Functional Statements of Organizational Units
National Wildlife Health Center

24th December, 2013
Revised 1st July, 2014

Office of the Center Director

The Office of the Center Director is responsible for overall planning, management, financial health, legal obligations, and integrity of all Center activities. The Center Director provides leadership for the development and execution of all science conducted within the Center and interacts with partners, USGS leadership, and Congressional delegations. Major duties include:

1. Science planning, development and management in line with the NWHC strategic plan, monetary and workforce constraints, USGS Mission and Midwest Region priorities, and partners' needs. Principal input and assistance is provided by the Center Leadership Team and Project Leaders.

2. Management of Center programs including provision of administrative and science support services, guidance, and quality assurance. Principal input and assistance in management is provided by the Center Leadership Team and supervisors. The Center Director is responsible for ensuring that fundamental science practices are followed and that scientific and technical products are delivered on-time and of the highest quality.

3. Leads and maintains cooperative partnerships with USGS programs, other Federal agencies, state agencies, universities, and nongovernmental organizations concerning the development and execution of scientific studies and the dissemination of wildlife health information. By liaison and personal contact encourages, stimulates, and promotes programs by obtaining constructive assistance from USGS programs, government agencies, and other partners.

4. Personnel management with respect to filling vacancies, development of scientific capabilities, adequate training, setting of performance standards, conducting appraisals performance, and adherence to principles of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Center Director, supervisors, and Administrative Officer have the major responsibilities in these areas.

5. Timely replies to queries from higher organizational units, Congressional offices, partner agencies, the news media, and the general public.

6. Ensures the health and safety of staff in the performance of their duties. Works closely with the Safety Committee to ensure that all USGS and DOI safety program elements are met.

7. Serves as the Center's Institutional Official.

8. Authors proposals, reports, fact sheets, briefing documents, program review documents,

and scientific papers describing the Center's scientific program, especially with regard to future directions.

9. Direct supervision of the Deputy Center Director and Branch Chiefs.

Deputy Center Director

The Deputy Center Director is responsible for implementation and management of all Center activities. Major duties include:

1. Serves as a full deputy to the Center Director, assisting the Center Director in matters related to the development, management and supervision of science research program activities and personnel within the Center.

2. Plays a leading role in implementing and managing scientific studies, including cooperative studies with partners. Works in coordination with the Branch Chiefs and Project Leaders to make project assignments, assure projects are adequately staffed and have sufficient resources, and oversee projects to ensure that project objectives, timelines, and financial constraints are met. Critically reviews proposals, study plans, and reports prepared by scientific personnel. Maintains the necessary records.

3. Supervisory and management responsibilities include development and maintenance of an environment conducive to efficient and effective operations as outlined in the NWHC core values and guiding principles, making recommendations for hiring staff, encouraging staff members to develop competence in specialized fields, and establishment and maintenance of active communications among staff members and other scientists in the USGS and broader scientific community.

4. Authors proposals, administrative reports, fact sheets, briefing documents, and program review documents describing the Center's scientific program.

5. Coordinates preparation necessary for Center Health Reviews; ensures that necessary briefing documents, oral presentations, and other activities are in place for these reviews. Oversees follow-up responses to action items resulting from the reviews.

6. Serves as the Responsible Official for the Center Select Agent Program.

7. Serves as Acting Center Director in the absence of the Center Director.

Business, Administration and Technology Services (BATS) Branch

BATS is under the direction of the Administrative Officer, who reports to the Center Director. The Administrative Officer is the supervisor of record for the section and assigns work; checks quality, accuracy, and timeliness of work; and performs all other supervisory duties. The section is responsible for, but not limited to, the following activities:

1. Development and tracking of Center budget, including processing of budget documents.

2. Development and processing of funding agreements and issuance of bills against funding agreements.

3. Processing of personnel actions and records.

4. Maintenance of Center time-and-attendance documents, and payroll records.

5. Procurement and inventory of Center equipment and supplies.

6. Procurement and maintenance of Center vehicles and rented space.

7. Timely replies to queries from higher organizational units on administrative matters and other data calls.

8. Responsibility for interfacing and coordination among the Center, Midwest Region and USGS Headquarters with all the various administrative units at those levels.

