



Request for Letters of Intent for the 2013 Multistate Conservation Grant Program

****Submission Deadline: 5:00pm Eastern Time on Friday, May 11, 2012****

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is Soliciting Letters of Intent for the 2013 Cycle of the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP)

Before submitting a Letter of Intent for a Multistate Conservation Grant, please carefully review all information and instructions contained in this funding opportunity announcement. The following sections are included:

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I. BACKGROUND

The Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) is a Federal financial assistance program that awards up to \$6 million annually in grants for wildlife and sport fish restoration projects. The MSCGP is a discretionary grant program because the grants are awarded based on a nationally competitive process that the Association coordinates.

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Association) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Division of Wildlife Sport Fish Restoration (USFWS-WSFR) cooperatively administer the MSCGP. The Association oversees the grant application process which includes soliciting Letters of Intent and inviting Full Grant Proposals from eligible applicants. The Association also prepares a priority list of projects which provides the Association's recommendation of projects to be funded. USFWS-WSFR selects projects from the priority list and awards, manages, and monitors the grants.

II. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The legal authorities for the MSCGP are: (1) the *Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act*, as amended (16 U.S.C. 669 et seq.), (2) the *Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act*, as amended (16 U.S.C. 777 et seq., except 777e-1 and g-1), and (3) the *Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-408), which amended the acts in sections 13.3A and B to authorize the Program (16 U.S.C. 669 h-2 and 16 U.S.C. 777m).

Under these statutes, the Secretary of the Interior may only award MSCGP grants to applicants whose projects are identified on the Association's priority list of wildlife or sport fish restoration projects. The Association's annual priority list is prepared by a committee comprised of the heads of State fish and wildlife agencies (or their designees), in consultation with nongovernmental organizations that represent conservation organizations, sportsmen organizations, and industries that support or promote fishing, hunting, trapping, recreational shooting, bow hunting, or archery. The priority list is approved by vote of a majority of the heads of State fish and wildlife agencies (or their designees) and must be submitted no later than October 1 of each fiscal year to the Assistant Director for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

III. FUNDING SOURCES AND AVAILABILITY

Up to \$6 million is available annually from the following sources:

1. The Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Fund (16 U.S.C. 669b-1, 669h-2(a)(1)): Each fiscal year, up to \$3 million is available from the Wildlife Restoration Fund which draws its funding from the excise tax that manufacturers, producers, and importers pay on shooting, archery, and angling equipment.
2. The Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (16 U.S.C. 777b, 777m(a)(1)): Each fiscal year, up to \$3 million is available from the Sport Fish and Boating Restoration Fund which draws its funding from the excise tax that recreational boaters pay on fuel and electric motors.

IV. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- A. Eligible Applicants:** The following entities may receive a Multistate Conservation grant:
1. A State, a State instrumentality such as a State university, or a group of States;
 2. The Service, to carry out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; and
 3. Nongovernmental organizations, such as hunters' and anglers' organizations, conservation organizations, and private institutions of higher education.
- B. Eligible Projects:** Projects are eligible for funding if they:
1. Are projects that carry out the purposes of the:
 - a. Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, or
 - b. Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act; and
 2. Address one or more of the national conservation needs that the Association establishes annually; and
 3. Benefit:
 - a. At least 26 States,
 - b. A majority (over 50%) of the States in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region (for a map of the USFWS regions, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/where/>), or
 - c. A majority (over 50%) of States in a regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies.
- C. Other Program Requirements:**
1. **Eligible Undertakings:** Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration funds can only be spent on projects that benefit sport fish, wild birds, and wild mammals. Specifically, 50 CFR 80.5 provides that the following activities are eligible for funding:
 - a. *Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act:*
 - i. Projects having as their purpose the restoration, conservation, management, and **enhancement of wild birds and wild mammals**, and the provision for public use of and benefits from these resources.
 - ii. Projects having as their purpose the education of hunters and archers in the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be a responsible hunter or archer.
 - b. *Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act:*
 - i. Projects having as their purpose the restoration, conservation, management, and **enhancement of sport fish**, and the provision for public use and benefits from these resources. Sport fish are limited to aquatic, gillbreathing, vertebrate animals, bearing paired fins, and having material value for sport or recreation.
 - ii. Additional funds resulting from expansion of the Sport Fish Restoration Program must be added to existing State fishery program funds available from traditional sources and not as a substitute therefor.
 2. **NGOs Only:** Any nongovernmental organization that is invited to submit a full proposal after their Letter of Intent is selected and that actually applies for a

Multistate Conservation Grant must submit with their application to the Association a certification that:

1. The organization will not use the grant funds to fund, in whole or in part, any activity of the organization that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife, or to the regulated taking of fish; and
2. The grant will not be used, in whole or in part, for an activity, project, or program that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting and trapping of wildlife or the regulated taking of fish.

V. 2013 NATIONAL CONSERVATION NEEDS

****As stated in Section IV(B)(2), each applicant must ensure that his/her Letter of Intent addresses *at least one of the 2013 National Conservation Needs.*****

What are National Conservation Needs? National Conservation Needs (NCNs) are (1) continuous or pressing resource management problems or (2) recently identified conservation problems that are significant, urgent, can be met by a practical and economically feasible management approach, and will result in improved resource management or environmental quality. In other words, NCNs represent the states' highest conservation funding priorities. NCNs establish the substantive criteria that grant proposals (and LOIs) must address and are used to guide proposal development and grant selection for the Multistate Conservation Grant Program.

