St. NW

Phone: (360) 753-8380

Election Results by Steve Bell

Several work groups of recently unrepresented WDFW employees signed Showing-of-interest Cards in excess of 51%. These work groups were recently accreted by WAFWP. The WPEA BioData Systems work group voted to change representation from WPEA to WAFWP. We welcome all these new members!

The PRO-S chapter of WPEA voted 89 to 40 to change representation from WPEA to WAFWP. Despite PRO-S members overwhelming decision to join us, WPEA contested the election. PERC plans to hold a hearing in the near future to settle the dispute. We are hopeful that PERC will honor the members' wishes and allow them to change representation.

Annual Meeting and Executive Board Elections by Tom Cyra

Four Executive Board positions are up for election this year, and the votes will be tallied at the Annual Meeting at the Olympia Center on August 21st. The four positions are President, Secretary, and the Wildlife and Fish Board Representative positions.

Members should look for their ballots in the mail by the second week of August. Ballots must be **received** by August 21st, or they can be delivered to the Annual Meeting.

Please remember to print your name as well as sign the security envelope to insure your vote is counted. If you do not receive your ballot by August 14th, please contact the Secretary. All full members in good standing are eligible to vote, including new members who recently joined from unrepresented work groups or other bargaining units.

Remember as part of our contract, attendance at the Annual Meeting is a paid work day. You may not however, use a state vehicle to get there.



WAFWP



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Boat Safety Training *by Pat Miller*

Many of you have probably heard something that is coming down the pike for all WDFW boat operators, Boat Safety Training. The idea has been in the works for several years, mostly prompted by the Safety Office. The policy and procedure are in the development stage.

Recently, 24 instructors from the Enforcement and Fish and Wildlife Management programs were certified as agency trainers. You may have heard about this as the trainers are from all regions as well as Headquarters staff and you probably know one of them. In addition to conducting the training, this group will be responsible for developing policy and procedures to implement the program, so hopefully this will benefit from being a grass roots process.

The training has the following components: legal requirements for boats, fire safety and fighting, marlinspike seamanship (knots and lines), boat maneuvering exercises, basic maintenance, trailering skills and demonstration, anchoring and docking, emergency signals and flare usage, injured swimmer/boater exercises, PFD and other water safety tools and other topics. This is basic training and does not include boating in fast water and use of fan boats (airboats). There are other training modules that cover those topics.

The course is modeled after the USDI MOCC class which some of you may have experienced with other jobs. The full course will take three days.

One of the things we as a group (yes, I'm one of the trainers) will consider is developing an abbreviated course for employees that have extensive boating experience. There may be a written exam after which the employee could then take the practical test. It is yet to be decided who is required to take the training - in the USDI you cannot operate a boat without this training, even as a temporary.

As mentioned earlier, the trainers are from all regions and Headquarters, and the training opportunities will be statewide. Dates have not been set but there is a meeting in early August to begin planning dates and locations for the next few years.

This training is very comprehensive, most of the folks taking this course have found new information or have been reminded of things they knew but forgot over time.

Contract Settlement Highlights (WAFWP) *by Bryan Murphie*

Contract negotiations commenced on April and finally resulted in an agreement. Once again bargaining was arduous, but at least resolution was achieved. We were able to bargain the agreement without any substantial take-aways, and made ground in some important areas.

The 2007-2009 agreement will include the following advancements in working conditions and economics:

Article 6: Performance Evaluation– The evaluation process is subject to the grievance



WAFWP



Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals Summer 2007

process, although the content is not. You may request an Agency mediator be present if there are specific concerns regarding the content.

