

ANNUAL REPORT



Assisting Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with conserving, protecting and enhancing their fish, wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

ELVEDA MATINEZ

WALKER RIVER PAIUTE

SW REGIONAL DIRECTOR & NAFWS PRESIDENT

Greetings to Our Members,

It's great to see our Society grow and thrive for all of you – 2022 has been the best thus far with our advancement. We have been fortunate to see our funding grow, not only from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but from other federal organizations, foundations, membership fees and investments. It's important for us to work to educate other organizations about the important work that we do for fish, wildlife, conservation and enforcement. Because of that, we are seeing more funding for programs that benefit our member tribes and members.

Along with the funding, has come a lot of educated and talented staff that have been hired to assist member tribes and individuals with their projects, funding, youth programs and resource opportunities. Staff is ready and willing to provide Technical Assistance and training on many topics from grant writing, professional development, invasive species, wildlife corridors, climate change, conservation law enforcement and more.

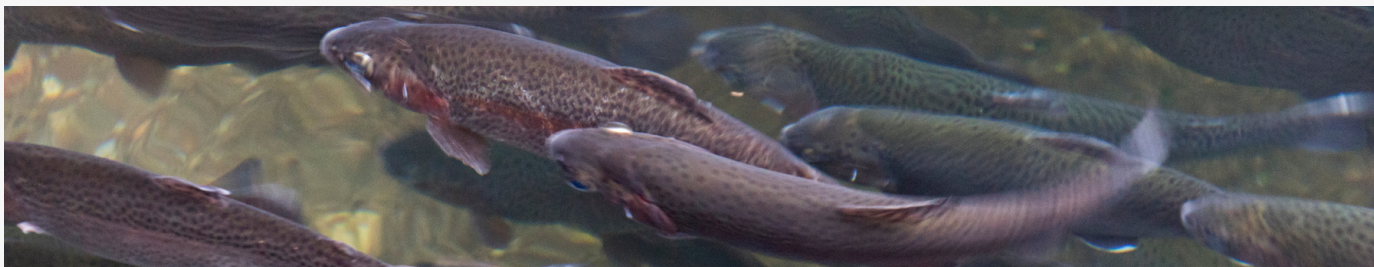
This was also the first year in a long time that all regions held conferences or meetings for their members. We continued to recruit more members so that we could not only assist them, but they could also educate us on their tribes and resources. Many members became involved in subcommittees, participated in webinars and meetings on the Recovering Americas Wildlife Act, wildlife corridors, invasive species, and more.

As President, my focus has always been on ensuring that our finances are taken care of. We have a great accounting contractor (MPI), proper checks and balances, ensuring that our financial reports are submitted on time, and our audits are completed within the required timeframe. We have Board members who also serve on a financial/audit committee that also look out for our funding. Our Executive Director, Julie Thorstenson, Ph.D., works hard to ensure that staff are educated in the finances that fund their positions and how to monitor accurately. All funds are spent in accordance with program requirements and budgets that have been approved by the funding agents. It has been great to see the students becoming active by attending our Summer Youth Practicum, attending webinars, and sharing their research via posters and presentations at conferences nationwide.

Seeing these young people interested in fish, wildlife, conservation, and other related fields shows me that our natural resources are in good hands. It makes me proud to be a part of the Society where I see students continue to learn from their elders, fellow mentors, participating and conducting field research, reading, and by generally continuing their education in whatever scope that may be.

Thank you for your membership and for being a part of our Society family.

I wish you all health, happiness and great careers – continue to take care of your tribal lands.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Han Mitakuye (Hello all my relatives),

As I look back over the past year, I am so proud of the NAFWS Team and feel so blessed to serve the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's phenomenal membership. I am pleased to provide the following update to the membership on the accomplishments of NAFWS staff and Board of Directors for 2022.

We seemed to be back to "normal" operations in 2022 integrating all we had learned during our "virtual world" and Pandemic times. We hosted 5 regional conferences, 2 regional meetings and the annual National Conference with a total of 758 participants from 177 Tribal nations.

One of our major duties is to provide technical assistance to our membership. In total we provided direct technical assistance to 170 Tribal nations. This included activities such as grant development and review, scientific resources, partnership development, informational webinars and listening sessions.