How are NCNs selected? The National Grants Committee annually solicits and selects NCNs from the Association's committees and the four Regional State Fish & Wildlife Associations. A majority of state fish and wildlife directors approve the NCNs during the Association's Business Meeting at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

How are NCNs used? Please see the Eligible Projects section (Sec. IV(B)(2)). In addition to the program eligibility requirements set forth in sections IV(a), IV(b)(1), IV(b)(3), and IV(C), each applicant must ensure that his/her Letter of Intent addresses *at least one of the 2013 NCNs.*

What are the 2013 NCNs? Of the 15 proposed NCNs, 7 were adopted by the State Directors of fish and wildlife agencies for the 2013 MSCGP cycle. The below list includes full descriptions on subsequent pages. (Please read the entire NCN to ensure your proposal addresses the specified need.)

**2013 Multistate Conservation Grant Program
National Conservation Needs**

The following NCNs were selected for the 2013 grant cycle:

NCN 1: Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership (*Submitted by the Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee*).....**Page 6**

NCN 2: Outdoor Heritage – participation, recruitment, and retention in hunting, fishing, boating, and conservation-related recreational activities; enhanced relations among state fish and wildlife agencies and the related industries (*Submitted by the Hunting & Shooting Sports Participation Committee, Angling & Boating Participation Committee, and Fish & Wildlife Trust Funds Committee and the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies*).....**Page 7**

NCN 3: State Fish and Wildlife Agency Coordination and Administration (*Submitted by the Executive Committee*).....**Page 8**

NCN 4: Improve benefits for fish, wildlife, and their habitats as provisions of the 2008 and future Farm Bills are implemented (*Submitted by the Agricultural Conservation Committee*).....**Page 9**

NCN 5: The Management Assistance Team (MAT) or similar entity to increase leadership capacity and agency effectiveness within state fish and wildlife agencies (*Submitted by the Leadership and Professional Development Committee*).....**Page 10**

NCN 6: Incorporating Fish and Wildlife Considerations into Energy Development Decisions (*Submitted by the Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee*).....**Page 11**

NCN 7: Protect State Wildlife Agencies’ Authority to Manage Wildlife Resources in Concert with Federal Actions Required by International Treaties and Conventions (*Submitted by the International Relations Committee*).....**Page 12**

-National Conservation Need 1-

Strengthening the National Fish Habitat Partnership

Submitted By: Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee

Statement of Need: The *National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP)* seeks to arrest and reverse declines to the quality and quantity of our nation's fish habitat in freshwater, estuarine, and marine waters. The National Partnership includes 18 regional Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) that develop and implement landscape scale approaches to protect, restore, and enhance priority fish habitats (natural and manmade) across the nation. All 50 states are engaged in one or more of the FHPs. The Partnership is guided by the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and coordinated by the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) which includes AFWA and regional association representatives. FHPs implement the habitat-based conservation strategies and actions established by the Board and themselves and seek to complement other local, regional, and national priorities, particularly those contained in many State Wildlife Action Plans. The Multi-state Conservation Grant Program helps leverage other federal, state, and private resources to implement the priorities of the Board and the FHPs. Grant resources aid state, federal, tribal, private, academic, and other local partners that coordinate with or are members of FHPs to

- compile scientific information on fish habitats,
- establish strategic goals and objectives for fish species and habitats, and
- develop methods for and implement habitat conservation activities across jurisdictional boundaries and species ranges.

Desired Proposals: Grant recipients would compete for Multi-state Conservation Grants to:

- 1) coordinate and compile scientific assessment information on fish habitats consistent with the Board's *Science and Data Framework*, including addressing gaps identified by FHPs in the *2010 National Fish Habitat Assessment*,
- 2) implement data standards and mechanisms established by the Board,
- 3) develop measurable outcomes from conservation action for fish species and habitats and compile those outcomes for reporting to the Board and stakeholders,
- 4) develop or improve methods to identify priority places, issues, and projects to focus conservation action, and
- 5) monitor the performance and needs of FHPs nationwide in a manner that enables direct and consistent comparisons between FHPs.

Projects that create methods or systems that could be used by multiple FHPs, and/or those that could be adopted by the Board's Science and Data Committee for broad implementation, are preferred. Some examples of desired proposals would be those that include collaboration between Partnerships, and with Joint Ventures and/or Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Desired Results/Expected Benefits: Desired outcomes of successful proposals would include:

- 1) production of scientific information that fills gaps identified through the national fish habitat assessment reported in *Through a Fish's Eye: Status of Fish Habitats in the United States 2010*,

- 2) coordinated implementation of *NFHP Conservation Strategies and Targets* adopted by the Board or FHPs for rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and other aquatic habitats,
- 3) development of new analytical approaches to examine landscape conservation information to improve the Board's and FHP's understanding of fish habitat quality or condition,
- 4) coordinated implementation of conservation actions by FHPs with other aquatic habitat strategies and actions identified in State Wildlife Action Plans and other complementary plans,
- 5) engagement of additional organizations and individuals with interest in the conservation of target aquatic habitats with FHPs and the Board, and
- 6) support for and development of FHP capacity to achieve goals and objectives for 2015 that will be outlined in the revised Action Plan that is expected to be completed in early 2012.

