

10. Department of Agriculture, "Nationwide Beef Microbiological Baseline: Steers and Heifers," October 1992–September 1993; "Nationwide Broiler Chicken Microbiological Baseline," July 1994–June 1995; and "Nationwide Pork Microbiological Baseline: Market Hogs," April 1995–March 1996: Food Safety Inspection Service, Data Collection Programs, Microbiology Division.

11. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, "Microbiological Testing of Antimicrobial Drug Residues in Food," Center for Veterinary Medicine, Guideline 52.

Dated: November 10, 1998.

**William B. Schultz,**

*Deputy Commissioner for Policy.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Services

#### North American Wetlands Conservation Council; Membership

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of policy and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this action is to notify the public regarding an existing term rotation policy for membership of charitable and non-profit organizations of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council. This policy will assure broad representation from such organizations in keeping with the purposes of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

**DATES:** Comments on this policy must be received by January 19, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments regarding this notice should be addressed to: Director (FSW/NAWWO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 110 ARLSQ, 1849 C ST., NW, Washington, D.C. 20240. Comments received on this notice will be available for public inspection during normal business hours in Room 110, Arlington Square Building, 4401 No. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. David A. Smith, Executive Director, or Mr. Douglas A. Ryan, Wildlife Biologist, North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, 703/358–1784; Facsimile 703/358–2282.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

The North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Council) was

established by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (Act), 16 U.S.C. 4401–4412, Public Law 101–233, and is comprised of nine members. The Council reviews and recommends wetland conservation projects to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, following criteria given in the Act. Two permanent Council seats are occupied by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Secretary of the Board of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Four of the seven non-permanent seats are Directors of State Fish and Wildlife agencies representing the four migratory bird flyways. Individuals representing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are actively participating in carrying out wetland conservation projects under the Act, the Plan, or the Tripartite Agreement (among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico) occupy the other three non-permanent seats.

Appointment of the non-permanent members is at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary). The term for non-permanent seats is three years. In addition, the Secretary appoints an alternate member and may appoint ex-officio non-voting members to the Council.

#### What is the Policy?

In the Spring of 1998, the Secretary adopted a term rotation policy of two consecutive terms or six consecutive years for organizations occupying the three NGO Council seats. An NGO that has completed two terms would be eligible for full reappointment to the next vacancy among the three NGO seats and also eligible for appointment to either the alternate seat or an ex-officio seat.

#### Why Was the Policy Adopted?

The Secretary adopted a two-term rotation policy for NGO members on the Council for the following reasons:

- The purpose of the Act is to encourage partnership among public agencies and other interests for the conservation of wetlands and migratory birds in North America. This policy is intended to build broad support for the Act by opening the door to a variety of organizations to take full advantage of opportunities available through Council participation.

- All organizations that meet the requirements for NGOs stated above in the Act should be given full and fair consideration for Council membership.

- Given the detailed approval process, and frequent consideration of complex issues associated with Council participation, appointing any NGO representative to serve two consecutive terms is appropriate, as it would allow that representative to become familiar with Council operations and to reach their full potential for contributing to the work of the Council.

- While the Act requires that NGOs on the Council be active participants in wetlands conservation, it does not restrict Council participation to only those NGOs that are most active (i.e., in terms of matching dollars and services, and grants received).

- Each NGO can only represent its own organization, unlike State agencies on the Council that have the responsibility and capability to represent the flyways, of which they are a part.

- Regardless of appointment status, those NGOs that have contributed substantially to Act-funded projects are encouraged to continue as instrumental participants in project development and implementation.

In summary, the purpose of this action is to notify the public and invite any comments regarding the Secretary's existing term rotation policy for charitable and non-profit organizations on the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, to fully implement the purpose of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

#### NEPA Consideration

Pursuant to the requirements of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4332(C)), and the Council on Environmental Quality's regulation for implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), the Service has determined that the policy published in this document is categorically excluded from the NEPA process as provided by 516 DM 2, Appendix 1.10 of the Departmental Manual.

Authorship: The primary author of this notice is Mr. Douglas A. Ryan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, Arlington, Virginia.

Dated: November 6, 1998.

**Jamie Rappaport Clark,**

*Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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