In addition, we hosted several trainings and workshops in 2022.



We educate on the importance and proper way to collaborate with Tribal fish and wildlife programs and the need for base funding for Tribal fish and wildlife programs. We continued to increase membership, membership value, partnerships, opportunities, visibility, and funding in 2022.

We developed a one-year Strategic Operations Plan for 2022 with the intent to conduct full strategic planning in 2023. This Plan allowed us to focus on the five national initiatives approved by the Board of Directors in December 2021.

We saw an increase in our funding and staffing in 2022. A new self-determination contract with the USFWS allowed us to hire 3 full-time Fish and Wildlife Biologist and contract a Wildlife Disease Coordinator. Through our self-determination contract with the BIA we also hired a Director of Programs and an Invasive Species Coordinator. We are proud to be nearly 100% American Indian/Alaska Native staff and continue to recruit AI/AN staff.

I hope you continue to find value in being a member of NAFWS and remind you to provide feedback to your Regional Directors and NAFWS staff on how we can improve. Thank you all again for your continued trust in NAFWS. I hope to see you in Anchorage, AK April 24-27, 2023, at our 40th NAFWS Annual National Conference.

Pilamaye ye,

**JULIE THORSTENSON, PH.D.
LAKOTA**





NATIVE AMERICAN FISH AND WILDLIFE SOCIETY

For more than 39 years, the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society (NAFWS), an intertribal non-profit 501(c)3, has strived to meet the needs of its members and member Tribes; directly, through conferences, training, youth education, and indirectly; through ongoing support of, and providing venues for government consultations, discussions, and by participating with innovative projects and initiatives in Indian Country.

2022 CONFERENCES

PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2022 Pacific Regional Conference was hosted by the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria at the Bear River Casino Resort in Loleta, CA on August 23-25, 2022. The conference was attended by 60 participants representing 20 Tribes along with many representatives from different agencies and organizations. This was the first time NAFWS has hosted a regional conference in northern California.

GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Great Plains Regional Conference was held in Deadwood, SD April 6-7, 2022. Seventy-five people from 13 Tribes attended the event and enjoyed presentations, workshops, and networking. Chairwoman Janet Alkire, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, inspired listeners with her keynote address sharing the accomplishments and challenges on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and the need for collaboration to restore and protect the plains.

ALASKA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2022 Alaska Regional Conference was hosted by the Alaska Village Initiatives in Anchorage, AK on October 19, 2022. The conference was attended by 42 participants representing 18 Tribes. The conference had presentations from organizations doing work in Alaska, Tribal leader speeches, and workshops, and partnering nonprofit organizations.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEETING

October 18, 2022, NAFWS hosted the Northeast Regional Business meeting in Bar Harbor, ME in congruence with the Fall 2022 EPA Region 1 Tribal Leaders Environmental Summit and Conference. Sixty-eight (68) attendees representing four Tribal Nations gathered together for dinner, NAFWS National and Regional updates, elections, and a Climate Resilience/Justice40 discussion. The meeting and the EPA Region 1 conference were excellent opportunities to learn about the issues faced by NE region tribes and network.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2022 Great Lakes Regional Conference was hosted by Lac Courte Oreilles of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians (LCO) and held at the Sevenwinds Casino, Lodge and Conference Center in Hayward, WI September 19-22, 2022. One hundred thirty-four (134) people from 28 Tribes attended to celebrate the 35th Annual Celebration. The week was packed with event highlights starting with workshops on wildlife trapping, wildlife disease sampling training, raptor handling training and a tour of the LCO fish hatchery.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2022 Southwest Regional Conference was hosted by the Pueblo of Santa Ana at the Santa Ana Star Casino and Hotel on August 22-25, 2022. The conference was attended by 163 participants representing 38 Tribes along with many representatives from different agencies and Organizations. The conference began with workshops on climate change and feral livestock and equine management and continued with presentations on collaboration, women in natural resource management, legislative update, and concurrent sessions on various topics.





Also, new this year was our first annual 5K Run/Walk. We had 44 (32 in-person and 12 virtual) participants raising funds for our scholarship program. Four natural resources tours were offered showcasing the natural resources of the area and the work the Miccosukee Tribe is doing: Airboat Swamp Tour, Everglades National Park, Fakahatchee Swamp Walk and Miccosukee Hatchery tour. We ended our conference with a banquet and awards ceremony.

39TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 39th Annual NAFWS National Conference was sponsored by the Southeast Region and hosted by the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida at the Miccosukee Resort and Convention Center in Miami, FL on May 9-11, 2022. We continued to see the effects of Covid and travel restrictions at our 2022 National Conference, however, our attendance is rebounding with 216 people representing 56 Tribes from all seven NAFWS regions. Most of our participants were Tribal citizens (68%).

New during the 2022 National Conference was a hybrid option, allowing members to attend the general session and one concurrent session virtually.



2022 PROGRAMS

ADVOCACY FOR TRIBES

NAFWS continued to advocate for Tribal inclusion in federal programs and fish and wildlife work. NAFWS Executive Director continued to meet with key personnel in Federal agencies (USFWS, USGS-CASC), monthly. NAFWS worked and continues to provide input and concerns with relevant agencies based on our work and in collaboration with Tribes.

MEMBERSHIP

2022 was a great year for NAFWS membership with an increase in our Member Tribes from 44 in 2021 to 59. Individual membership nearly tripled in 2022 from 176 individual members in 2021 to 485 individuals in 2022. We attribute the increase in both Individual and Member Tribe membership to the ability to have in-person regional conferences, three regional meetings in addition to the National Conference, and the growth of our social media presence.



EDUCATION

SUMMER YOUTH PRACTICUM

The 2022 National SYP was held at the Pingree Campus of Colorado State University, and it was a blast! NAFWS hosted 10 wonderful and engaging students from across the country that represented 6 Tribes and 5 NAFWS regions. Our agenda was filled with great activities ranging from a ropes course challenge, fly fishing, field trip to Colorado State University's (CSU) Warner College of Natural Resources and presenting their final presentations on their wildlife management proposal plan. A new aspect we added to this year's National SYP is the wildlife management challenge, where the students worked together to create a mock elk wildlife management proposal.

INTERNSHIPS

The summer of 2022, the NAFWS Staff was happy to welcome Trenton Chalmers as our Conservation Law Enforcement intern and Hannah Juliussen to the team as the Alaska Tribal Climate Resilience Intern in September of 2022.



RESEARCH PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

In December of 2021, the NAFWS approved the creation of the Research and Publication Committee to aid in providing assistance in navigating research, authorship, data sovereignty, research impact and resources. The committee met 5 times in 2022 to discuss projects and goals for the future including scientific literature access, "train the trainer" workshops, and student involvement in data analysis and research collection.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2022, we awarded a total of \$12,000.00 in NAFWS scholarships to nine Native college students. We awarded students from the Southwest (3 students), Great Lakes (1 student), Great Plains (1 student), Alaska (1 student), Pacific (2 students) and Southeast (1 student) regions. The Great Lakes awarded 1 additional scholarship from their regional funds generated from regional silent auctions and their annual golf tournament. Additionally, we awarded the 2022 NAFWS National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) Scholarship, funded by the US Forest Service.

TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We offered several training courses throughout the year on topics such as climate resilience, electrofishing, NEPA, Wildlife Chemical Immobilization, threatened and endangered species, grant writing and wildlife disease sampling. In total we provided training to around 300 participants.

Technical assistance varied greatly; however, some examples include, connecting Tribes with resources (scientific, funding, partners), meeting with Federal Agencies to assist them in Tribal engagement, conservation law enforcement issues, and policy questions.

In total, NAFWS provided direct technical assistance to 170 Tribes. Our largest technical assistance event was the "America the Beautiful Challenge Grant" workshop/webinar 7-part series. We had over 100 participants representing 62 Tribes.

NAFWS is in regular contact with over 400 Tribes providing direct response to all field staff inquiries along with dissemination of information including: funding opportunities, training opportunities, networking and NAFWS updates.

