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**National Grants Committee Meeting**

**Chuck Sykes ‐ Chair**

**Judy Camuso – Vice Chair**

**September 25, 2023**

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Meeting convened at 10:00 AM by Chuck Sykes. 38 participants attended, including 3 (out of 7) current Committee members:

* Chuck Sykes, Chair
* Paul Johansen
* J.D Strong

**Scheduled Discussion Items**

* Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements, and Agenda Review – ***Chuck Sykes***

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM. The Chair welcomed attendees.

* Approval of the March 2023 (NA Conference) Meeting Minutes – ***Chuck Sykes***

The Committee approved the meeting minutes from March 2023.

* Presentation and Discussion of Draft Priority List and Recommendations for 2024 Multistate Conservation Grants – ***Chuck Sykes, Chair / Silvana Yaroschuk, AFWA***

AFWA staff presented the Draft Priority List as the Technical Review Teams proposed. After recoveries and the previous year's obligations, there were about $ 3.15 M available for Wildlife Restoration Grants, $3 M for Sportfish Restoration Grants, and $4.45M for R3 Grants.AFWA received 105 Full Grant Proposals. After their review, the Technical Review Teams moved forward with 55 applications for recommendations to NGC.

The National Grants Committee received a summary of the proposals and Draft Priority List and had a chance to review them. Since there would be no quorum during the open meeting, they met on September 11, 2023, and voted on the 2024 MSCGP Priority List.

Chuck thanked the Technical Review team members for their hard work in reviewing these grants and coming forward with a draft Priority List.

***The National Grants Committee approved the Priority List of Projects recommendations for the State Directors for the 2024 Multistate Conservation Grant Program***

*2024 Multistate Conservation Grant Program Housekeeping –* ***Silvana Yaroschuk / John Lord, AFWA***

* Presentation of the MSCGP Database

MSCGP Dashboard is up and running. It requires continuous updates as new information on newly awarded grants becomes available.

* Update on Evaluation of MSCGP by SWR

The Multistate Conservation Grant Program aims to fund projects that address regional or national priority needs of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and their partners beyond a single State's scale, scope, and capabilities.

* + 2000 – 2020, 350+ grants have been awarded through MSCGP.
  + There hasn’t been a single in-depth review of the program since its beginning.

The primary goal of this evaluation is two-fold:

* To report how the funds have been spent and what kinds of projects have been supported.
* To tell the story of the MultiState Conservation Grant Program through the years.

The Contractor has been selected – Southern Wildlife Resources and the Final Report is due December 31st, 2023.

* Conflict of Interest Form

AFWA presented a draft of Policies and Procedures for the MSCGP Conflict of Interest for discussion.

*Application scoring and ranking by the Technical Review Teams –*

* Technical Review Team members shall sign a Conflict of Interest form every cycle prior to reviewing any grants.
* Scoring through SurveyMonkey Apply software – Members that have a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with one or more applications shall recuse themselves from scoring said application(s) and shall mark it as a conflict of interest in the notes when prompted by the software.
* Ranking during the meetings – Members with a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with one or more application(s) shall be excluded from the discussions and leave the room during the discussion of said application(s).

*National Grants Committee Priority List recommendation –*

* National Grants Committee members shall sign a Conflict of Interest form every cycle.
* National Grants Committee Meeting - Members with a conflict of interest, or potential conflict of interest, with one or more applications shall be excluded from the discussions and leave the room during the discussion of said application(s).
* Selection of Review Teams

Consist of subject matter experts from AFWA Committees (approved by the relevant committee chair) representing: nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, industry, higher education institutions and other partners

There are 5 Technical Review Teams: Conservation and Science, Expanding Relevancy and Engagement, Capacity Building, Conservation Education and Coordination of Conservation Policies, AFWA Priorities, and R3. Currently, 60+ reviewers.

