

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration and Associated Grant Programs

Program Update September 2005

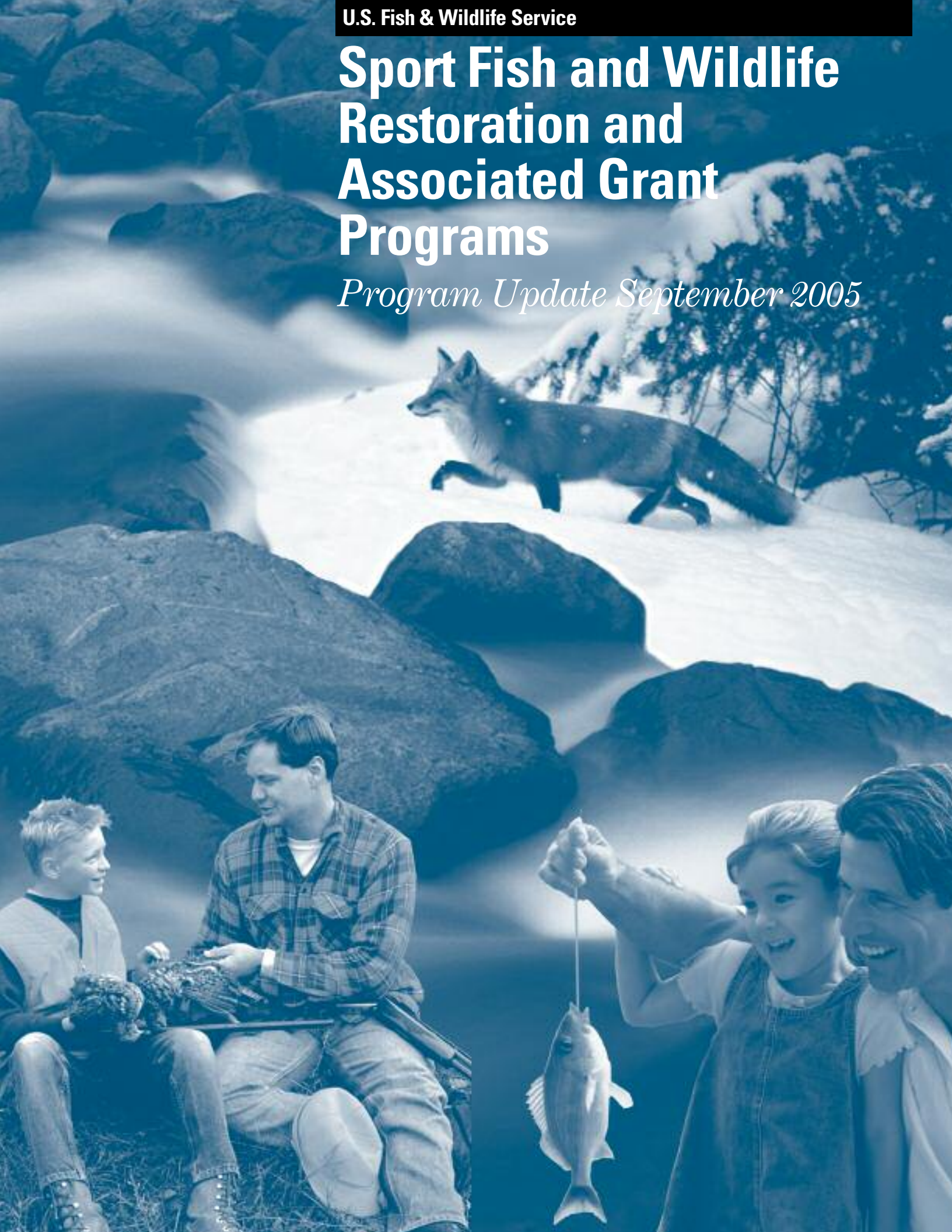




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Thoughts from the Assistant Director



Mitch King

As I near my one-year mark as Assistant Director, I remain excited about the direction of the Federal Assistance Program. The Service has made significant strides on a variety of fronts: We are doing a great job of being supportive and responsive to the needs of our State partners.

1. We have turned the corner on regional inconsistencies working with our State partners.
2. Our confidence marks are improving with Hill staff.
3. We are looked upon as leaders on grant management both within the Service and the Department.
4. If that is not enough, with the development and review of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (CWCS), we are chauffeuring in a new era in fish and wildlife conservation.

Change in FWS Leadership

Since the last Program Update, the Service had a change in leadership that could have made a profound impact on the Federal Assistance Program. As you know, former Director Steve Williams was instrumental in pushing for a higher visibility of the Federal Assistance Program within the Service, so his resignation could have been a major stumbling block for our program. However, the nomination of Dale Hall as his replacement silenced any concerns I might have had. Dale is a great leader and a strong supporter of our partnership with State fish and wildlife agencies. He serves on the Federal Assistance Policy Task Force and is well versed in the Program and its underlying policies. Dale's confirmation will be a good thing for both the Service and the Federal Assistance Program.

A "New Era" in Fish and Wildlife Conservation

One of the more notable things to happen over the last few months has been the submission of CWCS. As of August, we officially received 11 strategies with more on the way. I have reviewed each of the

submitted strategies and am thrilled at how seriously the States have taken the responsibility of strategy development. I can't wait to see the rest! We are entering a new era in fish and wildlife conservation. By October, we will have received strategies from all 56 States, Commonwealths, Territories, and the District of Columbia. This is an exciting time!

New Emphasis – Getting Our Message Out

Getting our message out is what I would like to emphasize in this update. We have had a lot of discussion within the Service on this topic over the last few months. Is this something we should be doing? Is it the responsibility of the Service or the States?

Here are some of my thoughts. First, the Service's ultimate responsibility is to work with the States to maintain healthy Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. Doing that requires that we "administer" the Programs from beginning to end. The Programs begin with the manufacturer who pays the excise tax, and end with the hunter or angler who utilizes the resource managed by the State. For a variety of very legitimate reasons, most of our attention in recent years has been focused on those very important middle steps; including, getting the excise tax funds to the States; and, making sure that the States utilize these funds on appropriate projects. Over the past year, we have expanded our focus on the front end by spending more time making sure that the excise taxes are being collected accurately and timely.

To round out our coverage of the Programs from beginning to end, I think we need to add emphasis both on the front and back end of the process. On the front end, we need to make sure that the manufacturer who pays the excise tax fully understands where the tax dollars are spent. On the back end, we need to help the hunter and angler understand the linkage between the purchase price of their equipment and the fish and wildlife resources they are enjoying.

I've heard manufacturers say they "pay the taxes because they have to." I've also heard them ask, "Where does this money go?" A healthy Program must start with a solid understanding by our industry partners of the importance of having viable fish and wildlife resources for their consumers to enjoy. The next step is ensuring that those industry partners know, understand and support the way our State partners utilize the funding provided by the Programs.

Finally, it's unfortunate that most hunters and anglers have no idea that some of the

money they pay for the equipment actually is used by their State to manage fish and wildlife resources. Keeping the hunters and anglers up to speed on the linkage between industry tax payments and their State's management activities will allow them to make informed decisions in their equipment purchases.

In my opinion, a modest and focused Service/State effort to get our message out falls within the realm of "program administration" and it is the right thing to do for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.



