

WAFWA Climate Change Committee

Chair: Don Koch CA Dept. Fish & Game

Vice Chair: Ken Mayer NV Dept. of Wildlife

The potential impacts associated with a changing climate will require all state natural resource agencies and our counterparts in Canada and Mexico to consider taking a broader systems approach to address challenges that will stretch beyond our individual borders. Even though each agency has specific mandates, authorities, and missions, agencies may be faced with similar challenges in managing natural resources for uncertain future conditions. In light of this, collaborative efforts across state lines and borders will be imperative to managing natural resources across the west.

Many of the WAFWA member states have already taken a leadership role in the climate change arena through the Western Climate Initiative, the Western Governors' Association working group on climate change, the AFWA climate change committee and associated work groups, and other important climate change activities at the regional, national, and international level. As climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts are established across the country we must make sure that fish and wildlife have a place at the table and that the western states and provinces share a unified and strong voice on the issue. As an association, WAFWA needs an interface in which the states and provinces can provide a leadership role nationally and allow our voice to be heard in a meaningful and effective manner.

The WAFWA Climate Change Committee will function as WAFWA's principal forum for discussion, gathering information and/or identifying actions relative to all aspects of climate change as it relates to fish and wildlife.

The WAFWA Climate Change Committee will be responsible for:

- Increasing coordination and communication among western states/provinces on key climate change related issues.
- Providing a venue to share information with state, federal, and provincial partners, as well as other conservation partners to improve development, integration, and implementation of fish and wildlife conservation plans and habitat objectives into state and federal agency planning.
- Identifying regional approaches for fish and wildlife monitoring, evaluation, and management responses.
- Creating a network of climate change contacts in Western North America that will work together to share information.
- Supporting regional efforts to develop strategies to manage the effects of climate related changes to fish and wildlife habitats.
- Identifying cross cutting issues that require multi-state coordination and collaboration,
- Advancing priorities or actions for discussion and consideration by the designated committee(s) within AFWA.
- Monitoring and informing western states about the potential for future funding from federal climate change legislation.