9. Processing of all accounting-related materials, including accounts payable and accounts receivable invoices, contracts, and bankcards.

10. Assistance with travel arrangements for all staff.

11. Staffs and maintains the reception area of the Main Building.

12. Outreach and library support for the creation of innovative information resources that will expedite clear and rapid communication of wildlife health issues to wildlife managers, policy makers, and the public.

13. Outreach and library support to acquire the data and information for the development of USGS-authored publications.

14. Provide support for the maintenance and dissemination of information from the NWHC data and information management systems.

15. Provide weekly Highlights that keep the Midwest Region and the USGS Office of Communications informed of specific scientific activities.

16. Develop and disseminate NWHC fact sheets, Wildlife Health Bulletins, pertinent content for the Web site, USGS Top Stories on wildlife disease topics, and media releases on significant discoveries and findings published by NWHC staff.

17. Develop and disseminate a quarterly partner newsletter that reports on wildlife disease investigations, research highlights and the NWHC wildlife quarterly mortality report.

18. Work with NWHC science staff to expand options for sharing information online, using modern and emerging technologies to facilitate the ease of use and availability of information for a variety of users.

19. Update the website layout and design as well as other routes of online communication.

20. Maintain ASKNWHC, the portal for public queries and responses will be prepared in cooperation with NWHC scientific staff.

21. Curate the NWHC print and digital library collections and recommend additions to ensure a robust collection.

22. Ensure all USGS-authored materials are entered into the appropriate reporting systems such as GPRA, IPDS, and the National Archives. Assistance with issues related to copyright, licensing, and intellectual property for individual researchers.

23. Provide user support for enterprise and non-enterprise applications, operating systems and equipment; group and individual training; user account/password maintenance; requests for special assistance.

24. Provide database services for NWHC enterprise systems - LIMS, EPIZOO, PHOTO, NIDHOGG - to include data dictionaries/lookup table management/searches/simple updates; support for project/group databases; development of new databases; metadata instruction and assistance; legacy data inventory; data sharing activities as requested.

25. Provide web development services and support for NWHC Internet and Intranet websites; management of federal/departmental/bureau requirements like ADA, policies and notices, and visual identity mandates; page maintenance; and page updates, in conjunction with outreach and scientific personnel.

Science Support Branch

The Science Support Branch is under the direction of the Branch Chief for the Science Support Branch. The Science Support Branch is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the physical facility (including buildings and grounds) in Madison (an owned federal facility), for the management and operation of the Animal Care and Use Program (ACUP), for the operation of the safety and biosafety programs, and serves as an Alternate Responsible Official (ARO) for the Center Select Agent Program (CSAP). The Branch Chief directly supervises the Facility Manager, the Animal Facility Manager, the Center Veterinarian, and the Biosafety Officer. The Facility Manager supervises Maintenance Mechanics and manages the day-to-day operation of the physical facility. The Animal Facility Manager supervises the animal care staff and manages the day-to-day care of experimental animals to meet requirements of regulations governing the care and use of animals in scientific studies. The Center Veterinarian provides veterinary services for experimental animals and serves as the Attending Veterinarian. The Biosafety Officer oversees and implements the safety and biosafety programs and assists the ARO for the CSAP. Activities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Plans and conducts preventative maintenance for critical systems and major equipment.

2. Responds to requests from NWHC personnel for repairs and assistance.

3. Schedules and completes required inspections and maintains permits required for the operation of the physical facility.

4. Plans for long-term maintenance of the physical facility and for the replacement of aging equipment through the program for Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvements.

5. Plans and oversees complex construction projects to maintain safe and efficient operations of the facility.

6. Maintains the fleet of government-owned vehicles.

7. Maintains the grounds and other outdoor areas in all seasons. Plans and implements grounds improvement projects.

8. Provides general husbandry (such as daily feeding and watering of animals and cleaning of cages) and performs health observations for animals housed at NWHC.