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Wallop-Breaux Reauthorization Completed

The President signed into law the new Highway Bill in early August. The bill contains much of the American League of Anglers and Boaters consensus position for reauthorization. The bill has several ramifications for grant programs managed by the Division of Federal Assistance's programs. Some of the bill's highlights include:

Most programs will be funded from pre-set funding percentages including:

Sport Fish Restoration- 57%

Coastal Wetlands Act- 18.5%

U.S. Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Safety- 18.5%

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program- 2%

Clean Vessel Act Grant Program- 2%

National Outreach and Communications Program- 2%

Phase out of the Boating Safety

Account: The Boating Safety Account will be dissolved over a five year period, with funds being distributed to several grant programs annually over that time frame.

Reauthorization of the Clean Vessel Act, Boating Infrastructure Grant Programs, and National Outreach and Communication Program: These programs were reauthorized. Without this reauthorization, funding for these programs in future years would be in jeopardy.

At press time, the Service was still evaluating other affects of this bill on grant programs managed by the Division of Federal Assistance.



State Wildlife Grant Program

After years of painstaking work and preparation, the States' Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies are in their final stages with a dozen already completed. The Strategies, due October 1, 2005, are required by Congress in order to ensure continued funding for the State Wildlife Grant program.

Focused on species in greatest need of conservation, each Strategy must address eight required elements concerning: species; habitats; threats; conservation actions; monitoring; Strategy revision; and public and private participation in the development of the Strategies. Although each Strategy will include all of these

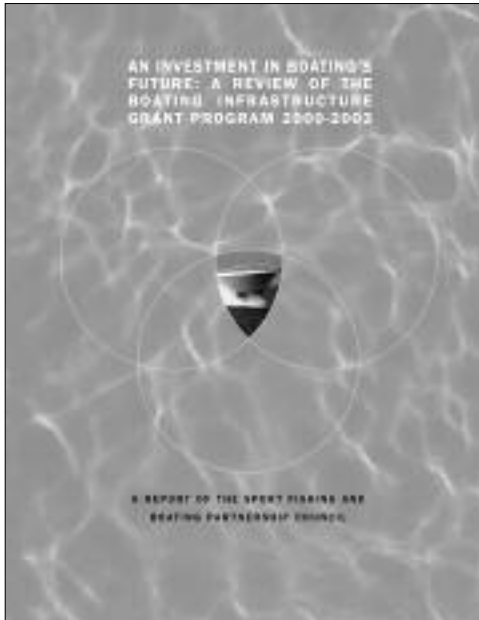
elements, States will be addressing them in unique ways that suit their agency's mission and available information. Hailed as being "structured, yet flexible" these Strategies could potentially revolutionize the way these species and their habitats are understood and managed.

The National Advisory Acceptance Team (NAAT), the FWS-State Agency team charged with reviewing the Strategies, held their first Strategy review meeting in the FWS Hadley, Massachusetts, office in mid-July. The NAAT will be meeting monthly for the remainder of the year to review the Strategies as they are received.



The National Advisory Acceptance Team and staff.

Grant Program Updates



The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council recently released its report evaluating the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.

Evaluation of Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Completed by Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council

In December 2003, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service charged the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council with conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the Boating Infrastructure Grant program (BIG). The Council recently completed its evaluation of the program and provided a report to the Director. In general, the Council found the BIG program to be effective and the program is continuing to receive requests for funding that exceed the funds available. The Council did make several recommendations for improving the program, including delaying the grant application period until later in the year, clarifying the scoring and selection process for Tier II and recommending that State agencies develop partnerships with existing outreach programs such as Sea Grant Colleges to develop and disseminate information on the program. The Service is reviewing the report and has already implemented some of the changes recommended by the Committee.

The Council's review committee included Ryck Lydecker- BoatUS, Mike Hough- past president of the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA), Jim Hardin- Grady White Boats, Bill Anderson- Westrec Marina Management, John Schwartz- Michigan Sea Grant Extension, and Doug Boyd- Coastal Conservation Association. Copies of the report may be downloaded from the Division's web site: <http://federalaid.fws.gov>.

Michigan Submits First Electronic Grant Proposal Through Grants.gov

The Division of Federal Assistance received its first ever electronically submitted grant application package through Grants.gov. The State of Michigan submitted three proposals for the Fiscal Year 2006 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant program through Grants.gov. Many of the Service's competitive grant programs have been posted on this site over the last year and are able to receive proposals electronically. The Service appreciates Michigan's pioneering efforts with this and is working to improve this process.

The Service is continuing its efforts to increase the efficiency of its grants processes. Grants.gov is an important part of these efforts. To date, Grants.gov has received more than 8,765 grants through June 2005.

To FIND, APPLY and SUCCEED visit <https://grants.gov/>. Proposals may be submitted for the Boating Infrastructure Grant and Clean Vessel Act grant programs this fall through the Grants.gov site. For more information contact Brian Bohnsack or Lori Bennett at 703/358 2156.

Changes Ahead For Clean Vessel Act Grant Program

The Division of Federal Assistance has begun a review of the Clean Vessel Act grant program to evaluate its efficiency and ways to improve the program. The review's initial focus will be on the ranking criteria and previous funding practices used by the Service. Specifically, the Service intends to develop new ranking criteria that will create a more competitive process than is currently used. The Service plans to gather input from stakeholders on this issue and to publish new draft scoring criteria in the Federal Register later this year. The Service will also assess the program's practice of partial funding of proposals.

The Clean Vessel Act was recently reauthorized by the Highway Bill.

New Survey Reports

National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

According to our stakeholders, the National Survey is one of the most important services provided the Division of Federal Assistance. The 2006 Survey will be the 11th conducted since 1955. The Service sponsors the survey every five years at the request of State fish and wildlife agencies. The survey will be similar in content, scope, and methodology to those conducted in 1991, 1996, and 2001—so their estimates will be comparable. The Census Bureau will collect the information using computer-assisted telephone and in-person interviewing. The US Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Survey, analyzes the data, and prepares the reports.

During 2005 we prepared and submitted the request to conduct the Survey to the Office of Management and Budget and worked with the Census Bureau in preparing and testing the survey instruments, including pretesting new and revised questions.

The Census Bureau will begin collecting information in April 2006. It will contact 90,000 households to identify samples of 31,500 sportsmen and 24,300 wildlife watchers. Census will ask these individuals detailed questions about their fishing, hunting, and wildlife-watching activities and expenditures. This will be accomplished in three interview waves conducted in April and September 2006, and in January 2007.

The 2006 Survey will generate information identified as priority data needed by the States, Service, non-governmental organizations, and other major survey users. General categories of information collected include the number of participants in different types of fish and wildlife consumptive and non-consumptive activities, the extent of participation (days and trips), and related trip and equipment expenditures. The survey is one of the nation's most important sources of information on fish and wildlife recreation.

We continue to seek cost-effective methods for the survey. In 2006 the Census Bureau will conduct a side-by-side test to determine the viability of using State fishing and hunting license databases as a supplement to the traditional census household databases. If viable, the use of State databases could reduce costs considerably for future surveys because Census would not have to sample as many households as it does now.

The 2006 Survey is funded by grants from the Multistate Conservation Grant Program of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. Products will include preliminary reports, final national and 50 State reports, CDs, and quick facts brochures. All data and reports also will be available on a website.

