

**AGENDA**  
**Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**

**Public Meeting:**     **Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.**  
Forest Heritage Center  
4350 S. St. Hwy 259A  
Broken Bow, Oklahoma 74728

The Commission may vote to approve, disapprove, or take other action on any of the following items. The Commission may vote to authorize public comment on any agenda item requesting a rule change.

1. Call to Order – Chairwoman Gaddis
2. Roll Call – Rhonda Hurst
3. Invocation – Wade Farrar
4. Pledge of Allegiance – Wade Farrar
5. Introduction of Guests
6. Presentation of Awards

Leah Campo, Administrative Assistant – 20 years  
Kyle Johnson, Senior Biologist – 20 years

7. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject or take other action on minutes of the August 1, 2022 regular Commission meeting.
8. Director's Report – J.D. Strong
  - a. Federal and Congressional Update
    - Oklahoma Legislative Update
  - b. Calendar Items – discussion of upcoming department calendar items.
  - c. Agency Update – an update on current activity within each division of the agency.
9. Presentation of the July 31, 2022 Financial Statements and consideration and vote to approve, amend or reject miscellaneous donations – Amanda Storck, CFO and Chief of Administration.
10. Presentation and update on Southeast region wildlife management activities and Red Slough Wildlife Management Area – Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division, Eric Suttles, SE Region Wildlife Supervisor and Chance Phillips, Hugo/Pine Creek/Red Slough WMA Biologist.
11. Presentation and update on Alligator Research Projects in Southeast Oklahoma – Bill Dinkines and Alex Cooper, Research Biologist.
12. Discussion of the appraisal and/or purchase of certain real properties located in Adair and Cimarron Counties, which the Commission by majority vote may decide to discuss in

Executive Session pursuant to 25 O.S. 307(B)(3); with any action thereon to take place through discussion, consideration, and vote in open session – Bill Dinkines.

13. New Business – Discussion of any matter not known about, or which could not have been reasonably foreseen 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
14. Announce the October 3, 2022 Commission meeting will be in Lawton, Oklahoma.
15. Adjourn

**People with disabilities may request accommodations by calling 405-522-6279 at least three days before the meeting.**

## MINUTES

### Of the Regular Meeting on August 1, 2022, of the OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Held at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on August 1, 2022. Commission meeting dates are filed with the Secretary of State, Office of Administrative Rules before December 15, annually. The agenda is listed on the Department's website and was posted at the entrance of the Wildlife Department Building on July 27, 2022, at 11:26 a.m.

Chairwoman Leigh Gaddis called the Commission in session at 9:00 a.m.

Rhonda Hurst, Executive Assistant, called the roll.

MEMBERS PRESENT:      LEIGH A. GADDIS, Chairwoman  
                                    JAMES V. BARWICK, Vice-Chairman  
                                    C. RICK HOLDER, Secretary  
                                    MARK H. MABREY, Member  
                                    D. CHAD DILLINGHAM, Member  
                                    BILL K. BREWSTER, Member  
                                    JOHN P. ZELBST, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:      JESS M. KANE, Member

J.D. Strong, Director, introduced the following guests: Rick Grundman, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation (OWCF); Laura McIver and James Dietsch, Quail Forever; John Groendyke, Scott Northcutt and Greg Hart, Grand National Quail Club; Zac Womack, Silverleaf Shotgun Sports; Todd, Nichole, Jake & Eli Yates, first youth raffle deer hunt recipient.

Chairwoman Gaddis also recognized and welcomed Mark Mabrey, newly appointed Commissioner for District 2.

Director Strong recognized Ron Smith, Southwest Regional Supervisor for 25 years of service and Mark Howery, Senior Biologist for 30 years of service.

Assistant Director Free recognized the winner of the Department's first youth raffle deer hunt in 2021 on the Dillingham Ranch, Eli Yates. Commissioner Dillingham recounted the details of a great hunt and is proud to be involved with a program that raises money for a great cause but also exposes youth to hunting. Assistant Director Free presented Eli with his mounted buck.

Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division, recognized the 2021 Wildlife Division Biologist of the Year, Jeff Ford and Technician of the Year, Jason Rockwell.

Ken Cunningham, Chief of Fisheries Division, recognized the 2021 Fisheries Division Professional of the Year, Chas Patterson.

Nathan Erdman, Chief of Law Enforcement Division, recognized Game Warden of the Year, Blake Pearson; Medal of Valor recipient, Riley Willman; Colonel's Life Saving Citation recognition, Riley Willman, Austin Jackson, Stephen Paul, and Larry Green.

Director Strong presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Spirit of ODWC Award to Cheryl Luetkemeyer, Procurement Officer.

Nels Rodefeld, Chief of Communication & Education Division, gave a brief presentation on National Shooting Sports month. He also introduced Lance Meek, Senior Communication and Education specialist who gave a presentation on the Wildlife Restoration Grant providing funding for upgraded target throwers for Silverleaf Shotgun Sports in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Zachary Womack, Owner/Operator of Silverleaf Shotgun Sports, explained that this grant has moved Silverleaf to the #1 clay target facility in the state. Mr. Womack supports High School shooting sports and has over 700 kids participating in a tournament in September. ODWC will be helping with this tournament.

Rick Grundman, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation, recognized the Grand National Quail Club, Grand National Quail Foundation, the Grand National Quail Hunt Past Shooters Council and John Groendyke for their individual donations of \$5,000 to the Foundation totaling \$20,000. Mr. Groendyke introduced Greg Hart and Scott Northcutt for their efforts to secure these donations.

Mr. Grundman also announce that the 2022 Hall of Fame Gala will be October 6 at the Omni Hotel. He gave a PowerPoint presentation recognizing all the donors from the 2021 Gala.

Motion was made by Mr. Barwick, seconded by Mr. Dillingham to approve the minutes from the June 6, 2022, Commission meeting. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham and Gaddis voting "Yes".

