



## Multistate Conservation Grant Program

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### Background and General Information

#### **Authority**

The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777 et seq.) and the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 669 et seq.), as amended by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-408, 114 STAT. 1766 §113 and 114 STAT. 1722 §122) authorize the Secretary of the Interior to make up to \$6,000,000 available annually under the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) to fund multistate conservation project grants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will cite this traditional program as the T-MSCGP.

In addition to the traditionally \$6,000,000 available funding (\$3,000,000 for Wildlife Restoration and \$3,000,000 for Sportsfish Restoration), the President signed the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act (Modernizing PR Act) (Public Law (Pub. L.) 116-94) into law on December 20, 2019. This law, among other measures, created a new "Modern Multistate Conservation Grant Program" designed to support "R3" projects for hunting and shooting sports. The Service will cite this as the "Modern Multistate Conservation Grant Program (R3-MSCGP)." The R3-MSCGP will make up to an additional \$5,000,000 available specifically for hunter and recreational shooter recruitment related grants, including related communication and outreach activities.

#### **Background, Purpose and Program Requirements**

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) and the Service work cooperatively to manage T-MSGCP and R3-MSGCP ("R3 MSCGP"). Administratively, both programs will function similarly to recent administration of the T-MSCGP. The Association manages the grant application process, providing oversight, coordination, and guidance. The Service awards and manages the grants. Both programs are competitive grant programs.

The primary goal of both programs is to fund projects that address regional or national priority needs of the State fish and wildlife agencies (States) and their partners that are beyond the scope and capabilities of a single State. Eligible grant proposals are reviewed by the Association's National Grants Committee (NGC) with the assistance of one or more technical committees. Proposals must address eligible activities in one or more of the Association's selected Strategic Priorities to be considered. Strategic Conservation Priorities are developed annually by the Association and are used to guide proposal development and grant selection for the program.

Projects awarded under T-MSCGP may use the funds for sport fisheries and wildlife management and research projects, boating access development, hunter safety and education, aquatic education, aquatic

R3 programs, fish and wildlife habitat improvements, and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation.

Recipients awarded under the R3-MSCGP can only use the funds for making hunter recruitment and recreational shooter recruitment projects that promote a national hunting and shooting sport recruitment program, including related communication and outreach activities.

Wildlife TRACS (Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species) is the tracking and reporting system used by WSFR to capture conservation and related actions funded by its grant programs. TRACS serves as the electronic repository system for all performance and accomplishment reporting related to those Federal awards administered by the WSFR program. TRACS highlights program accountability by documenting program accomplishments and results-oriented accountability. Grant and project statement information and performance reporting data must be entered into TRACS, as authorized under [2 CFR 200.102\(c\)](#), [200.202](#), [200.301](#), and [200.329](#).

Grant awards issued under this program typically include projects for biological research, training, species population status assessment, fish and wildlife conservation outreach, data collection regarding hunter and angler participation, hunter and aquatic education, assessing the economic value of fishing and hunting, and regional or multistate habitat needs assessments. Many of the projects that will be conducted under these types of projects either directly or indirectly support Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. For example, regional or habitat needs assessments will support climate resilience, land conservation, and biodiversity efforts, including the 30 x 30 initiative.

## **Total Funding**

Estimated Funding for T-MSCGP: Up to \$6,000,000.

Estimated Funding for R3-MSCGP: Up to \$5,000,000.

Estimated Total Funding: Up to \$11,000,000 for T-MSCGP and R3-MSCGP awards combined.

## **Applicant Eligibility Criteria**

Only eligible grant proposals will be considered for funding so please ensure that you meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 1. Organization Information.** Please indicate the appropriate classification of your organization. If you are a Nonprofit, please indicate the type:  
Applicant Classification:
  - a. 12 – Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
  - b. 13 – Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
  - c. 00 – State governments
  - d. 06 – Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
  - e. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or a State or group of States, for the purpose of carrying out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The State governments' designation refers to Agencies with lead management responsibility for fish and wildlife resources in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia (Sport Fish Restoration only), Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, or a group of these agencies.