-National Conservation Need 2-

Outdoor Heritage – participation, recruitment, and retention in hunting, fishing, boating, and conservation-related recreational activities; enhanced relations among state fish and wildlife agencies and the related industries

Submitted By: Hunting & Shooting Sports Participation Committee, Angling & Boating Participation Committee, Fish & Wildlife Trust Funds Committee, and Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Statement of Need: Participation in outdoor and conservation-related recreational activities is vital to strengthening the ability of state fish and wildlife agencies to protect the nation's natural resources and preserve opportunities for future generations. Generally, participation rates in traditional outdoor recreational activities are on the decline, and this trend is expected to continue into the immediate future. The reasons for declining participation are varied and complex; however, all states recognize a need for action to stabilize or reverse this trend. Ramifications of declining participation include 1) a citizenry further disassociated from our conservation heritage, nature, and all related benefits, 2) a direct loss of funding to fish and wildlife conservation programs, and 3) detrimental effects on critical industries that support and are supported by hunting, recreational fishing, boating, and the shooting sports. Successful recruitment and retention efforts rely on maximizing crossover opportunities in outdoor recreation; developing partnerships to implement state, regional, and national programs; and sharing best practices and the financial and intellectual resources necessary to create needed innovations.

Desired Proposals: Proposals submitted under this NCN should address needs related to participation, recruitment, and retention of people in hunting, recreational fishing, boating, and the shooting sports. This NCN also takes into consideration outdoor activities with valuable crossover applications. For example, approximately 73 million Americans participated in boating activities in 2006, and more than half of all anglers in 2006 fished from a boat.

Proposals submitted under this NCN should address one or more of the following: a) innovative tools, research, training and actions that foster introduction, initiation, recruitment, and retention,

including efforts to increase opportunities for target markets, under-represented groups, and non-traditional audiences; b) partnerships and cooperation between or among successful recruitment/retention or outdoor and conservation related recreational outreach programs and related industries, communities or organizations; c) new approaches to marketing that document and promote the social and economic benefits of hunting, fishing, boating, and related recreational activities; d) tools to assist hunting, fishing, and boating education instructors in communicating the history and role of hunters, anglers, and boaters in the conservation of North America's fish and wildlife; e) methods to assist state fish and wildlife agencies in assessing and meeting the demands for public shooting facilities, access to public waters for recreational fishing and boating, and public access to land for hunting; f) actions that help related recreational industries understand and enhance the important role they play in fish and wildlife conservation and promoting these benefits to the public at large; and g) efforts to evaluate the efficacy of recruitment and retention programs and strategies.

Desired Results/Expected Benefits: Desired results and expected benefits of proposals would be: 1) successfully implemented strategies that increase participation and retention rates in hunting, recreational fishing, boating, and shooting sports; 2) a steady and reliable source of revenue to state fish and wildlife agencies from license sales, registration fees, taxes, and associated federal aid; 3) national policies and programs to help recruit and retain participants; 4) continued long-term social and economic benefits through participation and increased recruitment of new hunters, anglers, boaters, and recreational shooters; 5) strategic guidance to state wildlife agencies to assist them in meeting demands in their state for public shooting facilities, boating and fishing access to public waters, and public access to land and public waters for hunting; 6) enhanced networking and understanding among agencies, related industries, and other committed partners; and 7) an improved conservation ethic among outdoor recreational participants, and a more understanding and supportive public – all of which will help ensure a bright and sustainable future for our North American hunting, fishing, and boating heritage.

-National Conservation Need 3-

State Fish and Wildlife Agency Coordination and Administration

Submitted by: Executive Committee

Statement of Need: State fish and wildlife agencies are facing a host of issues that are impacting their ability to manage trust resources, most notably the continued large-scale budget reductions in most states due to the drops in state revenues and continued belt-tightening by governors and legislatures. State agencies need to collectively address these and other emerging issues to ensure they can continue to meet their management responsibilities and sustain the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Desired Proposals: Proposals will be considered that assist state agencies with the coordination and administration of programs that address important issues facing fish and wildlife conservation. Applicants must demonstrate they have a history of collaboration and the ability to coordinate work with all fifty state fish and wildlife agencies.

Desired Results/Expected Benefits: A proposal funded under this NCN would provide states with valuable technical, administrative and professional expertise and services. Detailed coordination and administrative objectives should be included along with an explanation of how these efforts will assist state agencies.

-National Conservation Need 4-

Improve benefits for fish, wildlife, and their habitats as provisions of the 2008 and future Farm Bills are implemented (Submitted by: Agricultural Conservation Committee)

Statement of Need: The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) is the most important legislation for providing fish and wildlife habitat on millions of acres of privately owned and managed lands. Importantly, deliberations on the next Farm Bill are underway and effects of the economic downturn place unprecedented pressures on agriculture, our natural resources, and the programs that work to achieve conservation for the well-being of all citizens. The following concepts are needs of state fish and wildlife agencies to help bridge information gaps between state decision-makers, planners and field personnel to enable more efficient agency adaptation to changing circumstances and challenges as well as document conservation progress.

