



2015

Annual Agency Reports

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers

2015 Annual Agency Reports

Index of States/Provinces Responding

Alberta
Colorado
Illinois
Indiana
Kansas
Manitoba
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Saskatchewan
South Dakota
Texas
Wisconsin

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Alberta
Submitted by: Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch
Date: 2015

Training

The Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch (FWEB) provided a four day Field Training Officer Course to district officers that showed an interest and aptitude for field training new recruit officers. On completion of the course, Field Training Officers (FTO) were introduced to their new recruit to begin field training. FTO are expected to train, mentor, and coach their recruit until they complete their first year of employment.

A half day communications course specializing in media interviews was provided to managers and specialists across the province to accommodate media interview requests. Due to the nature of our work we are frequently asked to provide spontaneous on camera interviews for media. Managers and specialists are not better prepared to manage the message when interviewed by media.

In efforts to increase officer awareness when working in traffic the FWEB delivered a 1.5 hour Traffic Safety Management course using Microsoft link. From their computers officers joined in to learn more about working in traffic. In three 1.5 hour training sessions the short course was delivered to 120 officers. This method of instruction will be expanded to in-service refresher courses (legislative, patrol and procedure courses) just prior to fishing, hunting and trapping seasons.

Funding and Staffing Issues

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch is one of several branches assigned to the Public Security Division of Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. The branch maintains a presence across the entire province with 143 sworn members, 25 administrative support staff and infrastructure situated in 57 districts (plus headquarters in Edmonton). The branch mandate includes conservation law enforcement, problem wildlife management and public education and outreach. In September, 2014 the branch hired 12 new recruits who have completed the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Training Academy (WCLEA) and are finishing their field training program. In May 2015, the branch hired 12 new recruits who are just going to WCLEA.

Retirements

A significant number of officers retired over the past seven years and the branch has been actively recruiting to fill vacant positions. The branch has recruited 45 officers in seven years. Following this year's recruitment, 50 per cent of the fish and wildlife officers in Alberta will have less than eight years of service. In 2014, 7 officers retired from the branch.

Administrative support issues

When the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch was moved to Alberta Justice and Solicitor General in the fall of 2011, more than half of its clerical positions were held back in the old department. Work is still underway to secure additional positions. The branch is still relying on other government staff in shared locations to deliver frontline counter service. The branch received and recruited to 4 regional administrator positions. These positions will fill a large regional administrative gap.

Problem wildlife program delivery

The branch is responsible to respond and control human wildlife conflicts. In 2014 the branch responded to 1 fatality caused by a black bear, 1 major attack caused by a cougar and 7 minor attacks caused by cougars, black bears and grizzly bears. As a result the branch is providing scenario based human attack training for Bear Response Team Leaders (BRTL) and candidates.

Budget

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch is adequately funded with a \$21.7M annual budget. The branch enjoys full support from the department to fill all vacancies and is currently drafting a business case for additional officer positions.

Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts

Special Investigations Section – Major Investigations and Intelligence Unit (MIIU)

The Special Investigations Section is the designated liaison for the sharing of intelligence and the facilitation of wildlife and fisheries investigations that transcend provincial or international boundaries. To accomplish this function, the Major Investigations and Intelligence Unit (MIIU) has established formal information sharing agreements with over 30 state and federal resource law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and regularly participates in cooperative enforcement efforts with resource agencies in all provinces and territories in Canada. These interprovincial and international investigations present very unique challenges for evidence collection, the ability to compel individuals to respond to charges (accused and witnesses), and the coordination and presentation of evidence within court systems in multiple jurisdictions. Successful investigation and prosecution of investigations of this type often requires the formal invocation of procedures that are defined within Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties that exist between Canada and many other countries.

Evasive Species Surveillance

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch is supporting Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) in stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species into Alberta. FWEB has provided significant input into amending Fisheries (Alberta) Act to inspect various conveyances to stop the spread of aquatic evasive species.

New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement

Smart phone tracking application

Fish and wildlife officers in Alberta are monitored 24/7 by the Provincial Radio Control Centre (PRCC). Working with an Alberta-based company, the PRCC developed a smartphone application that allows officers to sign on and off duty with the centre. The application can run on any Blackberry, iPhone or Android platform. The application allows an officer to set an off duty time, provides for regular check-in at 100 minute intervals (or sooner) and allows the officer to easily notify PRCC that they are conducting a compliance check. All communication between the officer and the centre is conducted electronically using the smartphone data plan. Every time an officer sends a status update (by pressing an on-screen button) or moves more than 250 metres, the officer's GPS location is sent to PRCC and is displayed on their computer screen. On-screen buttons allow an officer to notify of an emergency or send a request for assistance. If an

officer does not check in on time, a radio/telephone call is made to the officer by the PRCC to check their status. When an officer is outside cellular coverage, safety communication is supplemented by a satellite-based device.

Mobile office

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch issues a Panasonic Toughbook laptop computer to each officer. The computers are docked in each patrol unit and provide access to all databases and applications while in the field. This year the branch will be testing six ruggedized tablets (Panasonic toughpads) for use and possible replacement for the toughbooks. The tablets are less expensive, lighter and potentially more user friendly than the toughbook. In addition to the laptop computer, each patrol unit is outfitted with an incident capture system (Watchguard 4E). Patrol units are equipped with a silent partner partition to secure one prisoner behind the front passenger seat and the officer's kit and gear behind the driver's seat. A rifle and shotgun are both racked between the front seats next to the partition. Standard patrol units are a Chevrolet 2500 HD crew cab 4x4 and a Ford F-150 super crew 4x4 SSV (for less rugged districts).

Computer-aided dispatch and records management system

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch has recently completed a business case to adopt a software package that will provide computer aided dispatch and a new records management system. The system is currently owned by the department and is in use by other divisions. It is intended to achieve efficiencies in data collection, enhance collaboration with other enforcement branches and improve officer safety.

A new radio system is coming

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch currently conducts all communications using smartphones, mobile field office computers and satellite phones. On January 1, 2016 a new provincial radio system will be fully operational to support emergency services agencies in Alberta. The Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System will provide radio communication and inter-operability between all first responders province-wide.

Digital Forensic Analysis

FWEB has entered the digital age by adding Digital Forensics Analysis capability. Our Computer Forensics Analyst is a Sergeant/Investigator in the MIIU. FWEB has the ability to deliver digital forensics analysis of computers, cell phones, SD cards (like the ones found in trail cameras set over illegal hunting sites), GPS devices and other electronic data storage. Digital devices can be examined in house to take full advantage of the ever increasing use of technology and it's ability to provide significant evidence in our investigations.

Technological data evidence

Two officers in the FWEB Special Investigations and Forensics Section has received extensive training, one as a Forensic Video Technician enabling photo comparison and video analysis, and another is certified in Computer Forensics and cell phone data retrieval. This training has allowed for superior in house evidence gathering, greatly improving the cost effectiveness and timeliness of investigations.

Legal Challenges/Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement

Nothing to report.

Cost Savings Initiatives

Results based budgeting

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch participated in a government-wide initiative referred to as “Results Based Budgeting”. The goal is to find efficiencies and make improvements in the delivery of public services across all departments. The final Alberta Government report was presented to Treasury Board in March, 2015. It is expected that decisions will be made in upcoming months that may assist the branch in delivering services, as the report contained several supportive recommendations. There is significant public support for conservation law enforcement in Alberta, so despite fiscal concerns, the branch hopes to see benefits arising from this initiative.

New cellular communication plan

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch has recently moved away from a standard cellular phone and has issued all officers with a Blackberry. New competitive pricing plans have led to a 60 per cent decrease in monthly phone bills.

Change in Standard Patrol Vehicle

The branch has recently begun leasing ½ ton F150 trucks for officers in the south and central parts of the province. This is a change from the standard ¾ ton that has been traditionally used. We expect a significant savings in lease and fuel costs with these lighter vehicles.

Other Special Law Enforcement Issues

Power DMS

The branch has initiated the migration to Power DMS. Power DMS (Document Management Software) was created to manage the publishing and maintenance of policies, directives and other documents and thereby greatly reduce the cost of man hours and the frustration of tracking the distribution of information to employees. It will also be used to deliver the Field Training Officer Program.

Provincial surveillance team

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch maintains a provincial surveillance team to effectively and discreetly monitor suspected illegal activity and, utilizing mobile, static and technical surveillance techniques, obtain intelligence and/or evidence in a timely, legal, and professional manner.

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch has made a concerted effort to modernize and enhance the technical capabilities of the surveillance team by using remote camera systems and other specialized equipment to assist in gathering evidence and increase the effectiveness of team deployments. This capacity has helped secure important evidence in several high profile poaching investigations, leading to numerous convictions resulting in heavy fines, orders for restitution, equipment/vehicle forfeitures, licence suspensions and jail sentences. The surveillance team has been called into service by police agencies to aid in their investigations into organized crime activities and has made significant contributions to the successful outcome to those investigations.

**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report**

State/Province: Colorado

Submitted by: Bob Thompson, Lead Wildlife Investigator

Date: 5/3/2015

- **Training Issues** - In Colorado the Division of Wildlife and Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation was merged into one agency, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), on July 1, 2011. Historically, both sides (Parks and Wildlife) would send new recruits to a POST certified law enforcement academy at different times of the calendar year. In 2014 going forward the wildlife officer and parks officer recruits will go to the same POST academy. In the 2015 POST Academy there are currently eight wildlife officer and twelve park ranger recruits attending the POST academy through the first week of May. The eight wildlife officer trainees will spend the remainder of the calendar year in specialized training to become wildlife officers. The twelve park officer recruits will spend the next six months in specialized training to become parks officers.

In 2015 a new POST rule was implemented that all peace officers have to have 24 hours of law enforcement training each calendar year in which twelve hours have to be perishable skills training such as firearms, defensive tactics, and driving. This is not really an issue for CPW because our officers are mandated by statute to have 40 hours of continuing law enforcement education each calendar year. CPW will just have to conform to the POST reporting requirement.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues** - CPW is an important and valuable agency to all Coloradans and visitors. CPW provides services that affect everyone that lives in or comes to Colorado. This includes 42 state parks and more than 300 wildlife areas covering approximately 900,000 acres, big-game management, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, camping, motorized and non-motorized trails, boating and outdoor education. CPW's conservation efforts strive to balance outdoor recreation with wildlife and natural resource management and stewardship.

The economic return on investment of activities supported by Colorado Parks and Wildlife is massive. The agency's annual budget is about \$190 million which, in turn, supports activities that result in over \$6 billion in total economic effects (including state park visitation, hunting, fishing and wildlife watching), spread throughout Colorado, from metro areas to rural communities.

CPW receives no general fund or citizen's tax dollars to support wildlife management, state parks or outdoor recreation programs. As an 'enterprise' agency mandated in statute, CPW relies primarily on license sales, state parks fees or registration fees to support programs. CPW funding streams are required by law to be separate and we do not inter-mingle wildlife and parks funding. Wildlife funding is spent on wildlife programs and activities. State Park funding is spent on state parks operations and programs.

CPW's has faced funding challenges in the recent past and will into the future. CPW wildlife programs faced a \$1.7 million budget shortfall in FY13-14. CPW parks programs faced a \$3 million budget shortfall in FY13-14. CPW is projected to face increasing budget shortfalls in FY14-15 and into the future. The budget outlook is made worse by expected increases in costs such as personnel, health care, operations and utilities. And there are expenses such as dam repairs, building and

property maintenance, new hunting and fishing access, and technological upgrades that are needed to maintain Colorado's world-class outdoor recreation opportunities. Maintaining our current level of service with increasing deficits will be increasingly difficult.

CPW has already reduced costs to balance our budget. Both before and after the merger, our agency has taken several steps to tighten our belts. CPW has had budget cuts totaling more than \$36 million with over 70 permanent positions eliminated. For now, CPW has continued a high level of service, even with substantial cuts. But cuts and delayed investments inevitably take a toll. CPW has taken drastic steps to tighten our belts while continuing to provide a high level of service.

In summary CPW's funding model makes us reliant on user fees to support our programs. Our agency is stream-lined and committed to providing the public with a high level of service, but this continues to be a challenge with current and increasing funding gaps. Financial sustainability for CPW is a key for maintaining our wildlife and outdoor heritage. CPW is currently in the process of developing a strategic plan and exploring all options to achieve the goal of financial sustainability into the future

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** –Colorado is a destination state for the hunting of mule deer and elk. Colorado has some of the largest populations and largest antlered of these two species in the nation. Unfortunately this wildlife are often taken illegally and transported across state lines to the state where these subjects that poach reside. Colorado currently works closely with the USFWS and these other states where poached Colorado wildlife are taken in a cooperative law enforcement effort to bring these poachers to justice. Colorado also relies heavily on the Interstate Wildlife Violator compact, especially the failure to comply with the provisions of a citation, to assist in these law enforcement efforts.
- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** - Colorado works cooperatively with many state agencies, federal agencies and other law enforcement/judicial entities. A great example is the below illegal outfitting case involves cooperation with Utah Division of Wildlife, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Justice. Christopher W. Loncarich, 56, of Mack, was sentenced on November 20, 2014 in U.S. District Court in Denver to 27 months in prison, followed by three-years of probation, for conspiring to violate the Lacey Act, a federal law prohibiting the interstate transportation and sale of any wildlife taken in an illegal manner. Until his probation has been completed, he cannot hunt, pursue or trap any wildlife and must undergo substance abuse and mental health treatment while on probation. In addition, Loncarich will appear before a Colorado Parks and Wildlife Hearings Officer where he may receive up to a lifetime ban from hunting and fishing in Colorado and 43 Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact states.

Loncarich and his assistant, Nicholaus J. Rodgers, 31, of Medford, Oregon were indicted in January by a grand jury on 17-counts of illegally trapping and maiming mountain lions and bobcats. In August, Loncarich pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to violate the Lacey Act. Rodgers pleaded guilty to the same charge in July and will be sentenced in early 2015.

"The sentence should send a strong message that poaching is a serious crime and will be treated as such by law enforcement agencies and the

courts," said Northwest Regional Manager Ron Velarde of CPW. "Our officers and investigators worked hard to bring these criminals to justice and we are satisfied with the outcome."

A three-year investigation by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revealed what Velarde said was one of the worst examples of poaching he has seen in his 40 plus-year career managing Colorado's wildlife.

According to the indictments, between 2007 and 2010, Loncarich, aided by his daughters Caitlin and Andie Loncarich, assistant guide Marvin Ellis and Rodgers, conspired to capture lions and bobcats then cage them, hold them in leg traps or shoot them in the foot or stomach. Coordinating by radio communication, they released the hindered cats when their client arrived. The goal was to make the cats easier for their clients to kill during excursions along the rugged Book Cliff Mountains in western Colorado and eastern Utah.

Several cats killed in Utah were illegally transported to Colorado where Loncarich falsified documents to obtain the required seals for the hides. The outfitter's clients then transported the illegally taken cats back to their home states in further violation of the Lacey Act.

Loncarich charged 18 clients between \$3,500 and \$7,500 for each lion hunt and between \$700 and \$1,500 for each bobcat hunt, sharing his earnings with his assistants. Investigators say approximately 30 cats were killed in this manner.

In what wildlife officials say was a particularly egregious example of their activities, the group captured a mountain lion and fit it with a radio-tracking collar. Aided by the device, they captured the same lion a year later, immobilizing it overnight with a leg-hold trap. The next day, they placed the lion in a cage and took it to Loncarich's residence in Mack where it was held for approximately one week while the outfitters waited for their client to arrive from Missouri. They then placed the lion in a box, transporting it via snowmobile to a predetermined area where it was released for the client to kill. Loncarich charged \$4,000 for the outing.

"This was not hunting - it was a crime," said CPW Area Wildlife Manager JT Romatzke. "It was cruel to the animal and contrary to what an ethical, legal hunt should be."

Caitlin Loncarich pleaded guilty to her role in the scheme and was sentenced on two misdemeanor Lacey Act violations on Sept. 30. She received one year of probation, a \$1,000 fine as well as sixty hours of community service, thirty of which must be spent with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Hunter Education program. Also pleading guilty, her sister Andie Loncarich was sentenced on a misdemeanor Lacey Act violation, receiving one year of

probation, a \$500 fine and thirty-six hours of community service, half of which must be spent with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Hunter Education program.

Ellis also pleaded guilty and on June 3, 2013, he was sentenced to three years of probation, six months of home detention and ordered to pay a \$3,100 fine.

Loncarich's 2008 Ford truck and Ellis' 1995 Dodge truck were seized during the investigation, having been used in the commission of Lacey Act violations. Both vehicles were subsequently forfeited to the government. In addition, three of Loncarich's clients have been issued federal, Lacey Act violation notices. Those clients have paid a total of \$13,100 in fines.

"Many of the violations committed by Mr. Loncarich appear to be the result of greed, unlawfully killing and maiming wildlife to increase his profits," said Special Agent in Charge Steve Oberholtzer, who oversees Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement operations in the Mountain-Prairie region. "The dedication and expertise of the state and federal investigators and prosecuting attorneys in bringing these persons to justice was outstanding."

The case was prosecuted by the Environmental Crimes Section of the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – Colorado continues to update and enhance the electronic forensics capabilities as “internet wildlife” crimes with all the social media outlets are ever increasing. Colorado contracts with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for wildlife/DNA forensics.
 - **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** - None
 - **Cost Savings Initiatives** - None
 - **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues** - None
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Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Illinois
Submitted by: Rafael Gutierrez
Date: April 15, 2015

Training Issues:

New Hires: Recently, a recruit class of 14 completed the Academy training and finished the Field Training Program and began solo patrol. The trainees were promoted to Conservation Police Officers in December 2014 and January 2015. The testing process to develop an eligibility list for a class of another 15 trainees was proposed to the Director and fulfilled. We had 360 applicants take the written exam for the list and invited 189 for the P.O.W.E.R. test. After the swim test, there were 73 eligible to participate in the interviews. 50 were chosen to begin background investigations after the interviews were scored and of those, the top 15 were offered the position of Conservation Police Officer Trainee.

