

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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Rollin D. Sparrowe
President

September 30, 1996

James W. Unsworth, President
Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society
ID Dept. of Fish & Game
South Powerline
Nampa, ID 83686

Dear James:

Good progress has been made on TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE since Past-President Erik Fritzell wrote the Idaho Chapter a year ago asking for your support. It remains The Wildlife Society's highest policy priority and the Idaho Chapter's continued support is needed.

As the highly successful Pittman-Robertson/Dingell-Johnson federal aid programs have demonstrated for species that are hunted and fished, user pay approaches are both popular and effective. Teaming With Wildlife will complement existing PR/DJ programs by raising money from a broad range of outdoor recreationists for conservation of all wildlife species. An excise tax on outdoor recreation equipment and gear will generate the needed funds to be used in three areas: wildlife and habitat conservation, outdoor recreation, and environmental education.

Think of it. State wildlife agencies finally will have a reliable source of funds with which to strengthen their nongame wildlife conservation programs. While still continuing to serve their hunting and fishing constituents, they now will have the means to serve the needs of all citizens. It will greatly expand wildlife management programs.

Last year, we asked members, chapters, and sections for their help. The response was gratifying -- 289 TWS members, 22 chapters, and 4 sections generously contributed over \$17,000 to boost The Wildlife Society's efforts on Teaming With Wildlife. Some of the money was used to strengthen our activities at the state level -- supporting TWS chapters' efforts to build state-wide coalitions of state wildlife agencies, conservation groups, outdoor recreation clubs, and the outdoor recreation industry.

The Wildlife Society also was instrumental in gaining key endorsements from the bird feeding industry.

The remaining money was used to build legislative support for the initiative on Capitol Hill. We contracted with Larry Jahn, former president of the Wildlife Management Institute and a past president of TWS, to focus on educating members of Congress and obtaining sponsors for a bill.

Actions to introduce Teaming With Wildlife on Capitol Hill began in March with Congressional staff briefings. An oversight hearing in June before the Fisheries, Wildlife, and Oceans Subcommittee of the House Resources Committee generated good momentum for the initiative. A follow-up briefing with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus was held to seek input from this influential group of Congressional members with an interest in hunting and fishing.

The hearing and briefings highlighted the need for greater education of both industry and legislators. The Wildlife Society and the entire Teaming With Wildlife coalition must continue to reach out to these groups to gain their support for the proposal.

Currently, the coalition is comprised of over 1,000 organizations that support Teaming With Wildlife. While the national steering committee is actively recruiting sponsors for the legislation, it is unlikely that legislation will be introduced in this election year.

Your renewed support will help us continue the legislative push next year with a new Congress. Funds are needed to retain the high-level expertise that has proven beneficial to our efforts.

At the same time, we need to expand greatly our efforts to garner industry support for Teaming With Wildlife. Working in cooperation with state chapters, TWS leaders are prepared to visit key industry representatives across the country. Support from the likes of BASS Pro Shops has been a great asset. More industry giants -- like Cabelas, L.L. Bean, Orvis, REI, WalMart -- are needed to help turn the tide. Funds are needed to support the industry effort.

Additionally, in those states where the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is unable to operate for political reasons, TWS must help pick up the slack to build grassroots coalitions and earn support of the governors. We want to work more closely with TWS chapters in these states to make it happen.

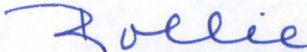
The Wildlife Society is uniquely positioned to influence legislators, governors, and outdoor recreation companies on Teaming With Wildlife because we have strong links to both the hunting and nonhunting communities of outdoor recreationists -- both within our membership and in our organization-to-organization contacts.

The Idaho Chapter can help by writing letters and meeting with outdoor recreation companies, the governor, and legislators, urging them to support Teaming With Wildlife.

The Idaho Chapter also can help by sending a donation to TWS. I would like to challenge every TWS section and chapter to contribute at least \$100 to help support our Teaming With Wildlife Campaign. Larger donations also are needed.

Teaming With Wildlife is the most important issue affecting wildlife professionals and the wildlife resource. We can't afford to reduce our effort. Please send your contribution today.

Sincerely,


Rollin D. Sparrowe
President