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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Native American Fish & Wildlife Society and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Announce New Curriculum for Conservation Law Enforcement Training**

### **Partners Bring Required Training for Tribal Conservation Law Enforcement Officers**

DENVER, CO – JUNE 9, 2016 – Tribal conservation law enforcement officers, protectors of tribal natural resources will receive annual 40 hours of required training on June 13-17 in Billings, MT. The officers are being trained by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indians Affairs' Office of Justice Services, Department of Justice, Alabama Fire College-Workplace Safety Training, and HUD.

Since 1992, the NAFWS and the USFWS have jointly provided training for tribal conservation law enforcement officers. These two organizations are the only partnering organizations in Indian country that assist tribal conservation law enforcement officers to preserve, conserve, and protect their tribal natural resources. A USFWS Resident in Charge, Terry Thibeault who oversees Montana and Wyoming jurisdictions said the number of officers being trained each year has increased while, "this year could be the year when we will see the most ever trained."

He said there are currently 54 tribal officers registered to attend and they represent 17 tribes from at least nine states in the western U.S. said Thibeault.

New courses this year include waterfowl identification, meth lab awareness, and using body armor. Basic required classes include: firearms safety, defensive tactics, and legal and ethical issues.

Since 2007, tribes started to provide certified instructors in the area of using a baton and OC pepper spray. These classes are being taught by tribal instructors from North and South Dakota.

Tribes in the U.S. are experiencing violations in terms of protecting their natural resources which could include sacred sites, fish and wildlife resources, and at times these officers are required to assist tribal police in areas not connected with conserving tribal natural resources.

The NAFWS is the only non-profit organization that provides conferences and training courses for tribal conservation law enforcement officers. The NAFWS's mission is to assist Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of their fish and wildlife resources. With the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the NAFWS has provided training and education for CLEOs for more than 23 years.

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