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WMI Outdoor News Bulletin

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Related meeting and function requests being accepted for 72nd North American Conference:

Organizations, agencies, committees and individuals that wish to hold meetings, receptions or other functions at the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference are urged to contact the Wildlife Management Institute as soon as possible. The 72nd Conference will be held March 20-24, 2007, in Portland, Oregon.

To be listed in the advance program (distributed in early December) and given priority consideration for the more limited than usual space this year, at the Portland Hilton and Executive Tower, requests should be received by September 29. Requests will be accepted after that date, but they might not be able to be accommodated on the date and at the time preferred.

To make a request, go to www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/form/relatedMeetingsForm.html, or call Bette McKown, WMI, at 202-371-1808.

Waterfowl gain reprieve from plan to expand oil and gas development in Alaska:

A preliminary decision by a federal judge may derail U.S. Department of the Interior plans to begin oil and gas leasing later this month in a vast wetland complex around the largest lake on Alaska's North Slope, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

Located in the northeastern portion of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA), Teshekpuk Lake and the surrounding tundra and wetland habitats are used as a traditional molting site for 50,000 to 90,000 geese, including as much as 30 percent of the entire Pacific population of brant and as much as 35,000 of the mid-continent white-fronted geese that breed on the North Slope. Geese, pintails and tundra swans using this area move through the Central and Mississippi Flyways during autumn and provide highly valued opportunities for recreational hunting and wildlife viewing.

The 4.6 million acres of the northeast NPRA also are believed to have substantial natural gas supplies. A 1998 decision by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) made 87 percent of the area available to oil and gas exploration, but designated 857,859 acres around Teshekpuk Lake for protection. Nearly 600,000 acres of this designated Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area were closed completely to oil and gas leasing, to safeguard caribou, geese and other wildlife resources.

In January, however, BLM reversed its earlier decision in order to make available for immediate leasing almost 4.4 million acres in northeastern NPRA, including the entire area around Teshekpuk Lake. Leasing of the subsurface land under the lake itself was deferred for 10 years. The new decision reversed a long-standing practice of keeping environmentally sensitive habitat in the Teshekpuk Lake area off-limits to oil and gas activities.

Because geese are vulnerable to disturbance by people and aircraft during their flightless, energy-demanding molt, conservationists and scientists are concerned that greater oil and gas development in the Teshekpuk Lake area may result in reduced populations of brant and white-fronted geese. The National Research Council, for example, found in its 2003 report on the cumulative effects of oil and gas activities on Alaska's North Slope, "If development moves into the Teshekpuk Lake area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, molting waterfowl could be adversely affected, especially brant."

These potential impacts led the Pacific Flyway Council, which is composed of public wildlife agency representatives from the states and provinces in the western United States, Canada and Mexico, to recommend that "the sensitive goose molting area should not be offered for leasing" and that the Teshekpuk Lake area "be given permanent protection from future development by Secretarial designation."

In his preliminary decision, Judge James Singleton of the federal court in Alaska found that BLM had violated the National Environmental Policy Act by failing to consider fully the cumulative effects of proposed development in the NPRA. The judge noted that, because BLM prevailed in earlier litigation concerning the northwestern NPRA, by arguing that it would consider cumulative effects when it conducted the environmental analysis for the northeastern NPRA, the agency could not now argue that it has no such duty to consider these effects in the northeastern NPRA analysis. The judge also found that, in its biological assessment of the effects of oil and gas development on Stellar and speckled eiders, BLM failed to use the best information available, as required by the Endangered Species Act, because it omitted consideration of these same cumulative effects.

Just a week prior to the judge's ruling, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne had announced that BLM was set to go forward on September 27 with leasing 8 million acres, including 500,000 acres in the designated Teshekpuk Lake area, saying that his tour of the special area left him more convinced than ever that energy development could coexist with environmental protection.

A final decision is expected by the court within the next week. (rpd)

Matt Dunfee to join WMI:

Joining the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) this month, as Conservation Program Specialist, is Matthew C. Dunfee. Matt will work in the Institute's Washington, DC headquarters.

