

## **National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Commission**

12 March 2002 (Day 1 of 2)  
American Geophysical Union  
2000 Florida Ave.  
Washington, DC 20036

### **Commission Members**

Mr. William P. Horn (Chair)  
Ms. Ramona Seeligson Bass (*by phone*)  
Mr. Karl Malone (*absent*)  
Mr. John L. Morris  
Mr. Lynn A. Greenwalt  
Mr. Kym Murphy  
Mr. Michael J. Bean  
Mr. J.R. Johnson (*representing Mr. Jack Hanna*)  
Mr. Daniel A. Pedrotti  
Mr. Peter H. Coors  
Senator Thad Cochran (*absent*)  
Senator John B. Breaux (*absent*)  
Senator Robert C. Smith (*absent*)  
Senator Jim Jeffords (*absent*)  
Congressman John D. Dingell (*absent*)  
Congressman Curt Weldon (*absent*)  
Congressman James V. Hansen (*absent*)  
Congressman Nick J. Rahall II (*absent*)

### **Meeting Participants**

Ms. Gale A. Norton (Secretary of the Department of the Interior)  
Judge Manson (Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks)  
Mr. Steven A. Williams (Director FWS)  
Daniel M. Ashe (Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System)  
James Kurth (Deputy Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System))  
Janet Tennyson (FWS/NWR System)  
Laurie Shaffer (Centennial Commission Coordinator – FWS/NWR System)

**The Chair:** After the Introduction of Commission Members and general introductory remarks, the Chair noted the humble beginnings and amazing growth and success of the NWR System. Spoke of the size and diversity of the System and noted that the NWR System has more land than the National Park Service but has suffered a low public profile. The system was conceived and expanded through successful partnerships with the early conservation community, the angling and hunting community, the state fish and wildlife agencies, the Migratory Bird Commission, the Congress, and Environmental Community. The Refuges System is successfully and capably managed, hosts an array of species (both game and non-game, threatened and non-threatened) and their health and welfare is testament to skill of well-trained professionals.

The Chair hopes that the Centennial Commission can help to introduce this wonderful system to the public so that it can shed its image as a neglected stepchild. The current budget request shows that a lot of progress has been made to shed this image. The Chair hopes that these efforts and the efforts of the Commission can introduce the NWR System to the body politic and set the stage for 100 years of conservation in the next century. Again welcome. Introduction of the Secretary of the Interior.

**Secretary of the Interior:** Indicated that she is delighted to be here. She recognized the outstanding people on the Commission. The Secretary indicated it has taken awhile to get the perfect mix of folks representing the different aspects of the refuge constituency. She feels this is a terrific commission, is delighted they have agreed to serve and ready to go forward with the celebration. The Secretary noted the Chair's former position as Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Mentioned the Chair is committed to the FWS System and its issues, he has continued to be involved in passage of legislation that created the overall governance for the system and really understands the FWS. The Secretary indicated there are a number of plans for celebrating the Centennial that are listed in the notebook. She expects the Commission to have to have important ideas as well and provide feedback and guidance on how the FWS should be celebrating the Centennial and informing the American public.

The Secretary highlighted the exciting things going on with the refuges such as the proposal the President put forward for the upcoming 2003 budgets which will start in October 2002. The President has proposed \$56.5 million increase in Refuge budget (for addressing maintenance backlog, staffing, etc.). She also praised the terrific set of 36,000 volunteers that donate 1.3 million hours every year. She explained that President wants to encourage partnerships with public land agencies. The overall program (including the other public land management agencies and states) is \$100 million. This means there will be funding for the FWS to do on the ground conservation projects in the Refuges on a competitive grant basis and bring in partners to work on these projects with the FWS. This is the grease that allows the partnerships. This is the seed money that Refuge managers can use to enhance the Refuges.

The Secretary explained there are also ways of reaching out to private land owners to assist in wildlife conservation (e.g. landowner incentive program). Planning to build partnerships with private sector, states, and local government to enhance wildlife both on and off the Refuges. She closed by saying that the members of the commission will be the "Generals" going forward in this process to help define both the celebration and also the presentation of the vision for coming century. She is delighted to be kicking off the meeting of the Centennial Commission.