* Question from review teams and National Grants Committee -  Some members of the review teams were not clear on some questions, so we asked the WSFR team. Here is the response:
  + Can Multistate Conservation Grant funds be used to pay for state fish and wildlife agency personnel?

State agency personnel salary, benefits, and indirect are allowable as part of a Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) application budget, as long as:

* Proposed activities are eligible under the grant program, are allocable under the specific Multistate award, and are necessary and reasonable for accomplishing the grant objectives (2 CFR 200).
* State agency personnel must document the time and effort spent on each grant-funded project assigned to them.
* It cannot duplicate (“double dip”) time charged for an activity under both an MSCGP federal award and a state Wildlife Restoration (WR) and/or Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) grant or any other federal grant.

All states structure activities funded under their annual WR and SFR apportionments differently. It is possible that state personnel activities proposed under an MSCGP grant may not have been included in any of the state’s annual apportionment grants, thus making it reasonable for a state to request personnel expenses as part of an MSCGP application.

* + How to address different indirect costs.

The applicants shall follow the 2 CFR 200. It is illegal to force them to apply a lower rate than what their NICRA suggests.

* + Applicants Feedback

The change from a two-step application to a one-step application has brought forward some challenges providing applicants feedback on their applications.

*Successful Applicants – recommended for the Priority List of Projects*

* Previously feedback was provided after initial proposals to improve final grant proposals.
* With new one-step process, feedback was provided on final grant proposals and communicated by review team members or staff - applicants must address those concerns before submission of federal forms to USFWS.

*Unsuccessful Applicants*

* If the applicant plans on resubmitting the application the following year, they can request feedback.
* AFWA provides feedback on request based on comments from review teams.
* WSFR Update

***Paul Rauch, WSFR***

* WSFR staff worked with AFWA staff on reviewing MSCGP Application’s eligibility
* Partner with a Payer website will be hosting the MSCGP grants’ abstracts. (<https://partnerwithapayer.org/fy24-multistate-conservation-grants/> )
* USFWS and AFWA organized webinars for the MSCGP applicants. 100+ current and prospective applicants participated in those webinars.
* 2022 National Survey Update – ***Martha Stapleton, NORC***
* Data was collected over 4 waves of data collection:
* Screener Survey fielded January 15 to April 15, 2022
* 3 detailed wave questionnaires were fielded May 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.
* Each survey was offered in 3 modes: phone, web, and paper.
* Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.
* In total, we interviewed 105,698 adults aged 16 and older.

2022 National Survey Findings

* ***Anglers*** - 15% of the U.S. population age 16 and older went recreational fishing in 2022.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Activity** | **Participants** | | **Days of Participation** | | **Trips** | |
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| **Fishing** | **39,935,437** | **100** | **785,226,417** | **100** | **462,733,320** | **100** |
| Freshwater | 35,069,217 | 88 | 559,005,615 | 71 | 359,051,599 | 78 |
| Saltwater | 12,704,743 | 32 | 123,110,918 | 16 | 103,681,721 | 22 |

* Expenditures for Fishing for 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Item** | **Expenditures** | | **Spenders** | | |
|  | Amount (Dollars) | Average per Angler (Dollars) | Number | % | Average per Spender (Dollars) |
| **Total, All Items** | **$99,422,180,761** | **$2,490** | **38,862,006** | **97** | **$2,558** |
| Total Trip-Related | 36,604,110,918 | 917 | 37,341,147 | 94 | 980 |
| Fishing Equipment | 8,660,298,983 | 217 | 29,126,920 | 73 | 297 |
| Auxiliary Equipment | 4,326,757,061 | 108 | 14,771,669 | 37 | 293 |
| Special Equipment | 27,747,888,134 | 695 | 7,908,496 | 20 | 3,509 |
| Other Expenditures | 22,083,125,666 | 553 | 29,268,567 | 73 | 754 |

