

NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



"The Voice of Resource Law Enforcement"



2023 NAWEOA CONFERENCE

Provo, Utah

7/10-7/15 2023

Conference Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/173505916518726/>

SPRING 2023

79th Edition NAWEOA Newsletter

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The President's Report

By Kurt Henry



Good day to ya all! I am happy to report I am still enjoying retirement!!! I don't think it has ever been said that someone regretted retirement or retired too early. Yes I lived the life and it never felt like a job but listen to me. There is more out

there so work hard but don't sacrifice all your time to work as time is one thing we can't control and when it's up its up. Enjoy work but live your life as well.

Your exec has recently finished a very productive in person winter meeting hosted by Larry outside of Pittsburgh. It was the first fully attended meeting in three years! Thanks god! The agenda was very daunting but we managed to address all that we set out to do. We had a site visit to the Erie host hotel and area and it seems like the organising committee has already done so much for the 2025 convention. It is a great area and venue so be sure to mark it early on your calendar to attend.

April 1 was the cut off for our award nominations and happy to report the interest shown and the number of nominations we received. Be sure to check out the awards available and take the time to nominate your fellow officers for their hard work and dedication to the profession.

The host of this year's convention has put together an amazing agenda both on the professional training side but also on the tours and social end of things. If you

I am on the fence about attending I encourage you to make sure you include July in Provo Utah to the must dos of your family summer activities. Jason Sherwood has been working hard on securing hosts and you will be excited to hear what is in store for 2024.

At each convention there are elections for roles within the NAWEOA executive. This coming summer it will be the USA directors. If you are at all interesting in these or any other position reach out to someone on the board to ask any questions you have. All of the positions on the executive are unique and in its own way rewarding. Lots of hard work goes into keeping the association moving forward and new blood is very important to that. Even more important is young blood. We need to work to get more young/new officers into the family we know as NAWEOA and one way to do that is to culture officers for the roles of the executive. So again if you are interested in any of the positions, please step up to the plate you will not regret it.

Spring was fast in coming to Manitoba we went from a winter blizzard, blame it on one of those pesky Colorado lows that dumped 20 inches of new snow in the last week of March to now the third week of April after 2 solid days of 50f or 15 C to being almost snow free! Be safe in your work and personal lives take some time to be happy and smell the roses we only have one tour on earth. Make it a GOOD one!

Kurt Henry
NAWEOA President



The Vice President's Report

By Larry Hergenroeder



Greeting NAWEOA members,

The NAWEOA "International Game Warden Association" Executive Board gathered in sunny yet snowy Franklin, Pennsylvania for the annual Executive Winter Meeting commencing on March 6th. I would like to express my gratitude to Pennsylv-

ania Game Commission (PGC) Northwest Region Director and former NAWEOA President, Rich Cramer for providing the venue to host the 2023 winter meeting. PGC Deputy Executive Director Tom Grohol, Deputy Executive Director David Mitchell, Colonel Jason DeCoskey and PA Fish & Boat Commission Colonel Clyde Warner joined the NAWEOA Executive Board for an evening during the four-day meeting to meet the NAWEOA Executive Board and discuss the upcoming 2025 NAWEOA Summer Training Conference being held in Erie, PA. The Conservation Officers of Pennsylvania Association (COPA) President, Mike Reeder (who is also the NAWEOA Webmaster and Newsletter editor) was present to support the efforts of the conference committee team during the preliminary planning stages. 2025 Conference Co-Chairman Andy Hueser, Committee Chairmen Cody Jones and Matt Visosky also joined the NAWEOA Executive Board as they toured the Bayfront Convention Center and the connecting hotels that are under contract with COPA for hosting the NAWEOA Summer Training Conference in July 2025.

It was very rewarding to see all of the NAWEOA Executive Board members seated around the NAWEOA Executive Winter Meeting table as this was the first time this has been possible since the Covid pandemic, that prohibited International travel for our Canadian

board members. Two new faces attended their first NAWEOA Executive Winter Meeting in their new roles as Region Director. Joining the Executive Board from Region 1, Chris Maier from Saskatchewan and from Region 7, Kris MacCabe from Maine. Both were instrumental in assisting the Executive Board with implementing changes to the existing policy. One of the changes was regarding the NAWEOA hosting contract. The contract was moved from the policy manual and stored as a link on the protected website thus making it easier to make the necessary changes as the annual NAWEOA Summer Training Conference evolves. The NAWEOA Fallen Officers Fund (FOF) policy also underwent changes for the betterment of the fund's financials. I would like to express my gratitude to former NAWEOA President Shawn Farrell from New Brunswick, for continuing to manage this very important fund and act as the liaison between NAWEOA and the families of our fallen brothers and sisters. I would also like to thank Captain Tom Caifa (NYDEC and North American Game Warden Museum) for his diligent efforts in providing critiques for the FOF policy. These are just a couple of the policy changes discussed however, many non-policy related items were discussed and implemented in preparation for the upcoming 2023 NAWEOA conference in Provo, Utah.

2023 NAWEOA conference attendees can expect a memorable experience as Utah Conference Chairman Sgt. Sean Spencer reported there will be plenty of scenic places to visit in the Provo, Utah area as well as having multiple sponsors step up for the ever-popular hospitality night events and the Grand Banquet. The training schedule is filling up with several quality POST certified accreditations that will be available for the attendees. A short ride to the Annual North American Game Warden Museum 5K Torch Run and the popular Warden Skills event will make for an exciting experience and even some friendly competition for building lasting memories. If you haven't secured your hotel room at the Provo Marriott Hotel or registered yet for the conference, we are past our "Early Bird" registration deadline. Make your plans now to

The Vice President's Report

By Larry Hergenroeder

join the Officers of the Utah Conservation Officers Association as well as the hundreds of game wardens from across North America.

With April 1st being the deadline for most major NAWEOA Awards, the nomination window will have closed by the release of this Newsletter but let this serve as a reminder for penning nominations for worthy nominees in 2024. It is never too soon to begin the nomination process and as with most top performers in the profession, they will be just as deserving in 2024 due to their commitment and outstanding work ethic. Check the website under the "Awards" tab to view the criteria for nominating the next NAWEOA "Officer of the Year" or the next up and coming game warden for the "Torch Award" in early 2024, just to name a few.

The NAWEOA Executive Board appreciates the support of its members and would like those interested in serving as part of the NAWEOA Executive to bring their skills and commitment to the stage and run for one of the Region Director positions that are up for election this year. US Regions 4-7 are up for election and/or re-election for some at this year's conference and a little healthy competition is always welcome. A call for nominations will be made during the conference as well as a 2nd and 3rd call. Nominations are forwarded to the Past President during the open nomination period. After nominations close, nominees will

meet at the second NAWEOA Business meeting where candidates will be offered the opportunity to present a speech bolstering their desires and qualifications. Voting follows via the Conference App by the membership present at the 2023 NAWEOA Summer Training Conference in Provo, Utah. The winners will be asked to confirm/accept their elected position then the results will be formally announced at the Grand Banquet. Those intending to run for election, may want to plan for a late departure on Saturday July 15th as there is an after-event Executive meeting held the morning after the Grand Banquet where your attendance is not mandatory but strongly encouraged if your bid is successful. (Nominees and nominating parties must be members of NAWEOA in good standing who are also full time sworn officers in their respective region where they live). These elected positions should be sought only by those who are serious about being fully involved in promoting the NAWEOA mission throughout the year.

I am hopeful in seeing many of the returning NAWEOA regulars and also the many new faces that share our treasured profession in Provo, Utah this July. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the NAWEOA Executive Board and I am looking forward to another great conference as I continue serving as your Vice-President thru 2024.



NAWEOA

The Past President's Report

By Rick Langley



good things for our wildlife, especially after our last 2 years of drought. I hope the good range conditions do good things for antler growth since I have one of the best elk tags in the state this fall.

It is an odd feeling to watch the months go by and know that my time on the Board is winding down. I do not have a lot of specific tasks as the Past-President, but I am responsible for welcoming and ensuring that your new Directors understand their responsibilities. NO concerns with these 2. Kris MacCabe and Chris Maier have hit the ground running and I am excited to see what they will bring to the Association in the future. I have also assured President Henry and Vice President Hergenroeder that I would help with everything I can and fix my past errors and move

forward in a good direction.

We had a very productive Winter meeting in Pennsylvania. I want to thank PA for hosting us at one of their wildlife areas and getting to meet some of their command staff. We also got to tour the venue for the 2025 Erie, PA conference and meet some of the conference committee members. I am really encouraged for what the Committee has pulled together so far and the membership will appreciate the location and venue. I am also really looking forward to Utah in July and seeing everybody at a, hopefully, COVID free event! Our Utah Committee has pulled together an incredible agenda and I am anxious for July to get here. We also will have an exciting announcement and presentation for our 2024 Conference. I get to go back to the location of my first conference!

In Utah we will be taking nominations for the US Director positions. If you have any interest in running for Regional Director, please talk to your current director or ask any board member about the duties and responsibilities of a Director. It can be a very rewarding experience!

That's all for now, BE SAFE and take care of those who are important to you!



NAWEOA Financial Report

By Steve Beltran

Wishing you the very best from the secretary 2024 was presented and approved by the executive treasurer's office, I'm happy to report our winter board. Our membership is strong as we have just over meeting was somewhat a success. A lovely time in 9000 members. I look forward to seeing everyone in Pennsylvania hosted by our Vice President Larry Her- Provo this year. I thank you for your support and as genroeder and Web master Mike Reeder we were able always if you have any questions you could reach me to conduct business and complete many necessary anytime. tasks. Our budget expenditures and perspectives for

Draft Budget		
Last updated 3/6/2023		
Income	2023-2024	Comments
Conference	\$ 50,000.00	
Dues	\$ 35,000.00	Estimate base on recent years dues
IGW Profits Share	\$ -	
Interest	\$ 100.00	
Promotional Sales	\$ 1,000.00	coins
Travel Reimbursements		
Total Income	\$ 86,100.00	
Expense	2023-2024	
Administrative Costs	\$ 12,710.00	See Administrative Worksheet
Affiliation Dues	\$ 750.00	ANRET, IAFWA and NACLEC dues.
Awards	\$ 2,250.00	See award sheet for detail
Conference Expenses	\$ 17,600.00	See conference expenses sheet for detail
Donations	\$ 1,000.00	See Donation sheet for detail
Meetings/Travel-Executive	\$ 30,000.00	See Meetings and Travel sheet.
Meetings/Travel-Service	\$ -	See Meetings and Travel sheet.
Membership Services	\$ 3,750.00	See membership services sheet,
Memorial Donations and Expenses	\$ 3,350.00	See Memorial Services worksheet
Newsletter	\$ 4,900.00	See Newsletter Expenses worksheet
Promotional Items Expenses	\$ 2,850.00	Patches and pins
Web Site Expenses	\$ 150.00	See Website Expenses worksheet
Total Expense	\$ 79,310.00	
Income	\$ 86,100.00	
Expense	\$ 79,310.00	
Surplus/Deficit	\$ 6,790.00	

NAWEOA Conference Liaison Report

By Jason Sherwood

The event countdown timer is slipping closer and closer to another great annual conference. The Utah Conservation Officers Association (UCOA) and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources are both making great efforts to ensure we have a top-quality event in Provo this July!

If you've somehow missed it, or are just now making your plans to attend, the event will be headquartered at the Provo Marriott and Conference Center. Make sure you're there before opening ceremonies, which will start at 08:00 (Mountain Time) on July 11, and we hope you can stay through the banquet on the evening of July 14. If you can come early, there are some great options for UCOA-led local tours on the 10th. Provo is also a great launching spot for seeing Utah's "Big Five" National Parks, or making a "Western" or "Rocky Mountain" family tour of your own. As usual, there will also be board meetings on the 10th and 15th. If you are planning on visiting National Parks in the area, be sure to make reservations for your park entry ASAP (now required for all parks in the area, and they are accepted starting three months in advance at www.recreation.gov).

UCOA is doing a particularly great job of lining out a great "game warden" training schedule. From everything I'm seeing, it should be easy to rack up at least seventeen hours of POST-certified training, and if you're really careful, you may even sneak in an hour or two above that. Certificates are emailed to participants of each class session, following the event. While the local crew are still finalizing the schedule, there are some great speakers and relevant topics on their confirmation list already, including a keynote address and opening afternoon with a local officer who was severely wounded on duty and has some great takeaways for wardens and their significant others on preparation for duty, having a survival mindset, and what it will take to overcome some of life's biggest obstacles. They have also arranged for the use of two nearby "VirTra" simulator facilities, where limited numbers of officers can rotate through scenario-based training sessions. Other topics cover a wide variety of conservation topics, ranging from insights into the Utah Wildlife Migration Initiative, basic horse patrol safety and packing techniques, field-level forensic entomology and ballistic examination skills, boating under the influence field tests (seated battery), advanced investigation tools, and insights from a recent global



CONFERENCE NEWS

PROVO, UTAH

JULY 10-15, 2023

SEE SCHEDULE DETAILS:

MORE THAN 17 HOURS OF POST-CERTIFIED TRAINING

[HTTPS://SITES.GOOGLE.COM/UTAH.GOV/NAWEOA2023](https://sites.google.com/utah.gov/NAWEOA2023)

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

[HTTPS://WWW.NAWEOA.ORG/NEXT-CONFERENCES/](https://www.naweo.org/next-conferences/)

\$139/NIGHT

PROVO MARRIOTT

SHORTURL.AT/DPABF

STAY INFORMED!

CONFERENCE FACEBOOK GROUP

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/173505916518726](https://www.facebook.com/groups/173505916518726)

SUPPORT OUR HOSTS

DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS

BRING DONATIONS TO THE CONFERENCE, AND

SHARE CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP LEADS:

CONFERENCE@NAWEOA.ORG



NAWEOA Conference Liaison Report

By Jason Sherwood

illegal wildlife trade case involving Thai wildlife products coming into Canada. As the schedule gets finalized, it will be posted with tons of other event information at <https://sites.google.com/utah.gov/naweo2023>.

Some beautiful nearby sites have already been scouted out for the Torch Run and Warden Skills Competitions, and you can expect excellent opportunities for networking with other wildlife officers from around the continent. Bring plenty of business cards, patches, and/or coins as you make the connections with other attendees who may well be assisting in your next big case. Similar to 2022, we'll also have a conference app to share conference information and store notes and attendee information until you get back home.