2. **State Benefit Requirement:** Projects must benefit:
  - At least 26 States,
  - A majority (over 50%) of the States in a [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region](#)
  - A majority (over 50%) of States in a Regional Association of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies ([WAFWA](#), [MAFWA](#), [NEAFWA](#), [SEAFWA](#)).
3. **Strategic Priorities Addressed:** An applicant’s Initial Proposal must address at least one of the current MSCGP Strategic Priorities (reviewed and updated annually).

FY 2024 Strategic Priorities for the MSCGP

## **FY 2024 MultiState Conservation Grant Program Strategic Priorities**

### **1. Conservation & Science**

- A. Climate Change
- B. Fish and Wildlife Health (“One Health”)
- C. Human Dimensions & Conservation Social Science
- D. Invasive Species
- E. Emerging Technologies for fish and wildlife management

### **2. Expanding Relevancy and Engagement (ERE)**

- A. Enhancing Conservation Through Broader Engagement
- B. Implementing and/or Expanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts
- C. Research

### **3. Capacity Building, Conservation Education, and Coordination of Conservation Policies**

- A. Leadership Development
- B. Conservation Education
- C. Coordination of Conservation Policies
- D. Integration of Law Enforcement

### **4. AFWA Priorities Identified in AFWA Funding Principles (submitted by ExCom)**

- A. Management Assistance Team
- B. Management of the MSCGP Program
- C. CITES and International Conservation Programs and Their Impact on State Agencies
- D. Coordination of Conservation on a National Scale
- E. National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

### **5. Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation (R3)**

- A. Marketing

- B. Engaging Participants
- C. Monitoring and Evaluation
- D. Hunting and Shooting Sports Access and Infrastructure

**Please refer to the following pages for definitions and potential projects related to each priority.**

## **1. Conservation and Science**

- A. Climate Change
- B. Fish and Wildlife Health (“One Health”)
- C. Human Dimensions & Conservation Social Science
- D. Invasive Species
- E. Emerging Technologies for fish and wildlife management

### **RATIONALE**

Three surveys have documented that AFWA agencies recognize climate change, invasive species, and fish and wildlife disease as the most significant challenges to science-based natural resource management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These same surveys also highlight the importance of applying advanced technologies (e.g., eDNA methods) and cross-jurisdictional collaborations to efficient and effective conservation. In response to these priorities, we propose that the National Grants Committee use the survey results to establish funding priorities for the Multistate Conservation Grant Program.

### **DEFINITIONS**

For this grant priority, the terms climate change, invasive species, and fish and wildlife disease mean:

- **Climate change** is operationally defined as changing weather (temperature, precipitation, event intensity, and periodicity) regimes that may affect management techniques (e.g., prescribed fire) or reinforce the need for new strategies (e.g., assisted migration, migration corridors) that effectively enhance the resilience of fish and wildlife populations.
- **Invasive species** are non-native or native species subject to range expansions with negative ecological consequences. Of particular importance are especially high-impact organisms identified at the regional or national level.
- **Fish and Wildlife disease** is defined as diseases with fish or wildlife population effects (e.g., CWD, HPAI, WNS, VHS, IHN, ISA) with particular emphasis on those diseases with known or potential zoonotic impacts.
- **Human Dimensions and Conservation Social Science** is a broad scientific discipline similar to traditional fish and wildlife research and management. It broadly integrates information from social psychology, sociology, political science, decision analysis, economics, and others. These multiple sub-disciplines require different skill sets, training, expert knowledge of complex theory, and proper application of various data collection methodologies, analysis, and interpretation. These components provide a framework for robust and responsible conservation management and decision-making. Conservation social science addresses the 3rd “leg” of the conservation triad: wildlife, habitat, and people. It provides unique insight into the social, psychological, and political determinants which underpin human preferences for fish, wildlife, and habitat management.
- **Advanced technologies** are defined as *devices* (e.g., more effective and economical tracking collars and acoustic tags), *techniques* (e.g., eDNA surveillance for rare species and pathogens, RT-QuIC applications to CWD testing), or *under-represented and evolving skill sets* (e.g., human dimensions/social science methodologies and quantitative population modeling) that can be

adapted to answer questions and improve natural resource management.

