

**MINUTES OF THE
70TH ANNUAL MEETING
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION**

**NEW ORLEANS, LA
MARCH 17-18, 2006**

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General Session, Friday, March 17, 2006

The 70th Annual Meeting of the National Wildlife Federation (“NWF”) was called to order at 8:05 a.m. on Friday, March 17, 2006, by its Chair, Jerome Ringo, at the Wyndham New Orleans at Canal Place in New Orleans, Louisiana.

A youth volunteer from the audience led the Pledge of Allegiance. Anita Yip, a Campus Ecology Fellow, led the Conservation Pledge.

Following the invocation, Mr. Ringo acknowledged the deaths of important members of the National Wildlife Federation family: Stan Anderson of Wyoming; Vine DeLoria, Jr. of Colorado; Bill Henley of Arkansas; George Hulsey of Oklahoma; James and Wynona “Toni” Bailey of West Virginia; Gene Paul of Missouri; William Russell of Wyoming; J.L. Schneider of Wisconsin; Shirley Strong of Vermont; Beth Williams and Tom Thorne of Wyoming; Paula Yeager of Indiana; and Jim Young of Missouri.

Mr. Ringo extended a special welcome to NWF’s newest affiliate, the Virginia Conservation Network, and its President and Representative Martha Wingfield, and Board V.P. and Alternative Representative William “Skip” Stiles; Marc Davis, President Elect of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders; and David Bayles, Executive Director of Pacific Rivers Council. He then recognized special guests Colin Maxwell, Executive V.P. of the Canadian Wildlife Federation (“CWF”) and his wife Cherry, and CWF’s Board Chair Nicolas Laurin and his wife Johanne Longpré.

Mr. Ringo announced that NWF and CWF had agreed to facilitate the exchange of mutually beneficial conservation information and cooperate on conservation programs and issues of mutual interest. Mr. Maxwell, on behalf of CWF, and Mr. Ringo, on behalf of NWF, signed a Memorandum of Understanding memorializing this collaboration.

Mr. Ringo introduced eight Affiliate Leaders Scholarship Awardees: Chuck Brinkman, Indiana Wildlife Federation; Joe Calvert, West Virginia Wildlife Federation; Dempsey Davenport, Oklahoma Wildlife Federation; Richard Hawley, The Planning and Conservation League; Angel Montoya, New Mexico Wildlife Federation; Raymond Nelson, South Carolina Wildlife Federation; Ryna Rock, Arizona Wildlife Federation; and Nick Simonson, North Dakota Wildlife Federation. The Color Guard from Boy Scout Troop #405 from Lafayette, Louisiana, then entered and presented the pledge of allegiance. Next, Mr. Ringo introduced the twelve Campus Ecology Fellows seated in the audience. Mr. Ringo then introduced NWF’s Board of Directors and Endowment Trustees seated in the audience. Mr. Ringo encouraged all attendees to meet the Affiliate Leaders Scholarship Awardees, the Campus Ecology Fellows and the National Wildlife Federation board members, trustees, and staff who were attending the Annual Meeting.

Mr. Ringo then reviewed the Order of Business set out in the program distributed at the registration desk and reminded the delegates that copies of the Secretary's Report were available in the conference and press office. (A copy of the Secretary's Report is attached as Exhibit 1.)

Next, Mr. Ringo called for the report of the Credentials and Affiliate Standards Committee. On behalf of the Committee, Mrs. Rebecca Scheibelhut, NWF's Immediate Past Chair and the Committee's Chair, reported that proper credentials were received for Affiliate Representatives from all 47 of the affiliate organizations entitled to send a voting delegate to the meeting, and that 45 Alternate Representatives had also been credentialed. There was no contest to the seating of any Affiliate Representatives or Alternate Representatives, so Mrs. Scheibelhut moved on behalf of the committee that the list of Affiliate Representatives and Alternate Representatives that had been distributed be declared the Official Roll for the 70th Annual Meeting of the National Wildlife Federation. This motion was adopted unanimously.

Next, Mr. Ringo called on Kimberly Berry, Assistant Secretary, to call the roll. She reported that a quorum was present in that all 47 affiliates were represented by an Affiliate Representative or Alternate Representative. Mr. Ringo then noted that the amended minutes of the 69th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., had been distributed. A motion that the reading of the minutes be waived and that the minutes be adopted as submitted was seconded and unanimously adopted without discussion.

Mr. Ringo then introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. R. King Milling of Louisiana. Mr. Milling spoke of the history of coastal Louisiana's collapse and the current and urgent need for coastal restoration. Today's challenge to create a sustainable coastline will be large, complex and expensive. However, Mr. Milling emphasized that the cost of such restoration is insignificant in relationship to the loss that will be experienced if we don't invest in restoration now. In conclusion, Mr. Milling noted that he believed Louisiana will meet the challenges ahead.

Mr. Ringo then introduced Larry Schweiger, President and CEO of National Wildlife Federation, who introduced speaker, Steve Johnson, head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Johnson congratulated NWF for protecting our natural heritage for seven decades. Mr. Johnson then highlighted the Bush Administration's efforts and plan to restore and protect wetlands.

Next, Mr. Schweiger gave his President's Report. (A copy of his report is attached as Exhibit 2.)

Following the President's report, a digital video on "NWF - 70 Years of Conservation" was presented. Following announcements of upcoming program events, Mr. Ringo adjourned the session at 10:00 a.m. to resume at 1:45 p.m. that afternoon with the Resolutions Session.