On that topic, the conference app will launch to registered attendees in late June. As you watch for it, please ensure you log in with the correct credentials—especially if you, your spouse, and your kids all registered under the same email address. I'll work on streamlining the app notifications as well, but am also encouraging everyone to keep the notifications on so you receive important notifications during the conference, as well as training certificates afterward. The "Game Wardens Annual Conference" group on Facebook is also an excellent place to ask questions and find additional information on NAWEOA events.

Registration is open! You can find the current registration link at <https://www.naweo.org/next-conference>. For the best pricing and training options, please register as soon as possible. This also helps the hosts pin down meal counts and make decisions on adding space or limiting participation in certain events. As April turns into May, the "Early Bird" registration will close and "Regular" registration will begin. "Late" registration will be available for those registering in July. All registrations include lunch on the 11th, breakfast (and participation in the Torch Run) on the 12th, supper at the Warden Skills Competitions on the 13th, and the banquet on the 14th. Purchase of a commemorative token is required for entry to the evening hospitality events (one token per person/for the conference). We are planning to have one big opening luncheon for all officers and adult guests. Some business may be rearranged from past years, and this should be a great event for spouses to be present as "their" wardens are recognized with various

awards, honors, and family-interesting NAWEOA business.

Public transportation is very affordable and extensive in the Salt Lake – Provo area. "TRAX" offers train routes from the Salt Lake Airport, connecting to downtown Provo, and even local recreation areas. A few dollars a day can take you throughout "the valley" and get you back to the hotel if you don't want to get a rental car. Just be aware they don't run on Sundays, and they won't take you all the way to the National Parks.

If you haven't made your room reservation yet, I would recommend doing so soon. The UCOA team has already had to adjust the room block to make extra room for a couple of nights and we expect this event to be very well attended. Make your basic reservation at www.shorturl.at/dpABF. If you have a preference for either a single or double room (one or two beds), we can add that to your reservation if you shoot an email to conference@naweo.org with your confirmation number, name, and the needed room type.

While you're thinking about NAWEOA and the upcoming conference, please consider bringing a donation to help support UCOA and NAWEOA. This is typically NAWEOA's only annual fundraising event and it helps ensure we can keep our membership dues low and conferences affordable for the whole family. We also plan for the local hosts to come out with some extra profits for all of their work to help make these events a success. Everything from an item that will be part of a bucket raffle package to a full corporate sponsorship is appreciated, especially if you don't see your state or jurisdiction being able to host a conference anytime soon. Please reach out if you plan to bring a donation along, or if have any questions or would like a copy of the current donor/sponsor prospectus (conference@naweo.org).

I hope to see you (again) this July in Provo!

2023 Conference Provo, Utah



Utah 2023

**The UCOA welcomes NAWEOA to Provo
for the 2023 annual conference.**

7/10/23 - 7/15/23

**Opening Ceremonies - Tuesday, July 11th
Banquet Dinner - Friday, July 14th**



2023 Conference Provo, Utah



Room Rate: \$139.00 per night + taxes
and fees



**Provo Marriott Hotel &
Conference Center**
101 West 100 North Provo, Utah 8460



Information regarding
NAWEOA Jurisdictional Representatives,

- ♦ Names
- ♦ Contact information
- ♦ The jurisdictions they serve
- ♦ Etc.

Can be found elsewhere on the NAWEOA website
naweo.org

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By April Elphinstone

Canadian Exchange Winner – by April Elphinstone, Manitoba Conservation Officer Service

This past July, I attended the 2022 NAWEOA Conference in Nashville, Tennessee with a little luck on my side!

Why New Mexico? That was by far the most common question I was asked followed by “where is Manitoba?” and “what’s your elevation?”

To be frank, I chose New Mexico for the people. When my name was drawn for the exchange, Captain Matthew Anthony with New Mexico Game and Fish was sitting at a table across from me. I hadn’t yet met Captain Anthony, but he immediately stood up, walked over, introduced himself and said New Mexico would love to host me. All throughout the week, Captain Anthony would find time to approach me and boast about his home state. It was clear he was proud of his organization and confident that New Mexico would show me a good time.

I’m happy to report that New Mexico showed me THE BEST time and I am truly grateful for the opportunity and experiences I have been given.



Santa Fe Head Office

Day 1 – On January 16th, I embarked on the 2,600km trip from Manitoba to New Mexico. When I arrived at the Albuquerque airport, Special Investigator Marco DiGrazia picked me up. I had been researching “New Mexico news” in the weeks leading up to my trip, aside from news about the high crime rate (which for the record I never saw any evidence of), news articles about New Mexico Game and Fish on the hunt for a tiger cub kept popping up. Obviously, I had some questions about this cub and was gauging whether or not I might actually get to see it on this trip. As we made our way to the Albuquerque Office, Marco quickly filled me in on a bit of the backstory and speculated that the cub no longer existed.

After a quick tour of the Albuquerque facilities and some brief introductions, Marco and his family took me out to the famous Sadie’s of New Mexico for my first authentic taste of New Mexican food. At the res-



Valles Caldera a 13.7 mile wide volcanic caldera in the Jemez Mountains of northern New Mexico.

taurant, I was met by many of the local NM Game and Fish staff and their families, including Colonel Tim Cimbal and his family. As I tried to decipher the menu, Major Rey Sanchez gave me a crash course on Mexican Chile and we joked that I was picky about my Maple Syrup like he is picky about his Chile!

Day 2 started at 0700hrs for a migratory bird patrol in the Bernardo WMA with Sergeant Jeremy Smith. We patrolled through Bernardo Farm part of the Ladd S Gordon Waterfowl Complex. Coming from a province with an abundance of water to a state with very little, I was amazed at how manipulated water resources are

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By April Elphinstone

in New Mexico. Sgt. Smith toured me through the new waterfowl management ponds that are set to open this fall. These ponds, which have been dubbed by Ducks Unlimited as the 'Crown Jewel of the South' have been carefully engineered to provide accessible hunting opportunities for New Mexicans. Sgt. Smith is a walking talking encyclopedia, after my short time with him, I felt like I could write an entire article on the Bernardo Farm Waterfowl Management practices alone!

From Bernardo, we headed out to La Joya (for the record in New Mexico 'j' is 'h' and 'll' is 'y'...). I hopped in with NM Game & Fish's devoted water fowler Brandon Ferguson. We patrolled and talked about how much our organizations are the same just a different country, but mostly I bragged about how many birds we have in Manitoba, how big our bag limits are and how we get to hunt them before they're all gun shy and hunter smart. The icing on my humblebrags was checking a pair of hunters proud of their two-coot harvest!



Ruidoso, a resort community in the Sierra Blanca mountain range.

From La Joya, Brandon and I made our way back to the Bosque south of Albuquerque. Here I met up with Jerry Pohl and Alberto Melendez with a side by side. Remember earlier, when I mentioned all the news reports of high crime rates in NM? Well, the running joke within the Manitoba Conservation Officer Service was that my life as an officer was never in more danger than it was leaving Manitoba to work



Captain Matthew Anthony showing me some tricks on the range in Roswell

in New Mexico for a week. My ride along through the Bosque back to the Albuquerque office didn't exactly negate any of those news reports. Alberto drove us through the 'war zone' (Albuquerque's crime hot spot otherwise known as the International District) on our way to Tingley Beach. During our ride, he impressed upon me all the wild and dangerous things that loomed in the Bosque, everything from gang bangers to mountain lions hiding in the bushes. I kept my eyes PEELED the whole ride, darting back and forth from the trees to the riverbank. My luck must've followed me from Nashville because all I saw was some fisherman, a couple of spandex clad joggers and a pair of old ladies on their afternoon walk.

When we made it back to the Albuquerque Office unscathed, I was greeted with an office cook-out. Fresh fajita's and chicharrones cooked on the disco! Here I had the opportunity to meet and socialize

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By April Elphinstone

with many of the officers and game & fish staff from the area. I don't know about the crime but I do know that New Mexicans are some of the most hospitable people I've ever met!

After the cookout, Sgt. Ben Otero and I patrolled to Jemez Springs, Valles Caldera (the Yellowstone of New Mexico), through Los Alamos to the Youngsville area for a night decoy. Remember the tiger cub saga and my very first questions to Marco upon setting foot in New Mexico? Well wouldn't you know it, as we were heading in the opposite direction of Albuquerque

want to give away too many details as this may still be an ongoing investigation but thanks to a pesky "raccoon", the officers we were able to gain access to the vehicle without garnering any suspicious attention and successfully retrieve their tracker.



Smokey Bear Historical Park in the heart of the village of Capitan.



Roswell Office Front.

que the call comes in that the police discovered a tiger cub in a trailer home when they were investigating a shooting and Marco is now about to execute a search warrant to seize the tiger cub... I left for two hours Marco.. two hours and you seize the cub without me!

Day 3 started at 0800hrs, Sgt. Ben Otero and I headed out to meet with Marco DiGrazia, Major Sanchez, and Sgt. Stephen Apodaca to retrieve a vehicle tracker. This was my first time working on a plain-clothes operation and it was exciting to see it all play out. I don't

From there, we headed to New Mexico Game and Fish's head office in Santa Fe. Here, I received a tour of the building, met with staff from a variety of branches and sat in on an upcoming antelope trap logistics meeting.

New Mexico Game and Fish is a leading agency in terms of antelope trapping, with a fleet of cowboys

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By April Elphinstone

and cattle ranchers I can understand how that came to be. Captain Ty Jackson, who for the record looks exactly how you'd expect a man named Ty Jackson to look; big handle bar mustache, big cowboy hat – tells it how it is and commands respect with his presence. He showed me YouTube videos of their past traps; it's intense, and looks like a lot of hard physical work but also a ton fun! After Captain Jackson wrapped up his day at the Santa Fe Office, he took me for a quick tour of the city and the New Mexico State Capitol Building. It was incredible to watch Captain Jackson walk into the Capitol Building, quickly flash his badge and carry on through the building like the world was his oyster... you cannot do that in Manitoba, I'm not sure you can do that anywhere in Canada for that matter, badge or not.

After that, we hit the pavement and made our way to Las Vegas to meet up with my next partner, Sgt. Stephen Apodaca. New Mexico is full of history and I'm confident Captain Jackson knows most of it. Our drive from Santa Fe to Las Vegas was an entire history lesson on all battles that took place along that route.



Mills Canyon – Melvin Mills' Orchard Ranch abandoned in 1916.

Day 4 - This part my article will be short, not for a lack of stories but because those stories would be best told in a bar not a newsletter. I will say that my time with Sgt. Apodaca and his family were some of my funniest times in New Mexico!

My day with Sgt. Apodaca was spent patrolling the Las Vegas area. We started by pulling some well-hidden reconyx cams that were linked to the same investigation involving the vehicle tracker. As we patrolled and snacked on Chester's Flaming Hot Fries (an Apodaca patrol staple), Sgt. Apodaca spoke of big water in the Peco's and the trout fishery, when we arrived I likened the river to what Manitobans would refer to as a dry creek bed. Not the flowing mountain cut I had envisioned from his description. From the Pecos, we made our way to Mills Canyon for some sight seeing and to try our luck at spotting Barbary sheep.

Day 5/6 – Sgt. Apodaca and I hit the road early and headed for Albuquerque to meet up with Sgt. Logan Vanlandingham aka The White Sands Stallion. If you're wondering about the nickname, here's the backstory; Right before my trip, Captain Anthony sent me an itinerary of my upcoming visit and all the Officers I would be working and staying with. I hastily read the email on my iPhone, turned to my husband and said "Wow! They have me working with some guy they call the White Sands Stallion! He must be the real deal, a real sniper down there if they're calling him that in an email that was sent to their Colonel and Senior Officers!"

My husband, bemused, gave me a quick "What!?" As I re-read the email- aloud this time, I quickly realized my error. I was in fact, scheduled for an Oryx hunt patrol on the White Sands Missile Range – specifically the Stallion Range with Sgt. Logan Vanlandingham. I had told the story of my miscommunication when I first arrived in New Mexico and it took off like wildfire! Before I had even met him in person or he had a chance to hear my story he had already officially become "The White Sands Stallion".

When Sgt. Vanlandingham arrived at the Albuquerque office to pick up his foreign dignitary (as he would call me for the next two days..), I quickly realized why the nickname stuck. He was a cattle ranchin', yes ma'am with a tip of his black cowboy hat, lip packed

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By April Elphinstone

with dip with more guns in his truck than I could count type! My next two days were spent at the White Sands Missile Range, home of the famous Trinity Site glassing for Oryx, touring Salinas Peak, shooting a thousand yards and talking all things American. I have to ask; how many of you have ever shot a butterfly before?

Day 7 – After a night at the Byrd Family home, Sgt. Ben Byrd took me on a patrol of his compliance area. We patrolled through Ruidoso, Lincoln, Capitan (Home of Smokey Bear) and eventually made our way to Roswell, where we met up with Captain Anthony, Sgt. Tyson Sanders, Clay Moyers and New Mexico's newest Game and Fish recruits on the firing range. My patrol with Sgt. Byrd was not unlike any of the preceding patrols. It was a full history lesson; everywhere we went, there was a story to be told. From the wild horses roaming Ruidoso to the tales of Billy the Kid. At the range, my handoff to Captain Anthony went something like this:

“This is April – she won't make a decision, she's game for anything, you won't hear her complain and she won't wear boots in your house”.

All of which was true, I came to NM to work, whatever the Officers had to show me, I wanted to see it. Wearing boots inside a home just felt wrong, I took a lot of heat on this one and received a few lectures on sand burs, 'goat heads' and time management (New Mexicans do not have time to take their shoes on and off to go in and out of the house all day long). It still

wasn't enough to convince me to leave my boots on though.

After some fun and learning some new tricks on the range, we made our way to my final stay at the famous Captain Andy Gray house!

Everywhere I'd been, people talked about Captain Gray, his house and what great hosts him and his wife Theresa are. I was not disappointed; it was a great night with great people and more great food. A great way to finish off my trip!

I've reflected on my time in New Mexico a lot, I don't know how I could possibly do this trip, this organization and these people justice in just one article. What I've shared with you is just a snippet of what my week with New Mexico Game and Fish was. I met so many amazing people, experienced a lot of history and engaged in some of the most thought provoking conversations of my career.



Bernardo WMA, 1675 acres located between Belen and Socorro between 1-25 and the Rio Grande.

During my trip, I stayed with a different officer family for six of my eight nights. I was apprehensive about that part of this experience but I quickly realized with each home I was invited into, that when you're an Officer you will always have a place to stay and people who will treat you like family. In addition to the patrols and seeing new country, some of my best memories were spent in the homes of the Officers who hosted me and invited their friends, families and fellow officers to meet me. I sincerely hope that I can repay the favour one day!