The Chair introduced Judge Manson, the newly confirmed Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

**The Assistant Secretary** stated that he has one of the best jobs in Washington DC and one of the exciting parts of the job is meeting all of the members of the Commission and participating in the Centennial celebrations and doing good things for the Refuges

System. He proceeded to tell about two important people he has recently met in connection with his duties. The first is the artist, Peter Mack. Mr. Mack sold prints to raise money for Statue of Liberty. Mr. Mack asked if he could do anything. Mason suggested he help out in Centennial of Refuge program. Mr. Mack agreed and said he's willing to help and contribute. The second person is Tom Prawl. Mr. Prawl is from Runnels, IA and he is one of 36,000 enthusiastic volunteer in Refuge program. Judge Manson hope the Commission can find and appropriate way to honor and involve the volunteers in Centennial Celebration. Closed by saying he and his office are willing to help in any way they can.

After a brief break, the Chair reconvened and turned the microphone over to Director Williams for an overview of Refuge System.

**Director Williams:** Indicated it is an honor to be here. Sworn in 5 weeks ago. Realizes he's "not in Kansas anymore!" Thanks to Commission on behalf of all the FWS staff. Knows the members have busy schedules and appreciates their time. What they accomplish will be very valuable. Will benefit the FWS and the millions of Americans who visit the Refuges and the generations that will follow. Refuges got started 100 years ago. Humble beginnings of one person and one boat protecting 5 acres off the coast of Florida. Has grown to encompass the finest collection of wildlife habitats in the world. More than 94 million acres. Diverse in habitat, topography, size, etc. Sure we have people in the room with the vision and courage to guide it during the 2<sup>nd</sup> 100 yrs.

Every day he has greater and greater appreciation for the complexity and responsibility of his job. Also has deeper and deeper appreciation for the FWS staff. Refuges not only where fish and wildlife thrive but a place for the American people. Lots of opportunities for all types of fish and wildlife related recreation (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation, hiking, boating, etc.) and the Commission will play a role in how they'll celebrate these opportunities and how to move forward. Much that they'd like to accomplish with regard to public awareness during the Centennial Celebration about conservation successes but also will take time to celebrate the greatest wildlife refuge system in the world. Look forward to the expertise of the Commission. Now they'll show a short video that will show images of very impressive places.

Video ("America's Wildlife Refuge System: Where Wildlife Comes First")

**James Kurth (Deputy Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System)**

Spoke very fondly and passionately about his history with the FWS. Believes that there is potential connection to fish and wildlife for most Americans because there are refuges within 1 hour of every major city. He hopes everyone understands that FWS uses the best science and that sportsmen are welcome as are school children. He understands from his time in DC that people are yearning for connection to wildlife (nearly every suburb has a name that evokes wildlife and the outdoors). The Commission can raise the profile of the Refuges and get people out to enjoy the wildlife.

After a brief break, the Chairman reconvened and outlined the agenda for the two days of meetings. He then introduced Mr. Daniel Ashe.

**Daniel M. Ashe (Chief of Refuge Division)**

Thanked all the committee members. Has tried to guide the NWR System as the national level for the past 2.5 years. Difficult to follow Jim because he speaks so stirringly. Shows the passion and dedication of staff. Lynn Greenwalt is 2<sup>nd</sup> generation refuge manager. Dan Ashe is 2<sup>nd</sup> generation FWS person. He feels that in the past, the service hasn't done enough to invite the public to enjoy the refuges. Spoke about how hard it is these days to find time for kids to enjoy the outdoors. Back when he was growing up in GA it was easier to enjoy the outdoors. Now kids have no lack of choices. Having refuges so close presents an opportunity.