Resolutions Session, Friday, March 17, 2006

The Resolutions Session of the 70th Annual Meeting began at 1:45 p.m. on March 17, 2006. Ms. Berry called the roll and reported that a quorum was present in that all 47

affiliates were represented by an Affiliate Representative or Alternate Representative. She reviewed an amended roster that had been distributed following corrections presented after the morning General Session. Additional corrections were offered from the floor. (A copy of the amended roll call is attached as Exhibit 3.)

Mr. Ringo briefly explained the process for adopting conservation policy resolutions. He then called upon Thomas Gonzales, a member of the NWF Board of Directors, to chair the Resolutions Session. Dr. Gonzales explained that he would ask each committee chair or vice chair to present the resolutions assigned to his or her committee. (The conservation policy resolutions, as adopted, will be filed with the original of these minutes.)

Dr. Gonzales called Mary Jo Forman Miller of Arizona, vice chair of the Land Stewardship Committee, to present the committee's report. Ms. Miller moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution LS-1, "Establishment of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge"** as amended by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as submitted.

Ms. Miller moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution LS-2, "Opposition to the Pebble Mine Project in the Bristol Bay Watershed of Southwestern Alaska,"** as amended by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as submitted.

Ms. Miller moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution LS-3, "Privatization/Disposition of Public Lands,"** as amended by the committee. Ruth Cutler of Connecticut offered by friendly amendment that the clause "WHEREAS public lands are irreplaceable public resources" be added between lines 11 and 12. Colleen Gadd of Colorado also offered by friendly amendment to delete lines 12 and 13. The resolution was adopted as amended by the committee and on the floor.

Next, Dr. Gonzales called on Karen Rupp Carpenter of Oklahoma, chair of the Globalization and the Environment Committee, to present the committee's report. Ms. Carpenter moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution GE-1, "Avian Influenza,"** as amended by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was then adopted as amended by the committee.

Ms. Carpenter next moved the adoption of a substitute resolution and the withdrawal of the original **Proposed Resolution GE-2, "Global Warming and Regional Emission Reduction Plans."** There was no discussion. Ms. Carpenter highlighted the major changes within the substitute resolution. Edna Sussman of New York offered a friendly amendment to change "carbon dioxide" in line 56 to "greenhouse gases" for consistency. The original resolution was withdrawn and the substitute resolution was adopted as amended by the committee and on the floor.

Next, Dr. Gonzales called on Janice Bezanson of Texas, vice chair of the Water Resources Protection Committee, to present the committee's report. Ms. Bezanson moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution WR-1, "Floods, Floodplains, and Disaster Recovery Issues,"** as amended by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as amended by the committee.

Richard Mode of North Carolina, chair of the Water Resources Protection Committee, moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution WR-2, “Funding for the Restoration of Coastal Louisiana as Part of Federal Response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita,”** as submitted by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as submitted by the committee.

Next, Dr. Gonzales called on David Hargett of South Carolina, chair of the Resource Conservation Committee, to present the committee’s report. Mr. Hargett moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution RC-1, “Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands Coastal and Wetland Habitats of Concern,”** as amended by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as amended by the committee.

Rebecca Pritchett of Alabama, vice chair of the Resource Conservation Committee, moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution RC-2, “Central Valley Project (CA) Water Contracts,”** as amended by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as amended by the committee.

Next, Dr. Gonzales called on David Haire of Georgia, chair of the Wildlife Conservation Committee, to present the committee’s report. Mr. Haire moved the adoption of **WC-1, “Cougar Management Guidelines,”** as submitted by the committee. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as submitted by the committee.

Mr. Haire moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution WC-2, “Diminishing the Impact of Feral and Free-Ranging Domestic Cats on Wildlife Populations,”** as amended by the committee. Sheylda Diaz-Mendez of Puerto Rico offered a friendly amendment that the word “North” be deleted from line 13. The resolution was adopted as amended by the committee and on the floor.

Mr. Haire then moved the adoption of **Proposed Resolution WC-3, “Protection of the Endangered Ivory-Billed Woodpecker,”** as submitted by the committee. Mr. Haire commented that he did not entertain a motion to amend in committee and invited discussion on the floor. There was no discussion. The resolution was adopted as submitted by the committee.

There being no further business for this session, and following some brief announcements, Mr. Ringo adjourned the Resolutions Session and ordered that the Elections Session commence at 3:00 p.m.

Elections Session, Friday, March 17, 2006

The Elections Session of the 70th Annual Meeting began at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 17, 2006, for the election of members of the Board of Directors.

Chair Jerome Ringo called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Berry to call the roll. Since a quorum was apparent the roll was not called. Before beginning the election process, Mr. Ringo noted that during yesterday’s Board of Directors meeting, three At-Large Directors were re-elected—Christine Thompson from Virginia; Walter Umphrey from Texas; and Beatrice Busch Von Gontard from Virginia—and one new At-Large

Director, Deborah Spalding from Connecticut, was elected to a full three-year term. Mr. Ringo then explained how the elections would proceed. Mr. Ringo appointed a tellers committee of Seth Ross from Delaware, Lil Pipping from Wisconsin, and Kent Salazar from New Mexico.

Mr. Ringo introduced Bryan Pritchett, Past Chair of NWF's Board of Directors, to chair the Elections Session. After explaining the process that would be followed for the elections, Mr. Pritchett placed in nomination all the names that had been submitted to the Assistant Secretary: for Chair-Elect, Thomas Gonzales; for Central Vice Chair, Spencer Tomb; for Director Region 5, David Carruth; for Director Region 6, Clark Bullard; for Director Region 7, Paul Rose; for Director Region 9, Gene Oglesby; and for Director Region 13, Kathleen Hadley.