Desired Proposals: Proposals submitted under this NCN should address one or more of the following:

- At the national level, work with State fish and wildlife agencies, NGOs, producers, USDA, FWS, initiatives, forestry and others to optimize fish and wildlife benefits from Farm Bill implementation.
- Provide recommendations on how fish, wildlife, and their habitat needs can best be integrated into Farm Bill programs, rules, policies, practices, and guidelines used to implement the laws.
- Increase the capacity to deliver fish and wildlife expertise/technical assistance; provide outreach to educate current and potential farm bill program participants.
- Develop recommendations for increasing the use/availability and improving establishment techniques of native plant materials used across the country to improve habitat quality.
- Assess the economic and social benefits as well as the fish and wildlife benefits associated with implementation of conservation provisions and communicate societal benefits such benefits.
- Assess Mid Contract Management (MCM) activities and determine whether /how practice and program intent is being met; conduct a multistate assessment of MCM across the country.
- Develop and coordinate scientifically sound methods for research, monitoring, assessment, and outcome reporting of fish and wildlife initiatives. Facilitate information sharing, and identify information needs and success stories that support strategic delivery of Farm Bill programs.
- Examine the affects, benefits, threats, and successful approaches to wildlife, soil, and water conservation with wind/ bioenergy provisions. Develop/implement outreach mechanisms to advance understanding of fish and wildlife needs as these technologies/initiatives evolve.
- Identify/evaluate approaches to maintaining conservation benefits on expiring CRP acres

and improve efforts to apply the best CRP mid-contract management practices.

- Expand farm bill programs/practices to regions of the nation where they are under-utilized.
- Develop materials on fish, wildlife and habitat conservation benefits and other values derived from Farm Bill provisions to appropriately inform development of the next Farm Bill.
- Assess the extent of native grassland and rangeland conversion to farm production across MAFWA and WAFWA states; evaluate the land cover conversion in general across the same states.
- Evaluate ecological /social implications of not recoupling crop insurance to conservation compliance.
- Assess the impacts of increased pattern tile drainage (IPTD) in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) on wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and flooding: determine relationships between IPTD and impacts on fish and wildlife populations and habitats; evaluate relationships between IPTD and increased flood events in the Dakotas and/or other downstream states; assess relationships of IPTD and/or enhanced tile systems and water quality on downstream states and water bodies; assess current methodology (van Schilfgaarde model) and develop/utilize a model that provides a significant level of comfort for conservation interests to ensure tile setback distances are sufficiently protecting wetland functions and values in the PPR.
- Coordinate, manage, and facilitate information about habitat accomplishments and wildlife population responses for state-based regional conservation plans between state decision-makers, planners and field personnel to optimize utility of the plans to the states and improve State agencies' ability to manage their public trust resources.

Desired Results/Expected Benefits: Successful proposals will improve Farm Bill benefits for fish, wildlife, and their habitats and improve State fish and wildlife agencies' ability to manage their public trust resources.

-National Conservation Need 5-

The Management Assistance Team (MAT) or similar entity to increase leadership capacity and agency effectiveness within state fish and wildlife agencies

Submitted by: Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Statement of Need: Seventy-seven percent of state fish and wildlife agency senior leadership were predicted to retire between 2004 and 2013 according to an Association / National Conservation Training Center sponsored study conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Due to the current economy some baby boomers are waiting longer to retire; however, this is only a delay in the inevitable significant losses of senior leadership and will likely exacerbate agency turbulence beyond what was initially thought. In a 2005 survey by the AFWA Leadership and Professional Development Committee 75% of all state fish and wildlife agency directors responded that "leadership development" was *very important*; no directors reported the problem as *somewhat* or *very unimportant*. Leadership development and well-managed fish and wildlife agencies are priorities identified in the Association's current strategic plan as well as critically important *vis-à-vis* today's economic reality. The MAT Team's 25 years of experience can be a

timely resource to help agency leaders meet the challenges of agency downsizing, restructuring, funding, and demographic/constituent changes and opportunities.

Desired Proposals: Strategies to increase the leadership capacity of tomorrow's fish and wildlife leadership through programming that provides:

- 1) leadership development programming that can reach a significant portion of the nation's state fish and wildlife agencies;
- 2) leadership program development, delivery expertise, and staff support to maintain an elite-level leadership development program, *the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)*, on a nationwide basis reaching governments, NGOs, conservation-oriented businesses and tribes;
- 3) knowledge, expertise, and consulting services to expand leadership capacity and developing workforce planning strategies;
- 4) organizational development and business management consulting services to state fish and wildlife agency staff particularly to help them during the current economic crisis;
- 5) programs and opportunities for state fish and wildlife agency staff to increase their capabilities for delivering leadership development to their employees.

Desired Results/Expected Benefits: As baby-boomers continue to retire, this NCN's programs will increase leadership capacity of the majority of states through online and classroom training, webinars, consulting services, and other tools including building rich networks among state, federal, tribal, provincial, NGO, and for-profit organizations in the conservation arena. Agency access to organizational development and business management consulting services provides state fish and wildlife agencies expertise and help as Boomers exit and funding teeters. Consulting services specifically tailored to the unique needs of state fish and wildlife agencies will also be a critical tool to help them develop their own leadership development programs. During the three years of this grant the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) will graduate its 7th, 8th, and 9th cohorts of Fellows and the 10th cohort will be in mid-program. By the end of this grant cycle the NCLI will have an accumulated cadre of approximately 360 Fellows across the spectrum of conservation – creating a powerful professional network of graduates to effectively lead fish and wildlife conservation work through the turbulent and unpredictable future.