The Centennial Initiative Campaign Goals are:

- Raise visibility of NWR and value to society
- Strengthen and expand partnerships and collaboration
- Strengthen conservation and visitor services on the ground (that means getting resources – either people or dollars – to do the job on the ground)

Centennial Act calls for:

- Establish commission to raise public awareness and plan the 2003 Conference
- Presidential proclamation designating 2003 “The Year of the National Wildlife Refuge”
- Calls for long term plan to address priority needs of refuges nationwide

National Wildlife Refuge System Conference:

- Unite the conservation community to celebrate the Centennial and strengthen collaboration
- Planned and hosted by the Centennial Commission
- Scheduled for Fall 2003

Some ideas:

*Protect Pelican Island:* It's the nation's first wildlife refuge. Until a few years ago it was still 1 man and 1 boat plus a vehicle. So they decided they need to reinvest in protection of Pelican Island. In last 2-3 years, million of dollars in land acquisition, land restoration around the island, worked with community to think about visitor facilities and visitor center to show the importance of conservation. By the time of the 2003 Conference, Pelican Island will be a showcase, partnership with the local community. Use March 14, 2003 as way to showcase the Refuge System

*Smithsonian Institution Exhibit:* This is a great opportunity to reach many visitors and they will learn about the Refuge system and the role that sportsmen have played in the development in the system. The museum has high visibility in DC, access to decisions makers, and 6,000 sq.ft. in the Museum of Natural History. They hope to have the exhibit ready for March 2003. Want to make it portable so can move around the country.

*National Zoo and American Zoological Association Partnerships:* The zoos and aquaria reach many people. Highlight refuges' role in conserving Endangered Species and Migratory Birds. Talk about success of animals and wildlife management in the US. Want this to be mobile and exportable beyond the National Zoo to take it on the road to other zoos. Plan to premier in March 2003.

*Conservation Education:* Looking toward using interactive technology and distance learning as well helping get kids out and see wildlife up close. All the FWS and Land Management Bureaus do education but the Centennial is an opportunity to look at how the NWR System can do it in a concerted fashion

*Disney Partnership Projects:* Currently exploring the possibility of Disney Company doing feature length public service announcements ("interstitials") for the FWS to air on Disney TV networks or more broadly. Such a partnership would also be a great opportunity to boost volunteerism and promote environmental education opportunities through Disney's Corporate Volunteer Program and Animal Kingdom.

*Commemorative Postage Stamp Series:* The FWS has been in discussion with the US Postal Service. The Citizens Advisory Committee has approved their request to develop postage stamps commemorating the Centennial. This is a very secretive process. They have optimistic feedback. Expect formal announcement later this summer. The commemorative stamps will allow for national and local events.

*Coordinated Special Events:* There will be events (at least one in every state) throughout the nation during the year focusing on Refuges. Local and regional flavor will be integrated into the national events.

*Comprehensive Media Promotions:* Very capable and hard working public relations staff but not enough of them. In the past, most of the resources have gone to biology. Now they are doing more to reach out to the American public and communicate the value and the importance of the NWR System. They will use the Centennial as a lever to attract corporate partnership to celebrate conservation success, raise visibility of the refuge system, and use the media more effectively.

*Internet Partnership:* Mentioned that lack of Internet for the past 4 months (due to the Indian Trust controversy in DOI), has highlighted how important the Internet is to getting their work done. Not having it has been a huge encumbrance. One of the Commission members asked for more details about the situation, and the FWS staff provided some details about the court case. They have been turned off for at least 3 months. Internet Partnerships have been of key importance to the AZA, National Geographic, individual zoos, etc. The FWS site is one of the best in the government and they have recently hired several people and invested a lot of time and energy. Looking forward to improving their online presence to better serve visitors and strengthen partnership efforts. Looking forward to partnerships with the private sector. Discussions with AOL, National Wildlife Federation and E-Nature producers to feature refuges and build linkages. FWS will also

expand existing partnerships with traditional partners (e.g. Ducks Unlimited, Audubon, etc.). Internet Partnerships are a promising area.

