



Resolution No. 2A, 2008

**SUBJECT: WAIVER OF WMA HUNTING PERMIT FOR SMALL GAME HUNTERS
TO ENCOURAGE RECRUITMENT/RETENTION OF HUNTERS**

WHEREAS, hunters provide both financial and political support for wildlife conservation, and more than any other segment of the population, are responsible for the preservation and enhancement of habitat and science-based wildlife management that benefits all species of wildlife, and

WHEREAS, hunters' willingness to pay for conservation is a hallmark of their dedication to the stewardship of the Earth's living natural resources, and is the foundation upon which institutional wildlife conservation is largely based, and

WHEREAS, due to many factors, including urbanization, loss of tradition, aging population, modern technology and alternative recreational opportunities, as well as loss of available places to learn woodsmanship and about hunting, and to engage in that activity, the numbers of hunters are declining, thus diminishing the support base for wildlife conservation, and

WHEREAS, it is vital to the future of conservation that its traditional support base of hunters be maintained, even as other strategies to expand the wildlife conservation support base are pursued, and

WHEREAS, a traditional avenue for the recruitment of hunters has been the opportunity to roam the woods hunting small game, particularly squirrels, and

WHEREAS, for various reasons, including the popularity and proliferation of lands dedicated to deer hunting/management, and emphasis on big game and turkey hunting by the popular sporting media, entry-level hunting for small game has received less attention as the vital hunter recruitment and retention pathway that it is, and

WHEREAS, a longstanding tradition in Louisiana has been the celebration of the opening weekend of squirrel season with large, extended family campouts, and woodland adventures involving many young hunters and their mentors stalking wily bushytails, and

WHEREAS, it has been observed that, since the \$15/year Wildlife Management Area Hunting Permit has been in effect, the numbers of early-season WMA squirrel hunters has declined, and

WHEREAS, in response to the imperative to recruit and retain hunters, the traditional support base for wildlife conservation, it is reasonable to consider a variety of strategies to stimulate participation, including relaxing fee requirements when such fees are determined to be an impediment to recruitment.

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission to consider waiving the Wildlife Management Area Hunting Permit for small game hunting during the first 9 days of the squirrel hunting season and that the Louisiana Legislature amend pertinent statute to authorize the Commission to take such action.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, March 16, 2008 in New Iberia, Louisiana