



Annual Report

2022

MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

Funding Critical Conservation Needs

ABOUT THE MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM



For over two decades, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) has been firmly dedicated to preserving our nation's fish and wildlife populations and conserving natural resources and crucial habitats. The MSCGP was established through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (Improvement Act), which amended the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act.

Each year, the MSCGP directs up to \$6 million—\$3 million from Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) and \$3 million from Wildlife Restoration (WR) funds—to support projects directly benefiting fish and wildlife conservation and state fish and wildlife agencies as well as projects that provide a foundation for future management and conservation. Grants focus on research, education, management leadership, industry relations, and on-the-ground management of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

On December 20, 2019, Modernizing the Pittman Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act was signed into law which further amended the Wildlife Restoration Act to

create a new Hunter Recruitment and Recreational Shooter Recruitment (R3) Multistate Conservation Grant Program.

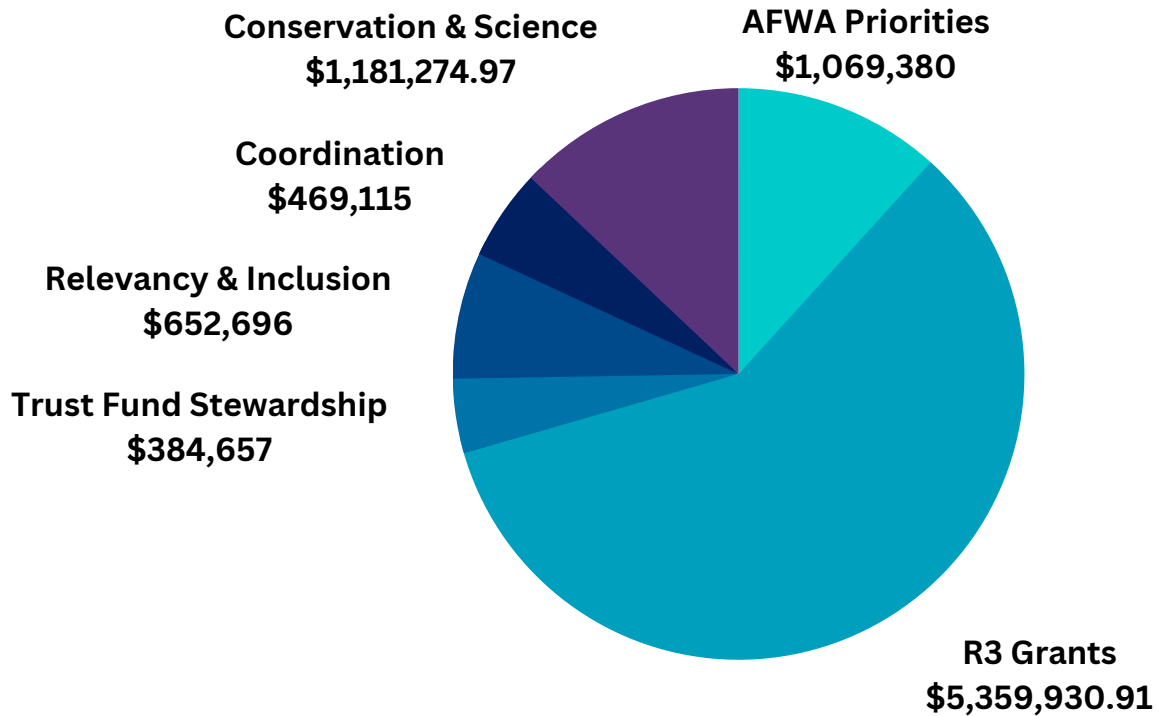
It authorized the Secretary of the Interior to make up to \$5 million available annually, specifically for R3 grants that promote a national hunting and shooting sports recruitment program, including related communications and outreach activities.