*Visitor Services Initiative:* Putting resources into facility enhancements and making refuges more welcoming. Key to visitor centers is encouraging people to get out into nature rather than looking at exhibits (e.g. boardwalks, kiosks, boat ramps, duck blinds, photo blinds, hunting blinds). Question from one of the Commission Members about who does the construction on the Refuges. The answer is that it depends on how large/complex (i.e. staff do it themselves, use volunteers, hire contractors through competitive bid process). Comment from one of the Commission Members that there might be interesting opportunity to collaborate with the Boy Scouts. Answer from FWS was that this was a good idea and the Secretary has given some seed money in Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) to help provide equipment, supplies, and oversight for these small but important “touchstone” initiatives.

*Commemorative Calendars/Books:* A number of activities in this area. Partnering with Caterpillar for calendars showing their equipment in action on the NWR. Karen Hollingsworth (renowned wildlife photographer) photo calendar and historic book. One of the members of the Commission had a question about the financing of these activities. The FWS responded that it is an independent action on Ms. Hollingsworth’s part and the FWS has committed purchasing a certain number of books from the publisher. One member of the Commission indicated that the Disney Artists (some on staff and some on contract) are interested in creating original art that can be used in mugs, prints, traveling shows, calendars, etc. but this seems to be simmering on the shelf. He wondered if he should continue this discussion. The FWS responded that he should continue to pursue but important to get interest from publisher. Maybe easier if have corporation like Disney behind it.

*Federal Duck Stamp Initiative:* 2002 stamp contest focused on the refuge system to highlight the centennial and refuges’ contributions to migratory birds. Also evaluating licensed product opportunities.

*Refuge Hunting and Fishing Guide:* Hunting and Fishing are two traditional pastimes that have been key part of the growth of the refuge system. This guide will provide information to hunters and anglers visiting Refuges. Will feature sample trips to prime refuges across the country. FWS currently seeking a sponsor and publisher.

*Habitat Restoration Initiative:* One of the most important things to do during the Centennial (because gets back to issue of why they are here - i.e. to protect and restore habitat for native fish and wildlife population). Key partnerships (Trout Unlimited, Audubon, etc.) to launch vital restoration efforts on Refuges. Partners will receive on-site recognition and other recognition. The Chair commented this one already seems to be making progress.

In closing, the Chief wants the Centennial to be a not just a celebration but also the beginning of a new century of conservation. Currently have more resources and tools

than ever before and if can do at least as well as the previous generations did, then 100 years from now they will have accomplished a great deal.

In response to a question from a Commission Member regarding the public recognition of the distinction between the NWR and the rest of the public lands (Park Service, BLM, etc.), the Chief responded that in fact there is not much distinction in the minds of the public. NWR has a bit of envy of the visibility and attention given to the Park Service. But in reality, people only know the first tier of National Parks (Grand Tetons, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, etc.) but beyond that they don't know if it's BLM Land, Park Land, State Land, or NWR. And they don't really care. However, it is important to draw these distinctions so that money, political support, and thanks is directed to FWS. Each of the agencies in the public land system are trying to establish identities so that it won't be seen as a monolith and build a support network for those lands. One of the Commission Members asked if that should be a focus of the Commission and the Chief felt that they should.

One of the Commission Members mentioned that the NWR system has strong connection with Roosevelt and implied that might be a useful opportunity. Suggest the FWS play upon the Roosevelt connection and enlist some of his biographers as spokesmen. Might want to consider ways to play upon the Roosevelt connection as a way of tapping into public interest. The Chief explained that they entered into relationship with PR firm and through that learned that FWS is better at PR than they thought. The PR firm ratified some of the things the FWS already knew (i.e. the power of the Roosevelt image). It is one of the best images and marketing devices that they have. Roosevelt registers with a broad spectrum of the public. He agreed that there are numerous areas of partnership around Roosevelt.

The Chair suggested that the Commission establish a "Projects" Committee. That committee would look at list of activities generated by the FWS Steering Committee and incorporate the ideas raised by the Commission then sort out who can take the lead on these sanctioned activities and where to get the money for this outreach program. He encouraged the Commission to think creatively about the outreach program and come up with a list that they all can support.

