



MIDWEST
 Association of
 Fish & Wildlife
 Agencies



BUILDING RESILIENCE:
 Rewilding an Altered Landscape through Partnerships

2026 MAFWA Directors’ Meeting Agenda
 June 21-24, 2026
 Lake Okoboji 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 - Moderator: MAFWA President Shannon Lott

10:00 - 10:30 AM

Refreshment Break - Room: Pebble Beach North

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

State Hot Topics continued

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 – 2:15 pm

State Hot Topics continued

2:15 – 2:30 PM

AFWA Report

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

2:30 - 2:45 PM

Fall Flights

Andy Readeke, DU Canada

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Refreshment Break - Room: Pebble Beach North

Sponsored by: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

3:00 – 4:30 pm MAFWA Federal Partners Session - Room: St. Andrews

- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- USDA Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
- US Geological Survey

4:30 – 5:00 PM Break to change for dinner & tour.

5:00 - 6:00 PM Dinner - Room: Bayhill

Sponsored by: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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

Sponsored by: Safari Club International

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**

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○ Deer○ Wild Turkey○ Furbearer○ Wildlife Diversity○ Conservation Social Science/Human Dimensions○ Feral Swine	
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
- Agenda Review
- Approval of 2025 Previous Meeting Board Minutes
- Treasurer’s Report – *Roger Luebbert (MAFWA)*
- Executive Secretary’s Report and Fish & Wildlife Health Coordinator Report – *Tricia Fry (MAFWA)*
- R3 & Relevancy Coordinator Report – *Keith Warnke (MAFWA)*
- MLI – *Tim McCoy (NE)*
- 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)*

Old Business

New Business

Presentation of Past President’s Plaque

Kansas Spotlight (2027)

12:00 PM

Conference Adjourns; Lunch on your own