In-service Training: Due to budget constraints, the Academy and field training program and lack of manpower, OLE training has suffered during the past year. The training section has only conducted mandated and critical training in order to make ends meet.

Officer Safety Training: The OLE training section continues the decentralized firearms training program since 2009. The results of this change have been positive and beneficial. The decentralization allowed each region and district to be more flexible, thus eliminating scheduling conflicts and overtime concerns. The training staff was able to provide more focused instruction, run a safer range, and address issues more efficiently. We were able to obtain approval of our firearms curriculum through the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board to allow us to certify our own instructors for Firearms which allows us more flexibility and cost savings as instructors are needed.

The DT and firearms staff again merged to provide scenario based training for all OLE officers and supervisors. The cross training was well received by all who participated as it provided officers a more realistic training scenario to enhance their skills.

The firearms staff is again providing the firearms qualification shoot for the OLE retired officers this year.

The OLE training section continues the training of defense tactics (DT) while researching new and improved training methods. The DT program is implemented quarterly on a region or district level allowing more flexibility for scheduling of officers training. We are in the process of adding more instructors to fill positions vacated by promotion or retirements and are looking to expand our DT program to include water based tactics that will assist if an officer ends up in the water with a subject.

Computer Training: The OLE training section continues to develop a computer training course for all skill levels of officers which continues to result in numerous wildlife cases being detected and solved. Also, there has been a more timely and efficient submittal of division paperwork which has been greatly beneficial.

Waterfowl Enforcement: The OLE training section has refined the Waterfowl Enforcement Training School again this year. We have added the new learning tool of duck bill molds utilized for identification purposes to assist in the training. We conducted one week of waterfowl training for our new CPOs during the Academy to prepare them for the upcoming waterfowl season by utilizing extensive classroom, scenario and field training to teach the enforcement techniques and regulations for the best enforcement of the waterfowl regulations.

Physical Fitness and Water Survival Program: The training section is continuing to develop a program to implement a physical fitness program for all sworn officers to encourage each to participate in a fitness program and complete a wellness test each year. With the fitness program, water survival training is proposed to be implemented on a yearly basis as well.

Outreach Training Programs: The OLE training section conducted numerous recruiting seminars, career fairs, and presentations in an effort to recruit qualified potential applicants for the 2015 Recruit Class eligibility list and future classes.

The OLE training section continues the internship program consisting of up to 48 internships per year. College students who wish to pursue a career in Law Enforcement/Natural Resources apply for an internship of up to 12 weeks during which they ride with a Conservation Officer (CPO), watch, listen, ask questions, and participate in many of the duties of a CPO. These internships provide a wonderful learning experience to students who the IDNR OLE hope become future applicants.

The training section also works with many high school students who are trying to determine a career path. Upon request, high school students from around the state are scheduled to meet with a CPO or supervisor and are given an overview of the duties of a CPO as well as the mission of the IDNR and the Office of Law Enforcement.

The OLE training section attends numerous career fairs at colleges and high schools to educate students about the mission of the IDNR as well as the Office of Law Enforcement.

The OLE training section offers training to outside agencies to assist in Conservation related enforcement techniques and methods of patrol as well as operational training for specialized equipment such as snowmobiles.

Sonar Program: The OLE training section continues to develop the sonar program both internally and for outside Agencies. We held two 4 day sonar operator schools during the year to certify operators for our department as well as several outside agencies including Wisconsin DNR. A tracking form was developed to maintain a record of when the sonars were utilized and what the results were when used. The Department's operators successfully utilized the sonars for many searches for items ranging from stolen cars to drowning or accident victims.

Funding and Staffing Issues

Although Fiscal Year 2014 did show signs of improvement, fiscal conditions for the State of Illinois continue to be watched closely and spending is limited to only those purchases absolutely necessary for operations. The Department of Natural Resources, Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) experienced an increase of almost \$3 million or 16% in its budgeted appropriations from FY13 to FY14.

The majority of the increases in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 were in the personal services and fringe benefits lines. While a small portion of these increases were for annual cost of living adjustment increases for current employees, the majority of the increased funds were for a new

recruit class of 15 cadets that was hired in September 2013 and 15 cadets hired in January 2015. Any net increase in the Office of Law Enforcement's other operating lines was for incidental costs associated with hiring, training, and outfitting the recruit class. OLE is still able to fill command staff positions from within by promoting conservation police officers but can only hire new support services personnel with approval from the agency's Office of Fiscal Management and the Governor's office.

Even with the addition of the new recruits, retirements continue to take its toll on the OLE sworn headcount levels. The Office of Law Enforcement sworn headcount at the end of January 2015 was just 142. At the end of fiscal year 2007, sworn law enforcement personnel numbered 166. Although funding has improved over previous years, the Office of Law Enforcement continues to limit purchases to only those items that are absolutely necessary to maintain operations. Tighter fiscal control/oversight by requiring purchases to be approved at the agency level rather than the regional level. In fiscal year 2013, the Office of Law Enforcement was successful in getting legislation passed to create the Conservation Police Operations Assistance Fund. This account, funded primarily through fines, donations and watercraft registrations, was established primarily to allow the department to address its aging fleet of work boats, snowmobiles, ATVs, laptop computers and for the procurement of other items necessary for an officer to perform his duties. To date, the department has deposited more than \$1 million into this fund. In FY14, the Office of Law Enforcement used these funds, along with funds from equipment lines appropriations, to purchase such things as eleven 20' and fifteen 18' daily work boats, sixty-three laptop computers, seventeen ATVs, one hundred vehicle rifle mounts, and ninety-six sets of replacement body armor. Major purchases in fiscal year 2015 from the Operations Assistance Fund and equipment lines appropriations include three 25' Brunswick 750 Impact Rigid Hull Inflatable patrol boats, one 24' Boston Whaler Justice patrol boat and one 23' Boston Whaler Guardian patrol boat, a radio/communications system analyzer oscilloscope and tester, plus additional rifle mounts and laptop computers.

Equipment Issues

Over the past several years, the Office of Law Enforcement's annual equipment appropriation has been reduced from \$900,000 to just over \$51,000 in Fiscal Year 2013. However, in FY14 the newly created Conservation Police Operations Assistance Fund (CPOAF) has had almost \$1 million deposited into it. This amount appears to be what we can expect to be deposited into it on a yearly basis. This fund is used to replace our aging fleet equipment such as work boats, patrol boats, outboard motors, snowmobiles, ATVs, laptops and other necessary equipment for CPOs to perform their job duties. Our two biggest equipment issues are our patrol and work boats. In FY15 we purchased 26 aluminum Jon boats out of the 60 which need to be replaced. We have also purchased three new snowmobiles with trailers, two new cargo box trailers with heat/AC units and generators to be used for OUI enforcement for snowmobiles and mobile command centers, if needed in the summertime. From the CPOAF we also purchased 42 more rifle mounts to be installed in patrol vehicles. This completes our rifle mount purchases which gives us a quantity of 150.

We also replaced nine outboard motors in FY15 along with new digital cameras, binoculars and flashlights. A communications system analyzer was purchased which is used to auto tune our portable/mobile radios which will save us approximately \$20,000 a year if a private vendor would have performed this required annual maintenance.

The largest equipment purchase, currently in progress in FY15, is the purchase of five new center console patrol boats. One 23' and one 24' fiberglass boat along with three 25' Rigid Hull Inflatable boats.

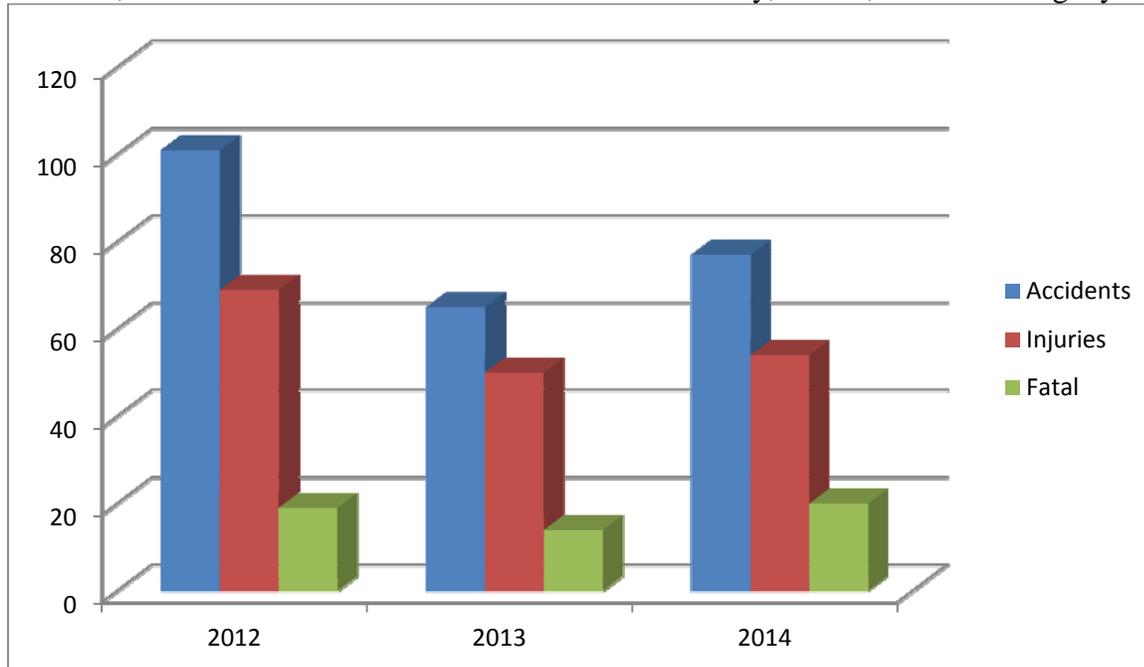
All officers are issued laptop computers and would not be able to perform their daily duties without this critical piece of equipment. With the advanced age of the computers and the improvements in technology, it is imperative the department remains on a program to replace the laptop computers every 3 years. The purchase of 45 laptops in FY12 was the beginning of this initiative. In FY13, the Department purchased another 41 laptops and in FY14 the Department purchased 63 laptops in an effort to keep current technology available to our officers. In FY15 we purchased 40 more laptops which will replace the ones purchased in FY12. These purchases keep the department at a 3 year rotation for laptop replacements which is what our goal was back in FY12.

In FY15 we were fortunate enough to have a not-for-profit organization donate approximately \$55,000 towards the purchase of a patrol boat for our busiest waterways in Illinois north of Chicago. The organization wanted to help us with our enforcement efforts in arresting boat operators for Operating under the Influence (OUI) of alcohol and/or drugs.

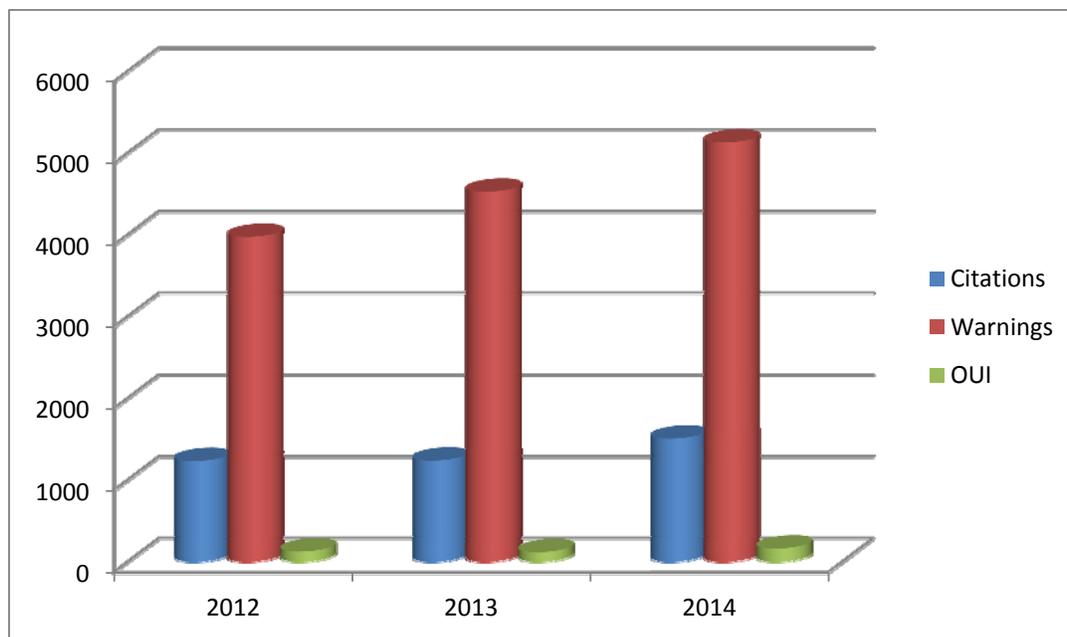
In FY16 the Department's equipment priority will be to replace more patrol boats and aluminum Jon boats.

Recreational Boat Enforcement **(Federal Fiscal Year 2014)**

Illinois Conservation Police investigated 77 accidents resulting in 54 injuries and 20 fatalities this past year. The three year Illinois average is 81 accidents, 57 injuries and 17 fatalities. Over the past 3 years, weather conditions and water levels have been consistent, with little or no flooding; providing excellent opportunities for recreational boaters. Fatalities (20) were slightly up. However, 2 accidents involved 6 total fatalities which rarely, if ever, occur in a single year.



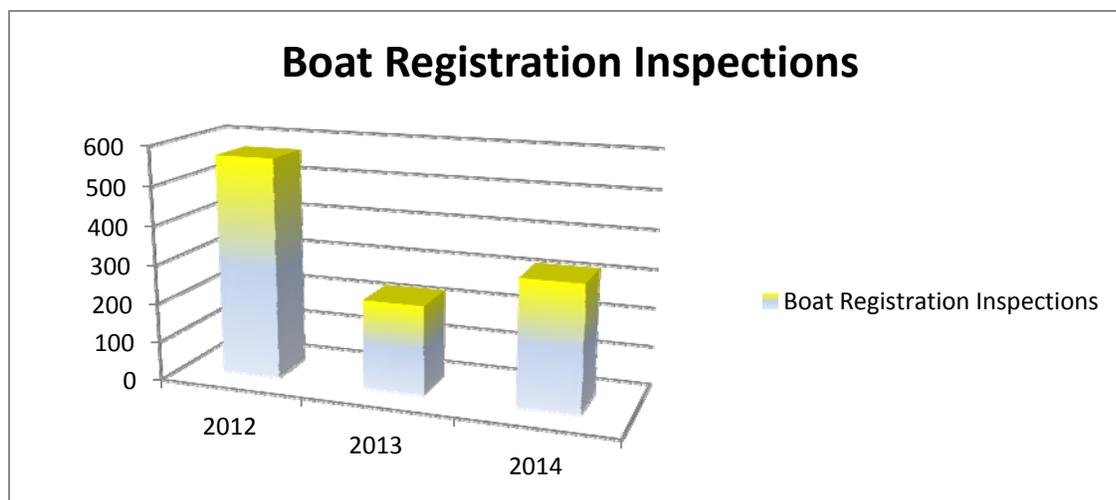
The graph above shows FFY 2014 accident information to be below the three year average (excluding fatalities).



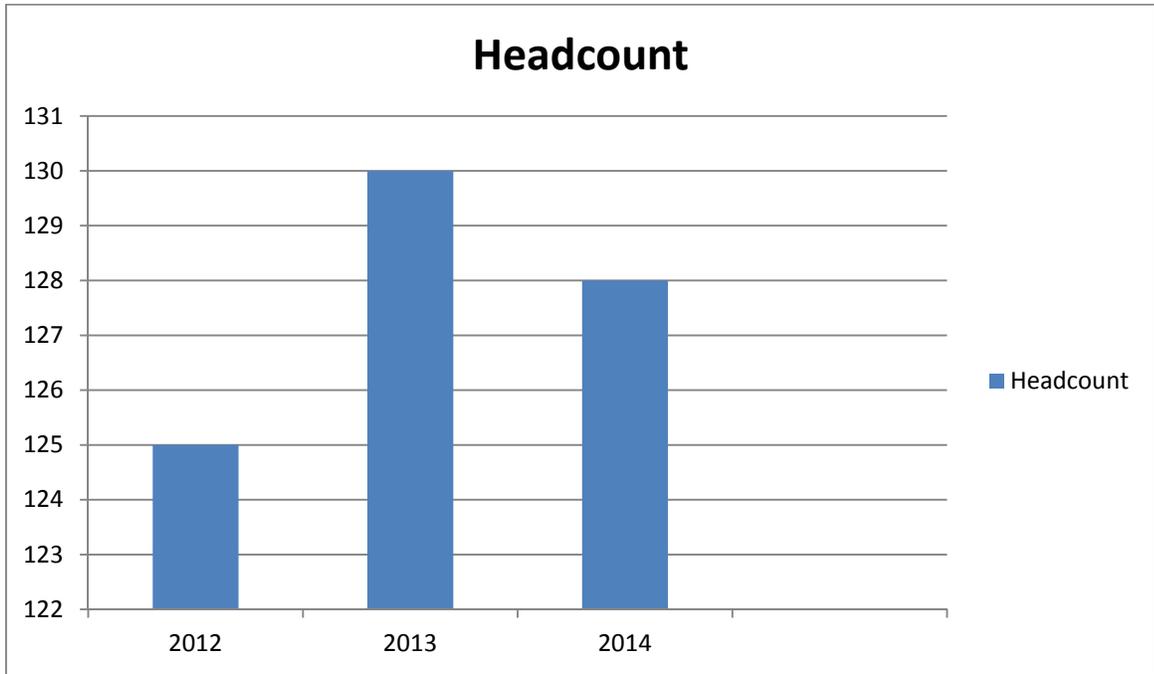
The OLE has experienced an overall increase in enforcement activity over the past 3 years. The focus on boating safety and OUI enforcement is reflected in the amount of activity generated by officers. A significant increase in OUI arrest occurred the past year with 159 arrests made (3 year average is 132).