As a student in Wildlife Biology at Colorado State University (CSU), Matt served as a WMI intern from 2003 through 2006, assisting with administration of the annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. His additional experience includes as a Project Coordinator for the Center for Environmental Management on Military Lands (Fort Collins, Colorado), Project Assistant on the Pawnee National Grassland, Field Supervisor for Canyon Enterprises, Inc., and teaching assistant for the CSU College of Natural Resources.

Matt, who will attend the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies annual meeting, at Snowmass, Colorado, will handle a variety of assignments for WMI. Significant among those will be taking on the role of coordinator for the CWD Alliance. He also will understudy as coordinator of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

"He brings a lot of intelligence, experience and enthusiasm to WMI," stated Steve Williams, WMI President. "His youth, technical skills and commitment to wildlife conservation will be substantial assets to WMI and the profession. We are very pleased to welcome Matt Dunfee aboard."

Antis take a shot at the mourning dove hunting season in Michigan:

A decade ago, Michigan voters overwhelmingly passed a ballot initiative requiring the management of wildlife to be on the basis of sound science. Based on sound science and with go ahead from the state legislature and governor, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources authorized a mourning dove hunting season in 2004, making it the forty-first state to have instituted a dove season. After a single season, in which fewer than 30,000 doves were taken from a fall population of more than 4 million, anti-hunting factions rallied to ban mourning dove hunting. With a war chest of at least \$29,000, much of it coming from sources outside the state, they gathered more than the 159,000 petition signatures necessary to enable a referendum on this November's ballot. This caused a dove hunt moratorium and terminated sales of \$2 dove hunting stamps until the issue is reconsidered, reports the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI).

In terms of total numbers, distribution and number of birds shot annually by hunters in the United States—more than 20 million, from a fall population in excess of 400 million—the mourning dove is the country's number one game bird. Nesting a number of times each year, the mourning dove has a 60-percent annual mortality rate. In other words, in most parts of the dove's range, hunter harvest has minimal impact on the species.

However, despite Michigan's successful and foresighted ballot initiative of the mid-1990s, science has taken a back seat in the current contest. For the upcoming vote, ballot lines have been drawn.

Because of its plaintive coo, the mourning dove was designated a songbird by the Michigan legislature back in 1905. By House of Representatives Resolution 244 of March 25, 1998, the mourning dove was officially declared the Wolverine State's bird of peace, although why Michigan had a need for a bird of that distinction is not clear. With enactment of a dove hunting season in 2004, the state's bird of peace ironically became a game bird, not a songbird.

There is further irony that the bird of peace concept is mainly borrowed from early Christianity, which proclaimed that the white, olive branch-toting turtledove symbolized peace. The turtledove isn't found in North America. North America has the mourning dove, so conveniently *ipso facto*, it has a bird of peace in the hearts and minds of individuals and legislatures compelled to embrace such anthropomorphic symbolism.

The fight over Michigan's game bird of peace has become infused with hyperbole and nonresident dollars.

The dove is the issue, say the ban proponents. "The overwhelming statewide support for the petition drive shows that mainstream Michiganders want to restore the century old ban on the bird of peace," said Fund for Animals president Michael Markian from his New York office. From Washington, DC, Wayne Pacelle, president of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), proclaimed it "morally wrong to shoot" and kill these gentle birds as a casual act of target shooting." (The referendum petition was run by the Committee to Restore the Dove Shooting Ban—a front for HSUS.) Peggy Ridgway, president of the Michigan Audubon Society chimed in that "The use of toxic lead shot to hunt doves creates yet another negative to our already burdened environment." And James Bull, president of the Detroit Audubon Society, took his best shot by reminding that "President George W. Bush, while dove hunting with an experienced guide, shot an American kestrel and was fined for the error."

