

FWS Science Committee Accomplishments

Updated August 2012

1. **Developed the Service's Scientific Code of Conduct**

The Scientific Code of Conduct (<http://www.fws.gov/policy/212fw7.html>) guides the professional conduct and management of scientific activities by and on behalf of the Service. The Code applies to all our employees when they engage in, supervise or manage, or apply the information resulting from scientific activities. The Code was approved by the Director in January 2008 and updated December 2011.

2. **Established the *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management***

The Science Committee formed a Publications Subcommittee in 2005 to meet the challenge of Director Hall to develop a scientific publication policy and publication outlet for the Service. The subcommittee's report and recommendations, which were endorsed by the Directorate, led to the development of the *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management*.

The *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management* accepts submission of original, high quality, English-language scientific papers on the practical application and integration of science to conservation and management of North American fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Unlimited full-text HTML and PDF file access is free and open to anyone at <http://fwspubs.org/>.

The inaugural issue was published in June 2010. To date, the journal has published over 80 high quality papers and over 70% of the papers have FWS or USGS authors, or both.

3. **Revitalized *North American Fauna***

As detailed above, the Science Committee formed a Publications Subcommittee in 2005 to meet the challenge of Director Hall to develop a scientific publication policy and publication outlet for the Service. In addition to developing the *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management*, the subcommittee's recommendations led the Science Committee to revitalize *North American Fauna*, the Service's scientific journal for monographs. *North American Fauna* has been in existence for nearly a century, but was dormant since 1993, until now. Monographs are once again being accepted and all 76 back issues are now available in searchable digital format at <http://fwspubs.org/>.

4. **Negotiated Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity Contract**

The contract was developed to support many scientific activities of FWS, including peer review. After a competitive bidding process, the vendors EMPSi, AMEC, and Atkins were selected.

The scope of these agreements includes peer reviews (documents, data, models, study plans, proposals, and other forms of scientific information) and many supporting activities such as preparation and/or editing of NEPA documents; National Wetland Inventory mapping, field surveys; hypothesis testing; field research studies; analysis of data; development and testing of scientific models; gathering and synthesis of information, literature, or cartography; preparation of reports; organization and conduct of public meetings; and other science-related activities.

Details are available at <http://www.fws.gov/science/supportcontractorsavailable.html>.

5. **Established Information Quality Act Guidelines**

The guidelines establish FWS policy and procedures for peer reviewing, substantiating, and correcting the quality of information it disseminates to the public.

Persons affected by that information may seek and obtain, where appropriate, correction of information that they believe may be in error or otherwise not in compliance with Section 515 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act of 2001 (P.L. 106-554, HR 5658). Section 515 is also known as the Information Quality Act (IQA). The guidelines (updated June 2012) and a record of correspondence regarding information quality requests are available at <http://www.fws.gov/informationquality/>.

6. Developed FWS Policy Review Guidance for Scientific Publications

In conjunction with the development of the *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management*, and the revitalization of *North American Fauna*, the Science Committee wrestled with the age-old conundrum of "policy review" and their recommendation was endorsed in Director's Order No. 196 and codified in FWS Manual Chapter "Policy Review Guidance for Scientific Publications" in 2010 (<http://www.fws.gov/policy/117fw1.html>).

With this guidance, the Service has eliminated the confusing and inconsistently applied requirement for policy review of scientific papers that employees publish in agency-sponsored and external peer-reviewed journals. This is a significant step forward in encouraging and empowering employees to publish and to do so using their official agency and office affiliation.

7. Developed the Rachel Carson Award for Scientific Excellence and the Science Leadership Award

The Science Awards were established to recognize that effective wildlife management and conservation is founded on innovative scientific inquiry and principles. As the Service faces increasingly complex challenges, the value of current scientific information is rapidly increasing. The awards recognize the outstanding efforts of the agency's scientists and technical staff. In addition to the honor and prestige bestowed upon the winners, the awards also come with \$50,000 to the awardee's field station to support additional scientific activities.

The Science Committee administers the awards process each year, including screening nominations to determine if they meet the criteria before forwarding nominations to the Selection Committee. Nomination guidelines, Selection Committee members, and winner history are available at <http://www.fws.gov/science/awards.html>.

8. Identified Problems Caused by Least User Access for FWS Scientists and Labs

The Committee identified problems caused by Least User Access for FWS scientists and labs and brought these problems to the attention of IRTM. IRTM has been working with labs and scientists to allow special scientific software to be loaded on FWS computers and used without interference by security software. Efforts continue to optimize solutions, advertise their availability throughout the Service, and ensure reliable implementation on a large scale.

9. Helped Develop the Department of Interior's Scientific Integrity Policy

A Science Committee member was part of the writing team that developed the DOI Policy and later served as the DOI Scientific Integrity Officer. The current FWS Scientific Integrity Officer is also part of the Science Committee.

10. Helped Redesign the Science Excellence Website for FWS

The Committee provided website content on a variety of scientific topics. The Science Excellence website is <http://www.fws.gov/science/index.html>.

11. Developed a Discussion Paper on the Definition of "Domestication"

This effort was in response to a request from Law Enforcement, International Affairs, and Migratory Birds. The paper includes four criteria to determine whether a species is domesticated – behavioral changes, physical changes, routine captive breeding, and whether both wild and domestic forms exist.

12. Re-established the Science Advisory Newsletter

The Science Advisory Newsletter was re-launched and expanded in spring 2012. The newsletter is a way for Service employees to receive and share information on relevant science news and events happening in the Service and the greater scientific community. The newsletter now has over 1,500 subscribers.