The Service also analyzes and produces reports based on existing survey data. Addenda to the 2001 Survey include the following reports: *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis*; *2001 National and State Economic Impacts of Wildlife Watching*; *Net Economic Values for Wildlife-Related Recreation in 2001*; *Participation and Expenditure Patterns of African-American, Hispanic, and Female Hunters and Anglers*; *Fishing and Hunting 1991-2001: Avid, Casual, and Intermediate Participation Trends*; and *Deer Hunting in the United States: An Analysis of Hunter Demographics and Behavior*. The most recent reports issued are: *The Relationship between Wildlife Watchers, Hunters, and Anglers*; *Private and Public Land Use by Hunters*; and *Economic Impact of Waterfowl Hunting in the United States*.

Copies of survey reports are available on request or are accessible through the following website: <http://federalaid.fws.gov>. For more information you also may contact the Service's survey staff.

Economic Impact of Waterfowl Hunting

Economic Impact of Waterfowl Hunting, a recently released report by the Fish and Wildlife Service, provides information on the participation and expenditure patterns of the 1.8 million people who hunted waterfowl in the U.S. in 2001. The first section examines their demographic characteristics. The second section examines the economic impact of waterfowl hunting on State and national economies. The report is based on data from the *2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. The following are excerpts from the report.

Every year millions of sportspersons take to the field to hunt. Among them are waterfowl hunters who pursue ducks and geese in the nation's flyways. These hunters are having an increasing economic impact on local, State, and national economies. Since 1991, the number of duck hunters has increased by 37 percent and the number of goose hunters by 13 percent. In 2001, waterfowl hunters represented 14 percent of all hunters, 9 percent of all hunting trip expenditures, and 10 percent of all hunting equipment expenditures.

Compared to all hunters, waterfowl hunters tend to be younger, have more years of education, and are more affluent. The majority (70 percent) of waterfowl hunters live in the South and Midwest regions of the United States.

The three States with the most waterfowl hunters were Minnesota, Arkansas, and Louisiana. All three are within the Mississippi flyway, which also is the flyway with the most waterfowl hunters.

In 2001, waterfowl hunters spent \$495 million on their hunting trips and \$440 million on equipment. Considering the ripple effects throughout the economy, these direct expenditures are only part of the economic impact of waterfowl

hunting. They impact economic activity, employment, and household income at State and national levels. To measure these effects, a regional input-output modeling method was used to derive estimates for total industry output, employment, employment income, and tax revenue associated with waterfowl hunting.

The effect on the economy in excess of direct expenditures is known as the multiplier effect. For example, an individual may purchase decoys to use while duck hunting. Part of the purchase price will stay with the local retailer. The local retailer, in turn, pays

a wholesaler who in turn pays the manufacturer of the decoys. The manufacturer then spends a portion of this income to pay businesses supplying the manufacturer. In this sense, each dollar of local retail expenditures can affect a variety of businesses.

Trip and equipment expenditures of waterfowl hunters in 2001 generated \$2.3 billion in total output in the United States; created 21,415 jobs; \$725.2 million in employment income; and generated over \$129.5 million in State tax revenues and \$201.8 million in Federal tax revenues.



Focus on Specific Program Results and Activities



Charleston Harbor Boating Infrastructure Facility Important for East Coast Transient Boaters

The Charleston City Marina and other local marinas are critical stopping points for transient boaters traveling on the East Coast's Intracoastal Waterway between New York and Miami. The City Marina hosts a wide variety of transient boaters, ranging from small off-shore fishing boats (25' in length) to megayachts more than 100' in length. Charleston is the midpoint of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway along the East Coast.

The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) has provided funds to Charleston City Marina to increase the availability of berthing space to transient boaters visiting the Charleston area. Charleston has been identified as a primary boating destination in the Southeast and serves as a midpoint along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway between New York and Miami.

The Charleston City Marina is owned by the City of Charleston and managed by a private management company, The City Marina Company. It is located in the southwestern portion of the Charleston Peninsula along the Ashley River. The marina has been awarded three BIG projects to improve the existing facility. Projects included the installation of 11 single-point moorings and construction of a 10-slip floating dock tree equipped with standard utilities; construction of an additional 10-slip floating dock tree equipped with standard utilities and construction of the "MegaDock" which includes 1,280 linear feet of side-tie docking equipped with standard utilities. These projects have been completed and are available for use by transient vessels 26' in length or greater.



Transient boaters on the East Coast are enjoying increased docking space provided by a Boating Infrastructure Grant program Tier 2 award to the City of Charleston, South Carolina.



Additional Transient Boater Space Added to Craig, Alaska Marina

Craig is a small community on Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska. It is one of the first United States ports of call available to transient boaters traveling north up the Inside Passage from British Columbia, Canada. Craig has shopping, repair facilities, entertainment, and other attractions of interest to visitors including access to the extensive island road system and its many freshwater fishing opportunities. Before construction of the BIG Program transient moorage float, which provides room for up to seven recreational boats, transient boaters were accommodated in the harbors by berthing them in slips temporarily vacated by their permanent residents. This dedicated moorage float should boost the number of transient recreational boaters making port calls and help Craig diversify its economy with tourism related services.



Oregon Seeks to Increase Boating Tourism

The Oregon State Marine Board is leading the nation with its development of transient boating facilities along many of the State's navigable rivers and waterways. The State plans to develop tie-up facilities and safe harbors for transient boaters approximately every 20-25 miles along its navigable waterways. Most of these facilities are associated with local towns and communities and are part of an effort to increase boating based tourism to these communities. The Boating Infrastructure Grant program is an integral part of this effort.

Oregon has been awarded nine Tier 2 grants from the Boating Infrastructure Grant program ranging from \$125,625 to \$749,138, in addition to its Tier 1 awards. Oregon has received a total of \$3,441,763 from the Boating Infrastructure Grant program through Fiscal Year 2004. As a result of these projects, Oregon's boaters are gaining access to areas that were previously not accessible to them.



Arkansas Responds to Boaters Needs for Pumpouts

The Clean Vessel Act Program (CVA) is extremely popular in Arkansas and is being requested with an increasing waiting list each year.

On Lake Norfork, which is a public water supply and an impounded body of water, two public marinas have constructed stationary pump-out facilities utilizing CVA funds. Quarry Marina and Jordan Marina both built pump-out facilities to accommodate vessels already at their facilities that previously did not have any type of pump-out, resulting in sewage being discharged directly into the lake.

On Beaver Lake, which is also a public water source for the rapidly growing northwest Arkansas area, Lost Bridge Marina and Hickory Creek Marina built new stationary pump-out facilities where the old stations were either non-existent or not functional.

In southwest Arkansas, on Lake Greeson, which is a public water source for several towns in the area, two marinas constructed pump-out facilities. SWAHA Marina constructed the first pump-out vessel, which is now the only mobile pump-out facility for a very beautiful and fast growing lake. Self Creek Marina built a new stationary pump-out facility for its new and rapidly expanding operation.

The State of Arkansas has a Marine Sanitation Inspection Program in place, which is producing a demand for pump-out facilities for boaters. Thanks to the CVA program, pumpouts are being installed throughout the State, which is a tremendous help in cleaning up the waters of Arkansas.