* ***Hunters*** – 5.5% of the U.S. population age 16 and older went hunting in 2022.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Activity** | **Participants** | | **Days of Participation** | | **Trips** | |
|  | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| **Hunting** | **14,374,589** | **100** | **240,752,065** | **100** | **165,002,494** | **100** |
| Big Game | 11,521,659 | 80 | 134,683,681 | 56 | 91,610,000 | 56 |
| Small Game | 5,290,082 | 37 | 38,056,272 | 16 | 33,996,768 | 21 |
| Migratory Birds | 2,812,364 | 20 | 22,861,271 | 9 | 19,786,340 | 12 |
| Other Animals | 2,300,439 | 16 | 19,902,802 | 8 | 19,609,387 | 12 |

* Expenditures for Hunting for 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Item** | **Expenditures** | | **Spenders** | | |
|  | Amount (Dollars) | Average per Hunter (Dollars) | Number | % | Average per Spender (Dollars) |
| **Total, All Items** | **$45,221,096,403** | **$3,146** | **13,854,558** | **96** | **3,264** |
| Total Trip-Related | 12,322,736,006 | 857 | 12,191,391 | 85 | 1,011 |
| Hunting Equipment | 7,903,537,189 | 550 | 10,555,584 | 73 | 749 |
| Auxiliary Equipment | 3,947,958,433 | 275 | 8,440,300 | 59 | 468 |
| Special Equipment | 7,742,558,419 | 539 | 3,351,210 | 23 | 2,310 |
| Other Expenditures | 13,304,306,355 | 926 | 11,734,306 | 82 | 1,134 |

* ***Wildlife Watching -*** 57% of the U.S. population age 16 and older went wildlife watching in 2022.
* Expenditures for Wildlife Watching for 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Item** | **Expenditures** | | **Spenders** | | |
|  | Amount (Dollars) | Average per Wildlife Watcher (Dollars) | Number | % Wildlife Watchers | Average per Spender (Dollars) |
| **Total, All Items** | **$250,198,668,336** | **1,687** | **114,362,154** | **77** | **2,188** |
| Total Trip-Related | 42,059,320,300 | 284 | 34,914,966 | 24 | 1,205 |
| Hunting Equipment | 24,635,959,828 | 166 | 89,051,682 | 60 | 277 |
| Auxiliary Equipment | 8,910,935,634 | 60 | 36,132,561 | 24 | 247 |
| Special Equipment | 85,097,170,236 | 574 | 20,823,554 | 14 | 4,087 |
| Other Expenditures | 89,495,282,339 | 604 | 72,486,119 | 49 | 1,235 |

* Participants in ***Target Shooting & Archery*** by Age Group in 2021

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age Group** | **Target Shooters** | | **Archers** | |
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| **Total** | **46,167,033** | **100** | **18,849,819** | **100** |
| 6 to 15 years | 4,820,346 | 10 | 4,198,084 | 22 |
| 16 to 17 years | 1,166,524 | 3 | 792,096 | 4 |
| 18 to 24 years | 4,175,301 | 9 | 1,947,345 | 10 |
| 25 to 34 years | 8,063,251 | 17 | 3,337,682 | 18 |
| 35 to 44 years | 7,583,088 | 16 | 2,932,189 | 16 |
| 45 to 54 years | 6,687,440 | 14 | 2,236,893 | 12 |
| 55 to 64 years | 6,938,313 | 15 | 1,970,654 | 10 |
| 65 years or older | 6,732,771 | 15 | 1,434,875 | 8 |

* Presentation on Prior Year Grant:
  + MSCG Funding Start-to-Finish Success Story – ***Alex Baer, IHEA***
  + Understanding the Management, Funding, and Staffing of Human-Wildlife Conflicts by State Fish and Wildlife Agencies – ***Bryant White, AFWA/Lou Cornicelli, Southwick Associates***

**Action Item:**

Approve 2024 (R3 and Traditional) MultiState Conservation Grant Program Priority List

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.

***ACTION ITEM:*** Approval of the 2024 Multistate Conservation Grant Program Priority List