The first election was for **Chair-Elect**. The only nominee was Thomas Gonzales of New Mexico. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed. Following a seconding speech by Mr. Salazar and Ms. Gadd, Dr. Gonzales was elected unanimously.

The next election was for **Central Vice Chair**. The only nominee was the incumbent Spencer Tomb of Kansas. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed and Mr. Tomb was re-elected unanimously.

The next election was for **Region 5 Director**. The only nominee was the incumbent David Carruth of Arkansas. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed and Mr. Carruth was re-elected unanimously.

The next election was for **Region 6 Director**. The only nominee was Clark Bullard of Illinois. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed and Mr. Bullard was elected unanimously.

The next election was for **Region 7 Director**. The only nominee was Paul Rose of Michigan. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed and Mr. Rose was elected unanimously.

The next election was for **Region 9 Director**. The only nominee was incumbent Gene Oglesby of Nebraska. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed and Mr. Oglesby was re-elected unanimously.

The next election was for **Region 13 Director**. The only nominee was incumbent Kathleen Hadley of Montana. On a motion duly made and seconded, the nominations were closed and Ms. Hadley was re-elected unanimously.

Mr. Ringo then thanked departing Board members James Baldock, Region 7 Director from Wisconsin, and Daniel Deeb, Region 6 Director from Illinois, and presented each with a bald eagle statue. Next, Mr. Ringo called forward all newly elected or re-elected members of the Board of Directors and administered the oath of office to them. Mr. Ringo noted that the newly elected or re-elected board members will assume their new duties at the conclusion of Saturday's Closing General Session. Board members taking the oath were Dr. Gonzales, Mr. Tomb, Mr. Carruth, Mr. Bullard, Mr.

Rose, Mr. Oglesby, Ms. Hadley, Mr. Umphrey, Ms. Spalding, and Ms. Thompson. Ms. Von Gontard was not present to take the oath.

After some brief announcements the meeting was adjourned until the next day at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 18, 2006.

General Session, Saturday, March 18, 2006

The closing session of the 70th Annual Meeting was called to order by the Chair, Jerome Ringo, at 8:30 a.m. on March 18, 2006.

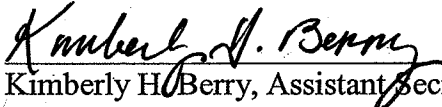
Mr. Ringo began by introducing Mr. Schweiger who introduced keynote speaker, Dr. Gregory Smith. Dr. Smith is the Director of the National Wetlands Research Center, a branch of the U.S. Geological Survey based in Lafayette, Louisiana. In the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Dr. Smith shared his insights on the damage the storms caused to wildlife habitat and on the contributions science can make to ecological restoration. Dr. Smith took questions from the audience.

Mr. Schweiger then introduced Mr. Ringo, who gave his Chair's Report. (A copy of his report is attached as Exhibit 4.)

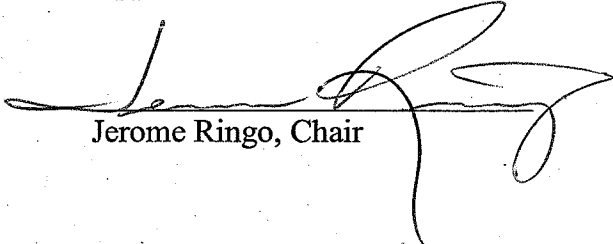
Following Mr. Ringo's remarks, he introduced Randy Lanctot, Executive Director of Louisiana Wildlife Federation. Mr. Lanctot, along with Bob Becker, CEO of New Orleans City Park, and Nancy Walters, Natural Resource Manager for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, described Restoration Day and the three restoration project sites: New Orleans City Park, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, and Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Ringo concluded the meeting by reminding the delegates that former U.S. Vice President Al Gore would be the keynote speaker that evening, which would be followed by the NWF Awards Dinner. He announced that the 71st Annual Meeting will be held March 29-31, 2007, in Washington, D.C. Mr. Ringo then introduced the performance of "The Echoes of Praise," an acapella singing group of three women from Lake Charles, Louisiana, and adjourned the 70th Annual Meeting of the National Wildlife Federation.

Respectfully submitted,


Kimberly H. Berry, Assistant Secretary

Approved:


Jerome Ringo, Chair

EXHIBITS



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People and Nature: Our Future Is in the Balance

Exhibit 1

ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Assistant Secretary reports that:

- The official minutes of National Wildlife Federation meetings are in order and reports of all official committees have been submitted and are on file.
- Affiliate (voting) membership in the National Wildlife Federation is 47, including 45 states plus the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- The Secretary has sent out notices of all official meetings.
- Credentials certifying Affiliate Representatives and Alternates to the Federation's 70th Annual Meeting have been received from the affiliates and turned over to the Committee on Credentials and Affiliate Standards for its report.
- Invoicing the 2006 affiliate dues and the Call for Credentials for the 71st Annual Meeting will be accomplished later this year.
- The 2006 Midyear Board meeting will be held August 2-6, 2006, in Pacific Grove, California. The 71st Annual Meeting of the National Wildlife Federation will be held March 27-April 1, 2007, in Washington, D.C.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the Board, the affiliates, and the staff for their cooperation in providing reports and materials.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly H. Berry
Assistant Secretary

March 17, 2006



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New Orleans, Louisiana
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PRESIDENT LARRY J. SCHWEIGER'S REPORT

Seventy years ago this year at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington DC, Ding Darling and his cohorts set about to change the future of wildlife by founding National Wildlife Federation. We often focus on Ding's leadership and I want to say that Ding was certainly a great leader who inspired many, but there were others who were involved in the founding of National Wildlife and affiliates. Aldo Leopold founded the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, one of our affiliates, Judge Grover Ladner founded another, and Havalala Babcock, the eloquent outdoor writer, yet a third.