- **Cross-jurisdictional collaborations** are projects involving multiple geographic or political jurisdictions in coordinated efforts to improve the sustainability and resilience of fish and wildlife.

## **A. Climate Change**

- Proposals that explicitly consider management actions in the context of the RAD (resist, accept, direct) climate change framework and how to implement RAD appropriately.
- HD/SS proposals that query key stakeholder groups about their expectations (e.g., effects on hunting/angling opportunities and food security) and understanding of climate change effects.
- Proposals that evaluate the resilience of landscapes to climate change.
- Proposals to establish monitoring programs for climate change effects, including sentinel sites.
- Proposals that evaluate the viability of current or potential management practices and provide actionable options as climate changes.
- Proposals that evaluate changing precipitation regimes on fish and wildlife resources.
- Proposals that develop viable options to prevent entrainment and turbine mortality at hydropower projects, particularly pumped-storage projects.
- Big game movement changes with utility-scale PV solar development.
- Fish movement and population dynamics with hydropower development and removal

## **B. Fish and Wildlife Health (“One Health”)**

- Proposals to establish monitoring programs and sentinel areas for fish and wildlife pathogens.
- Proposals to establish large-scale data systems and sample repositories for fish and wildlife pathogens.
- Proposals to develop standardized non-lethal and eDNA testing methods for fish and wildlife pathogens.
- Proposals to develop new methods for determining the epidemiological factors related to fish and wildlife pathogens.
- Proposals to update and determine appropriate sample strategies and sizes for wild and propagated fish and wildlife pathogens.
- Proposals to establish determinants of health model for free-ranging wildlife that can be used in planning and policy to mitigate future disease outbreaks.
- Proposals to identify important wildlife disease (CWD, HPAI, SARS CoV-2, RHDV2, etc.) transmission pathways.
- Proposals to develop effective mitigation measures to block disease transmission pathways, which could include new methodologies to mitigate spread and disease distribution expansion.
- Proposals to determine reverse transmission between species for specific and important wildlife diseases.
- Proposals to develop field-based animal-side diagnostic testing protocols or tests.
- Proposals to develop effective and new sampling strategies for determining disease prevalence in free-ranging wildlife.
- Proposals that include the development of human dimensions models and strategies in free-ranging wildlife research that direct planning, policy decisions, and subsequent research.
- Proposals that address the need to build capacity and provide training opportunities for agency personnel engaged in fish and wildlife health issues.

## **C. Human Dimension and conservation social science**

- Understanding the use and acceptance of technology by the public engaging with state agency decision-making processes (e.g., who is using online commenting tools, do virtual commission meetings increase public engagement).
- Building social science capacity in the conservation community (e.g., supporting social science networking and continued education for conservation social scientists).
- Do “one-off” events (e.g., fishing clinics) translate into increased positive conservation behaviors long-term?
- Using content analysis to improve public engagement (delivery platform, imagery, language).
- How effective are public engagement efforts (e.g., billboards, TV spots, magazine ads, state fairs, or festival booths) in increasing awareness of the agency?
- Developing cultural competence in agency staff.
- Developing a stakeholder engagement strategy matrix (guidance on when to use which method)
- Improving the use of social science in decision-making processes (when is it most effective to use in decision-making?).
- Methodologies for managing and analyzing public input.
- Understanding motivations for conservation volunteers.
- Methods to determine the economic impact of conservation at the local level.
- Improving methods for outdoor recreation user-satisfaction surveys (improving ways to engage with current constituents).
- What programs are proven “gateways” to hunting, fishing, and trapping?