Director Strong gave a brief update and highlighted the Congressional report submitted by Brittnee Preston, the Department's part-time Federal and Congressional Liaison. This report was sent to all Commissioners and will be kept with the minutes of this meeting. Mr. Strong gave a Director's Report on calendar items and agency updates. This report was given to the Commission and will be kept with the minutes of this meeting.

Amanda Storck, CFO and Chief of Administration presented the Financial Statements for May 31, 2022, and June 30, 2022. Motion was made by Mr. Dillingham, seconded by Mr. Holder to accept the financial statements as presented and approve miscellaneous contributions. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham and Gaddis voting "Yes".

Ms. Storck also gave an update on the current license data:

- Recreational Licenses - Number of licenses down 12% for July compared to 2021 sales. (Down 10% YTD)
- Resident Fishing - Down 16% (Down 12% YTD)
- Resident Hunting - Up 10% (Up 7% YTD)
- Resident Combo - Up 9% (Down 11% YTD)
- Nonresident Hunting - Up 35% (Down 13% YTD)
- Nonresident Fishing - Down 15% (Down 13% YTD)
- Lifetime Licenses - Down 6% for March
- Lifetime Combo - Up 11% (Down 13% YTD)
- Lifetime Fishing - Down 32% (Down 31% YTD)
- Seniors - Down 7% (Down 2% YTD)

Overall monthly totals for July are just under 2019 levels, but hot temperatures could be a factor. All other months in 2022 have been higher. We'll continue to monitor it.

Amanda Storck presented and requested Commission approval on the ratification of proposed resolution of the adoption agreement for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Defined Contribution plan and SECURE Act Amendment. Motion was made by Mr. Zelbst, seconded by Mr. Holder to approve the ratification as presented. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham and Gaddis voting "Yes".

Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division, requested Commission approval on emergency rules relating to the establishment of air-powered arrow rifles as a legal means of take during open rifle seasons. These rules are necessary after the state legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 1571 allowing for their use in open rifle season.

Title 800. Department of Wildlife Conservation

Chapter 25. Wildlife Rules

Subchapter. General Hunting Seasons

Part 1. General Provisions

800:25-7-3. General Provisions [AMENDED]

Part 13. Deer

800:25-7-53. Deer-Gun [AMENDED]

800:25-7-54. Legal firearms and archery specifications [AMENDED]

Commissioner Barwick stated that the rules committee had met, reviewed the rules, and attended a demonstration of the arrow rifles. A few revisions were made to the rules to create this final version. Motion was made by Mr. Barwick, seconded by Mr. Mabrey to approve the rules as presented. Motion carried with Commissioners Brewster, Barwick, Mabrey, Holder, Zelbst, Dillingham and Gaddis voting "Yes".

Chairwoman Gaddis announced that #21 regarding the discussion of property in Cimarron County will be tabled until the September meeting. Director Strong announced that a tour of the property will take place on August 24 & 25, 2022 and invited Commissioners to attend.

Chairwoman Gaddis announced that the September 6, 2022, Commission meeting will be held in Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Leigh A. Gaddis, CHAIRWOMAN

ATTEST:

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C. Rick Holder, SECRETARY

# September 2022 DIRECTOR'S REPORT



OKLAHOMA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION**

## CALENDAR ITEMS:

Aug 13NWTF/ODWC Deer Conference, Midwest City  
Sep 12-15 WAFWA Executive Committee, Boise, ID  
Sep 17-21 AFWA Annual Meeting, Ft. Worth, TX  
Oct 3 Commission Meeting & Tour, Lawton/Hackberry Flat WMA  
Oct 8 State Waterfowl Festival & Duck Calling Contest, Henryetta, OK

## AGENCY UPDATE

### ADMINISTRATION

- Accounting
  - Number of Claims Audited and Paid - 307
  - Total Dollar Amount of Claims Paid - \$2,456,163.78
  - Total # Agency Cardholders - 188 (17 approving officials)
  - Total Agency Spending Limit - \$418,000
  - Number of P/Card Transactions Processed -823
  - Number of In-depth Audited Transactions - 125
  - Total Dollar Amount of P/Card Purchases - \$222,277.39
  - New and Refresher PCard-holder and Approver Training Completed 4
  - Number of Purchase Orders/CO issued - 57
  - IT Acquisitions Processed - 14
  - Construction site visits
    - 07/25/2022 - Cheryl Luetkemeyer - Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting San Bois WMA - Clearing of woody vegetation from roadway
    - 07/27/2022 - Cheryl Luetkemeyer - Canton WMA Shop Building - Final Inspection with Contractor & Construction & Properties Project Manager
    - 07/27/2022 - Cheryl Luetkemeyer - Watonga Dam Lake Project - Meet with Garver Engineering, Construction & Properties, Fish Division, & Terracon - tour project site & see how to get project back to bidding status
- Human Resources
  - Open Full-time Positions - 26
  - Positions Interviewed, 3 Candidates interviewed, 13
  - Positions Announced, 4
  - See included personnel report that shows personnel actions for the month.
  - Temporary Employees Processed (Interns & Aids), 3
  - End of employment, 8
  - 13 - In-House Workday Trainings for Employees
  - 1 - New Employee Orientation for 2 new hires

- 1 - ODWC Computer Training webinar
- 1 – MINRC Meetings
- Cristo Rey Draft Day: 3 new and 1 returning students.
- Workday system go live this month. Catch up transactions.
- Hope Awareness Training
- IT -
  - August has the lowest ticket count IT has recorded this year. Currently we are sitting at 79 opened in the last 30 days. The extra time has allowed us to work on several projects and work on ongoing issues that have been lingering. We took the first shipment of OMES leased laptops this year. While there are issues with getting them setup. Having them in our possession is a step in the right direction. We were able to pin point an issue with users frequently getting locked out of their domain accounts. We were able to source a motherboard for the failed mini-split in the server room. We have been notified our audit has been finalized and has been sent to peer review.
  - Upcoming and Ongoing Projects:
    - Working on the EDT system to work under the user settings instead of the admin setting on computers.
    - Prepped a batch of loaner laptops for Karla's Workday training in the central office.
    - Working with the Workday Extract Team to download the Payroll Extract into our system.
    - Started the decommissioning of hundreds of old hard drives and cellphones.
    - Started talks with Pinnacle about the future of our server architecture needs.
    - Worked with OMES on implementing KnowBe4's cyber security suite to work with Office 365.

