



MATters

An Update from the Management Assistance Team

Fall 2007 Issue 7, Vol. 3



Workforce Planning... is a Lot Like Losing Weight

Many of us know that being overweight is a dangerous thing, but still we often do little about it until we face a health crisis or something of gargantuan importance. In this way leadership development can be a lot like being overweight. Many times we say we need to be doing more to develop leadership in our agencies yet, at the same time we're putting it off due to more immediate daily tasks.

It's not unusual for organizations to do little about developing the leaders they need until they face an observable leadership crisis. When the actual "pain" felt is critical

enough, then all tend to be motivated to finally act. This is classic change theory. What's happening now is that the babyboomers are retiring in record numbers and the drain on agency institutional memory and leadership skills is becoming critical. Will this be the catalyst that moves your agency to action?

Some state fish and wildlife agencies have decided not to wait for the completion of their babyboomer exodus. These agencies are taking action now. Minnesota and Alaska, for example, are looking at the big picture of workforce planning, of which leadership development is a part. These states are

(Continued on page 3)

NCLI Cohort 2 Fellows Selected



The Management Assistance Team extends their congratulations to the 36 Fellows selected for the 2007-2008 National Conservation Leadership Institute.

2007-2008 Fellows-Cohort 2

Verdie J. Abel—Ohio Division of Wildlife

Steve Belinda—Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Grace Bottitta Williamson—Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Jeff Bridi—PA Fish & Boat Commission, Bureau of Law Enforcement

E Lynn Burkett—Bureau of Land Management

Karen Chytalo—NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Drue DeBerry—American Forest Foundation

Tom Decker—Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

Michelle Doerr—Archery Trade Association

Cindy Dohner—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Nate Donovan—Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Thomas Eason—Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Jon Heggen—Idaho Fish and Game

Grant Hilderbrand—Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Lief Horwitz—U.S. Geological Survey

Mike Hubbard—Missouri Department of Conservation

Mark Hughes—International Paper

Aleria Jensen—NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region

Emmett Keyser—South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

Nancy Ledbetter—Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Andrea Mackenzie—Sonoma Co. Agricultural Preservation & Open Space

Mitch Marcus—Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife

Ken McDonald—Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Dirk Miller—Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Dean Mitchell—Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

John Nielsen—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Hank Patton—Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Lynn Quattro—South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Heather Richards—Piedmont Environmental Council

Jen Mock Schaeffer—Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Mike Senn—Arizona Game & Fish Department

Natalie Sexton—U.S. Geological Survey

Terri Stewart—California Department of Fish and Game

Jason Stockwell—U.S. Geological Survey

Shelly Tovell-DiBona—DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife

Wendi Weber—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

MAT *Better Conservation Through*

MAT Says Goodbye... and Regroups

It was a sad day in MATville when Melissa McCormick, MAT's project coordinator, announced that her hubby got a better job in Florida and she was leaving us.

Melissa's position had changed drastically over the 3 years she was with us. MAT had added online courses and the National Conservation Leadership Institute as additional offerings to the states incorporating a complex mix of tasks into everyone's duties, especially Melissa's.

With her departure it was decided that this was a perfect opportunity to re-organize the three positions held by Gina Main, Donna Reeves and Melissa.

Three entirely new positions were created by redistributing the old duties and adding some new duties such as knowledge management and grant administration that had not previously existed.

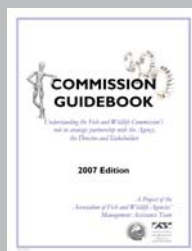
Donna's new position, **Office and NCLI Grant Administrator**, encompasses internal general program management issues and the financial aspects of the NCLI and the State Toolbox. In other words she keeps MAT on track and flying around the country.

Gina, now the **NCLI/MAT Projects and Creative Manager**, will be the creative lead for all of MAT and NCLI projects as well as event coordination, logistics management, and promotion for the NCLI. Knowledge management will also be under Gina's new position.

The new **Student Services Administrator position**, currently vacant, will deal with student related issues and support for both the NCLI and State Toolbox participants.

MAT looks forward to serving the states even better in the future with the reorganization of these positions.

Commission Guidebook Revised and Available Online!



At the request of the WAFWA, MAT led a comprehensive revision of its 1997, widely used resource for commissioners and directors. The only one of its kind in the country, the 2007 Guidebook has been converted to MS Word and PDF and made available for customization to all state fish and wildlife agency commissioners and directors online at www.matteam.org.



Better Managed Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Workforce Planning ... (continued from page 1)

engaged in doing the work of identifying the demographic trends in their state, looking at changes and challenges on the horizon, and doing the number crunching to know clearly who is retiring and when. They are providing forums for candid dialogue among management staff to proactively ask critical workforce planning questions. (Unions get nervous when they hear the term “workforce succession” so planning seems to be a better word choice.)