#### **D. Invasive Species**

- Proposals that develop cost-effective tools, technologies, and methods to address invasive species introductions and movement pathways by anglers, hunters, and boaters.
- Proposals that develop safe and cost-effective tools, technologies, and methods to eradicate or manage invasive species and restore native fish, wildlife, and their habitats.
- Proposals that expand or create partnerships to manage invasive species across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Proposals incorporating surveys of hunter, angler, and boater perceptions and values regarding invasive species prevention and management strategies.
- Proposals that evaluate and implement effective invasive species communications (e.g., effects of invasive species of fish and wildlife, prevention strategies) for anglers, boaters, and hunters.
- Proposals that identify survey and management tools to address the intersection between climate change and invasive species.

#### **E. Emerging Technologies for fish and wildlife management**

- Proposals that develop methodologies for LiDAR applications that facilitate watershed management.
- Proposals that develop or standardize techniques for environmental testing for CWD surveillance.
- Proposals that advance the development of wildlife vaccine delivery technologies (e.g., using deer to deliver Lyme disease pharmaceuticals or pesticides to ticks).
- Proposals that identify tools that assist in implementing Machine learning for estimating wildlife abundance utilizing remote sensing techniques (e.g., thermal imagery or aerial photography).
- Proposals that advance the utilization of MOTUS wildlife tracking systems in wildlife management decision-making.

## 2. *Expanding Relevancy and Engagement (ERE)*

- A. Enhancing Conservation Through Broader Engagement
- B. Implementing and/or Expanding Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts
- C. Research

### RATIONALE

Society is increasingly diverse, urban, and disconnected from nature. In response to these trends, fish and wildlife agencies must find ways to engage and serve broader constituencies to expand the financial and political support necessary to ensure the future of North America’s conservation legacy – [AFWA Conservation Education Strategy Vision](#).

### DEFINITIONS

- For this grant priority, the term “*diverse audience*” means:
  - o Constituents who have historically represented less than 20% of participants in a specific conservation action or outdoor recreation opportunity.
  - o Constituents who may have had little to no prior engagement with state fish and wildlife agencies or conservation organizations.
  - o Constituents who are part of a traditionally underserved or under-represented group due to societal or institutional barriers.

### Potential Proposals

#### **A. Enhancing Conservation Through Broader Engagement**

- Implementing Relevancy Roadmap work
- Opportunities to engage new and diverse audiences.
  - o Internship programs, fellowships, and training scholarships.
  - o Career development, mentoring, and continuing education.
  - o Targeted educational programs and outreach events.
  - o Identifying and addressing inclusivity and diversity gaps in existing programming.
- Marketing efforts and campaigns to new and diverse audiences (see definition of “diverse audience” above).
  - o Grants focusing on informing trust fund contributing industries on the tangible benefits of the American System of Conservation.
  - o Research that informs and supports efforts focused on the North American model.

#### **B. Implementing and/or Expanding Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts**

- Implementing Relevancy Roadmap work specific to agency staff.
- Assisting states/organizations to develop or further inclusion efforts.
- Educating staff
  - o cultural engagement best practices for staff
  - o identifying changing demographics and implications for conservation at scale
- Sharing best practices, sharing knowledge, and material resources.

#### **C. Research**

- Surveying motivations, barriers, and desires of non-traditional, new, and diverse audiences
- Research focusing on participation by historically under-represented groups in outdoor recreation opportunities and highlighting successful engagement practices.
- Assessment of internal staff demographics, perceptions, and practices.
- Development of best practices for engaging diverse and new audiences.

- Developing evaluation metrics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the conservation community (are DEI programs working?).