#### License

- Processed over 580 orders, including 473 licenses/permits and 388 hard card orders (mail and walk-in orders) - \$38,396 in revenue
- Shipped over 370 merchandise items (hats, books, etc), totaling almost \$3,500 in revenue.
- Processed \$43,000 in miscellaneous revenue, such lease payments, fines restitution, etc.
- Reviewed almost 940 online applications for various licenses and permits.

#### Property

- Had meeting with Greg Harring @ Bill Knight Ford on our Fy22 Ford Super Duty truck order. Build dates on these trucks are rescheduled to build sometime in late September. Trucks were originally scheduled to build in early June.
- Ordered 11 replacement lost/damaged Comdata cards for field employees.
- Had meeting with Tom Ayers @ Bob Howard Dodge. Put in a verbal order in for 30 new 2023 Dodge Ram 1500 4x4 trucks. 25 trucks for Law Enforcement and 5 trucks for the other divisions.
- Followed up with Spaces on phase II reconfiguration. All parts on order should be in by end of the month (August).
- Mini split unit (AC unit) for 1st floor server room had control board go bad. All parts ordered and scheduled to be installed towards end of the month (August).

- Johnson Controls installed 1 of 2 new compressors on chiller. Waiting on a schedule date to get the second compressor installed. Lost another compressor and fan motor on the chiller. Johnson Controls has new compressor and fan motor on order.
- Barry met with roofing contractors to get recommendations on repairing the leaky skylight in lobby. Waiting on contractors to come up with a scope of work needed for repairs.
- Replaced old decals with new decals on trucks coming to OKC for the WorkDay training.
- Made changes to new logo on caps. Placed order for 1500 caps on 8/19/2022 with JVH Marketing. (10-14 week on delivery)
- Prepped and completed 5 vehicle exchanges for Wildlife Division ½ ton trucks.
- Installed new decals and door/tailgate text on 23 new Game Warden trucks.
- Removed and installed new high band radios in 2 Wildlife trucks.

## FISHERIES DIVISION

<b>Statewide Fish Stockings, July 2022</b>			
<b>Species</b>	<b>#Fish</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b># Locations</b>
Channel catfish, Spawns to Nat'l Hatchery	13 spawns	41.05 lb.	1
Channel catfish	2,221	15"	1
Rainbow trout	9,316	11"	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,537</b>		

### Meetings Attended

- ODWC hosted and staffed the centennial celebration of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (**WAFWA**) in Oklahoma City.
- Staff met with the City of Wetumka Lake caretaker to discuss lake management and vegetation control.
- Staff met with COE and SWPA to address water options for the lower Illinois River.
- Staff attended the Pine Creek Master Plan open house meeting and participated on the technical guidance committee.

### Activities

- Catfish spawning kegs were checked multiple times to collect egg masses and were transferred to the Tishomingo NFH to incubate and hatch. Spawning kegs were removed after the required number of egg masses were obtained.
- Blue River staff set numbered markers posts to better delineate individual camping sites. This is aimed to reduce unauthorized camp locations and will hopefully improve enforcement capabilities.
- Staff spent significant time picking up/cleaning/mowing/maintaining Blue River and Dept. Lake properties following high-use weekends. Additionally, mowing/grounds and shop maintenance was performed at each ODWC hatchery and office.
- After being monitored in holding pools for 5 days, a total of 32 of 240 fish survived (86.7% mortality) that were shot by Oklahoma bowfishers for up to 120 hrs. Shot



locations (head, dorsal musculature, spine, internal organs, tail, and/or fins) were recorded for each fish shot and most of the fish were shot in the dorsal musculature (n= 128) and/or the internal organs (n=145). Fish shot in the head and/or internal organs had a lower probability of surviving compared to fish shot solely in the dorsal musculature. The following Lakes were sampled: **via electrofishing** Ft. Gibson, Holdenville, Arcadia, Overholser, Wiley Post; **via seining**: Sardis, Wes Watkins, Keystone; **via hoop netting**: McMurry, Lawtonka, Chambers, Vincent, Lindsay, Purcell, Elmore City, several CTHFP; **via water quality**: Lower Mt. Fork River, Keystone Lake; **via community sampling**: lower Arkansas basin; **creel surveys**: Beaty-Mulhousen, Ten Arce, Holdenville.