The Chair moved on to discussing the logistics and functions of the Commission. The Chair introduced the Members of the Commission. Introduced J.R. Johnson (who is sitting in for Jack Hanna). Mentioned that Ms. Bass couldn't be here in person but she has previously met with many of the FWS executive team and is an enthusiastic member. He informed the group that Carl Malone could not attend due to the NBA schedule. He explained that Mr. Malone has agreed to be involved and will be an active participant. Congressional Members will be involved even though they aren't here today.

The Chair explained the duties of the Commission as spelled out the statutory obligations and duties of the Commission as set forth in Section 303 Subsection F of the Act. Briefly: Prepare the plan, coordinate activities under the plan (with FWS and other

referenced partners), and plan and host a major NWR Conference in 2003. Beyond that there is a little latitude to undertake other activities.

A Commission Member asked what has already been done with regard to the Conference by the FWS staff. The FWS pointed out that in the binder there is a section discussing the activities of the Steering Committee. This committee met in January and brainstormed the substantive issues. That group will be expanded to include regional representatives. The Steering Committee decided the Conference needs to be in DC (in order to get decision makers to attend and have contact with them), The Conference has been approved by DC convention center for a period in October 2003. Those dates are flexible and tentative. The Steering committee suggestions are presented in the book.

The Chair suggested they move to a discussion of the purpose of the Commission beyond what is proscribed in the statute. He sees three conceptual purposes that he would like to propose and discuss:

1. Introduce the NWR system to the body politic (i.e. a coming out party and demonstrate to the public that they have a strong NWR system)
2. An internal congratulation to the community of interests who have been part of the NWR system over the past century and who have done such a fine job. Service should be congratulated and the broad community of interests that has supported the system. Recognize what a good job the community has done.
3. Commission not to be a policy body because the statute doesn't mention a policy aspect and the Service had a fairly lengthy debate about that 5 years ago. The NWR System Improvement Act set out the policies (and passed the House of Representatives 402 – 1 and went through the Senate on unanimous voice vote after 3 years of protracted discussion). Probably premature to raise the issues that have already been put to bed. Within the community of interests there are many things that the various actors don't agree upon the Chair would like to transcend the differences and focus on the commonalities.

Chair welcomes comments on these conceptual purposes.

One Commission Member noted that the NWR suffers from a lack of a high profile. The NWR system is one of the best-kept secrets. His company has found that dealing with the government can be quite rewarding and very positive. In fostering partnerships they have focused on creating program for kids (e.g. Wonderful Outdoor World – camping in urban setting) and these have been successful. He sees a good opportunity to reach kids. Kids don't focus on the political aspects. They can be an extraordinary marketing department for the NRW System. Can be done fairly inexpensively. He recommends they get school systems and kids involved.

Another Commission Member mentioned that his TV program is seen all over the world (65 countries) and 2.5 million viewers every week. They have had the opportunity to film in some Refuges. He finds that there is always somebody at these Refuges that really care and has devoted their life to wildlife. That makes great television. Might be something they can do at the education level. They have their shows on 313 stations and

perhaps Jack (the star) can appear on Larry King live and talk about the importance of the NWR. He feels that Americans love the fact that we have these places available and would like to do something but not sure quite how to help. These are not controversial issues.

Chair indicated that perhaps should organize by 4 committees and the committees can meet and figure out the specifics:

1. Conference Committee
2. Fundraising / Finance Committee
3. Projects Committees (assemble list of projects and programs for outreach. Focus on children would be important and could involve the TV program)
4. National Events Committee. Commission would be responsible for 4 items. The first is the Conference and the other 3 would be national level events (99% sure that they can have the President at one of the events and the Vice President has expressed interest as did the Secretary and Assistant Secretary). Hosted at different Refuges to highlight different themes. Perhaps 1 every quarter. Pelican Island could possibly be one of these. FWS could do additional local events through out 2003.

One of the Commission members pointed out the importance of agreement on a common message defining why the NWR System is different from the other land management agencies. He wants the Commission to make sure that the message (for which the commission is the “medium”) is the same so that each time one of them speaks.

The Chair said that in anticipation of that comment, the Commission should turn to middle of Tab 4 in the binders. This draft document lists 3 proposed themes: partnership, professional management, and recreation/education opportunities. The Chair briefly explained the 3 draft themes.