### 3. Capacity Building, Conservation Education, and Coordination of Conservation Policies

- A. Leadership Development
- B. Conservation Education
- C. Coordination of Conservation Policies
- D. Integration of Law Enforcement

#### RATIONALE

Fish and wildlife agencies must foster and train leaders; better equip policymakers such as Commissioners and State legislators with better information on wildlife management practices, principles, and appropriate governance practices; create new ways to educate and inform citizens involved in conservation issues; and coordinate policies to manage fish and wildlife resources within the context of both State-level and national impacts to conservation.

#### DEFINITIONS

- **Leadership Development** is broadly defined as the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed to enable fish and wildlife leaders to facilitate conservation actions in an effective, appropriate, and beneficial way to support the conservation of all wildlife.
- **Leaders** could include fish and wildlife agency staff, Commissioners, State legislature, and Congress members.
- **Conservation education** becomes an effective, dynamic means for fish and wildlife agencies and their partners to achieve an informed and involved citizenry that:
  - o Understands the value of our fish and wildlife resources as a public trust.
  - o Appreciates that conservation and management of terrestrial and aquatic resources are essential to sustaining fish and wildlife, the outdoor landscape, and the quality of our lives.
  - o Understands and actively participates in the stewardship and support of our natural resources.
  - o Understands and accepts and/or lawfully participates in hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, wildlife watching, shooting sports, and other types of resource-related outdoor recreation.
  - o Understands and actively supports funding for fish and wildlife conservation. – [AFWA Conservation Education Strategy Vision](#)

#### Potential Proposals

##### **A. Leadership Development**

- Provide technical assistance.
- Development of Effective Leaders in State Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
- Expand knowledge and understanding of wildlife management by agency Boards of Commissioners, members of State legislatures, and members of Congress to expand understanding of the basic principles of fish and wildlife management and agency governance.

##### **B. Conservation Education**

- Education that highlights fish and wildlife are public trust resources managed by governmental agencies (Federal, Tribal, or State).
- Education that highlights regulations are necessary for natural resource conservation.
- Education that highlights the health and well-being of fish and wildlife and depends on the quality



of their environment.

- Education that highlights fish and wildlife can be conserved and restored through science-based management that considers the needs of humans as well as fish and wildlife.
- Education that connects how a person's culture affects their view and use of fish, wildlife, and habitats.
- Education that highlights how the distribution and abundance of fish and wildlife provide significant economic benefits.
- Education that connects how everyone impacts fish and wildlife and their habitats, and as human populations grow, impacts on natural resources increase.
- Education that highlights regulated hunting, fishing, and trapping are important tools for managing some fish and wildlife populations and habitats.
- Education that highlights fish and wildlife-based recreation benefits participants and increases advocacy for conservation.
- Education that highlights responsible users of fish, wildlife, and the outdoors respect the rights and property of others.
- Education that highlights how State fish and wildlife management is funded primarily through hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses and federal excise taxes collected from the sale of hunting, target shooting, and fishing equipment and motorboat fuels.
- Education that highlights wildlife-based activities, such as hunting, fishing, viewing, and photography, provides people with outdoor recreation and generates billions for the economy.
- Education highlighting the future of fish and wildlife conservation requires additional funding from a broad-based constituency.
- Enhance the public's understanding of water resources, aquatic life forms, and sport fishing, and develop responsible attitudes and ethics toward the aquatic environment.
- Promote conservation and responsible use of the aquatic resources of the United States (U.S.).
- Supporting Law, Graduate, and Undergraduate Students' Study of Legal Principles and Professional Experience in Conservation Law and Policy and Providing Opportunities for Practicing Lawyers and Judges' Continuing Legal Education on Conservation Law

### **C. Coordination of International, National, and Regional Conservation Efforts & Policies, including Research that Informs and Supports those efforts and policies**