- The following training were attended by staff: Employee Workday Training (Online), Online Security Awareness Training; Attended mandatory workday training offered by OMES.
- Reports were completed or worked on for the following waters: Continued working on the Wetumka Gap Report 2007-2021, Haskell, Roland, and Adair survey reports.
- Habitat and/or fishing attractors were maintained/refurbished on the following lakes: Adair - 25 spider blocks were placed near the newly installed south bank fishing pier, installed 200 spider blocks at Boomer Lake, finished installing Georgia cubes, and started installing mossback fish habitat structures in grand lake.
- Aging otoliths from spring electrofishing continue for Largemouth Bass from Holdenville, Konawa, Okemah, and Weleetka.
- Conducted boating and fishing access inspections on water throughout the state.
- Provided flathead catfish for Fort Gibson Lake Association tank at noodling event.
- Followed up on numerous fish kill reports. As many as 6 per day. Completed fish kill claim and submitted to OKC for consideration. Assisted DEQ and USFWS with local fish kill/pollution events and provided technical advice to local pond owners regarding algae control and low water levels.
- SharePoint site was built to house fish division publications
- Staff met with a new engineering firm at Watonga. The dam project is being reviewed to provide ODWC with a proposal.
- Staff participated in OKAFS and NASPS board meetings and planning.
- Helped Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery staff insert coded wire tags into approximately 12,000 paddlefish juveniles.
- Submitted 3 manuscripts for the Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science titled "Population characteristics of Channel Catfish in Meeker Reservoir, Oklahoma, a small impoundment", "An Investigation into the Effects of Elevated Water Hardness on Channel Catfish Egg Viability", and "Population Characteristics of Black Bullhead *Ameiurus melas* in Two Small Oklahoma Close to Home Ponds".
- Staff worked on writing abstracts and presentations for the upcoming **Oklahoma** Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting.
- Staff completed a concrete modification project on 10 harvest basins to assist in fish harvest.
- Installed new pressure tank to supply water to two hatchery residences.
- Collected hybrid bluegill and stocked them in Elk City ponds for fishing clinic
- Staff provided 2 programs to summer library program students.

- C&E is proud to recognize Blake Podhajsky, Darrin Hill, Todd Craighead, Whitney Jenkins, Sarah Southerland, Don Brown and Smokey Solis for their recent awards from the Association of Conservation Information.
  - Social Media Presence - First Place (Sarah)
  - Outdoor Recreation Video - First Place (Blake)
  - Magazine Feature - Second Place (Don and Carlos)
  - Internal Communications - Second Place (Whitney)
  - Recurring Video Program - Second Place (Blake, Darrin, Todd)
  - Photography People - Third Place (Blake)
  - Poster - Third Place (Smokey)
- As of Aug. 9 nearly \$100,000 have been raised through the Outdoor Adventure Raffle series. The raffle closes Aug. 15 and will be followed by a Fort Sill elk hunt raffle running Sept. 1 through Dec. 1.
- Communication and Education Staff assisted with an event at The Cedar Gate for the OU football program staff and their families. They participated in sporting clays, trap, archery and fishing.
- Kelly Boyer and Shawn Gee conducted two teacher training courses, training more than 40 new teachers that are replacing previous teachers at existing schools and equipment kits were provided to six new schools.
- Damon Springer and Jason Smith trained 12 new teachers that are replacing teachers at existing schools that offer Scholastic Shooting Sports.
- Recent marketing efforts include promoting the new hard cards, abandoned cart, spring/summer fishing emails and other onboarding messages. The hard card email launched in early August captured just under \$14k.
- 185,000 copies of the 2022-23 Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting regulations book are making their way to license dealers across the state. This year's regulations book does not include ads and was restructured to include all licenses and exemptions in one section. Previously, fishing and hunting licenses and exemptions were separate.
- Lance Meek continued to ensure that Shooting Range Projects progress on our WMA range locations while we work on replacing the Shooting Range Coordinator position.
- Staff assisted with final review of the Hunting and Fishing regulations prior to them going to print. Additional in-person Hunter Education Courses were added that will be taught by Education staff in October and November in Jenks at Arcadia.
- Skylar St Yves worked with several DHS-affiliated children's homes to offer fishing clinics on site.
- Colin Berg continued his once a month live interviews with Tess Maune on Channel 6, and twice a month live interviews with Good Day Tulsa Channel 8. Topics covered included Get Ready for Dove Season by going to the Skeet Range, Invite a fiend to go shooting for National Shooting Sports Month, Pond Management Information Available on ODWC Website, New On-line and in Print Regulations Coming out soon and Sign up now for In-Person Hunter Education Courses.
- The deadline for the Oklahoma waterfowl stamp art contest is Aug. 25. This year's contest features the green-winged teal. To date we have received 10 entries.
- Don Brown is working with Oklahoma Today magazine on opportunities to cross-promote Outdoor Oklahoma magazine to the respective subscriber lists.

## WILDLIFE DIVISION

- All staff have begun the transition to the Workday system, including in-house training on time and leave reporting and approval.
- WMA staff are in full gear prepping for hunting seasons and the peak in WMA visitation / utilization, which began with the September 1 dove season opener. Activities include:
  - Maintenance of roads (over 100 tons of gravel spread on WMA roads), parking areas, camping areas, fence, signs, and fireguards.
  - Fence construction/repair has been recently completed or is ongoing at numerous WMA's across the state.
  - Habitat manipulation, including mowing, strip disking, herbicide application, masticating trees/brush, and cedar cutting
  - Fall food plot preparation/planting is well underway on WMA's statewide
  - A large number of Wetland Development Units are receiving much attention in preparation to begin pumping or to capture any fall rains. Much of this infrastructure is aging and in need of repair or replacement. Our Wetlands technician has been working through state purchasing and supply chain issues to source parts and replacement pumps. Wetland Development Units staff have also been utilizing two mini-excavators to clear beaver dams and other debris. Similarly, the Migratory Bird airboat has been loaned to WMA staff to gain access to wetland areas for structure repair and inspections. This sharing of resources is allowing for better utilization of equipment and distribution of workload.
  - Shooting range maintenance and ongoing shooting range construction continues. The new range at Packsaddle WMA is in final construction phase and nearing completion.
  - Construction continues (app. 98% complete) on the new access road up the mountain into the interior of Sans Bois WMA
  - Agricultural, Hay, and Grazing leases monitoring, and inspections continue. All grazing leases for this year have been completed and cattle have been removed.
  - Staff are completing Bat Acoustic surveys on WMAs
  - The NWTF Superfund project on Black Kettle WMA treating 105 acres with cedar mastication is near completion. The NWTF Waterways for Wildlife project is slated to begin on Packsaddle WMA, treating 2,000 acres with cedar mastication.
  - A very well attended (60+ landowners) prescribed fire field day was held on Lexington WMA.
  - WMA staff have been busy with late summer dove field management / manipulation (burning, mowing, hay contracts) and entering dove field information on the Department "Dove Hunting Opportunities/Dove Fields" webpage
  - Two tracts (18 and 160 acre inholdings in the Atoka Public Hunting Area) of land were purchased.
- Numerous staff conducted dove baiting and trapping. Anecdotal reports indicate lower success than prior years.
- Jerry Shaw, Supervisor, Wildlife Division will be traveling to the Central Flyway Council meeting in TX. Jerry is the Oklahoma Council member and represents the

Department's interests in discussions and decisions concerning research, regulations, and other migratory bird concerns.