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By Jerry Czech

American Exchange Winner – Jerry Czech, Game Warden Pennsylvania Game Commission

A NAWEOA Conference is something every warden or conservation officer should attend at least once in their career if not more. I have had the opportunity to attend several with my wife also an officer and with my children. These conferences are fun, full of training and networking and yes family friendly. The opportunity has not presented itself in several years to be able to attend and conference. So in about 2017 when I saw that Nashville TN was selected to host and conference. I started making plans to attend. Nashville TN was a place I wanted to vacation, visit and of course see Broadway and listen to my favorite music. As time passed and the conference started to near, and the excitement grew. Reservations were made, flights and time off planned. Then March 2020 arrived and the Covid pandemic swept the country and well need I say more. The 2020 NAWEOA was cancelled and rescheduled for 2021, well that came and went as well. I thought this was going to be a bust as other conference locations were planned and now this will be 2 summers with no Nashville. The conference was up in the air for July 2022.

My wife was on the Board of our FOP union and had a few opportunities to travel to Nashville for training and each time I was unable to make it as we had 4 teenagers at home. Feb 2022 came, and I was able to attend a Wellness Summit in Nashville for the weekend. I got my trip to Nashville. It was short only for 3 days and many Covid restrictions still in place – not quite the trip it could have been.

Restrictions from Covid began to relax and the NAWEOA Nashville conference was go for July 2022. I was ready to attend after a 2 year wait. We flew to Nashville and got to the hotel, a bit easier now with only 2 teens left at home. The beginning of the conference is the opening ceremonies and the officer lunch. During this lunch is the time when the NAWEOA Exchange selections are made. One American officer and one Canadian officer are selected. They then select and province for the American officer and a state for the Canadian officer to go and work for 7-10 days. The bucket of names was brought to the head table for selections. I looked at some of the officers I was seated at the table with and said after all this and I am finally here in Nashville, I am going to win this thing.

The first name was drawn, and the officer was due to arrive the next day. The next selection was made, again the officer was not at the lunch, third time is a charm, and my name was called. Well, I was excited, and Nashville was worth the wait. They select an alternate in case the first officer cannot make it, I said aloud there is no need for an alternate I AM GOING!! The conference was great, and I was able to speak to several officer and depts while trying to decide where to go. Before leaving I had a few places in mind and contacts in place. NAWEOA has some paperwork to be done and gives you a travel stipend. You also are expected attend the next conference to do a presentation at the officer's lunch about the trip and your experiences. So, Provo, Utah he I come. There is also an article that needs to be written for the newsletter and IGW.

My trip was planned to British Columbia, Canada. I was given a point of contact with their officer's association CO James Zucchelli. He asked what I wanted to



C.O. Sergeant Bates and PA State Game Warden Czech – Vanderhoof, B.C

see and do, fisheries, moose hunting, bears or cougars. I did ask that we do hit some remote areas as my patrol area in Pennsylvania is a metro area the City of Philadelphia. We spoke and he went to work and came up with an itinerary.

The agenda was set and flights and travel arrangements made. I was to leave Philadelphia and fly to Smithers, BC on Oct 19, 2022. This was a long 3 leg trip – Phila to Chicago then to Vancouver 9-hour lay-

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By Jerry Czech

over till 7 am and a small plane from Vancouver to Smithers, BC. and meet Ofc. LeBlanc. Spent the day in Smithers which is a remote town. I was overnight in Smithers and then to Neida, a BC Co Service post cabin to meet Ofc. Corbett on Oct. 20. Then on Oct. 21 was with Sgt. Bates to the Vanderhoof / German-son Landing area. Oct 22 we meet Ofc. McCarthy to patrol the Valemount area, overnight at hotel in Valemount and to Ofc Walkosky on Oct 24 and 25 for two days in the Prince George Road Check, Gang Ranch, Reservations, William Lake and Big Bar areas. I then meet the orchestrator of the trip Ofc. Zucchelli for patrols of the Merritt, Penticton and Kelowna area where I would fly out of on Oct 27. I had been in Penticton many years ago for the NAWEOA conference.



Helicopter patrol for Salmon and Steelhead fishermen

will hit on a few points of things we did and saw along the way is this newsletter article and a more detailed article will follow for the IGW magazine. There

are few words to describe the trip, experiences, scenic views, patrols, and officers I meet along the way. One thing I can say is that I felt at home and treated with respect and comradery, like I was part of each and every officer's family during this trip.

I arrived in Smithers and meet CO Ron LeBlanc, one gate and one other small 30 seat aircraft on the tarmac at well what they said was an airport. One flight in and out each day. Went to Post Detachment Smithers in the Skeenka Region and meet CO Knibbs, SGT Corbet and Dep Chief Schley. After a tour of the office and introductions we had lunch and stowed some gear at LeBlanc home. We then went to Canadian Helicopters in Smithers for our afternoon patrol to check salmon and steelhead fishermen in the B&K River Valley. There was a briefing from the pilot, and we were off to check fishermen via helicopter at 1400hrs. After a several minute flight over some mountains we saw some moose and elk. Then we saw some people fishing and landed the helicopter on the streamside and check the identifications, guide permits and licenses of the fishermen. If there were violations, we would sign to the pilot to kill the engine to save fuel as we would be there a few minutes writing the appropriate warnings or violation notices. Checked 11 fishermen and guides and there were 10 violations detected. We saw a few grizzly bears along the way they were also fishing. We landed at 1800hrs and return to LeBlanc's home for the evening.

Day 3 went to Smithers Office and I rode with Cam to patrol to Lake Nadina several hours away. Along the way we checked hunters and recreation sites for fishermen. We ran into mostly moose hunters on Crown Land- which is like our state land. We traveled on logging road- which require radio comms with the logging trucks and getting over on pull offs to avoid loaded logging trucks coming up or going down the roads. There were active protests of the pipelines and logging areas, with protest camps and pipeline security in very remote areas. Saw a black bear and a lynx on the road or trail into Nadia Cabin. The BCO service has remote cabins and or can rent hotels or cabins during patrols. Their days are not like our 8-hour day and return to HQ. They sometime can patrol for a few days before a return trip to home. Their trucks have two 5-gallon gas cans and 2 spare tire as standard equipment. At the cabin we meet SGT Stu Bates and Ron LeBlanc was there. Stu was my next officer I was

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By Jerry Czech

to ride with. We had steaks, potatoes, and salad. The cabins are equipped with a wood stove, kitchen, solar panels and car batteries for limited power and a few bunks. We played poker, shared some stories, and had a few sips of the famous Canadian Whiskey.

Day 4 Left Nadia Lakes and patrolled towards Vanderhoof, stopped at checked several hunters along the way, grouse, moose, and mule deer hunters. In Canada you need a firearms license along with your

just transferred to the Vanderhoof area from Vancouver Island a metro area. We traveled to Prince Georges Region Office. Meet Sgt McCarthy and traveled to Jasper National Park. While on the way there we patrolled along Rt 16 in a valley between mountain ranges, with weather changes along the way and as elevation changes. We encounter, sun, rain, sleet, and snow. We diverted to some Forest Service Road- FSR's to check rec sites for camper, fishermen and hunters. Stayed at Valmont in a Best Western in a resort area where many travel to hike, ski, and snow mobile. Had diner and a few more Canadian beers and whiskeys. I was able to catch the end of the Phillies game to take a 3-1 series lead from the Padres on their way to the World Series.

Day 5 had a buffet breakfast at the hotel- coffee and no whiskey.. As we were leaving for this day patrol in the morning NFL football was coming on- way too



SGW Czech checking Big Horn Sheep

hunting and fishing permits. Also the native folks can do certain this while they are on reservation land but while off the reservation they must abide by the laws all others abide by. While checking a hunter and his permits

He said man "you need a Philadelphia lawyer to figure this stuff out" Being from Philadelphia and thousands of miles from Philadelphia I asked, "What did you just say". Stayed with Stu and his family in his new home- he was not even fully unpacked as he was



Big Horn Sheep crossing sign

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By Jerry Czech

early for football. More beautiful scenery, Rt 16 and FSR for grouse, mule deer hunters, fishermen but no moose hunters on this day. Arrived in Prince George a bit late- road checkpoint of hunters yielded checks of several moose hunters and the confiscation of 6 guns, due to the possessor of those guns did not having proper PALS or Canadian Firearms License paperwork to possess them.



SGW stop at Tim Hortons

Day 6 Meet CO Waslowsky to his HQ in Williams Lake a decent size city. Had some breakfast with CO Waslowsky, his wife and in laws who were visiting from Vancouver. Arrived at Williams Lake Region Office met Insp. Butler who remember my wife and I from the conference. We helped biologist age and check 15 big horn sheep that outfitters bring in for inspections. I was able to sit in the background on a zoom meeting with tribal chief and legal counsel from a poaching incident of 5 mule deer that CO Waslowsky and other CO's and well as the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police- RCMP were involved in 2 days prior to my arrival. Left Williams Lake for our 2-day patrol - stocked up on groceries for our 2 day patrol to a remote cabin at Eagle Lake. Traveled the Fraser River Canyon, Chilcotin River, First Nation Toosey Tribal Reservation and various Crown land. CO Waslowsky apologized as he had to euthanize a Bald Eagle and of course since I was an American. I reassured him it was ok, I euthanized a few Canadian Geese over the



Fish spawning grounds near Lake Nedia

years. Arrived at Eagle Lake 30 minutes prior to dusk and saw amazing sunset over the lake and we fired up the wood stove and made moose steaks and salad for diner. It was a cold night and we swapped stories about the two different agencies we worked for, pay, working hours, duties and family.

We woke up early and had well Canadian bacon and some eggs and set off to patrol the Chilcotin mountains and some tribal land. We ran into a local on one of the remote roads- they said road, looked more like an atv trail to me! He strongly advised not to take that pass it is impassible for the last few months. So we mapped out another route and set off. The expected time was 3 hours on this single lane road through the mountains. The patrol took a bout 5-6 hours on this like I said atv trail. We missed a rendezvous with my next handler, and I spend another day with Mark in Williams Lake. We returned to his house tired after a long patrol but through some of the most beautiful scenery. We had moose stew and watched what most Canadians love a hockey game. The next morning it was off to meet another CO for a ride to my next and

NAWEOA Officer Exchange Report

By Jerry Czech

last officer CO James Zucchelli in the Merritt and Penticton area. We meet at a gas station of all places. The CO in BC, spend lots of time at a gas station. It seems at least once a shift as their patrol areas area massive and fuel is a must, along with some coffee. Tim Horton's are also a staple like our Dunkin Donuts in the states- of course Tim Horton was you guessed it a former hockey player. We checked some fishermen as there were several small and large lakes on our



BC mountains

was, more recreations areas and logging areas- Some areas are closed to access after wildfires come through and the forest is coming back. When we arrived in Kamloops a Region Office there was an active wounded grizzly and cougar in a local park area. I finally meet CO James Zucchelli who set up the trip and itinerary. We patrolled down through Kelowna where I would fly out of in a day or so. That area and Penticton where the NAWEOA Conference was in

2006. There we some small metro areas and I had not seen big horn sheep or mountain goats yet. I figure that was not going to happen in this area. Not long after that though we ran into a few big horn sheep on the outskirts of town and then another herd of about 25. When we were driving along a highway James pulled over and said we may see some goats along this stretch and sure enough soon after we saw several mountain goats. I had been in the remotest area in the last several days and was able to see the grizzly, cougar, big horn sheep and mountain goats in the populated areas of Kamloops and Kelowna. Almost like back home in Philadelphia where for a big city no one expects the amount of wildlife in a metro and suburban area.

Stayed with James for 2 days, had a takeout diner of Thai food with him and his wife and then the trip would soon come to an end. He told me that they were trying to get the conference to come to BC again in 2024. It was still not official, so I had to keep it tight lipped about it. It would be cool to be talking about and highlighting BC at the conference in Provo, Utah when the next NAWEOA after that would be BC. BC CO would be there promoting BC to all the officers in Provo.

A few months after my trip James called and told me the good news that BC will be hosting in 2024. So, I started the plan for 2024, to attend in BC and see some of the great and friendly officers that hosted me in 2022. The trip was a great experience, once in a life time. I would like to thank NAWEOA for having such a program for officers to experience. The Pa Game Commission for allowing me the time to take the trip and the British Columbia Conservation Officer Service. The officers that I had the opportunity to ride with for hosting and holding back nothing to show me their province and all it has to offer. I would also like to thank the officers that I had the opportunity to ride with and made sure I got to see what I wanted to and much more.

Region 1 Director Chris Maier



Greetings to all my fellow resource officers from around the continent!

I recently returned from my first NAWEOA winter meeting and I can honestly say that this association is in some pretty good hands.

Pennsylvania hosted the winter meeting at a fantastic facility near Franklin, PA. Rich Cramer and NAWEOA VP Larry Hergenroeder put together a great few days of meetings. As part of the week we all cooked a meal and we all got a chance to experience some different style of cooking from Western Canada to the South eastern United States. I can honestly say I've never had Sausage gravy and biscuits before this year. I also was a bit shocked that perogies and sausage was a new delicacy to some of the southern directors, and hopefully at some point I can try one of Jesse Gehrt's famous Ta-Co's.

As a true Canadian, and hockey fan I was able to coerce some other hockey loving directors into buying penguins tickets and we drove into Pittsburgh one evening to catch a Pittsburgh Penguins game. Thanks to Steve Beltran for driving us out there! I won't go into too much detail to the whole week but I will say that we had a tour of the 2025 convention centre, and I know NAWEOA will be in good hands with Larry running the convention and the association. Utah is quickly approaching and I'm looking forward to being at a convention after a few years away, and from what I've seen Sean Spencer and the Utah officers will have a great convention lined up for us all. With the snow slowly starting to melt in parts of Region 1, I wish you all a safe spring and summer, and hope you all spend lots of time getting out in the field, and even more importantly enjoying those resources with your friends and family.

Below is a few reports from the associations across Region 1. Make sure to read them all....especially the one from BC for some exciting news!

Take Care
Chris Maier
Region 1 Director

Parks Canada

Spring 2023

Hello once again NAWEOA! Well after slogging through a never ending winter last season, this proved to be the winter that almost was...and then wasn't north of the 49th. Apologies for not getting a submission in for the fall newsletter, fell off the side of the desk with all the other things going on at the end of another busy summer.

Update from the Law Enforcement Branch

By the time you are reading this, we will have graduated another class of 20 new Park Warden Recruits from the RCMP Academy in Regina. They will be a much welcomed addition to help fill our ranks.