- Conduct surveys to determine the adequacy, number, location, and quality of facilities providing access to recreational waters for all sizes of recreational boats.
- Develop and adopt plans to restock sport fish and forage fish in the natural areas or districts covered by the plans; and obtain data to develop, carry out, and test the effectiveness of the plans.
- Obtain data to guide and direct the conservation of fishing. These data may be on:
  - o Size and geographic range of sport fish populations.
  - o Changes in sport fish populations due to fishing, other human activities, or natural causes.
  - o Effects of any measures or regulations applied.
- Conduct research on the problems of managing fish and their habitat and the issues of fish culture, if necessary, to administer sport fish resources efficiently.
- Conduct research on the problems of managing wildlife and its habitat if necessary to administer wildlife resources efficiently.
- Restore, rehabilitate, improve, or manage areas of lands or waters as wildlife habitats.
- National Grassland Coordination Initiative.
- Supporting Effective Coordination of Regional & National Conservation Efforts Through State Fish & Wildlife Agencies.
- Ensuring State Management Authority of Furbearers through a Multi-Agency, Multi-Organization Approach.

- Assessing State Legislators' Knowledge and Understanding of Conservation Issues.

#### **D. Integration of Law Enforcement**

- Planning for the Future of Conservation Law Enforcement in the U.S.
- Development of training tools/systems to assist conservation law enforcement personnel to understand and communicate critical aspects of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.
- Enhancing enforcement to combat wildlife trafficking in the U.S.
- DNA, digital and financial forensics suite for state conservation agencies.

#### **4. AFWA Priorities Identified in AFWA Funding Principles (submitted by ExCom)**

- A. Management Assistance Team
- B. Management of MultiState Conservation Grant Program
- C. CITES and International Conservation Programs and Their Impact on State Agencies
- D. Coordination of Conservation on a National Scale
- E. National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

#### **RATIONALE**

This strategic priority recognizes the important role that the Association and its members play in coordinating and implementing conservation in North America. It includes opportunities for professional development within state fish and wildlife agencies, coordination of national and international policies to meet conservation needs more effectively, and coordination of the multi-state conservation grant program. This priority is intended for grants to the Association based on the Association's funding priorities, which limit the amount of funding that can be awarded to the Association.

#### **Potential Proposals**

##### **A. Management Assistance Team**

Sustainable and effective conservation management of our wildlife and natural resources relies on the creativity and innovation of fish and wildlife staff in federal, state, Non-Profit, tribal, and industry organizations. These staff must be equipped to deal with the complex problems conservation organizations face daily. However, high retirement rates and struggles with recruitment within these agencies continue to impact and put conservation gains at risk. Data reveal that the tenure of a State Director is an average of three years. This staggering loss of leadership, coupled with the challenges facing state agencies to remain relevant, adapt to changing landscapes and constituencies, and secure stable funding sources, requires consistent leadership at all levels within an agency. It is essential to a well-managed and thriving organization to empower agency staff with the skills, knowledge, and efficacy to manage projects with diverse stakeholders across geographic ranges and within their agencies.

The Management Assistance Team and the National Conservation Leadership Institute offer virtual and in-person courses and training.

##### **B. Management of MultiState Conservation Grant Program**

The MultiState Conservation Grant Program receives annually \$11,000,000 through Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) to fund multistate conservation project grants. There aren't any administrative funds for the Association's use in administering and implementing its significant

responsibilities under this grant program. The primary objective is to continue meeting the responsibilities of the Association as required under the Federal authorizing legislation for administering and coordinating the MSCGP. However, additional emphasis is placed on program evaluation and the communication of program results. The MSCGP Manager works to maximize the benefits to the State Fish and Wildlife Agencies throughout the grant cycle and the grant proposal selection process. The MSCGP Manager manages the activities that implement the grant program. This project provides continued program manager funding and supports those administrative responsibilities necessary to implement the Multistate Conservation Grant Program.