- Paxton Smith, our migratory bird technician, traveled to the prairie region of North Dakota to assist with waterfowl banding efforts with the Central Flyway. This travel was funded by Central Flyway dues paid by all cooperating Flyway states and provinces.
- Airboat training was completed by Paxton Smith in cooperation with ODWC Game Wardens on the Canadian River in Cleveland County in August. This cooperative effort helps to sharpen skills, share knowledge, and evaluate equipment capabilities.
- Deer spotlight counts are being conducted on DMAP and WMA properties. There have been mixed early results with some reports of fewer deer and fawns, while other areas are reporting average to above average numbers. Drought conditions are likely impacting deer movement and habitat use during spotlight periods.
- August quail roadside counts have been completed, but data analysis is not yet complete. This is the first of two repetitions of this sighting effort. Anecdotal accounts have been mixed but continue to be low.
- The 2022 fur harvest and survey data has been analyzed and the Fur Report has been completed. The report can be accessed using this link:  [2022 Post Season Fur Report.pdf](#)
- The Arcadia Research building is being connected to Cox fiber optic internet service. This will replace the current cellular hotspot connection that was inadequate for the connectivity needs of those staff stationed there.
- Numerous nuisance bear complaints are being worked. Late summer is when we get the greatest number of nuisance bear complaints, primarily as a result of limited food resources due to prolonged periods of very hot and dry weather conditions. Many Nuisance Bear Coordinators were able to get “hands on” training by accompanying experienced staff to work some of these complaints.
- Staff attended the joint Midwest and SE Wild Turkey working groups meeting.
- Statewide turkey surveys were conducted during the months of July and August. Overall, the surveys indicate generally poor recruitment statewide, although there are isolated “pockets” where there was indication of at least some reproduction.
- Private Lands Staff are finishing up compliance reviews on FY22 WHIP projects and responding to the usual flush of private lands technical assistance requests that are annually prompted with the impending arrival of the fall hunting seasons.
- OLAP staff are making the final push to get OLAP properties ready for upcoming hunting season (clean up, signs, updated maps, etc).
- Staff have been working to get annual reports for WSFR projects prepared and submitted/entered **TRACS** (the new WSFR **T**racking and **R**eporting **A**ctions for **C**onservation of **S**pecies system).
- The SWG and Research needs identification process has been completed, and Requests for Proposals will be issued for both State Wildlife Grants and targeted Wildlife Research projects.
- Youth antlerless deer hunts were advertised, applications solicited, and participants were drawn. A total of 71 slots are offered this fall. Emphasis was placed on targeting youth with limited hunting experience for several of these hunts.

- Continue to interview and fill vacant positions. SW Private lands biologist interviews were conducted. Migratory Bird/Wetland Development Biologist interviews soon.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

- Wardens have been busy completing the Workday training at the Department Headquarters. This is the new time and labor program that all state agencies are transitioning to.
- New trucks ('22 Ford Pickups) have started arriving from upfitters and will be issued to field in the coming weeks. The average cost per truck is right at \$35K; we ordered 23 trucks this last year.
- We are in the process of promoting a new District Chief for D3. Capt. Mike Virgin is retiring after 44 years of service to the Department.
- Warden from D4 worked a special emphasis on Heyburn and Keystone management areas on the opening days of dove season. Results are not in yet, but the results will be in October report.
- Lt. Todd Smith (D4 Coal County) will be retiring the last day of October after 34 years of service to the Department. Between Todd and Mike that is 78 years of combined experience and institutional knowledge leaving within a month.

***Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
Financial Statement***

***For the period July 1, 2022 Through July 31, 2022***

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Combined Balance Sheet - All Fund Types and Accounts Groups**  
**July 31, 2022**

	Governmental Fund Types		Fiduciary Fund Types	Account Groups			
	General	Capital Projects	Trust	General Fixed Assets	General Long-Term Debt	07/31/2022 Totals	07/31/2021 Totals
<b>Assets and Other Debits:</b>							
Cash	10,655,394		4,111,919			14,767,313	18,594,340
Investments	0		259,230,844			259,230,844	284,295,115
Accounts Receivable	3,034,862					3,034,862	1,874,097
Monthly Lifetime License			123,875			123,875	125,475
Legacy Permit / Operation game Thief	3,200,874		7,000			3,207,874.00	5,187,394.00
Fixed Assets				77,031,479		77,031,479	70,519,921
Land				103,575,289		103,575,289	96,610,614
<b>Other Debits:</b>							
Amount To Be Provided For Payment of Compensated Absences					3,528,814	3,528,814	3,453,776
Amount To Be Provided For Payment of Net Pension Obligation					(3,924,890)	(3,924,890)	16,555,543
	16,891,130	0	263,473,638	180,606,768	(396,076)	460,575,460	492,035,881
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balance:</b>							
<b>Liabilities:</b>							
Accounts Payable (accrual)	650,400					650,400	1,595,644
Due to Other Funds (current month Lifetimes)	123,875					123,875	125,475
Compensated Absences Payable (leave accrual)					3,528,814	3,528,814	3,453,776
Net Pension Obligation					(3,924,890)	(3,924,890)	16,555,543
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>774,275</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(396,076)</b>	<b>378,199</b>	<b>21,730,438</b>
<b>Fund Balance:</b>							
Reserved for Employee Pension Benefits			125,747,250			125,747,250	142,276,031
Reserved for Defined Contribution Benefits (DC)			6,140,998			6,140,998	5,876,488
Investment in General Fixed Assets				180,606,768		180,606,768	167,130,535
<b>Fund Balance</b>	<b>16,116,855</b>		<b>131,585,390</b>			<b>147,702,245</b>	<b>155,022,389</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>16,116,855</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>263,473,638</b>	<b>180,606,768</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>460,197,261</b>	<b>470,305,443</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>16,891,130</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>263,473,638</b>	<b>180,606,768</b>	<b>(396,076)</b>	<b>460,575,460</b>	<b>492,035,881</b>

