



**RESOLUTION 2024-02-10**

**ADOPTED AT THE 114TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES  
(MADISON, WISCONSIN)**

**SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TRAINING, RESEARCH, AND DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER TO SUPPORT INSTREAM FLOW AND WATER LEVEL CONSERVATION**

**WHEREAS**, since 1998 the Instream Flow Council (“Council”) has pursued the conservation of aquatic ecosystems by enhancing state, provincial, and territorial fish and wildlife agency instream flow and water level conservation programs and providing support to other water stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS**, the conservation of adequate amounts of instream flows and water levels is required to sustain fish and wildlife productivity and other ecological functions in freshwater and estuarine habitats; and

**WHEREAS**, such ecological processes and functions include, but are not limited to connectivity, flood mitigation, groundwater recharge, navigation, biological productivity, nutrient transport and cycling, pollution attenuation, energy generation, water supply, and recreational, commercial, and subsistence opportunities such as fishing, hunting, boating, and wildlife-viewing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council is governed by, and directly serves, professionals employed by fish and wildlife agencies in fulfillment of public trust responsibilities; and

**WHEREAS**, from 1974 to 2000 the U.S. Department of Interior’s Cooperative Instream Flow Service Group served as a clearinghouse and provided leadership, training, scientific, and technical support to agency professionals and a variety of other water use stakeholders involved in instream flow and water level conservation and other water management uses, and these training and support services ended in 2000; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been no alternative established to replace these critical instream flow and water level conservation support services, especially to train current and future generations of fish and wildlife agency professionals and other stakeholders in water management and uses; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020 the Council, in cooperation with the American Fisheries Society (“AFS”), established a Steering Committee of experts who completed a [Feasibility Assessment](#) demonstrating the need and pathway to establish a new training, research, and development center (“Center”) to provide these critical and state-of-the-art instream flow and water level conservation services and recommended several options to achieve this goal; and

**WHEREAS**, the Feasibility Assessment outlined a range of concepts and recommendations for organizing, managing, and establishing such a Center, including guidance to the Council’s and AFS’s leadership and water stakeholder community in determining a path forward based on integration of eight interdisciplinary elements: hydrology, geomorphology, biology, connectivity, water quality, legal, institutional, and public involvement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Steering Committee determined that a centralized, distributed network with a core staff housed at a central location, and perhaps several trainers operating on a regional basis, would best serve the various needs of fish and wildlife agencies and other water use stakeholders to ensure conservation of adequate amounts of instream flows and water levels would be integrated into all water management practices; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council and AFS are presently taking steps to establish a Center in this format;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies supports the Council's and AFS' [Feasibility Assessment](#) and efforts to establish an interdisciplinary instream flow and water level conservation training, research, and development center and shall offer subject-matter expertise and technical assistance via its staff and its committees as appropriate and practicable.

*Resolution submitted by the Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee.*

*Adopted by the Association on September 25, 2024 in Madison, Wisconsin.*