The program is co-administered by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Association solicits grant proposals from state agencies, regional associations, and non-governmental agencies and selects its "priority list" of recommendations at AFWA's Annual Meeting. Those priorities are forwarded to the USFWS, which reviews, processes and approves grant awards.

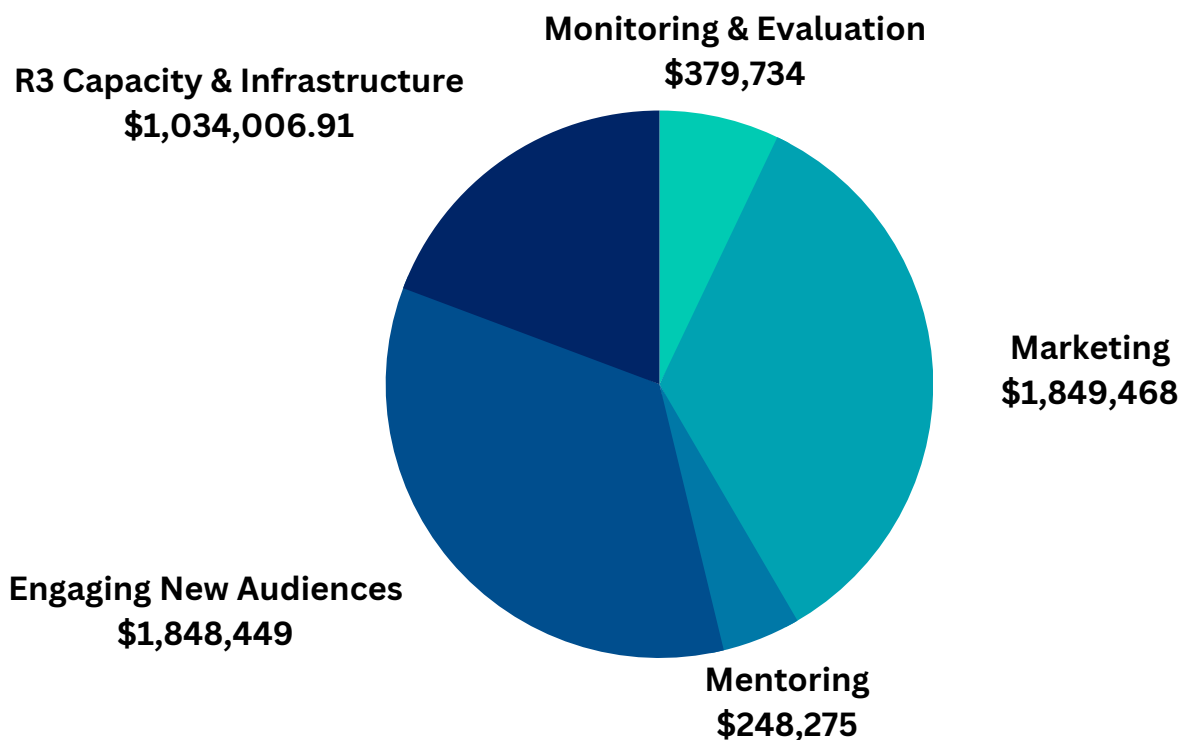
The Association updates the information on How to Apply for Multistate Conservation Grant Program every year (End of March-Beginning of April). This information can be found on the AFWA website www.fishwildlife.org.

For the 2022 Multistate Conservation Grant Program, the Association established priority areas and received 121 initial proposals. Fifty-four proposals were selected for further consideration and invited to submit full grant proposals. In 2022, 42 projects were awarded \$9,117,093.88. You can view the list here: [Final Priority List](#) .