Hunting is the issue and poorly hidden agenda, say the opponents. Marc Somers, of the Lansing-based Citizens for Wildlife Conservation, implores voters not to be duped by "national anti-hunting extremists groups [that] have invaded Michigan, pumping millions of dollars into a campaign to chip away at your rights to hunt," and warning of the insidiousness of the antihunting threat in the state and beyond.

"It appears," observed Pat Ruble, WMI Midwest field representative, "that what is most at stake is the decade-old public mandate in Michigan to manage wildlife based on sound science, not on emotionalism, paranoia, overblown rhetoric and campaign dollars from outside special interests."

McGraw Wildlife Foundation extends the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program:

Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT)—a program to inform nonhunting university students with majors in wildlife and other natural resources about the role and values of recreational hunting—will continue to be underwritten in part by the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. At the conclusion of its second and final pilot-year workshops this fall at the McGraw Wildlife Foundation in Dundee, Illinois, the program will look to establish satellite facilities and workshops in other parts of the country, reports the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI).

CLfT was prompted mainly by state wildlife agency officials concerned that fewer and fewer professional-level hires are hunters or have any direct familiarity with hunting. Inasmuch as these agencies are responsible for harvest management programs, the officials' concern is that new staff will not be adequately attuned with the importance of hunting to agency mission, public trust responsibility and obligation to a significant constituency. Nationally, more than 50 percent of college students with wildlife and other natural resource majors and graduate students—the next generation of private as well as public resource managers and administrators—have had no experience with or exposure to hunting.

The McGraw Foundation underwrote the two-year pilot program, administered by WMI. After two more workshops this October, more than 70 students will have completed the program. The workshops are three-day events that feature a dozen roundtable discussion topics and nearly a dozen field exercises, including mentored hunting for those students who meet the requirements for hunter certification. The program is neither designed nor intended to recruit the students as hunters.

The workshops are conducted by a number of instructors, who are experienced hunters and veteran natural resource professionals. Instructors go through separate, annual three-day training and orientation sessions.

Based on the success of the workshops in 2005 (video, photos and more can be seen at www.cflt.org) and continued refinements of the program for 2006, the McGraw Foundation Board of Directors generously approved continuation of the program at least through 2008. The Foundation will remain as the flagship of the program for instructor training and several annual workshops, but development of satellite facilities in other states will be a priority for 2007. CLfT will continue to be administered by WMI, but with the hire of

a part-time national coordinator.

Three universities have been involved in the CLfT pilot years. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Penn State University and U. W.-Stevens Point have enrolled students and have faculty advisors involved since the program's inception. In 2007, other universities will be invited to participate, based on faculty involvement and satellite facility location. State agencies, hunting/conservation organizations and businesses also will be invited to provide logistical support and other input.

CLfT investment by the McGraw Foundation beyond 2008 will depend on the continued success of the program workshops this fall and of involvement of satellite facilities, universities and others. Charlie Potter, President and CEO of the McGraw Foundation, stated: "Our Board has enthusiastically endorsed the CLfT concept, its implementation and momentum. The extended underwriting commitment reflects our sincere desire to make sure that future wildlife managers and other natural resource professionals understand and appreciate that hunting is an essential element of responsible and successful conservation. The McGraw Foundation and WMI have responded positively to the clearly expressed desire of wildlife agencies. We have taken the initiative to address their concern, and we look forward to working with those agencies, with universities and others to see that all students going into the natural resource profession have opportunity to learn directly the role of hunting and to appreciate why it is so important to hunters and to the management of wildlife in North America."

Dick McCabe, WMI executive vice president and the CLfT chair, noted: "The McGraw Foundation provided the wherewithal and enthusiasm to create the program. The dedication of support through 2008 is further testimony to its foresight and generosity. But if CLfT is to meet wildlife agency needs and expectations for its future professionals, those agencies and other conservation interests will need to step to the plate as well. Given the workshop model that has developed, I can't imagine that all hunting and resource management interests won't want in' with this program."