These visionaries understood that wildlife desperately needed a strong voice, and a vote. They firmly believed that the organization that they were founding was to be that voice. Therefore, they started a movement of people who cared about wildlife and who strived to protect its future.

Over the seventy years, National Wildlife Federation has been blessed with able executive leaders. I think of Ernie Swift, Tom Kimball, Jay Hair, and others who were able to lead the Federation at critical moments.

Equally important, National Wildlife Federation has had many dedicated volunteers including our board and delegates here today who have worked hard. I look back in history and see Dr. Scroggins, Ross Leffler, Judge Cliff Young and my lifelong mentor Lenny Green as great Chairs of this board as just a couple of examples.

Our board of directors included many dedicated people, including some famous people, such as Shirley Temple Black, Walt Disney, and Maurice K. Goddard. Through the years people of all backgrounds came together and gave voice to our concerns for wildlife- Bing Crosby, Hopalong Cassidy, Arthur Godfried, and even Kermit the Frog were wildlife week chairs of National Wildlife's famous wildlife week efforts.

For seventy years, the National Wildlife Federation, our supporters, and you, our affiliates, have been a clarion voice for wildlife. We are standing here today on the shoulders of some special people who chose to work together to make a difference for wildlife.

Let's see a video here.

<Video not transcribed>

Very special thanks to Bill Dion and the others who worked on these several successful efforts. Bill did just a beautiful job on the video. Thanks.

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March 17, 2006

You know, the great news is that National Wildlife Federation is seventy years old. The bad news is that the National Wildlife Federation is seventy years old.

I do not need to tell you that outside of this room not far from here, is America’s greatest river. That great river moves particles that are very fine, and its waters move slowly. It has a large sweeping bend, I can see from my room the great crescent from which this city gets its nickname.

I’d like to thread back up that river for a moment to a place called the Laurel Highlands in my home state of Pennsylvania where this same river has a tributary and that stream is called Bear Run. Up there on Bear Run, it’s still a throaty young water course. It moves not fine silts and clays, but stones and pebbles and even boulders in big storms.

Just as great rivers have a beginning and an end, organizations can have a beginning and an end. The beginning can be a very throaty, muscular place where great things happen, and the end can be a meandering river that is slow and barely able to carry even the finest of silts.

I share that with you because I think it is important for us at this moment on our 70th birthday and for many affiliates who are in some cases older than NWF, to renew our strength, to get a clear vision for our future. We must mount up like eagles with a clear purpose and sense of direction to secure a place for wildlife in the future.

So the question remains, can old organizations act like young organizations? My fondest hope is *yes we can*. Yesterday National Wildlife Federation’s board of directors voted unanimously to adopt a bold and I would say throaty plan that calls for a movement building effort to stop global warming, to save wildlife and their habitats and to reconnect people with nature.

The National Wildlife Federation strategic plan calls us back to our headwaters where boulders are still being moved. This plan rededicates National Wildlife Federation to a movement building organization that our founders called into being seventy years ago.

Our plan promises that this fourth chapter of conservation will be written on our watch.

Our plan promises to reconnect Americans with nature, to protect wildlife and their critical habitats for our children’s children, and to stop global warming before it stops us.

Together we must wake up America and build a movement like none other to achieve these goals.

You may be asking, “What does movement building mean anyway?” At its core, I believe any movement is about volunteers, encouraging other volunteers, acting together

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to be a part of a selfless history that's now been a part of our conservation legacy. And every one of these great battles that we've looked at over our past there have always been won against great odds. I would suggest to you that we have never had greater odds than we have today. Greater threats demand greater responsibilities for us all. In every noble enterprise, leadership is always the most important ingredient. All other ingredients are secondary.

I'm always inspired as I see the good work of volunteer leaders. Tomorrow, some of us are going to be at the Jean Lafitte National Park. You may not know this but Frank Ararat, who was a long term member of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, decided many years ago that that this special wetland needed to be a national park. Frank took some slides and went on the road, talking to civic clubs and various gatherings of people wherever anyone would listen about his proposed park. For twenty years, night after night, week after week, year after year, Frank beat the drumbeat – that this place needs to be a national park. And finally lawmakers got tired of hearing Frank and figured it's easier to create a national park than to put up with Frank. So we have a national park nine miles from New Orleans because of volunteer leaders like Frank who are persistent, who are steadfast and who have a clear vision for the future.

This month's magazine tells another story about a wonderful volunteer Rex Hancock. Rex is someone who I met when he was a board member of National Wildlife Federation. He was also the president of the Arkansas Wildlife Federation, and a dentist. He was famous because people would go in to get their teeth repaired and Rex would get all caught up on the phone talking about stopping the latest attempt by the Corps of Engineers and forget he had a patient waiting to be treated. Rex gathered about 37 like-minded hunting organizations and fought to protect this great bottomland hardwood, which now harbors the last known Ivory Bill woodpeckers.

We can now hope that perhaps this bird may some day come back in numbers that would ensure its survival because of the dedicated and inspired leadership of one of our own. It's our obligation to make sure that these magnificent birds, while they are still on the verge of absolute extinction- they are ours to keep and to protect and we continue to give voice to that protection through a recent lawsuit.

To build a movement we need to ask others, and each other, for very specific commitments to action. I believe very strongly in the notion that we need to say precisely what we are willing to do and ask others specifically what they are willing to do to make a difference.