Some of an agency’s critical workforce planning questions include:

1. Which of our retiring boomers will be leaving positions that are critical for maintaining the business of the agency?
2. Are there positions not being vacated that will need to be reconfigured?
3. What are strategies in our agency that should be considered now for how the workforce will accommodate itself to the retirements? For example, where do we need to develop leadership skills? Are there positions that could be job-shared? Are there places where mentoring would be valuable now before that key manager physically walks out the door forever? What about job shadowing or cross-training? Shouldn’t we start doing some of this now before our org chart begins to look like swiss cheese?
4. Is there a way to continue to tap in to the institutional memory of retirees by extending their exit through some sort of cyber-umbilical cord with the agency?
5. Who on our staff will be our champion for helping address these issues?
6. Are we including funds for this when we develop our budget? If not, why aren’t we?

Employees in the Arizona Game and Fish Department recently participated in MAT’s new Emotional Intelligence and Mastering Agency Change workshops. Designed for face-to-face delivery, Arizona is incorporating these workshops into their existing excellent leadership courses. They identified a cadre of in-house trainers, and MAT provided train-the-trainer preparation for them to take these courses and run with them. Arizona Game and Fish and Texas Parks and Wildlife are also incorporating MAT’s on-line courses into their leadership programs to augment their programs for developing employees to take over as babyboomers retire.

The bottom line is that there’s a lot to be done and help is only a phone call away. Call us at 304-876-7988 or info@matteam.org.

Your Conservation Learning Campus

The Management Assistance Team’s Conservation Learning Campus is your virtual place for training, continuing professional development, and learning resources for conservation professionals.

Fish and wildlife personnel have unique perspectives, and your online leadership development courses are tailored specifically for conservation professionals. Each course carries a nominal fee that covers technology costs, required textbooks, and copyright protected materials.

Courses currently being offered each term are *Creative and Critical Thinking*, *Going from Good to Great*, *Power*, *The Adaptive Leader*, *Visionary Leadership*, and *Secrets of Agency Assessment & Development*, and run for 4 to 6 weeks, depending on the course.

Fall Term Schedule:

- Sept. 21** – Registration Deadline
- Oct. 1** – Student Orientation
- Oct. 8** – Classes Begin

Winter Term Schedule:

- Oct. 29-Dec. 21** – Registration
- Jan. 7, 2008** – Student Orientation
- Jan. 14, 2008** – Classes Begin

Visit www.matteam.org for a schedule of upcoming classes, important dates, registration forms, and other important information.



What MATters...

Leadership and the “Science Safety-Zone”

The safety-zone is one of the basic principles of hunter education. We teach our future hunters that when they are in the safety-zone, they cannot take a shot. The practice of leadership has no analogue; there is no safety-zone in leadership, but sometimes would-be leaders want to create one.

How many times have you heard someone say something like, “We manage wildlife/fisheries using science.” Sometimes this can really mean, “We are creating this boundary, don’t come in here because we have advanced degrees and know what’s best for wildlife.” There is no doubt that the proper application of science is an important cornerstone of fish and wildlife management, but one has to wonder if science can also become a convenient hiding place where conservation leaders try to escape the harsh realities of organizations, people, and politics. While important to conservation, we must be open to the idea that the application of science in wildlife and fisheries management is not, itself, leadership.

Here is a little illustration of the limits of science and wildlife management. The biologist says, “We make our deer management decisions based on science.” This may sound great to many people, but it begs the question, which is better scientifically: should we manage the deer for optimum sustained yields or for trophy bucks? Of course, a scientific approach would be critical to help us achieve our management goal, whichever choice we made, but it does not tell us which choice to make. Even social science cannot tell us the “right” choice, although the data is often useful or critical to excellent leadership. When someone tries to use science as a smokescreen to avoid a tough decision,

a decision that is not really scientific in nature – they are in the artificial “leadership safety-zone.”

Leadership, by many definitions, requires taking a stand outside of the norm; pushing for solutions that may make many uncomfortable. Science, no matter how well-applied, cannot substitute for leadership, and it is the leader’s job to understand how science is useful in managing fish and wildlife and when leadership is needed to address problems and issues that are not scientific in nature.

MAT offers many courses in leadership in online and face-to-face formats. For more information go to www.matteam.org.



ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Executive Director

Matt Hogan

Resource Director

Ron Regan

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair

Ken Haddad

Vice Chair

Curtis Taylor

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

Project Leader

Dwight Guynn, Ph.D.
dwightg@matteam.org
304.876.7387

Project Leader

Sally Guynn, Ph.D.
sallyg@matteam.org
304.876.7395

Project Leader

Jacob Faibisch
jacobf@matteam.org
304.876.7915

Projects and Creative Manager

Gina Main
ginam@matteam.org
304.876.7755

Office and NCLI Grant Administrator

Donna Reeves
donnar@matteam.org
304.876.7988

A Project of the
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Management Assistance Team
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
698 Conservation Way
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

