

**National Grants Committee**

**September 24, 2024**

**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

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**Judy Camuso – Chair**

**Paul Johansen – Vice Chair**

**Committee Members:** Paul Johansen, WV (Vice Chair of Executive Committee), Ted Will, GA (Vice Chair of Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds Committee); Alan Jenne, NV (WAFWA ), Ryan Brown, VA (NEAFWA); Kevin Robling, SD (MAFWA), Robert Boyles, SC (SEAFWA)

The meeting was convened at 1 PM by Judy Camuso. 33 participants attended, including all committee members.

**Scheduled Discussion Items**

* Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements, and Agenda Review – ***Judy Camuso***

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM. The Chair welcomed the attendees.

* Approval of the March 2024 (NA Conference) Meeting Minutes

The Committee members approved the March 2024 Meeting minutes.

* MSCGP President’s Task Force (PTF) Update – ***Justin Grider, AL, Vice Chair of PTF***

The PTF presented a full report to the Executive Committee, which was approved. Some of the key recommendations include:

1. Development of Strategic Priorities should include state and federal agencies, NGOs, trade associations, and regional partners.
2. Update the review process. Everyone is involved in the grant review discussion, but only state agency reviewers decide on the draft list of proposals for the priority list.
3. Enhance and update the scoring process. This still needs to be done, but several aspects that need to be updated have been identified.
* MSCGP Housekeeping

* + 2027 National Survey Funding request and allocation for 2025 – 2029

The National Survey Technical Work Group met to review and discuss the 2027 National Survey (NS) proposals, including coordinating the 2027 NS proposal (USFWS). Below is the proposed budget:

|  |
| --- |
| **Survey Vendor - NORC** |
|  |  | **2025** | **2026** | **2027** | **2028** | **2029** |
| **Total Ask** | **$ 405,177** | **$ 1,056,631** | **$ 4,578,128** | **$ 1,127,215** | **$ 328, 097** |
| **Total (if spread across first three years)** | **$ 2,013,312** | **$ 2,013,312** | **$ 2,013,312** | **$ 1,127,215** | **$ 328,097** |
| 35% | PR | $ 704,659.20 | $ 704,659.20 | $ 704,659.20 | $ 394,525.25 | $ 114,883.95 |
| 35% | DJ | $ 704,659.20 | $ 704,659.20 | $ 704,659.20 | $ 394,525.25 | $ 114,833.95 |
| 30% | R3 | $ 603,993.60 | $ 603,993.60 | $ 603,993.60 | $ 338,164.50 | $ 98,429.10 |
| **Survey Coordination - USFWS** |
| **Total Ask** | **$350,992** | **$ 360,322** | **$ 367,289** | **$ 374,395** | **$381,642** |

NORC requests $ 4,578,128 in 2027. That would drain the funding for MSCGP. To avoid that, the accumulated amount for 2025-2027 is spread equally across 3 years.

The President’s Task Force on MSCGP approved including the R3 program as a funding source for the National survey as allowable and using funds from Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration programs. The proposed allocating of funds for the 2027 National Survey is as follows:

35% from Wildlife Restoration, 35% from Sport Fish Restoration, and 30% from R3.

* + Multiyear Funding

According to the Criteria approved by the National Grants Committee in 2021 for the multiyear funding:

“The annual funding amounts obligated each year will not exceed 25% of total fund availability by category (WR, SFR, R3) so that adequate funds remain for proposals in subsequent years.

Previously awarded multi-year obligations will be included in the 25% calculation for each year’s determination of multi-year fund availability”.

The table below shows the availability and requests requested by NORC/USFWS (National Survey) and Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS) for multiyear funding. CAHSS is requesting $ 999,999.75 annually from 2025-2029.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Multiyear Funding Availability (2025)** |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Request** |
|  |  |  | **National Survey** | **USFWS For Coordination** | **CAHSS** |
| **WR:**  | $750,000.00 |  | $709,291.60 | $87,146.85 |  |
| **SFR:** | $750,000.00 |  | $945,721.80 | $87,146.85 |  |
| **R3:** | $1,250,000.00 |  | $709,291.60 | $74,697.30 | $999,999.75 |

With the approval of those three proposals for multiyear funding, no multiyear funding will be available from 2025-2029.

* + One Health Proposal Eligibility

Karen Bennet, OCI, reviewed the key points regarding this topic.

* The CDC defines One Health as “an approach that recognizes that people's health is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.”
* Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration grant programs, including Multistate Conservation Grants, cannot fund projects with human health purposes, objectives or activities. Only wildlife and sport fish health projects are eligible for WSFR funding.
* The AFWA Strategic Priority for Fish and Wildlife Health (“One Health”) appropriately lists examples of potential projects focused on wildlife and fisheries health. These examples do not state or imply a connection to human health as a purpose or benefit of the project.
* It is acknowledged that One Health has value and much of the state fish and wildlife agency work supported by WSFR funding has incidental health benefits. However, articulated purposes, needs, objectives, activities, and benefits in grant applications, accomplishments, outputs, and outcomes stated in reports must focus solely on wildlife and sport fish health.
* Presentation /Approval of 2025 Draft Priority List for Multistate Conservation Grant Program ***– Judy Camuso / Silvana Yaroschuk, AFWA***

AFWA received 105 proposals for the 2025 MSCGP. Four of these were initially deemed ineligible, leaving 101 to proceed for evaluation by the Technical Review Teams.