Park Wardens were able to attend the 45th Annual Canadian Police and Peace Officer Memorial day in Ottawa in September 2022. The first time in 3 years the event could be held at regular capacity.

Enforcement News

We've had a number of big files come down in the last year (and a few more pending). Here are a few highlights:

In May 2022, an individual from Québec was sentenced in the Provincial Court of British Columbia for the trafficking of Burgess Shale Fossils. The individual was handed a \$20,000 fine and is to serve 5 months of house Arrest.

In August 2022, an individual hiking in Jasper National Park, shot a black bear. The individual was arrested and has been charged with numerous violations under the Canada National Parks Act. That case is still before the courts.

In early September 2022, due to an abnormally dry fall, a late season wildfire broke out in Jasper National Park only 30km (18mi) from the Jasper Townsite. Unfortunately, this brought out numerous individuals who unlawfully flew their UAV(drones) near the fire simply to capture footage. On one occa-

Region 1 Director Chris Maier Continued

sion a drone spotted close to the blaze forced the grounding of all aircraft working the fire. Ultimately 5 individuals would be caught and charged. To date the two individuals have plead guilty. The first was handed a \$10,000 fine, while the second was given a \$7,000 fine.

News from the association:

The National Park Warden Association Facebook page continues to be our primary tool to reach out to Park Wardens and the general public;

The Association will be produced and entirely sold out of Park Warden belt buckles in 2022;

The Association is still actively involved with the International Ranger Federation and of course NAWEOA.

The Union representing Park Wardens has finalizing their demands, and has been meeting with Parks Canada collective bargaining talks in 2022 and into 2023, to date not much has been agreed to.

Contact us if you would like more information: npwa.agpn@gmail.com
- Neil Schroeder (J-rep)

Alberta Game Wardens Association (AGWA)

Greetings from the Alberta Game Warden Association! I hope you all had a great winter, and looking forward to the spring season and warmer temperatures. A majority of my submission will focus on our returning annual AGWA Banquet, Hockey Tournament, and Annual General Meeting which occurred March 24 – 26th in Spruce Grove. This event was made extra special, as it was the 50th year anniversary of our association, which dates back to the spring of 1973 when a select few of our Officers got together and agreed there had to be some uniformed representation of the Officers to advocate for the betterment of those in this specialized field.

The weekend started off with the first couple games of the hockey tournament, compiling of Officers from across the province representing their individual Region. In spite of recently being reorganized from 4 to 3 Regions, the decision was made to continue the tra-

ditional 4 of Northwest, Northeast, South, and Central. The Central Region which had been amalgamated as part of the restructure, made their name known in an exciting comeback in the final from a 3-1, to win-



ning with an impressive score of 8-3!

Hockey was only one of many exciting events that weekend, the main being the banquet on Saturday. With 50 years of history, you can imagine the legacy of names to have come through during those years. It was exciting to have a variety of seniority in the crowd, including some who were part of the original association at the start, some recent hires, and some like myself whose years of service are somewhere in the middle. In my mind, it was the grand total of 160 guests who packed the room that evening, that made the celebration as memorable as it was, and we thank those to took the time to participate.

Being the first in-person event in a while, provided a great opportunity to present a number of awards that evening in a group setting. Numerous retired Officers



Region 1 Director Chris Maier Continued

were presented with an appreciation plaque, and I had the pleasure of presenting not just 1, but 3 Officer of the Year recipients with their awards!

Provincial Problem Wildlife Specialist Mike Ewald, who is known far and wide for his human wildlife conflict knowledge and skills, was presented the final portion of his award who someone (may have been me) neglected to locate and present in 2021...The 2022 recipient was District Officer John Elias, who has made significant contributions to the Service's firearms team, and played a major role in securing the carbine rifle program. And finally; the 2023 recipient was District Officer Tim Krikun whose contributions range from a long time Defensive Tactics Instructor, running the Grande Prairie District, and currently sits on the AGWA Executive as a Regional Representative for the Northwest Region. It was a highlight of the evening for me to present so many deserving Officers with an award that dates back to 1983 and has been presented a total of 36 times since.



(2021 Officer of the Year Mike Ewald being presented his award by AGWA president Sam Pidwerbeski)

The AGM was filled with insightful conversation on how to best advance our profession in the times of difficulty we come to face. A strong Executive team is critical to delivering on this focus, and I was honoured to have been selected for a second term as President,



but even more glad that a number of new faces have *(Sam Pidwerbeski presenting 2022 Officer of the year award winner John Elias with his award)*



(AGWA president Sam Pidwerbeski presenting 2023 Officer of the year Tim Krikun with his award)

joined the team to distribute the workload! I'm happy to announce that after several years of covering off vacant positions, AGWA now has a full team ready to bring the association into the next 50 years of excellence!

The weekend would not have been possible had it not been for Dana Kopp of the Social Chair position, for planning, coordinating, and executing the strategic events which made this weekend so enjoyable. Even though she has chosen to pursue a new aspect of her career as an Environmental Protection Officer, on behalf of the association; I thank her for all that she has contributed, and we're glad she is remaining as an

Region 1 Director Chris Maier Continued

Honorary Member to enjoy future milestones of AGWA.

On behalf of the association; I hope you all have a great safe summer, and be proud of the unique service you provide to those around you!

Sam Pidwerbeski – AGWA President (J-Rep)

Saskatchewan Association of Conservation Officers (SACO)

Good day and greetings from SACO, I am hoping the best for all of our partners and family of game wardens across the NAWEOA nation. Here in Saskatchewan, we are rounding out the end of our winter and looking forward to the Spring thaw and the change of seasonal work pressures. I'm sure most of us are ready to trade in our parkas for short-sleeved shirts and PFD's, hard water for soft water, bring on summer.

We are also gearing up with huge anticipation for our association annual convention, this year being hosted in our provincial capital in Regina on April 28-30, 2023. Prizes are rolling in steadily and I cannot thank the convention organizing committee enough already. To give an idea, I'm told we have fundraising, hunting and fishing trips and prizes that total nearly \$160,000 in retail value. There will no doubt be some happy faces at the end of the weekend with that quality of support. We have also already received the commitment that our Minister at our new home in Corrections, Policing and Public Safety will be in attendance to address the group. All signs are pointing to a good event for our association and service. The fundraising that events like this create for our association is directly linked to how much support we can distribute to officers in time of need. Thank you to this group for everything that you have done up to this point.

On the work front, we are also gearing up for our permanent officer recruitment to conclude. We are anticipating 10 officers/recruits being sent to the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy (WCLEA) this summer. We are happy to hear that with the end

of COVID, we will see a return to the traditional academy training where our recruits will train side by side with officers from across Western Canada. This year's academy is being hosted in Lac La Biche, Alberta. Our service will no doubt be in attendance supporting the academy with a host of trainers and instructors in the various disciplines required.

Our association continues to push forward in attempt to represent and support our officers in the best way we possibly can. We are continuing to be an organized voice bringing concerns forward from our membership to our executive and union partners. These conversations are not always easy on both sides of the perspective but we work hard to maintain relationships and effectiveness in the best way we know how. I want to take a moment to thank all of my co-representatives on our association board of executives and area representatives. The work that these members do on our executive to support the role of president is truly humbling and has helped me to really appreciate how much they care about not only the success of our association but how much the association cares about our officers and members.

Jared Yeo
President

Saskatchewan Association of Conservation Officers

Greetings from British Columbia!

Thankfully winter is slowly releasing its grip on the most Southern regions of our Province. For our Northern counterparts spring is still a long ways away with drifts of rotting snow towering in the driveways. Hopefully all is well in the rest of jurisdictions and they are well rested up for 2023 field season.

Things have been changing rapidly on the BCCOS front with a huge push to fill vacancies with a field first priority to getting boots on the ground. Combined with the backlog of mandatory training due to covid and the daunting task of training 20 plus recruits the BCCOS has been very busy. In addition we have several significant retirements in the past few months. The loss of knowledge, experience and leadership will be felt throughout the organization. We have lost some 120 years of combined experience that we have

Region 1 Director Chris Maier Continued

relied upon in the past to navigate the everchanging demands and challenges on the everyday game warden.

Retirements:

Conservation Officer Warren CHAYER retired after 34 years of continuous service in Clearwater British Columbia. Warren is known for his hard work ethic and keen investigative skills focusing on catching intentional poachers vs just voluntary compliance. Warren's sense of humor will be sadly missed and we all wish him well in his retirement.

Sgt. Bob BUTCHER retired in Lillooet British Columbia after 29 years of service. He spent time in the Surrey Office as well as Terrace BC and then spent the last 21 years in Lillooet. Bob is known for his jet-boating skills on the Fraser River and the protection of the White Sturgeon in the Fraser river. Bob was always up for a patrol and he preferred circle route patrols vs in and out. Bob is very techno savvy having mastered the real time GPS navigation with an on board laptop computer well before any one else could figure it out. Bob was a great CO and good friend and will also be sorely missed in the COS family.



Doug Forsdick retirement

Chief Doug FORSDICK retired after 35 years of service in the Province of BC. 30 years with the BCCOS and the last 9 ish years serving as our Chief Conservation Officer. Doug's support for the BCCOS was unwavering through some difficult times in our agency

and he kept the front line well trained and well equipped to do the job. Doug came through the field ranks and worked in Surrey, Terrace, Vanderhoof, and then as an Inspector in Prince George. Doug also served on the NAWEOA board for many years through the early 2000s prior to becoming Chief. We thank him for his service to the North American Wildlife Officers Association as well we thank him for his service and legacy to the BCCOS.

Recruiting:

We have a full class of close to 20 new recruits that have accepted locations throughout the Province of BC and will be starting WCLEA (Western Canadian Law Enforcement Academy) early this spring. Congratulations to those successful candidates and we look forward to recruiting you and giving you the opportunity to have the best career on the planet.

We congratulate Inspector Andrew MILNE who received the esteemed BC Conservation of the year award. Andrew has dedicated his career to making the BCCOS better every day on the job. He is currently the inspector for the South Coast Region which has the majority of the population in the Province residing in his area of responsibility. This creates many challenges as we navigate the political/social pressures of being a Natural resource law enforcement agency that is responsible for public safety in relation to human wildlife conflicts. Andrew is well deserving of this award and he will continue to exhibit the professionalism, integrity, service and protection that the BCCOS is known for.



Andrew Milne receiving his award for Officer of the year.

Region 1 Director Chris Maier Continued

As well we want to congratulate Inspector Cam SCHLEY on his latest promotion to the position of Chief Conservation Officer. We are in good hands with Cam at the helm. Having a chief that has come through the ranks for the last 20 or so year gives credibility to the great organization that has been built by our strong leadership in the past.

On the NAWEOA conference front we have some very exciting news that the Society of British Columbia Conservation Officers are partnering with the Society of Pacific Region Fishery Officers to host the NAWEOA Conference in July 2024 in Penticton, British Columbia. The seed was planted in Nashville when inhibitions and common sense were slightly impaired (not sure how that happened) unfortunately I

wasn't there. There was no confirmed host for 2024 and I was approached as the president of our association to see if we could make this happen. This was in the fall of 2022 and the NAWEOA board was very enthusiastic about the potential for a conference in Canada. How could I say no... I was part of the 2005 conference and I have many fond memories and am looking to give that back and provide those opportunities to the newer generations.

So with that we look forward to seeing you all in Provo for NAWEOA 2023 and hope you can join us in Penticton in 2024 for NAWEOA just North of the 49th.

James A. Zucchelli – President of the Society of British Columbia Conservation Officers



Region 2 Director Martin Thabault



After a long, mild and gray winter, it is an interesting spring in Eastern Ontario. We recently had an ice storm which resulted in important power outages throughout the region. This unusual weather phenomenon not only caused damage to man-made structures, it also brought down several trees. What a mess. Another recent spring highlight was the Public Service Alliance of Canada's strike. This union represents most of our Enforcement Branch's workers, including our Wildlife Officers. We had been out of a contract for almost two years, with little progress being made at the bargaining table. Part of our workforce was designated as essential and remained at work, but some of us were on the picket lines for eight days. Thankfully this situation didn't drag on for too long before a reasonable tentative agreement was reached.

We recently had our NAWEOA winter meeting in Franklin, Pennsylvania. The PA Game Commission graciously offered their Northwest Training Centre to the NAWEOA Executive, thanks in great part to their Northwest Region Director and long-time NAWEOA Executive Member Richard Cramer. Our Vice President Larry Hergenroeder had put together a full meeting agenda which allowed us to make progress on several fronts as an organization. During our meeting we traveled a short distance to Erie, PA where we visited the Bayfront Convention Centre. This is where our upcoming 2025 Summer Conference will be held. The complex features two hotels directly connected to the conference centre (a Marriott Courtyard and a Sheraton). It offers a scenic view on Presque Ile Bay and Presque Ile State Park. This conference will have many things to offer, from Niagara Falls a short drive away to fishing charters on Lake Erie.

Well, we have now secured the locations of our next three summer conferences. This has been unheard of in the last decade or so. I am grateful to the jurisdic-

tions who have stepped and committed to host, but I don't think we would be where we are without the hard work and dedication of our Conference Liaison and Region 4 Director, Jason Sherwood. Jason, thank you for your hard work and dedication to our organization.

Finally, a special thanks to my Region 2 J-Reps for supporting me with their timely submissions and important updates, and for nominating several of their colleagues for our yearly NAWEOA awards.

I am looking forward to seeing several of you in Provo this July.

Please read on to find out what is happening in Region 2's jurisdictions, and to see what the two winners of last summer's Officer Exchange experienced on their respective trips.

Best,

Martin Thabault

National Capital Commission

by Jason Pink, Senior Conservation Officer

J-Rep NCC

Hello NAWEOA membership! Winter in Ottawa was quite different for our Officers this season. Every year we have several Officers assigned to the Rideau Canal Skate way (the longest natural ice rink in the world) to patrol, enforce our laws and aid the public. This is the first time in over 50 years the Skate way did not open! A mixture of a milder than normal weather and more precipitation did not allow the ice to attain the thickness needed to allow for a safe opening. Climate change at its best. The milder weather also brought us another "first". A large black bear woke from hibernation and refused to leave the front porch of a residence. We assume the den flooded during a mild spell causing the bear to wake up. Hazing and scare tactics did not encourage the bear to move on. Our officers then coordinated a chemical immobilization with the assistance of the Quebec Provincial Wildlife Officers. The bear was tranquilised and brought to a wildlife rehabilitation center to sleep off the remainder of the winter. Our

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

officers also had the pleasure of immobilizing it for a second time to return it to the wild a month later. On



the same subject, we recently purchased a net gun to allow us a different option when trying to capture large game without using drugs.