-National Conservation Need 6-

Incorporating Fish and Wildlife Considerations into Energy Development Decisions

Submitted by: Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee

Statement of Need: Energy development has been one of the dominant adverse influences on our nation's fish and wildlife resources over the past decade, and will continue to cause major landscape disturbances over the next decade. Our ability to direct the development of energy facilities and sources—whether for fossil, renewable or nuclear fuels and generation, pipelines or transmission lines—while maintaining fish and wildlife populations and habitats is limited by: 1) inadequate fish and wildlife resource information and tools needed to effectively inform decisions concerning energy development; 2) planning, leasing, siting, and mitigation processes

that do not provide a means for wildlife considerations to be addressed before irreversible development decisions are made; and 3) a shortage of personnel and financial resources to administer and influence energy development programs without diverting resources from other fish and wildlife conservation programs. Energy development decisions affect every regional association and virtually every state and province; hence, this NCN is intended to directly address the Critical Issues and Program/Project Coordination Goals in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA's) Strategic Plan.

Desired Proposals: This NCN seeks proposals in the following four areas: 1) research on the relationships between energy development practices and impacts on fish and wildlife populations and habitat (e.g., influences of wind turbine design and placement on birds, bats and big game, effects of gas well drilling and fracking processes-pad spacing and infrastructure build-out on ground nesting birds such as sage grouse and prairie chickens, and neotropical migrants experiencing population declines such as the golden winged warbler, effects of potential erosion and sedimentation impacts and consumptive water use on varied aquatic resources etc.); 2) evaluation and refinement of current BMPs and guidelines for energy development practices; 3) joint efforts to incorporate fish and wildlife data into decision support systems designed to inform landscape conservation planning efforts, and 4) increased coordination with organizations and processes affecting energy facilities development and regulation.

Desired Results//Expected Benefits: Over the past two years, AFWA has been involved in several initiatives undertaken to improve interstate and interagency coordination, and processes to integrate fish and wildlife resources conservation into energy development (e.g., Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee recommendations, Western Governors Association's Wildlife Corridors Initiative, Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development symposium, Executive Order 13443, and formation and participation in the American Wind Wildlife Institute). These have produced recommendations to improve the conservation of fish and wildlife resources during energy development. To realize those objectives, states and provinces must continue to support research into the impacts of energy development on fish and wildlife that will result in successful mitigation of lost wildlife resources, and improve Wildlife Agencies participation in the planning, leasing, siting, and mitigation of energy development, with the desired outcome of no net loss to fish and wildlife resources during energy development.

-National Conservation Need 7-

Protect State Wildlife Agencies' Authority to Manage Wildlife Resources in Concert with Federal Actions Required by International Treaties and Conventions

Submitted by: International Relations Committee

Statement of Need: Rules established under international treaties often supersede state authority and limit how states manage wildlife. State agency representatives must work with the federal agencies and be engaged in international fora where these actions are taken. Added regulations and burdensome oversight results from restrictions adopted through international treaties such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). State management and harvest decisions for otters and bobcats stem from federal restrictions that

resulted from CITES actions 30+ years ago. The collapse of the Caspian sturgeon fishery and European Union trade restrictions coupled with continued market demand for caviar has increased pressure for commercial harvest of sturgeon and paddlefish making it more difficult for States to sustainably regulate the fisheries. Our active involvement on CITES committees has insured that permits are not required for international movement of personal items such as wallets and garments. Without these provisions it would be virtually impossible to travel with alligator garments leading to catastrophic declines in sales in these sustainable use products. These are just three examples that have significant impact on state's authority.

Understanding issues and developing working relationships over a sustained period by the Technical Work Group are essential for effectively resolving these issues and requires a thorough working knowledge of the treaties and routine engagement with international colleagues. CITES was originally intended to ensure globally sustainable use of natural resources in trade. Over the past decade, there has been a swell in NGO participation (e.g., HSUS and the Animal Welfare Institute) attempting to push a protectionist/no use approach in CITES for well managed game and non-game species. Protectionists outnumber sustainable use advocates 6:1. The present system, using the regional Association representation, was initiated in 1994 and has proven both effective and efficient. Without funding, this coordinated approach to state participation in international fora will effectively end in 2012 and the state agencies will not be represented at any CITES meetings in 2013.

Other international forums that are of importance to state wildlife agencies include but are not limited to the Ramsar Convention, the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, and The Convention Migratory Species (CMS).

Desired Proposals: Proposals submitted under this NCN should address the need to fund one representative from each Regional Association and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to participate in international treaties, conventions, and associated meetings.

Desired Results/Expected Benefits: Successful proposals will provide 1) an efficient, effective approach for state agencies to have input into federal policy on international treaties, 2) a means whereby state wildlife agencies may be apprised of pending developments and respond appropriately, 3) a streamlined approach to requesting changes in federal and/or international policies, procedures and rules to better accommodate state wildlife agency needs, 4) a mechanism to provide biological and administrative information to assist the federal government in executing its international responsibilities, 5) a method to minimize unnecessary oversight and restrictions to state wildlife agency authority, 6) support for sustainable use principles in international arenas, 7) ensure the federal government understands and reacts positively to the needs and authority of state fish and wildlife agencies on these issues, and 8) ensure the North American Conservation Model is recognized and considered in the international conservation arena.

VI. LETTER OF INTENT GUIDELINES

A. Submission Deadline

Letters of Intent (LOIs) **must be received** by the Multistate Conservation Grants Program Coordinator *no later than 5:00pm (Eastern Time) on Friday, May 11, 2012*. LOIs received after the deadline will not be considered.

B. Submission Instructions

LOIs must be emailed (in Microsoft Word format, NOT PDF format) to the Multistate Conservation Grant Program Coordinator, Michael Marcum, at mmarcum@fishwildlife.org. You will receive a confirmation of receipt within 24 business hours. If you do not receive a confirmation after 24 hours, please contact the Multistate Conservation Grant Program Coordinator immediately at the e-mail address listed above.