9. Transports, handles, and restrains animals in a safe, humane manner and assists veterinary and research staff in administering medications for clinical purposes and experimental treatments, in conducting veterinary procedures (such as nail trimming and wound suturing), in collecting samples (such as blood draws and swabs), in taking scientific measurements, and in administering and monitoring anesthesia and performing euthanasia.

10. Prepares and maintains detailed and accurate records and checklists that document husbandry and veterinary practices, experimental results, disinfection certification, and personnel training procedures.

11. Cleans, decontaminates, sterilizes and maintains the animal isolation facility (AIW) (including rooms housing animals, cages, and equipment) in accordance with standard containment procedures.

12. Develops and revises standard operating procedures (SOPs) on husbandry procedures, operation of equipment (e.g., cage washer, autoclave, and incinerator), and general operations in the animal isolation facility (AIW).

13. Develops and updates per diem rates for use of rooms in the animal facility on an annual basis.

14. Advises on legal and ethical animal procurement and transportation.

15. Conducts a preventative medicine program including animal quarantine, animal biosecurity, and health surveillance of animals housed in the facility.

16. Monitors animals during quarantine periods and on studies for signs of pain and distress and assessing their general condition and health.

17. Trains animal care staff, Principal Investigators (PIs), and research staff regarding proper care and treatment of animals, surgical techniques, anesthesia, aseptic and surgical techniques, analgesics, and physiologic assessment.

18. Provides veterinary oversight of animals used in experimental studies and intervenes clinically when appropriate. Provides emergency veterinary care.

19. Advises PIs on animal welfare issues during the planning stages of a study involving animals in which pain or distress or mortality are a possible outcome, including providing guidance on pain and distress anticipated in experimental protocols.

20. Provides guidance on appropriate use of anesthesia and analgesia in experimental protocols and on humane endpoints and the appropriate use and methods for euthanasia.

21. Outlines and coordinates required safety and biosafety training for activities conducted by NWHC personnel.

22. Chairs the Center Safety Committee and oversees the annual review and updating of the Center Safety Program as outlined in the Center Safety Manual.

23. Oversees and manages the Center Respiratory Protection Program and other aspects of the Center Occupational Health Program.

24. Reviews study plans, SOPs, and other documents with regards to biosafety and safety issues.

Applied Wildlife Health Research (AWHR) Branch

The Applied Wildlife Health Research (AWHR) Branch is under the direction of the AWHR Branch Chief, who reports to the Center Director. The Branch Chief is directly responsible for supervisory functions for Project Leaders in the Branch and Research Grade Evaluations preparation of all Principal Research Scientists (Project Leaders) at the NWHC. The Branch Chief also serves as the second-level supervisor for Branch support staff, including performance appraisals, promotions, awards, training, hiring, career development, safety, staff redirection, and adverse actions. Project Leaders are responsible for conducting research on wildlife disease and wildlife health topics, including all aspects of the research process from proposal development and funding/grant applications to publication of research results in peer reviewed scientific literature and other forms of technical and non-technical dissemination of research results and interpretation. Emphasis of research topics is on applied science to provide information, methods and techniques, tools, and quantitative models to address priority wildlife health and

disease issues of our primary stakeholders and partners, primarily bureaus within the Department of Interior and state wildlife and natural resource agencies. Project Leaders represent a wide array of expertise and capabilities, including wildlife biology, ecology, statistics, quantitative modeling, microbiology, veterinary medicine, epidemiology, toxicology, molecular biology, and immunology. Research partnerships across disciplines are encouraged with other Center scientists as well as scientists from other government agencies, academia and non-governmental organizations, nationally and internationally, to foster comprehensive research products from the molecular to the landscape level. Project Leaders are encouraged to provide mentorship to developing scientists through research programs involving graduate and undergraduate students, post-doctoral fellows, veterinary externs, and visiting scientists. Project Leaders are expected to provide assistance to other Center scientists, and to external scientists as time and resources allow, in their areas of expertise on consultations, manuscript and proposal peer reviews, graduate student committees, and Research Grade Evaluation panel participation, and provide assistance to resource managers and decision-makers by serving on expert panels, committees, workshops, reviews, and consultations.