2022 SPECIAL PROJECTS

INTERNATIONAL HUNTER'S EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (IHEA)

NAFWS staff worked with the IHEA to develop a NAFWS sponsored program that can be utilized by Tribal field staff across the continent to provide hunter education programs in their own communities that meet the standards of all IHEA members and allow the Tribes to incorporate any local or cultural chapters they deem important. The NAFWS program was certified by IHEA-World in November of 2022.

| Region | Tribes that received Technical Assistance |
|------------------|---|
| Southwest | 31 |
| Alaska | 62 |
| Northeast | 2 |
| Southeast | 14 |
| Pacific | 38 |
| Great Lakes | 10 |
| Great Plains | 13 |
| Federal Partners | 13 |
| NGO's/ Other | 81 |

NATIONAL CONFERENCE TRAINING CENTER (USFWS)

A memorandum of understanding was signed between USFWS and NAFWS, and implementation began in 2022 to provide training and professional development tailored to support conservation partners in accomplishing their mission. NAFWS and NCTC staff met to plan and deliver the training system opportunities to NAFWS members.

In addition to training, the MOU provides NAFWS member access to the National Conservation Library. NCTC assigned a National Librarian to develop and administer NAFWS member access. Library access allows NAFWS members to search and research nearly 4,000 professional journals and over 9,000 books.

ASSESSMENT OF WILDLIFE WATER SOURCES ON ARID LANDS

Phase one of this project was completed April 2022 with the collection of information from Tribes in the Southwest region on their existing availability and needs for wildlife water. A selection committee was formed at the 2022 SW Regional Conference who reviewed and selected 15 Tribal projects to receive funding.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance was able to expand in cervids on Tribal lands in 2022. A total of 60 CWD samples have been submitted from 44 total Tribes under this project. NAFWS is looking forward to funding up to 380 additional samples with this funding in 2023. We continue to host a dedicated CWD page on our website.



NAFWS Member Benefits:
Access to USFWS Conservation Library

Through the MOU between the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society (NAFWS) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), NAFWS Members and Member Tribes will now have access to thousands of scientific journals through the USFWS Conservation Library.

Introduction Webinar

Join us for an introductory webinar about how to access the Conservation Library through your NAFWS Membership.

Join us:
 January 18, 2023
 1:00 PM Mountain Time

Register at:
<https://bit.ly/3UCQ6nt>

Open to NAFWS Members and those interested in membership

INVASIVE SPECIES

NAFWS received funding in February 2022 to implement an Invasive Species Tribal Engagement Project to engage Tribes for input on invasive species concerns and represent Tribal interests in national initiatives and organizations. The funding supports the Invasive Species Coordinator who also provides technical assistance to member Tribes and individual members on invasive species. Mitzi Reed joined the NAFWS staff in November 2022 as the Invasive Species Coordinator (ISC). Ms. Reed created a comprehensive invasive species program plan to provide guidance to implement the program and direction to enhance Tribal engagement.

TRIBAL CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

It was a busy year of training for Conservation Law Enforcement Officers (CLEO). The NAFWS provided many training opportunities for CLEOs to successfully achieve their annual training requirements and/or participate in advanced law enforcement training to maintain situational awareness while carrying out their duties as sworn peace officers.

- CLEO's Trained: **185**
- Tribes Represented: **71**
- Trainings Held: **10** (including a webinar training)

NAFWS recognizes the need for strong conservation law enforcement to protect Tribal natural resources and promote self-determination. The Tribal Conservation Law Enforcement Program Enhancement initiative was new in 2022 and established based on member input. NAFWS continued our contract with Robert Romero for CLEO technical assistance and support while continuing to identify and secure resources, including funding for CLEOs.



2022 NATIONAL INITIATIVES & GOALS



TRIBAL WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIVITY

The Tribal Wildlife Corridors/Connectivity national initiative focused primarily on the Tribes in the western states. During 2022, technical assistance was offered to 77 Tribes, across 19 states. NAFWS received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trust to support the hiring of a Wildlife Connectivity Coordinator (WCC) and in January 2022, Shailyn Wiechman was hired. The WCC focused on providing technical expertise to Tribes working on wildlife connectivity and creating federal policy and management recommendations that improve the capacity and inclusiveness related to wildlife migration conservation. A Tribal only Wildlife Corridors discussion group was also formed and continues to meet monthly.