Only eligible LOIs will be processed and considered for funding so please ensure your proposal:

1. Meets the MSCGP's legal requirements as outlined in the Program Eligibility Requirements section (e.g., eligible applicant type; eligible project type; benefits sport fish, wild birds, and/or wild mammals);
2. Specifically addresses one (or more) of the seven 2013 National Conservation Needs; and
3. Adheres to the format and content requirements (outlined below).

Projects selected to receive Multistate Conservation grants are funded on a *calendar-year* basis. Applicants may request funding for one, two, or three years. Match/cost-share is not required, although "partnership funds" are encouraged and awarded bonus points during the review process. See **Attachment A** for the projected funding availability.

C. LOI Format

Length: Four Pages Total

- Cover Page (1 Page)
- Explanatory Text (2 Pages)
- Qualifications Page (1 Page)

Spacing: Single spaced

Margins: 1 inch

Font: 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial

Please note: Images and literature references are discouraged. Also, due to the page limit, cover letters, letters of support, and any additional materials **will NOT be accepted**.

D. LOI Content

I. Cover Page (Page 1)

1. Project Title
2. Applicant name (ONE person), affiliation, address and contact information including phone, mailing address and e-mail address (this will be the primary contact)
3. Name, position and organizational affiliation of co-investigators or partners
4. MSCGP Requirements:
 - a. Primary 2013 NCN addressed
 - b. Project length (1,2 or 3 years)
 - c. States, USFWS regions, or Regional Associations of Fish & Wildlife agencies benefited
 - d. Estimated amount of MSCGP funding request Funding source (Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration, or both)
5. Brief summary of project and funding request (5 lines or less)

II. Explanatory Text (Pages 2 & 3)

- A. Narrative:** This is the substance of the LOI and addresses how the applicant will approach the project. The following questions should be addressed:
1. How will this project meet the needs of the NCN?
 2. What states and/or USFWS regions or Regional Associations are targeted?
 3. What are the goals of this project? (Goals should be written as outcome oriented.)
 4. What activities or actions will this project undertake to achieve the stated goals?
 5. Provide a specific timeline of the project activities.
- B. Project Budget:** (a detailed budget is not required, only a general one). Please include:
1. The total cost of the project broken into three general categories:
 - a. Salaries and benefits broken down by staff (include staff name or position title)
 - b. Project related expenses (includes travel, communications, supplies, consultants etc.)
 - c. Equipment (purchases of tangible, personal property over \$5,000.00 that will be used for a year or more) (Note: There is a 20% cap on indirect costs)
 2. The amount of funds you are requesting from the MSCGP and the source (Wildlife or Sport Fish Restoration, or both)
 3. An estimate of partnership funds or existing assets that will be leveraged, if any (this is not a requirement for the MSCGP)
- C. Measurable Outcomes:** What are the measurable outcomes or products that will result from this project? How will these benefit state fish and wildlife agencies?
- D. Extended Benefit:** What ideas do you have that could enhance the usefulness, quality, and communication of the project's results?
- E. Summary:** Summarize the most important strength of your proposal in the last paragraph.

III. Qualifications (Page 4)

Include a brief abstract of relevant qualifications for the Primary Investigator and most important team members.

VII. EVALUATION OF LETTERS OF INTENT

The National Grants Committee, with the advice of the appropriate Association committees and Regional Associations, will evaluate and rank the LOIs based upon the following five criteria:

- 1) Responsiveness to NCNs;
- 2) Scientific quality;
- 3) Practical relevance to State Fish & Wildlife Agencies;
- 4) Value; and
- 5) Qualifications.

To ensure fairness and equality to all applicants, a LOI will be judged only on its merits and how well it addresses one or more of the 2013 National Conservation Needs.

Please note: Any attempt to discuss a LOI with a National Grants Committee member outside of a committee meeting is considered lobbying and *is strictly prohibited*.

VIII. INVITATIONS TO SUBMIT A FULL PROPOSAL

The National Grants Committee will invite the applicants with the most competitive LOIs to submit a Full Grant Proposal. A Full Grant Proposal consists of 1) a project narrative, 2) a detailed budget, and 3) the required federal forms.

Applicants will be notified in late June (date TBA) whether they are invited to submit a full proposal. Full Grant Proposal instructions will be distributed with the invitations. Full Proposals will be due to the MSCGP Coordinator in early August (date TBA).

Please direct any additional questions to MSCGP Coordinator Michael Marcum at mmarcum@fishwildlife.org.

ATTACHMENT A

**Estimate of Funds Available for the
2013 Multistate Conservation Grant Program**

FY13 MSCGP Budget Information

Source of Funds	Amount
FY 13 Sport Fish Restoration Multistate Grants Program Distribution	\$3,000,000
FY 13 Wildlife Restoration Multistate Grants Program Distribution	\$3,000,000
Carryovers from FY 12	\$72,911
Total Est. WR and SFR Funds Available for FY13 Before National Survey	\$6,072,911
National Survey Expenditures for FY13	(\$332,477)
Grand Total WR & SFR Available Funds for “New” MSCGP Grants	\$5,740,434

WR/SFR Breakdown

Total Available WR Funds for MSCGP FY13 Grants	\$2,870,217
Total Available SFR Funds for MSCGP FY13 Grants	\$2,870,217

ATTACHMENT B

Schedule for the 2013 Cycle of the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP)

2011

November

- The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) solicits National Conservation Needs (NCNs) from each Association committee and the four Regional Associations of state fish and wildlife agencies.

