

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES DIVISION,

THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE,

AND

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes and defines a collaborative working relationship between the U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division (USGS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and The Wildlife Society (TWS) to develop and exchange science-based biological information for natural resource managers and to ensure preparedness, professionalism, and continuing education of wildlife biologists.

STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTEREST

USGS Biological Resources programs partner with federal, state, tribal, university, non-governmental, and private sector organizations nationwide providing science-based biological information needed by natural resource managers and others. The USGS has more than 1600 Biological Resources employees located at 18 Science Centers and 40 Cooperative Research Units nationwide. They provide the scientific understanding and technologies needed to support the sound management and conservation of federal lands and resources.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and

restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts.

The Wildlife Society is a non-profit scientific and educational organization of professional wildlife scientists, managers, administrators and educators, and serves as a liaison between the scientific community, wildlife resource education institutions, and governments. The Wildlife Society is dedicated to developing and promoting sound stewardship of wildlife resources and the environments upon which wildlife and humans depend through programs focusing on wildlife research, sustainable resource management, public conservation education and activities, wildlife policy analysis and development, and professional services. TWS is instrumental in promoting science-based decision-making and in enhancing the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve biological diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources for the benefit of society.

Research, monitoring and evaluation, and promotion of professionalism in wildlife biology and management would benefit from cooperative action. Collaboration between USGS, FWS, and TWS presents a unique opportunity to maximize the skills and knowledge of each entity. The focus of this agreement is to improve collaboration among our organizations with the goal of addressing pressing wildlife resource issues and enhancing the profession of wildlife biology and management.

A liaison position between USGS, FWS, and TWS will strengthen science, foster a collaborative working relationship, aid in identifying and developing initiatives and projects that have mutual interest to USGS, FWS, and TWS, and will benefit wildlife resource managers regionally and nationally. The liaison will work toward closer collaboration between USGS, FWS, and TWS, other federal agencies, and congressional offices concerning wildlife resource science and management, with the goal of providing science-based biological information needed by natural resource managers.

USGS AND FWS SHALL:

1. Share resources and expertise with TWS;
2. Encourage USGS and FWS wildlife biologists to join TWS and similar professional organizations, pursue professional certification through those organizations, and engage in appropriate leadership roles;
3. Assist TWS in making its scientific journals available to USGS and FWS in electronic format;

4. Assist TWS with development of newly initiated scientific technical reviews on the following subjects: 1) Improving the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act, 2) determining the status of lead poisoning of wildlife and its implications to fisheries and wildlife professionals, and 3) evaluating the effects of supplemental feeding and baiting of game species of wildlife; and
5. Encourage new technical reviews on 1) analysis of habitat- relationships and evaluation techniques for critical wildlife species, and 2) disease impacts on wildlife populations.

FWS SHALL:

Provide an employee, through a detail assignment and subject to terms mutually agreed by FWS, TWS and the employee, to work in the offices of The Wildlife Society to assist in carrying out this agreement.

USGS SHALL:

Provide \$50,000 annually, subject to the availability of funds, to TWS to assist in carrying out this agreement.

TWS SHALL:

1. Assist in a project to review and assess FWS science capabilities that is being conducted jointly by FWS and USGS;
2. Ensure that The Wildlife Society Annual Conferences and International Wildlife Management Congresses address the continuing education and training needs of USGS and FWS personnel;
3. Ensure that TWS technical reviews address scientific and management needs and concerns of USGS and FWS;
4. Provide office space, and administrative and supervisory support for a USGS-FWS-TWS liaison; and
5. Provide support and advice to USGS and FWS in defining future management challenges and the scientific information and technology needed to address them effectively.

USGS, FWS, AND TWS MUTUALLY AGREE TO:

1. Determine how the financial, staff, and information resources and expertise of these three organizations can be coordinated to better address wildlife resources issues of common concern;

2. Investigate methods to standardize survey and monitoring techniques and data storage, and enhance access to information;
3. Explore ways to enhance training and professional development for USGS and FWS biologists, including demonstration of new concepts, like Communities of Practice;
4. Work with colleges and universities to identify ways in which higher education institutions can better educate and train students to work effectively within USGS and FWS;
5. Work cooperatively to develop and implement a strategy to build the next generation of biologists and managers in response to demographic changes in agency personnel structure;
6. Identify ways to address wildlife-human disease problems and encourage institutional support for reducing the impacts of existing diseases and preventing future ones;
7. Identify ways to enhance interaction and cooperation between USGS scientists and FWS managers and scientists; and
8. Identify barriers to professional society membership, leadership and certification by USGS and FWS employees and recommend solutions.

REVISION AND AMENDMENTS

This MOU may be revised as necessary with the mutual consent of the parties involved by the adoption of a written Amendment signed and dated by both parties. Amendments to this MOU may incorporate subsequent technical proposals, projects, and associated funding actions.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

This MOU is effective as of the last signing date shown below, and may be renewed annually, pending availability of funds, for a period of up to five years.

TERMINATION

Either party may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding by providing 60 days notice, in writing, to the other party.

SIGNATURES

On witness thereof, this Memorandum of Understanding is effective as of the last date shown below.

Dr. Charles Groat
Director
U.S. Geological Survey

Date

Dr. Steve Williams
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date

Dr. Harry Hodgdon
Executive Director
The Wildlife Society

Date