Year	Boat Inspections
2012	20,015
2013	17,512
2014	15,070

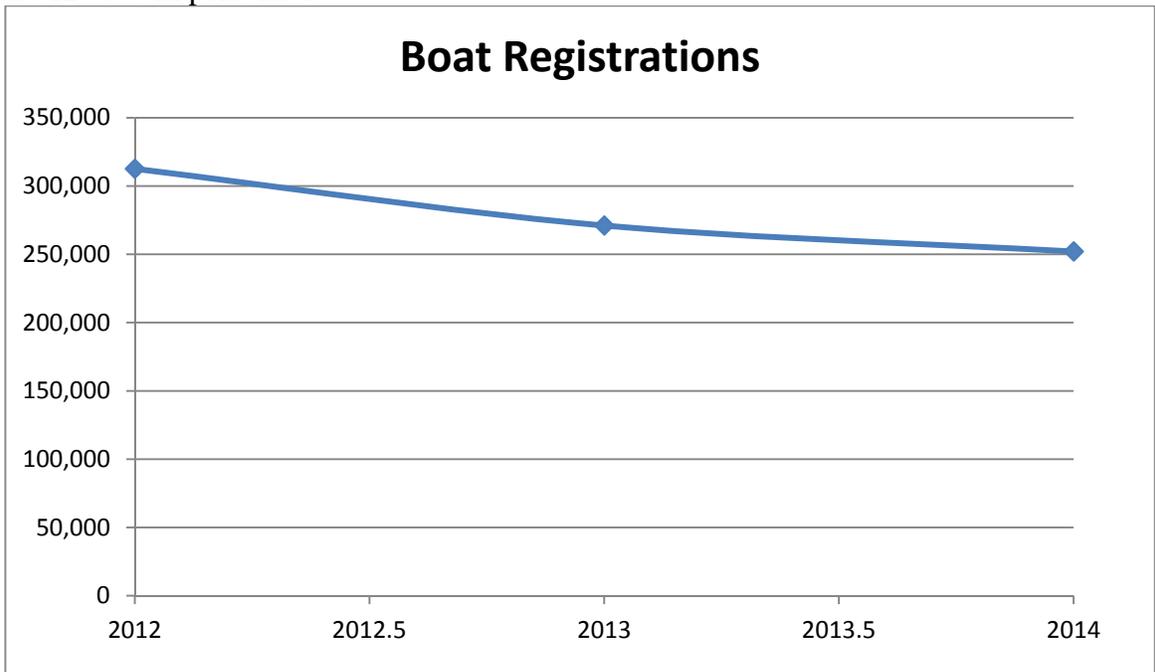
Boat inspections have declined about 15,000 from 2012. Several concerns with the validity of boat inspection statistics have been brought up; mainly with officers falsifying inspections. Supervisors continue to review statistics identifying and addressing officers with high ratios of inspections and low enforcement activity.



In 2013, the Water Usage Stamp was implemented, eliminating the need for officers to conduct inspections on non-powered watercraft. A 40% drop in registration inspections occurred after implementation (566 to 228) between 2012 and 2013. However, an increase in inspections occurred in 2014 (320), which still remains below the 3 year average (369).



With additions of 2 recruit classes in the past 3 years (27 total), headcount has remained stable around 127 sworn personnel.



The number of registered motorboats has decreased the last 3 years by 60,570. This trend is seen nationally and believed to be directly related to the current economic environment.

Summary:

The statistics show stable headcount numbers but an increase in enforcement overall. The increase in enforcement has reduced the number of overall accidents and injuries over the past 3 years. Although fatalities are up (3), from the past year, there were 2 accidents resulting in 6 deaths in 2014. Weather conditions and water levels have remained stable as well; creating ample opportunity for recreational boaters.

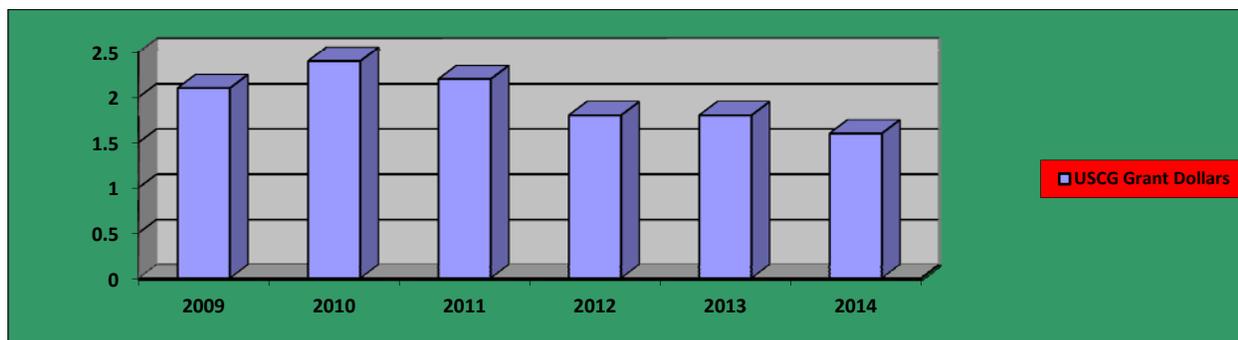
The total hours worked on the Recreational Boat Safety Grant (RBS) decreased about 6% from 2013. A total of 38,275 personal service hours were recorded, which was 2,459 hours less. The three year average is 43,224. Time spent on the program varies with available funding and manpower associated with administering programs, which can be claimed as expenditures towards the RBS Grant.

USCG Recreational Boat Safety Grant:

In FFY 2014, the IDNR received approximately \$1.6 million (down 200k from 2013). This money is used to support operations directly related to the enforcement, boat access and safety. The decrease is again mainly due to the decrease in boat registrations. As mentioned previously, it appears the economy continues to affect recreational boating as seen in the reduction of boat registrations. The OLE, through the Special Operations Fund monies, has procured several large purchases of equipment (boats), which has helped in increasing claimable expenditures. The increase in expenditures has assisted in bridging the gap created through the loss of boat registrations. Currently, the Federal Government has not determined funding allocations for the RBS Grant for FFY 2015.

It is important to remember the RBS program determines funding using the following criteria:

- 1/3 number of registered boat compared to other states/territories
- 1/3 previous years expenditures coded towards the RBS Grant
- 1/3 equal distributions of remaining funds equally among states/territories



Homeland Security

State/Federal Interoperability:

The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) continues to serve as a member agency with the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF). In addition, the OLE continues to serve on the ITTF Transportation and Critical Infrastructure Security (formerly the Transportation Committee) and the Crisis and Prevention Committee. Serving on the committees allows the OLE to develop partnerships with

other state and local law enforcement agencies to help prevent, respond to and recover from an attack on the waterways of the State.

In addition to communicating with fellow State agencies, the membership in the ITTF allows the cooperating agencies to identify special equipment and needs to mitigate gaps in emergency response and protection of critical infrastructure.

Similarly, the OLE has continued to serve on the United States Coast Guard Area Maritime Security Committees (AMSC) in St Louis, Chicago, Peoria and the Quad Cities. The AMSCs specifically deal with ports on waterways in which the State and Federal governments have concurrent jurisdictions. Working with the USCG also helps merge information and response assets, ultimately increasing the safety of our waterways used for commercial transportation purposes.

Training:

- The OLE was again able to provide training on the Chicago Waterfront in 2014. Homeland security boats (approximately 10) were deployed for sonar and familiarization training with approximately 30 officers attending. The USCG Station Calumet Harbor provided the classroom and facilities to dock boats.
- ITTF Transportation Committee Conference (E. Peoria) 12 Officers attended and provided watercraft demonstration and trained on Illinois River

Outlook:

Homeland security dollars continue to decrease as a result of budget restrictions at the Federal level. The ITTF has seen significant reductions in the amount of grant dollars awarded to the State. The USCG has experience similar decreases in grant monies. The OLE will continue to seek additional funding through the ITTF as well as the USCG (Port Security) Grants in a continued attempt to enhance response and mitigate gaps in security on the State's ports and waterways.

Major Law Enforcement Trends

Illinois continues to expand our computer technology. We are currently looking at records management software to improve our report accuracy and content.

Unique Cross Boundary Cooperative Efforts

Illinois has two officers dedicated to a task force for identifying and apprehending persons involved in the importation of invasive and disease susceptible aquatic life, primarily Asian Carp.

New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement

Due to budget and staffing shortages, Office of Law Enforcement has not had an opportunity to explore new innovations or techniques. Current and foreseeable future efforts will be primarily dedicated to maintaining the status quo.

State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement

The year 2014 was a perfect example how a minor enforcement issue can turn into a major legislative battle. Two major bills were proposed, at the urging of a special interest legislative

lobbyist arrested for a minor violation of illegally transporting his uncased crossbow on his ATV. The resulting legislative proposals would have severely curtailed the way Illinois Conservation Police (CPO's) conduct their jobs.

The first bill would have prevented CPO's from conducting compliance inspections of hunters in the field. The proposed language stated "*no employee of the Department shall enter any private land, question an individual, or make any examinations without probable cause, a valid warrant, or permission.*" This proposed language would have made it nearly impossible for CPO's to check hunters in the field unless the officer observed an on-view violation from the road. Currently, Illinois CPO's have the authority to enter all lands and waters, pursuant to law, to enforce the provisions of the Wildlife Code and to examine equipment and devices in the field. This basically works off of the open field's doctrine.

The second bill would have prevented the forfeiture of a hunters equipment used in the unlawful taking of game unless the equipment was used in the commission of a felony. Currently, any items used in the unlawful taking of any aquatic or wildlife species may be seized by a CPO and ordered forfeited by the Court.

Illinois reached out to fellow AMFGLEO states for information related to these issues. As a result, Illinois received a great deal of informative information and support from other member states, which, along with a strong Illinois DNR lobbying effort, helped stop this bad legislation from becoming law.

A bill to legalize bobcat hunting passed both the House and Senate, but was vetoed by Illinois's previous Governor, Pat Quinn. The bill has been re-introduced in the 2015 legislative session.

Many other fish and wildlife legislative proposals did become law during the 2014 legislative session, of which most were positive. These new laws include:

- **Public Act 98-0914 (HB 5080) Outfitters-** Repeals provisions concerning permits for the commercial hunting of migratory waterfowl, hunting blind requirements, and reporting by permit holders of duck and geese taken and requires commercial waterfowl clubs to be licensed as an outfitter and included in provisions concerning deer and wild turkey outfitter permits and related regulations. Provides that providing or offering to provide, for compensation, outfitting services for deer, waterfowl, or wild turkey hunting without a permit shall be increased from a petty offense to a Class B misdemeanor, **effective January 1, 2015;**
- **Public Act 98-0913 (HB 5079) Trapping Licenses;** Provides that no trapping license shall be issued to any person born on or after January 1, 2015 or who has not previously held a valid trapping license within the 3 years immediately preceding the application unless he or she presents to the person authorized to issue the license evidence that he or she has a certificate of competency provided for in the Code, **effective January 1st, 2015;**
- **Public Act 98-0924 (HB 5514) Shooting Furbearers;** Provides that it shall be unlawful to take beaver, river otter, weasel, mink, or muskrat except during the open season set annually by the Director of Natural Resources, and then, only with traps, except that a firearm, pistol, or

air-gun of a caliber not larger than a .22 long rifle may be used to remove the animal from the trap, **effective immediately**;

- **Public Act 98-(SB 3049) Protection of Cougars, Bears, & Wolves**; Adds the Gray wolf, American black bear, and Cougar to the list of protected species under the Act. Provides exceptions for landowners who are protecting life and property, **effective January 1st, 2015**;
- **Public Act 98- (HB 5911) FOIA Exemption for Nuisance Trapping**; Provides that if an individual is authorized by the Department of Natural Resources to trap a wild bird or wild mammal that is known to be destroying property or causing a risk to human health or safety upon his or her land, then the location of the traps or snares shall be exempt from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Makes a corresponding change in the Freedom of Information Act, **effective immediately**;
- **Public Act 98-0752 (SB 902) Creates the Herptiles-Herps Act 510 ILCS 68/**; Provides possession limits for indigenous amphibian and reptile taxa. Provides that it is unlawful to take, possess, buy, sell, offer to buy or sell or barter any reptile, amphibian, or their eggs, any resulting offspring, or parts taken from the wild in this State for commercial purposes unless otherwise authorized. Provides that no person shall take or possess any of the herptiles listed in the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act. Provides for the taking of certain herptiles and areas that are closed to the taking of herptiles. Provides additional protective regulations concerning herptiles. Provides that nothing shall prohibit lawfully acquired possession of any of the Boidae family, such as boas, pythons, and anacondas and exempts boas, pythons, and anacondas from certain provision of the Act. Creates a permit process for the possession of special use herptiles depending on the purpose of the special use herptile. Provides for the suspension of privileges and revocation of certain permits and record keeping requirements of certain permits. Creates provisions concerning home rule, administrative provisions, injury to a member of the public by a special use herptile; prohibited acts with special use herptiles; penalties; civil liability and immunity; seizure and forfeiture; and exemptions. Provides that a licensed veterinarian who may have cause to treat a special use herptile that is in violation of the Act shall not be held liable, except for willful and wanton misconduct, provided that the veterinarian meets certain requirements. Amends the Criminal Code of 2012. Removes poisonous or life-threatening reptiles from the definition of "dangerous animals". Makes corresponding changes to the Fish and Aquatic Life Code, **effective January 1st, 2015**.
- **Public Act 98-0898 (HB 4277) Disability Exemptions of Sport Fishing Licenses for Certain Commercial Activities** -Amends the Wildlife Code- Allows veterans that are Illinois residents to obtain an Illinois Hunter Education card after completing the online study section of the Illinois Hunter Education program and providing the Department of Natural Resources with verification of service or mobilization, **effective January 1st, 2015**;
- **Public Act 98-1044 (HB 5869) Release of Aquatic Life Upgraded to Class B Misdemeanor**; - Provides that releasing any aquatic life into the wild in this State without first securing permission of the Department of Natural Resources shall be a Class B misdemeanor; **effective January 1st, 2015**;

- **Public Act 98-0771 (SB 3333)** Changes the definition of "aquatic life". Provides that "aquatic life" means all fish, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans, algae, aquatic plants, aquatic invertebrates, and any other aquatic animals or plants that the Department identifies in rules adopted after consultation with biologists, zoologists, or other wildlife experts, **effective January 1st, 2015;**

Cost Savings Initiatives

See "Funding Issues" above.

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers

2015 Agency Report

State/Province: Indiana

Submitted by: Lt. Colonel Steve Hunter

Date: May 11, 2015

- **Training Issues** - We have incorporated active shooter training and the use of tourniquets into our annual in-service training. We now have a formalized career development training program.
- **Funding and Staffing Issues** - We have not experienced any improvements in staffing or funding since at least 2009. The most current budget did not fund 20 of the 35 vacant officer positions we had anticipated filling through an aggressive recruitment campaign which included accepting an honorable military discharge, with 4 years of honorable service, as a qualifier to application. We do seem to have attracted more female applicants this process and did hire a Latino in the previous class.
- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** - Indiana participates in the NASBLA Wear It campaign and Operation Dry Water. We have provided specialized boating under the influence training to the field and have a billboard campaign that emphasizes personal floatation wear.
- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** - Indiana participates in an invasive species initiative with other states that border the Great Lakes. We also participate in a USFWS invasive species task force aimed primarily at interstate trade of bait fish.
- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** - None come to mind.
- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** - Indiana's ability to regulate captive wildlife has been challenged and is currently awaiting a decision from the State Supreme Court on whether they will hear on appeal a decision that has determined, in part, we do not have any authority over wildlife that is in captivity. Much of this stemmed from citizen efforts to establish high fenced deer hunting in our state.
- **Cost Savings Initiatives** - Indiana's Law Enforcement Division has continually operated in a frugal manner with a degree of concern for providing the best services to the public in the most economical and efficient manner. And although we are always looking for ways to provide those services better and quicker there have not been any ways, of late, that have allowed us to provide the same for less.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues** - There has been a series of legislative attacks on the Law Enforcement Division's authority from the state legislature. Although these could be considered idle threats as much of the activity has been limited to statements from committee members that indicate less than total respect for the agencies mission, there has also been language drafted that can only be considered a direct threat on the enforcement authority of Indiana Conservation Officers. Moving forward it will be important to ensure our relevance in future legislative conversations.
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Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers

2015 Agency Report

State/Province: Kansas

Submitted by: Kevin Jones

Date: May 2015

- **Training Issues**

Improvements are continuing in the new officer training program. More structured training objectives have been implemented to better address the needs of the Division.

With the advances in technology the Division continues to update computer and data systems to better equip the field officer. The records management system with ties to the statewide, multi-agency database has been released and old system records being added and archived within the new system. This has required more extensive training of officers in records management and equipment issues.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

For the sixth year in a row, Kansas officers received no increase in pay. The last time an increase was approved was in 2009, which was a 2.5% cost of living increase. Although listed as "classified" employees, meaning they are paid according to a grade and step matrix, no step increases have been approved for 14 years. The Legislature, who initiates and approves all budget related legislation for all state agencies, continues to debate various means to address a \$500 million deficit in State General Funds. Even though Game Wardens are not paid with State General Funds, the overarching philosophy that you have to treat all state employees the same prevents any improvements in pay or benefits. Several bills aimed at adjusting the retirement benefit calculations continue to be discussed, with no clear indication of what the final product will look like. The Department is also hiring more employees as "unclassified" employees, meaning that they are exempt from the Civil Service Act. There is no indication at the present time that Game Wardens will be moved to unclassified employment.

During the past year the Law Enforcement Division has seen the highest number of vacancies in over 15 years. Vacancies have occurred throughout the ranks from retirements, resignations and dismissals. While recruitment of new officers has not dropped off, the ability to retain younger officers is becoming more difficult, particularly in light of the lack of any pay increases and related issues.

