



Communications & Press Plan July 2006

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE *a natural investment*

In March, 2006, a new campaign was launched under the banner of Teaming with Wildlife aimed at boosting state and federal funding for wildlife conservation and related education and recreation in every state. Capitalizing on the momentum created by the completion of the state wildlife action plans, Teaming with Wildlife is now expanding its coalition of key individuals, organizations, agencies, and associations at both the state and national level in order to achieve this goal.

A critical component of this campaign is a national public education effort to build support among the general population and invigorate activists with the Teaming with Wildlife message (see TWW Campaign Plan). Through our collective knowledge and resources, this public education effort will increase awareness of the state wildlife action plans and need for new and greater funding for their implementation. This document is meant to be a building block for state's to use in formulating their outreach efforts over the coming six months. It defines target audiences, provides key messages and news hooks, and gives a timeline of what to expect as the Teaming with Wildlife campaign picks up speed.

Communications Strategies:

- Focus on increasing visibility among opinion leaders critical to long-term success of the state wildlife action plans and related national and state funding legislation.
- Create public buzz through the use of research-based messages and compelling visuals
- Target communications activities to key audiences

Values to which to appeal:

- Health of people, clean air and clean water
- Future generations
- Proactive efforts to help wildlife
- Conservation of natural places
- Serenity of the outdoors

This media campaign is a coordinated state and national effort. While strategies and activities are separated in this document, in practice they should be well-integrated. Communications between states and the national Teaming with Wildlife steering committee should be nurtured and strengthened to ensure a consistent, well-timed campaign. Together, our voices carry great power in conserving the wildlife and natural places we love.

Teaming with Wildlife

A coalition of more than 3,000 groups working together to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

c/o Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

444 North Capitol Street, Suite 725, Washington, D.C. 20001

Phone: 202/624-7890 Fax: 202/624-7891 Email: teaming@fishwildlife.org
www.teaming.com

State Wildlife Action Plan

The State Wildlife Action Plan conserves wildlife and natural places, enhancing our own quality of life.

- Each state has developed a proactive Wildlife Action Plan to conserve wildlife before they become more rare and more costly to protect.
- The State Wildlife Action Plan ensures we will be able to conserve wildlife and natural places that bring peace and relaxation to our busy lives.
- The State Wildlife Action Plan shows us how to conserve the wildlife and natural places that are important to many of our family traditions.

Supporting the State Wildlife Action Plan will benefit the health of wildlife and people.

- The State Wildlife Action Plan conserves wildlife and natural places thereby protecting clean water and air – making both wildlife and people healthier.
- The health of wildlife is often an early indicator of disease and pollution that affect us all. Investing in the State Wildlife Action Plan will allow us to identify and prevent problems before they threaten wildlife and affect humans.



We need to invest in the State Wildlife Action Plan now to conserve wildlife and vital natural areas for future generations.

As our communities grow, the State Wildlife Action Plan can help us fulfill our responsibility to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.

- The State Wildlife Action Plan outlines actions developed by scientists, sportsmen, conservationists AND members of the community, working together.

Transitions

**Benefits Both
Humans and Wildlife**



**Investment in Future
Generations**



**Cost
Effective**

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National Media Work

The national media campaign will be driven by the 12 member organizations of the TWW steering committee and other key conservation partners (see TWW Campaign Plan, pages 2, 5 & 6). It will reach target audiences through the placement of articles, op-eds, and editorials in major national news sources.

Target audiences

- Congress: specifically members of the House Resources Committee, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and both Appropriations Committees
- Administration: OMB, CEQ,
- General public, but especially outdoor enthusiasts (hikers, bikers, paddlers, wildlife watchers, hunters, anglers, etc)
- Editors of high circulation newspapers & magazines
- Reporters in key states (the Association will coordinate with I&E staff of key states, which will change as various legislation is introduced)
- Technocrats (regional planners, transportation officials, etc)

Strategies

- Garner media attention about Teaming with Wildlife and conservation-related national and regional events. Support regional and national speaking opportunities, Teaming-sponsored seminars, speaking engagements, roundtables and membership with trade organizations
- Cultivate relationships with reporters through press conference and meeting opportunities with national organizations such as the Outdoor Writers Association of America & the Society for Environmental Journalism
- Follow national news stories and pursue media opportunities which position the states as an authority on turnkey issues and topics; tailor key and common conservation actions identified in the action plans to fit with news focus
- Pursue op-eds, editorials and articles in major national newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Sun Times, Los Angeles Times, Houston Chronicle, and USA Today.
- Assume an authoritative role in addressing issues current in the news and offer insight about interesting trends, news hooks and compelling regional and national publicity action.
- Share media coverage with influential people and key decision makers, reinforcing the importance of state wildlife action plans

Activities

1. Keep states informed of all news, as it happens, and consult with them about appropriate media relations action in their state or region.

