

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

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Resolution on the USFWS Conservation Law Enforcement in the Southwest Region

Whereas, 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; and

Whereas, the NAFWS's purpose, in part, is to protect, preserve and conserve the wise use of tribal fish, wildlife and recreational resources and to assist in the facilitation and coordination of intertribal communication in regards to fish and wildlife matters; and to improve the general welfare of tribal people through educational, charitable as well as fish and wildlife enhancement activities; and

Whereas, tribes in the United States had Cooperative Conservation Law Enforcement Agreements with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for cross commissioning of tribal wildlife law enforcement officers; and

Whereas, in 2007, the USFWS rescinded the Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreements and cancel all tribal cross commissions; and

Whereas, the USFWS has cited that their ability to enter into Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreements with tribes is not authorized under 16 U.S.C. 7421; and

Whereas, vacant Law Enforcement Agent positions within the USFWS in the Southwest have not been filled, including the Flagstaff Agent position and the Mexican Wolf Agent position in Arizona; and

Whereas, the nearest USFWS law enforcement presence is either in Phoenix, Arizona or Albuquerque, New Mexico, which results in untimely response times and is contrary to standard law enforcement procedures for investigations and collection of evidence and information pertaining to wildlife crimes; and

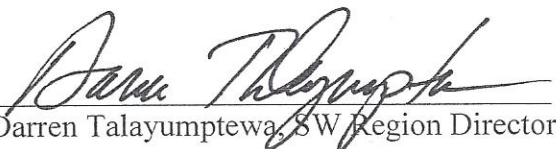
Whereas, the USFWS law enforcement presence on tribal lands in the Southwest has greatly diminished and is of tremendous concern to tribes; and

Whereas, the USFWS has a trust responsibility to provide effective federal conservation law enforcement services to Indian tribes; and

Be it Further Resolved, the Southwest Region of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society request the USFWS Law Enforcement Division to recognize and acknowledge that Tribal conservation law enforcement officers, who have successfully completed the Basic Federal Law Enforcement Training certification course and who adequately meet annual in-service training requirements to maintain certification, have the qualifications necessary for USFWS law enforcement cross-commissioning; and

Be it Finally Resolved, that the Southwest Region of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society requests the USFWS Law Enforcement Division to collaborate with Tribes to identify a means to secure federal conservation law enforcement cross-commissioning of tribal conservation officers which shall include the Special Law Enforcement Commission that authorizes tribal conservation law enforcement officers to enforce federal wildlife laws, including, but not limited to misdemeanor/felony crimes committed on Tribal lands.

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the 2015 SW Region NAFWS Conference, held in Reno, Nevada on August 13, 2015 by a vote of 12 FOR, 0, AGAINST and 0 ABSTENTIONS.


Darren Talayumptewa, SW Region Director


Elveda Martinez, SW Region Director