The Chair invited comments and discussion on the document, a vision statement for the Refuge system and how it will be delivered to the body politic.

One Commission Member noted that world has changed dramatically in past 50 years. Families are different and involved in different activities. When he thinks of National Park he knows you can recreate and it's user friendly. When think of Forest Service, think of something a bit more wild. Most don't know what BLM is but those who do know they can get out in wide-open spaces and do things not allowed in Forest or Park. When the public thinks of “Wildlife Refuge”, most public don't know what it is and if they do they think of a place where wildlife should prosper. He agrees that a definition is needed. It is more well known to hunters and fishers know but not the general public. You'd get different responses from different people. Therefore the Centennial may be a key time to define a NWR and can help shape public perception. He personally thinks of NWR as a prized jewel that is a sanctuary for wildlife.

Another Commission Member indicated that he is coming from a different point of view. This is the first time he has seen the draft and he's not critical but he feels that the “what”

and the “how” are combined in the document. Maybe need a concise “what” to educate everyone and make sure that all have the same perception. That way when people ask what the Centennial is all about, the Commission can say that there is an incredible system that has been designed, built, and funded by tax dollars for wildlife dependent recreation and environmental education. They’ve done partnerships, work with all kinds of people, have volunteers, have budget to increase the resource, etc. Bottom line is the Commission needs to be clear about what they are blowing their horn about.

The Commission Members seemed to agree that this is what the first Commission Member was saying when he raised the issue of speaking with one voice and a common definition.

The first Commission Member continued that everybody has a different perception of what that NWR is. Need to come to a common agreement (otherwise they’ll continue to have discussions like they just did, that is, different views on the definition of a refuge). It is a definitional problem: the word “refuge” means different things to different people. Don’t want to overemphasize the “refuge” dimension as a sanctuary. They have had this discussion many times in the past and there has never been a resolution to it. They’ve never found an alternative to the word “refuge”. Want to avoid emphasizing the idea of a “refuge” because that will lead people to think of sanctuary.

A Commission member noted that they are still “refuges” despite hunting taking place due to the extraordinary potential for biological activity and sustaining of wildlife. Without the Refuges, the animals would be in dire shape.

Another Commission member offered a third perspective. Demographic changes are quite important to the work of the Commission and the Refuge System as a whole. In past, people less urbanized and had better connection with land. In future it will be urban people with little day-to-day contact with land. Refuge System can play important role in helping them to have understanding and contact with nature. In past, the idea was to give animals a refuge from over-hunting but in future the threats will be different. One role of the Commission should play is to guide the FWS in defining the role that the refuge system will play in American society in the coming century.

The Chair stated that the as far as the overall vision, the 1997 Improvement Act has answered some of this. He stated that “the Refuge System is a unique array of public lands set aside for the purpose of conserving fish and wildlife and an important part of that conservation mission is the provision of compatible wildlife dependent recreation and environmental education.” This shows that it is different from a National Park, different from a National Forest. This is the “what”. Now we need to look at the “how”.

The Chair continued that if this is the definition, then the “how” is the conference (which is mandated by law), national level events, education outreach, etc. He posed the question what in the past 100 years is worthy of celebration and should continue in the future? He suggested partnerships, scientific professional management and opportunities.

The Chair believes that these have been important in the past and will be critical elements in coming 100 years as well.

A Commission Member noted that if one were to describe the NWR system 100 years ago, today, and in 100 years each would be very different. The ones who can best describe the Refuge System are the hunters and fisherman. But that's only part of the picture. Beyond the measurement of how many ducks and animals are harvested, Refuges are successful on an ecosystem and biological level. Animals and birds are sustained by the ability to breed and migrate through the refuge system. This isn't apparent to casual glance.

Chair felt it is important to incorporate that scientific management concept because due to the good management you can have hunting without deleterious effect on the overall health and welfare of these Refuges. He noted that Congress added environmental education to the definition to accommodate the changes in constituency and demographics (e.g. no hunting on refuges close to urban centers).

