



MATters

An Update from the Management Assistance Team

Summer 2009 Issue 9, Vol. 2



Commissions and Boards—Our Powerful Partners

Since the mid-1990s MAT has worked with state fish and wildlife commissions and boards to help them increase their governance effectiveness. This year we have seen a marked increase in the number of requests from state fish and wildlife Directors to provide workshops for Commissioners. We believe this is a good sign.

Commissions can be very helpful to state fish and wildlife agencies regardless of their authority level which may vary from state to state. However, a common issue is getting clear on who does what. In other words, what are the role distinctions between the Commissioners and the Board versus the Director and the agency staff? In short commissioners stick to policy and the agency and staff stick to operations.

Also, in most cases, problems with Commissions trying to work effectively with their agency is a matter of poor

systems and processes that have been assembled from bits of historical practice over time. There is often a lack of any overall planned design for Commission operation. This creates a myriad of issues which include:

- Commissioners are asked to decide on issues about which they have little knowledge
- Individual Commissioners who make conflicting requests of the Director
- Commissioners circumvent the Director by giving direction to agency staff
- Commissions are unsure how to have their “hands on” the agency without having their hands “down in” the agency micromanaging

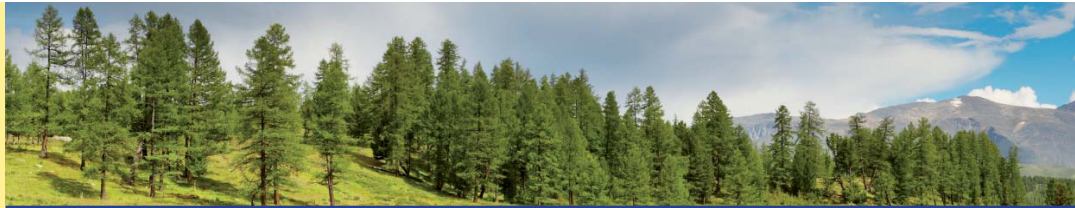


2009 NCLI Graduates

The Management Assistance Team extends their most heartfelt congratulations to the 33 graduating Fellows of the third cohort of the National Conservation Leadership Institute. It is a privilege and an honor to know each of you. We know the future of our natural resource legacy is in good hands.

2008-2009 Graduating Cohort

- Karen Alexy**~Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife
Laurel Anders~Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
Karen Bataille~Missouri Department of Conservation
Thomas Baumeister~Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Bob Broscheid~Arizona Game and Fish Department
Sally Claggett~U.S. Forest Service
Frank Fiss~Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Peter Flores~Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Danielle Flynn~Bureau of Land Management
Mike Fowlks~Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Ben Fulton~Marine Corps Base Quantico
Becky Gwynn~Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries
Debbie Hart~Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Steven Hilburger~U.S. Geological Survey
Steve Hurst~New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Aaron Jeffries~Missouri Department of Conservation
Chris Jensen~U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ron Leathers~Pheasants Forever
Julie Lyke~U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Marcia Maslonek~Wildlife Habitat Council
Fred Maulson~Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission
Ray Metzler~Alabama Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
Jason B. Moeckel~Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Mike Montoya~Mescalero Apache Tribe
Amy Owsley~Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Tom Paragi~Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Steve Perry~New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
Linnea Petercheff~Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Scott Reinecker~Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Bill Rudd~Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Tony Schoonen~Boone and Crockett Club
Nick Wiley~Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
David A. Zebro~Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



MAT

Helping State Fish and

Getting More Than a Drop

We've all watched ripples spread out widening the circle more and more after dropping a pebble in a pool of water. It's a good metaphor for looking at the impact of any of our work efforts in the fish and wildlife industry.

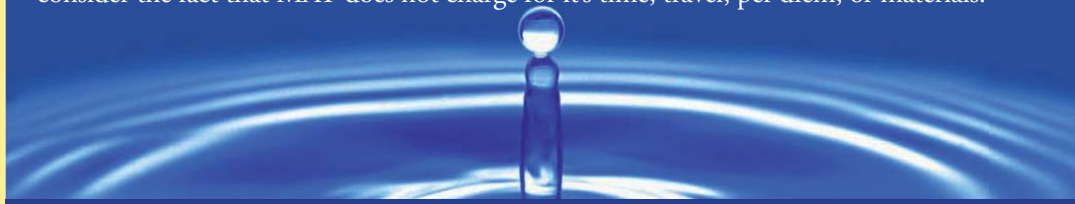
Take the Management Assistance Team, for example. Last year, MAT delivered 44 workshops and courses to 840 state fish and wildlife personnel. The ripple effect was much greater.

MAT delivers face-to-face workshops for state fish and wildlife agencies and also conducts a half-day train-the-trainer for the agency's designated staff course facilitators. Each facilitator receives all the course materials on Compact Disc including PowerPoints, overheads, workbooks, facilitator guides, etc. The agency facilitators are then able to conduct MAT workshops for agency employees as many times as desired. This is one force multiplier or ripple effect of MAT workshops.

New Hampshire can illustrate this point. Their Fish and Game Department is looking at major change in fish and wildlife interests among the New Hampshire publics. To meet these changing public needs and expectations, major adjustments in the agency's programs and direction will be required. Thus, the Department requested the *Mastering Agency Change* MAT workshop.