The third word in our name is the word "federation." I like to think it's a word meaning connection. The most important connection we can have as a federation is connection to nature, to the places we have grown up and love so deeply and the second is the connection to each other. Let me tell you there are two very dangerous disconnections in America today. The first danger is that our children are disconnecting from nature, as

they are preoccupied by TVs, computers, iPods and by all the other gadgets that distract us from life outside our windows. As a society, we are also being disconnected from one another through political strife and division.

America cannot be great when we are divided. We must re-engage Americans of every stripe to protect our common future. We must find and use new tools to knit together a network of people who are concerned about our future, people of racial and culturally diverse voices. And on that note I want to give a special tribute to our chair, Jerome Ringo. Jerome has brought new energy to the National Wildlife Federation and has opened wonderful new doors for people across the country to see opportunities for leadership and a chance to be a part of something really important. And Jerome, my hat's off to you for your leadership brother.

<Applause>

Jerome and I call each other brothers in this cause. We must forge partnership with a wide range of organizations as we go forward, and we are working hard to do that. Later this weekend, you'll see members of the Green Group, the environmental community, coming together at our meeting, and I welcome their presence here. We have also reached out to labor, to business leaders, to people with various faith perspectives. Again, America works best when we work together. For seventy years, National Wildlife has fought to restore threatened and endangered wildlife, to restore the extravagant abundance of wildlife- and let me say that again- to restore the extravagant abundance of wildlife that America once enjoyed. And to secure for perpetuity the ecologically significant habitats – that's our vision and our plan.

One ecologically significant habitat that is uncertain as we sit here today is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

For over twenty years we have asked you to call your members of Congress, to step to the plate and defend this great place and for twenty years you have done so. Let me suggest to you that we are on a verge of what I hope can be the last battle over this piece of real estate. We have the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee from Alaska leveraging his colleagues, threatening to cut off their funding needs if they don't vote with him on the Arctic language that came through the budget process, not through the normal legislative process, because they don't have the votes for it.

Once again, we can beat them. I predict personally, and I feel very strongly that these people are going to be very desperate this time around because they know there's a graduation coming in Congress. They know that 2006 means change. It's time for an oil change in Washington DC.

<Applause>

One of the early NWF leaders was from my home state of Pennsylvania. Ross Leffler was the Chair of the Board when *National Wildlife* and *Ranger Rick* were started. At one time, Ross also served as Undersecretary of Interior under President Dwight D. Eisenhower. As Undersecretary, he became a good fishing buddy of Eisenhower's and in behind-the-scenes conversations with the President, Ross convinced Ike to create the Arctic National Wildlife Range as it was called in those days its many champions. Leffler wanted it to be a place permanently protected for wildlife and so we intend - and I know all of us in this room feel this way – we intend to keep that promise that Ross, Ike, and others made so many years ago.

We will be calling on Congress and the White House to invest \$80 billion to restore America's most important living waters, such as coastal Louisiana, which King Milling obviously spoke so well about. We also want to see the Great Lakes, and the Chesapeake Bay, and so many other great and threatened others restored. We do not think these waters compete against each other; we think they compete against priorities which need to be evaluated. After all, if we can spend \$400 billion plus in Iraq to restore their communities and resources, surely we can invest \$80 billion to restore the natural water systems that replenish all of us.

<Applause>

The third and final dimension of our plan that I want to share with you, and I'm sure it comes as no surprise, is global warming.

Much has happened since I spoke with you before about this important and urgent matter, and let me just share a few highlights for you. Ninety eight percent of the mountains on our planet that have ice are losing their ice. Ten years from now they wonder where we're going to be able to hold a winter Olympics, how high we'll need to climb on mountains to have this great international sport.

Forty percent of the ice in the Arctic has melted, twenty percent by surface area. The Antarctic is now losing ice on both east and west sides – we have known for some time we've been losing ice on the west side but we did not realize that the east is melting nearly as fast as the west. So the Antarctic is losing ice and water at a very, very disturbing rate.

Greenland is melting – the equivalent of three new Nile rivers per year into the North Atlantic. The glaciers – talk about glacier speed- glacier speed now in Greenland is seven miles per year as they slide closer and closer to the ocean. It's interesting to me that most Americans, some 75% to 80% of the American public understand that we've got a problem with global warming but they don't understand that this is a very, very urgent matter.

You can't melt Arctic ice at 8% per decade without fundamentally changing the way weather works on our planet. You can't heat up the Gulf of Mexico several degrees (and even right now the Gulf of Mexico is still at record temperatures) without triggering intense and destructive storms. You cannot add the amount of water that we're adding to the oceans and expanding the water that's in the oceans without destroying great wetlands and disrupting great ecological systems. You cannot take the ice off of mountaintops without interfering with the viability of salmon and other cold water fisheries. *You just can't do that and expect to get away with it.*

Jim Hanson, who is head of NASA'S program on global warming- you may have seen some quotes from Hanson because he was being constrained by the administration to be quiet about his recent findings and modeling. Well, let me tell you about one of the findings that scientists are seeing.

A few years ago, and in fact up to a couple of years ago, we were adding about one part per million of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere each year. A year ago, that went up to 1.8 parts per million carbon per year. Jeremy sent me an email the other day and I haven't slept very well since I got that note – thanks, Jeremy, for that – but it shows that number of parts per million is up 2.4 per year.