One Commission Member felt the need to focus on the unique successes of the NWR such as the recovery of the Whooping Crane. Another Commission member suggested they look at similar success where they have created healthy biological units out of "whole cloth" (e.g. recovery of Bear River's marshes due to CCC creation of dunes in Back Bay, VA). Shows that good scientific management can be replicated in many areas (even outside of NWR System) and the product can be beneficial and profitable. Again the message can take many different forms and need to stay focused on what is stated in the preamble of the Act.

A Commission Member stated that it would be nice to have power point presentation that is acceptable to any audience (e.g. schools and hunters). Show that the scientific management of NWR System is a benefit to all organisms.

One Commission suggested adding the word "demonstration" to the statement (i.e. recreation, education, and demonstration).

The Chair stated that the US largely created the NWR System and scientific wildlife management. It doesn't really exist anywhere else in the world. We've taken it beyond what the British did. He's sure that all successful African countries have trained in some capacity in FWS or related university system.

One Commission Member informed the group that Mexico avoided the "refuge" as "sanctuary" problem by calling them "biospheric reserves".

The Chair made a side note about the nomenclature and the long debate between wildlife refuges (purchase of private land by the US Government, mostly in the east and mid-west) and wildlife ranges (withdrawn public land, primarily in the west). Debate 20 years ago and "Refuges" prevailed, Congress spoke it has been resolved.

One Commission Member indicated that although he is not a hunter he realizes that the refuges are still a sanctuary (even with hunting) because the animals as a whole are protected.

Another Commission member noted that it goes both ways. Hunters realize that animals and fish need to have a break so that they can develop. There is commonality and the NWR System accommodates both kinds of recreation.

A third Commission Member stated that the NWR System has flexibility and they take action to benefit the wildlife. Wildlife first and people second. If hunting hurts, there is no hunting. The FWS specifically retains the right of the scientifically based management to do what is best for the critter.

Chair noted that this is recognized in the statutory arrangement in 1997. There was 10 years of protracted debate and decided conservation of the critters first (along with the habitat) and then permits wildlife dependent recreation as long as the two are compatible. This language was carefully hammered out.

A Commission Member noted that fortunately it embraces activities that are open and acceptable to all and very little is objectionable.

A Commission Member stated that they need to come up with an idea about why the Refuges were created in the first place. Suspects that it was to maintain habitat for wildlife. This would include all different ways of management, including burning, hunting, grazing in order to maintain the habitat of the creatures. If see what works biologically (including hunting and burning) then it's not scary to people. Don't need to be afraid of mentioning hunting.

After a message from a Commission Member stating that they are all honored to be a part of this group and they closed the morning session.

After a break, the Chair introduced the FWS staff member assigned to the Commission and opened the floor to administrative related questions. One Commission Member requested a list of FWS staff associated with this effort.

The FWS Staff Member explained they are hosting a reception at Botanical Garden tomorrow evening after the meeting. 500 people have RSVPd.

The Chair expressed his preference to use Roberts Rules of Order.

The Chair then turned to the selection of the 4 proposed committees. He indicated they will need to have volunteers and chairs for each committees. The Committees are: Fund Raising, Conference, Events, Projects/Communications/Outreach.

**Conference Committee:**

*Charter:* The Conference Committee work with FWS Steering Committee on the planning of the conference. Their role will be mostly executive rather than hands-on. The Committee will oversee budget, look at content, look at where, when, etc.

*Members:* **Mr. Greenwalt, Mr. Bean**

**Programs/Projects Outreach:**

*Charter:* Different ideas have been floated (Smithsonian, TV Programs, Disney, Sporting Goods Owners, Calendars, Books, etc.). Come up with list of projects, figure out costs, and figure out the priorities.

