

For a few years, NAWEOA Board has consulted with a private marketing specialist in an effort to develop a marketing strategy to ensure our association stays strong and relevant into the future. This July, at the 2022 Conference, the attending membership in Nashville voted to approve the new logo, catchphrase, and style guide.

During the 2018 Conference business meeting, the board brought forward the idea of starting a rebranding & improved marketing effort to help reinvigorate the association. At the time, the board was starting to notice growing turnover between generations of game wardens, creating a need for improved marketing for our profession's association. Additionally, conference volunteers had noted poor brand recognition for NAWEOA, with one striking example where a cash donor chose to support an outlaw motorcycle gang, because of their heavily-marketed "toy drive," rather than supporting training for local game wardens.

Printing quality has also improved continually since the previous logo was developed, and it was getting harder to find shops willing to reproduce the old logo, and few who were able to keep the image looking as sharp as other printed items.

The membership in attendance at the 2018 Conference weren't overly receptive to such a change and provided very little feedback to the NAWEOA Board, except for discussions of the strong sense of tradition and base values of our association.

Posed with the precarious request of balancing our association's history and tradition, as well as creating a fresh, inviting look for prospective members, professional graphic designer Jaimel Blajszczak (pronounced "BLAY-zak") was hired by the NAWEOA board. Despite the elected board's wildlife law enforcement



NAWEOA Announces an Updated Logo and New Catchphrase

"By reinvigorating their character and persona, brands can showcase their growth and development over time." - Designrush.com

experience and training, the group quickly realized the worlds of marketing and graphic design required a much different skill set. Blajszczak had recently designed the logo for the 2018 NAWEOA Conference, had extensive work experience in graphic design for a wildlife agency and private businesses, including banking and clothing retail chains. She had recently been hired as the lead magazine designer for Eastman's Publishing.

Soon afterwards, a private consultant, providing non-profit organization management services, sought NAWEOA's business. While their pricing and some of their ideas did not win over the Board, they also spoke pretty frankly about things the Board was slow to recognize; especially with the consultant not coming directly from a wildlife background, they struggled with the long name and fully understanding who the association represented. Meanwhile, they recognized one of our most important assets, International Game Warden magazine had a simple, easily-

understood name – and good brand recognition.

The board worked through dozens of ideas, but struggled to find a common direction, especially with the limitations of only two in-person meetings per year. Eventually, a subcommittee, including Rick Langley, Jason Sherwood, Dan Fagan, Martin Thabault, and Jesse Gehrt, was formed to work more closely with Blajszczak to develop workable logo and tagline ideas that could fit the association's requirements. These ideas were then vetted through the full board during semi-annual meetings before eventually landing on a final proposal.

This logo retains several familiar design features from the past, with updates including a simpler background that will be easy to reproduce in a variety of formats, from small conference pins to wall-sized banners, with a modern, thin green line and traditional badge outline to unmistakably reference our profession.

Rather than proposing a full name change, which would

require extensive changes to incorporation documents, the by-laws, and would directly conflict with the requests of the 2018 business meeting attendees, a simpler "tagline" of "International Game Warden Association" was also added to logo and marketing materials.

While we maintain the association's legal identity as the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association, use of the "International Game Warden Association" tagline is expected to help quickly build support and recognition among people currently outside our association, including donors and prospective members. Similarly, it will strengthen the connection between our professional organization and our magazine.

Change is rarely comfortable and it doesn't always immediately provide the perfect result, but it is often a requirement for long-term success. As you look around at familiar brands such as "Wal-Mart," "McDonald's," and "Google," you'll notice they have each undergone at least six logo changes. Even as the board painfully navigated dozens of requests for various element changes, word adjustments, and color issues to create this step, we understand it is an important one, and we sincerely hope it won't be the last. Each change creates an opportunity to help more people understand who NAWEOA members are and the important things game wardens do (even if their official title is actually "conservation police," "wildlife officer," "ranger," or "natural resource specialist IV").

On top of these important discussions, we're also looking forward to the new challenge coins, stickers, and gadgets that will likely soon wear the "International Game Warden Association" tagline and NAWEOA logo. 🐾

➔ Prepared by Jason Sherwood