

Government Relations

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The IWJV's Government Relations Efforts are Rooted in Relationships & Collaboration



Building relationships with congressional and agency decision-makers in Washington, D.C., is a long-standing core function of the IWJV and its Government Relations Committee. For three decades, the IWJV Management Board and Government Relations Committee have included members with deep relationships at high government levels and on Capitol Hill.

These potent individual relationships are bolstered by the committee's collaborative spirit in solving significant conservation challenges. The IWJV's conservation model is inherently bipartisan, and the people of our committee share that message, building an amazing level of trust and respect with one another and with decision-makers.

The primary goal of the IWJV's government relations work is to maximize the availability and impact of conservation funding in the West in alignment with the IWJV's priority habitats and mission. In addition, through the IWJV's ever-expanding partnership network, we work to help our partners access and implement conservation funding.

Base-level funding for Joint Ventures is provided in annual appropriations for the USFWS Migratory Bird Joint Venture program (Department of Interior Budget - USFWS - North American Waterfowl Management Plan - line 1234). Thus, maintaining (and increasing) the appropriated amount has been a focus of Joint Ventures—in conjunction with the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards—since their inception in the late 1980s. The base funding has seen nominal annual increases. For the IWJV to support conservation at a large scale, we must look to other funding sources and help champion bipartisan support for funding and policies that enable impactful, large-scale conservation.



Conservation Funding

In addition to the base funding provided to Joint Ventures through the USFWS, several other funding sources provide opportunities for conservation implementation aligned with IWJV priorities for wetlands/water, sagebrush, and western forests. These include the BLM Wildlife Conservation and BLM Fire & Fuels Programs, Farm Bill Conservation Title, USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and most recently, funding allocated to the USFWS, BLM, and NRCS through the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.



Conservation Implementation

Through intra- and interagency agreements with federal agencies such as USFWS, BLM, and NRCS, the IWJV applies its conservation model of field delivery capacity, communications, science to implementation, and partnership development to help ensure efficient and effective implementation of available funding for on-the-ground work. offers suggestions for improving programs or processes to better facilitate on-the-ground results, provides examples and ideas for conservation implementation, brings science-to-implementation support to prioritize strategic conservation, and utilizes communications to highlight successful programs and efforts.

Strategies & Approach

The government relations strategy uses a multipronged approach carried out by staff, partners, and management board members. A key component to the successful strategy is a cohesive, concise, and consistent approach that builds relationships with decision-makers locally and in Washington, D.C., delivers messages about programs that work, offers suggestions for improving programs or processes to better facilitate on-the-ground results, provides examples and ideas for conservation implementation, brings science-to-implementation support to prioritize strategic conservation, and utilizes communications to highlight successful programs and efforts.



The IWJV will execute a robust government relations strategy over the life of this plan that involves the following approaches:

Ensure a consistent D.C. presence via:

- An annual fly-in to Washington, D.C.
- Additional D.C. fly-ins where possible (topic-specific and/or in collaboration with other partners).
- A D.C.-based management board member to carry IWJV messages regularly and highlight critical issues and solutions from the western U.S.
- Engagement by D.C.-based policy staffers of management board member organizations on the Government Relations Committee, bringing real-time insights that help the committee develop and execute tactical strategies.

Cultivate D.C. relationships through events and other opportunities in the West, such as:

- Strategic relationship engagement throughout the year (by staff, management board members, partners, etc.).
- Participating in partner events in the Intermountain West that host D.C. congressional members and staff.
- Joining/supporting partners on congressional field tours.
- Joining/supporting partners on agency leadership field tours.
- Inviting congressional and agency leadership to IWJV Management Board meetings and field tours.
- Using IWJV communications messaging to highlight local projects to respective legislatures.

Drive funding to strategic conservation delivery by:

- Using the IWJV's unique relationships and structure to connect federal funding to on-the-ground conservation implementation.
- Utilizing intra-/interagency agreements and other funding tools to build capacity and offer science to implementation and strategic communications that support key federal agencies (BLM, NRCS) in conservation implementation.
- Leveraging private partnerships to further federal funding (seeking opportunities for private funding investments).
- Helping federal agencies build on-the-ground capacity for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Demonstrating the success of existing efforts to federal decision-makers by highlighting local impacts/benefits, collaborative efforts that benefit economies and conservation, projects that offer nonregulatory solutions, and approaches that bring people with diverse perspectives together for conservation outcomes.



Looking Ahead

The IWJV government relations effort will maintain and grow strong relationships with leadership at federal agencies (BLM, NRCS, USFWS, etc.), the departmental level (U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Interior), Office of Management and Budget, and with congressional members and staff. Notably, we will prioritize relationships with NRCS State Conservationists in the West—the agency’s key decision-makers—and leaders at multiple levels of BLM and USFWS.

We will explore opportunities for a greater voice to support conservation in the West, leaning on and growing the trust and credibility built over the last 30 years. We will bring pragmatic ideas, innovations, and solutions forged on the common ground of our partnership’s diverse perspectives.

The continued success of the IWJV’s government relations effort is a function of an incredible contribution by all involved who devote time, energy, relationships, and connections to the endeavor. Each year, the IWJV builds on the momentum from the year prior to carry relationships and engagement forward—utilizing our partners and forums in the West that include representation with congressional and high-level decision-makers. In addition, the IWJV continually innovates the messages, messengers, and approaches to D.C. relationships to ensure we maintain relevancy and build off previous efforts.