In other news, as part of the NCC green initiative we are now expecting a new fleet of hybrid Ford pickup trucks this summer. They will be run through their paces to see if they can provide the reliability needed to work off road and pull heavy trailers. On the staffing side, management has decided to hire 2 full time supervisors and assign each one to a platoon. This will allow for more supervisory coverage on weekends. Our Officers continue to conduct joint operations with various agencies. Several operations included marine patrols of lakes and rivers with police of jurisdiction, pre bass season fishing inspections with Quebec Provincial Wildlife Officers including their K-9 team and monitoring of Ginseng with Officers from Environ-

ment and Climate Change Canada. We anticipate more joint operations coming this season and well into fall. Looking forward to another great conference in Utah! Warm regards from the National Capital Commission Conservation Officer Service!

Manitoba

By April Elphinstone, S/Sgt. – Lac du Bonnet Compliance Area

J-Rep, Manitoba Conservation Officer Service

Greetings from Manitoba!

I am pleased to announce that the province has recently hired nine new recruits for the service and those recruits are set to attend the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy starting in May.



The Manitoba Conservation Officer service has recently re-structured again to form 3 regions (East, West and North) and has implemented a new rank structure to align ourselves with other enforcement agencies (Officer, Corporal, Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Superintendent & Chief).

Our Park Patrol program has undergone some modernization; they are now called Patrol Officers and will receive new uniforms. Effort has gone into ensuring our seasonal Patrol Officer program returns to a full compliment or close to full compliment staffing levels.

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

This March our collective agreement expired and we are back into negotiations with proposals for a special wage adjustment for armed Officers, Northern Benefits and increased qualification pay, most notably.

Other noteworthy news, Our Minister (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development) recently announced a \$1.7 million investment as part of the plan to revitalize the Manitoba Conservation Officer Service. Succeeding this, the Minister announced a 46% budget increase for the Mb COS. This investment will support the purchase of new soft body armour, uniforms, radios, cell phone boosters & tactical tools. The budget increase is proposed to help address issues relating to compensation, northern incentives and assist with staffing issues. The increase also will support a new contract with a centralized dispatch service provider, which is scheduled to come online early this summer. As well as allow the COS to upgrade equipment, tools, gear and support more training for officers.

Additionally, the Mb COS has secured a 300k, 3-year contract for a dedicated helicopter service for the VOS to enhance enforcement of illegal night hunting and unsafe hunting activities. We have 11 unmarked police model trucks that will begin rolling out to the districts this year, 50 Spike belts coming to the service and carbine patrol rifles on order to replace our aging shotguns. These are unprecedented times for the COS in terms of support and recognition.

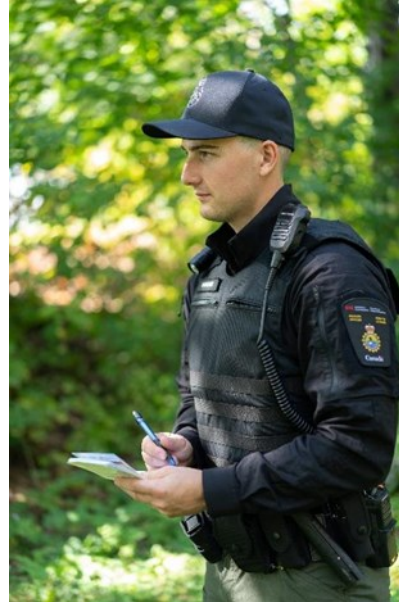
Environment and Climate Change Canada

By Julie Horvath, Wildlife Officer, Wildlife Enforcement Directorate

J-Rep for ECCC-WED
Greetings from Ottawa and ECCC,

A few updates from the Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) at Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). As of fall 2022, our Wildlife Officers are sporting their new uniforms, featuring a black

shirt and green pants, and shoulder patches. Below is a capture of both our Environment and Wildlife patches. The first picture is a closeup of one of our very own Wildlife Officers from the Quebec Region, Officer Lefebvre and the last picture below is Wildlife Officer Badeaux, also from Quebec Region. The new uniforms are a change from our previous forest green attire, but they continue to honour the tradition of wearing green as a link to the environment. Overall, the quality and comfort have favourable reviews from our officers.



One interesting file to note out of the Prairie and Northern Region (PNR), includes a multi-agency investigation, Operation Crossing the Line, that concluded at the end of 2022. This was a two-year joint investigation between the Manitoba Conservation Officer Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service

and WED-PNR. The offences were committed by two Manitoba black bear hunting outfitters, an associated taxidermist and their American hunting clients. As a result of this investigation, the total fine amounts against the subjects was \$30,230. Both Outfitters' licenses were cancelled as well.

Of note, Regional Intelligence Analyst DJ Dillon will be presenting on Operation DECEIVER at this year's NAWEOA Conference in Provo, Utah. DECEIVER was an interdiction and intelligence project focusing on non-compliant imports of bushmeat, traditional medicines and seafood from a Southeast Asian country. The operation ran



Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

from 2019 until its closure with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lessons learned from the project (including investigative techniques, officer safety considerations, and intercultural sensitivities) will be presented at NAWEOA as part of the conference's Peace Officer Standardized Training ("POST") program. DJ has been a frequent participant in NAWEOA since joining ECCC in 2017 and looks forward to representing the department at this event.

And lastly, several enforcement files have concluded across that country since my last report and show the diversity of files that our Wildlife Officers deal with. I would encourage you to take a look at our enforcement notification page on the ECCC's website, but should you not have time, a snapshot of these files include: house arrest for the unlawful importation of a threatened cacti species, three Species at Risk files totalling \$90,000 in fines relating an Emergency Order and a population of threatened western chorus frog, and an alternative measure agreement resulting in a contribution of \$30,000 to the Environmental Damages Fund relating to the import of protected European eel meat.

Ontario

By Sgt. Davis Viehbeck, Conservation Officer
J-Rep Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

The OMNR continues to be in a hiring flux with upwards of 40 officers hired in the last year. To put things in perspective, the agency has roughly 200 officers.

We are maintaining the internal agency training model for newly hired Conservation Officers for the time being, rather than reverting to the Ontario Police College for their basic training.

We continue to face work ethic, job commitment and lack of resource management experience while trying to recruit new Conservation Officers.

Wage disparities continue to cause senior officer retention issues and morale challenges with staff.

Several larger scale multi-agency moose cases are currently before the courts. The majority of these prosecutions are associated with fly-in tourist operators.

Ontario Conservation Officers recently attended the Toronto Sportsmens Show from March 16-19, 2023. Pictured from left to right, CO Jordan Morrison, Sgt. Davis Viehbeck, CO Reid Wareham, CO Mike Panaro



and CO Ian McGale.

ONTARIO CONSERVATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

2023 Ontario Conservation Officer of the Year

The Ontario Conservation Officers Association (OCHOA) is pleased to announce that Conservation Officer Drew Pegrum has been selected as the 2023 Conservation Officer of the Year. Conservation Officer Pegrum is a part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and works within the Guelph Enforcement Unit working out of the Clinton office.

Officer Pegrum started his seasonal career with the MNRF in 2011 as a Park Ranger at Inverhuron Provincial Park, then in 2012 moved to a Park Warden position at Balsam Lake Provincial Park. In 2013 Officer Pegrum took his career to Rocky Mountain House Alberta as a seasonal Conservation Officer (CO) before returning back to Ontario as a CO Intern

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

within the Bancroft Enforcement Unit working out of the Minden office. He completed his internship in 2014 and was hired as a contract CO out of Owen Sound and shortly after secured a full time position within the Guelph Enforcement Unit, working out of Guelph prior to getting to his current position out of the Clinton office.

Officer Pegrum is a professional who demonstrates exceptional leadership and motivates his team, colleagues and trainees to administer their very best to protect our natural resources, and ensure public safety within the Province of Ontario. He is also well established within the community he serves and is often called upon by residents, land-owners, policing partners and community groups in relation to angling, hunting and land use questions and complaints.

Officer Pegrum has been an OCOA member since he began his career as a CO and most recently served as a Regional Representative in Southwest Region for five years and is currently part of the 2023 OCOA Convention Committee.

“Officer Pegrum is not afraid to utilize new techniques or solutions to aid him in his pursuit of ensuring hunter safety” said OCOA President Matthew McVittie. “He is a natural leader that has collected extensive knowledge throughout his life hunting, fishing and being outdoors. In the last few years, he has had the opportunity to become a Coach Officer. He

takes great pride in the individuals he has coached, who have moved on as full time COs”. Officer Pegrum volunteers his time in many ways within the community of Listowel, but his true passion lies with the outdoors and hockey. “Anytime that Drew can’t be found spending time with his family or at work, he can be found mentoring youth hunters, anglers and hockey players throughout his community”

Officer Pegrum is an accomplished investigator and no matter the investigation, big or small, he leaves no stone unturned. Drew goes to work everyday maintaining his top priorities of ensuring hunter safety, protecting the public and the natural resources of Ontario. Some of the most recent work that Drew has completed includes:

Completing multi-district surrogate wildlife decoys to address hunter safety and trespassing within the Guelph Enforcement Unit

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/bulletin/1002092/government-protecting-ontarians-from-unsafe-hunting> <https://news.ontario.ca/en/bulletin/1002287/government-protecting-ontarians-from-unsafe-hunting> [https://news.ontario.ca/en/bulletin/53322/trespassing](https://news.ontario.ca/en/bulletin/53322/trespassing-to-shoot-a-turkey-costs-hunters-7000-and-licence-suspension)



Ontario Conservation Officer Drew Pegrum and K-9 Jett
(Clinton ON, October 2019)

-to-shoot-a-turkey-costs-hunters-7000-and-licence-suspension

Providing exceptional service to a mobility impaired hunter ensuring they could engage in the hunting activity they loved

Has and continues to demonstrate a high level of competency, knowledge, and capability through contribu-

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

tions to enforcement activities in and around Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area

Coordinating multi-district search warrants and statements in relation to hunter safety and trespassing

Being a coach officer and mentoring many officers to become successful CO's

Officer Pegrum was nominated for the 2023 Ontario Conservation Officer of the Year award by his peers. He was selected to receive the award by the selection committee of the OCOA. The Conservation Officer of

the Year award acknowledges officers who have demonstrated the highest level of dedication and professionalism amongst our ranks and pays tribute to the high quality of COs within Ontario.

Ontario Conservation Officer Drew Pegrum and K-9 Jett (Clinton ON, October 2019)

Officer Pegrum is also a member of the North American Wildlife Officers Association (NAWEOA) and was nominated also for North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association Officer of the Year Award.

Drew will be presented with his award, in person, during the OCOA Annual General Meeting this summer by representatives of the OCOA.



Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau



Hello everyone,
It has been a great start to 2023 and here in New Brunswick we are now a year into getting back to our usual game warden work with no Covid response responsibilities. We are all looking forward to a great year ahead. I was able to attend the NAWEOA winter

meeting in Franklin, PA which was fantastic. The NAWEOA board was able to get some meaningful business items completed and we also got to tour the facilities for our 2025 summer conference in Erie, PA. A huge thank you to NAWEOA vice president Larry Hergenroeder and the Pennsylvania Game commission for the hospitality and accommodations for the NAWEOA winter meeting.

Our summer conference in Provo, Utah is fast approaching, and I am looking forward to attending our second post covid summer conference. A big thank you to Sean Spencer and the Utah Conservation Officers Association along with Conference Liaison and region 4 NAWEOA director Jason Sherwood for all your hard work on this upcoming Conference.

I would again like to remind everyone to visit the NAWEOA website and stay connected. Please nominate deserving Officers for next year's awards as there are numerous categories that capture the great work Officers do. NAWEOA is here to help recognize and also connect Officers from all over North America.

I would like to thank all the J Reps for their hard work and dedication being the connection between their jurisdictions and NAWEOA. The work you do is very important and does not go unnoticed. Thank you again!

I would like to congratulate all those retirees who have been recognized here in region 3 and wish them health and happiness as they navigate this new chapter of their life.

Take care and stay safe!

New Brunswick

It has been a very busy few months here in New Brunswick. Conservation Officers have been busy with training and conducting their regular duties. We have implemented hard body armor for all officers, and it appears that other protective equipment like tazers and body worn cameras are being looked at for issuance in the near future. We are also looking to expanding our k-9 program with the addition of two k-9's with training starting very soon. That would make it a total of three k-9's for the province. Conservation Officers were very fortunate this year with the addition of numerous pieces of small equipment. This includes new ATV's, Snowmobiles, boats and trailers.



Sgt. Shawn Farrell and Federal Wildlife Officer Shane Hellyer with their Covid-19 exemplary service medal and queen jubilee medal

The New Brunswick Conservation Officers Association has recently held its first annual general meeting since 2019 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was

Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau Continued

a great success with the highest turnout in years. The Association gets great support from senior leadership within the Department and special thanks goes out to Superintendent Rick Nash who has always been a great supporter of the association.

Contract talk is now front and center in the minds of Conservation Officers with the recently expired contract. Although it is not anticipated a new contract



Supt. Rick Nash presenting Sgt. Jason MacIntyre with the Covid-19 exemplary service medal with distinction and queens jubilee medal

will be settled in the near future it is something that Conservation Officers are looking forward to getting negotiations underway as soon as possible.

Conservation Officers were also presented with departmental Covid 19 exemplary service medals and national queen Jubilee medals recognizing their outstanding response and service to the Covid 19 pandemic.



Supt. Rick Nash presenting CO Andrew Cooke with the Covid-19 exemplary service medal and queen jubilee medal



New Brunswick Conservation Officers Association annual general meeting. Public Safety Minister Kris Austin speaking with the membership.

Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood



While “news” from the Region IV J-Reps has been sparse this spring, it appears to be the result of an extreme amount of too much going on—and, in most cases, also with too few officers. This winter has been a “doozy” across much of the region. I’m sure many of you have seen the news covering the record-breaking

snows “sunny California” has experienced. Good news for water resources and the skiers who live close to their favorite slopes, but it has been tough for those watching the wildlife. Personnel are being stretched thin, between massive winter die-offs in many big game herds and more-adaptable elk populations perfecting ways to eke out a living by moving into cities or staking novel claims to private hay stacks and other stored crops. Add in a few emergency regulations to “help” reduce wildlife conflicts, with continuing high turnover rates, and we’re all going to be really ready for a vacation this July! (Might I suggest Provo, UT this July 10 – 15th..?)