Article 7: Hours of Work - You will receive time and one-half for all hours worked on a holiday regardless if you are overtime eligible or overtime exempt. The State agreed to allow the accrual of exchange time for any work over 40 hours in a workweek so long as you go through the approval process. The tradeoff for this was to lower to cap to 80 hours maximum accrual unless situations outside of the employee's control require a larger accrual. We will work with the Agency on developing a liquidation strategy for those who have more than 80 hours. As a part of this agreement we also signed a MOU which will allow us to work with the Agency to streamline the approval process for exchange time. We were also able to bargain in a provision which will allow for you to work an alternative workweek with supervisor approval (we bargained away the requirement that such approval is limited to customer service needs exclusively.)

Article 8: Overtime – We were able to change the language from stating that the employer may grant compensatory time to requiring the appointing authority to grant compensatory time for work over 40 hours. You may also continue to choose to receive overtime compensation as opposed to compensatory time off if that is your preference.

Article 13: Sick Leave - We have changed the accrual of sick leave to provide for the accrual after 80 non-overtime hours of work in a month

instead of requiring 15 days of service prior to accruing sick time. You can continue to utilize

sick leave for extended family bereavement and to supplement the paid bereavement leave in Article 17.

Article 15: FMLA - Workers compensation benefits will not run concurrently with FMLA allowing for your use of the 12 weeks of FMLA for other purposes. The State is covering domestic partners to the same extent as spouses for the use of FMLA.

Article 16: Severe and Inclement Weather – The state will allow the use of exchange time to supplement other paid time if you miss work due to severe and inclement weather. In addition, your employer can grant paid time in addition to the one hour of paid time you can receive for late arrival at work due to severe and inclement weather.

Article 17: Misc. Leave - You can now have three paid days, not chargeable to your personal leave time, for bereavement leave for the following family members: parent, sister, brother, parent-in-law, spouse, grandparent, grandchild and child (as well as domestic partner equivalents.)

Article 20: Equipment – We have expanded the list slightly to include any other agreed-upon equipment.

Article 25: Duty Stations – The state will assign vehicles to field employees in accordance with OFM policies and will allow employees to take them home when such use does not violate OFM policies.



WAFWFP



Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals Summer 2007

Article 31: Grievance Procedure - The State has agreed to pay for the grievant's attendance at arbitration proceedings. The State agreed to allow the option to request arbitration through FCMS instead of AAA.

Article 38: Union Activities – We preserved your right to attend one annual meeting per year on duty as well as your stewards to attend union training on duty.

Article 41: Compensation – The State agreed to incorporate the 1.6% increase from this biennium as a baseline in your salary ranges. They also agreed to cost of living increases of 3.2% on July 1, 2007 and 2.0% on July 1, 2008. The State will add a new step “L” to the pay range for those who are currently at the top step, providing an additional 2.5% to all those employees who are at the top step. The State will also increase the Research Scientist's pay by an additional 5%, the ITAS employees by an additional 10% and the lands agent by 2.5% based on comparability or the equity pay lawsuit. The State has agreed to assignment pay of four pay grades while performing low level flight work or chemical immobilization of wildlife.

Article 42: Health Care - The state will continue to contribute 88% of the aggregate premium for health insurance benefits and provided a one-time payment on July 1, 2007 of \$756 to each employee who was insurance eligible on June 30, 2006.

NA – Work Related Injuries – No charge to FMLA for any work related injury time loss.

NA – Agency Policy – The State agreed that it will notify the union and bargain with the union prior to making a change to an agency policy which impacts a mandatory subject of bargaining.

Grievance Resolution

The State agreed to the immediate implementation of the exchange time article providing for accrual after 40 hours in a workweek. They have agreed to pay standby pay to the Oil Spill Team retroactive to July 1, 2005 and to implement a policy where there will be two Oil Spill Team members on standby at all times. We agreed to withdraw our grievances and ULPs.

Treasurer's Report by Derek Stinson

The 2007 year-to-date income (member dues and interest) as of 11 July was 79,577 and total expenses (attorney fees, bookkeeper, newsletters and correspondence, board travel and reimbursement, and misc.) were 61,203 for a positive cash flow of \$18,374. Account balances in savings and checking accounts, and CDs total \$212,126.



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Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals Summer 2007

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