Now, we've built some new power plants and we've added a lot of new cars and factories in China and Asia, but we haven't *more than doubled* the amount of carbon dioxide by human sources in the last few year. If you look across the world, we're killing our forests with diseases because insects are not dying off the way they used to die off. We're melting permafrost and allowing carbon dioxide to escape from tundra regions in the planet. We are at a very, very serious point. Dr. Hanson suggests that if we don't act within 10 years to reduce the carbon that we are emitting into the atmosphere, we are going to have a fundamentally different planet. Hear those words – *A different planet.*

I don't want a different planet. I want *this* planet.

I would like to ask my family to come forward if they're in the back of the room. Are they there? Our grandson was starting to make some noise earlier so they may have slipped out.

I want to make a pledge to you, and would like to ask you to make a commitment back to National Wildlife Federation. My pledge to you as your CEO and President is to do everything in my power to make sure that this bold vision, this throaty plan that the federation's board has adopted yesterday, becomes reality. That we can reduce the amount of carbon in our atmosphere, that we can protect these very special places for wildlife, and that we can reconnect our children with nature.

I would like to ask each one of you to make that same kind of commitment at your own station in your journey. I believe deeply and strongly that not one of us can do this alone.

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Not one of us, in fact not one organization can do it alone- but Americans linking together across this country for common purpose can, and in fact, we must, change the forecast for wildlife and for our children's children.

Thank you very much for this opportunity and please, join with me in that cause.

Thanks.

<Applause>

**National Wildlife Federation
70th Annual Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana
March 15–18, 2006**

Amended Roll Call

<u>State</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
Alabama	Rebecca Pritchett	Timothy L. Gothard
Arizona	Don Farmer	Mary Jo Forman Miller
Arkansas	Jim Wood	Steve Duzan
California	J. William Yeates	Gary A Patton
Colorado	Colleen Gadd	Christian Westring
Connecticut	Ruth Cutler	Lori Brant
Delaware	Seth Ross	Richard A. Fleming
Florida	Bob Reid	Virginia Brock
Georgia	David Haire	Lynn E. Haire
Hawaii	Kim Ramos	Julie Leialoha
Idaho	Kent Marlor	Russell W. Heughins
Illinois	Jon McNussen	Clark Bullard
Indiana	Dwight Shelton	Paul Bunner
Iowa	John Zietlow	Carlton Harford
Kansas	Don Snider	Steven G. Sorensen
Kentucky	Robert M. Smith	
Louisiana	Edgar F. Veillon	Elbridge R. Smith
Maine	Jim Glavine	Sharon Tisher
Massachusetts	Anne Kelly	
Michigan	Steve Bartz	Don Meixner
Minnesota	Steven Maurice	
Mississippi	Jocephus R. Dillard	Don Jackson
Missouri	Albert Phillips	Ron Coleman
Montana	Stan Frasier	
Nebraska	Bruce E. Stephens	Karl Whitmore
Nevada	Kevin Cabble	Anita Wagner
New Mexico	Ellery E. Worthen	Kent Salazar
New York	Edna Sussman	
North Carolina	G. Richard Mode	Larry Thompson
North Dakota	Clarence Bina	Don Baasch
Ohio	Larry Mitchell	Andrea Caito
Oklahoma	Karen Rupp Carpenter	Andrew McDaniels
Pennsylvania	Ed Zygmunt	Peter Dalby
Puerto Rico	Sheylda N. Diaz-Mendez	Joel Franqui Gil de Lamadrid
Rhode Island	Jack Schempp	David Brunetti
South Carolina	David L. Hargett	Katherine Stephens
South Dakota	Jeff Albrecht	Chris Hesla
Tennessee	Monty Halcomb	Joanne Halcomb
Texas	Janice Bezanson	Susan Petersen
Utah	William R. Burbridge	
Vermont	Peter Land	Dale Guldbrandsen
Virgin Islands	Carlos Tesitor	
Virginia	Martha Wingfield	William Stiles
Washington	K. Robert Johnson	
West Virginia	Thomas Ditty	Wayne Kirby
Wisconsin	Corky Meyer	Lil Pipping
Wyoming	Harold Schultz	Dave Bragonier

**National Wildlife Federation
70th Annual Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana
March 18, 2006**

CHAIR JEROME RINGO'S REPORT

So we have reached the close of a special annual meeting of the National Wildlife Federation, special because it marks the seventieth anniversary of the group's founding. Seven decades ago people whom we still revere—Ding Darling, Aldo Leopold, even President Franklin Roosevelt—helped create an organization that would give a political voice to outdoor enthusiasts of all shapes and stripes, from gardeners to anglers, from hikers to hunters, from birders to Boy Scouts.

The Dust Bowl was at its worst in 1936, making waterfowl conservation one of the key issues for NWF founders. We're still working to protect waterfowl from threats like the draining of prairie potholes, but we're also facing challenges that our predecessors would never have imagined. First and foremost of these is global warming.

Here in Louisiana, global warming is no longer an abstraction. I was a delegate to the Kyoto summit in Japan a number of years ago, and one of the big questions on participants' minds then was whether the United States, as the world's largest economy, could afford to restrict its carbon emissions. I must say—having faced the very real prospect of my house in Louisiana being destroyed by a monster storm powered in part by global warming—that now the question for me and for millions like me is not can we afford to do something about global warming, but can we afford NOT to?

In that context, let's take a closer look at Louisiana. Many conservationists, hunters, anglers, and other outdoor enthusiasts call Louisiana "the nation's wetland" and "the Sportsman's Paradise." I also call it home, because I live in Lake Charles, Louisiana, about forty miles east of the Texas-Louisiana border, halfway between New Orleans and Houston on I-10. I am beginning to think that we should call it the Laboratory State, because all Americans, directly or indirectly, have been conducting for decades a massive experiment on Louisiana, especially on the state's coastal wetlands. I think that in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we can say that the experiment is a failure from every perspective—socially, economically, culturally, industrially, ecologically, and biologically. Even from the point of view of national security, the experiment has been a failure.