New CRP initiative in Prairie Pothole Region bodes well for ducks:

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced a new initiative aimed at bolstering duck production in the Prairie Pothole Region. The Duck Nesting Habitat Initiative (CP-37) has a target of 100,000 acres, including 40,000 acres slated for each of the Dakotas, 8,000 acres each in Montana and Minnesota and 4,000 acres in Iowa. CP-37, an adjunct of the Farm Bill's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), is projected to produce an additional 60,000 ducks annually, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

In order to qualify for enrollment and incentive payments, tracts must be (1) outside the 100-year floodplain, (2) capable of being restored to CRP wetland standards and (3) include an upland buffer to provide nesting habitat and protect water quality. In areas where nesting density of ducks is less than 25 pairs per square mile, ground can be enrolled in a ratio of 4:1 acres of upland to wetland. Where nesting pair density exceeds 25 per square mile, a 10:1 upland to wetland acreage is eligible. Cost-share for site development will be available through the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, along with annual rental payments on the lands enrolled in the CRP program.

Sign up for the CP-37 begins October 1, 2006, at FSA state and local offices. Enrollment will be done on a continuous basis until acreage objectives are met or until December 31, 2007, whichever occurs first.

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Management Board (PPJV)—a technical and management component of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan—and other conservation interests applaud this initiative. They also have suggested several enrollment criteria modifications that likely would substantially enhance landowner interest in the program. FSA has been asked to consider allowing small, shallow non-cropped wetlands, in addition to the currently eligible cropped wetlands, to be used to calculate the size of upland buffers in areas where duck nesting pairs exceed 25 per square mile. This is not meant to suggest that non-cropped wetland acres be eligible for enrollment, but that those acres might serve to increase the size of the

adjacent upland buffers. It is felt that this criteria adjustment not only will encourage more whole-field enrollments, but improve duck nesting production and success.

Also recommended is that landowners who have CRP contracts expiring in 2007 be allowed to re-enroll these tracts in CP-37 if they meet program criteria. Most of these landowners already have been offered the opportunity to extend their current CRP contracts for a period of two to five years at current rates. This would provide the landowners the option of enrolling eligible ground in a new, full-term contract on sites that have been providing high-quality habitat and where there already has been an investment in grassland restoration.

FSA has promised to give the PPJV et al. suggestions fair consideration.

Currently, 2 million wetland and wetland buffer acres have been restored through CRP. Among other benefits, those acres produce an estimated 2.2 million ducks each year. Additional information on CP-37 is available at FSA offices or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crpduck06.htm. (pmr)

Oil shale potential in the West rises once again:

Because of rising oil prices, development of oil shale on public lands in the West is coming closer to reality. The U.S. Department of the Interior has issued an "advance notice of proposed rulemaking" concerning the establishment of a commercial oil shale leasing program, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

The advance notice published in the August 25 Federal Register requests comments and suggestions to assist the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in its drafting a rule to establish a commercial leasing program for oil shale. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 directs the Interior Secretary to complete a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for such a program. Input is especially requested on royalty rates and leasing approaches. On completion of the PEIS, BLM would publish a final rule establishing the program.

Vast areas in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah overlay huge deposits of oil-bearing shale. It is estimated that there may be as much as 1.2 trillion barrels of oil in the Green River Formation under these three states. About 70 percent of the oil is under federal public lands, much of it administered by BLM. The trick, of course, is how to extract the oil and reclaim the land in an economical manner.

There have been various booms and busts in the quest for shale oil over the past 60 years. The latest was in the 1980s, when a supposedly lucrative approach was on the horizon. But industry suddenly pulled out, when the approach proved impractical, with the result that many communities in western Colorado suffered considerable economic hardship. Once burned, so to speak, local communities likely will demand advance payments in support of community infrastructures, such as schools, roads and social services, from oil shale companies prior to any large-scale development.

To date, no economically feasible method for large-scale development has been found. Current industry efforts seem to be focusing on an underground, or "in-situ," process using heat that would separate oil from rock. Earlier methodologies more commonly relied on mining or above-ground retorting.