2022 Multistate Conservation Grant Program



Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation (R3) Priorities



EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS GRANTS

Contaminant Loads in Waterfowl of the Northeast Atlantic Flyway: New Threats and Outdated Advisories – Cornell University

A comprehensive evaluation of chemical contaminant loads in waterfowl at a flyway spatial scale needs to be improved to assess the health of waterfowl and the potential impact on hunters who consume them. Waterfowl hunters in the Atlantic Flyway harvest approximately 1.5 million ducks and more than 450,000 geese annually. In the northeast portion of the Atlantic flyway, it has been three decades since a study assessed the levels of legacy compounds, such as mercury. Contemporary compounds, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), have not been assessed in waterfowl. The 200,000 waterfowl hunters in the Atlantic Flyway need better information about contaminant levels in wild waterfowl to make informed decisions about species consumption safety.



Our goal in the study entitled “Contaminant Loads in Waterfowl of the Northeast Atlantic Flyway: New Threats and Outdated Advisories,” funded by the 2022 Multistate Conservation Grant Program, is to collect data capable of allowing state wildlife agencies and health departments in a four-state area (NY, NJ, PA, and CT) to update consumption advisories for waterfowl given information on the levels of chemical contaminants. Current consumption advisories are based on old data, are relatively broad by species, and are not particularly informative, which may dissuade new or cautious hunters from pursuing waterfowl. Data from this study will also inform wildlife agencies of the need (or not) to conduct further intensive surveillance to understand the impact of these contaminants on waterfowl populations based more specifically on species, location, or compound.

A statistically robust study design was created and included randomization of samples (birds) selected for study and standardization of the data collection method, including predefined variables, definitions, locations of measurements, instruments of measurement, and units of measurement. Using the study protocol, state wildlife agencies for NY, NJ, PA, and CT collected carcasses and tissue samples from five species of hunter-harvested ducks and geese (mallard, American black duck, Canada goose, American green-winged teal, and wood duck) across 13 ecoregions in the four-state area. Samples were sent to the Cornell Wildlife Health Laboratory for processing and distribution to laboratories for chemical analysis. Sample analyses are underway to determine the levels of six contaminants (PCBs, dioxins, furans, organochlorine pesticides, mercury, and PFAS) in waterfowl across the study area.

Laboratory results will be analyzed to determine the relative risk of consuming waterfowl in the ecoregions of the study area that agency biologists and health professionals can use to update waterfowl consumption advisories.

Examples of Previous Grants

MORE TO THE HUNT - Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA)

After developing the campaign strategy, concept, landing page, and all other supporting materials needed for recruiting influencers and properly managing the project, The SEAFWA: More To The Hunt Social Influencer Campaign officially launched mid-September 2022 and ran through the beginning of December 2022. Working with various male and female micro-influencers throughout the southeast, the campaign



generated upwards of 195,780 views, 16,960 likes, 391 comments, and 776 shares from the organically posted content published by our partnering influencers on their respective social media channels. Additionally, with the content these influencers provided, we ran a series of paid ads on Facebook/Instagram, Google, YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify, targeting individuals we identified with interests related to the outdoors and who we believed were most likely to be interested in hunting for the first time or needed renewing their license to hunt again. Through these paid marketing efforts, we generated 50,907,015 total paid impressions and 360,651 total paid clicks to the participating state agency website pages. The campaign landing page we created, moretothehunt.com, also saw roughly 27,022 users visiting the website throughout the campaign, with 1,846 of visiting one of the state agencies pages to get more information about hunting and purchasing a license. Overall, we view these numbers and metrics as a major success considering the brief window of time in which the campaign ran. We hope to see the campaign efforts live on as more people are introduced to the SEAFWA social media pages and campaign content that was created.

Mi Tierra Salvaje – New Mexico Wildlife Federation (NMWF)



The goal of Mi Tierra Salvaje was to identify the best practices to effectively engage youth and their families in hunting and angling - focusing on communities not historically involved in these activities. Our team compiled the leading strategies in youth engagement utilizing a mixed-methods approach. This included identifying educational frameworks from the leading organizations in outdoor education, conducting a literature review to understand what peer-reviewed research existed, and hosting three listening sessions with partner organizations within, and beyond, our AFWA region that are either implementing hunting and angling programming or other outdoor programming. Many barriers were identified throughout our research including cost, transportation, adult supervision, and the community perception of hunting and angling.