California Among National Leaders in CVA Grant Program

California is the number one State in the nation in terms of registered boats, with more than 1 million boats registered. Fortunately for these boaters and the citizens of the State, the California Department of Boating and Waterways is among the national leaders in the Clean Vessel Act grant program. The State has excellent Clean Vessel Act grant programs in both freshwater and marine waters throughout the State and receives approximately \$2 million annually from the Federal Clean Vessel Act grant program.

Sewage pumpout and other facilities funded or maintained by the Clean Vessel Act grant program remove more than one million gallons of boaters' sewage annually. More than 93 facilities in freshwater and 150 facilities in saltwater have been provided through this program.



Photo: Santa Catalina Island Co.

The California Department of Boating and Waterways is recognized as one of the innovators in the Clean Vessel Act grant program. The agency was one of the first in the country to install floating restroom facilities for boaters. These facilities are gradually becoming more common throughout the country. Recreational researchers have found that the availability of restroom facilities is a very important component of outdoor recreation and the lack of suitable facilities may prevent some individuals from participating in activities. Accordingly, California receives accolades for meeting this challenge.

Minnesota's St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Since its inception in 1994, Minnesota's Clean Vessel Act Grant Program has provided 25 grants totaling in excess of \$220,000, to of 21 public and/or private boating facilities for the installation of new or improved sanitary pump-out and dump-out equipment. Although the facilities awarded grants are distributed throughout the State and are located on water bodies ranging from Lake Superior to the Mississippi River, approximately 1/3 of the Program's activity has been in the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway.

The St. Croix River forms a portion of the Minnesota/Wisconsin boundary and is located on the eastern margins of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area. It represents one of the two most utilized recreational boating resources in the metropolitan area. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was created under The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, which defined a narrow corridor of protection for the St. Croix River. The Minnesota Clean Vessel Act Grant Program has provided grants to seven of the 13 marinas/boating facilities along the approximately 50 miles of the Lower St. Croix River open to unrestricted boating use. Based upon information provided by facility operators, as a result of the Clean Vessel Act Grant Program's activities, the compliance with discharge regulations and

the use of pump out facilities along the St. Croix River has measurably increased.

Massachusetts Clean Vessel Act Program Reaches Three Million Gallon Milestone

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries announced in August that its Clean Vessel Act Program has removed in excess of 3,000,000 gallons of effluent from boats moored in the Commonwealth's marine waters since its inception in 1994. One of the first States to provide free pumpout facilities for recreational boaters through the CVA, Massachusetts' harbors have put more pumpout boats in service than any other State. This extensive coverage, coupled with the many shore-side stations placed in service, provide the infrastructure needed to achieve and maintain the goal of designation of the Commonwealth's coastal waters as a Federal No-Discharge Area.

The three-million gallon milestone is a reminder of how valuable the pumpout program is to boaters, shellfish harvesters, swimmers and Massachusetts' fish and wildlife that live in its marine waters. In 1998, the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) awarded a "State CVA Excellence Award" to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. This award was given in recognition of the enlightened and innovative implementation of the CVA program in Massachusetts, involving the extensive deployment of a network of pumpout boats in the State's coastal waters.

Funding is provided through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sport Fish Restoration Program, and has averaged about \$700,000 per year. The Division of Marine Fisheries administers these funds and reimburses up to 75 percent of the total project costs to cities, towns, and private marinas, for their pumpout facilities.

The public has shown great enthusiasm in cooperating with the CVA program and its goal of cleaner coastal waters. Free and



Sewage pumpout boats are essential to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Clean Vessel Act program.



convenient pump-outs have created an atmosphere where recreational boaters are no longer in search of locations to have their holding tanks pumped. There are currently 62 CVA funded pumpout boats, 45 fixed location shoreside stations, and 14 operational dump stations available to the boating public. A user-friendly boaters' guide is prepared and updated on an annual basis listing all locations for

pumpout services and is constructed of Kimdura paper (a waterproof plastic paper) that will hold up under marine conditions. The guide can be found in most Marinas and Harbormaster's offices throughout the State. For more information about the CVA Program, see the Division of Marine fisheries website at: <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/programsandprojects/cvabig.htm#cva>

Kansas Anglers Benefit from Community Fisheries Assistance Program

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' Community Fisheries Assistance Program is striving to improve fishing opportunities and facilities to more than 230 water bodies scattered throughout the State. This program is providing improved fishing opportunities to more than 14,000 acres of some of Kansas' best and most convenient fishing locales. The Kansas agency is using \$1.1 million of Sport Fish Restoration funds annually for this program.

Many towns and cities in Kansas have ponds and small lakes that can provide excellent fishing opportunities when managed properly and if sufficient infrastructure (e.g. bathrooms, docks, etc.) are available. The Kansas agency's biologists work closely with community leaders to assess the needs and potential opportunities at these community lakes. In exchange for the Federal dollars they receive through the efforts of this program, the communities are also required to establish and agree to a habitat plan designed to enhance fisheries.

The Community Fisheries Assistance Program consists of a leasing program, which provides incentive to the communities to remove any additional access fees, and a grant program to provide funds for enhancements to improve access. The Kansas agency has also stocked channel catfish, largemouth bass and other game species into these lakes with program funds.



Kansas anglers are gaining increased and improved access to community fishing lakes through the community fisheries assistance program funded by a Sport Fish Restoration grant.

Maryland's Striped Bass Research Contributes to Atlantic Coast Stock Recovery

Chesapeake Bay has historically been a major spawning area for the migratory population of striped bass from Maine to North Carolina. Atlantic Coast striped bass stocks declined dramatically after harvests reached record levels in the mid-1970's. Maryland initiated intensive studies of adult striped bass population characteristics in 1981 using Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) funding since 1987. Pound net and gill net surveys of pre-migratory and spawning populations provide measures of relative adult stock abundance, age structure, and estimates of relative spawning stock biomass. Maryland has also conducted a beach seine survey to monitor striped bass juvenile abundance since 1954 (with SFR funding in many of the 50 years since) that allows predictions of future adult population size.

These surveys, conducted with the support of the Maryland SFR grant, help ensure that thousands of Atlantic Coast anglers enjoy a quality fishery that is also effectively managed to ensure its long term conservation. The stock assessments resulting from the combined studies support an adaptive management framework for Maryland and other Atlantic Coast States. This grant was recently recognized by the Fisheries Administrators Section of the American Fisheries Society as the top SFR grant in the research and survey category for 2004. The striped bass fishery has evolved from a total moratorium in Maryland in 1985, to reopening a conservative coastwide fishery in 1990, to a declaration of recovered status of the Atlantic coast stock in 1995. With this recovery, estimated angler expenditures on Atlantic Coast striped bass fishing trips increased from \$85 million in 1981 to \$560 million in 1996. Striped bass has been the top marine species by weight harvested recreationally along the entire Atlantic Coast every year since 1996.



Anglers along the East Coast are enjoying the rejuvenated striped bass fishery.



Large spawning striped bass captured in Maryland's gill net surveys. Credit: MD DNR

Sport Fish Restoration Program Benefits Boaters

Boaters contribute to, and benefit significantly from the Sport Fish Restoration Program. Fuel taxes attributed to boaters comprise approximately half of the revenue into the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund. In turn, the Sport Fish Restoration Program rules require States to spend 15 percent of their annual apportionment on a regional basis on boating access projects.