2012

February

- The Association's committees and the four Regional Associations develop and submit proposed NCNs for consideration by the National Grants Committee.

March

- The Association's MSCGP Coordinator distributes the proposed NCNs to the National Grants Committee.
- The National Grants Committee reviews and selects the NCNs that represent the states' highest conservation funding priorities.
- The selected NCNs are presented for approval by a majority of the State Fish & Wildlife Directors during the Associations' Business meeting at the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference; March 12-17, 2012 (Atlanta, GA).

April

- The Association distributes an Announcement of Opportunity for MSCGP funding that solicits Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential applicants. The Announcement is posted on Grants.gov, the Association's website, and the USFWS website. LOIs are due to the MSCGP Coordinator by 5:00pm (Eastern Time) on Friday, May 11, 2012.

May

- The National Grants Committee and other appropriate Association Committees reviews, scores, and ranks the submitted Letters of Intent.

June

- The National Grants Committee invites the most competitive applicants to submit a full grant proposal. Applicants are notified whether their LOI has been selected to submit a full proposal.

July/August

- Full proposals and the required federal forms are due to the Association's MSCGP Coordinator.

August

- Full Grant Proposals are reviewed, scored, and ranked by the National Grants Committee. The MSCGP Coordinator also reviews the proposals for eligibility and consults with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on any eligibility issues that arise. The USFWS conducts a debarment and suspension and audit records check, ensures NEPA and ESA compliance, and reviews the financial management systems of applicants.

September (Association's Annual Meeting; September 9-12th, 2012; Hilton Head, SC)

- The National Grants Committee convenes; reviews the comments and scores of each proposal; and prepares a recommended "priority list" of projects for the State Director's approval. The Committee may request changes to a proposal. Grant applicants may attend this meeting.
- During the Association's Business Meeting, the State Directors approve the "priority list" of projects to be funded through the Multistate Conservation Grant Program.
- The Association submits its list of priority projects, and the final proposals, to the USFWS by the mandated October 1, 2012 deadline.
- The Association's MSCGP Coordinator notifies the applicants regarding whether their proposal was selected for funding.

October-November

- Priority projects are reviewed and processed by the USFWS, which is required by law to only fund projects on the Association's priority list, although there is no requirement to fund all recommended projects.

December

- USFWS awards Multistate Conservation grants to successful applicants.

2013

January to December

- USFWS manages recipients and their implementation of Multistate Conservation grants.
- The Association initiates the process for the 2014 cycle of the MSCGP.

ATTACHMENT C

MSCGP Applicant’s Letter of Intent Checklist

Program Eligibility

Applicants (check one):	
The following entities may receive a Multistate Conservation grant:	
	1. A State, a State instrumentality such as a State university, or a group of States;
	2. The Service, to carry out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; and
	3. Nongovernmental organizations, such as hunters’ and anglers’ organizations, conservation organizations, and private institutions of higher education.

Projects (check all that apply):	
Projects are eligible for funding if they:	
	1. Are projects that carry out the purposes of the:
	(a) Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, or
	(b) Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act;
	2. Address one or more of the national conservation needs that the Association establishes annually; and
	3. Benefit:
	d. At least 26 States,
	e. A majority (over 50%) of the States in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region (for a map of the USFWS regions, please visit http://www.fws.gov/where/), or
	f. A majority (over 50%) of States in a regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies.

Other Program Requirements (check one):	
2. Eligible Undertakings: Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration funds can only be spent on projects that benefit sport fish, wild birds, and wild mammals. Specifically, 50 CFR 80.5 provides that the following activities are eligible for funding:	
	(a) Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act:
	i. Projects having as their purpose the restoration, conservation, management, and enhancement of wild birds and wild mammals , and the provision for public use of and benefits from these resources.
	ii. Projects having as their purpose the education of hunters and archers in the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be a responsible hunter or archer.
	(b) Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act:
	i. Projects having as their purpose the restoration, conservation, management, and enhancement of sport fish , and the provision for public use and benefits from these resources. Sport fish are limited to aquatic, gillbreathing, vertebrate animals, bearing paired fins, and having material value for sport or recreation.
	ii. Additional funds resulting from expansion of the Sport Fish Restoration Program must be added to existing State fishery program funds available from traditional sources and not as a substitute therefor.

NGOs Only:	
Any nongovernmental organization that applies for a Multistate Conservation Grant must <i>not</i> engage in any activity that:	
	in whole or in part promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife, or to the regulated taking of fish.

