

SWGWILD



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January 14, 2013

Dear SWFS Members,

Today, SWGWILD announces the release of the first comprehensive set of Standards and Guidelines for wildlife forensic practitioners (<http://www.wildlifeforensicscience.org/swgwild/>). They have been almost two years in the making, and are the result of many hours of detailed work and debate within the SWG. We could not, however, have done it without you. Seeking comment and consensus, we disseminated our draft Standards and Guidelines to the SWFS membership and members of the human forensics, legal, and broader scientific communities. We gathered written and oral comments before and at the 2012 SWFS meeting. Each and every one of your comments was carefully considered and debated by the entire SWG. Many were incorporated, and they vastly improved the final product.

We were particularly sensitive to the comments at the feedback session that Standards needed to be limited to practices within the control of an individual practitioner, as opposed to practices that are dictated by laboratory policy and therefore cannot be implemented without additional management support. All Standards were viewed through this lens. Some were re-worded to narrow their scope, and others became Guidelines if we did not think lone practitioners could achieve them. We are aware that some of the Standards remain a stretch for small labs (mine included), but our purpose is not to maintain the status quo. We worked with the aim of legitimizing our maturing discipline, affirming the good practices we know exist in your labs, and providing "best practice" goals for all of us to work towards in improving wildlife forensics.

Finally, I would like to note that these Standards and Guidelines are a "living" document. As technologies change and new realities emerge, they will doubtless need revision. We will continue to accept and consider your comments and suggestions and periodically issue revisions. Thank you for your help, and for your dedication to our growing discipline.

Sincerely,

M. Katherine Moore
SWGWILD Chairperson

*In addition to those on the letterhead above, I would also like to acknowledge several subject matter experts and former SWGWILD members who contributed significantly to the Standards and Guidelines: Lara Adams, Tasha Bauman, Ed Espinoza, Trey Knott, Beth Wictum, Paul Wilson, and Bonnie Yates.