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Trust Funds**

**Combining Balance Sheets**  
**July 31, 2022**

	Expendable Trust	Nonexpendable Trust	Pension Trust	DC Trust	07/31/2022 Totals	07/31/2021 Totals
<b>Assets:</b>						
Cash (Wildlife Heritage)	425,446	3,686,473			4,111,919	3,859,804
Investments	31,231,206	96,111,390	125,747,250	6,140,998	259,230,844	290,171,603
Due From Other Funds		123,875			123,875	125,475
Restricted Assets (OP. Game Thief)		7,000			7,000	7,000
	<b>31,656,652</b>	<b>99,928,738</b>	<b>125,747,250</b>	<b>6,140,998</b>	<b>263,473,638</b>	<b>294,163,882</b>
<b>Fund Balance:</b>						
Fund Balance Reserved for Employee Pension Benefits			125,747,250	6,140,998	131,888,248	148,152,519
Fund Balance	31,656,652	99,928,738			131,585,390	146,011,363
Total Fund Balance	31,656,652	99,928,738	125,747,250	6,140,998	263,473,638	294,163,882



**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances**  
**All Governmental Fund Types and Expendable Trust Fund**  
**For the Period July 1, 2022 Through July 31, 2022**

	Governmental Fund Types		Fiduciary Fund Type	07/31/2022	07/31/2021	Percent of Inc. or Dec.
	General	Capital Projects	Expendable Trust	Totals	Totals	
<b>Revenues:</b>						
Licenses (without Lifetimes)	763,687			763,687	638,628	19.58%
Other Wildlife Sales	220,609			220,609	258,444	-14.64%
Agriculture and Oil Lease	42,803			42,803	66,904	-36.02%
Grant Revenue	1,988,067			1,988,067	857,597	131.82%
Investment Income	15,306		3,939	19,245	22,004	-12.54%
Miscellaneous	53,831			53,831	102,669	-47.57%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>3,084,303</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,939</b>	<b>3,088,242</b>	<b>1,946,246</b>	<b>58.68%</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>						
Administration	509,135			509,135	661,232	-23.00%
Wildlife	1,249,876			1,249,876	984,655	26.94%
Fish	688,525			688,525	865,703	-20.47%
Law Enforcement	943,240			943,240	1,248,267	-24.44%
Information and Education	270,429			270,429	268,655	0.66%
Capital Improvements	1,520,285			1,520,285	1,134,576	34.00%
Land Acquisitions	-	-		-	0	0.00%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>5,181,490</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>5,181,490</b>	<b>5,163,088</b>	<b>0.36%</b>
Excess(deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(2,097,187)	0	3,939	(2,093,248)	(3,216,842)	-34.93%
<b>Other Financing Sources(uses):</b>						
Sale of General Fixed Assets	0			0	0	0.00%
Operating Transfers In	49,790	0	6,856,056	6,905,846	1,298,555	431.81%
Operating Transfers Out	0		(49,790)	(49,790)	(59,269)	-15.99%
Operating Transfers Out (215)			0	0	0	0.00
<b>Total Other Financing Sources(uses)</b>	<b>49,790</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,806,266</b>	<b>6,856,056</b>	<b>1,239,286</b>	<b>453.23%</b>
Excess of revenues & other financing sources over expenditures & other financing uses	(2,047,397)	0	6,810,205	4,762,808	(1,977,556)	340.84%
Fund Balances, Beginning of Year:	18,164,252	0	24,846,447	43,010,699	65,499,816	-34.33%
<b>Fund Balances July 31, 2022:</b>	<b>16,116,855</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31,656,652</b>	<b>47,773,507</b>	<b>63,522,260</b>	<b>-24.79%</b>

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
**Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances**  
**Trust Funds**  
**For the Period July 1, 2022 Through July 31, 2022**

	Fiduciary Fund Types			07/31/2022 Totals	07/31/2021 Totals
	Nonexpendable Trust	Pension Trust	DC Trust		
Operating Revenues:					
Licenses (Lifetime)	123,875			123,875	125,475
Other Sales (Senior Citizen Licenses)	16,170			16,170	13,365
Interest and Investment Income	0	7,029,570	335,205	7,364,775	1,278,358
Employer Contributions		0	53,539	53,539	45,753
Employee Contributions		45,499	37,274	82,773	80,615
Total Operating Revenues	140,045	7,075,069	426,018	7,641,132	1,543,566
Operating Expenses:					
Administration		53,292	1,280	54,572	69,835
Benefits and Participant Refunds	0	717,059	1,211	718,270	716,123
Total Operating Expenses	0	770,351	2,491	772,842	785,958
Operating Income	140,045	6,304,718	423,527	6,868,290	757,608
Nonoperating Expenses:					
Transfers Out	0	0	0	0	0
Total Nonoperating Expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Net Income	140,045	6,304,718	423,527	6,868,290	757,608
Fund Balances, Beginning	99,788,693	119,442,532	5,717,471	224,948,696	244,075,434
Fund Balances, July 31, 2022	99,928,738	125,747,250	6,140,998	231,816,986	244,833,042