*Members:* **Mr. Morris, Ms. Bass, Mr. J.R. Johnson/Jack Hanna**

One Commission Member inquired about the what funds the FWS already has. The Chair thought that the FWS and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) had earmarked approximately \$2 million. FWS Staff indicated that there is budget information in the packet. \$619,000 set aside at NFWF and that can be matched. Another FWS Staff Member confirmed that that in past few years they have placed a little over \$600,000 in the NFWF and this is to be matched. The FWS also has \$300,000 in their budget that they could transfer to the foundation but they'll wait to see what the needs of the Commission are and how they want to proceed. NWR system has a budget and they'll try to do something if can to support the needs of the Commission but that needs to be balanced with the needs of the 500 Refuges. The FWS possesses deferred allocations (kept back by the Director for unexpected needs) in the range of \$3 million some of that might be available. There will be funds available but since they are appropriated there are a number of limits.

A Commission Member asked if there is money in the upcoming budget proposed for Centennial activities. The FWS answered that the FWS will cover many of the logistical costs of the Commission, Secretariat, and the Conference but additional fund raising will be needed (as they did for the Keystone Conference) and there is no line item in the President's Budget for this Centennial effort.

The Chair indicated that tomorrow the Commission will examine the list of activities and the costs. Then can look at funds available and commitments. After that the Commission can conduct a zero based budget exercise and subtract out what has already been committed. Feels that this should be done together as a group to reflect the wisdom of the Commission.

One Commission Member indicated that Jack Hanna could best contribute in the form of the TV Program and appearances he makes. He will also work with the AZA to see how they can play a role in an educational outreach role

**Events/Availabilities Committee:**

*Charter:* Could plan for 3 Major National Events and plan the availability of the Commission Members. 1 each quarter (including the Conference). 1 would involve the President. 1 would involve VP. Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Director, and

Congressional Members would be involved. Pelican Island might be one of these events. Would be on the ground at a refuge. Would use the high profile and visibility of the Commission Members. This would go a long way toward promoting these events.

*Members:* **Mr. Coors, Mr. Johnson / Mr. Hanna** (will do all that he can to do get the Commission's message across if the venue is appropriate).

A FWS Staff member indicated there are endless possibilities. They get all of these things down on paper and they can distribute the list of events to the Commission Members. She requested that the Commission Members submit a calendar of their availability to help in the planning.

A Commission Member pointed out there has been good reception at Disney Company and there is a potential to have Mr. Disney do a Public Service Announcement. They are also in the planning stages of hosting an event at Animal Kingdom.

### **Fund Raising and Finance:**

The Chair indicated that they need to have a candid conversation about what they think they can raise and look closely at the budget to see what the price tag is for the proposed activities. In the Statue of Liberty Restoration Commission the mid-80s they knew from the engineers how much it would cost and commission went out and raised it. Need to talk about the feasibility and reality of raising money in this post 9-11 environment. He's getting mixed reports as to how well non-profit fundraising is currently faring. He'd like to talk about this tomorrow so they have a realistic chance of raising funds.

Next, the Chair turned to the logistical and organizational components of the Commission.

*Timing of the Meetings:* With regard to meeting frequency, 2 full committee meetings this year. The first one in the July time frame. Second meeting would be November time frame. As for the committees, the Commission will leave that up to the individual groups.

*Logistics:* in the future they'll have afternoon start. Finish the following morning. That way Members can arrive in the morning and depart the following afternoon. Allows for just 1 night away and 2 working sessions. All were in agreement. FWS Secretariat will talk to each member and see about their individual schedules. She added that although they prefer to have the Commission members present, sending an alternate or participating by phone is also an option (although less desirable than being at the meetings). One Commission Member asked about combining the meetings with media events. The Chair indicated that this is a good idea for 2003 but this year it's mostly planning and no big events yet.

One Commission Member asked about the October event: A FWS Staff member responded that there will be judging for duck stamps during Refuge Week and she'll send out judge qualification details. It will be approximately 12-13 October. The federal

duck stamp office has asked about having some of the members of commission on the judging panel. One Commission Member stated that said it was a very interesting and wonderful experience but tough duty because of all the great submissions.

A FWS Staff member indicated that more than 40 Member of Congress had RSVP for tomorrow's reception and this demonstrated strong interest and support. This turnout is unprecedented for function like this.

The Chair closed the first day and complimented the group on their speed of moving through the agenda.