Examples of Previous Grants

NMWF implemented potential solutions to many of the identified barriers to create positive social-cultural experiences for participants, such as presenting an array of interests to provide various access points to outdoor activity, creating strong community partnerships, communicating safety guidelines clearly within our programs, and marketing our programs directly in and for the communities we are serving. The Nature Ninos program utilized these findings to release the research report “Engaging Marginalized Youth in Hunting and Angling: Identified Best Practices and Opportunities,” the action guide “Breaking the Barriers to Nature: A How to Guide for Engaging Marginalized Youth in Outdoor Programming,” and host the “Outdoor Adventure Summer Camp” to serve over 300 youth during the summer of 2022. This camp invited youth typically not engaged in the outdoors to meet community mentors in conservation who introduced them to activities such as angling, archery, pellet gun shooting, bird dogs, wilderness first aid, foraging, field-to-table cooking, water conservation, nature photography, nature journaling, and so much more!

2022 – 2024 Facilitation of National R3 Strategies - Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (Council)



The Council was founded in 2009 to, “Facilitate the promotion and growth of hunting and the shooting sports and the education of the public on the contributions that hunters and shooters make towards wildlife conservation.” Since then, the Council has served as one of the nation's main facilitators of hunting and shooting R3 efforts. Significant increases in R3 capacity nationally led to an increased demand for

Council services. The *2022 – 2024 Facilitation of National R3 Strategies* three-year MSCG award allowed the Council to increase operational capacity to address the increased demand from professionals and the general public.

In 2022, the Council grew to a five-person team. It addressed this demand via 15 objectives developed through input from the R3 community and strategic planning sessions with the Board of Directors. The metrics associated with these objectives were developed to align with the TRACS Matrix and are on a three-year timeline. The Council has made great strides in accomplishing these objectives in 2022, with some of the highlights including (for a full description of the 15 objectives, please visit <https://cahss.org/objectives/>):

- Partnered and/or provided assistance on MSCG projects for seven organizations.
- Provided technical assistance on eight organization-level R3 strategic planning efforts.
- Assisted with six state-specific R3 training workshops or summits.
- Managed the National R3 Community, facilitated engagement, and increased cumulative membership to 3,091 individuals.
- Developed a social media presence to educate the public on the contributions of hunters and shooters to wildlife conservation and grew to 5,054 followers across platforms.
- Managed the National R3 Clearinghouse, facilitated engagement, and increased the number of digital assets to 3,691.
- Hosted and/or facilitated nine R3 webinars (including the Building an R3 Team webinar series).

Examples of Previous Grants

- Participated in 22 regional and national meetings (i.e., conferences, trade shows, informational/business meetings) to help facilitate R3 efforts.
- Partnered in the development and hosting of an in-person R3 practitioner training.
- Produced hunting and shooting sports participation report.
- Produced a hunting license index.
- Administered a stakeholder survey to assess the needs of the R3 community and inform strategic actions.
- Engaged 40 stakeholders representing NGOs, agencies, and industries in developing and implementing The Assessment Group (TAG) and TAG Review Panel.

Native American Participation and Perceptions Towards Hunting, Trapping and Target shooting - Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF)