Anyway, here are some specific highlights from around the region:

Arizona

NAWEOA Past-President and new Arizona J-Rep Rick Langley writes, “Arizona is coming out of a wet (back to normal) winter and we are facing a muddy spring and full reservoirs. Flagstaff has recorded their second highest annual snowfall amount this winter. We had a busy and productive hunt season with some outstanding cases coming together. We are slowly catching up and filling vacant districts by hiring two recruit classes each year. The bill passed through the legislature in July 2022 which extended our deferred retirement package for two years (from 5 years to 7 years) has been successfully retaining some of those officers who would have been forced to retire at 5 years. We are currently going through a review of our uniform policy, which was only intended to look at newer materials or newer types of clothing, and

AGRL is asking management to consider other color options and an increase to the uniform allowance.” Rick chose not to provide comment on the question as to whether or not all of the snow in the Colorado River drainage is due to mafia influences. Is it coincidence that once those special barrels from the bottom of Lake Mead started coming to light, the drought suddenly started to turn around? Who knew wildlife conservation could have so many varied partners over the years...

Colorado

J-Rep Jeromy Huntington has plenty of local news. For those who don’t know, Colorado has a very unique political climate: with widely varied interests between rural constituents and a ballooning urban/suburban population in Denver and along the eastern flank of the Rocky Mountains. Often caught in the middle, it is great to see Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPS) Wildlife Managers are at least seeing some improved benefits.

Gray Wolf Reintroduction:

A lot has been happening around wolf reintroduction efforts. For those interested, updates can be found at: <https://engagecpw.org/hub-page/wolf-engagement>. The first round of public comment on the draft plan has concluded and the CPW Commission has started to provide some suggestions for changes. One thing clear, is wolf management issues are going to be significant new commitments for CPW and its officers, who will likely be under a microscope between questions from the public, sighting reports, possible poaching, and investigating game damage.

Employee Benefits:

There has been a lot of movement for pay increases and compensation. In June of 2020, the Colorado Partnership for Quality Jobs and Service Act was signed into law, which recognizes Colorado WINS organization / union for covered employees in state employment of Colorado. There have been significant movements as partner agreements have been developed and signed. In addition to a 3% pay increase last July, a promised 5% pay increase this July and efforts are underway to move to a “pay step” process in 2024. Colorado historically had a step in pay process, but then moved to pay for performance; which included several years when performance pay increases were not approved, leading to a push to go back to a step program.

Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood Continued

Wildlife officers now will also now have two 28-day periods during peak law enforcement times where they are considered FLSA “non-exempt” (“7K Status”). Officers previously only earned comp time for extra hours worked. As of July 1, 2023, employees can now opt to earn overtime pay or comp time. For wildlife officers, the remaining ten months out of the year will still be worked as “exempt” employees. Wildlife officers who are in 7K Status and “on call” will be getting \$5/hour of “wait time” (not working, but required to be available to respond to a call). For the remaining 10 months the officer is not in 7K Status, officers currently get \$300 additional “on call” pay.

Cost of living is a significant challenge, particularly in mountain communities where obtainable / affordable housing is extremely limited. For specific counties, Colorado has offered anywhere from \$100 - \$400 extra/month for housing premium (while other agencies in CO are offering \$1,000 - \$2,000 extra). There are now a lot of discussions and CPW is exploring community partnerships for state housing options as well as possibly increasing cost of living allowances. Colorado Wildlife Employees Protective Association (CWEPA) has been very active with all the pay and compensation efforts. Recently, the CWEPA board decided to enter into a contract with a lobbyist. (All on personal time and personal computers / phones.) There have been several bills introduced in the legislature that may or may not have impacts to CPW and Staff. On bill they are closely watching relates to retirement and employee status in SB23-163, which may classify CPW officers as State Troopers.

Hiring:

Colorado Parks & Wildlife has several wildlife officer vacancies and has shortened the hiring process from 4 -6 months, down to a 1-2 month process. The current training class consists of about 20 park rangers and 18 wildlife officer trainees (double what they hired last year).

Awards:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife recently announced Ian Petkash as the agency’s 2022 John D. Hart Wildlife Officer of the Year.

The John D. Hart Wildlife Officer of the Year Award was named after a legendary wildlife officer who re-

tired as the agency's assistant director in 1959. This year, Ian Petkash, a district wildlife manager in south-east Park County, was chosen for the honor by his peers. Petkash worked multiple felony and misdemeanor poaching cases in 2022, obtaining 15 search warrants and arrest warrants. He is the lead in habitat projects affecting his district, and he and his K-9, Samson, are an integral part of canine programs such as check stations, field searches and search warrants. The award was presented by its 2021 recipient, Officer Eric Harper.



Officer Petkash and K9 Samson

“Officer Petkash’s love of wildlife and desire to help protect their habitats are what makes him an exemplary law enforcement officer,” said Area Wildlife Manager Mark Lamb. “His tenacity and compassion for his job is what we strive for at CPW.”

Additionally, a Medal of Valor, Valor Award and five Life Saving Awards were issued to CPW’s public servants for their brave, selfless and life-saving actions.

District Wildlife Manager Todd Cozad was issued a Medal of Valor for his actions when responding to a rural house fire on Oct. 21, 2022. Cozad was the first on the scene, arriving to find a house engulfed in flames and smoke pouring out of the home. Upon being told a man was still inside the residence, he crawled into the house under the smoke, dragging the

Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood Continued

unconscious man outside. Cozad began CPR with another officer until paramedics arrived.

“Colorado Parks and Wildlife officers protect not only Colorado’s natural resources, but its citizens as well,” said CPW Acting Director Heather Disney Dugan. “As POST-certified first responders in sometimes remote areas, CPW officers are occasionally the first on the scene for life threatening emergencies. I am humbled to work with such brave and selfless people, who work so very hard and risk their lives to protect Coloradans.”

Montana

Kalispell game warden Nate Muhn has been recognized as this year’s recipient of the Montana FWP



Nate Muhn

Region 1 Game Warden Excellence Award

Over the last 5 years, Nate has dedicated himself to serving his community by protecting and preserving the wildlife, habitat, and natural resources of Montana. He constantly strives to be proactive by being out in the field checking licenses and educating the public on the laws and regulations of the Montana outdoors. He has grown and developed into a game warden who has gained the respect and trust of the local landowners, outfitters, hunters, and anglers.

If Nate is not tirelessly patrolling the water and field, he is out living in it with his family. In addition to being a great outdoorsman, Nate is a great dad who loves to spend time packing his kids on his back into the backcountry and teaching them how to fish, hunt, and live off the land.

Utah

Utah conservation officers have been spending a ton of time on conference prep. Everything has been going well on that front and they have been enjoying amazing support from their agency.

Less fortunately, they have also been dealing with a ton of nuisance issues because of the extra snow this winter. Several large herds of elk have been right down in Salt Lake City (golf courses appear to be a new preferred winter habitat type) and on major highways. The Western Hunting Expo was recently held in Salt Lake City, where Utah officers man the “Help stop poaching” trailer. It sounds like this was also a great opportunity for them to visit with many regional vendors who may also turn into donors and/or vendors for the 2023 NAWEOA conference.

Utah has also hired several new officers to fill vacant positions.

Wyoming

Anniversary:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wyoming Game Wardens Association (WGWA). WGWA is gearing up for an extra special annual meeting in April, and has also developed a custom Henry rifle, Weatherby shotguns, folding knives, belt buckles, and challenge coins to commemorate the years of support for Wyoming wardens.

Recruiting:

Like just about every agency right now, Wyoming is hiring. Several conditional job offers should be going

Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood Continued

out very soon to several potential new wardens. For the first time, Wyoming also has advertised “nationwide” for a few open districts, instead of requiring everyone to work up through the trainee ranks. Wyoming Game and Fish has also implemented a new “Recruitment, Retention, and Training” Unit, who will supervise new officers, for more consistent development and diverse training, in addition to leading recruitment efforts, coordinating and streamlining training across the agency, and taking on other related tasks.

Awards:

North Jackson Senior Game Warden Jon Stephens has been named the 2022 Shikar-Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year for Wyoming. “Warden Stephens is a top hand and an exceptional wildlife officer,” said Rick King, Wyoming Game and Fish Department chief game warden. “The traditions of the Wyoming game



Warden Jon Stephens

warden are sustained at the highest level by his work performance and dedication to serving his community

and protecting wildlife.”

Stephens is a nearly 20-year veteran of Game and Fish. His district includes the Absaroka Mountains from the southern boundary of Yellowstone National Park along the Continental Divide south to the high peaks of Gros Ventre Range. Stephens’ district involves some of the most controversial and complex wildlife issues in the state, including grizzly bears, wolves, elk feedgrounds and highly-prized moose, bison, and bighorn sheep herds. He regularly represents Game and Fish on high-level management discussions with Grand Teton National Park, the National Elk Refuge and Bridger-Teton National Forest. His extraordinary ability to make objective decisions and apply realistic solutions to difficult management issues has proven to be an invaluable asset to Game and Fish.

“I feel very grateful just to receive the nomination, and it’s rewarding to be recognized by some of your peers,” Stephens said. “One of the appealing components of the job is all of the respective challenges. That is related to the country you work in, the resource we work with and try to protect, and also all the different interest groups that are out there. Working with the different groups and trying to reach a balance with all of them is definitely challenging, but that’s part of what makes it such a great job.”

The people he serves within his region are diverse and range from hunters, anglers and landowners to other wildlife enthusiasts who visit Teton County. Within his community he is known as a strong mentor and inspiration to younger wardens with his strong work ethic, dedication to wildlife resources and service to the public.

“Warden Stephens is an excellent role model and has helped new game wardens understand everything Wyoming expects from them,” King said. “Thanks to Jon’s influence and guidance, new game wardens are exposed to the skills they need to be successful.”

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Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt



Greetings from the Midwest in Kansas, located in the middle of NAWEOA's Region 5. I hope this message finds all our NAWEOA brothers and sisters safe and in good health. I would like to thank all of the Region 5 J-reps for the work that they have done

throughout this past year thus far. I am working on keeping up communications with all of the states in Region 5. You are a great asset to making sure info flows to and from our NAWEOA family.

Thank you to the J-Reps and individual officers/members who have submitted nominees for our yearly NAWEOA awards. It is great when we can all step up and recognize those that we work with for a job well done. Please recognize your peers if you are able. The whole NAWEOA executive board traveled to upper Pennsylvania for our winter meeting back in March. Our Canada delegation was even able to make it for a very productive few days of meetings. It was great to get together with everyone again. As we cruise into 2023, this brings us all closer to the Summer conference in Provo, UT. The officers in UT have a great conference, including excellent training for everyone, geared up and ready for all of NAWEOA. I encourage everyone that can to attend, and I look forward to meeting up many in July. Reminder, if you have not done so, please make your Prove Hotel reservations, and register for the conference.

North Dakota

Greetings from North Dakota Game and Fish. Here are some agency updates. Jonathan Peterson, North Dakota Game and Fish Department district game warden in Devils Lake, is the state's 2022 Wildlife Officer of the Year. Johnson was honored recently by Shikar-Safari Club International. Congratulations Jonathan!

Kylor Johnston, District Game Warden out of Hazen, was named North Dakota's 2022 Boating Officer of the Year. Congratulations on your award Kylor. Clayton Edstrom, out of Killdeer, Riley Gerding, from

Kenmare, and Paige Swanson, in Steele, all passed the probationary Game Warden status and are now full time Game Wardens. Welcome to the team fully!

NEBRASKA

Nebraska Conservation Officers have been in constant training and hiring these past several months. In September 2022, two new officers began their field training. Hunter Lee recently completed his training at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center. A native of Lincoln, Nebraska, Hunter participated in the law enforcement division's college internship. Curt Prohaska is a 30 + year law enforcement officer and has been employed with the Nebraska State Patrol and Saunders County Sheriff's Office. They completed their training with the duty station presentations on Feb. 23rd. In October, Conservation Officers Luis Nunez, Kelbi Akbe, and Tyler Adelman received their badges and completed their field training, Luis comes to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission from Lexington Police Dept. Kelbi is a native of Texas and was previously employed as a park superintendent for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Tyler Adelman grew up in Madison, Nebraska, and was employed in the parks division of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Nebraska Game and Parks Law Enforcement Division currently have 4 officers in the field training. They are set to complete their training in July 2023. The law enforcement division now has 4 FAA-licensed drone pilots and two new tech team members.

There have also been some promotions within the law enforcement division, to include Lt. Brian Piernicky. Lt. Piernicky will supervise the Southwest District stationed out of the North Platte office. Conservation Officer Trevor Stahlecker recently accepted the Shikar Safari 2022 Officer of the Year. CO Stahlecker is stationed in Lincoln, NE. In January the State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council ratified the biennium contract. In July 2023 and 2024, conservation officers will receive a step increase and a 5% raise in the pay lines. In March, the law enforcement division held its annual division meeting and completed the LB 51 required law enforcement training in Verbal De-Escalation, Confronting Bias in Law Enforcement, Mental Health Crisis Training, Legislative Updates, and 4th and 14th Amendment Issues. On March 30, approximately 40 conservation officers from Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa met for a tri-state meeting. This meeting has been put on hold for 3 years. Officers had presentations on case reviews, Iowa's timber enforcement, Nebraska's Technical Sur-

Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt Continued

veillance Team and Drone Program. They also were given state updates and USFWS updates.

Missouri

As for things going on in MO, we do have a few big things happening in our department and within our Protection Branch. Missouri Department of Conservation just received a statewide 8.7% pay increase after it was approved by our governor and subsequently by our MDC Commissioners. That took effect March 1 and was a pretty big boost for all department employees. This was a statewide raise for all state of Missouri employees.

Within our Protection Branch we have implemented the use of body cameras for all commissioned officers and are learning the ropes on that still. We are using Axon body cameras and the Axon evidence storage software to manage videos and to document all law enforcement contacts. That is a big adjustment for a lot of officers.

We also have four new K9 officers that will be or just recently completed their K9 training with their partners in Ohio. This brings the total to nine commissioned K9's in MO. This is a very new program we started in just the last couple of years and it had been a very positive thing with the public during programs and contacts as well as being very beneficial in making numerous wildlife cases in the past year and a half.

Missouri has 17 Conservation Agent trainees that started our training academy on March 16th. This is a very large class for us and will prove to be a challenge not only for the trainees but for field staff that assists in training efforts and scenarios throughout the academy. If all 17 trainees complete the six month academy it will help fill in some vacancies that are much needed around the state. We will still not be completely fully staffed but it will help alleviate some of the extra duties and coverages by current officers in the field once the field training portion is completed for the new agents.

Wisconsin

Staff at Wisconsin's Division of Public Safety and Resource Protection had productive fall and winter seasons protecting the state's natural resources and the people who enjoy them. With the snow and ice melting, and the temperatures getting warmer, staff are preparing for busy summer months.