Format Requirements

	Length: Four Pages Total Cover Page (1 Page), Explanatory Text (2 Pages), Qualifications Page (1 Page)
	Spacing: Single spaced
	Margins: 1 inch
	Font: 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial

Content Requirements

Cover Page (Page 1)	
	1. Project Title
	2. Applicant name (ONE person), affiliation, address and contact information including phone, mailing address and e-mail address (this will be the primary contact)
	3. Name, position and organizational affiliation of co-investigators or partners
	4. MSCGP Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Primary 2013 NCN addressed b. Project length (1,2 or 3 years) c. States, USFWS regions, or Regional Associations of Fish & Wildlife agencies benefited d. Estimated amount of MSCGP funding request Funding source (Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration, or both)
	5. Brief summary of project/funding request (5 lines or less)
Explanatory Text (Pages 2 & 3)	
	A. Narrative: This is the substance of the LOI and addresses how the applicant will approach the project. The following questions should be addressed:
	1. How will this project meet the needs of the NCN?
	2. What states and/or USFWS regions or Regional Associations are targeted?
	3. What are the goals of this project? (Goals should be written as outcome oriented.)
	4. What activities or actions will this project undertake to achieve the stated goals?
	5. Provide a specific timeline of the project activities.
	B. Project Budget: (a detailed budget is not required, only a general one). Please include:
	1. The total cost of the project broken into three general categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Salaries and benefits broken down by staff (include staff name or position title) ii. Project related expenses (includes travel, communications, supplies, consultants etc.) iii. Equipment (purchases of tangible, personal property over \$5,000.00 that will be used for a year or more) (Note: There is a 20% cap on indirect costs)

	2. The amount of funds you are requesting from the MSCGP and the source (Wildlife or Sport Fish Restoration, or both)
	3. An estimate of partnership funds or existing assets that will be leveraged, if any (this is not a requirement for the MSCGP)
	C. Measurable Outcomes: What are the measurable outcomes or products that will result from this project? How will these benefit state fish and wildlife agencies?
	D. Extended Benefit: What ideas do you have that could enhance the usefulness, quality, and communication of the project's results?
	E. Summary: Summarize the most important strength of your proposal in the last paragraph.
Qualifications (Page 4)	
	Include a brief abstract of relevant qualifications for the Primary Investigator and most important team members.

ATTACHMENT D

Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of frequently asked questions by MSCGP applicants. If your question is not addressed, or you require further clarification, please contact Michael Marcum, MSCGP Coordinator, at mmarcum@fishwildlife.org.

Can you clarify if my project meets the criteria for states benefited? Does my project really need to involve 26 states?

There are three ways that a project can meet the criteria for state involvement. A project must benefit:

1. At least 26 States **OR**
2. A majority (over 50%) of the States in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region (for a map of the USFWS regions, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/where/>) **OR**
3. A majority (over 50%) of States in a regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies.

Can you provide some examples of projects that benefitted 26 states?

Yes. Some projects that benefitted 26 states include:

- 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (conducted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
- Data-Driven Strategies to Recruit and Retain Anglers (conducted by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies and the American Sportfishing Association)
- Economic Impacts of Hunting, 2006 (conducted by the Southwick and Associates)

More information about past projects can be found on the MSCGP website at: http://jjcdev.com/~fishwild/?section=previous_mscgp_grant_cycles.

What is the amount of funding that can be requested?

Applicants should first review the guidelines to determine how much funding is available for the current MSCGP Cycle, and consider if the project will require funds from Sport Fish Restoration, Wildlife Restoration, or both programs.

The most expensive project supported by the MSCGP is the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The project currently costs approximately \$16 million and funds are deducted from the MSCGP's annual funding, which is reflected in the estimate provided in the guidelines. The range of funding for other projects has been between \$30,000 - \$1.5 million depending on the type of project, its scope and duration. Applicants are encouraged to request the minimum amount of funds required to complete the project.

How competitive is the MSCGP?

Below is a table of MSCGP Cycles and the number of proposals submitted and projects funded:

MSCGP Cycle	Proposals Submitted	Projects Funded
2012	13	12
2011	17	12
2010	21	13
2009	20	14
2008	38	9
2007	22	11
2006	59	23
2005	38	21
2004	57	18
2003	54	25
2002	53	25
2001	42	14

To make the MSCGP more efficient, the National Grants Committee decided to adopt the LOI process in 2009; the goal of this process was to filter out projects that did not meet the necessary requirements or were less likely to be funded before full proposals could be submitted. During the 2012 MSCGP cycle, 34 LOIs were submitted and only 13 were invited to submit full proposals. Out of the 13 projects submitted, 12 were selected and recommend to USFWS for funding.

Are universities considered NGOs?

Yes.

I am submitting a Letter of Intent and have partners involved. Should I include statements of support?

No. The Letter of Intent is only four pages and there is no room for letters of support. It is sufficient to list your partners where appropriate within the text.

Can I include potential partners in my Letter of Intent or only confirmed partners?

Only confirmed partners should be included in your submission.

Can federal agencies be contractors or sub--recipients of MSCGP funds?

Yes, federal agencies and federal personnel can be, and often are, involved in MSCGP projects (through contracts, sub-awards or partnership funds.) Federal agencies cannot be primary recipients of MSCGP funds, except for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Is there a matching requirement?

No match is required. However, “partnership funds” are considered by the National Grants Committee and given bonus points during the review.

Can in-kind services be included in my budget as “partnership funds”?

Yes. Any services or funds leveraged from partner organizations can be included in the “partnership funds” category.

I know a member of the National Grants Committee. Can I contact them if I have questions about my LOI or would like advice regarding my LOI?

No. Direct contact with members of the National Grants Committee regarding LOIs is strictly prohibited. All questions should be directed to Michael Marcum, MSCGP Coordinator, at mmarcum@fishwildlife.org.

How many times is my LOI reviewed?

Every LOI is reviewed at least twice. The AFWA committees or Regional Fish & Wildlife Associations that submitted NCNs review the LOIs that address their NCNs. They provide technical advice to the National Grants Committee regarding the extent to which an LOI addresses an NCN. The National Grants Committee also reviews, scores, and ranks the LOIs.