Department revenues have been trending downward. In order to reverse this trend and to address the salary and operations budget needs, the Secretary has created a revenue work group, and has

engaged the administrative staff in developing a strategy to address these issues. It is clear that significant changes are needed.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

The Law Enforcement Division continues to work in cross jurisdictional investigations. Several projects concerning commercial activities relating to both fisheries and wildlife are currently under investigation.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

The records management system is a part of the statewide multi-agency records management system, which is part of the Highway Patrol records system. Through this system, agency selected records are integrated across the system, providing the ability to develop leads and confirm related investigations.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

CyberTracker, a smart phone application, is being used to record preliminary case and contact information. The application allows for the assignment of case numbers, storage of an initial investigation reference photo, a brief case synopsis and logging the GPS location. This application is used to initially document crime scene and investigative information. The information is quickly uploaded to central data and then it becomes capable of being queried.

Thirty body cameras were purchased and distributed to the field for testing and use during patrol and investigative work. Not all the issues concerning the storage of collected data have been worked out, but their limited use has proven to be beneficial, particularly when dealing with complaints against officers.

Captain Melson took up the project of creating and managing a Facebook page for the Law Enforcement Division. His efforts have been met with a lot of support and have increased the public's understanding of our profession. This is a successful venture in improving the awareness of the work and positive contributions that Game Wardens provide to the broad spectrum of public and community life.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

During the 2014 Legislative session an amendment to the statute concerning the disposal of evidence created the provision that the Department should make it a priority to return any illegally taken wildlife to the landowner or tenant of the land where the wildlife was taken. Provisions were also included setting conditions whereby the landowner would not be eligible to receive the wildlife, such as if the landowner was directly involved in the violation. The Department fought this legislation arguing in part that such language would indicate that the landowner or tenant has a possessory interest in the wildlife, contrary to the doctrine and law stating that the people of Kansas own the wildlife. Once signed into law, the Division has endeavored to comply with the new law as cases are closed and wildlife evidence is rendered into the possession of the Department. During the 2015 Legislative session, a bill was introduced which would further amend this law. The 2015 amendment changes the offering of the wildlife to the landowner or tenant from a priority to a mandate. It additionally establishes a retroactive 10 year time period that any antlers or horns currently in the possession of the Department shall be returned to the landowner or tenant upon their request. The language is broad enough that it in essence freezes the disposition of any antlers or horns falling within the time period unless it is through a

landowner request. At the time of this writing, the Legislature is still in session and it is unknown if this bill become law.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**
 - **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**
-

**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
Jack Harrigan
Manager, Compliance & Field Services
May 25th, 2015**

- **Training Issues**

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship is again training new officer recruits through the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy. The Department continues to accept recruits trained through the Atlantic Police Academy, as well as those trained by other law enforcement agencies, such as an officer added last year who was previously with the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Training and qualifications in defensive tactics, firearms, emergency vehicle operations, etc. is still conducted by in-house officer instructors. Availability of officer instructors to conduct in-house training is always a challenge due to high turn-over and other work priorities.

Lack of sufficient funding for specialized training is always an issue.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

Recruitment and Retention of full time Natural Resource Officers continues to be problematic with constant vacancies due to insufficient applicants and resignations. In the last year and a half, 8 full time Natural Resource Officers have resigned to take positions in other jurisdictions. Currently, out of 119 Natural Resource Officer Positions, 11 are vacant, 10 officers are eligible for retirement and another 25 will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years.

The Departments overall budget was cut by 2.7 million for the 2015/16 fiscal year. However, Compliance & Field Services Division (Enforcement) received no reduction in operating budgets and only 3 district clerk positions were lost.

The outfitting of tablet computers to officers has been temporarily suspended due to funding pressures and the inability to implement the TraCS software in a timely manner.

It appears that night flights to detect illegal night lighting will be reinstated after being discontinued for a number of years due to budget pressures.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

The impact of social media continues to build, with conservation enforcement action initiated from video of both legal and illegal wildlife harvesting and public reactions to these activities.

Night hunting by rights based harvesters has come under more public scrutiny by various lobby groups and municipalities wishing to see it banned outright. The 2006 Supreme Court of Canada *R. vs Morris* decision stated that night hunting is a protected right as long as it is done so in a safe manner in areas where they have access.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

While there were no cross-boundary cooperative law enforcement investigations undertaken this year, the Department remains committed to, and continues to work with, various agencies outside Manitoba's borders either directly or through affiliated associations.

Discussions with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources took place in regards to the training of the department's canines for use in detecting Zebra Mussels on boats and other water equipment.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

The Department has begun investigating the possible usage of drones, both chopper style and fixed wing models, to assist in our enforcement efforts. Demonstration flights with other departments currently using this technology has already occurred, and future demonstrations with a local drone supplier company are planned for the near future.

The process is still underway to implement the TraCS software program to replace our outdated DOS enforcement database programs. A Request for Proposals to implement the software in the Manitoba network will be tendered in this spring.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

The Conservation Officer Act has been tabled in the House and it is anticipated to be proclaimed this summer. The new Act officially recognizes the "Conservation Officer Service" and consolidates appointments for our various pieces of legislation, both provincial and federal, as well as setting out training and qualification standards and disciplinary procedures. The new ACT will also establish the title of Conservation Officer to replace Natural Resource Officer.

The Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund Act allowing organizations to obtain grants from the fund for projects approved by a committee has now been proclaimed. Funds are generated from a portion of all hunting and fishing license sales in the Province as well as other dedicated funds.

The new Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution) has now received royal ascent and will be proclaimed this summer. The new Act allows for restitution to be collected when a person is convicted of an offence where specified fish or wildlife is unlawfully killed. The restitution monies collected are over and above any fine ordered by the court and cannot be waived. The restitution collected is deposited into the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund referenced above.

The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species) Bill has been tabled in the House and it is hoped it will be proclaimed this summer. The Bill introduces new inspection and enforcement powers along with other administrative powers to deal with the threat of aquatic invasive species introduction into the Province and procedures, etc. for when they are found in the Province. Currently Zebra Mussels have been found in Lake Winnipeg and the Red River.

The Wildlife Amendment and Fisheries Amendment Act Bill has been tabled in the house and should be proclaimed this summer. This bill will update various enforcement powers for Natural Resource Officers as well as authorizing reciprocal suspensions with other jurisdictions. In addition, the Bill will allow the department to refuse the issuance of any licence issued under The Wildlife Act for the failure to pay a fine levied by the courts.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

Increased teleconferencing and select high visibility peak period enforcement activities continue in order to save money and to ensure enforcement and public safety standards are met.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

Preliminary discussions have begun with an existing Provincial call centre operation to investigate the possible call-in and call-out protocols for on duty Officers to address safety concerns, including working alone procedures .

**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Michigan
Submitted by: Chief Gary Hagler
April 30, 2015**

Training Issues

Online Training Modules - The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Law Enforcement Division (LED) launched an online training program in order to enhance our capabilities with respect to the collection and use of physical evidence in investigations. The program is comprised of a series of online forensic training modules. The first module, Time-of-Death Estimation by Temperature Study of Whitetail Deer, which is a voluntary training that started last fall, has been completed by more than 70 conservation officers (COs). The information conveyed in the module has already produced results in the field with several successful prosecutions. The second module is titled Chain-of-Custody. This module is important and has nearly daily ramifications on many of our cases and will be the first mandatory training module in the series.

Social Media – Special Investigations Unit (SIU) personnel have participated in training designed to increase capabilities related to online and social media investigations and mobile device forensics. The importance of the evidence retrieved from the online realm as well as from mobile devices has increased significantly.

Aquatic Invasive Species – Great Lakes Enforcement Unit (GLEU) (formerly the Commercial Fish Enforcement Unit) personnel have participated in increased identification training of aquatic invasive species. New reference materials are being put together and along with the training the unit officers will be better prepared for identifying prohibited species entering into Michigan through various industries. Unit officers will also use the new training and materials to eventually assist with training field conservation officers with identification. New apps for mobile devices are also being looked at that will provide quick reference guides to the unit officers while conducting inspections.

Wildfire Preparedness - Wildfire preparedness training is conducted in District 5 annually to prepare for wildfire response. The training includes wildfire behavior and what to expect at a wildfire. Law enforcement response tactics during a wildfire and law enforcement's role on a wildfire are also part of the training. Evacuations, traffic control, origin/scene preservation and looting prevention are all an important part of Law Enforcement Division's role. Airplane tactics and radio usage are also discussed. The training helps COs be more prepared for a wildfire which, in turn, helps keep them and the public safe.

Funding and Staffing Issues

In order to obtain a more effective span of control, the Division went from one statewide Captain to three Captains in January 2015; one staff captain at Division Headquarters in Lansing, one covering the northern districts of the state (Region 1) and one captain overseeing the southern districts of the state (Region 2).

There are currently 37 conservation officer recruits attending Law Enforcement Division's 22-week training academy. After graduation on June 5, 2015, the new probationary conservation officers will be assigned to a field training officer for a period of 18 weeks before working on his/her own in his/her assigned county.

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) continues to operate with one vacancy unfilled. This one vacancy constitutes a 25% reduction in personnel for the unit which handles a very demanding work load even when at full staffing. Efforts are underway to significantly increase the staffing level of SIU in order to more effectively address major natural resource violations such as illegal commercialization and to provide assistance to field conservation officers with significant poaching incidents.

The GLEU continues to operate with four vacancies. This is a 50% reduction in personnel for the unit from when it was first established. Efforts are also underway to significantly increase the staffing level of the GLEU in order to more effectively address

major natural resource violations such as illegal commercialization of fish and the illegal possession and transportation of injurious aquatic invasive species into Michigan and to increase the level of monitoring of the state and tribal commercial fishing industry both on the Great Lakes and at facilities.

Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts

Belle Isle State Park - LED has been working with the Michigan State Police (MSP) to provide law enforcement coverage on Belle Isle State Park, which is located on the Detroit River and gets 1.65 million visits annually. Belle Isle became Michigan's 102nd state park in 2014 and is within the city limits of Detroit. This partnership has made the park a family friendly location that is drawing people from all walks of life, many of whom are reliving fond childhood memories of trips to Belle Isle. The officers are constantly being complimented on the improved safety on the island.

Homeland/Border Security - Officers continue to work together with the U.S. Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Homeland Security along the Canadian Border in the Sault Ste. Marie, St. Mary's River region. A number of joint patrols are routinely conducted in this area utilizing officers with both marine and snowmobile support. Due to conservation officers' familiarity in working these waterways both in the summer and winter months a very high number of contacts are made during each patrol and they are recognized as an integral part of the border security team.

Homeland security issues and cooperation with other agencies continue to be on the forefront with conservation officers in District 3. The Mackinac Bridge and the Straits of Mackinac have been on the radar for terrorists and the threat of a potential attack is real. COs work closely with U.S. Coast Guard, MSP Dive Team, sheriff's departments, and emergency management administrators to coordinate patrols during high activity and events. COs contribute high level rural policing in northern Michigan utilizing their training and specialized equipment to enforce laws and assist other agencies in the homeland security arena.

Tribal Cooperation - Officers partner with tribal law enforcement agencies in northern Michigan within the 1836 treaty boundaries. District 3 officers coordinate with tribal officers during two specialized high profile hunting/fishing activities. Tribal officers are scheduled along with Michigan COs to patrol the elk hunt and sturgeon spearing season. These two activities are highly regulated with a low number of permits available. Michigan and tribal COs work side by side in assuring that the resource is protected from overharvest.

U.S. Coast Guard - The GLEU has participated in several cooperative enforcement efforts involving the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). One involved a large scale operation on Lake Michigan with USCG law enforcement and Wisconsin conservation wardens along the Michigan-Wisconsin border to target the illegal movement of fish and drugs. A second operation involved a cooperative enforcement effort on Lake Superior with the USCG looking for the illegal movement of fish, drugs, and human trafficking between Michigan and Ontario.

CORA Law Enforcement Committee - The GLEU represents LED on the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority's (CORA) Law Enforcement Committee. The committee is made up of law enforcement representatives from the respective 1836 Treaty tribes and the State of Michigan. The committee works jointly on enforcement issues and the agencies have personnel that conduct a minimum of eight cooperative Great Lakes patrols a year. One concern this past year from CORA involved the need for a cooperative effort and collaborative response plan regarding the Enbridge Pipeline that runs along the bottom of the Great Lakes at the Straits that separate Lakes Michigan and Huron. The tribes wanted to make sure they were part of the disaster planning process. Officers with the Great Lakes Enforcement Unit helped bridge that cooperative effort by bringing key individuals in to make sure the tribal law enforcement agencies were involved and had input into any response plan.

New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement

An increase in the use of social media sites both in creating complaints and as an informational gathering tool has generated a lot of good cases that have resulted in successful prosecutions.

State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement

Wolf Relisting - A 2014 Federal Court decision placed wolves back on the Federal Endangered Species List thus removing the DNR's ability to have a wolf hunt or to issue any depredation permits to farmers experiencing legitimate wolf/livestock conflicts. Subsequent to the delisting which occurred in 2011, depredation permits were being issued and a wolf hunt ultimately took place in 2013. Conflicts and issues were reduced along with the number of illegal wolf killings and acceptance of wolves was on the upswing. Since the change in status to relisting wolves, complaints are continuing to rise along with the number of illegally killed animals. Challenges are being made opposing this ruling which will hopefully reinstate the DNR's ability to properly manage the wolf population.

Other Special Law Enforcement Issues

Snowmobiles - Michigan has 3,272 miles of snowmobile trails in the Upper Peninsula. Approximately 55% of the trails are on private land and access is at the sole discretion of the landowner. Many private landowners support snowmobiling but are adverse to loud snowmobiles. An extended period of heavy snow, cold temperatures and lower fuel prices across the Upper Peninsula drew a very high volume of snowmobilers to the region this past winter. With this we saw an increase in complaints of careless operation and excessive noise levels. A deeper impact was a number of snowmobile trail leases across private property were in jeopardy. Land owners were frustrated having loud machines operating close to their homes and disrupting them. Some owners have

withdrawn from the lease program thereby causing major issues necessitating rerouting of the trail system. LED has stepped up patrols in these areas and also has been using sound meters to help reduce the conflicts and complaints. LED has partnered with snowmobile user groups to get the message out on legal sound limits and stepped up enforcement.

Yacht Races - The annual Great Lakes Port Huron to Mackinac Yacht race and the Chicago to Mackinac Yacht race both generate a large number of participants and spectators operating very expensive yachts and various other water craft. Each year officers encounter and cite the owners of high dollar vessels, some ranging upwards of 5 million dollars that have never registered their vessels and have not paid the applicable sales tax. When these subjects are cited the courts typically order the vessels be registered before the case can be finalized thus assuring the taxes are paid as well. Many owners have stated they believed their chances of ever being caught were minimal and worth the risk to avoid paying the taxes. Stepped up enforcement in recent years has made this a risky proposition.

Operation Lifesaver - Operation Lifesaver is directed snowmobile enforcement patrols involving railway trespass. Officers partner with the MSP, county sheriff's departments and railroad police targeting railroad trespass. These patrols involve multiple jurisdictions throughout the state several times during each winter season. Railroad trespass accelerates snow compaction between the rails causing train derailments. These patrols are also very important to deter and prevent train/snowmobile collisions.

Operation Take Back Tippy - From September 19 to October 12, 2014, District 4 COs were assigned to Tippy Dam State Park on four consecutive weekends to control the numerous illegal activities occurring during the annual salmon run. During the four week period, group patrols resulted in 179 misdemeanor citations being issued and 8 warrant arrests being made. Total pounds of restitution charged for salmon illegally taken was 839 pounds = \$8,390.00 to the Fish and Game Protection Fund.

Operation 10-Point - During the 2014 firearm deer hunting season, MSP Troopers and DNR COs developed a collaborative effort to reduce the large number of complaints received by dispatch centers regarding reckless and careless driving, speed, and impaired driving on M-115 in Clare and Wexford Counties. MSP troopers stopped vehicles for traffic violations while DNR COs inspected deer transported by these vehicles. While extra enforcement from both agencies took place the entire firearm deer season, during one five-hour period there were 126 vehicles stopped resulting in 65 citations and 86 verbal warnings for traffic and game law related violations.

Security – COs provided security and enforcement efforts at the bi-annual mineral oil lease auctions held at the Lansing Center. These auctions have been a heated topic within the State of Michigan among some of its citizens at many public meetings. The mineral auctions themselves are open to the public to view, but not open to public comment at that point. The auctions have been a challenge to maintain a peaceful and safe environment for all. We have experienced protestors using many levels of tactics from just noise or verbal interruptions, to malicious destruction to the building and/or

anonymous threats. Several arrests have been made in the past with some escalating into resisting arrest. Our security presence inside the building and that of Lansing Police Department outside have reduced the issues significantly, but we continue to plan for the worst with a large law enforcement presence at each auction.

Muskegon River Task Force - In 2014 District 4 COs were assigned to work the Muskegon River Task Force (MRTF). The MRTF is a multi-agency task force involving LED, MSP, Newaygo County and Newaygo City PD officers dedicated to working certain stretches of the Muskegon River. The MRTF was created in response to continued on-going problems on certain stretches of the Muskegon River where large gatherings of tubers, canoers, and kayakers were getting out of hand. Some of these users were creating issues with local land owners by trespassing, littering, creating disturbances, etc. Increasing the problems were a number of boat livery operators not following agreements to limit the amount of rentals they could authorize on a given day. On weekends from approximately June 14 - September 7, 2014 the MRTF conducted heavy patrols which resulted in thousands of contacts, 58 marine no PFD citations being issued, 10 warrant arrests being made (all were lodged), 9 trespassing citations being issued, 9 litter citations, 4 MIP arrests, 3 marijuana use/possession citations, 3 fishing without a license citations, 1 unregistered watercraft citation, and 1 disorderly arrest where the suspect was lodged.

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Minnesota
Submitted by: Col Ken Soring
Date: May 27th, 2015

Training Issues

Recruitment and Training Unit provided 16 hours of Officer Training during annual in-service. This training included defensive tactics, firearms training, and realistic training scenarios. Nine hours of training was provided at the district level in the fall that covered firearms qualifications, defensive tactics, and issued weapon maintenance. The unit also coordinated district level law update training (a new initiative), and employee “right to know” training. Over 40 hours of instructor development training was also provided to the Division’s Use of Force Instructor team. The recruitment section coordinated three summer internships within the Division, answered around 200 requests for information on becoming a Conservation Officer. This section also conducted testing and interviews for the inaugural year of the CO Prep Program.