Wisconsin wardens assisted local law enforcement with a comprehensive security plan for the American Birkebeiner ski race held in northern Wisconsin. Wardens assisted with downtown patrol, provided snowmobile coverage on intersecting snowmobile trail, and provided trail sweeps to ensure participant safety. Wardens also helped with numerous parking and traffic issues and provided a presence during the event which brought in more than 40,000 people to the Hayward area.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Madison recently settled a hazardous waste/tax evasion case involving 5R Processors. 5R was a company that was set up to conduct electronic waste recycling in several locations in northern Wisconsin and in states including Tennessee. The case began in 2016 and involved multiple state and federal warrants, subpoenas and numerous interviews and hearings. This case had a very large impact on the solid waste processing industry. There has been some limited legislation passed to assist some local municipalities in paying for the cleanup costs that are not covered by the restitution from the defendants in the case.

One of the defendants was sentenced Feb. 21 by Chief U.S. District Judge James D. Peterson to 33 months in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for failure to pay employment taxes to the IRS for tax years 2014-2016. On May 16, 2022, the defendant pleaded guilty to failing to pay over employment taxes to the IRS from Pure Extractions Inc. and Wisconsin Logistics Solutions LLC.

The lead investigators for the case were Emily Weaver (U.S. Environmental Agency), DNR Warden Lt. Barry Fetting (Wisconsin DNR), and Sarah McCarron (U.S. Internal Revenue Service). These investigators were supported by hazardous waste program staff, local conservations wardens and the entire DNR Investigative Team.

Wisconsin DNR and Minnesota DNR wardens recently teamed to host a NASBLA Airboat Operator training along the Mississippi River near La Crosse, Wis.

Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt Continued

A total of nine students from Wisconsin, Minnesota and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service participated in the training. Training included classroom instruction and dryland and on the water operation training. Conditions for the training were ideal as there was a good mix of ice, snow and open water for students to practice all their newly acquired skills.

In April the Wisconsin Conservation Warden Class of 2023 had their graduation ceremony at the Assembly Chambers at the Wisconsin State Capitol building in Madison. The class included eight field conservation wardens and one recreational warden. In addition to their academy training, graduates also take part in 20 weeks of field training, and attend several specialized trainings. Wisconsin is in the process of preparing for its next conservation warden hiring process for the class of 2024. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in becoming a Wisconsin Conservation Warden, please check out our recruitment website at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WardenRecruitment>.

Oklahoma

Greetings from Oklahoma. Oklahoma will be hosting this year's Five State Game Warden Association meeting at Camp Billy Joe near Kenton, OK. The Association is made up of Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, and Colorado wildlife officers. An annual meeting is held each year on a rotational basis and the group was formed in 1980. Approximately 100 officers attend the three day meeting which has firearm competitions, training, raffles, a business meeting and lots of food, fun and fellowship. The dates are May 16-18. ODWC has hired a group of 10 new Game Wardens. They are currently undergoing training and attending the Game Warden Academy at HQ and the Camp Gruber training facility. The nine men and one woman make up one of if not the largest group of new hires in history. Looking forward to getting in the field and into their FTO programs so they will be able to hit the ground running by this fall.

In other personnel news, Game Wardens Billy Bob Walker and Kenny Lawson have been promoted to Warden Supervisor (Lt.) positions. Congrats to both those guys. Also, Game Warden Emily Long has been assigned as a liaison to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She is officed in Tulsa and will work cases in-

volving the ODWC and Federal Agents. ODWC is also transitioning once again to a new weapons platform. They will be going to 9mm pistols with red dot scopes. This should be a great sidearm and the lower cost of 9mm ammo will hopefully allow for more training and practice opportunities. The Department will allow officers who want to purchase their current Glock 40s to do so. New trucks for 2023 are Ram 4x4 four doors. They have the handy Ram boxes which allow ample storage while still allowing an ATV to fit in the bed. They will include new graphics displaying the new brand and logo. As mentioned before, the agency went through a new branding process recently with an entirely new looking logo. The old logo, which included the state seal, has been replaced with an arrowhead shaped logo featuring a scissor-tail flycatcher, a deer, and a largemouth bass. Law enforcement will have two different color patches for class A and B uniforms.

Recent cases worth noting include a case where last fall GW Jaylen Flynn saw on social media several posts about a trophy buck killed during archery sea-



Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt Continued

son. Further investigation revealed the hunter had not obtained the correct licenses before harvesting the deer. GW Wardens Mark Murray and Dylan King contacted the subject and the interview resulted in a confession and seizure of the deer. (In Alfalfa County Lt. Ben Bickerstaff caught a pickup load of road hunters the day before opening day of rifle season. All three pled guilty to Hunting with the Aid of a Motor Vehicle charges. Lt. Bickerstaff also made a case on a night hunter using a suppressed 6.5 Creedmore equipped with a thermal scope. The subject was given two citations and the rifle was confiscated. Wardens Stephen Paul and Spencer Grace made a good duck case involving hunting over bait. Wardens Marshall Reigh, LT. Ben Bickerstaff and Blake Cottrill assisted on the case. The Case has been filed and is awaiting adjudication.

In Association news, the OSGWA has several new officers and board members. New officers include Marshall Reigh-president, Mark Murray- Vice President and Bailey Johnson-Secretary. New board members are Austin Jackson, Brek Henry, Bradley Magby, Jaylen Flynn, Blake Pearson, Orlando Martinez, and

Blake Cottrill. The OSGWA has been busy acclimating the new board to the day-to-day workings of the association and so far everything seems to be going well. A recent tornado hit Retired LT Loren Damron's home in Cheyenne, OK, doing a large amount of damage and sending Loren to the hos-

pital with some broken bones and other injuries. He is doing well now. The Assoc. sent him a check to help cover expenses and we are doing a custom gun raffle to raise even more money for his aid. Foley Defense, a firearms manufacturer in West Virginia, has built a custom .223 with engravings of the OSGWA and ODWC patches on the gun.

Since the US Supreme Court decision of *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, which determined that Congress had never disestablished the Muskogee (Creek) nation and therefore its lands were still a reservation, and the subsequent rulings the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Quapaw Nations were also still intact, nearly the entire eastern half of Oklahoma is still an Indian Reservation. This greatly impacted how wildlife violations are handled by Oklahoma Game Wardens. All are cross-commissioned with the tribes which allows them to arrest, cite, and prosecute tribal members. Most of the tribes have made or adopted their own wildlife codes. The Choctaw Nation has started its own Wildlife Department and one of its first hirings was a Game Warden Manager. Retired Oklahoma Game Warden Jay Harvey accepted the position and started work on July 1, 2022. The Choctaw Nation encompasses all are part of 13 counties in SE Oklahoma which comprise almost seven million acres. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) adopted their own wildlife code and their season dates run parallel to Oklahoma's. The CNO has also hired a Senior Manager of Wildlife Conservation, a Wildlife Biologist, a Wildlife Tech, and an Education and Outreach Coordinator. Since his tenure began with the CNO, Warden Harvey has attended 20 meetings, attended 5 trainings including a five-week law enforcement academy, performed 39 patrols, conducted 18 investigations, done 5 outreach programs, took 83 calls and assists, made 23 field contacts and 11 calls for service. Harvey made 6 arrests and assisted



Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt Continued

ODWC Wardens with 19 others.

In July, Warden Harvey was off duty and fishing on Hugo Lake with his son. As they made their way thru the docks in the marina, Harvey spotted a jon-boat tied in a slip. On the dock next to the boat, and in the boat, several illegal fish shocking devices were in plain sight. Harvey called OK Game Wardens Andrew Potter and Jim Gillham. Both responded to the scene, located the evidence, and set up surveillance. Soon a man arrived and went down to the boat. The Wardens made contact and subsequent interview revealed the man had been using the devices to illegally shock fish on the lake. Charges were filed, and several bags of fillets were confiscated along with illegal devices.



On October 1st, while working the first Choctaw Nation bear hunt, Warden Harvey made contact with a group of three individuals with a small bear. The woman, dressed in sweats and house shoes, claimed she harvested the bear, while a 12 year old boy in full camo was in the bed of the truck showing the bear to everyone. Subsequent investigation revealed the boy did not have a free Tribal bear tag but his mother did. She also checked the bear using her information. Four

charges were filed. The woman received citations for loaning a tag and giving false information to a check station. The juvenile received charges for hunting bears without a tag and illegally taking a black bear. The CNO hopes to hire more Wardens this fall to continue to protect the natural resources of the Choctaw Nation.

Kansas

Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks continues on as many others. The Law Enforcement Division has had a few new changes in its ranks over the past couple of years, bringing in new management. This change has brought in fresh ideas, leading to revamping our policies, directives, and procedures. Throughout the year, we have had turnover in the ranks, and this brings in the constant need to hire new blood. Similar to many other state DNR agencies, Kansas struggles to recruit applicants for these positions. Currently Kansas is approximately 25% vacant, but we are still managing. Better benefits and pay raises are the topic of conversations at management level for retention of our current Game Wardens.

Kansas has been navigating a new e-licensing system, which allows hunters to purchase an electronic permit to harvest their big game, and in the past year a completely new vendor for this than the first rollout. So far this seems to be working without too many hitches, but it does bring forth unforeseen challenges. The e-tagging option, that is available for sportsmen when they harvest their big game, seems to be a welcomed new addition for convenience for those with smart phones. It also allows Game Wardens to have somewhat of a “check station” to check up on those that have harvested and tagged wild game. Law Enforcement officers are still hoping for a more effective/efficient Records management system, which we are told is close to being rolled out. Spring is here, which means the opening of our Turkey hunting season, the walleye spawn, and warmer weather for fishermen. Stay safe everyone!

Region 6 Director Brandon Gavrock

Things across region 6 have been quite busy over the winter. A brief update from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Service is reporting that they have a new class of 20 Special Agents in training at FLETC and the class should be out and, in the field, come April. The new class of Agent Trainees will have to report back to FLETC in the fall for some additional training. We wish the new class all the best and look forward to having them join in the fight. USFWS also reports the conclusion of a couple of major cases. There was one case concerning the illegal take and sell of sturgeon caviar. The defendant was sentenced to 12 months for violation of Felony Lacey Act and was ordered to pay 10k in restitution to the state of Kentucky.

Mississippi reported in with officers receiving a state personnel board realignment raise in July that will start new cadets off at approximately 40k per year. Mississippi is in the hiring and background check phase of hiring a new class of 15 cadets. Mississippi has, like most places recently, experienced a lot of officers retiring.

Tennessee Officers have just received a raise. Depending on where you fell on a comparative salary scale determined how much of a raise that you would receive initially. Some new officers experienced raises of nearly 17k. All officers received a substantial raise, it will take several years for officers to go through the steps to realize the full extent of the raise. Tennessee, when they hire in the fall and begin their new academy class in January of 2024 will be starting officers out at \$59,700.



Region 7 Director Kris MacCabe



Connecticut

Connecticut Environmental Conservation Police have been busy replenishing our ranks over the last few months. With 9 new officers hired since last July and 7 more positions currently in the hiring process the division

is getting some much-needed replacements after several high retirement years. The command staff has put a priority on training over the winter months sending 2 officers to NOAA fisheries NRFTC training for commercial fish enforcement, 3 K-9 officers to a Fish and Game detection class and scheduling 3 officers to attend IHEA HRSI training this spring/summer.

New York

On December 09, 2023 eighteen New York State Environmental Conservation Police Officers graduated



from the 23rd Basic School for Uniformed Officers, located in Pulaski, NY. During the 6-month academy recruits endured more than 1,000 hours of training. Of the 20 recruits who started the academy, 18 remained. They will join the force equaling a total of 305 sworn police officers.

Department of Environmental Conservation Division

of Law Enforcement Director, Karen Przyklek said, "These six months of training prepared our recruits to face a diverse workload of cases in both general law enforcement and environmental law. Each day our Officers are working a number of cases, from enforcing clean air and water regulations, to supporting fish and wildlife laws, and investigating large scale environmental crimes, all in an effort to protect New Yorkers from environmental pollution and exploitation. I'm confident our new Officers are ready to continue that rich tradition of environmental protection."

Recent ECO graduates include:

Tyler Ableson, Cortlandt Manor
Michael Broughton, Staten Island
Benjamin Clinger, Randolph
Timothy Day, Binghamton
Laura DeVito, Shirley
Kyle Farner, Gowanda
Casey Giarratana, Floral Park
Christopher Goonan, Syracuse
Derek Hilton, Hannibal
Frank Keegan, Troy
Joan Korey, Pine Bush
Abigail Kortz, Troy
Justin McGhee, Hampton Bays
Justin Rappold, Albany
Bradley Smith, Plainview
Brandon Swart, Cazenovia
Nicholas Vandenbos, Warwick
Emilio Zullo, Somers

Awards

2022 NWTF Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer of the Year - Presented to an Officer who brings to conclusion a substantial case related to fish and wildlife or makes significant efforts to protect natural resources and educate the public. Other considerations include professionalism, dependability, and investigative skills.

RECIPIENT: ECO Ryan Wing, Region 7

2021 NYCOA Future of the Division Award - Presented by NYCOA to a Member with five or fewer year's total time in service with the Division and who has done an outstanding job in their area of responsibility.

RECIPIENT: ECO Spencer Noyes, Region 6

2021 Shikar – Safari Award - Presented to the Member who has done an outstanding job in the area of wildlife law enforcement.

RECIPIENT: ECO Josh Crain, Region 8

Region 7 Director Kris MacCabe Continued

2021 Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association Award - Presented to the Member who has done an outstanding job in his or her areas of responsibility.

RECIPIENT: ECI Mark Malone, Region 6

2021 The NYCOA Bryan Burgin Award - Presented to a Member who, through acts of conspicuous dedication, promotes the work of the Division through public education and outreach. Bryan Burgin was a mid-20th Century Game Protector best known for his role in the 1955 movie "Game Warden". This is not an annual award, but is considered when appropriate and deserving candidates are nominated.

RECIPIENT: ECO Fay Fuerch, Region 8

Division of Law Enforcement Lifesaving Award – Presented to the Member or Members whose extraordinary actions saved, or attempted to save, the life of a fellow officer or member of the public.

RECIPIENTS: ECOs Paul Pansini, Shane Currey, and Eric Lovgren, Region 2

For their response and actions involving the rescue of a 58-year-old man who suffered a heart attack while fishing aboard the charter vessel Sea Hunter on August 10th, 2021.

