

AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PARTNERS CHARTER - Adopted 8/22/01 – Revised 8/21/05

NEED

America's hunting traditions are being pulled in multiple directions by diverse factors, including demographic change, urbanization, broad concepts like ecosystem management and biological diversity, mass turnover in professional staffs of state and federal wildlife agencies, the decreasing proportion of our population that hunts or fishes, anti-management philosophies and values, and the crowded, fast-paced lives of everyday Americans. In spite of great successes in restoration of wildlife over the past 100 years, the changing structure of our society makes it necessary for wildlife managers and hunter/conservationists to work together more effectively to build on the successes achieved in the past. Further, the decade of 2005-2015 is recognized as critical for wildlife as the die is being cast for its future. Against this challenging backdrop, hunter/conservationists are arrayed in literally hundreds of organizations, diluting their effectiveness.

The early successes of Boone and Crockett Club members and the citizen-sportsmen of the turn-of-the-century offer insight into the value of unity. Back then, wildlife was visibly depleted and their habitats – like pine forests in the Northeast – had been cut and burned. There was a common need to protect wildlife and restore lost habitat. In the 1930s, drought and low waterfowl numbers presented a rallying point for hunters and other conservationists to take action. In each case, people interested in wildlife could see some uncomplicated, visible threats they could combat directly. Formation of the Forest Reserves and their evolution into the National Forests, development of treaties to conserve migratory birds, passage of the Pittman/Robertson Act, and other movements came to fruition because people of like-minds, with specific objectives, worked together. This history shows that unified efforts do produce gains for conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

With all this in mind, there is a need for today's wildlife leaders to unify their collective strength and apply it to common challenges and opportunities to protect wildlife, habitat, hunting, trapping, and the way of life they represent.

PURPOSE

Diverse wildlife organizations with a common interest in conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat, and in preserving hunting and trapping, are committed to identifying specific needs and working together toward fulfilling those needs. The unifying element is a shared commitment to:

- Build unity among partner organizations and increase collective effectiveness;
- Develop a vision for wildlife;
- Collectively address key issues; and,

- Develop and pursue implementation of a set of recommendations for the Administration and Congress.

PRINCIPLES

1. Develop, in a loose federation, process/structure with objectives and agenda.
2. Build trust and respect among partner organizations.
3. Be a potent force advocating conservation, hunting, trapping, and stewardship.
4. Positions are taken by partner organizations and not in the name of AWCP.
5. Focus on commonalities and principles, including:
 - Habitat,
 - Wildlife populations,
 - Hunting and trapping,
 - Scientific management of wildlife and habitat,
 - North American wildlife model.
6. Share information in an effective and immediate way (e.g. list serve, web site):
 - Develop an outreach strategy,
 - Develop unified message and stay focused,
 - internal (hunter/conservation groups)
 - external (general public)
7. Work together where we agree:
 - Agree to disagree and respect differences,
 - Extol and recognize accomplishments of sister organizations,
 - Coordinate efforts on specific issues – some groups develop the issues, some groups implement the strategy,
8. Issue leaders emerge and coordinate communication between partner organizations.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Each partner organization retains its organizational autonomy.
2. A common objective (or more than one) is identified.
3. Rules are agreed upon to channel activities and stick to the main objective(s).
4. Differences are respected, and no pressure is asserted to conform.
5. Someone leads the effort, and holds people to the rules of engagement.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Role: Work with Chair and Vice-Chair to plan, organize, direct, and coordinate the activities of AWCP.

Membership: Comprised of 12 partner organizations, with 4 elected annually by

	the partner organizations.
Chair:	Ascends automatically to one-year term after serving one-year term as Vice-Chair.
Vice-Chair:	Elected annually by the partner organizations.
Terms:	All terms are based on the calendar year.
Committee Meetings:	As needed.
AWCP Meetings:	Minimum of two/year, one at the “North American” and the second at an annual “summer summit.”
Budget:	Developed by the Committee.
Funding:	Funds donated by partner organizations as needed to support operating expenses or specific efforts.
Resource Sub/Committees:	Established as needed by the Committee; membership is voluntary.

ADMISSION OF NEW PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Criteria:

- Eligible organizations are those that support hunting and trapping and whose mission is wildlife conservation.
- Issues of concern to organizations should be national or regional in scope and the groups policy efforts should be targeted toward the Congress, the Executive branch agencies and the President.
- Organizations should have staff and/or members dedicated to working on issues involving Federal wildlife conservation policies and programs.
- Groups which serve as local, state or regional units of a national organization would be expected to participate in AWCP through their organization’s national unit or office.
- Organizations should support professional wildlife management in their programs, statements and practices.
- Organizations should have been in existence long enough (at least several years) to have established a track record consistent with the common interest of partner organizations.
- Organizations must agree to abide by the principles and the rules of engagement of AWCP.

Procedure:

- Organizations that wish to join AWCP must provide sufficient information about their organizations to allow partner organizations to determine the organizations suitability as noted by, but not limited to the Criteria.
- Information must be provided to the Chair.
- The Chair will forward information provided by the organization to all partner organizations.

- Partner organizations will vote on admitting new organizations at the annual summer summit.
- Organizations shall be admitted to AWCP if 75% of voting partner organizations vote in favor of admission.
- Organizations shall accept the invitation to join AWCP by notifying the Chair within 90 days or the invitation shall be withdrawn.