

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES
DISCIPLINE, 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 Discipline (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 the USGS, the 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 the USGS, the FWS, and TWS will strengthen science, foster a collaborative working relationship, aid in identifying and developing initiatives and projects that have mutual interest to the USGS, the FWS, and TWS, and will benefit wildlife resource managers regionally and nationally. The liaison will work toward closer collaboration between the USGS, the 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 the USGS and the 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, to the extent available and in accordance with requirements of law, 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.

USGS will assist TWS in carrying out this agreement by working cooperatively with them as outlined and agreed upon in the MOU. Specific work projects or activities which

involve the transfer of funds between the parties to the MOU will require the execution of separate agreements, contingent upon the availability of funds.

TWS SHALL:

1. Assist in a project to review and assess FWS science capabilities that are being conducted jointly by the FWS and the USGS;
2. Ensure that 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 the USGS and the FWS;
4. Provide office space, and administrative and supervisory support for a USGS-FWS-TWS liaison; and
5. Provide support and advice to the USGS and the 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 the USGS and the 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.

REQUIRED CLAUSES

This MOU in no way restricts the federal agency parties from participating with other interested groups, organizations, or individuals.

No member or delegate to Congress, or resident Commissioner, shall be admitted to any share or part of this agreement, or to any benefit that may arise there from, but this provision shall not be construed to extend to this agreement if made with a corporation for its general benefit.

Nothing in this MOU shall obligate any federal party to any present or future expenditure of funds.

This MOU is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Any endeavor involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the Parties of this MOU will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures including those for Government procurement and printing. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by representatives of the Parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Specifically, this MOU does not establish authority for noncompetitive award to TWS of any contract or other agreement. Any contract or agreement for training or other services must fully comply with all applicable requirements for competition.

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, is subject to the availability of funds and is applicable for a period of five years.

TERMINATION

Any party may terminate their participation under this Memorandum of Understanding by providing 60 days notice, in writing, to the other parties.

SIGNATURES

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

Signature on File

Dr. Charles G. Groat
Director
U.S. Geological Survey

June 30, 2004

Date

Signature on File

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

June 30, 2004

Date

Signature on File

Dr. Harry Hodgdon
Executive Director
The Wildlife Society

June 30, 2004

Date