As a result of the Sport Fish Restoration Program, boaters often gain more and better access to the water. For example, the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife uses Program funds for its efforts to acquire new sites and operate and maintain over 330 public boat ramps and 21 public fishing areas. Ramps are routinely upgraded to improve access routes, enhance suitability for wider ranges of watercraft and create more boating opportunities.

The notable project for 2005-2006 involves partnering with the Indiana Division of Parks and Reservoirs to develop a large (100-car/trailer) ramp for access to the Ohio River at Charlestown. When complete, this ramp will provide large-motorboat access to a section of the Ohio River with virtually no similar services within 20 miles of the new access site.

On a national level, approximately \$45 million of Sport Fish Restoration funds are spent annually on boating access facilities.

Texas Researchers Prepare Saltwater Fishery Managers for the Future

Leading demographers and fishery researchers have predicted for many years that saltwater fishing participation will increase at a faster rate than will freshwater fishing. A variety of social and demographic factors are affecting this change in fishing participation. The Service's recent *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife*



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department fishery researchers are working to improve fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Associated Recreation confirms the predicted angling trends. In 2001, almost 9.1 million anglers participated in saltwater fishing in the U.S. These individuals took 72 million trips during the year. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is aware of these trends and has paid increased attention to some of the most perplexing issues facing saltwater fisheries managers today.

Fishery researchers at the Perry R. Bass Marine Research Lab, located near Palacios, are conducting a wide variety of research, primarily in the disciplines of population genetics and life history of sport fish species. Current research has focused on species identification at the genetic level, genetic tagging for hatchery fingerling survival studies, genetic basis of population structure, ageing and growth evaluations, including Atlantic croaker studies of otoliths from archaeological sites and the reproductive biology of many recreationally important species, including studies of hatchery-reared fingerling stock contributions. This

research is helping to provide fisheries managers throughout the Gulf of Mexico with important information on fish stocks, movement, and sustainability potential to better manage the fisheries throughout the Gulf of Mexico. Future projects include mtDNA RFLP analyses, DNA sequencing and DNA fragment analysis of snook, gray snapper, and tripletail, for which relatively little information is available. In addition, these and other species need more life history information. Further evaluation of Atlantic croaker and southern flounder growth curves and age and length distribution may be used in evaluating efficacy of by-catch reduction devices in gulf trawls.

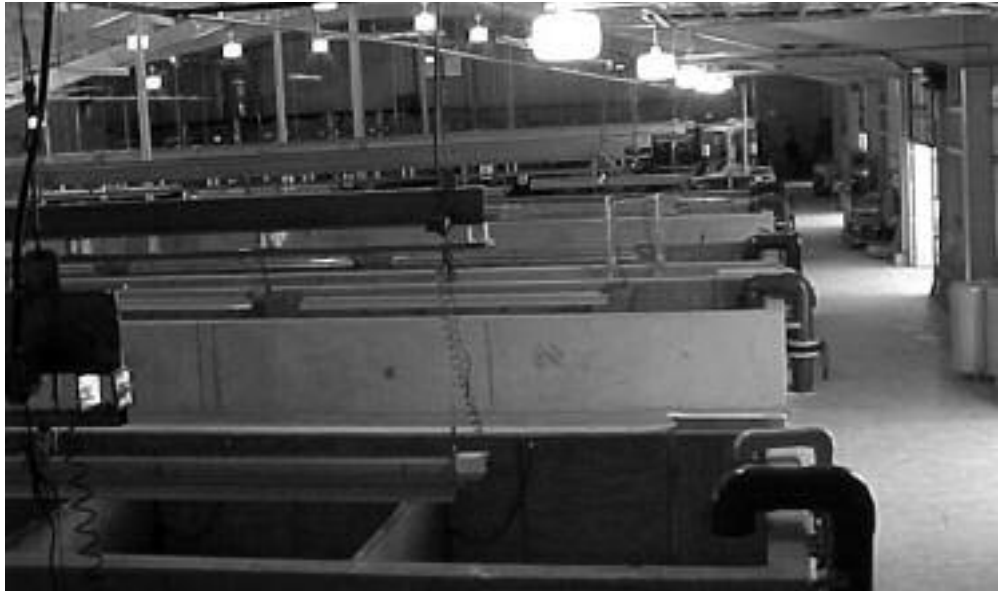
In addition to the innovative marine research being conducted at the site, the associated hatchery annually produces 4.5 million fry/fingerling of red drum and spotted sea trout for stocking coastal waters. These fish generate more than 300,000 angler days annually along the Texas Gulf Coast.

\$6,573,500 million of Sport Fish Restoration Funds Aids Development of Florida's Bass Conservation Center

Florida's anglers will benefit from the Bass Conservation Center currently under development near Webster. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's (FWC) new \$10 million facility (which includes \$6,573,500 of Sport Fish Restoration Program funds) will modernize the Richloam Fish Hatchery into a state-of-the-art freshwater fish hatchery and research facility dedicated to the propagation and conservation of the unique Florida subspecies of largemouth bass, (*Micropterus salmoides floridanus*), which does not naturally occur anywhere else in the world, as well as the conservation of shoal bass (*Micropterus* species) and Suwannee bass (*Micropterus notius*). The facility is scheduled to be completed later this fall.

Highlights of the FBCC include a climate-controlled spawning facility, six 11,000-gallon raceways, a 2,000-square-foot research laboratory, a modern fish health laboratory and a comprehensive bass research library. These additions are being made to improve and upgrade the FWC's Richloam Fish Hatchery, which was built in 1965. This is the State's principal producer of freshwater fish for stocking. Outdated ponds and incubation facilities at the hatchery have severely limited the agency's capacity to spawn, rear and harvest largemouth bass efficiently.

The center will play a key role in Florida's Freshwater Fisheries Conservation Initiative, which will seek to develop long-term management and protection for vulnerable freshwater fishes through population augmentation or research into propagation methods, genetics or diseases.



Anglers will benefit from the new Florida Bass Conservation Center.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Amazing things are done by the States' Aquatic Education programs. From fly-tying clinics to development of fish identification cards to watershed and fisheries management courses for school kids, States are working hard to educate the next generation of anglers and aquatic stewards. When we recently came across Mr. Anderson's diary about his experience last year bringing Alaska's Aquatic Education program to one of his State's rural communities, we saw an wonderful example of how the AE program exists as the confluence between education, awareness, community and fun. As you will note, Alaska's program does not seek to supplant essential community-based knowledge and wisdom but strives to support it. Neither this, nor any other aquatic project in our Program Update, would be possible without support from the Sport Fish Restoration Program and the excise taxes that fund it.

School Begins on the Banks of the Kuskokwim

By Erik Anderson

In early September, I was invited to take part in an innovative new school program in Kalskag, Alaska. The junior high and high school students begin the school year by staying in a traditional fish camp for a week. The students set up the camp and then spend the week hunting, fishing, and most importantly, learning from village elders.

Earlier in the summer, I worked with a group of teachers from rural Alaska. They were taking a graduate course at the University of Alaska Fairbanks called "Place-Based Education," which looked at using the natural environment as an extension of the classroom. After showing the participants how to sample aquatic insects and describing their place in aquatic food webs, a teacher from Kalskag



A Kalskag student shows her catch, a pair of northern pike. All photos by Erik Anderson

mentioned that the activity would be perfect for her school's upcoming trip to fish camp and invited me to come along.

