



## Leadership in Conservation LEADERS for Tomorrow

A quick read of our program name would quite reasonably suggest that Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow is a leadership development program. In a sense it is, but not in the traditional sense of structural leadership within an administrative hierarchy. A primary goal of CLfT is to continue the very successful history of wildlife conservation as documented in the North American Model. We focus on awareness and understanding of hunting and the history, role, and status of hunting in the United States. It is then up to you, the CLfT participant, to be willing and able to include this perspective during the routine conducting of your job. This is the “leadership” in the CLfT name.

If you are already in a professional position in which you direct other staff or influence agency policy, you will be better able to ensure that hunting and hunters are considered as an important stakeholder group. However, everyone working in the field of natural resource, no matter what your position, will have the opportunity to use the content of CLfT to lead communication with and about hunters, speak to the role of hunting in adaptive management discussions, and improve your own ability to interact with hunters in any setting.

In fact, a review of the CLfT curriculum was conducted by the Chief of Leadership and Employee Development for the USFWS Northeast Region to evaluate leadership content. CLfT content was cross walked to the USFWS Leadership Development Competency Model. CLfT met 14 (9 directly and 5 indirectly) of the Services’ 22 core competencies for leadership development. Competencies directly met included external awareness, customer service, technical credibility, political savvy, and partnering, among others. These findings are especially relevant to USFWS employees and any other professionals who have attended or are considering attending a CLfT workshop.

If, in addition to what is provided by CLfT, you are interested in traditional leadership development, there are many resources and opportunities available. Leadership training programs are offered by organizations like The Wildlife Society (TWS), the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), and by agencies as professional development. There are vast internet resources, self-help books, and independent consultants who market seminars and literature.

There is an essay on leadership in natural resources inserted in your primer. It was written by P.J. White, Director of resource management for Yellowstone National Park. He writes from the perspective of a military background where leadership is well-defined and absolute and from a Park Service policy perspective. With that background, White has been at the forefront of leadership on some of the most well publicized and contentious issues in the country, including

wolf reintroduction, bison culling, and removal of problem (but popular) bears. Other relevant readings may be added, and leadership will be covered within the Effective Communication and Leadership roundtable discussions.

Like P.J. White, everyone working in natural resources conservation has an important responsibility for the stewardship and wise use, including hunting, of one of our most valuable and cherished public trust resources...America's wildlife.