RECIPIENT: Will Chomicki, Region 3

For his response and actions on August 4th, 2021, involving the rescue of a non-swimming, 72-year-old kayaker who had capsized and was not wearing a PFD.

RECIPIENT: Kurt Swan, Region 4

For his response and actions involving the rescue of a kayaker who had capsized into freezing waters and, as a result, suffered a heart attack on April 10th, 2021.

RECIPIENT: ECO Shea Mathis, Region 9

For his response and actions involving the rescue of an individual attempting suicide in a parking lot along 18 Mile Creek on January 18th, 2022.

Promotions

Captain James Boylan was recently promoted to Colonel, serving as Assistant Director of the Division of Law Enforcement. Colonel Boylan graduated from the 9th Basic School for Uniformed Officers in 1992 and started his career as an Environmental Conservation Police Officer in New York City. He worked as a uniformed member of the Division until 2001, when he was promoted to the role of Investigator within the

Bureau of Environmental Crimes Investigation (BECI) and assigned to DEC Region 7 in Upstate New York. In his 16 years with BECI, he worked complex environmental cases and achieved the rank of Lieutenant. Prior to his promotion to Assistant Director, he served as Captain responsible for the 9 counties of Region 7.

Pennsylvania

18 cadets from the 34th cadet class at the PGC's Ross Leffler School of Conservation recently graduated and are in their assigned Districts.

30 Game Wardens have been promoted to Group Supervisors (Unit Supervisors), within their respective regions. They will be tasked with supervising four to six state game wardens as well as handling incidents and will basically be a field supervisor for two to three counties.

The 35th cadet class starts at the end of March 2022, and testing is taking place for the 36th class.

Congratulations goes out to Northeast Regional Wildlife Management

Supervisor, Kevin Wenner who won the Pennsylvania National Wild Turkey Federation Joe Kurz Habitat Manager of the Year Award, which recognizes a current employee of the state fish, wildlife or forestry agency for their outstanding wild turkey conservation efforts.

Congratulations to Andrew Troutman who won the Pennsylvania

National Wild Turkey Federation Wildlife Officer of the Year Award, which recognizes an outstanding state or federal wildlife law enforcement officer.

Rhode Island

A majority of 2022 training included a major change to our duty firearm as we transitioned from the Sig Sauer 229, .357 caliber to the Sig Sauer model P320 9mm with Romeo 1 Pro optics. The first agency statewide to carry this type of firearm. This included training our Range Officers at the Sig Academy Pistol Mounted Optics Instructor Course to bring back knowledge and familiarization with the correct sighting and handling of the firearm and training all sworn officers for both daytime and low light shooting course and techniques.

Our K-9 Unit in the Division of Enforcement organized and hosted a statewide K-9 In service training to familiarize K-9 handlers throughout RI in a collab-

Region 7 Director Kris MacCabe Continued

orative effort on various level vessels including small patrol vessels to large commercial industry fishing vessels. Most recently, our Agency hosted two NASBLA courses, the BUI training course and the NASBLA Comprehensive Boat Accident Course.

Our newest graduates from the police academy finished their Field Training requirements bringing the Department total to 30 sworn Officers, four female officers and 26 males. Retirement welcomed Capt. Joseph Poccia and Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard as the newest members to that club and has created promotional opportunities within our ranks. Lt. Michael Schipritt was promoted to Captain, Captain Dan White was promoted to Deputy Chief, and Harold Guise was promoted to Detective. The RIEPOA Chapter Eternal peacefully welcomed Retired Chief Frank Papa and Retired Officer Howard Leonard this past year.

We continue to execute the Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA. In January, a dealer inspection turned up packaged mutilated lobster and parts as well as 107 undersized lobsters all items were offered for sale. That case is currently being adjudicated through our Administrative Court process within our division.

A variety of cases within the past year include: In September, Rhode Island Environmental Police received a report from an anonymous caller who observed suspected poachers taking undersized and over-the-limit striped bass along the Seekonk River in East Providence. Officers responded and observed eight striped bass and three fish less than the minimum 28 inches. A second person at the same location was in possession of eight undersize and two legal striped bass. Each was issued a summons for possession of undersize and over-limit striped bass. One was also issued a citation for saltwater fishing without a license. Sixteen were seized and donated to the Wildlife Clinic of Rhode Island (Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island) to feed a Bald Eagle in their care.

A boat incident case included a vessel operator who launched his vessel onto an island after an evening along the waterside pub village and injured himself and a passenger. The operator was ultimately charged with two violations to Rules of the Road.

Two individuals hunting illegally were caught by Environmental Police Officers (EPOs) including one subject hunting over bait, in possession of buckshot and a 9mm pistol without a permit, the second was arrested for lighting deer from a vehicle and that subject was also in possession of a 9mm handgun without a permit.

A Thanksgiving Day hunting excursion went differently when a hunter was injured after falling out of his tree stand. After further investigation of the hunting accident, he was found to be hunting without landowner permission and within a limited access boundary. The injured hunter is alive and recovering.

On opening day of shotgun season three hunters were arrested for shotgun hunting in a closed area. This area is closed to all hunting. The out of state residents were charged with hunting a closed area, possession of untaged deer and no hunter orange as required.

A Joint task force including the Division of Law Enforcement and the Federal Office of Inspector General and Federal Department of Labor culminated with a construction company and employee charged with operating a solid waste facility and lying to public officials as they allegedly disposed of contaminated solid waste and debris in and along the highways of the state. One of the first criminal cases of its kind in this State, that case is currently being adjudicated.

Officer Christopher Letoile received the Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chief's Association Award, Officer Harold Guise received the Shikar Safari International Award, and Officer Joshua Bergeron received the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Award.

The RIEPOA chapter will again host our annual Spring Sporting Clay Shoot at the Peacedale preserve April 29, 2023. This is a sanctioned New England Regional event and we are welcoming teams. There will be food, raffle, and good cheer. Please consider visiting our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RI-Environmental-Police-Officers-Association-367752314079312/> for more information, to be a vendor/exhibitor and/or to donate email stoppoachingri@gmail.com. A portion of the proceeds go to IWC and Operation Game Thief.

Ohio

2022 has been a very busy year for the Ohio Division of Wildlife with the hiring and training of eleven wild-

Region 7 Director Kris MacCabe Continued

life officers to fill some longstanding vacant field assignments. The new wildlife officers completed 21 weeks of Ohio Peace Officer Basic Training with an additional 10 weeks of specialized training from the Division of Wildlife. Training included law enforcement procedures as well as wildlife and fisheries management, communications skills, ATV and vehicle operations, and advanced firearms and self-defense



topics. The officers of the 31st Wildlife Officer Training Academy graduated on March 17th, 2023 and are working in their new areas of assignment while in the six month field training program. We are extremely excited to have them in the field!

The Division of Wildlife has already started the next hiring process of the 32nd Wildlife Officer Training Academy. The goal is to hire another fifteen officers and they will graduate in March of 2024.

Back in December of 2022 all Commissioned Wildlife Officers have been issued Motorola V300 body cameras. This has been a great addition and everyone has been doing an excellent job of learning how to use them.

An investigation that was initiated in 2017 has recently come to a close. This investigation involved the owners/operators of A&E Deer Processing located in Gallia County, Ohio. They were stealing meat from customers, turning it into summer sausage, and then selling it to the public. Through the investigation, it was discovered that over 2,000 lbs. of deer meat was stolen from 280 customers and taken unlawfully from the people of the state of Ohio. Other violations discovered throughout the course of the investigation included jack lighting, illegally harvesting / tagging

deer, hunting out of season, hunting without permission, falsifying records, and falsifying deer tags. The investigation resulted in 14 defendants being charged with 122 counts, including felonies and misdemeanors. They paid \$11,790.00 in fines and \$58,223.14 in restitution, received a combined hunting license revocation of 63 years, and paid more than \$6,752.70 in court costs. All the evidence that was seized was forfeited to the Division of Wildlife.

New Jersey

In the past year many of the supply chain disruptions that were holding up our agency's moves toward modern police technology have resolved. By the end of 2023 we expect New Jersey's Conservation Police Officers to be equipped for the first time with body worn cameras, the Motorola Watchguard. We're preparing to switch to Motorola's CAD. Finally new patrol vehicles are hitting the road; some Ram 1500s that were ordered after Ford, following a long delay, cancelled production of an order F150 SSVs, and some F150s of the current model year.

The purchase and deployment of all these simultaneous projects was largely accomplished by one officer, Lt. Joseph Soell. Because of this project management and the support he provides directly and indirectly to every officer in the Bureau, Lt. Soell was awarded the recognition of Officer of the Year.

Announcing the honor, Chief Frank T. Panico wrote, "I am extremely pleased to announce that Lieutenant Joseph Soell has been selected as the 2022 Shikar Safari Club International Wildlife Officer of the Year.

"Lt. Soell has a bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management from Rutgers University and a master's in Coastal Environmental Management from Duke University. Joe began his career with the Bureau of Law Enforcement as a Conservation Police Officer in 2004. He was first assigned to the Marine Unit, District 7.

"A few of the highlights of his time there include a case of unmarked lobster pots in federal waters that brought \$67,000 in penalties and forfeitures, and a case involving a vessel landing overages of fluke and black sea bass that resulted in \$15,800 in penalties and forfeitures. Lt. Soell was also active in pollution investigations. On two occasions he brought successful prosecutions for the spilling of diesel fuel into the Forked River, resulting in penalties of \$8000 and \$6800.

Region 7 Director Kris MacCabe Continued

“Lt. Soell transferred to the Administration Unit in 2015 and has been instrumental in the daily function and survival of the Bureau of Law Enforcement ever since. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 2022. Lt. Soell has become the Bureau’s IT officer earning the nickname “Cody Joe” after the records management system that he manages. He is the lead on all major projects such as body worn cameras, computer aided dispatch (CAD), vehicle purchases, software purchases and many more. Joe’s hard work and dedication continue to have a tremendous impact on the success of the Bureau of Law Enforcement.

Please join me in congratulating Lieutenant Joe Soell on a job well done and an award well deserved.”

In other news, back on January 13th our newest cadre of Conservation Police Officer Recruits graduated from the Cape May County Police Academy. They will be in field training throughout the spring. Brothers Cowan and Jack Sikora will be serving posts in North Jersey, while William Chillari’s patrol area is in South Jersey.

Our agency is fortunate to be in the process of another hiring cycle. This group of candidates is the first to be

prescreened with the NJ Police Training Commission’s physical fitness assessment as part of the application process. They were required to demonstrate: a vertical Jump of at least 15 inches, 28 sit-ups in 1 minute, a 300 meter run in 70.1 seconds or less, 24 push-ups in 1 minute, and a 1.5 mile run in 15:55 minutes or less. By summer we hope to welcome six additional Conservation Police Officer Recruits to our ranks.

Pictured from left to right are CPO Recruit William



Chillari, CPO Recruit Jack Sikora, CPO Recruit Cowan Sikora, Chief Frank Panico, Deputy Chief Douglas Applegate and Deputy Chief Jason Snellbaker.



NAWEOA Awards

N.A.W.E.O.A. believes deeply in recognizing the commitment of the wildlife law enforcement professional. The awards recognize people and agencies that have performed outstanding work, exemplary service to the public, or have contributed to wildlife law enforcement in other ways. Look at the award categories below and consider nominating your fellow officers for accomplishments. Submitting an award is easy. Go to NAWEOA.org and in the main menu under “**Awards**”, is “**Award Application**”. Click that link and you will be taken to the online Award Applications.

N.A.W.E.O.A. OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

1. Must be a fully certified conservation officer in the state, province, territory, or country in which employed.
2. Must be a full time field officer, up to and including first line supervisors from the field in the last calendar year.
3. Both nominee and person submitting nomination must be a member of NAWEOA.
4. An officer whose character is beyond reproach.
5. An officer who is competent, knowledgeable and capable.
6. An officer who promotes wildlife law enforcement.
7. An officer who demonstrates professionalism in every facet of life.
8. The person submitting the nomination shall provide background material when submitting the nomination. Background material shall be in written narrative format, not exceeding 5 pages. Other supportive articles, certificates, awards, media coverage, etc. may be included with the nomination.
9. All nominations must be received by the Vice President of NAWEOA not later than April 1st each year. The successful officer will be notified by April 15th..

NAWEOA TORCH AWARD

- Presented annually to an officer from each region, to encourage the professional development of recently appointed officers. The selection criteria are as follows:
- Both nominating and nominated officers must be regular NAWEOA members.
- Nominated officer must not have worked as a wildlife enforcement officer more than five years.
- Must have demonstrated a genuine desire to protect the resource and develop professionally.
- Must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties, including public education.
- Must be respected by his/her peers and the general public.
- Nominations must be received by April 1st each year. Winners will be notified by April 15th.
- Awards will be presented at annual conference; attendance encouraged but not mandatory.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given for outstanding achievement or service in the field of Wildlife Law Enforcement, to NAWEOA executive or outgoing NAWEOA Directors. (Amended Winter 2003, West Palm Beach)

CERTIFICATE OF RETIREMENT

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given to honor years of service to the profession. This award is distributed on behalf of NAWEOA by regional reps and is not subject to executive review.

AWARD OF VALOUR

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given

en to the officer who performs a heroic act, or risks or receives serious injury, in the line of duty in an attempt to protect him\herself or a member of the public from a dangerous situation or circumstance. It infers bravery in the face of adversity.

LIFESAVING AWARD

Anyone who is eligible to be a regular or deputy member of the association or anyone who is a member of the association may be nominated for this award. It is given for any act at any time which saves the life of another person. (Amended Winter 2003, West Palm Beach)

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Anyone who in any way is helpful to the association and/or it's members may be nominated for this award. This includes, but is not limited to speakers, conference or workshop hosts, fundraisers, committee or special project members, citizens or politicians.

HONOURARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Anyone who has performed an extraordinary service to the association over a number of years may be nominated for this award. It is one of our most prestigious awards and may only be given in rare circumstances. Anyone who is eligible for regular membership in the association who receives this award shall maintain their voting privileges within the association.

K-9 AND HANDLER "LOYAL PARTNER AWARD"

1. Must be a fully certified conservation officer in the state, province, territory, or country in which employed.
2. Must be a full-time field officer, up to and including first line supervisors from the field in the last calendar year.
3. Both nominee and person submitting nomination must be a regular member of NAWEOA.
4. Three years minimum experience and active as a K-9 handler at time of nomination.
5. All nominations must be received by the Vice President of NAWEOA not later than April 1st each year. The successful officer will be notified by April 15th.
6. Both K-9 and handler must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties.
7. Award will be presented at annual conference; attendance encouraged but not mandatory.