Conservationists and sportsmen have long been concerned about the negative impacts a large-scale oil shale program would have on important wildlife species, such as mule deer, elk, pronghorn and sage grouse. It is suggested that the in-situ approach would be less harmful to the environment and wildlife habitats compared with impacts of shale waste disposal in the more typical mining approach. However, there remain serious concerns about the amount of energy required to retrieve the oil and about further impact on the region's scarce water resources.

Another issue is determining how much of the economic gain should go to federal coffers. Congress cur-

rently is haggling over how big a share of royalty money taxpayers should get from oil shale produced on public lands. How this issue is decided may well decide whether or not the current efforts proceed. At the moment the royalty provisions are included in House legislation on offshore drilling and that bill seems to be pretty much held hostage by a standoff between the House and the Senate.

Given the vacillating history of oil shale development in the West, no one seems ready yet to gamble on its certainty in the immediate future. However, as long as the nation's voracious appetite for oil exceeds the supplies, the affordability gap of oil shale development becomes increasingly narrow.

More information on the advance notice and plan for the PEIS can be found in the Federal Register (Vol. 71, No.165; pp 50378-50379). (lhc)

Workshop on aquatic nuisance species slated for North American Conference:

The aquatic nuisance species (ANS) issue is a complex and costly ecological, business, policy, legislative and political issue. It also is a nightmare in terms of law enforcement and communications. To address the issue and identify means of coordinating effective responses to invasive nuisance aquatic species, a one-day workshop will be held in March 2007 in conjunction with the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, in Portland, Oregon.

The workshop will be a forum for state, federal and tribal agency administrators, along with technical staff, university researchers, nongovernmental organization and corporate representatives to discuss implementation of a communication strategy to consolidate and coordinate issue-related information. The workshop is seen as an opportunity to determine how communication can work most effectively to counter the spread of known and potentially new ANS.

Presentations, a question-and-answer session, a poster session over lunch and a facilitated discussion with panel members will highlight the workshop, which will take place on Monday, March 19, 2007. The workshop is being organized by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). The preliminary agenda calls for:

- Examining case histories of partnership efforts to communicate ANS issues
- Developing communication strategies on ANS issues—using information developed by others as a template for addressing similar ANS issues elsewhere
- Discussing development and implementation of communication strategies in light of personnel and funding constraints
- Developing more effective mechanisms of regional coordination mechanisms
- Reviewing and discussing common ANS materials developed by attendees to reduce development time, money and redundancy
- Communicating with corporations, businesses and organizations about their role in resolving ANS issues
- Exploring effective partnerships
- Sharing scientific information and databases

For additional information about the workshop, contact Amber Pairis, AFWA, at APairis@fishwildlife.org. Other information on the 72nd North American Conference can be found at www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org. The advance program for the Conference will be completed and available in early December. To receive a copy of the advance program, contact [Bette McKown](mailto:BetteMcKown@wmi.org), WMI, or call 202-371-1808.

Exhibiting at the 72nd North American Conference

The Wildlife Management Institute invites companies, agencies and organizations that are interested in exhibiting at the upcoming [72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#) to contact [Jennifer Rahm](#) to request an exhibitor's registration packet. As the premier annual gathering for the natural resource profession's leading administrators, scientists, educators and managers, this conference is an ideal opportunity to display your work, products, mission and/or expertise. Exhibits are scheduled for March 21st through 23rd, 2007, and will be placed in the Portland Hilton's main foyers, vicinal to meeting rooms and the conference registration desk, for utmost exposure. For more information on exhibiting, visit WMI's [Exhibits](#) Webpage.

U.S. citizens strongly back hunting and fishing:

A nationwide survey conducted by Responsive Management of Harrisonburg, Virginia, found that support for hunting and fishing has remained strong over the past decade, with approximately every 3 of 4 Americans approving of legal hunting and more than 9 of 10 approving of recreational fishing, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

Based on a telephone survey of 813 Americans conducted from August 31 to September 9, 2006, the results reflect the opinions of randomly selected U.S. adult residents. The sampling error is 3.44 percentage points.

