

Protecting Ephemeral Streams and Wetlands

The Ohio Legislature recently was considering legislation that would eliminate “Clean Water Act” protections for ephemeral waterways and wetlands. They play very important roles in dealing with low, regular, and heavy precipitation events. They provide the ability to reduce runoff rates, minimize soil erosion, and provide increase opportunity for water infiltrate the soil. In the process of infiltrating, the water can be cleaned and eventually aid in restoration of groundwater resources. They also serve important roles in sustaining wildlife populations.

Ephemeral waterways and wetlands were not mentioned in Izaak Walton League Policy. They should be included in Izaak Walton League of America policy.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in convention July 22, 2022 in East Peoria, IL, calls on Congress to amend the Clean Water Act to clarify that all streams (ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial) as well as all wetlands are protected by the Clean Water Act.

PROPOSED - NOT ADOPTED

Funding for Rural Electric Cooperatives

Throughout the United States, rural cooperatives formed during the Depression by New Deal programs provide power to their members without the investment of shareholders primarily interested in selling power at profitable rates. Many of these co-ops are particularly reliant on coal powered power plants. To operate at the lowest possible costs, the cooperatives signed many long-term contracts that locked in the supplies of coal for decades at costs that are now higher than the current costs of wind, solar and battery storage. Electric cooperatives and generation and transmission associations across the country owe billions of dollars in debt on coal plants, many of which have become more expensive to operate than the cost of building new renewable energy projects.

The legacy of these coal debts is that while renewable energy transmission often comes from rural areas, the co-ops servicing locations where wind farms and large solar gardens exist are tied to coal-fired generation. The power generated by these renewable sources in rural areas is then delivered to urban homes and factories instead of local communities.

The United States Department of Agriculture administers many loans for these rural co-ops through its Rural Utilities Service (RUS). In the past these loans supported the construction of power plants - mostly fueled by coal. Consequently, these rural cooperatives often owe billions of dollars on plants that are increasingly uneconomic (the cost of wind and solar is now lower than the cost of coal generation).

Instead of investing in new clean energy projects, many rural electric co-ops are stuck spending money to repay the debt owed on older coal plants - even when closing those plants would reduce energy costs for co-op members.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in Convention in East Peoria, Illinois, July 22, 2022, requests that the U.S. Congress:

- 1. Approve the funding and authorizations necessary for the Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Services, to:**
 - a. Offer debt relief to rural electric cooperatives to write down or restructure loans for coal plants that are less financially viable than renewable energy, so that the dollars saved can be re-directed toward modern clean energy assets, both in front of and behind customer meters.**
 - b. Increase its budget to provide low-cost financing for low or zero-carbon generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity including distributed renewable energy assets as well as broadband infrastructure for smart grid solutions and other technologies.**
- 2. Direct the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to support rural electric cooperatives by providing funding for energy-efficiency upgrades, on-site solar energy, and local battery storage. These investments will lower co-op members' utility bills and expand economic opportunity in rural areas.**

Protection of Native Non-game Fish

There are at least 27 species of native fish managed as “rough fish” by the Minnesota DNR. They include widely divergent species such as bowfin (*Amia calva*), lake herring (*Coregonus artedi*) and the threatened black buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*). Another species, bigmouth buffalo (*Ictiobus cyprinellus*), can live at least 112 years in Minnesota, and reproduces infrequently. There are NO BAG LIMITS to the harvest of bigmouth buffalo in Minnesota.

In the old food chain paradigm, fish production was a zero-sum game. The assumption was that if you removed one fish, you would get more of another. This led to widespread denigration of non-game native fish. The fish ecology now rejects such simplistic food chains in favor of a more holistic “food web”. We now understand that healthy intact ecosystems have many species, with many complex interactions. Removing any native species is much more likely to disrupt the ecosystem than increase the number of “game fish.”

Science has also found that healthy, intact, species-rich ecosystems are less susceptible to invasive species. For example, many species of redhorse and bigmouth buffalo prey on zebra mussels. Bowfin and gar are effective predators of invasive common carp fingerlings. The same native species which were maligned as “rough fish” are in fact vital to a healthy and resilient ecosystem.

The DNR gives inadequate protection for “endangered”, “threatened”, and “special concern” rough fish species, such as the “threatened” Black Buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*) or special concern” species such as Blue Sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*) and Black Redhorse (*Moxostoma duquesnei*). For example, the bag limit for ALL species of buffalo is “no limit”. People who harvest bigmouth buffalo and other native non-game fish are not even limited by the number of fish they can use. The harvested fish are routinely “disposed” of as fertilizer. Anglers who “dispose” of native fish usually have misidentified the fish as a carp because they don’t know other native non-game fish exist. But once people are aware, they are usually able to appreciate and respectfully use the resource.

