

## **Guidelines for the Role of the NWF Affiliate Representative\***

(These guidelines were developed in 1994 at the suggestion of National Wildlife Federation affiliates by a task force appointed by then Chair Gene Stout. The task force was comprised of representatives from affiliates, and its recommendation was approved during the August 1994 NWF Board meeting. The purpose of these guidelines is to enable the Affiliate Representative to serve most effectively for the benefit of his/her affiliate and NWF. Editorial changes were made to update titles in August 1997.)

The selection of the Affiliate Representative is the function of each affiliate organization because they are independent and diverse organizations. However, some guidelines may enhance the effectiveness of the position. Such recommendations are made with the intention of assuring each affiliate that the stature and function of the Affiliate Representative position is shared among all affiliates and that this is a leadership position within state organizations.

- 1) The Affiliate Representative should be a member of the affiliate's Executive Committee. This helps to ensure the information flow between the affiliate and NWF and that the Affiliate Representative participates in the leadership of the affiliate and has authority within the organization. (This may require changes in some affiliate bylaws, but Executive Committee representation reflects the proper stature of the relationship between the state and national organizations.)
- 2) Because of the voluntary nature of NWF governance, it is highly recommended that the Affiliate Representative be a volunteer from the affiliate and not affiliate staff. If an affiliate selects staff to serve, it is recommended that this be limited to the Alternate Representative position.
- 3) The Affiliate Representative should function on a year round basis. The Representative fulfills an important function as the voting delegate at the NWF annual meeting, but may play an important year-round role. Affiliates are encouraged to view this position as an important way to develop and enhance leadership within their organization. It can be used to tap the talents of existing volunteer leadership and to develop new leadership and should be used with leadership in mind.
- 4) Affiliates are encouraged to select individuals for the Affiliate Representative position who have the potential for becoming more involved in the NWF volunteer leadership structure. Election of good affiliate delegates strengthens NWF and reflects well on the affiliate.
- 5) The Affiliate Representative, in conjunction with the NWF Regional Representative, should see that an annual review of the affiliate's compliance with the Standards of

Affiliation is conducted with the affiliate Board or Executive Committee. By asking the Affiliate Representative to assume this responsibility, it becomes a joint affiliate/NWF effort, and enlists the Affiliate Representative as a player in helping to meet the Standards.

- 6) As the official connection between NWF and the grassroots, it is recommended that the Affiliate Representative be actively involved in at least one national issue. This can be demonstrated by participating in a conference call on a regular basis, attending a lobby week, or spearheading an initiative on the local level. An affiliate could make national affairs the focal point of the Affiliate Representative's responsibility on the state level, asking that person to coordinate the affiliate's involvement on national issues, recruit attendees for lobby weeks, engage other affiliate leaders in campaigns and assure participation on conference calls.
- 7) The Affiliate Representative has a duty to guide the affiliate throughout the year in the development of resolutions to be submitted for consideration at the national level. The Representative is in a position to understand what resolutions are appropriate for national consideration and to encourage her/his group to participate in the process. [S]he can ascertain that the proposed resolution is not a duplication of those already in place, see that it meets the NWF criteria and that it is submitted at the appropriate time. In order to do this, the Affiliate Representative should be familiar with past NWF resolutions and the criteria for resolutions. The Regional Representative and the Affiliate Representative should coordinate on this item.
- 8) In preparation for and in conjunction with the NWF Annual Meeting, the Affiliate Representative is responsible for:
  - familiarizing her/himself with all proposed NWF resolutions regardless of what committee [s]he is serving on;
  - seeing that all NWF resolutions are reviewed, as appropriate, within the affiliate if only to determine that there are no suggested changes;
  - coordinating contact, in advance of the annual meeting, with the responsible NWF staff person and committee chair if there are concerns or extensive revisions to suggest; and
  - preparing any extensive revisions, also in advance of the meeting, with sufficient copies for the committee to consider.
- 9) NWF has responsibilities which will make the system work better and enhance the relationship between the Affiliate Representative and NWF. The Regional

Representative is key in this process. [S]he can:

- meet with the Affiliate Representative when first elected to let him/her know about the responsibilities of the job during the course of the year;
- advise the Affiliate Representative about the duties of a delegate at the NWF annual meeting, including educating the delegate about past resolutions and NWF's governance;
- make sure the affiliate understands the importance of the Affiliate Representative position in terms of its leadership capabilities on the national level and the affiliate's ability to maximize the relationship with NWF;
- counsel the affiliate leadership if their NWF Representative is not performing well in carrying out this leadership position and does not relate to the general guidelines outlined. The RO will communicate with affiliate leaders so that they can consider a change; and
- communicate with NWF staff or persons contacting the affiliate on NWF's behalf about the person/organization being called.

These suggested guidelines are proposed to enhance and strengthen the role of the Affiliate Representative and increase the direct and valuable communication between the Affiliate and NWF.