Kalskag is actually composed of two villages—Upper Kalskag and Lower Kalskag. These small, Yup'ik Eskimo villages are located on the Kuskokwim River in Southwestern Alaska. It's a landscape of tundra and scrubby patches of willow that border the numerous sloughs and streams that feed into the Kuskokwim.

Traditionally, Yup'ik Eskimo families from the Kalskag area spent summers in fish camps, using set nets and fish traps to harvest from the abundance of anadromous fish on their spawning migration. The Kuskowkim receives all five species of Pacific salmon (Chinook, sockeye, coho, chum, and pink.) In addition, whitefish, northern pike and Arctic grayling are plentiful in the river and its tributaries. These days, many families still spend a part of each summer at fish camp, cutting and drying fish to help sustain them through the winter.

Some families, however, no longer go to fish camp. The start of the school year in August conflicts with the end of the fall run of coho salmon. Because of this, the principal, teachers, and community members of Upper and Lower Kalskag decided to begin the school year by taking the students to fish camp. This camp serves to better connect the school with the community. Fish camp provides a setting for the traditional ecological knowledge of the elders to be passed along to village youth.

A trip to rural Alaska typically involves a number of flights on progressively smaller planes. From Fairbanks, I flew nearly 400 miles south to Anchorage. Transferring to a smaller jet, I flew west to Aniak. Finally, I boarded a small, six-seat bush plane for the 15 minute flight to Kalskag. I was enthusiastically greeted at the landing strip and driven to the school on a bumpy dirt road.

The lobby of the school was buzzing with excitement as the students brought in duffel bags filled with sleeping bags, tents, rubber boots, extra coats, and of course, CD Walkmans and MP3 players. Despite the fact that it was a balmy 60 degrees outside, all the students had enough experience in boats to know that it was wise to bundle up for the chilly 40-minute ride downriver. After hauling the supplies to the river, the 40 students put on winter jackets, stocking caps, and snow pants for the ride. Members of the community volunteered their time, and it took four trips in two boats to shuttle the students, elders, teachers, chaperones, and supplies to the fish camp.

The first thing I noticed upon stepping out of the boat was the number and variety of animal tracks on the bank of the fish camp site. Wolf, grizzly, black bear and moose tracks were abundant. The students were divided into two groups—one group was set to work collecting driftwood to get a fire going, while the second group began putting up the canvas wall tents that would be home for the rest of the week. In no time, the tents were up and we were all

lunching on hot dogs cooked on sticks over the fire.

That evening, I was able to work with a group of junior high students. With the set of fly rods that I brought from Fairbanks, we practiced fly casting on the shore. I had planned for a systematic series of lessons on fly casting, fly selection, and technique and presentation before doing any actual fishing, but we were in fish camp and of course, these kids wanted to fish. They practiced fly casting for only about 10 minutes, and then began clamoring for flies so they could fish. With that, we tied on some classic salmon flies and began fishing for coho salmon. Despite seeing them finning and jumping in the eddies, we just couldn't coax them to take a fly, and I was feeling a bit embarrassed because very few, if any, Kalskag residents fish with rod and reel. Here I was introducing them to this new way of fishing and having no success, while their traditional means of catching fish—the gill net vibrated with the telltale splashes of numerous cohos and plentiful whitefish. The elders in camp suggested that we walk upriver a bit to a small slough that should have northern pike.

I showed the students how to tie on wire leaders above the fly. Within minutes of making short casts into the slough and stripping the flies back to shore, the kids started catching pike. Northern pike are renowned for the quickness and voracity of their strikes. Finally, we had our own splashes, signaling that fish were being caught! I was running from one student to the next, helping to remove the hooks from freshly caught pike, and I could barely keep up. Anything bright and flashy that dropped below the surface attracted this lie-in-wait predator—pink zonkers, Clouser minnows, Lefty's deceivers and the quintessential, all-purpose Alaskan fly—the egg-sucking leech.

It was a satisfying and self-redeeming walk back into camp that evening with each student holding a fish or two to augment dinner. We combined a lesson on



Kalskag student on the Kuskokwim River, with a brace of pike taken on an eggsucking leech pattern. This was his first flyfishing experience.

fish anatomy with a lesson from one of the elders on how to cut and clean a fish.

For the next two days, I took the remaining students out fly fishing in small groups. We also looked at the many different types of aquatic insects in the slough that support the fish populations. It really helped the students understand what fly tiers attempt to mimic when tying those bits of fur and feather on hooks. Each group was able to bring back fish to contribute to the camp. The elders then showed the students how to make slow burning fires in order to dry fish.

When I wasn't teaching, I was able to watch what some of the students were doing in the other groups. In one group, elders showed students edible and medicinal plants as they hiked along the river. In another group, elders taught Yup'ik Eskimo words and phrases related to fish camp. As the students rotated through the different activities, I was

wishing I was a student myself participating in all the lessons of fish camp.

The night before I left, I was jolted awake in my tent at 2 a.m. by the sound of howling wolves. The next day, we found their tracks within 200 yards from camp. It was a perfect send off. I applaud the communities of Upper and Lower Kalskag, and the principal and teachers of George Morgan Senior School for putting together this camp—including the traditional ecological knowledge of the elders in the curriculum and bringing science education into the spectacular beauty of the Kuskokwim River drainage. I was happy to hear that the school and community will continue to start the school year off with fish camp in upcoming years.

-Erik Anderson is an Aquatic Education Specialist for the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Division of Sport Fish

The Wildlife Restoration Program continues to be part of the foundation of wildlife conservation in the U.S. It funds projects having as their purpose “the restoration, conservation, management, and enhancement of wild birds and mammals, and the provision of for public use of and benefits from these resources.” Its source of funding is an excise tax at the manufacturer’s level on sporting firearms, ammunition, handguns, and archery equipment, and the annual apportionment of funds to States varies with fluctuations in sales of taxed equipment. The amount a State receives also is affected by the number of hunting licenses sold in that State and by the land area of that State. Some examples of the work being accomplished under this program follow.

Alaska — Harmless Baits and Snares Assist Black Bear Conservation

One of the world’s densest and most heavily hunted populations of black bears is on Kuiu Island in Southeast Alaska. A project involving barbed wire, antibiotics, and cooperative bear hunters has provided revealing insights into this population. Using a mark-recapture population-estimation method with tetracycline-laced bear bait and toe-bone samples from hunted bears to reveal tetracycline ingestion, researchers determined that four bears live per square mile on the island. Using barbed wire to snare black bear hair samples along bear trails, researchers used DNA analyses to estimate that about 175 different bears use one mile of a spawning salmon stream over two months. By using these new and innovative methods to solve old wildlife management problems of estimating bear numbers, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be able to better manage black bears for long-term population sustainability and hunting opportunity. The project was funded from 2000 to 2004 with \$168,000 of Wildlife Restoration funds.

Arizona Investigates Effects of Wildfire on Habitat

With support from the Wildlife Restoration Program, Arizona Game and Fish Department investigated the impact of wildfires on several wildlife species, including black bear, fox, bobcat, and mule deer. This work was done on the Three Bar Wildlife Area in central Arizona. Results found that, although there was very little direct mortality from these fires, there were substantial impacts to wildlife. As an example, the lack of cover for black bears and the loss of large trees that bear cubs climb to avoid being killed by adult male bears resulted in a total loss of cub recruitment for years after a wildfire. The condition of the habitat after the fire was favorable to other species such as mule deer. The information gained will help resource agencies plan for reducing fire danger in a manner to benefit a variety of wildlife.

