



MIDWEST
 Association of
 Fish & Wildlife
 Agencies



BUILDING RESILIENCE:
 Rewilding an Altered Landscape through Partnerships

2026 MAFWA Directors’ Meeting Agenda
 June 21-24, 2026
 Lake Okobji Resort & Conference Center, Iowa

Location & Lodging

Overnight accommodations are available at the Lake Okoboji Resort & Conference Center, 1405 U.S. Highway 71, Okoboji, Iowa 51355, at a discounted rate of \$160/night plus tax and resort fees. A limited number of rooms will also be available at the prevailing government rate to eligible individuals. To make a reservation, call (712) 332-2161 and indicate you are with the MAFWA Group.

| Sunday | June 21, 2026 |
|-----------------|--|
| 2:00 – 6:00 PM | Conference Registration Desk Open |
| 4:00 – 6:00 PM | MAFWA Executive Committee Meeting – Room: Sandhill |
| 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Welcome Reception – Room: Bayhill <i>Sponsored by: Brandt Information Services</i> |
| 8:30 – 11:00 PM | Hospitality Suite Open – Room: Great Room <i>Sponsored by: Southwick Associates</i> |

Monday

June 22, 2026

7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Conference Registration Desk Open

7:00 – 8:00 AM

Attendee Breakfast – Room: Bayhill

Sponsored by: National Wild Turkey Federation

8:00 – 9:00 AM

Welcome to Iowa – Room: St. Andrews

- Posting of the Colors, Iowa DNR Law Enforcement Honor Guard
- Welcome to Iowa – Pete Hildreth, Division Administrator
- Opening Remarks – Kayla Lyon, Iowa DNR Director

Keynote presentation: Mike Hawkins, Iowa DNR Fisheries

- **Building Resilience: Rewilding an Altered Landscape through Partnerships**
- **Abstract:** In the heavily altered landscape of the Midwest, the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed stands as a testament to the power of collaborative conservation. For over 50 years, this region has served as a living laboratory for "rewilding" within a working landscape, proving that ecological integrity and economic vitality are inextricably linked. This presentation explores how myriad partnerships - spanning local fundraising, state agencies, and private citizens - have successfully implemented extensive land protection, wetland and shallow lake restoration, and urban conservation strategies. Long-term monitoring data reveals a clear trajectory of recovery: improved water clarity, decreased nutrient levels, and positive shifts in aquatic plant life and fisheries assemblages. The Iowa Great Lakes experience offers a scalable model for Directors across the Midwest, demonstrating how aggressive, partnership-driven conservation can build ecological resilience and restore natural function to our region's most premiere resources.

9:00 – 10:00 AM

State Hot Topics: IL, IN, IA, KS

Each Director will describe a recent agency challenge and response as a teaching moment. 15 minutes each.

10:00 - 10:30 AM

Refreshment Break - Room: Pebble Beach North

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

State Hot Topics: KY, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND

Each Director will describe a recent agency challenge and response as a teaching moment. 15 minutes each.

12:00 – 1:30 PM

Awards Luncheon - Room: Bayhill

Sponsored by: Canadian NAWMP Partners & Fall Flights

Sponsored by: Ducks Unlimited

Awards presented by: MAFWA Awards Committee – Pete Hildreth, IA DNR

Awards presented by: AMFGLEO Awards Committee -

1:30

MAFWA Directors - Room: St. Andrews

1:30 – 1:45 PM

AFWA Report

Ron Regan, Executive Director, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

1:45 - 2:00 PM

Fall Flights

Andy Readeke, DU Canada

| Monday | June 22, 2026 continued |
|-----------------|---|
| 2:00 – 2:45 PM | State Hot Topics: OH, SD, WI <i>Each Director will describe a recent agency challenge and response as a teaching moment. 15 minutes each.</i> |
| 2:45 – 3:00 PM | Refreshment Break - Room: Pebble Beach North <i>Sponsored by: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation</i> |
| 3:00 – 4:30 pm | MAFWA Federal Partners Session - Room: St. Andrews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● US Fish & Wildlife Service ● USDA Forest Service ● USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service ● USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service ● USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units |
| 4:30 – 5:00 PM | Break to change for dinner & tour. |
| 5:00 - 6:00 PM | Dinner - Room: Bayhill <i>Sponsored by: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service</i> |
| 6:30 - 9:00 PM | Leave for Queen 2 Lake Okoboji Boat Tour and Dessert |
| 9:30 – 11:00 PM | Hospitality Suite Open – Room: Great Room <i>Sponsored by: Safari Club International</i> |