WILDLIFE HEALTH

The Wildlife Health initiative focused on established and emerging threats to wildlife health impacting Tribes. This initiative was primarily supported by the USFWS Tribal Collaboration Project self-determination contract that supports a contract with Native Healing, LLC – Dr. Tolani Francisco, DVM, MPH. Dr. Francisco presented on Wildlife Disease at the National Conference and several regional conferences. NAFWS held a webinar on One Health funding opportunities from BIA and USFWS. NAFWS submitted a letter to USFWS and USDA APHIS regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza impacts on eagle feathers for Tribal citizens.

RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT (RAWA)

Due to its potential impact to establish a dedicated annual base funding for Tribal fish and wildlife programs, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) remained a priority for NAFWS. NAFWS served as a clearinghouse for Tribal Support Letters for RAWA to Sec. Haaland and to the Senate. NAFWS conducted a Tribal Fly-in November 2022, to educate Congress on the importance of funding for Tribal fish and wildlife programs.

CLIMATE CHANGE

NAFWS was successful in securing several grants focusing on climate adaptation, impacts and resilience for Tribes. In 2022 NAFWS Staff engaged in the meetings at the Southwest Adaptation Forum and the Southwest Tribal Adaptation Menu Workshop, to build up our network and resource database of climate change professionals and organizations as well as securing funding and filling two positions for Tribal Climate Resilience Liaison's based in Alaska.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

In 2022, NAFWS gained a great deal of public awareness through involvement in national policy, increased events in each region, availability of training, outreach efforts and the media. The Public Information Officer (PIO) developed a public information strategy to update and monitor outreach efforts through the NAFWS website, the From the Eagle's Nest newsletter, social media, and press relations.

NAFWS WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER

In 2022, we received 99,708 website views and an average of 274 visits per day. NAFWS releases four quarterly newsletters each year, From the Eagle's Nest, which are published on the website and distributed to subscribers through email. We ended the year with 798 subscribers receiving our Winter issue with an average open rate of 42.6% compared to 533 subscribers and a 36.9% open rate in 2021.

SOCIAL MEDIA

After implementing the 2022 Social Media Strategy, we experienced extreme growth and engagement across all platforms. LinkedIn led the charge with a 791.2% growth in 2022 compared to 2021, Instagram followed with a 176.5% growth rate, Twitter at 169.7% growth, followed by Facebook at 61.7% growth rate.

NAFWS IN THE NEWS

With 11 press releases published in 2022, NAFWS far exceeded our goal of four. Our PIO completed two site visits for Tribal highlights of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's 30 years of black bear management and the cohosting of video celebration of World Fish Migration Day on the Penobscot Nations' work to restore the Mattamiscontis Stream Watershed and the return of sea-run fishes.

2022 FINANCES

NATIVE AMERICAN FISH & WILDLIFE SOCIETY EXPENDITURES

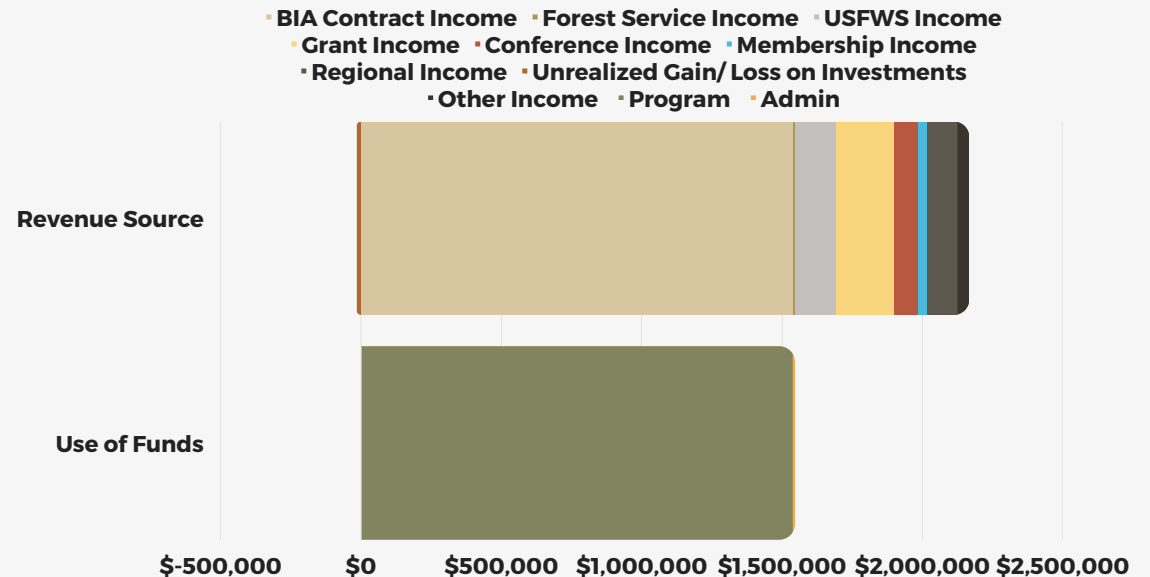
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