The Minnesota DNR has extended bowfishing seasons and allowed the use of lights for shooting fish at night, without reducing daily limits. Despite the liberalized harvest methods and extended seasons, the Minnesota DNR has collected almost no data about non-game native fish harvest. In 2019, the DNR did collect data from two bowfishing tournaments and found 75% of the fish harvested were native species. Bowfishing teams averaged one fish every 2-3 minutes during the 10 hours of each tournament, a substantial number of fish in a short time.

The mission of the Izaak Walton League is to conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use of our natural resources. We promote and support adoption of reasonable regulations to conserve all native fish and their ecosystems.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in Convention in East Peoria, Illinois, July 22, 2022, supports the adoption of

comprehensive fisheries management to sustainably manage all native fish, both game and non-game. The League calls on all states to conduct the studies needed to assess population levels of all native non-game fisheries and issue relevant regulations to ensure the sustainability of those populations and the ecosystems that depend on them.

PROPOSED - NOT ADOPTED

Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material

The Ohio Legislature recently sought to legislatively allow the packaging for sale a solution that is a byproduct of what is declared as Gas and Oil operational maintenance. The product “AquaSaline” was promoted by the “Oil and Gas Industry” for use in dust and ice control. The product was allegedly used by Ohio Department of Transportation for ice control for a period. It was stopped for no declared reason.

Testing of the product revealed that it could contain Radium-226 and Radium-228, which are very commonly found in fracking waste and are commonly referred to as “TENORM” (Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material).

TENORM Industries and Sources

Radioactive elements are present in many soils and rock formations, and consequently in the water that encounters them. Extraction and processing of these resources may expose or concentrate NORM, causing them to be classified as TENORM.

This list of TENORM sources is not comprehensive, as TENORM is known to occur in other processes, but provides a general sense of the hazards posed by this class of radioactive substances. The major industrial sectors that generate TENORM are:

Mining

Hard Rock Metal Mining

Rare Earth Mining Wastes

Uranium Mining

Copper Mining and Production Wastes

Bauxite and Alumina Production Wastes

Energy Production

Oil and Gas Production Wastes

Coal Combustion Residuals

Water Treatment

Drinking Water Treatment Residuals

Wastewater Treatment Residuals

Consumer Products

Fertilizer and Fertilizer Production Wastes

Cigarettes

Building Materials

Granite Countertops

Additionally, oil and gas operations involved in exploration, maintenance, and distribution have a history of generating significant quantities of highly toxic and potentially environmentally disastrous materials. Difficulty in disposing of these materials in an adequate and safe manner has created incentives to utilize these materials in ways that may present serious and long-term environmental problems.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in convention in East Peoria, Illinois, July 22, 2022 amends its conservation policies, Chapter II Environmental Health to read:

II Environmental Health

G) Hazardous and Toxic Substances

1) To prevent any immediate or cumulative damage to human health or the environment by any of the thousands of new chemical substances fabricated every year, state and federal agencies should:

g) Educate the public about the need to test materials gathered from industrial processes that have not been safely sourced for highly toxic dangerous components.

h) Identify and categorize potentially toxic TENORM (Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material) and establish acceptable levels utilizing scientifically accepted health criteria.

5) Government should enact and enforce laws and regulations requiring that the location and constituents of major oil and toxic or hazardous substance spills, storage areas, **processing**, or disposal sites be legally recorded in property records and titles.

N) Radioactive Waste

3) Industrial processing of NORM (Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material) creates TENORM, which may present circumstances resulting in the contamination of public and private areas that expose the public to conditions that can be extremely hazardous to short and long-term health. These TENORM byproducts and materials must be dealt with as hazardous radioactive waste and handled according to radioactive material protocols.

Rural Electric Vehicle Charging Study

Electric vehicle corridors depend fast chargers that enable electric vehicle (EV) owners to charge in 10-20 minutes. Commercial charging networks are putting fast chargers on major routes (interstate highways and major state highways) aimed at EV owners who are passing through and travelling long distances. However, this leaves major parts of the nation dependent on slower home charging (level 1, level 2). This limits the adoption of EVs by people travelling between regional centers that are not on the major corridors.

At the same time, there are many locations in rural America that could support fast charging, such as farmers with heavy-duty grain driers, state and national parks that are not using their electrical infrastructure during long periods of the year, and technical colleges that are not being fully utilized during various periods. All of these could support high speed charging for long periods and their availability could be assessed with the use of broadband communications on screens in the EV's. These chargers could represent an important revenue stream for these property owners and institutions.

This resolution is to commission a study by U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to study potential EV charging networks that could be vital to America's rural areas for achieving its climate goals and for the long-term economic development of rural communities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in convention in East Peoria, Illinois, July 22, 2022, requests that the U.S. Congress authorize and appropriate necessary funding for a joint task force comprised of the Departments of Transportation, Energy, and Agriculture to develop a study to identify the composition of charging methods available for vehicles currently and in the future, as well as potential for installing higher capacity chargers for electric vehicles in rural areas, such as state and national parks, technical colleges, rural electric cooperatives, and other properties that have access to high-capacity electrical sources to increase access to fast chargers where they currently are not available.