Tours & other activities to do in the area:

- Okoboji Classic Cars <https://okobojicc.com/>
- Maritime Museum <https://arnoldspark.com/maritime-museum/>
- Iowa Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame (find Website)
- Arnold's Park <https://arnoldspark.com/>
- Winchester Museum <https://thewinchesterstore.com/>
- Sherwood Forest <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Dickinson/Park/Sherwood-Forest>
- Fisherman's Factory Outlet (<https://www.purefishing.com/>)
- Freda Haffner Kettlehole State Preserve <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/freda-haffner-preserve/>

Tuesday afternoon while the Directors are in a closed session may allow time for these other activities that attendees and guests can do on their own.

Tuesday

June 23, 2026

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|--------------------|---|
| 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Conference Registration Desk Open |
| 7:00 AM | Bus loads for breakfast and tour |
| 7:15 – 7:45 AM | Attendee Breakfast – At the hatchery <i>Sponsored by: National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP)</i> |
| 7:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Field Tour – Midwest Resilience: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery - Kim Hawkins (Iowa DNR)● Anglers Bay - Chris and Mike on buses (Iowa DNR)● Moore Slough - John Smelzer (Spirit Lake Protection Association) and Joe McGovern (Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation)● Shallow Lakes Initiative – West Hottes Lake/Kettleson Hogsback Complex - Chris Larue & Mike Hawkins (Iowa DNR)● West Okoboji Wetlands Complex WMA/WPA & Okoboji View Golf Course - Chris Larue & Mike Hawkins (Iowa DNR) |
| 12:00 – 1:00 PM | Luncheon @ Maser Monarch Lodge, Dickinson CCB <i>Sponsored by: Bass Pro Shops</i> |
| 1:00 – 1:15 PM | Iowa’s County Conservation Board System <i>Lee Sorenson, Dickinson CCB Director</i> |
| 1:15 – 2:00 PM | MAFWA Technical Working Committee Reports - Maser Monarch Lodge <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Please read reports prior to attending as this time is only for discussion of action items and any questions related to the reports</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Private Lands○ Public Lands○ F&G Law Enforcement Officers○ F&W Health○ Deer & Wild Turkey○ Furbearer○ Wildlife Diversity○ Climate Change○ R3 & Relevancy○ CITES○ Conservation Social Science/Human Dimensions○ Feral Swine○ CWD |
| 2:00 – 5:00 PM | MAFWA Executive Session - Maser Monarch Lodge (Closed Session, Invitation Only) |
| 2:00 PM | Non-directors return to hotel. |
| Evening | Dinner on your own |
| 8:00 – 11:00 PM | Hospitality Suite Open – Room: Great Room <i>Sponsored by: DJ Case & Associates</i> |

Committees will be represented by the Director Liaison unless there is a specific ask from the TWC.

Wednesday

June 24, 2026

7:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Conference Registration Desk Open

7:00 – 8:00 AM

Attendee Breakfast – Room: Bayhill

Sponsored by: The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF)

8:00 – 12:00 PM

MAFWA Business Meeting - Room: St. Andrews

Shannon Lott (MI), MAFWA President

- Call to Order and Roll Call
- Agenda Review
- Approval of 2025 Annual Meeting Board Minutes
- Treasurer’s Report – *Roger Luebbert (MAFWA)*
- Budget and Finance Committee Report – *Shannon Lott (MI)*
- Audit Committee Report – *Chris Kennedy (KS)*
- Bylaws Committee Report – *Tim McCoy (NE)*
- Resolutions Committee Report – *Jeb Williams (ND)*
- Awards Committee Report – *Kendra Wecker (OH)*
- Conservation Fund Board of Trustees – *Jason Sumner (MO)*
- CEF/MFWS Committee – *Tim McCoy (NE)*
- Executive Secretary’s Report –
- R3 & Relevancy Coordinator Report – *Keith Warnke (MAFWA)*
- Fish & Wildlife Health Coordinator Report – *Tricia Fry (MAFWA)*
- MLI – *Tim McCoy (NE)*

Old Business

-

New Business

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Presentation of Past President’s Plaque

Kansas Spotlight (2027)

10:00 – 10:30 AM

Coffee Break - Room: Pebble Beach North

12:00 PM

Conference Adjourns; Lunch on your own

12:00 – 2:00 PM

CEF Board of Trustees Annual Meeting - Room: Sandhill