Special areas of research emphasis for the Branch include:

1. Development, testing, and evaluation of tools and techniques for the prevention and control of diseases in wildlife populations, such as vaccination, habitat management, population manipulation (3.3.1).* (see footnote)

2. Development of tools and techniques for the diagnosis of wildlife diseases and isolation or culture of wildlife disease organisms (3.1.2).

3. Research studies on the pathogenesis of wildlife disease and the role wildlife play in the maintenance, transmission, and spread of wildlife diseases (3.2.1).

4. Research studies on the relationship between environmental factors and the occurrence or magnitude of wildlife diseases (3.2.3).

5. Research studies on the impact of wildlife diseases on populations and population dynamics, particularly in threatened and endangered species (3.2.2).

6. Research studies on the interaction between infectious diseases of wildlife and environmental contaminants and toxicants (3.2.3).

7. Ecological research on wildlife diseases, including vectors, to understand critical aspects of their epidemiology in order to develop prevention and control strategies (3.2.1).

8. Development of quantitative models to predict risk for wildlife diseases, implications for wildlife populations, possible implications for human and domestic animal health, and to evaluate disease prevention and control methods (3.2.2, 3.3.2).

Wildlife Epidemiology and Emerging Diseases Branch

The Wildlife Epidemiology and Emerging Diseases Branch (WEED) is under the direction of the Wildlife Epidemiology and Emerging Diseases Branch Chief, who reports to the Center Director. The Branch will consist of the field biologists/veterinarians, emergency disease coordinator, research/consulting statistician, technical information specialist, support staff, and the Honolulu Field Station (HFS). The Branch Chief is responsible for supervisory functions, including performance appraisals, promotions, awards, training, hiring, career development, safety, and adverse actions. The Branch field biologists/veterinarians, biostatistician, emergency disease coordinator, and technical staff are responsible for field investigations and center representation/leadership for investigating new and unusual wildlife mortality events, responding to disease emergencies, and disease consultation and training for external partners. The Branch will also foster active collaborations with federal, state and tribal partners so that partner needs will guide disease investigations, research and outreach activities. In partnership with other Center staff, the WEED Branch staff is responsible for designing and conducting epidemiology and disease ecology studies for new or reoccurring priority diseases. The Data and Information Management Group within the Branch will be a Center-wide resource for developing and managing Center-wide data systems. Specifically, the Group will work with scientists and data holders to ensure data bases are well designed, managed and maintained for optimal data quality, security, retrieval, and archiving. The Group will assist in developing data standards and controlled terminology for Center data sets and provide support for the development of data and information products.

The primary activities of the Branch include:

1. In collaboration with NWHC Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories and Research scientists, design and implement field investigations and surveillance programs to understand mechanisms and epidemiology of prioritized wildlife diseases and develop and evaluate management recommendations and disease control measures (1.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.1, 3.3.2).

2. In collaboration with NWHC research scientists, design and implement studies to understand mechanisms and epidemiology of prioritized wildlife diseases to understand the significance of wildlife mortality events and develop management recommendations to provide epidemiological support for Tribal, state and federal wildlife management agencies (3.1.2, 3.2.1).

3. Attend and participate in selected meetings, conferences, committees, and work groups that address crucial wildlife health issues (1.1.3).

4. Develop workshops for partners and work collaboratively with NWHC outreach to develop online training materials and information resources (e.g., fact sheets, Wildlife Health Bulletins, NWHC partner newsletter, research highlights and mortality reports) that will expedite clear and rapid communication of wildlife health issues to wildlife managers, policy makers, and the public (1.2.2).

