Commissioner Ron Walter, WIR President, called the meeting to order and welcomed members to the NACo Legislative Conference. [1:03]

**Roll Call and Introductions [1:04]**
- Mike Murray, Lewis and Clark County Commissioner, MT
- Ron Walter, Chelan County Commissioner, WA
- Tim Josi, Tillamook County Commissioner, OR
- Walter Armijo, Sierra County Commissioner (for Ron Brown, Sierra County Sheriff), NM
- Robert E. Cope, Lemhi County Commissioner, ID
- Gordon Cruickshank, Valley County Commissioner, ID
- Clinton Farlee, Ziebach County Commissioner, SD
- David Finigan, Del Norte County Commissioner, CA
- Tom Fransway, Humboldt County Commissioner, NV
- Alan Gardner, San Miguel County Commissioner, CO
- Todd Mielke, Commissioner, Spokane County, WA
- John Martin, Garfield County Commissioner, CO
- Lesley Robinson, Phillips County Commissioner, MN
- Daron Smith, Commissioner, Millard County, UT
- George Wilkinson, Commissioner, Alamosa County, CO
- Lorinda Wichman, Commissioner, Nye County, NV

Ex-officios present:
- Harold Blattie, Executive Director, MACo
- Dan Chadwick, Executive Director, IAC
- Wes Henderson, Dep. Exec. Dir, NACO (sitting for Jeff Fontaine)
- L. Brent Gardner, Executive Director, UAC
- Eric Johnson, Executive Director, WSAC
- Kris Jacobsen, SDACC
- Mark Johnson, Executive Director, NDAC
- Paul Gutierrez, Executive Director, NMAC

**MOTION:** Approval of minutes from Lewis & Clark County, MT [1:07]
- Moved Tim Josi, Second Gordon Cruickshank
  ○ **Motion carried**

NACo Energy Environment and Land Use Committee Chairman Robert Cope provided a report on current activities of the EELU committee. [1:08]
NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Chairman Tim Josi provided a report on current activities of the PLSC. [1:15]

Paul Henson, Oregon State Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided a report on the Northern Spotted Owl revised critical habitat designation. [1:18]

Recovery strategy:
1. Manage barred owl threat
2. Conserve older forest habitat
3. Support active management to restore forest health (fire, disease, insects, climate)

FWS goal is to have a CH designation that is scientifically and legally defensible, supports management goals of FS, BLM, and states, and enables commercial forestry and restoration consistent with recovery

Owl critical habitat is not a reserve:
• Need active mgmt inside NSO CH
• Local impacts to NSO reconciled with forest ecosystem goals
• Support forest restoration
• Forest health and resilience is the goal
• Conserve older forests – don’t need much silviculture
• CH not a reserve; active management in many areas
• FWS supports BLM pilot projects and USFS plan revisions
• Move more projects forward under existing plans now
• Monitor and evaluate NSO and other wildlife post treatment

NACo Labor and Employment Committee Chairwoman Carol Holden provided a report on current activities of the committee. [1:43]

Tom Donnelly, Executive Director of the National Water Resources Association gave a presentation on issues of common issues between NWRA and western counties. [1:47]

The National Water Resources Association is a strong federation of state associations and caucuses representing a broad spectrum of water supply interests. It is the oldest and most active national association concerned with water resources policy and development. Its strength is a reflection of the tremendous "grassroots" participation it has generated on virtually every national issue affecting western water conservation, management, and development.

Issues include:
• Western water users are becoming increasingly concerned about the number of environmental regulations and policies that are currently being rewritten or reconsidered by the Obama Administration (NPDES permits / pesticides, waters of the US guidance, 404 permits)
• Maintaining existing water and power infrastructure. NWRA urges Congress to pass legislation establishing a revolving loan fund for the USBR to address the rehabilitation and modernization of its aging water and power infrastructure.
• Amend ESA to recognize that nothing in the Act, including Section 7 consultation, shall be construed or used to justify the involuntary appropriation, acquisition or reallocation of property of others, including water rights, contractual rights to water or other contractual rights in existence at the time of the listing of any species for any purpose.

Mellissa Simpson, Director of Government Affairs and Science Based Conservation provided insight into the interests of Safari Club International. [2:05]
• Protecting hunters’ rights and promoting wildlife conservation, SCI’s two areas of focus
• SFI can encourage an appreciation for nature and wildlife so that conservation efforts remain strong, while also fighting to protect our rich hunting heritage.
• SFI has strong support for active management on public lands and looks to work closely with NACo and WIR in an effort to develop stronger coordination on issues.
• Share mutual concern with the ESA settlement between FWS and Center for Biological Diversity. Pursuing litigation.
• USDA Forest Service Planning rule – hunting is not mentioned as primary use in plan. Very concerned with the reintroduction of the viability standard in the proposed rule.

NACo Senior Legislative Director Bob Fogel provided an update from the NACo Transportation Steering Committee. Both House and Senate have reported bills. The Senate bill the EPW Committee has favorably reported 2 year bill, $109 billion. [2:14]

Shanna Brown, Washington Office Director, Western Governors Association [2:27]
• Western Governors' Association is an independent, non-partisan organization of Governors from 19 Western states, two Pacific-flag territories and one commonwealth. The Association was formed to provide strong multistate leadership in an era of critical change in the economy and demography of the West. The Western Governors recognize that many vital issues and opportunities shaping our future cross state lines and are shared throughout the West.
• Support the promotion of healthy vibrant economies, protecting state authority, and providing leadership on key western issues.

Jordan Smith, National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition [2:45]

ESA, 38 years later:
• 1,372 species listed as endangered or threatened
• 251 species identified as candidates for listing
• 21 species have been “recovered” (1.53 % success rate)
• BILLIONS of dollars spent in ESA compliance: Actual amount unknown

Litigation settlements:
• September 17, 2011: Federal District Court approves settlements between FWS, WildEarth Guardians and Center for Biological Diversity
  - Over 250 candidate species must be reviewed for final listing as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act by 2016
  - 44 species have specific deadlines for FWS decisions
Likely to increase overall amount of species listed by 20% by 2016

Renewed NESARC Efforts
- NESARC is renewing its efforts in 2012 to educate policymakers on ESA priorities and concerns and to build support for potential action in the 113th Congress.
- 2013 could be the next real ESA legislative opportunity
  - HOUSE: Republicans do not want to fund an unauthorized ESA, which may open the door for modifications to the law
  - SENATE: Potential Republican wins will increase likelihood of ESA consideration, but a GOP majority would not be filibuster-proof; Senate will continue to set parameters for debate

Financial Report provided by David Keene, NACo Chief Financial Officer [3:02]
MOTION: Approval of minutes from Lewis & Clark County, MT
- Moved John Martin, Second Mike Murray, Motion carried

Ron Walter discussed examining other organizations we work with (NWRA, NESARC, SFI, Etc.) and encourage NACo member participation. [3:05]

NACo Associate Legislative Director Ryan R. Yates provided a brief legislative update and WIR conference update [3:10]
- PILT/SRS talking points
- New plan to include a housing forum at WIR conference in May
- Include session on ESA implementation issues

Adjourn [3:20]