The Education Section certified 24,540 firearms safety (FAS) certificates in 2014. A total of 9,017 students (2,996 youths/6,021 adults) or 36 percent of FAS students completed the course online.

Funding and Staffing Issues - identify any recent developments in funding, staffing, and diversity in employment issues and describe what prompted these developments and how improvements in funding, staffing and diversity in employment were accomplished.

The division’s Strategic Planning Committee has outlined four major goals, 15 two-year strategies and 13 key actions per goal to ultimately provide better service delivery to the public. The 10 year plan (2015-2025) would also be tied to developing more flexibility in securing natural resources

funding of division operations ranging from ATVs to water recreation, as well as emerging issues such as AIS, groundwater management, and silica sand. The Strategic Plan, when completed in 2015, will mesh the division's link to Minnesota's quality of life and economy with the department's strategic plan "Conservation That Works."

---CO Prep academic training was completed. CO Prep is a legislatively funded initiative aimed increasing diversity in the Conservation Officer ranks. The candidates possess a four-year degree and attended Hennepin Technical College to complete Minnesota Peace Officer License requirements to become a conservation officer (CO). Upon completion of their studies CO Prep participants will attend the 12 week Conservation Officer Academy at Camp Ripley in July 2015.

---In a ceremony marking the culmination of 12 weeks of intensive training, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources welcomed 10 conservation officers to its ranks during a special ceremony Tuesday, July 15, 2014 at Camp Ripley.

---14 officers were promoted while another 5 officers retired. The division currently has nearly 32 vacant licensed positions.

Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends

The Humphrey School of Public Affairs recognized the Department of Natural Resources K-9 program. The DNR zebra mussel detection dogs program received a State Innovation Award from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. State Innovation Awards celebrate the creative work and projects of Minnesota state government.

Of the ten overall winners, three received a professionally produced video to use to share the story of their work with others, including the DNR's zebra mussel detection dogs program. The videos will also be included in the Humphrey School's online repository of digital case studies.

Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts

Late Feb. 20, 2014 CO Todd Langevin of Center City was contacted by the Chisago County Sheriff's Office to assist in locating a missing snowmobiler in the area of Center City.

The snowmobiler was a young woman in her early 20s who had left her parent's home that evening. As she rode on the snowmobile trails, her snowmobile became stuck in the increasing snow. She called 911 because she was unable to free the snowmobile and she did not know where she was at. Chisago County Dispatch was unable to locate her from the cell phone provider and was unable to make contact with her on her cell phone. Chisago County Deputies and North Branch Police Officers started looking for the woman. CO Langevin was called to assist.

CO Langevin loaded his snowmobile into his squad and started towards Center City. He began his search for the woman shortly after midnight on the snowmobile trail when he noticed a black object in a roadside ditch. The object was a snowmobile helmet. The Officer contacted Chisago County Dispatch that he had found a woman in the ditch buried up to her waist in snow and lying on her arms. He was unable to wake her, so he requested dispatch to start paramedics to the area.

CO Langevin began pulling the woman from the ditch and was able to get her on to the road surface. At this time, a North Branch Police Officer arrived and verified the description of the woman. Langevin and the North Branch Officer placed the woman in the back seat of the North Branch squad where she started to wake up and speak. She stated she felt ill, but did not want medical attention. The woman was transported for medical care and evaluation.

---In another instance, several Boy Scouts became stranded after their canoes swamped in rough seas in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and Wilderness on June 12. COs Marty Stage of Ely and Anthony Bermel of Babbitt were the first boat on scene and worked with the a US Forest Service (USFS) pilot and a Lake County deputy to retrieve two cold and soaked young Boy Scouts and their dad, while a Minnesota State Patrol helicopter crew rescued the two other adults from the same party.

Conditions were so rough that a large wave washed over the gunwale and sunk the CO's 16 foot boat at the shoreline as the victims were being loaded aboard. Undaunted, the COs recovered their swamped boat before completing the transport of the wet and waiting Boy Scouts to the island where the USFS was waiting to fly the group to the Ely hospital. In still another incident on that date, a trio of conservation officers used a boat to assist with the rescue of a flood-stranded woman driving along Interstate 90 near the South Dakota border and a State Trooper that had come to her rescue.

---Agencies working together on multi-jurisdictional task forces team up for training sessions and share resources. Such is the case with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) in Grand Rapids.

The fire center was established to facilitate the exchange of fire suppression and support resources for wildfire management, provide a common point for fire intelligence, and to streamline dispatching procedures.

The DNR aviation program, administered by the Enforcement Division, provides aviation services to all divisions and bureaus within the DNR.

Three of DNR enforcement's nine aircraft operate in remote areas of northern Minnesota. Each of the air frames has an onboard satellite and cell tower tracking device that allows the MIFC to track them real time on a moving map as the aircraft works. If the aircraft stops moving on the map a warning goes off in MIFC's dispatch center with a GPS location of the aircraft.

This system was already in place as part of forest fire fighting abilities nationwide, now MIFC allows DNR enforcement to piggy back onto it, increasing flight safety and saving money.

If the DNR went with a system like this, it would be a big ticket item, dollars wise. MIFC will even make phone calls for the pilots, which keeps them in the air longer. For example, if DNR aircraft are operating near the Canadian border MIFC will call U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to advise them, and to receive a special aircraft identification code for the pilot. In the past the pilot would have had to land and call in for this. This cooperative agreement is an example of how agencies can come together to enhance safety and save money.

New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement

Enforcement is now connected to the Law Enforcement Technology Group (LETG) test system for the DNR Enforcement Records Management System (RMS). The system will provide officers in the field real-time data to help with their work. It's currently being used in over 200 law enforcement agencies in Minnesota. The system is currently being tested by a few Officers with full implementation expected by early 2015. New GTech tablets are being issued which allow officers to have access to RMS during remote field patrol.

State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement

Appeals Court placed Grey Wolves back on threatened species list in MN

Fed Appeals court dismissed lacey charges on Tribal Members from the Red Lake and Leech Lake reservation concerning sale of game-fish harvested on reservation but sold off reservation in violation of tribal code, state law, agreement between the state and tribal government.
<http://media.ca8.uscourts.gov/opndir/15/02/133800P.pdf>

Supreme court ruled that Hunter was "taking" deer while sitting in a blind on an ATV with a loaded firearm....confirming conviction in appeals and district courts.
<http://cases.justia.com/minnesota/supreme-court/2015-a13-337.pdf?ts=1424889163>

Cost Savings Initiatives

DNR Enforcement Records Management System (RMS).

More training conducted at the district level or on-line

Eliminated VHF mobile and portable radios and operate only with 800mhz

Updated Mileage/Fleet life cycle to reduce fleet costs.

Significantly reduced out of state travel, moved in-service training to FY16, postponed academy

Other Special Law Enforcement Issues

MN continues to work with Natural Resource Enforcement staff from Tribal agencies. Two bands are seeking a joint powers agreement with the state. Two others have had JPA's for decades.

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Missouri
Submitted by: Larry Yamnitz
Date: May 1, 2015

- **Training Issues** – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is conducting a training academy in 2015. The academy is POST certified and consists of conservation law, boating operations, waterfowl school, firearms training, land management practices, trapping, fish kills, defensive tactics, etc. Pending successful completion of the academy, ten conservation agent trainees will graduate at the end of September.

Protection Division held another statewide conference for all Division personnel in 2015. Training and discussion took place on a variety of topics including; *The Wildlife Code of Missouri*, All Day Turkey Hunting, and Social Media in Conservation Law Enforcement. Gordon Graham was the featured speaker and presented an outstanding program on Risk Management – Considerations in Law Enforcement Operations.

Protection Division graduated four supervisors from the inaugural National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy (NCLELA) in September. All four graduates rated the program as excellent. Three additional supervisors are attending the 2015 NCLELA, and Conservation Agents Becky Robertson and Marsha Jones are scheduled to provide training on the Missouri Discover Nature Girls Camps to the 2015 cohort.

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote diversity within the agency, MDC is sending seven female conservation agents and supervisors to the IACP Women in Law Enforcement Leadership Training in 2015. Protection Division also hosted the 2014 Law Enforcement Leadership component of the AFWA Conference in St. Louis, and is currently putting together the 2015 AMFGLEO Investigators Conference in June.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues** – The Department's budget has been relatively stable over the last few years. Protection Division currently has 212 FTEs. We removed one field agent position and reclassified it to a Programs Specialist in the Central Office. This position will take additional responsibility for agent training classes as well as other duties involving the Atlas Database, Share the Harvest, and Operation Game Thief programs. We also sacrificed five field agent positions by removing them from their county assignments and assigning them to the newly formed Confined Wildlife Enforcement Unit, under the supervision of the Programs Supervisor.

Diversity in employment continues to be a priority for the Department and our Discover Nature Girls Camp programs will help better achieve that goal. These three-day, two night programs introduce females between 11-15 years of age to a hands-on hunter education summer camp. Due to their tremendous popularity, Protection has expanded these camps to all eight regions in 2015. Two female chaperones from recent Girls Camps have made it into each of the last two conservation agent trainee academies. It's just a matter of time before a Girls Camp participant gets hired as a Department employee.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** – In 2014, Missouri's Operation Game Thief (OGT) program received 822 violation reports which resulted in 255 arrests and \$10,150 in rewards paid. The newly designed and professionally wrapped OGT trailer was utilized at twelve special events throughout the state.

During the 2014-2015 deer season, 3,967 hunters donated 213,443 pounds of venison to Missouri's Share the Harvest program. Though still popular with the public, a second year of

below average deer harvests contributed to a reduction in donations. Conservation staff, in addition to our program partner, the Conservation Federation of Missouri, are continually working on securing funding for this valuable program. The Governor of Missouri continues his active interest in Share the Harvest and has assisted in bringing more public awareness to the program.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** – Missouri continues to work with our partners in the USFWS and the US Attorney’s Office to wrap up federal cases against eight individuals indicted on the Operation Roadhouse paddlefish poaching investigation. Several of the defendants are still working their way through the federal court system. To date, 240 out of 256 state charges have been adjudicated with \$61,488.50 in fines and court costs collected. Other investigations involving illegal commercialization of wildlife resources and unlawful movement of captive wildlife are ongoing.
- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – Protection Division continues to embrace technology to better protect Missouri’s fish, forest and wildlife resources. A new “Agent Mobile” application is currently in its second phase of implementation. This new app combines our Active Outdoors (permits system), arrest record, written warning, and Telecheck databases into one, easy-to-use format that conservation agents can access via their iPhones. Initial reports from the field have been positive.

The Department continues to promote electronic hunting and fishing permits, with electronic deer and turkey permits coming this fall. Electronic signatures and permit invalidation continue to be a challenge for Protection but we are committed to working with our IT folks to address those issues.

Agents are increasingly utilizing Telecheck spot checks to verify the accuracy of the Department’s electronic checking system for deer and turkey. Specifically, agents saturate a county on a given day and pay a personal visit to each hunter who checks their harvest. Honest hunters are very happy we’re following up on the self-reported Telecheck system, and unscrupulous hunters are very surprised when an agent shows up at their door within an hour of their check. Violations for permit fraud, over-limits, and fail to properly tag/check are not uncommon.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** – On July 8, 2014, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon vetoed two pieces of legislation, SB506 and HB1326, which would have reclassified captive cervids as “livestock” and placed them under the authority of the Missouri Department of Agriculture. In his veto message, the Governor stated those provisions would go against longstanding successful conservation practices and would violate the Missouri Constitution which gives exclusive authority over game and wildlife resources to the Conservation Commission. The veto came within one vote of an override during the next legislative session.

On January 30, 2015 new comprehensive captive cervid regulations, passed by the Conservation Commission, went into effect. The new regulations ban the importation of live white-tailed deer, mule deer, and their hybrids from other states; improve fencing standards for all facilities holding captive cervids; require participation in a USDA approved CWD herd-certification program, and improve record-keeping procedures among other things.

Since that time, at least 13 new pieces of legislation have been introduced targeting the Conservation Commission’s authority and funding to protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state. Specifically:

SJR1: Expands Conservation Commission to 8 members with one member from each Department Region.

HJR8: Repeals the Conservation Sales and Use Tax. *WITHDRAWN*

HJR27: Proposes a constitutional amendment reducing the conservation sales tax from 1/8 to 1/16 of a cent.

HJR28: Proposes a constitutional amendment requiring the conservation sales tax to be approved by voters every 10 years.

SB56: Eliminates hunting, fishing and trapping permit fees for Missouri residents.

HB710: Allows nonresidents who own property or pay income taxes in Missouri to receive resident hunting and fishing permit privileges.

SB337: Bans the Conservation Commission and the Department of Conservation from engaging in cooperative agreements with not-for-profit corporations.

HB763: Bans the Conservation Commission and the Department of Conservation from engaging in cooperative agreements with not-for-profit corporations.

SB178: Defines Captive Deer as Livestock.

HB315: Requires the Department of Conservation to be responsible for the pickup and disposal of road killed deer along state highways. In addition, the Department shall conduct CWD testing on 10% of the deceased deer along highways and all deer within 25 miles of a CWD positive.

HB317: Requires the Department of Conservation to reimburse automobile owners up to \$500 for damages inflicted upon their vehicles by deer.

HB833: Establishes the Forestry Management Consortium to review and prescribe management plans for forest lands owned by the Department of Conservation

HB834: Prohibits state agencies or entities from purchasing or receiving donated land without the approval of the General Assembly.

HJR39: Proposes a constitutional amendment to repeal the Conservation Commission's authority to acquire land.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives** – Protection Division currently has approximately 120 Protection Volunteers who assist conservation agents and other Department staff with projects including; enforcement patrols, outreach and education programs, training scenarios and wildlife surveys. The volunteer program continues to be a valuable recruitment tool, as the most successful volunteers often make it into our agent training classes.

Another improvement in work effectiveness is the creation of our Confined Wildlife and Commercial Permits Enforcement Program. With the increased emphasis on wildlife disease control and the passage of new captive cervid regulations, Protection Division has updated our confined wildlife and commercial permit inspection procedures. In addition, we've sacrificed five conservation agent field positions to form a Confined Wildlife Enforcement Unit. This five person team, supervised by the Protection Programs Supervisor, works with local conservation agents and permit holders to provide firm, fair and consistent enforcement of all confined wildlife and commercial permit regulations statewide.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues** - Protection Division continues to work diligently with Wildlife Division and other partners on feral hog eradication efforts in Missouri. Two Protection employees actively participate in the Department's aerial gunning program.

The Department reported 11 new cases of CWD in deer harvested in Macon, Adair, and now Cole, counties. These new cases bring the total number of Missouri free-ranging deer that

have tested positive for CWD to 24 overall since the disease was first discovered in the state in 2010 at a private hunting preserve in Linn County. CWD has also been found in 11 captive deer in Macon and Linn counties. Protection Division continues to be very active in CWD containment efforts serving as Incident Commanders in both containment zones and serving on landowner contact and shooting teams.

Conservation agents in Southwest Region made a bear poaching case in Laclede County thanks in-part to social media. The suspect couldn't help but post a picture of himself with the bloodied bear carcass in the back of his truck on Facebook. The post generated enough negative public reaction that agents' phones were soon ringing off the hook. The public cooperation helped Agents Walt Hutton and Jarad Milligan make the first bear poaching case in Missouri within the past 15 years!

Protection continues to increase our involvement in special hunts for military veterans throughout the state. Agents conducted or participated in four wounded military veteran appreciation related events including; Wounded Warriors in Action, Veterans of Valor, Ft. Leonard Wood Warrior Transition Unit, and Wounded Warriors. Community support for these events has been outstanding!

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: North Dakota
Submitted by: Chief Robert Timian
Date: May 14, 2015

- **Training Issues** - Late summer 2015 in conjunction with local USFWS selected Game Wardens will be given enhanced training in waterfowl violation detection and investigation. All staff continue to attend various career enhancement training opportunities both in state and out of state.
- **Funding and Staffing Issues** – Major upgrade in electronic, computer and software in the patrol vehicles in an effort to get our officers in equilibrium with other law enforcement agencies. This upgrade includes CAD system, GPS locating, and video equipment.

We currently are in the process of hiring due to retirements and the resignation of our Warden/pilot. Currently, we are looking at the possibility of training in-house a ND Game Warden to fill the pilot position.

Work load for Enforcement continues to increase state wide with the most dramatic increases in the oil impacted area of the state. We will continue to do what we can with existing manpower and resources through technology and prioritization until 2017, as there was no increase in Game Wardens, and it is unknown at this time what, if any, funds will be allocated for overtime.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends** -
- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts** - We continue work through MOU's with our local law enforcement agencies for a specific Missouri River Patrol task force

in the Bismarck/Mandan area. The positive impact this multiple agency patrol task force under the direction of the Enforcement Division has seen a dramatic decrease in complaints from the public. This is a directly related to more high visibility patrol resulting in improve compliance.

We continually work with the Native American tribes in North Dakota for cooperative fish and wildlife law enforcement agreements.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement** – With the new MDT's being acquired we are also going to be installing docking stations on our two Boston Whalers. This will allow for better call assignment, by our State Radio dispatchers, on the river system throughout the summer months.
- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement** – As of the writing of this report our legislative session has just complete its work and we are reviewing and coordinating the Attorney General's office to give our offices a comprehensive review of law changes that will have affect them in carrying out their duties prior to the effective date of the new laws of August 1, 2015.
- **Cost Savings Initiatives** – Cost savings are difficult to find as increasing mandated bureaucratic procedures over which the department has little or no control are increasingly taking more time and resources.
- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: OHIO
Submitted by: KEN FITZ
Date: 4-30-2015

- **Training Issues**
- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

While not viewed as a positive development, due to a lack of license fee increases in the face of increasing costs; programs and staffing levels were evaluated agency –wide. A recommendation was made to temporarily place a hold on 8 investigator (detective) positions, keeping the officers in uniformed wildlife officer positions as long as possible. Planning for a cadet class to be held in 2016 was moved back one year, with the anticipated hiring and background investigation phase taking place in 2016 for a 2017 academy.