The Technical Review Team developed a Draft List of 44 proposals for National Grants Committee consideration. OCI was involved in reviewing the draft list of proposals.

Additionally, the Technical Review Team proposed a few extra proposals contingent on available funding, but after reviewing the funding situation, these were not included in the final draft list.

The only Proposals to be considered for multiyear funding are the ones submitted by the NORC, USFWS, and Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports.

***Action Item: A****pprove the Priority List of Projects recommendations for the State Directors for the 2025 Multistate Conservation Grant Program*

The National Grants Committee unanimously approved the draft Priority List, which moved forward to be approved by the State Directors during the AFWA Business meeting.

* 2027 National Survey Update ***– Jeff Davis, CO***

Background

* National Survey is performed every five years
* Old census model became unaffordable (estimated at $22 million) and ‘new vision for national survey created by AFWA with following side boards:
* $7.5 million cap over five years
* High level, national, participation and economic data only
* Enable state ‘buy-up’ for state data
* 2022 survey considered success
* 15 states ‘bought-up’ for state level data

Recommendation 1: Main Survey

NSTWG Recommends NORC implement option #1:

* $7.495 million – meets budget cap
* Increase efficiency based on lessons learned from 2022 survey
* Increase number of completed interviews at same cost
* Addition of two or three new questions included

Recommendation 2: Coordination

NSTWG Recommends USFWS Continue to coordinate national survey

* Recommended reducing budget
* Develop workplan for addendum and reports with approval from NSTWG
* Better coordination with and approval of draft reports by NSTWG per RFP
* Make public data set available on USFWS web site for download (not done per RFP for 2022) – include instructions for use in all downloads
* Work with AFWA on formal, coordinated effort to solicit new questions (2-3 for National effort and potential future small surveys)

Recommendation 3: State Level Reports (15 states in 2022)

NSTWG Recommends promoting the expansion of state level reports (paid for by states):

* Investigate standardization of reports
* Develop and implement formal marketing / comms plan based on 2022 positive experience
* Share state data publicly on USFWS web site (requires permission from states)

Recommendation 4: Interim Surveys

Per instructions given to NSTWG, NORC is now able to perform interim, high-level surveys

* Note – need to determine timing/funding request for 2025 data
* Cost between $200,000 and $400,000
* AFWA continues to work with NORC to develop modules with subject experts on priority areas
* Proposal likely to be submitted in 2025
* Office of Conservation Investments Update – ***Karen Bennett, OCI***

Karen Bennett from the Office of Conservation Investments (OCI) reported the following to the committee:

The Service’s Office of Conservation Investment is participating in the AFWA President’s Task Force regarding MSCGP. Meetings thus far have developed a work plan of items the Task Force will review and familiarize Task Force members with MSCGP history and current program operations. We have provided input on Conflict-of-Interest Policies, Training of Applicants, Indirect Cost Rates, and other ancillary topics.

Office of Conservation Investment increased grant administration capacity two years ago and continues to seek operational efficiencies. With this increased efficiency, we were able to award 90% of FY 2024 grants in mid–January 2024, 35 days after Service Director approval on December 6, 2023.

Office of Conservation Investment has multiple planning training webinars in the coming months for grantees. Grantees will be presented with topics related to the grant program, contracts, sub-awards, grant reporting process, etc. We are also providing regular “Virtual Office Hours” for grantees to have regular opportunities for questions and guidance. These are structured but informal opportunities for grantees to better understand MSG administration.

Virtual Office Hours consist of a brief presentation on a timely grant topic followed by open-floor Q&A on any Multistate topic recipients wish to discuss with CI. The first Virtual Office Hour was held on August 13 and covered grant amendment procedures. The next Office Hour session is scheduled for October 24, 2024, at 3 pm ET and will cover Contract vs. Subaward determination. On January 30 at 3 pm ET, the Virtual Office Hour session will discuss performance report content and acknowledgment requirements and tips.

AFWA received 105 applications for the 2025 grant cycle. AFWA has completed the technical review process, advancing 43 proposals for consideration by AFWA’S National Grants Committee and State Directors, who will vote on the final priority list at the AFWA Annual Meetings in September 2024. The Service has reviewed these applications in preparation for official submission.

Office of Conservation Investment Partner with a Payer Website has all the 2024 and 2023 Grant abstracts online and available for viewing. The 2024 MSCGP grant abstracts load automatically, and the 2023 abstracts are viewable by clicking the button for last year's abstracts.

* Presentation on 2023 MSCGP ongoing/completed Grants:
* Knowledge Hub – ***Chet Van Dellen, Timons Group***
* Recruiting Females and Ethnically Diverse Youth Participants into Shooting Sports – ***Keith Warnke, MAFWA***

NGC heard from two ongoing Multistate Conservation Grant Program grantees.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.