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2. Develop targeted fact sheets for national and state use and post at www.teaming.com/communications
3. Continually pitch reporters feature stories on state wildlife action plans and Teaming with Wildlife; Review key target media editorial calendars and piggyback on media opportunities
4. Coordinate a media tour this spring and next fall to familiarize key reporters with the issues. Inspire additional media tours across the nation. Work with key media states on ed-board visits, Letters to the Editor and other ways to garner media attention
5. When new funding legislation is introduced by Congress, keep states informed and heavily pitch national reporters and media outlets in key states

Calendar of Events

June

- ***Outdoor Writers Association of America Conference*** (June 19 Lake Charles, Louisiana) “Working together, biologists, sportsmen, and conservationists unveil new wildlife action plans for proactive conservation in every state”

July

- ***Association for Conservation Information Conference***: (July 16 -20 Orlando, Florida) trains state/regional communications experts in TWW messages

August

- ***Wildlife Action Plan Summary/Overview Report Released*** “New Report Highlights State Wildlife Action Plans Ability to Conserve Wildlife and Natural Areas”
- ***“One-Year Later” meeting*** (July 30 –August 2, NCTC) “Wildlife professionals and conservation experts come together to secure critical funding to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered”

September

- ***Coalition Reaches 100 Organizations in Every State*** “Thousands of organizations and individuals come together to secure critical funding to protect the welfare and health of wildlife”
- ***Reporter Field Trip*** to a wildlife spectacle coordinated by the Association.
- ***Editorial Placement*** in major newspapers and magazines authored by state fish and wildlife directors/conservation leadership: “Wildlife Action Plans work to prevent endangered species listings; need funding”

October

- ***Society of Environmental Journalists*** (October 25-29, Burlington, Vermont) Field trip and Panel Discussion or reception

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State Media Work

The most influential news happens locally. The state-side media campaign will be driven by each state's TWW coalition (see TWW Campaign Plan, pages 5 & 6). The goal is to raise general awareness of the state's new wildlife action plan and the need for new and greater funding at both the state and federal level for its implementation. It will seek to place articles, op-eds, and editorials in major state newspapers and to engage the grass roots of the TWW coalition in advocating for funding.

Target audiences

- General public, but especially outdoor enthusiasts (hikers, bikers, paddlers, wildlife watchers, hunters, anglers, etc)
- Potential coalition members
- Wildlife advocates
- State level reporters (get them interested in covering the story from a local angle)
- Key Decision Makers: Congress, State Legislature, Governor
- People who will use the plans- regional planners, transportation officials

Strategies

- Consistently feed “soft stories” on State Wildlife Grants projects and the wildlife action plan and need for funding to media contacts
- Keep your Congressional delegation informed of media coverage via fax
- **Be prepared for the introduction of new wildlife funding legislation- this is hard news that can gain a lot of positive media attention for the state agency and Teaming with Wildlife**

Activities

1. Coordinate with other TWW coalition organization in your state to develop a communications strategy
2. Finalize your wildlife action plan outreach materials- fact sheets, b-roll, contact information, etc- many resources may already be available at www.teaming.com/communications.htm
3. Set up appointments with reporters you have worked with in the past to bring them up to speed on the action plan
4. Plan for a fall site visit to a place that will familiarize reporters with the issues- a field site of a State Wildlife Grants project, a place to watch yearly wildlife migration, etc
5. Set up an ed-board visit with members of your state Teaming with Wildlife coalition to talk about the broad support and partnerships that have been formed by the wildlife action plan
6. **When new funding legislation is introduced by Congress, be ready to pick up your phone and let your key media contacts know what has happened -** Position your state fish and wildlife agency and the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition to be the go-to source for information on the subject.

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State Wildlife Action Plans: “The Six Essential Talking Points”

These are the core messages that will help build support for your state’s wildlife action plans and wildlife conservation funding. Make sure you include each of these points when you talk with the media. Over the long term, including these core thoughts will pay-off in terms of greater public support and funding.

1. Each state has developed a pro-active state wildlife action plan to conserve wildlife before they become too rare, and while it is still cost-effective to protect them.

Why say this: This message also focuses on the outcome—which voters broadly support – not the planning, which is the process toward the outcome and less important to voters.

2. The state wildlife action plan outlines specific consensus steps developed by scientists, sportsmen, conservationists AND members of the local public, working together.

Why say this: It demonstrates that everyone’s at the table, including scientific experts and the general public, and the effort has broad support.

3. The plans offer specific, immediate actions to protect all wildlife in [State] and the places they live, starting with the animals most in need of help and those for whom we can do the most good.

Why say this: This is an action plan, not just an assessment or inventory. Give examples of concrete actions that you might take in your state. Stress that no single kind of animal or habitat will be prioritized over others, and that none will be left out completely.

4. This effort has emerged through the work of a broad national bipartisan wildlife conservation coalition, called Teaming with Wildlife. Teaming with Wildlife includes more than 3,500 organizations nationwide.

Why say this: This ties the strategy to the successful Teaming with Wildlife campaign and boosts our capability to raise long-term support and funds for implementation.

5. Supporting the state wildlife action plan will conserve wildlife and natural places by protecting clean water and air – making both wildlife and people healthier.

Why say this: The research clearly showed that the single strongest argument for protecting wildlife is explaining how doing so will benefit people as well as animals. People want to know what's in it for them.

6. As our communities grow, the state wildlife action plan can help us fulfill our responsibility to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.

Why say this: Voters believe that over-development is the single greatest threat to both wildlife and their own quality of life, and they see great value in conserving wildlife – and the natural areas where they live – as a legacy for future generations.

Additional Thoughts

- Don't get trapped into talking about the mechanisms by which the plans will be funded, or how much money is needed; instead, talk about how expensive it would be NOT to act now.
- Talk about the action plans as a way of protecting ALL wildlife and the places they live, rather than just specific species – and definitely rather than just “endangered” species.
- Focus on the issues that we know already matter to voters, even those who don't know much about wildlife – protecting places where wildlife live and protecting the health of both wildlife and people. By meeting voters “where they are,” and emphasizing the issues they already care deeply about, it will be much easier for us to get their attention and support for the action plans.



Teaming with Wildlife Communications Contact List

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