Working with the fish management section, grant money was used for equipment purchased for the inspection and detection of aquatic invasive species, as well as for associated manpower costs. As Asian carp are found in the Ohio River basin, but not yet in the Lake Eire Basin we are trying to be proactive to prevent movement through the bait industry or in bait caught for personal use.

As of this writing, legislative action is being sought to provide for an increase in nonresident hunting license and deer permit fees.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

We are the responsible agency for ginseng enforcement in our state. With the ever increasing popularity of television shows such as Appalachian Outlaws, Ohio has seen a two fold increase in the number of harvesters and a three-fold increase in ginseng related arrest. This activity has become a significant time drain from traditional fish and game enforcement for field officers.

Officers continue to encounter mobile drug labs on Division of Wildlife owned properties. These labs pose a number of hazards, including exposure to volatile or toxic chemicals, burns or explosions.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

A major Lacey Act case was completed, with sentencing scheduled for July 2015. This case involves the interstate sale and movement of deer and the illegal operation of a high-fence hunting preserve. The main defendant pleaded guilty to 12 charges related to violating the Lacey Act, one count of conspiracy and one count of wire fraud. This case involved Ohio, the USFWS, Georgia, and Florida. It started in September 2010 when Ohio Wildlife Officers noticed deer noses and antlers inside a cargo trailer and pulled over a truck driven by the defendant's employees.

Ohio continues to partner with other states in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, participates in NACLEC, AFWA, MAFWA and the Great Lakes Fish Commission as well as AMFGLEO and other law enforcement partnership opportunities.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

Underwater cameras were purchased for use in detection of aquatic invasive species in bait tanks, aquaculture facilities as well as fish hauling trucks.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

A case is currently before the state supreme court to determine if the forfeiture of the antlers and meat of an illegally harvested deer are sufficient compensation to the state or if monetary restitution is also due in addition to the forfeiture. Under Ohio Revised Code, the deer in question has a value of nearly \$28,000 dollars. It was forfeited to the state in the criminal case, however the state is seeking restitution as a civil matter.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

Ohio has initiated a web-based system for its wildlife related permitting processes. The ability to establish work-flow for field approval of permits and utilize one site for data storage of all permit types has improved efficiency, saving manpower costs. The agency has also seen a savings in copying and postage cost.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

None noted at this time.

Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State: OKLAHOMA
Col. Robert Fleenor, Chief
Prepared by: Capt. David Deckard
Date: May 13, 2015

The following report covers the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 (FY2015) for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Law Enforcement Division.

AGENCY OVERVIEW:

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Law Enforcement Division game warden's primary responsibility is to enforce the State's wildlife laws. Game wardens also participate and assist in all phases of the Wildlife Department's operations and programs.

The division consists of 118 employees, with a field force of 90 game wardens, 16 game warden supervisors and 8 district chiefs. Central office staff includes the chief, assistant chief, operations manager and one secretary.

In addition, the agency has a reserve force consisting of 48 reserve officers who are agency employees assigned to various divisions whose primary duties are other than law enforcement.

The division operates with a straight-line chain of command.

TRAINING ISSUES:

All new game wardens undergo a five to six week division academy and ten weeks in the Field Training and Evaluation Program with a Field Training Officer. In addition, they also attend the 600-hour Oklahoma Basic Law Enforcement Academy, all totaling nearly 30 weeks of training prior to solo assignment.

All game wardens are now required by state mandate to complete twenty-five hours of law enforcement training and two hours of mental health training each year. In addition, all supervisors are also required to attend twelve hours of supervisory training each year. New supervisors are required to attend 24 hours within one year after promotion.

They are also required to train and qualify annually with their pistols, shotguns and carbines. In addition, game wardens must also attend an annual 8 hour defensive tactics refresher course.

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES:

Funding remains basically unchanged from the previous year. We are fortunate that we are a revenue based agency and not experiencing any funding shortfalls cause by the downturn in the oil gas industry. Our division received an additional \$100,000 to help with exigent expenses that may not have funded in the budget.

Eight new game wardens completed their initial training during this period. Three new game warden candidates are expected to start June 1. Additional vacancies are expected this fall due to anticipated retirements.

The Department conducted a Hay Group study regarding employee pay last year. The results allowed for numerous employees to receive substantial pay raises. The starting pay for new game wardens was increased by \$6,000 to \$38,344.00 per year. The higher pay scale has helped with recruiting and retention of employees. The higher pay has attracted more experienced certified officers from both in-state and out of state.

We were able to purchase 23 Chevrolet four-wheel drive extended cab pickups this year. All of the trucks are converted to use CNG. The state now has a mandatory Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) requirement for most state vehicles. The CNG requirement cost the Division \$9,500 per vehicle for each aftermarket conversion for a total \$190,000 additional cost for vehicles. The cost savings per vehicle for the CNG are projected to break even at 70,000 miles or about three years. The equipment for this year's trucks has been upgraded with LED light bars, and grill guards.

We were able to purchase of 50 800mgz radios last year that were badly needed for wardens to be able to communicate in certain counties. The radios are still being installed with about half deployed so far.

We also were able to purchase an 18' deep V patrol boat to be used in the eastern part of the state. Other equipment purchased includes 16 sets of night vision goggles and we are also replacing our old inflatable PFDs with new hydrostatic inflatable PFDs.

We are in the process of replacing our 870 shotguns of which many are over twenty years old.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS:

Social media continues play an enforcement role in wildlife enforcement. There have been several violations discovered and prosecuted with help of social media. The division created a Face Book page that has been well received and has helped with violations and public relations.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS:

The division continues to cooperate with every state in efforts to combat fraudulent license applications and interstate wildlife violations.

We continue to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in enforcing the federal laws occurring in our state.

We are currently in the process of updating our division procedure manual and many states have shared their policies and procedures that has been very helpful.

NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT:

We implemented an Investigation Unit last year to help combat the commercialization of wildlife. We currently have four investigators who work on a part-time as needed basis. A full-time investigator position was approved for our budget, but there is a current hiring freeze due to unexpected drop in state revenue created by the declining oil industry. We have had some initial success already and expect to increase activity in the future.

The Department recently deployed an on-line hunter education course that has decreased the demand for traditional classroom courses taught by game wardens.

The On-line check station or E-Check is now the main method of checking deer and turkeys. Paddlefish are now required to be checked on-line with E-Check starting this year as well. Turkeys are now to be checked in statewide starting this year. Previously, turkeys taken in the eastern half of the state were required to be checked in.

Game wardens are now entering leave requests and vehicle fuel and equipment purchases electronically versus the old paper method that has been used for years. We are currently researching the feasibility of a RMS and or a CAD type system.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Legislation was introduced last year to prevent certified officers in the state to take cash from violators. The bill was pulled. It would have adversely affected our officers to sell temporary hunting/fishing licenses and administrative fines in the field. License violators are allowed to purchase 30-day temporary licenses in lieu of going through the court system and saving themselves money. The administrative fine allows a violator to pay a reduced fine in lieu of going through the court system for certain commission regulations in the field. The administrative fine is set at one half of the regular fine or \$106 versus \$206 for the cost of a regular fine in the court system. It allows a person to save at least \$106 and not have to go to court or have a public criminal record for a wildlife violation.

New legislation passed for this year included a change of statute concerning the mesh size for turtle trappers, and, adding certain means of taking of exotic animals on commercial hunting areas. Two license related bills were passed that allowed non-resident archery deer permits to expire at the end of the season rather than on December 31 and a new three day conservation to allow persons without hunting or fishing permit to access department lands.

Other changes include a change in additional species for decoy operations and changes in trapping and fur dealer regulation.

The Wildlife Commission approved a rule change this year that prevents the filleting of fish while on the water. This rule will help our officers enforce compliance of certain fish species bag and length limits,

The Wildlife Commission voted to allow our Director to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with Cherokee Tribe. The Cherokee has codified wildlife rules for their tribal members and they are requesting a Native American hunting or fishing license for their members in the original fourteen county tribal reservation in northeastern Oklahoma. The area is a prime area for hunting and fishing in the state. It is uncertain at this time how this agreement will affect our license and federal aid revenue. Oklahoma has more than forty separate federally recognized tribes in the state and the impact may be substantial if other tribes follow the Cherokees.

COST SAVING INITIATIVES:

Fuel costs continue to be a concern in Oklahoma. Game wardens are encouraged to use time management and to work wisely while conducting their patrols. Fuel saving initiatives has been implemented to help offset costs, including the installation of after market CNG conversions, which will greatly impact our fuel bill. Nearly three quarters of our fleet has been converted to CNG.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:

Enforcement of the illegal harvest and sale of paddlefish eggs for caviar continues to be a major enforcement issue. Game wardens maintain an increased enforcement emphasis during the annual spring spawn to help curtail the illegal activities associated with the illegal caviar trade. Game wardens write a enormous amount of tickets each to maintain compliance with the paddlefish rules.

The paddlefish rules were changed limiting anglers to 2 fish per year and they must also check the fish in via E-Check. Paddlefish anglers can still catch and release.

Game wardens are involved in several Department programs that involve the recruitment and retention of anglers and hunters. The programs include an annual Wildlife Expo and an annual Archery in the Schools statewide tournament. Both programs require an enormous amount of manpower and associated costs in these popular and worthwhile projects. Other programs include the annual Wildlife Youth Camp, STEP programs and Aquatic Education. The recruitment and retention of fishermen and hunters and the sale of licenses to them is vital to our agency.

WAFWA LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE
2015 PROVINCIAL REPORT – SASKATCHEWAN
Submitted By: Tim Neuman, Intelligence Officer

AGENCY OVERVIEW:

In the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, there are 186 law enforcement positions from Chief to seasonal conservation officers. Of this number, there are 134 full time conservation officers and 52 seasonal positions. Seasonal positions are less than a full year duration. All conservation officers are sworn peace officers for the Acts and regulations they are designated to enforce. In addition, full time conservation officers are deemed Special Constables who can enforce all Acts and regulations.

The Compliance and Field Services Division has seven Compliance Areas entailing 46 districts. The number of districts varies from three in one of the northern Compliance Areas to eight in a few southern/central Compliance Areas. Each area has an Area Manager (who is a conservation officer) and from 2 – 3 second in command (2I/C) conservation officers. The 2I/C is responsible for the conservation officers in the 1 – 3 districts in his sub area. Each district has a minimum of two conservation officers and up to six (including the 2I/C) depending on the activity of that district.

Included in the 134 full time positions are an Investigations Unit and the Provincial Training & Education Unit. Both managers are conservation officers. The Investigations Unit includes a manager, plainclothes investigators, undercover operators, intelligence officer, data management unit officer and environmental officers. The Provincial Training & Education Unit includes a manager, the core provincial training officers and education/public relations officers. The one provincial K-9 officer reports to the Chief of Compliance and Enforcement.

TRAINING ISSUES

- Saskatchewan is a member of the Western States Project that trains officers in environmental protection. It continues to send conservation officers and environmental protection officers for this training when approved by the Ministry for out of province travel.
- Saskatchewan will be hosting the Western Canadian Law Enforcement Academy (WCLEA) at Candle Lake Resort, north of Prince Albert, in the fall of this year. This is a 16 week course designed to qualify the candidate as a conservation officer. WCLEA started in 2007 and up to 2014 has turned out 196 graduates who are qualified to be full time conservation officer in their home province. This year there is an expected enrolment of between 24 and 35 candidates. These would be from British Columbia, Alberta, Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES:

- The Investigations unit is now fully staffed with two undercover positions filled and two more trained officers in waiting. Also filled was a plain clothes position tasked with working with the districts on more complex files requiring plain clothes assistance.
- The Ministry is preparing for more Senior Conservation Officer retirements in the districts this year. Approximately 1/3 of the full time positions are filled by officers with less than 10 years' experience.
- The Ministry's Data Management Unit will continue to be the data depository for all resource information produced by field conservation officers, Ministry branches and the public. It will develop intelligence from this information, handle special requests from officers and other function along this manner. Two staff have been trained in the i2 program to assist with information analysis.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS:

- One trend is the expansion of fish and wildlife violations found through social media such as Facebook, Kijiji and local buy/sell sites. Saskatchewan has developed a canned message for Kijiji and a second message for Facebook or buy/sell sites. These are to be sent to posters of the legal requirements and warning the next step could be prosecution.
- With increased provincial economic growth, activities affecting the environment are expanding. There is an increase of engineering companies in the province that are not familiar with the regulatory policy. New engineering companies entering the province are by-passing approvals for permits and not getting licences for the environmental protection of their operations.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS:

- Assisted the Yukon with information on Saskatchewan's protocols, bulletins and forms for their development of conservation officer standards
- Provided Ontario with lists of eastern provinces hunters in Saskatchewan who hunted white-tailed deer. This was to assist with planning of enforcement stops of hunters entering Ontario with potentially CWD infected deer.

NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT:

- Saskatchewan has developed a satellite based monitoring system for low traffic areas such as illegal bait sites, trails behind closed areas, etc. The unit combines a SPOT Personal Locator Beacon and a metal sensor. The unit notifies a conservation officer on his cellular phone when a vehicle passes by the metal sensor and enters into the area to be monitored.
- The investigations unit used a tracking unit for the first time on a poaching case last fall. The unit transmitted for 81 days before running out of power.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT:

- Telephone companies want a production order before they will supply basic subscriber information on a telephone number. One suggestion by a telephone company representative was to have legislation under a specific Act, such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Act, stating a telephone company must provide this information. This would have to be similar to the legislation the Canadian Revenue Agency and Canadian Border Service Agency have enacted.

COST SAVING INITIATIVES:

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:

- The illegal water drainage by a landowner pits him against other landowners downstream. This draining affects other jurisdictions downstream in Manitoba and North Dakota by adding more water into the river systems causing more flooding.
- The illegal sale of commercial and/or subsistence fishing of walleye continues to be a problem.

**AMFGLEO/WAFWA Law Enforcement Annual Report
State Report – South Dakota**

*By: Andy Alban
Law Enforcement Administrator
Division of Wildlife
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks*

This report covers the period April 1, 2014, through March 31, 2015, for the State of South Dakota, Department of Game, Fish and Parks - Division of Wildlife - Law Enforcement Program.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Are officers 100% Wildlife Law Enforcement or Mixed: **Mixed**

Straight Line Reporting Structure: **No** – Regional Supervisor positions have reverted to non-LE (1 of 4 is still a certified officer). Additionally, the Assistant Director position (supervises four Regional Supervisors and the LE Administrator) is a non-enforcement position.

Number of Officers: **77 total officers in Wildlife Division:** 53 CO's, 12 District CO Supervisors, 4 Regional CO Supervisors, 1 Training Supervisor, 1 Regional Supervisor, 1 Regional Program Manager, 2 CO Specialists, 2 Investigators, 1 LE Administrator.

TRAINING ISSUES

Boating Validation Study

This past summer, 24 conservation officers from across the state took part in a national validation study sponsored by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and United States Coast Guard. The validation study was the second of its kind being conducted on the Seated Battery of Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFSTs). The Seated SFST's were designed for the marine environment and allow law enforcement officers to investigate impaired boat operators while remaining on the water.

Having already been researched and validated previously, this study set out to answer two questions about the Seated SFSTs. First, does the training currently given to officers nationwide produce the same levels of preparedness in administering the tests that was produced for the original validation study? Second, is there evidence that marine officers can sustain that level of preparedness in the course of their daily routine for prolonged periods of time like months and years?

The South Dakota study took place in Yankton and was ran from June 27th through September 1st. Patrolling mainly weekends and holidays, conservation officers ensured their patrol efforts were being utilized during peak boating periods. During the course of the study, conservation officers administered the Seated SFSTs to 79 individuals and made 17 arrests for Boating Under the Influence (BUI). Those 17 arrests accounted for 52% of the BUI arrests across the state in 2014.

Results of the study indicated that the current training officers receive nationwide produces somewhat lower preparedness results than those that were produced for the original validation study. However, in 2014, South Dakota was the only state to participate the in the study resulting in a much smaller sample size being collected than what was originally designed for the multiyear study. Therefore, analysis from the results of the 2014 South Dakota study are being interpreted with extreme caution and it is the hope of the researchers that further study across a much larger (multi-study site) scale can be conducted in the years to come to fully answer the questions set out at the beginning of this study.

University Law Enforcement Class

We continue to expand our efforts in assisting with lectures for the Wildlife Law Enforcement class, offered in the fall of every other year at South Dakota State University. In the fall of 2014, we helped instruct two-hour lab sessions on seven different dates. Topics included:

- Department Organization/Mission/Motto
- Law Enforcement Creed
- History of Wildlife Law Enforcement in SD
- Legislative Process
- Rules Promulgation
- Conservation Officer Duties and Authority
- Conservation Officer Hiring Process
- Conservation Officer Training and Demos (Training Officer Program/Firearms/Defensive Tactics/Patrol Vehicle Setup)
- Overview/Explanation of Major Hunting/Fishing/Boating Laws/Rules
- Search & Seizure, including Open Fields Doctrine Discussion
- Evidence Collection/Forensics
- Interview/Interrogation
- Arrest/Criminal Procedure Overview
- Use of Discretion
- Improving Compliance (Turn In Poachers Program, License Revocation, Interstate Wildlife Violator's Compact, Wildlife Replicas)

Potential for New University Curriculum/Major

We are anxiously awaiting formal approval by the South Dakota Board of Regents for a new Bachelor of Science degree to be offered at South Dakota State University; Natural Resource Law Enforcement.