### **C. CITES and International Conservation Programs and Their Impact on State Agencies**

Decisions made in international fora, such as the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), can positively and negatively affect the management authority or practices of state, provincial, and territorial fish and wildlife agencies. However, it is not realistic nor economically viable for all state fish and wildlife agencies (states) to participate in CITES, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), or other international fora. At the same time, U.S. federal agencies, foreign governments, and NGOs are at the table and have input in decisions. Therefore in 1994, the CITES Technical Work Group (Work Group) was created. It includes a member from each state regional association and AFWA. The Work Group has been highly effective in supporting the state's (and, where appropriate, Canadian Provinces and Territories) ability to manage and conserve wildlife and influencing decisions through science-based positions that encourage the sustainable use of wildlife. Without the Work Group, the states do not have a voice in decisions, nor can they bring science-based, on-the-ground expertise to help guide decisions. Considering the current pandemic and its spotlight on fish and wildlife use and consumption, having a voice in international fora is even more critical.

### **D. Coordination of Conservation on a National Scale**

The proposals focus on the following:

- Participation in regional and national forums where planning and coordination are performed with federal, NGO, and industry partners. State Directors and Association staff will attend major industry events to maintain open communications and coordinate on important and often sensitive issues determining the success or failure of conservation and management initiatives important to the Association's members. Support is included for state agency directors and senior Association staff for expenses related to attending meetings either remotely (registrations) and/or in-person participation (registration and travel expenses) to meetings of regional and national significance, including but not limited to regional association meetings; the North American; the AFWA Annual meeting; NGOs meetings; industry meetings and other events and meetings.
- Strategic communications. Association of Fish & Wildlife Staff will implement a communications plan and maintain a communications infrastructure that allows state fish and wildlife agencies to effectively coordinate with each other and their NGO and federal partners on regional and national importance issues.

### **E. National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation**

- The National Survey of Hunting Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation Technical Workgroup Coordination.
  - o Ensuring the statistical validity and rigor of the survey is of utmost importance.
  - o Ensuring communication and promotion/relevancy of this information and sharing to broad outlets

It is the responsibility of the Association through the national survey technical workgroup (NSTWG), which consists of members of state fish and wildlife agencies and a technical consultant.

## 5. Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation (R3)

- A. Marketing
- B. Engaging Participants
- C. Monitoring and Evaluation
- D. Hunting and Shooting Sports Access and Infrastructure

For proposals submitted under the following strategic priorities, “R3” refers to efforts that strategically increase and diversify participation in support for shooting sports and hunting (which includes trapping for this grant program). The long-term purpose of R3 is to provide improved support and experiences for existing participants, ensure that new participants are introduced from all different backgrounds, and ensure that hunting, shooting sports, and angling are seen as relevant throughout all segments of society regardless of the percentage of the population that participates. Priorities, where projects may also be considered for angling R3, are noted in italics.

Proposals under the following strategic priorities should be broad in scope and far-reaching. Collaboration between new and existing partners such as industry, NGOs, and state agencies is highly encouraged. Projects that build off prior multistate grant-funded efforts are encouraged where appropriate. Proposals that support startup programs designed to increase hunting and shooting sports participation are encouraged but must include a robust evaluation plan capable of documentation of participant behaviors or behavioral intents post-program. In addition, they must consist of a sustainability plan for continuation beyond the end of the grant period. Proposals focused specifically on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives related to R3 are encouraged.

### Potential Proposals

#### **A. Marketing**

##### **Description:**

Identification, development, and implementation of strategic marketing (including outreach and communication) tools, tactics, and resources with defined and measurable R3 outcomes intended to:

- 1) maximize social support for hunting and/or recreational target shooting from increasing broad societal awareness and acceptance to connecting participants with opportunities and
- 2) increase participation in hunting and/or recreational target shooting.

Potential projects might include:

- applied market research that includes real-world testing or application.
- marketing best practices that influence the behavior of individuals or groups in a manner that can be tracked and evaluated for desired outcomes.
- development and implementation of R3-related marketing toolkits, including real-world testing or application.
- development and placement of regional or national R3 marketing or ad campaigns and toolkits that have been previously developed.
- increase R3 community-wide engagement and implementation of marketing tactics.
- marketing public target ranges and the opportunities available to them.