MAT conducted the workshop in New Hampshire over a two-day period for approximately 30 agency upper level staff and two of its Commissioners; it also included a third day train-the-trainer session for seven agency staff facilitators. The ripples were evident when within two weeks the agency's facilitators had conducted six additional "*Mastering Agency Change*" workshops for NH staff. In these, more than one hundred additional employees were reached. It is just this kind of ripple effect in New Hampshire and across the country that works so well as a force multiplier for MAT efforts.

Consider now dropping that pebble into a pile of pebbles instead of a pool of water. What happens? There is no ripple effect. This can be compared to having private vendors develop and conduct workshops. The vendor has proprietary ownership of the materials and is typically contracted for each workshop (pebble in the pile). With MAT workshops, all materials developed by MAT belong to the state fish and wildlife agencies and the agencies are trained by MAT to conduct their own workshops for a magnified ripple effect. The advantages and savings to states become clear and are only emphasized more when you consider the fact that MAT does not charge for its time, travel, per diem, or materials.





Wildlife Agencies to Achieve Excellence

Commissions and Boards... *(continued from page 1)*

One of the best resources on policy governance is a book by John Carver entitled “*Boards That Make a Difference.*”

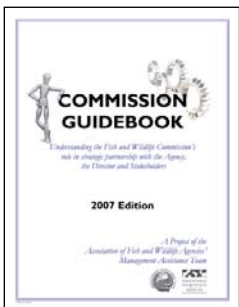
Carver emphasizes that Commissions are established to insure the agency is doing the right things that the public wants. Essentially, this is a value judgment. Commissions are to insure that the agency is doing a good job—another value judgment—and that the products/services produced are a good bargain for the public—again, another value judgment.

Since values and their application by the agency is the job of the Commission rather than specifics of day-to-day management, Commissions can best operate with policies that incorporate the values desired. These can then guide the agency. The axiom to remember is, “If you want to have incremental impacts – focus on processes. However if you want to have major, overall impacts – focus on values.”

Policies are not procedural prescriptions but rather they are explicit statements of values that will govern agency actions. Policies made by Commissions should fall into one of four categories:

1. **Ends** – what end products, services, results the agency is to achieve
2. **Executive Limitations** – what specific things the Director should not do in carrying out his/her duties. (Ex., Must be legal methods, must not be undue financial risk, etc.)
3. **Commission-Staff Linkage** – Can Commissioners go directly to field staff for information? To give direction? Can the Commission Chair give instructions to the Director even if all Commissioners don't agree? etc.
4. **Governance Processes** – How will the Commission operate among its members? (Ex., Majority rule; can one Commissioner go to the press if they don't agree with a majority rule? Etc.)

Simply clarifying and deciding policies in the above areas will aid Commissions to work more effectively. MAT has expertise in working with Directors and Commissioners to develop agreed upon policies for governance. In addition, MAT developed a downloadable Commission Guidebook (2007 Edition) available on its website at www.matteam.org.



Online Courses Tailored for the Conservation Professional!

The Management Assistance Team's Conservation Learning Campus is one solution to fish and wildlife personnel's need for training, continuing professional development, and learning resources. The courses were designed specifically for fish and wildlife professionals.

Courses Currently Being Offered:

- Creative and Critical Thinking
- Going from Good to Great
- Power
- Visionary Leadership
- The Adaptive Leader
- Secrets of Agency Assessment & Development
- Leader as Supervisor

These courses run for 4 or 6 weeks, depending on the course

Fall Term Schedule

Aug. 3-Sep. 18 – Registration

Oct. 5 – Student Orientation

Oct. 12 – Classes Begin

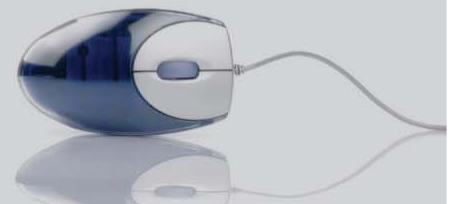
Winter Term Schedule

Nov. 2-Dec. 18 – Registration

Jan. 4 – Student Orientation

Jan. 11 – Classes Begin

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





Are You Measuring Leadership?

Agencies need to bring a “measurement mind-set” to the often inexact process of developing the next generation of leaders. There is no holy grail of leadership metrics—so give up the search for the “perfect answer,” that may hinder progress. Putting the right leadership metrics in place doesn’t have to be a Herculean task. The first step is defining the questions from the perspectives of the different stakeholders. Some examples of questions to consider are:

- Where are the biggest leadership gaps on our teams, unit, etc? What are the actions needed to fill them?
- Who are our high potentials and what are their development needs?
- Does senior management take responsibility for their own development and that of their people?
- What are our current and future leadership gaps? Are we developing talent fast enough and in the right areas?
- Are our leadership efforts aligned with the agency’s needs? Do we even have a leadership development effort in our agency?

To avoid the Lake Wobegon effect where every agency employee who has taken a leadership course is “good looking and above average”, it may be better to focus on some of the following:

- Several leadership priorities that are critical to the agency rather than trying to be comprehensive
- Things that leaders do differently as a result of participating in the program
- Ask colleagues and direct reports about any subsequent changes in behaviors of participants in leadership programs
- Impacts on the agency’s business —access things such as customer satisfaction, employee productivity and cost savings

The lion’s share of leadership development happens outside the classroom. We are not getting the full picture if our measurements stop at the classroom door. Metrics can help the leadership team think more strategically about leadership needs both short and long term. It’s okay to start small; with each step you’ll be building that “measurement mind-set” and getting clearer as you move forward.

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A Project of the
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies



MAT is funded in part by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