Louisiana Bands Back-bellied Whistling Ducks

Louisiana is using Wildlife Restoration funds to band and study the Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. In 2003, a pair was banded while nesting in a wood duck box on Manchac Wildlife Management Area at the west end of Lake Pontchartrain 25 miles northwest of New Orleans. The following year, six more were banded at Manchac. In January 2005, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) learned that black bellied whistling ducks were concentrated near a grain elevator across the Mississippi River from New Orleans. LDWF personnel found about 4,000 at the site and saw an opportunity to band them and learn more about migration patterns, reproduction, and harvest rates. LDWF personnel used “walk-in” traps and rocket nets to capture and band 197 of these ducks.



Brown bears foraging at water's edge.

Illinois Improves Wildlife Habitat and Recreational Opportunities on 64 Areas

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources uses Wildlife Restoration funding for a wildlife habitat development and facility access project active on 64 public-land sites with 161,500 acres of managed public land under project guidance and funding. Long-term wildlife management goals of this project are to provide improved wildlife habitat for hunted and non-hunted wildlife species and public-use opportunity. Four of the sites are considered fully funded, which means virtually all expenditures are charged to Wildlife Restoration. Sixty of the sites may or may not have wildlife programs as a major priority. The annual budget averages approximately \$3.9 million (including \$475,000 in revenues generated annually from farm-lease revenues) for the 6-year period. Each year, the project provides in excess of 21,000 acres of wildlife habitat developments. In addition, the project

funds buildings, water control structures, bridges, roads, trails, parking lots, signing, administration, managed hunts, and maintenance. Project sites provide over 155,000 hunter-use days annually with millions of visitor use days for wildlife observation, aesthetic enjoyment, photography, and other wildlife-related activity.

Minnesota Conducts Aerial Moose Survey

Each year the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conducts an aerial survey in northern Minnesota to estimate moose numbers, determine the calf:cow and bull:cow ratios, and identify the harvestable surplus. This survey and the use of the data in a model is part of the Wildlife-Restoration-funded Statewide Wildlife Inventories and Surveys Project and the Statewide Wildlife Population Management Project. Moose numbers and age/sex ratios were estimated by flying transects within a stratified random sample of survey plots. All survey plots in

2005 were rectangular (5 x 2.67 mi.) and all transects were oriented east west. The survey was conducted using helicopters flown by DNR enforcement pilots. Moose were sexed by the presence of antlers, and shape of the bell, nose color, and/or vulval patch. Calves were identified on the basis of size and behavior. Location coordinates for all moose observed within the plots were recorded. Each time moose were located, observers recorded temperature, snow depth, wind speed, group size, cover type, and the amount of visual obstruction.

Test plots (one-half of a rectangular plot) containing one or more radio-collared moose were flown during the survey using the same protocol as on regular survey plots. If collared moose known to be in the test plot were not observed from transects, they were located using telemetry. Each time a collared moose was located, the above data were collected and used to develop a "sightability model" to correct for animals not seen during the aerial survey. The model with the highest predictive reliability incorporated a single variable (visual obstruction) grouped into six equal intervals. This model was used to recalculate the population estimate, bull:cow, and calf:cow ratios from the 2004 survey. The survey ran January 3-26, 2005. Snow depth ranged from 8-16 inches on 10 plots and more than 16 inches on 26 plots. Survey conditions were good on all plots. During the flights, 372 moose were located on the 36 plots and included 152 bulls, 138 cows, 70 calves, and 12 unidentified moose. DNR personnel located 41 collared moose in 31 test plots, observed 21 from transects, and located 17 using telemetry. The estimated moose population in northeastern Minnesota numbered $6,481 \pm 1,697$. Estimates of the calf:cow and bull:cow ratio were 0.49 and 0.84, respectively. Nine percent of cows were with twins.



Mississippi Adds New Wildlife Management Area

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks recently added Hamer Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to the lands managed for the public through the Wildlife Restoration Program. The acquisition of Hamer WMA was made possible by the ability to use program income generated from timber sales for wildlife habitat enhancement on other WMA's acquired or managed with Federal Assistance. Located just northeast of Batesville, in northeast Mississippi, the 3,909-acre former working farm has tremendous wildlife management potential. The habitat diversity is excellent, with a large bottomland area associated with a major drainage, forested uplands, and early successional old-field habitats. Some of the bottomland recently in crop production has been reforested, and some will be maintained in permanent openings. A successful deer management program and wintering waterfowl habitat improvements are already in place, and the area can easily be enhanced for turkeys, small game, and a variety of nongame species. The location, in the loess hills just east of the Mississippi River alluvial plain is in a region with little public land. Ample, but controllable, public access also add to the attractiveness of this property. Management plans are currently being finalized and the area has already been opened for public access and limited hunting. Enhanced deer hunting opportunities, a handicapped access hunting area, and public dove fields are among the opportunities planned for users of the area next fall. More opportunities will follow as habitat and population management plans are implemented.

Missouri Increases Dove Field Management

The mourning dove is North America's most popular game bird and that holds true for Missouri hunters as well. Last year, the Missouri Department of Conservation increased dove-field management efforts on 75 conservation areas scattered throughout every part of the State. Providing dove fields in dozens of locations gives hunters, who do not have connections with private landowners, places to pursue doves. This was especially true for dove hunters with disabilities who benefited from increased access to managed dove fields. During 2003 more than 43,500 dove hunters harvested 806,349 doves statewide. In 2004, hunters bagged 10,666 doves at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area alone and posted the State's top average of 3.1 birds taken per hour of hunting, using an average of 4.1 shotgun shells for every bird bagged. Maps showing the locations of dove fields were available through Conservation Department regional offices statewide and were available on the Department's web site. Wildlife Restoration Program funding helped make the Missouri dove hunting efforts such a big success.

North Dakota's Big Game Survey Methods

Over the past 75-years big game survey methods in North Dakota have evolved considerably. The horseback counts of the early 1960's gave way to standardized fixed-wing aerial surveys. Hunter harvest questionnaires, generated by randomized computer sampling, were instituted in the mid 1970s. Although spotlight surveys, forward-looking infrared technology, and biomarkers have all been tested on big game in North Dakota; they have been found to be limited in use for landscape-scale application under North Dakota conditions. For more than 40 years aerial surveys have remained the gold standard for big game monitoring in North Dakota. Currently, refined aerial survey methods, coupled with harvest data and a newly developed hunter observation questionnaire, provide the basis for determining big game population indices across the State. Long-term data sets are currently being evaluated for developing Adaptive Harvest Models. Geographic Informational Systems (GIS) technology is also being used for evaluating survey data and setting harvest goals. We will continue to reassess and evaluate big game monitoring methodology as new technology and opportunities develop. This work would not have been possible without the long-term support and funding that Wildlife Restoration provides.



States Target Chronic Wasting Disease Research with Wildlife Restoration Funds

Deer hunting is the most popular form of hunting in the U.S. According to the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation there were 10.3 million deer hunters in the U.S. in 2001. Hunters spent nearly \$10.7 billion on hunting-related expenditures while deer hunting in 2001. Accordingly, the recent outbreak of chronic wasting disease in deer has wildlife managers concerned because of the potential impact on this form of hunting.