5. Provide statistical consultation to NWHC scientists as outlined in the Statistical Consulting Instructional Memorandum.

6. Maintain disease emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

7. Serve as initial points of contact for the diagnostic case submitters and partners and refer cases to the NWHC Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories as necessary. Review correspondence and reports from NWHC Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories and follow up with submitters as necessary including responding to requests for assistance and consultation with field investigations, disease management, and techniques for disease surveillance and control.

8. Develop data sharing agreements for NWHC data and conduct data searches and summaries for external partners to foster reporting and data sharing partnerships (1.1.1).

9. Maintain, support and query the NWHC wildlife mortality data/information systems (LIMS and EPIZOO data systems), while developing a long term comprehensive solution for these systems (2.2).

10. Provide online reporting systems and other tools to facilitate the reporting and dissemination of wildlife mortality data.

11. Maintain functions of the records room, manage epizootic records, and work collaboratively with the NWHC Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories to support the efficient management and flow of laboratory and field reports, records and data.

12. Development and application of innovative statistical methods to survey, sample or monitor wildlife populations for pathogens, development of statistical methods to estimate demographic and epidemiologic parameters involved in the maintenance, spread, and population effects of wildlife diseases, and development and adaptation of advanced statistical approaches to assess landscape and spatial characteristics of wildlife diseases.

13. The HFS provides similar technical (diagnostic and epidemiological) services as well as research for the Pacific Region.

Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories Branch

The Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories Branch is under the direction of the Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratories Branch Chief, who reports to the Center Director. The Branch Chief is responsible for charting Branch directions, science oversight, and supervisory functions, including performance appraisals, promotions, awards, training, hiring, career development, staff redirection, safety, and adverse actions. The Branch laboratory section heads and pathologists consist of both service and combined service/research staff, and are responsible for conducting cause-of-death determinations, providing Center representation/leadership for diagnostic laboratory investigation of routine and unusual wildlife mortality events, designing and conducting research studies to characterize emerging and other priority pathogens of wildlife,

and offering disease consultation services to external partners. The Branch laboratories and pathologists are supported by a biological support microbiologist, a diagnostic case manager, and a core group of technical staff, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows. The primary activities of the Branch include:

1. Conducts time-sensitive and quality controlled diagnostic laboratory analyses on behalf of submitting federal, state, and Tribal partners to determine causes of morbidity and mortality in wildlife (3.1.1, 3.1.2).

2. Detects and identifies emergent and other pathogens of wildlife (3.1.1, 3.1.2).
3. Maintains and updates Center and Laboratory databases to disseminate results of laboratory and pathology analyses to submitting partners in a timely manner (2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.1.1).

4. Provides science-based technical assistance to federal, state, and Tribal partners to facilitate the investigation of outbreaks of wildlife disease (1.2.2, 2.3.2, 3.1.1).

5. Implements original scientific research to identify and characterize emerging and other priority pathogens of wildlife (3.1.2, 3.2.1).

6. Develops diagnostic assays to facilitate identification of unique pathogens of wildlife (3.1.2).

7. Provides laboratory support to the Wildlife Epidemiology and Emerging Wildlife Diseases Branch to facilitate field investigations in response to outbreaks of wildlife disease as requested by federal, state, and Tribal partners (3.1.2, 3.2.1).

8. Works with the Wildlife Epidemiology and Emerging Wildlife Diseases Branch to design and support surveillance programs to understand mechanisms and epidemiology of prioritized wildlife diseases and development of management recommendations (3.1.2, 3.2.1).

9. Operates Biological Support Services for the benefit of all laboratories at the NWHC (3.1.1).

10. Maintains collections of emergent and other priority pathogens of wildlife to facilitate original scientific research (3.2.1).

11. Attends and participates in selected meetings, conferences, committees, and work groups that address crucial wildlife health issues (1.1.3).

*The numbers in parentheses refer to the Goal, Objective, and Strategy in the *NWHC Strategic Science Plan: Advancing Wildlife and Ecosystem Health for the Next Decade,* April 2012.