It is anticipated that the program will begin with the fall 2016 semester. Freshman registering for classes during the spring/summer of 2015 will be able to select the major. The formal approval is slated for some time in June. The coursework (120 hours) was designed with input from our agency, as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It is essentially a modified Wildlife and Fisheries curriculum with a heavy emphasis on:

- Identification (i.e., mammalogy, ichthyology, ornithology, herpetology) classes
- Management (i.e., wildlife management, fisheries management) classes
- Natural Resource Laws and Policies
- Minimum of 21 hours of criminal law/sociology courses required (will receive a Criminal Justice minor)
- Semester-long internship (at least 45 hours of contact) required during sophomore year to prepare students to compete for summer internships/seasonal jobs
- Certification/training opportunities/workshops (Wilderness First Aid, Conflict Resolution, Chemical Immobilization)

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES

Budget Results in Reduced Spending

Nonresident small game licenses are a major source of revenue for the agency. The 2014 pheasant index increased 76% compared to the 2013 index, but was still 53% lower than the 10-year average. This increase still resulted in a 5% increase in nonresident small game license sales. On the other hand, efforts to increase deer and antelope herds over a majority of the state required a reduction in antlerless licenses (42,000 fewer antlerless deer offered and only 20 antlerless antelope licenses offered). Both resident and nonresident fishing license sales were strong and helped offset the loss of revenue with other licenses. However, overall budget spending was reduced in FY14.

Conservation Officer Numbers Steady

Our workforce of Conservation Officers steadied during the past year as a result of constant recruitment whenever there is an academy class. Our officers begin their tenure by attending the State Law Enforcement Academy, in Pierre, and there are three sessions offered each year. Also helping matters is a noticeable reduction in the number of officers leaving for Conservation Officer jobs in other states or employment with the Highway Patrol or Division of Criminal Investigation within our state. At this time of this document, 53 of 55 field positions were filled and we had two trainees at various stages in the field training process that would ultimately fill both vacancies. It takes approximately eight months to train an officer before they are slated for solo duty in a vacant duty station.

New Department Secretary

Governor Dennis Daugaard selected Kelly Hepler to replace the retiring Jeff Vonk and serve as the next secretary of our agency that includes three divisions; Wildlife, Parks and Administration. Secretary Hepler, originally from South Dakota, previously served as Assistant Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), a position he held since 2010. Secretary Hepler began his career as a fisheries biologist with ADFG in 1979 and has held a number of different research, management and leadership positions within the department. He served as a principal investigator for the Exxon Valdez oil spill from 1989 to 1991.

Potential for Increased Employee Pay

In this year's budget address, the Governor proposed a state budget that included funds to increase annual salaries and reward state employees for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. The South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) conducted a survey examining the pay and benefits of state employees compared to in-state public and private employers, and the six surrounding state governments. The results of the survey determined we are behind the market (17.3% in-state and 19% six surrounding states) in base salaries. Based on the results of the survey, BHR created a new compensation system with new pay grades and higher market values (formerly job worth). The new system increases the income potential for most state employees and allows some employees who are currently at job worth to increase their pay above the annual salary adjustment.

A 2% salary increase will automatically be applied to all eligible permanent state employees under the new compensation system, beginning July 1, 2015. This increase will be added to their base salary. In addition to the initial salary increase, eligible employees under the new compensation system will receive up to a 2% movement toward market value. This increase will be added to the base pay for those who have completed the probationary period and are under market value in the new compensation system. In May of 2015, each employee will receive a letter detailing their new individual pay rate, grade, and range. It has been guaranteed that no employee will lose money under the new system. In the future, the move towards market value is proposed to be based upon work performance.

One note of interest is that Conservation Officers were placed in the "General" pay structure category and not the "Law Enforcement" pay structure category, due mainly to a definition of "law enforcement employee" in state code pertaining to employee benefits. We are considered a "law enforcement officer" in many other statutes in state code and are identified as a member of the state constabulary, so this news was disheartening to many officers when it broke.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

Societal Changes Also Affect Conservation Officer Cases

A recent query of the most frequent violations/arrests encountered by Conservation Officers was proof positive to the notion that officers are spending more time with non-wildlife related issues (drugs and alcohol). Underage possession/consumption of alcohol, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of marijuana were all in the Top 10. The top three (in order) were fishing without a license, insufficient PFD's, and spotlighting. Other common violations included unlawful possession of big game, fish length limit violations, hunting trespass, and over limit of fish.

New Aquatic Invasive Species Rules

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission finalized several rules at their March meeting to prevent the introduction and slow the spread of existing aquatic invasive species in the state. Within the past year, both quagga and zebra mussels were found in our state (one sample of each found in two different reservoirs). New regulations include:

- Boaters and anglers are required to open or remove all drain plugs or similar devices; except when in the boat ramp parking lot or when the boat is being launched or loaded. A boat may have these devices closed or in place while in route to a fish cleaning station that is immediately adjacent to where the boat was loaded, but they must be opened or removed before leaving the fish cleaning station.
- Bait and fish may not be transported in water taken from a lake, river or stream. Bait may be transported in water taken from a lake, river or stream only while in route to a fish cleaning station that is located immediately adjacent to the lake, river or stream, but must be drained prior to leaving the fish cleaning station.

- Anglers will have three options for transporting whole fish for cleaning at home; in a container (not a part of the boat) that is filled with domestic water (tap water, well water, bottled water, ice), on ice – in a cooler or pull the plug on their livewell and fill it with ice (plug must remain out), or dry - put fish in an empty bucket or pull the livewell plug before leaving the boat ramp and let it drain when traveling.
- Bait can only be transported away from a waterbody in domestic water (tap water, well water, bottled water, ice). Boat anglers can wait until they reach an immediately adjacent fish cleaning station to put their bait in domestic water. They can dump out the lake water and fill their bait bucket up with water from the cleaning station or water they brought with them. A shore angler can do the same if they are able to access the domestic water source at a fish cleaning station that is immediately adjacent or if they bring domestic water with them. Minnows may be used in multiple lakes as long as they are transported between lakes in domestic water. Lake water must be drained before leaving each lake. Unused minnows should be poured into the fish grinder at a cleaning station or drained and disposed of in the trash containers at the boat launch or cleaning areas. It is a violation of state law to dump unused minnows into a waterbody.

We also launched a new website (<http://sdleastwanted.com>) which includes information on AIS Laws and Regulations, AIS Species Information, Boat Wash Locations and Tips, News and Updates, Maps, and more.

NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

Game Warden App Developed to Check Licenses

Our agency owns, operates, and manages a hunting/fishing/trapping license sales system that processes over 650,000 transactions annually for nearly 400,000 unique license holders. Our current hunting, fishing and trapping license system allows for people to purchase a license 'online' and print it off at home, so there is no 'official' paper that the license is printed on. The only way to verify that someone has a valid license and has not altered or forged a hunting, fishing or trapping license is to check that license against our database. In early-2015, we began using a smart phone Android application that provides Conservation Officers with a tool to access "real-time" hunting and fishing license holder data in the field. The application will eventually use the device camera to scan a unique barcode on an individual's paper license, which will be uniquely associated to their license information. We purchased Samsung Galaxy S5's for each officer and they seem to be functioning well on multiple levels; license checks, phone service, email service, and digital cameras.

STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES, AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT

2015 Legislative Session

The 2015 Legislative Session saw a fewer number of bills affecting our agency, compared to recent years. Bills that passed include: a provision to allow bullheads to be used as bait, revisions to fur dealer records/inspection requirements, a provision to limit who may request another individual's hunting/fishing license, and a restriction to when personal watercraft may be operated without lights.

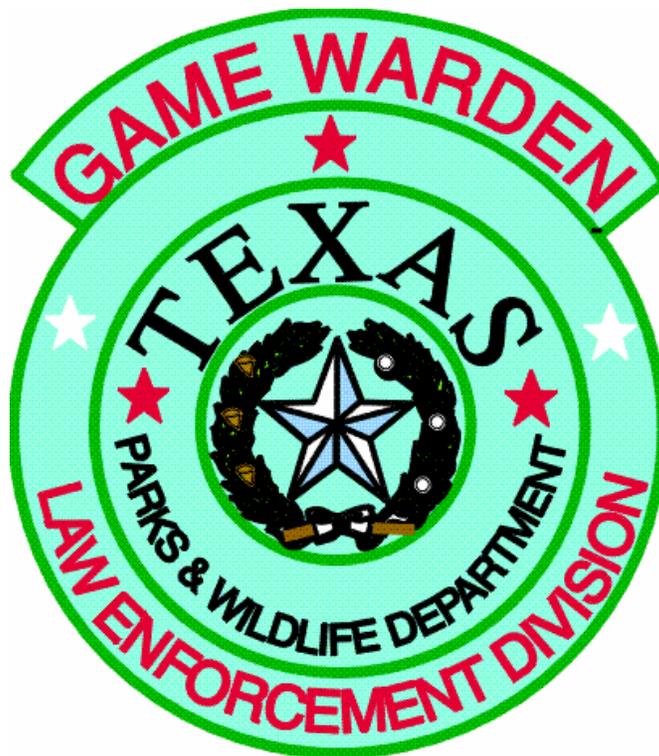
2014 Legislative Session

Below is a summary of applicable legislation that was enacted in 2014.

- House Bill 1012 – An Act to provide for free resident fishing licenses for certain entities teaching basic fishing skills. This bill amends 41-6-35 to provide an exemption from the fishing license requirement for any school, governmental entity, charitable or nonprofit organization conducting an event, class, or program for the purpose of teaching basic fishing skills.
- House Bill 1014 – An Act to increase the nonrefundable application fee for resident bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and elk licenses. This bill amends 41-6-19.6 to provide an increase (\$5 to \$10) in the application fee for bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and elk licenses.
- House Bill 1076 – An Act to revise certain requirements relating to party fishing. This bill amends 41-12-21 by creating additional allowances (from shore and from the ice) for party fishing. Persons engaged in this activity must maintain visual and unaided vocal contact. Party fishing is limited to hook and line fishing, not spearfishing.
- House Bill 1110 – An Act to revise certain provisions regarding the definition of a resident for the purposes of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses. This bill amends 41-1-1.1 by creating an additional allowance for residency for those persons who previously had a domicile in SD that have left the state due to the person's regular attendance in a medical or dental residency program.
- House Bill 1118 – An Act to clarify certain provisions about discharging firearms in safety zones. This bill amends 41-9-1.1 by prohibiting the discharge of a firearm within a 660' safety zone (along road right of way where hunting is normally allowed). Prior to this bill, the subject had to be in the act of hunting in order to satisfy the elements of the crime.
- House Bill 1129 – An Act to prohibit the use of certain explosive targets in the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District. This bill creates a new statute in SDCL 34-35 that prohibits (Class 2 Misdemeanor) exploding targets (except on designated shooting ranges) within the BHFPD and assigns liability to those persons violating this law that cause damage/fire.
- House Bill 1130 – An Act to authorize the use of crossbows for hunting big game animals during the firearm season. This bill creates a new statute in SDCL 41-8 that allows for the use of a crossbow to hunt big game in a firearm season. Essentially, those issued a license to take big game animal with a firearm (i.e. NOT archery and muzzleloader specific licenses) may utilize a crossbow as a legal weapon in lieu of a firearm. The bill also specifies certain legal crossbow equipment specifications.
- House Bill 1185 – An Act to revise certain provisions relating to nonresident waterfowl licenses. This bill amends 41-6-18.1 and 41-6-18.4, essentially placing the responsibility (within some defined parameters) for allocating nonresident waterfowl licenses and types with the Game, Fish & Parks Commission.
- Senate Bill 104 – An Act to authorize the use of night vision equipment for hunting under certain conditions. This bill amends 41-8-17 by allowing a landowner or occupant and one guest accompanied by the landowner or occupant to utilize/possess night vision

equipment on the owner's or occupant's land. It also removes the .22 caliber requirement from the statute, making it simply a rimfire firearm (which now legalizes .17 calibers).

**Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law
Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Texas**



**Submitted by: Major Larry E. Young – Texas Parks and Wildlife
Department – Law Enforcement Division
2015**

Training Issues – The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Law Enforcement Division (TPWD-LE) continues to encourage and promote relevant training to ensure game wardens are prepared to meet the demands of their job. Some highlights from the past year include:

- The NASBLA Boat Programs Officer Water Survival Course is being rolled out statewide with great results. Game Warden Training Center (GWTC) staff continues to certify field wardens across the State in Officer Water Survival (OWS) training, with very positive response from those that attend. Game Wardens continue to express the significant impacts it is having on their presence of mind in waterborne operations and confidence in their ability to survive an unexpected water entry.
- The GWTC is exploring the possibility of creating a Game Warden Brigade program working through the program's founder, Dale Rollins. The Brigade program is designed to foster future leaders in conservation. This type of a joint venture ties in with a new recruitment emphasis attempting to reach out to potential diverse game warden applicants at a younger level.
- The 59th academy is well underway as it starts the fifth month of a 7 month process. There are 21 Game Warden cadets and 4 Park Peace Officer cadets. The 59th academy is the first attempt by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at merging Park Peace Officer cadets and Game Warden cadets into one uniform academy for training.
- A statewide technology training initiative is nearing completion. All field staff received training on the use of various iPhone applications to help increase officer safety and efficiency. These include applications developed both in-house and proprietary, and allow officers to access numerous department state and federal databases from a handheld device.
- Texas Game Wardens continue to utilize the NASBLA Seated Field Sobriety batter of test to determine intoxicated boat operators across the state. Prior to the official kick off of the boating season, Texas Game Wardens have been provided with a refresher course and an opportunity to practice their skills.
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Law Enforcement Division (TPWD – LE) now has 10 K-9 Teams fully trained with a primary focus on search and rescue, with additional capabilities in narcotics detection, wildlife detection, and article search. In its first year, the K-9 Team has located 16 people and assisted in numerous narcotics and resource related arrests.

- TPWD-LE continues with a strong tradition of representation at the prestigious FBI – National Academy with game wardens attending when in positions are offered to the LE division. The 10 week course of study is instrumental in providing the training to prepare ranking game wardens for future roles in senior management. In addition, TPWD-LE has expanded leadership training to include the FBI – Law Enforcement Executive Development Association training classes as well as the FBI – National Academy Associates Command College.

Funding and Staffing Issues – TPWD-LE continues to maintain a substantial force of over 500 game wardens statewide. As with many agencies TPWD-LE has had to work with senior management, legislators, and constituents to ensure the strong tradition of Texas Game Wardens continues and adapts to the ever changing working conditions and job duties. The Law Enforcement Division continues its efforts to update the vehicle fleet and aircraft. Some highlights include:

- TPWD – LE expects delivery of an additional 128 patrol vehicles in the very near future that will be outfitted with overhead light-bars to match the 130 patrol vehicles delivered last year. All new patrol vehicles are being assigned to field personnel as efforts continue to update the fleet.
- TPWD-LE has a new Airbus AS350B3e helicopter that was purchased with funds appropriated by the 83rd Session of the Texas Legislature. The new helicopter is equipped with the following: Night Sun Search light, laser pointing light, a rescue hoist and cargo hook, and MX-10 Thermal Imager/video camera system operated by the Co-pilot/Tactical Flight Officer that sends images to a Churchill Monitor and to two thumb drive USB storage disks. This new state-of-the-art helicopter has already been extremely effective as another law enforcement tool for the division.
- As mentioned above, a new Game Warden cadet class started January 5, 2015 and this is the first class to include cadets from the State Parks division that will serve as Park Peace Officers upon graduation from the 7 month academy.

Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends – Significant advances have been made by TPWD-LE in support of major conservation law enforcement trends. Whether working traditional conservation law enforcement efforts in federal waters or being the lead agency on border operations game wardens continue to adapt and excel as their job duties change and expand. A few examples of TPWD-LE involvement in these trends include:

- TPWD-LE has conducted numerous fisheries outreach events for other government and non-government agencies as well industry personnel to ensure commercial and sport fishing regulations are understood and concerns are addressed.
- TPWD-LE is recognized as being the lead agency enforcing the Texas Water Safety Act on all public waters in the state. Boating While Intoxicated (BWI) is an integral part of that enforcement effort and game wardens have incorporated “no refusal weekends” and “mandatory blood draws” as tools to be utilized when handling BWI suspects.

- Border operations continue to be an enforcement effort game wardens are involved with along the Texas/Mexico border and in the Gulf of Mexico. TPWD-LE game wardens fill a vital niche with their expertise of navigating the waterways and back country of rural Texas. Some of the most challenging areas for game wardens to patrol are the remote mountains and canyons in the Big Bend region of west Texas. While maintaining these patrols game wardens are constantly in search of illegal drug and human smuggling activity in addition to their enforcement efforts of the Texas Parks and Wildlife and Penal Code. These operations serve a dual purpose by allowing game wardens to practice conservation law enforcement while serving as a force multiplier providing security along the border.

Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts – TPWD-LE continues its involvement with several cooperative enforcement efforts with federal and state partners which include:

- The TPWD - LE continues to work with the Department of Nuclear Detection and Oakridge National Laboratories in rolling out a comprehensive Radiological and Nuclear Detection Program focused on the maritime environment. The LE Division is currently in the procurement process for the necessary equipment through grant award funds from the Port Security Grant Program.
- The U.S. Coast Guard continues to be a partner on the maritime forefront whether working together on border operations or fisheries issues. In addition, Recreational Boating Safety funds, provided by the U.S. Coast Guard, enable game wardens to maintain and enhance their officer presence on all waters of the state as they continue to serve as the lead agency ensuring public safety on public water.
- TPWD-LE has partnered with NOAA – Office of Law Enforcement, National Marine Fisheries Service since 2001 by maintaining a Joint Enforcement Agreement that provides federal funds for state game wardens to patrol coastal waters and points-of-entry for enforcement of recreational and commercial fisheries violations. This successful partnership has provided equipment and operational funds which have allowed for increased officer presence in the bays and Gulf of Mexico.

New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement –

- All officers have received iPads to accompany their iPhones. This allows officers to access a suite of in-house developed applications that provided instant query capability of records such as recreational fishing and hunting licenses, hunter and boater safety education, and commercial boat licenses. The applications will allow officers to identify persons with licenses that are in a denial status.
- All officers have capability to run Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) queries from their iPhone. This includes accessing NCIC, TCIC, NLETS, TLETS, and driver's license and

motor vehicle data bases from all states and territories. The system also searches the agencies internal records management system and boat registration database. Officers can run queries for wanted persons, vehicles, boats, and articles. Officers receive instant notifications for wanted persons and property, sex offenders, probationers, gang members, and those with active protective orders.