Like many States, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) is utilizing Wildlife Restoration funds to study Chronic Wasting Disease in deer. During the last two years, the agency has collected samples from over 1500 free-ranging whitetail deer and submitted samples for CWD testing. This has included statewide systematic testing as well as targeted testing in high risk areas. To date, the disease has not been detected. The NCWRC has substantial concerns that that CWD detection in North Carolina would have a tremendously negative impact on the deer herd, the agency, and especially on the sportsmen of the State and retailers/industry. The State is using approximately \$100,000 per year to conduct research on Chronic Wasting Disease and other disease research.

During 2001 (the most recent year that data were available) the economic impact of deer hunting in North Carolina was \$607 million, with \$311 million of that in direct retail sales. Detection of CWD in the State may greatly impact how and when sportsmen hunt deer. It is reassuring that the agency has not found the disease despite diligent testing, particularly given the recent discovery of the disease in New York.

South Dakota Hunters Gain Access to Private Lands

Wildlife Restoration program funds are being used by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department to provide hunters with access to almost 1,000,000 acres of prime private hunting lands. The South Dakota agency accomplishes this monumental task by leasing private lands for hunting access with its Walk In Hunting Access (WIHA) program. The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department spends approximately \$1.75 million of its Wildlife Restoration Program funds on this project annually.

The WIHA program provides hunters with access to some of South Dakota's finest upland bird hunting areas. As a service to hunters, the South Dakota agency publishes an atlas with maps and other information on the program. The State estimates that 180,000 recreation days occurs annually on WIHA lands. Hunting is both a popular activity and also is important to the State's economy. Hunters spent an estimated \$223 million on trip-related expenses annually. As a result of the popularity of the WIHA program, several other Midwest States have used South Dakota's program as a template to develop their own program.



Vermont Acquires Corridor to Connect WMA to State and National Forests

The State of Vermont used Wildlife Restoration funds to purchase 242 acres of land from Yankee Forest LLC for the Tiny Pond Wildlife Management Area in Ludlow. The property connects the management area to Okemo State Forest and two large blocks of land owned by the U.S. Forest Service, providing travel corridors for black bears and other wildlife and improving hunter and other public access to these protected areas.



Multistate Conservation Grants are awarded cooperatively with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA). These grants support products and solve high priority problems affecting States on a regional or national basis and allow for efficient use of limited resources to address the National Conservation Needs of States established through the IAFWA. Examples below highlight the broad array of projects supported by the Multistate Conservation Grant. To learn more about all projects funded and the benefits derived from the Multistate Conservation Grant Program, please visit <http://faims.fws.gov>.

Instream Flows for Riverine Resource Stewardship - This grant addresses the National Conservation Need to support multi-State efforts to address conservation needs of species at risk. It funded the publication and distribution of a single, guiding reference that can be used by State fish and wildlife management agencies for establishing or improving State instream flow programs and for securing instream flows to support native, threatened and endangered, and sport fish. This new publication updates the previous version published in 2001 and the grant allows for broader distribution to public libraries across the country. The final report was completed in August and the book published in September 2004 under the title, "*Instream Flows for Riverine Resource Stewardship, Revised Edition*," and under ISBN 0-9716743-1-0, by The Instream Flow Council.

National Archery in the Schools Program - This grant addressed the National Conservation Need to support recruitment and participation in outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, boating, trapping and shooting sports. The objective of this program is to broaden the number of State agencies enrolled in the National Archery in the Schools Program by creating needed resource guides and support materials, and by providing archery instructor training courses for pilot-schools in those States.



New Animal Drug Application for Oxytetracycline Immersion Therapy for Diseases of Cool and Warm Water Fish Species Cultured on Public Fish Facilities - This project addressed the National Conservation Need to support the approval of aquaculture drugs and chemicals. Oxytetracycline is one of two antibacterial compounds approved for use in aquaculture species. The original approved uses in aquaculture were limited to salmonids and catfish for a few diseases when used as a feed additive. This grant funds research to support a New Animal Drug Application (NADA) for Oxytetracycline immersion therapy to treat external and systemic bacterial diseases of cool and warm water fishes cultured on public fish facilities. The research under this grant provides additional data for the NADA to expand currently approved uses of oxytetracycline to treat additional diseases, to be used below current temperature limits in salmonids, and to treat additional fish species than those currently approved. Data generated from this project will help demonstrate the effectiveness of oxytetracycline in cultured cool and warm water fish so that the treatment methodology proposed in the NADA may be submitted to the Center for Veterinary Medicine for approval of its expanded use. Research has been extended through 2005 to complete all grant goals and objectives.

Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative - This grant addressed the National Conservation Need to enhance and improve the ability of State fish and wildlife agencies to manage the wildlife resources of their State. This grant greatly increased the visibility and awareness of the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) within the agricultural community and the related agricultural programs administered by the US Department of Agriculture. The Northern Bobwhite has experienced population declines over much of its range in the last 30-40 years. This grant will assist in developing habitat to benefit the Northern Bobwhite to reverse its decline. Joint Ventures, Bobwhite Conservation Working Groups and Partners in Flight have been enlisted as partners to ensure Bobwhites are included in "All Bird" conservation efforts. State quail councils and planning efforts are underway in at least 13 of the 22 NBCI States. This grant provides support to expand the NBCI habitat plan, to promote implementation of the NBCI and new partnerships have been formalized among quail conservationists, foresters and farmers, and to develop a database system on NBCI accomplishments.



Pumpout Equipment Standards and Lifecycle Testing - This grant addressed the National Conservation Need to support programs that enhance and improve the ability of States to administer their agencies. This project developed a standard method for evaluating the effectiveness and life cycle of commercially available pumpout equipment. This grant developed a single source testing regimen for all States, which is more cost effective than each State conducting their own independent testing program. As of February 2005, the project under this grant was completed. Generally, all equipment tested performed as intended. Tests were not intended to eliminate or reject from use any particular type or brand of equipment.

Tests were intended to give responsible Federal, State and local grant participants a baseline of information that can be used to help them rationally choose the type of equipment that is best suited to their particular performance needs and to provide predictions of what may be experienced in the maintenance of equipment over its useful life. Information will be shared with manufacturers with the hope they, too, will use this information to analyze the equipment and to match improvements to performance needs. The side-by-side comparisons of pumpout equipment performance are available online on the website for the States Organizations for Boating Access at www.sobaus.org.

Geographic Information System for the Central Hardwoods

- This project addresses the National Conservation Need to enhance and improve the ability of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies to manage unwanted (invasive) species. Funding of this grant resulted in the development of a geographic information system (GIS) used in a series of workshops to delineate focus areas for priority bird species associated with four general habitat types (wetlands, grasslands, grass-shrublands, and forests). Other maps of sensitive sites (such as wetlands and restored native ecosystems) were incorporated into the GIS as a result of the series of workshops to help define and integrate geographically explicit habitat conservation strategies that will sustain all priority bird species across the Central Hardwoods Bird Conservation Region. Based on the information in the GIS, sites were identified for future management emphasis, for future acquisition or easement projects, and for directing other bird conservation efforts in the Central Hardwoods in future years. Geographically explicit conservation strategies tailored to each subregion have been outlined so that strategies for conserving specific bird species of concern can be developed and implemented at the local level.

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