The people of Louisiana have long understood the importance of coastal wetlands to the vitality and security of not just the region but the nation. We know that a quarter of all the oil and gas consumed in America and 80 percent of the nation's offshore oil and gas travels through Louisiana wetlands. We know that Louisiana provides temporary or permanent habitat for 20 percent of North America's ducks and geese and 72 percent of the continent's forest-dwelling migratory birds as well 1.5 million alligators and myriad muskrats, river otters, raccoons, mink

and other furbearers. We know the state attracts about 1.1 million anglers yearly and provides some 1.4 billion pounds of fish and shellfish yearly to the seafood industry—about 30 percent of the nation's fish catch.

Because of industrial development and the digging of various canals and ditches, we've witnessed, in my lifetime, the disintegration of large portions of the coastal marsh and swamplands that once stretched across our coastline and nourished our biological heritage. Louisiana has lost enough wetlands since 1930 to cover the state of Delaware. Before the hurricanes struck, the state was losing coastal land at the rate of 24 square miles a year, an area about the size of Manhattan. Through massive, misguided, over-engineered projects costing billions of taxpayer dollars, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers drastically altered the natural waterways of the Mississippi Delta.

This problem may seem local, but as the hurricanes have shown, it is national as well. Louisiana, the nation's wetland, has also become the nation's alarm bell, and it is tolling for all of us wherever we live. It is telling us that we have to restore the natural buffers that protect our communities and that lessen the destruction of our property. It rings true regardless of whether we are talking about wetlands that purify polluted waters in New England, or about grasslands and forests that stem erosion in the East and West, or about marshes that absorb spring flood waters along Midwestern rivers. Wherever you live, you can go too far in tampering with natural ecosystems, with dire results.

One example of that tampering here in the Sportsman's Paradise is the Mississippi River Gulf Channel, a ditch connecting New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico that the Corps finished digging in 1965 at an initial cost of \$92 million. The idea was to give commercial ships a shortcut around the Mississippi River, shaving a few miles off the trip to the Gulf.

The Corps cut its shortcut through freshwater marshes, bringing salt water from the Gulf into contact with freshwater vegetation. The vegetation died, leaving nothing to hold soil in place. The banks of the channel steadily eroded, and the wetlands disappeared. To date, the channel has destroyed 15,000 acres of marshland that provided precious wildlife habitat and that acted like a natural buffer during hurricanes by helping to reduce storm surge.

Now, the channel has become a storm-surge superhighway. Plus, most of the silt from the banks ends up on the channel floor, which has to be dredged at an annual cost of \$22 million, all for a canal that carries fewer than five boats a day. This means that dredging the channel alone costs taxpayers about \$12,000 per vessel per day, money that could be spent strengthening levees, restoring wetlands, and protecting people.

Into this shattered landscape came hurricanes Rita and Katrina, like twin monsters out of ancient mythology storming out of the skies to devour marsh and woodland, beach and barrier island. The hurricanes were natural events, but make no mistake—the devastation was largely a human-made disaster that came from years of ignoring common sense and glaring warnings.

The tragedies of Katrina and Rita were not caused by two days of stormy weather. They unfolded over decades.

Katrina and Rita did so much damage because, in the past, we ignored warnings about how vulnerable we were to the next big storm. You can bet that in your own region, wherever it may be, natural areas have been similarly, if not as extensively, re-engineered, and that their present condition, too, is a warning largely being ignored. Let me outline just three of the warnings we ignored here in Louisiana.

Number one: We've known for years that New Orleans is sinking. It began when we started straightening out a river that has no business flowing straight. In the process, we deprived the Mississippi Delta of the silt that the river system for thousands of years had deposited in the delta and that every year replenished coastal wetlands that lost silt to water flow into the gulf. Without the arrival of new silt, the marsh lands collapsed. We have literally snatched the ground from beneath the wonderful city of New Orleans.

Number two: The destruction of those wetlands and marshes removed landforms that act as nature's levees in a storm—levees that do not break. We destroyed them and relied solely on our own levees of concrete, earth, and steel, which did break.

Number three: We have, as a nation, repeatedly failed to do our share to reduce global warming, which will further warm the waters that fuel these monster storms.

Global warming is rightly one of NWF's three main conservation priorities, along with protecting and restoring habitat and reconnecting people with nature. Scientists are telling us that hurricanes today are more ferocious than they were in the past due in part to global warming. In a peer-reviewed study published in *Nature*, tropical storm researcher Kerry Emanuel of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that major storms in both the Atlantic and the Pacific since the 1970s have increased by about 50 percent in both duration and intensity. Scientists attribute this increase in storm intensity to warmer ocean temperatures.

The pollution we emit from smokestacks and tailpipes is warming not only the air, but also the tropic seas, and warm water is high octane fuel to a tropical storm or hurricane. Ocean temperatures have increased over the past decades as global atmospheric temperatures have gone up. Warmer ocean waters provided the fuel that gave hurricanes Katrina and Rita their ferocious energy as they hit the Gulf Coast. Additionally, the sea level rise expected to occur due to global warming, combined with the elimination and disappearance of vital wetlands, will exacerbate storm surges that can engulf communities and destroy the very infrastructure meant to protect them. Scientists also warn that the longer we delay action on global warming, the more we will see devastating storms like Katrina and Rita.