Mark Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, observed: "This is the first nationwide study that verifies an increase of public support over the past decade. In 1995, 73 percent of Americans approved of hunting; in 2006, 78 percent approved." Although approval of fishing decreased slightly—from 95 percent in 1995 to 93.3 percent in 2006—an overwhelming majority of Americans approve of recreational fishing.

Conservation interests are encouraged by the survey's evidence of strong public support. Said Matt Hogan, executive vice president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies: "Public support for hunting and fishing is crucial for conservation efforts. State fish and wildlife agencies have been and continue to be funded in large part by the contributions of sportsmen and women through license sales and excise tax payments on hunting and fishing equipment. To put it simply, without hunters and anglers, state fish and wildlife agencies would not be able to do their job conserving and managing wildlife for all Americans to enjoy."

Steve Williams, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, noted: "It is good to have verification that most citizens understand the importance of hunting to wildlife management and hunting's economic, social, recreational and other values." Similarly, Gordon Robertson, vice president of the American Sport Fishing Association, stated, "It is gratifying to know that the American public supports these activities [hunting and fishing] with such strong cultural heritage."

For more information about the survey, contact Mark Duda at 540-432-1888 or mark@responsivemanagement.com.

Worth reading:

According to James Carroll, author of *House of War* (2006), we have met the enemy and it lives in Hell's Bottom. It goes by the name of Pentagon—the massive edifice that houses the higher echelons of the U.S. Department of War (sanctimoniously renamed Department of Defense in August 1949) and its various military service branches. Approximately 23,000 military and civilian employees work in "The Building," and the physical and logistical nature of the place staggers the imagination.

The Pentagon was built to dimensions that President Franklin D. Roosevelt explicitly overruled. It is too

big, Roosevelt said. He was ignored. And that becomes the gist of the book. The Pentagon became too big—not merely as a concrete warren of offices for people who stand up straight and wear badges and ribbons and stuff on starchy clothing, but for what it represents and tries to do.

A self-described peacenik, whose father was an Air Force general and a fixture at the Pentagon for many years, Carroll describes the history of the place, from his youngster days playing about its new ramps and corridors to the time when he strolled its exterior picketing angrily, sadly and benignly against the juggernaut of war and the unfathomable stockpiling of the nation's thermonuclear arsenal and arrogance.

Not too far into its pages, the book's focus shifts to a history of "defense" strategies and blunders by all presidents from Truman to the present. It savages myths surrounding such incidences as the bombings of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Germany, about Korean war policy, the Bay of Pigs and Viet Nam. It is about paranoia and power mongering. It takes a lot of widely perceived American heroes to task and demonizes a few for blatant and more-dangerous-than-imaginable hawkishness. And the history it covers includes the very recent—a warring epoch in the making, according to the author, a former priest and winner of the National Book Award (*An American Requiem*).

Carroll reveals a true hero during overposturing and overproduction from the House of War. The insights and actions of that person, not an American, provided a timely if not temporary check on the muscle shirt mentality across the Potomac.

There are parts of this book so fantastic and iconoclastic that the author's objectivity and sources are brought into question. For one thing, Carroll seems to have relied heavily on evidentiary interpretation of speeches to an uncomfortable degree. I was uncomfortable with the clear assertion that the United States military has become a bully both home and abroad. That fogs my sense of our republic. And, as noted in the prologue, Carroll claimed to have written this book for "his children and all children." Because the 672-page work offers decidedly little hope for putting a lid on Pentagon influence, I found that statement both incredible and unbelievable.

On the other hand, I am glad that I read the book. Its myth-busting about the American military machine is worth the read, and there is plenty of perspective and insights that won't make the popular history texts, at least for now.

But why a review of this book for a conservation-oriented audience? Mostly because it tells of an enormous draw of public focus, anxiety and dollars away from North America's increasingly vulnerable natural resource base. And because I took the time to read the scary thing.

House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power, published by Houghton Mifflin, retails for \$30.00.

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