# Wildlife Contributions Report

Jul-22

<b>Total Payment Amount</b>	<b>Name Of Individual Or Business</b>	<b>Description Of Contribution</b>
\$10.00	Lori Gamble	Donation
\$4,308.00	Barry Shrader	Fish Division/Blue River
\$2,500.00	Barry Shrader	Fish Division/Blue River
<b>\$6,818.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	



J. KEVIN STITT, GOVERNOR

J. D. STRONG, DIRECTOR

Wildlife Conservation Commission

**Leigh Gaddis**

Chairman

**James V. Barwick**

Vice Chairman

**Rick Holder**

Secretary

**Bill Brewster**

**D. Chad Dillingham**

**Jess Kane**

**Bruce Mabrey**

**John P. Zelbst**

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 20, 2022

**TO:** OK Department of Wildlife Commission and Staff

**FROM:** Brittnee Preston

**RE:** Report on July and August Federal and Congressional Issues for September Commission Meeting

### State of Play:

President –

- > Over the course of the last month, the President has tested positive for COVID twice and the First Lady tested positive once.
- > President Biden signed an [Executive Order](#) establishing a new federal office tasked with addressing health challenges associated with climate change. The Office is called the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy and will be housed within the Executive Office of the President.

### Congress:

General Congressional actions:

- > Inflation Reduction Act –

In late July Majority Leader Schumer and Sen. Manchin announced an agreement on a reconciliation package which included health care, climate and tax provisions. The package, which has been under negotiation even since a deal was announced, is projected to reduce budget deficits by \$102 Billion over 10 years and \$204 billion in new revenue from cracking down on tax avoidance, according to a CBO estimate. The package is a \$433 billion tax, climate and health-care plan currently includes:

General provisions:

- A \$7,500 clean vehicle tax credit,
- Several clean energy tax credits related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, and various grant programs,
- 'Prevailing wage' provisions,
- Corporate income tax increase,
- Reforms the carried interest on investment income tax,
- Increases funding for the IRS,
- Extends the ACA tax credits through 2025, and
- Drug pricing reform

Wildlife and Environment specific provisions:

- \$1 billion for national parks and public lands including acquisition funds.
- More than \$20 billion for agriculture provisions and voluntary conservation programs to improve soil carbon, reduce nitrogen losses or sequester greenhouse gas emissions.
  - \$8.45 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- \$6.75 billion for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- \$3.25 billion for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- \$1.4 billion for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The bill needed all the Senate Democrats to agree to move forward with the 20 hours of debate on the measure followed by a vote-a-rama, which is the allowance of unlimited amendments. Extending session into the beginning of August Recess, the Senate passed the bill on a weekend vote with Vice President Harris breaking the tie. The House came back from August Recess for a day to pass the bill and send it to the President's desk. President Biden quickly signed it into law a few days later.

> **FY23 Appropriations**

- Work on the FY 23 appropriations bills is in full swing with the Senate holding budgetary hearings and released their draft bills. The House has moved a significant number of bills through the Committee process including all the titles covering wildlife issues including: Department of Agriculture, Energy and Water, and Interior and Environment bills. The House passed a six-bill appropriations minibus package towards the end of July, which includes the previously mentioned bills. The Senate bills will not see movement until after they return in September. A continuing resolution is expected ahead of the end of the fiscal year on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Below are highlights of the relevant bills from both chambers:

**HOUSE FY23 APPROPRIATIONS BILLS SUMMARY**

**AGRICULTURE BILL:**

- The bill provides funding of \$27.2 billion– a critical increase of \$2.075 billion, 8 percent– above 2022.
- \$1.16 billion – \$52 million above the FY 2022 enacted level – for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which covers funding for plant and animal diseases including CWD.
- Provides \$1 B for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and affiliated programs.

**ENERGY AND WATER BILL:**

- The bill provides \$56.275 billion, an increase of \$3.4 billion above the fiscal year 2022 level
- Provides a total of \$8.889 billion, an increase of \$545 million above the fiscal year 2022 level and \$2.288 billion above the request for the Army Corps of Engineers
- Provides a total of \$1.913 billion for the Department of Interior, an increase of \$479.7 million above the request.
- Provides \$1.891 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation, an increase of \$476.7 million above the request.

**INTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENT BILL:**

- The bill provides a total of \$11.5 billion for EPA – an increase of \$2 billion above the FY 2022 enacted level.
- Provides a total of \$16.6 billion in discretionary appropriations for DOI, an increase of \$2.1 billion above the FY 2022 enacted level.
- \$1.5 billion for the Bureau of Land Management (MLR/O&C), \$135 million above the FY 2022 enacted level. Within this amount, the bill includes:
  - \$81 million for sage-grouse conservation,
  - \$37 million for threatened and endangered species,
  - \$70 million for the National Landscape Conservation System, and
  - \$12 million for National and Scenic Historic Trails consolidated in a new sub-activity in Recreation Management. It also provides \$156 million for the Wild Horse and Burro program which includes \$11 million for research on reversible immunocontraceptive fertility control and its administration.
- \$1.9 billion for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, \$230 million above the FY 2022 enacted level. Within this amount, the bill includes:
  - \$355 million for Ecological Services, \$77 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$574 million for National Wildlife Refuge System, \$55 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.