- The agency is beginning to explore the use of body worn cameras for field personnel. This includes research, test and evaluation. Grant funding is being sought to help the agency with the start-up cost.
- TPWD-LE has rolled out many new applications this year Pocket Cop enabling game wardens to run individuals and items for wants or warrants in the field. A TPWD license verification app will be released in April allowing game wardens to verify licenses and determine whether a subject has been placed on a license block or suspension due to Child Support, Civil Restitution, Criminal Judgement, or check with insufficient funds. A fisheries enforcement application is currently in construction, set for release in September 2016, which will allow wardens to capture Joint Enforcement Agreement vessel and fish dealer contact information and provide an administrative component to run reports and complete invoicing forms.

State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement –

The 84th Session of the Texas Legislature is well underway and listed below are some of the bills that have been introduced which, if enacted, would impact TPWD:

- House Bill 593 would require all peace officers - except officers employed in a county with a population of less than 125,000 - to attend animal encounter training. The training is required to be conducted with an emphasis on canine-related incidents and the utilization of nonlethal methods in handling the encounter. This version relaxes a previous requirement that would not allow the initial training to be conducted online. It also relaxes original wording that would require the training to be conducted at a minimum of every 2 years. It appears with this version, that once the training requirement has been met, future training in this area is not required.
- House Bill 2471 amends Parks and Wildlife Code 43.363(a), to provide that breeder deer may only be sold, transferred, shipped, or transported without having removed the deers antlers during the period March 1 through June 1 of any year.
- House Bill 1189 provides the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with the ability to administer an Oyster Boat License Buyback Program, and it allows the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission to establish rules requiring a Vessel Monitoring System on Oyster Boats. The bill also assigns criminal responsibility to the Captain and crew for undersized

oyster violations, whereas currently only the Captain is responsible for the violation.

- House Bill 1579 establishes a Class B misdemeanor penalty for commercial trade in shark fins and requires the tail and all fins be attached to the shark carcass.
- Senate Bill 840 relates to certain boat and trailer registration fees for veterans with disabilities. This bill will reduce the cost of boat registration for disabled veterans to \$3 for 2 years. This bill is estimated to result in an annual net loss of \$247,989 from GRD-9 (Game, Fish and Water Safety Account) with an overall 5 year loss to the account of \$1,239,945.
- Senate Bill 158 would require certain law enforcement agencies to provide body worn cameras to all officers. The bill does provide for some grant money to offset the cost of the body cameras to the agencies.
- House Resolution 937 encouraging safe boating practices and paying tribute to the life of Kali Gorzell of San Antonio. This resolution points to the “Flats Boat” issue address by the United States Coast Guard in their Fall 2014 Boating Safety Circular (Please click on the link below for a pdf version of the BSC #88: <http://www.uscgboating.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Fall%202014%20BSC%20rev%2003.pdf>)

Cost Savings Initiatives –

- TPWD-LE continues to move forward with embracing new technology and incorporating new ideas and concepts into the traditional methods of accomplishing the agency and division missions. E-documents and interactive conference calls are replacing massive mailings and face-to-face meetings which were once the standard. As a result TPWD-LE disseminates information in a more timely and efficient manner at an overall cost savings to the Law Enforcement Division.
- 2014 Port Security Grant funds were utilized to purchase 92 Motorola Apex 7500 multiband radios. The radios are currently being programmed and will then be distributed to field personnel in an effort to improve interoperability with the United States Coast Guard.

Other Special Law Enforcement Issues –

- Since September 2010, the Operation Game Thief Program (OGT) has quickly grown into a 501 (c) 3 organization with an annual operating budget and a CPA for budget preparation and auditing purposes. The primary source of funding for the program has been derived from fundraising efforts around the state, with no funds from the state treasury. In 2010 OGT conducted only two fundraisers in Austin and San Antonio. Today the program conducts four events around the state with a fifth tentatively set for 2016.
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Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers
2015 Agency Report
State/Province: Wisconsin DNR
Submitted by: Chief Todd Schaller
Date: May 1, 2015

- **Training Issues**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Academy piloted the first 720 hour LE academy program. Dept. of Justice (DOJ) required the 720 hour academy curriculum effective Jan 1, 2015.

Integrated annual DOJ recertification training with other LE programs within the DNR – Parks, Forestry and Conservation Warden

Transition toward electronic registration for training events through survey sites and web based programs

Phasing in the issuance and training of Electronic Control Devices (Tazers)

Aim Points systems for issued rifles were acquired through the 10-33 Program for all LE within the DNR. They will be phased in during our annual qualifying 2015 spring shoots.

- **Funding and Staffing Issues**

FY15-17 Biennial Budget Requests – We are currently in the midst of the biennial budget process with the following items submitted for consideration.

- Increased OT Funding
- Increased Environmental Funding
- Computer Replacement (looking at tablets)
- Removal of Responsibility for the Car Killed Deer Program

Initial steps within the budget process have indicated an overall theme “smaller government” which has resulted in several cuts across the agency.

Staffing Issues – We had another good recruitment at the beginning of 2015, bringing on 11 new officers. Unfortunately, the high number of retirements has continued, and when combined with losses from training and people moving out of state or to other agencies, has outpaced our new hires. We currently sit at 25+ permanent, credentialed vacancies.

Diversity recruitment has been extremely successful with at least 30% of new hires being candidates of a diverse demographic. In 2014, we hired the largest class of female wardens in the history of our warden service.

We are currently seeking approval to hire 15 new full time wardens to begin in January 2016.

- **Major Conservation Law Enforcement Trends**

PROJECT RED BERRY

In 2012 WIDNR transferred all wild ginseng management and oversight from the Bureau of Endangered Resources to the Bureau of Law Enforcement (shifting emphasis from biological management to natural resource protection). After evaluating the entire wild ginseng program it became abundantly clear there was statewide abuses by dealers and diggers associated with wild ginseng.

Investigative Planning and Approach

During the wild ginseng purchase and sales records review process, there were a number of transactions that seemed to suggest potentially illegal conduct on the part of the harvester. In addition, the department received an increasing number of complaints from frustrated landowners relating to the theft of wild ginseng on private lands. On state and federal lands, where harvest is prohibited, the department had tangible evidence that suggests an increased pressure from harvesters who took large quantities of wild ginseng.

To maintain a wild ginseng program with a high level of integrity, follow up was conducted on leads that indicated possible illegal harvest or possession of wild ginseng within the state. This follow-up was primarily a knock-and-talk approach with the lead.

Through the records review and the vetting process conducted by a small group of conservations wardens knowledgeable with wild ginseng enforcement, 399 harvesters were identified as having questionable transactions between the 2007 and 2012 wild ginseng seasons. Approximately 100 law enforcement officers, consisting of conservation wardens from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Agents participated in conducting the follow up interviews.

Outcomes

Enforcement Action

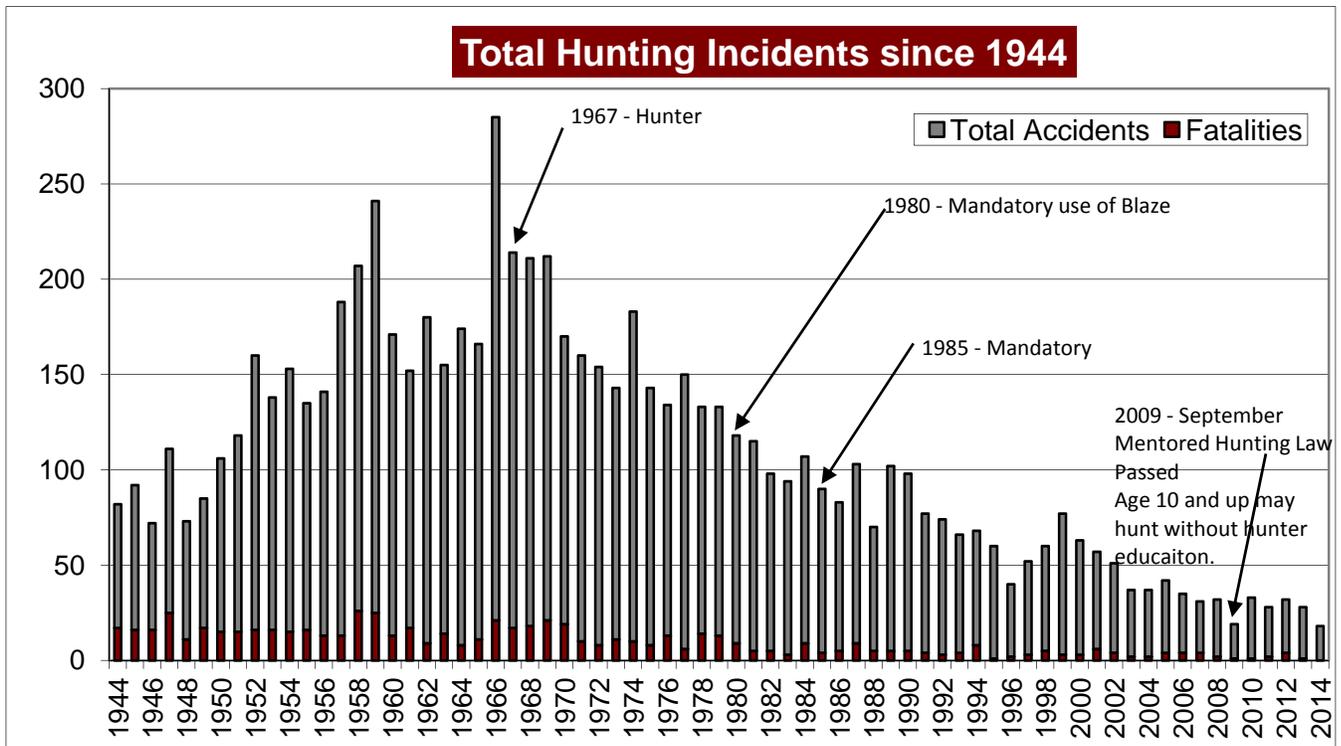
- 167 citations issued to 117 individuals. (Updated 9/12/14)
- Violations types included: harvest prior to the season, harvest without a license, trespass, selling for licensed or unlicensed harvesters, and not planting the berries.
- 367 warnings issued to 208 individuals. Many warnings were issued to landowners for harvesting on their own property without having a license even though the ginseng was going to be sold.
- Evidence was seized from 52 individuals.
- Evidence included: 9 bags, 17 digging tools, 1 jacket, 8 purchase receipts, 0.40 ounces of berries/seed, and 76 dry pounds (250.8 lbs. green) wild ginseng.
- 4 pending dealer investigations

Education – This investigation and resulting follow-up provided an opportunity for the program manager and the “Wild Ginseng Enforcement Team” an opportunity to train and educate WI Conservation Wardens about the wild ginseng program and enforcement techniques with this unique natural resource.

Feedback – As a result of the increased presence of conservation wardens in the field, there was a large number of harvesters that called the program coordinator to express approval of the recent enforcement effort and to offer suggestions on how to make the wild ginseng program more sustainable.

HUNTING INCIDENTS IN WISCONSIN

There were 18 total hunting incidents during the 2014 hunting season. 0 of 18 incidents were fatal. Thanks to the efforts of our volunteer hunter safety education instructor corps of just over 4,100 instructors, conservation wardens and the WDNR’s recreation enforcement and education safety section, hunting is a safe activity in Wisconsin and getting safer all the time. Hunting incidents are continuing on a downward trend. In 2014, Wisconsin finished well below the 10 per year average of 28 incidents per year.



ASSISTANCE TO OTHER AGENCIES – DNR LE programs continues to experience and increase in the # of requests to provide LE assistance to other agencies. These requests are often connected to mid to large scale protests; state capitol protection, officer involved shooting events etc.

One area of concerns is DNR LE does not have full police power thus lack clarity on authority. We rely on expanded authority in the past for Conservation Wardens and mutual aid for our Natural Resource Officers. Some questions have also come up about properly training our officers for these “newer” type duties.

STANDARDIZED SEATED FIELD SOBRIETY TESTING - The WI DNR Warden Service has transitioned to the Seated Field Sobriety Tests (SFSTs) that have been validated through the Southern California Research Institute. The North American Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) trained 6 WI Wardens as instructors approximately 5 years ago. Since that initial training the WI DNR Warden Service has adopted the Seated SFST as their primary field sobriety test battery for all recreational vehicle DUI enforcement and all Conservation Wardens are certified to administer the tests.

Local law enforcement partners have requested training from the DNR Wardens. From 2014-2015 Wardens have held approximately 6 training sessions for traditional law enforcement agencies, certifying over 110 officers. Wardens have presented the new tests at statewide attorney conferences and statewide field sobriety instructor updates. The seated SFSTs have been through multiple trials in the court systems and are accepted by the courts as validated tests. The new tests continue to be an effective tool in DUI detection and the apprehension of impaired drivers.

- **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts**

SPECIAL OPERATIONS - The Special Operations unit continues to communicate, collaborate, interact, and provide investigative assistance to a number of states throughout the United States and Canadian Provinces. Recent issues that have been addressed are associated with the commercial bait trade, commercial fur trade, and tagging and citation investigations involving Wisconsin residents. Wisconsin has recently partnered with include: New Mexico, Florida, Michigan, Delaware, Minnesota, Illinois, Nova Scotia, Colorado, and Wyoming.

WILDLIFE VIOLATOR COMPACT - The Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact is reciprocity agreement between the 45 member states. If an individual's licenses privileges are suspended in any one of the member states it will be enforced in all member states.

Wildlife law violators are held accountable due to the fact that their illegal activities in one state can affect their privileges in all participating states, including the member home state. This cooperative interstate effort will enhance Wisconsin's ability to protect and manage our wildlife resources for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

In 2014 Wisconsin entered 398 violations into the compact and overall member states a total of 5,402 violations entered.

TraCS and MACH - The department has rolled out two IT platforms to staff all WDNR LE programs (Conservation Wardens, Park and Forestry). The two platforms are TraCS and MACH. TraCS which has been reported on in the past continues to evolve as the agency's electronic citation issuance system.

MACH is a combined GPS vehicle locator system and MDC (Time System). MACH not only shows where officer squads are located on a map, it can also be used to manage critical incidents by use of geo-fences, resource typing, etc.

The program is managed by our sister agency State Patrol with DNR as a major shareholder.

- **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement**

GEOFEEDIA - The WDNR Investigations Unit has recently piloted three projects utilizing Geofeedia, a location-based open source social media monitoring, analysis and engagement

platform that has recently been presented as a viable investigative tool to the department. Geofeedia's patented technologies will allow us to search and monitor areas where potential commercial and criminal violations of the state's natural resources may be taking place. Geofeedia currently searches Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Picasa, Flickr, Yik-Yak, and Viddy. Geofeedia is a cloud-based social media monitoring platform that will allow us to search, monitor and analyze real-time social media.

DIGITAL FORENSICS – The department hired a Digital Data Investigator, whose primary task is to conduct case forensic acquisition and analysis of electronic evidence on computers and other electronic media. A forensic position in-house allows for timely analysis of digital evidence for environmental and fish and game investigations without having to seek outside agency assistance. The department continues to find cost-efficient ways to acquire the expensive forensic software and equipment and has partnered with the Digital Forensic Unit at the WI Dept. of Justice to share forensic personnel and resources in furtherance of that goal.

EFHRS II - Law Enforcement in cooperation with WDNR fishery program developed an Electronic Fish Harvest Reporting System program (EFHRS II). This program, funded by a grant from the USF&WS, allows commercial anglers from Lake Michigan and Lake Superior to input data into the system for fish management and law enforcement monitoring purposes. As it relates to LE, EFHRS II signals red flags to DNR staff through reports when erroneous data is input by commercial angler in an attempt to cheat quotas. The red flags are not necessarily a guarantee that violations have been committed, but they do provide an investigator a reason to conduct a focused look at practices and conduct a records analysis. A dashboard attachment is now being researched to add onto EFHRS for simplifying angler input and report production.

- **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement**

FEDERAL WOLF LITIGATION

Recent court action has resulted in the gray wolf (Western Great Lakes DPS) being placed back onto the federal endangered species list. The state hunting/trapping season is suspended indefinitely, and the Department anticipates future difficulty in addressing wolf depredations/conflicts. Prior to the relisting, WI's wolf harvest seasons had appeared to be successfully managing wolf population growth, agricultural conflicts, and social tolerance for the species.

TRIBAL NIGHT HUNTING APPEAL

The US 7th Circuit Court of Appeals recently remanded the Tribal Night Hunting case for further proceedings consistent with the tribes' request to permit night hunting of deer by tribal members on publicly accessible lands (including private forest lands with public tax law access. The Dept. is currently preparing for the next steps of litigation.

- **Cost Savings Initiatives**

Cell Phone and Wireless Device Rate Plans – Over the last year, WI has worked to reduce expenditures for telecommunications. This year, we have focused initially on our wireless devices (aircards for computer connectivity in the field). By managing our lines more closely and working with our primary vendor, we were able to get all of these lines onto 4 subaccounts. We found we only need unlimited data for 6 lines, while the remainder of the lines were put onto 3 different sharing plans. These plans have saved us about \$2000 per month, over the previous unlimited data

for everyone. There has been no loss of service, either, as we have yet to have any overages on our shared data pools.

We are focusing in similarly on our cell phones. We are converting many of our accounts and lines to share plans where feasible, further saving considerable dollars, primarily for the local budgets. These share plans are offered to businesses or the general public, but aren't in the state contracts. It's a bit too early to tell how much will be saved, but to date our Northern Region cell phone account is looking to be about \$300 per months cheaper.

- **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues**

THRILL KILLING - Conservation Wardens statewide have noticed an increase in night hunting/thrill killing cases for several species with white-tail deer being a major target. Some of the commonalities between these cases are; suspects are white males between the ages of 16-21, deer are killed at night and outside of the normal hunting seasons, most of the deer are does, most deer are left to lay, and a variety of firearms and bows are used with the 22 rifle being the most common. Wardens continue to receive complaints of shots at night and dead deer with bullet holes in them left to lay in fields.