But if you do not want to take the word of independent scientists, how about the findings of the Bush administration, which has never been accused of being an alarmist voice for global warming action. Three years ago, the Bush administration warned in their Climate Action

Report that hurricanes “are likely to have higher wind speeds and produce more rainfall” as a result of global warming. This calls into question whether the current standards that we now employ for coastal building, placement, and construction properly anticipate the future conditions we may be facing.

The Bush administration's report also warned that “coastal communities will be at greater risk of storm surges” due to global warming. Global warming has already caused sea levels to rise globally and along the Gulf coast by about a half foot, worsening the storm surge that swamped Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The rise in sea level from global warming will continue to accelerate as glaciers and ice caps melt and as water expands due to warmer temperatures.

The problem is not limited to the Gulf. A 2002 government report predicted that sea-level rise caused by global warming could swallow sizable chunks of all U.S. coastal areas in the coming century. In a worst-case scenario, sea level along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts would be more than 3 feet higher by mid-century, and 23,000 square miles of land along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts could disappear, swamping the wetlands and barrier islands that help protect our shorelines against storm surges.

Here is a damning figure in regard to global warming: The United States harbors 5 percent of the world's population but produces 25 percent of its greenhouse gas emissions. That's not fair. We're making the mess, but we're not helping to clean it up. We need to do better. Yet to this day, we refuse as a nation to do our part to fight global warming.

More and more we have seen our nation's priorities being set by politicians on behalf of corporate interests rather than by a clear, rational analysis of our nation's critical needs. Consider, for example, that one response of the politicians in the White House and in Congress to the damage of Katrina and Rita was to call for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Is that a solution to the problems posed by the hurricanes? Louisiana sinks into the sea, and our politicians respond by going after oil above the Arctic Circle?

That's bad enough, but consider this: In 2003, the White House blocked an ambitious, 14-billion-dollar Louisiana coastal restoration plan supported by NWF. That price tag seems like a bargain now compared to the hundreds of billions we'll have to spend partly because we destroyed nature's levees.

NWF, as it strides into its seventieth year, has made global warming a priority because the time has arrived to examine the fundamental changes necessary to bringing America out of what seems increasingly like the start of a new Dark Age in which science is mocked and too many politicians pride themselves on the information they ignore rather than on the knowledge they command.

Solutions that reduce global warming pollution while growing the economy are within reach if Congress shows leadership on this issue. Economists estimate that within the next few

years, dealing with global warming is going to create a ten-trillion-dollar industry—that's trillion with a T. America cannot stand on the sidelines and watch other nation's prosper from this new industry while our politicians pretend none of it is happening. We can help cut back on global warming pollution AND create a stronger economy while doing so.

More than 200 mayors have called on Congress and the Bush administration to act now. As we still continue to procrastinate, U.S. global-warming pollution levels are climbing, getting worse rather than better. The United States emitted 13 percent more global warming pollution in 2003 than it did in 1990, despite U.S. commitments under the 1992 Rio Treaty to halt the growth in emissions. The buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has reached a point greater than at any time in the past 400,000 years.

Global warming is no longer a problem that can be pushed off on our grandchildren decades from now. Inaction by our national leaders is already having real and tragic consequences on our children today. The global warming pollution we emit in the coming years will linger in the atmosphere for more than a century. Our children will not be able to flick a switch and reverse what we have done. The honorable, intelligent, science-based, ethical, economical, smart, sensible thing is to do something right now about global warming.

Let me stress right up front that throwing money at the problem is not a solution. As a recent *Washington Post* article painstakingly outlined, despite for years receiving more Corps of Engineers funding than any other state, we in Louisiana have preferred to spend money on navigation and dredging projects rather than on flood safety and environmental protection. We have favored new construction projects over maintenance of existing projects. We have tended to put off addressing the obvious needs of our population centers in favor of attending to special interests. The issue is not entirely one of how much money we have but of how we spend it.

The nation needs a new course of action. We need to put our money into sustaining the life we have, and that means sharing our wealth with wild lands, wild waters, and wildlife, protecting them so they will be there to protect us. In line with NWF's priority for restoring habitat, we must learn to respect the natural ability of ecosystems—from floodplains to forests, from marshes to barrier islands, from dunes to prairie potholes—to reduce the damaging impacts of human activity. This need to restore our natural buffers is critical all over the nation. In Louisiana, it means restoring marshes and dunes to keep storm surges and flooding out of towns and cities. It means rebuilding not just ruined buildings, roads, and infrastructure and not even just the broken levees, but the very landscape that supports and protects all those people and makes possible all that commercial activity. Other parts of the nation have other needs—protecting ancient forests, perhaps, or mountaintops. At the same time, all over the globe, we are facing the need to restore the atmospheric system so that we can reduce global warming.

Wherever NWF does its work, the job cannot be done in a business-as-usual frame of mind. It is time—it is past time—that we stop fighting nature and start to understand that it can be our first line of defense.

Today, our nation's leaders face a choice: They can keep choosing short-sighted policies instead of long-term solutions.

They can keep ignoring common sense and hope the consequences won't come back to haunt us.

They can continue to overlook the warnings.

But we've all seen here in Louisiana where that path leads, and it's not a road we want to go down ever again. For our sake and our children's, let's heed nature's warnings and do it right this time.

Through NWF's grassroots campaigns we are demanding that our leaders choose better, that they show real leadership, and that they create a cleaner, more secure future for our children—one that safeguards our last natural treasures. We are insisting that sound science guide decisions on how we deal with global warming and habitat protection nationally. We are insisting that national and local policies respect local natural ecology and allow nature to perform its task of nourishing and maintaining our lives and our wildlife. We are insisting that in the future progress be measured in part by how well our nation lets nature do its work.