- \$25.5 million for Multinational Species Conservation Fund, \$5.5 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
- \$24.5 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
- \$74.4 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants
- \$57.8 million for migratory bird management
- \$44.7 million for Aquatic Invasive Species, of which \$4,400,000 is for National Invasive Species Act (NISA) activities, as requested, which includes \$2,834,000 for State and Interstate plans and \$1,566,000 is for NISA coordination
- \$3.6 billion for the National Park Service, an increase of \$378 million above the FY 2022 enacted level. Within this amount, the bill includes:
  - \$3.1 billion for the Operation of the National Park System, an increase of \$323 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$88 million for National Recreation and Preservation, an increase of \$4 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$171 million for the Historic Preservation Fund. Within this amount, the bill includes \$82 million for State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, \$38 million for Save America’s Treasures competitive and project grants, \$28 million for competitive grants to preserve the sites and stories of underrepresented community civil rights, and \$10 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- \$1.6 billion for the U.S. Geological Survey, \$250 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - Provides \$28 million for Cooperative Research Units

## **SENATE FY23 APPROPRIATIONS BILLS SUMMARY**

### **AGRICULTURE BILL:**

- Funds USDA at \$3.9 billion, or a \$248 million increase over fiscal year 2022.
- The bill provides \$1.132 billion for NRCS, an increase of \$126.8 million. This includes \$926.6 million for conservation operations, including an increase of \$20 million for increased conservation technical assistance staffing.
  - Provides \$900,000 for research dedicated to the development of a live cervid test for chronic wasting disease.
  - provides \$5,000,000 for Agriculture Research Service research teams to support regional Climate Hubs.
- The bill’s explanatory statement contains the following statements about the Lesser-Prairie Chicken conservation efforts:
  - “The Committee recognizes the importance of providing private landowners with ready access to the many Federal, State, and local government and private resources available to support conservation efforts on private lands. The Committee directs NRCS to implement a multi-year cooperative agreement with appropriate funding support to an organization that can make conservation solutions and best practices accessible daily to private landowners. This organization should also support efforts to conserve the lesser-prairie chicken and implement carbon sequestration conservation programs nationwide.”
  - “recognizes the role of the Working Lands for Wildlife model in conservation efforts to enhance both wildlife habitat and productivity on working landscapes. In addition, the Committee is worried about the concerning population figures for the lesser prairie-chicken and the need to protect its habitat, particularly in times of drought. NRCS is directed to make every effort to strengthen and expand the work of the Working Lands for Wildlife model and the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative.”

### **ENERGY AND WATER BILL:**

- The bill provides \$57.54 billion in new discretionary budget authority, \$4.6 billion more than fiscal year 2022.
- Provides \$8.7 billion, an increase of \$414 million over fiscal year 2022
- Provides \$1.928 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation

:

## INTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENT BILL

- The bill provides a total discretionary funding level of \$42.217 billion, which is \$4.217 billion more than the fiscal year 2022 level.
- The bill provides \$2.55 billion for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund and \$2.282 billion in emergency funding
- In accordance with the Great American Outdoors Act, the bill allocates \$1.9 billion for projects within National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund and \$900 million for projects within the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- The bill provides \$10.6 billion for EPA, an increase of \$1.1 billion to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level.
- Provides a total of \$53.2 billion in discretionary appropriations for DOI,
- \$1.2 billion for the Bureau of Land Management. Within this amount, the bill includes:
  - \$37 million for threatened and endangered species,
  - \$68 million for the National Landscape Conservation System, and
  - provides \$156 million for the Wild Horse and Burro program which includes \$11 million for research on reversible immunocontraceptive fertility control and its administration.
- Provides \$1.8 billion for the Fish and Wildlife Service, an increase of \$264 million (17 percent) to the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. Within this amount, the bill includes:
  - \$313 million for Ecological Services, \$35 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$550 million for National Wildlife Refuge System, \$31 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$20 million for Multinational Species Conservation Fund, \$5.5 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$24.1 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
  - \$76.5 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants
  - \$54 million for migratory bird management
  - \$246 million for Fish and Aquatic Conservation
  - \$48.2 million for Aquatic Invasive Species, which includes \$3,500,000 for zebra mussel eradication.
- Provides \$3.578 billion for the National Park Service, \$313 million more than the fiscal year 2022 level, which will restore about half of staffing losses since 2010 and fully fund the request for deferred maintenance and construction.
  - \$85.5 million for National Recreation and Preservation, an increase of \$10.8 million above the FY 2022 enacted level.
  - \$192 million for the Historic Preservation Fund.
- \$1.5 billion for the U.S. Geological Survey.
  - Provides \$30 million for Cooperative Research Units

### Recovering America's Wildlife Act –

- > **Senate:** The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has passed a version of the bill and it awaits floor time. This is expected as early as September.
- > **House:** The House Natural Resources Committee moved their version of the bill in January of this year. On June 14th, the House passed H.R. 2773, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, by a vote of 231-190! The Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee offered an amendment to the bill that aligned the text more closely with the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed bill. Both bills offered a ramp up in funding instead of allocating all \$1.4 billion to states and tribes in the first year. The House included a 3 year ramp up while the Senate bill uses a 5 year.

### House –

- > [HR 263](#) - The Big Cat Public Safety Act passed the House floor. This bill set limitations on owning and exhibiting big cats.

### Senate –

- > The Senate released draft appropriations bills this week. More details to come next week on this.

- > The Senate passed their version of the [WRDA bill](#) off the floor. Several Oklahoma specific projects were included along the Arkansas River navigation system, Lake Copan, authorizing development along Oklahoma Lakes and a couple of land conveyances.

**Agencies:**

- > U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)
  - The USFWS is [seeking comments](#) from the public for assistance in developing a proposed rule establishing objectives, measurable performance standards, and criteria for use, consistent with the Endangered Species Act, for species conservation banking. Comments are due by September 26, 2022.
  - The USFWS [announced](#) the rules for the 2022-2023 game bird hunting seasons, hours, areas, and daily bag and possession limits for hunting migratory birds

**Coming up...**

- > FY 23 appropriations and possible Continuing Resolution.
- > Potential Senate floor time for Recovering America's Wildlife Act.
- > The Farm Bill expires in 2023 and preliminary discussions on the next bill have begun.