JANUARY - DECMEBER 2022

(UNAUDITED)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Program | \$1,771,571.43 |
| Admin | \$401,933.03 |
| Total Expenditures | \$2,173,504.46 |

2022 FINANCIAL REVENUE SOURCES & USE OF FUNDS



2022 PARTNERSHIPS

FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)- NAFWS Primary Partner and Funder
- United States Forest Service (USFS)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Alabama Fire College
- Bass Pro Shops
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Kalliopeia Foundation
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- First Nations Development Institute
- USDA-APHIS: Office of National Tribal Liaison
- National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)
- National Wildlife Federation (NWF)



ADDITIONAL NON-FINANCIAL PARTNERS

- US Environmental Protection Agency
- The Wildlife Society
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife
- Indian Land Tenure Foundation
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)
- Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASC)
- Alaska Conservation Foundation (ACF)
- Alaska Village Initiatives (AVI)
- Alaska Tribal Resilience Learning Network (AK TRLN)
- Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRCC)
- Inspiring Girls' Expeditions (IGE)
- Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC)
- Trees, Water, People
- American Fisheries Society
- TWS Native People's Working Group
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)
- Center for Large Landscape Conservation (CLCC)
- Wildlands Network (WN)
- Animal Road Crossing Solutions (ARC)
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP)
- Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Mule Deer Foundation (MDF)
- Wild Virginia



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Great Lakes Region

- Donald J. Reiter- Wildlife Biologist, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Menominee Conservation Department
- Terry Metoxen- Conservation Law Enforcement Officer, Oneida Nation

Great Plains

- Jeff Kelly- Standing Rock Game and Fish Director
- Charles Wilkinson- Game Warden, Three Affiliated Tribes Fish & Wildlife Division

Pacific Region

- Donna Nez- Fisheries Technician – Il Mussel, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Ted Lamebull, Jr. -Retired Conservation Law Officer with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Southeast Region

- Mike LaVoie, NAFWS Vice President- Natural Resources Program Manager, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Mitzi Reed- Biologist, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Department of Natural Resources

Southwest Region

- Elveda Martinez, NAFWS President- Water Resources Coordinator, Walker River Paiute Tribe
- Darren Talayumptewa-Program Manager, Hopi Tribe Wildlife & Ecosystems Management

Alaska Region

- Orville Huntington- Wildlife Biologist
- Hope Roberts – Indigenous Advocate, Captain/ Owner of Surreel Saltwaters

Northeast Region

- Dinalyn Spears- Community Planner/Natural Resources, Narragansett Indian Tribe
- Benjamin Simpson- Biologist, Penobscot Nation

OUR TEAM



CONTRACTORS

- Managment Partners, Inc.
- ARED, LLC.
- Native Healings, LLC.
- Robert Romero, CLEO Consultant



NAFWS STAFF

- Julie Thorstenson, PhD. Executive Director
- Heidi McCann, M.S., Office Manager & Membership Coordinator
- April Richards, M.S., Public Information Officer
- Ashley Mueller, M.S., Education Coordinator
- Sean Cross, Fish & Wildlife Biologist
- Shailyn Weichman, Wildlife Connectivity Coordinator
- Laurel James, PhD. (C), Director of Programs
- Mitzi Reed, M.S., Invasive Species Coordinator
- Justin Leon, M.S., Senior Tribal Climate Resilience Liaison
- Kaitlyn Demoski, M.S., Assistant Tribal Climate Resilience Liaison
- Christine Longjohn, M.S., Fish & Wildlife Biologist