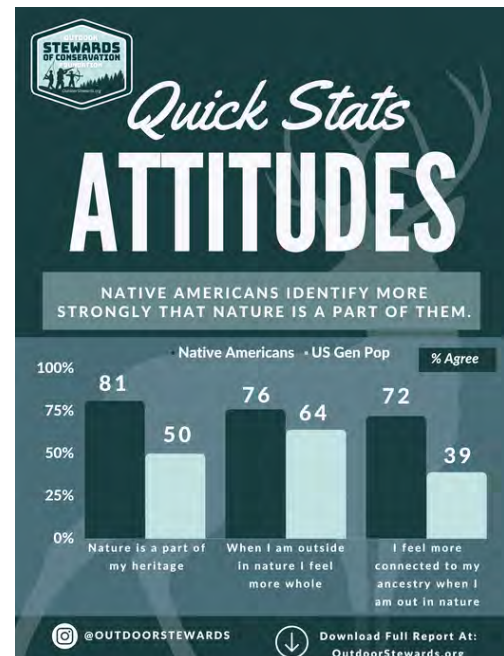
With more than seven million Native American tribal members inhabiting all 50 states in America, it is imperative to better understand current participation rates and perceptions of hunting, trapping, and target shooting within this important group.

Working with partners from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, OSCF developed and conducted an online survey among the US general population and the Native American population. Objectives for this study included:

- measuring activity, participation, and cultural acceptance.
- identify barriers to entry and potential influences.
- identify and measure awareness and usage of special land access and tribal privileges among Native Americans.
- benchmark perceptions and general opinions of government agencies.

Working with the research firm Sheerwood Enterprises, OSCF administered an online survey using a sample from Dynata. A total of 2,853 interviews were completed allowing for high confidence in the data received.

The report generated eye-opening findings, particularly when comparing the Native American and U.S. general populations. Native Americans currently participate in hunting and fishing activities at a higher rate than the general population and are significantly more interested in and favorable towards hunting, trapping, and target shooting activities. There is also higher interest in participation among Native Americans who are not currently participating, which helps justify recruitment efforts for wildlife agencies and industry.

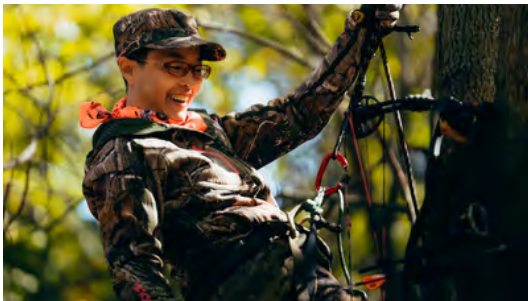


Examples of Previous Grants

There are many ways to build interest and increase participation among the U.S. general population and Native American population alike. Time and access are two critical barriers to participation that creative multi-format programming can address. And for Native Americans, tribal leadership involvement in and support of programming will drive more interest and consideration. Native Americans perceived state and federal agencies moderately favorably, still, actions and programs to help reduce barriers like the cost of entry (licensing, tagging, etc.) could aid in building a more favorable perception.

The full report and a link to an informative webinar outlining the grant project results are available at www.OutdoorStewards.org.

Bowhunting Is for Everyone: Use These New Images in Your Marketing Efforts – Archery Trade Association (ATA)



Nearly 1,500 bowhunting-themed images are available for ATA members, state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other industry members to use in their marketing and communications efforts. The images are a result of a 2022 grant awarded through the Multistate Conservation Grant Program.

Anyone can enjoy bowhunting, regardless of age, size, physical abilities, social status, or ethnic background. The images will help entities make bowhunting more welcoming, inclusive, and relevant while recruiting and appealing to racially diverse archers.

The ATA partnered with NubAbility and Hunters of Color to conduct three photo shoots across the country featuring people of color. History and statistics in America reveal a disconnect between minority groups and bowhunting. The ATA hopes the images will help ATA members, partners and others represent and connect with diverse audiences. And because the photos feature real bowhunters (not models) from different ethnic backgrounds, industry members can confidently and comfortably use the images in their digital and print communications.

To make the images even more authentic and unique, ATA staff also worked with state agencies to identify ideal public land photo shoot locations. Each shoot took place in a different region to represent varied landscapes and topography. As a result, users can find images from Oregon, Tennessee, and Minnesota.



This Project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant [F23AP00459](#), a program funded from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, and jointly managed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.