#### **B. Engaging Participants**

##### *a. Mentoring*

**Description:** Identify and evaluate elements of successful mentoring programs and current mentor/mentee motivations and application of that knowledge to expand and promote effective mentoring or instructional efforts from the existing base of hunting and/or recreational target shooting participants. *Projects will also be considered for fishing participation under this category using funds*

*from the Traditional MSCGP.*

Potential projects might include:

- development of program guidance to increase partners' effectiveness, capacity, scalability, and collaboration.
- efforts to increase involvement and marketing to current participants to become mentors.
- efforts to increase understanding and engagement of potential mentees.
- efforts to facilitate effective brokering of mentoring or instructional experiences within populations of mentors/instructors and prospective mentees/students.

**b. Underserved Audiences**

**Description:** Assist organizations and R3 efforts with targeting new or underserved audiences, prioritizing target audiences based on their relative likelihood of engagement/conversion, and then identifying effective pathways and tools to create targeted R3 efforts to engage those new, underserved, and diverse audiences.

*Projects will also be considered for fishing participation under this category using funds from the Traditional MSCGP.*

Potential projects might include:

- development of tools to increase the effectiveness of targeted R3 efforts.
- evaluation of adoption and effectiveness of existing toolkits.
- research projects to understand potential target audiences and how to increase their participation.
- development of additional toolkits or training to increase organizations' effectiveness and capacity in retaining new hunting and target shooting participants.
- development, application, and evaluation of mentoring efforts that increase underserved audiences' hunting and target shooting participation.

**C. Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Description:** Development of tools, training, technologies, analyses, or reports that allow R3 practitioners to evaluate the impact(s) of R3 effort implementation on the behavior (initiation or avidity) or behavioral intent of its target participants.

Potential projects might include:

- development of tools to support R3-related data collection methodologies.
- creation of data dashboards and resources that increase R3 staff competency and capacity to evaluate, manage and interpret data to benefit decision-making.
- creation of R3 effort outcome indicator measurement and collection systems that allow participant and license sales data to be summarized and compared at regional or national scales.
- analyses or meta-analyses and reporting across multiple programs and geographies that determine and interpret the efficacy of R3 programs or program components, delivery mechanisms or platforms, branding or campaigns, and outcomes so that state agencies and partners can optimize effectiveness with the use of their R3 resources for the most significant benefits.
- best data sources to monitor and evaluate participation in non-licensed activities, such as shooting sports.
- Identification of effective measurement tools for shooting sports that can be used to identify effective R3 efforts.

**D. Hunting and Shooting Sport Access and Infrastructure**

**Description:** Development or expansion of projects, plans, tools, or programs to increase hunting and/or target shooting access and infrastructure at regional or national scales. Implement strategic initiatives that effectively unify or leverage R3 efforts by state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, NGOs, and industry partners to yield measurable outcomes.

*Projects will also be considered for fishing participation under this category using funds from the Traditional MSCGP.*

Potential projects might include:

- development of resources (e.g., best management practices, construction/renovation plans, case studies, tracking visitation, Americans with Disabilities Act and Build America, Buy America Act guidelines, and other information sharing) to help organizations improve effectiveness in R3 efforts related to hunting and recreational shooting.
- projects that increase partners' (industry, NGO, regional associations, etc.) capacity to work on collaborative R3 efforts at inter-organizational scales.
- development of tools that foster effective communication, planning, coordination, and networking between R3 partners.
- enhanced mapping and communication tools for connecting recreational shooters and hunters with opportunities for them to participate, such as virtual resources/self-learning tools to increase hunting and target shooting participation.
- research that documents and assesses usage and user types at shooting ranges and hunting areas to determine areas of high importance, high concern, or best-use practices so state agencies and partners can optimize effectiveness using their R3 resources to maximize benefits to existing and potential users.

**The Association judges every proposal on its merits and how well it addresses one or more of the Association's Strategic Priorities.**