

*Wildlife and Hunting Heritage
Conservation Council*

July 20, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Interagency Coordination

Dear Secretary Salazar:

One of the charges to the Council outlined in our Charter is to foster coordination among the range of government agencies and non-government organizations engaged in wildlife and habitat management. In our December 7th 2011 letter to you we requested you assign staff to assist us with a Council working group on enhancing interagency coordination. Director Dan Ashe – at your request – provided a response letter to the Council assigning Department of the Interior bureau ex officio representatives to the Council to serve in this role.

The Council’s working group is moving forward with draft recommendations for enhancing coordination, but I also wanted to share my appreciation of some coordination efforts already being made by the Department of the Interior and its bureaus.

America’s Great Outdoors 50 State Report rightly highlighted projects that were accomplished cooperatively between a range of partners. From its start, the Council has been very supportive of AGO and is delighted to see recognition of the critical role of federal-state coordination, in particular. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – through its implementation of the Refuge Vision process – is in the process of surveying federal-state cooperation. This effort indicates the Service is cognizant of the Refuge system’s role in the larger public lands context, both in terms of natural resources management and outdoor recreation opportunities. Director Ashe also offered the assistance of the Service National Conservation Training Center and its staff to assist the Council in developing tools to enhance federal-state coordination.

Coordination and communication happens when individuals appreciate the other’s situation. Recently, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe and Kentucky Department of Fish and Game Director Jon Gassett participated in a “job swap” program, where they each got to experience being in each other’s’ shoes for a short time. There are few better ways to secure good communication between state and federal agencies than this kind of engagement pursued by Directors Ashe and Gassett. We commend all the above efforts by the Department and its bureaus, and hope they receive continued support.

Fostering coordination and communication among all agencies and groups engaged in wildlife management, habitat management and ensuring a future for our nation’s

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hunting traditions remains a Council priority. We appreciate the efforts already made by your Department and bureaus and look forward to expanding those efforts even further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Tomke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Cc: Secretary Tom Vilsack, USDA