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America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act/U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Hearing: Austin T. Booth, Director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Testimony

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The Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources ("Subcommittee") held a March 6th Hearing addressing H.R. 7408, which is denominated the:

America's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act ("Conservation Act")

The Conservation Act is sponsored by Representative Westerman of the State of Arkansas' 4th Congressional District.

A Memorandum prepared by Subcommittee staff state in advance of the Hearing described the "Key Messages":

- State and Tribes know best how to conserve and restore habitat for at-risk species within their borders.
- The Conservation Act provides States and Tribes with the resources necessary to carry out habitat restoration projects vital to preventing the listing of species and accelerating the delisting of species under the Endangered Species Act.
- Top-down federal regulations and federal management of listed species have not resulted in the recovery of those species. Only 3% of species listed under the Endangered Species Act have ever been delisted.
- The Conservation Act empowers states and private landowners in the Endangered Species Act decision-making process by providing regulatory certainty and incentives to recover and restore habitat for listed species.
- The National Wildlife Refuge System is a crown jewel of American Wildlife Conservation. Tools such as Good Neighbor Authority are needed to ensure they are healthy for decades to come.

The invited witnesses at the Hearing included:

- Mr. Matthew Strickler - Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

- Mr. Austin Booth - Director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Mr. Ryan Bronson - Director of Government Affairs, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Missoula, Montana.
- Mr. David P. Tenny - President and CEO, National Alliance of Forest Owners, Washington D.C.
- Mr. Glenn Olson - Donal O'Brien Chair in Bird Conservation and Public Policy National Audubon Society, National Audubon Society, New York, New York.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Director Booth was testifying on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This organization's self-described mission is to:

... represent and protect the authorities of our member agencies and enhance their abilities to manage fish and wildlife as public trust resources for current and future generations.

The organization includes all 50 states as well as the United States Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia.

A link to the prepared statements of Director Booth and the other invited witnesses, along with the statements of the following Congressmen can be downloaded [here](#).

In addition, a copy of H.R.7408 can be downloaded [here](#).