

**National Grants Committee**

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**Chuck Sykes, AL – Chair**

 **– Vice Chair**

**March 21, 2023**

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Scheduled Discussion Items**

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

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

* Approval of the September 2022 (AFWA Annual Meeting) Minutes – ***Chuck Sykes***

The Committee approved the meeting minutes from September 2022.

* Presentation / Discussion/Approval of 2024 Strategic Priorities for Multistate Conservation Grants – ***Chuck Sykes, Chair / Silvana Yaroschuk, AFWA***

Jenifer Wisnewski, TN, summarized the efforts that went into updating the 2024 Strategic Priorities.

The process lasted several months. AFWA Committees, AFWA Staff, and WSFR staff gave input on the priorities. The Technical Review Teams (Conservation and Science, Expanding Relevancy and Engagement, Coordination, and R3) met several times to discuss and review the priorities.

Those priorities are clearer and more elaborate, so it’s easier for applicants to know under which priority to apply or for the reviewers to ensure those applications fall under the correct priority.

The NGC members voted on approving the 2024 Strategic Priorities, which were approved unanimously.

**ACTION ITEM:** Approval of the 2024 Multistate Conservation Grant Program Strategic Priorities

* 2024 Multistate Conservation Grant Program process and timeline update – ***Chuck Sykes/Silvana Yaroschuk, AFWA***
	+ Changes to One-Step Process

On March 8th, the National Grants Committee Voted unanimously to initiate a one-step submission process for the 2024 MultiState Conservation Grant Program.

The current two-step application process for Multistate Conservation Grants was initiated in September of 2009 when the National Grants Committee added an additional step to the review process, the submission of a letter of intent (LOI) (Initial Proposals (IP).

This process has served the committee well over the years. However, an expansion of grant funding from the 2019 changes in the Wildlife Restoration Act, increased applications, and grant awards have resulted in further thoughts and considerations on the efficiency and administration of the MSG applications, recommendations, and, ultimately, the awarding of grants.

During the meeting, the Grants Committee unanimously endorsed this change for the 2023 cycle.

The 2024 MSCGP Timeline/Process was shown to the participants.

* + MSCGP Data Dashboard - <https://fishwildlife.org/mscgp/>

The new MSCGP Data Dashboard was introduced. The dashboard launched in March. It features the MSCGP Grants 2001-2022. It’s easy to navigate and has information on over 450 grants. You can sort and look at the grants by organization name, year, and priority and create reports.

* + 2022 MSCGP Annual Report

Another first for Multistate Conservation Grant Program. AFWA published an Annual Report, which we plan to publish every year. This report will be in hard and electronic copy and distributed during regional and national meetings.

* WSFR Update - ***Paul Rauch/Tom Decker, WSFR***
	+ ***Traditional Multistate Conservation Grant Program (T-MSCGP):***
* Annually, $3M allocated from Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration accounts for projects that address one or more of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ (AFWA) Strategic Priorities.
* Grant funds may be used for sport fisheries and wildlife management, coordination, administration, research, surveys, technical assistance, outreach, training, education, and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation.
	+ ***R3 Multistate Conservation Grant Program (R3-MSCGP):***
* Up to $5M available annually.
* Grant funds are to be used exclusively for hunter recruitment and recreational shooter recruitment projects that promote a national hunting and shooting sport recruitment program, including related communication and outreach activities.
	+ ***General MSCGP Updates:***
* WSFR supports the modifications to MSCGP grant submission process to enhance efficiencies. A one-step submission process will streamline the application process and reduce the burden on applicants and review panel members.
* WSFR will work with AFWA to offer several webinars for potential applicants and grantees around various operational elements, conditions, and priorities in the MSG administration. These webinars would be an opportunity to update applicants about any potential changes in the process and when they might occur.
* For the 2023 grant cycle, AFWA received 110 applications and recommended 55 new awards totaling $10.4 M to the Service Director for approval.
* With the Service Director approval, WSFR has awarded 52 of the 55 grants; three new awards and one amendment remain to be processed.  We are waiting for further information from those applicants.
* WSFR is repopulated/restructured to work with AFWA more effectively in program delivery.
* WSFR has a relatively new Branch of Communications, Analysis, and Partnerships (CAP) led by Tom Decker.
* We have expanded our MSGP processing team by assigning two fiscal specialists from our FASO group to work on MSG submissions.
* WSFR is in the process of hiring a new MSCGP Coordinator.
* The CAP Branch is working collaboratively with AFWA on a few items to improve continuity.
* In FY 2023, WSFR plans to highlight grant success and modify the website.
* WSFR hosted a financial and performance reporting webinar on 8 February 2023. The webinar's purpose was to train recipients in preparing financial reports and entering grant performance data (starting with FY 2022 awards) within TRACS. In total, 30 people participated in the webinar. Two additional webinars will be hosted in the Spring and Summer of 2023 with various topics. TRACS eLearning courses may be viewed at this link: [TRACS eLearning Courses](https://wsfrtraining.fws.gov/course/index.php?categoryid=3)
* 2022 National Survey Update – ***Emily Alvarez, NORC***

NORC gave an update on the 2022 National Survey.

* Presentation on MSCGP Completed Grants:

The National Grants Committee received updates from:

* AFWA on Farm Bill Coordination – ***Kalina Vatave, AFWA***

The expected outcome of this grant was that, through the applicant’s coordination of the AFWA Agricultural Conservation Committee, state fish and wildlife agencies will be better equipped to collaborate with USDA on Farm Bill program implementation, and USDA will have better incorporated the needs of fish and wildlife into their programs.

If you would like the presentation, we can make that available.

* Nature Ninos – ***Greg Webb/Laura Lewis***

Mi Tierra Salvaje aimed 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 implement hunting and angling programming or other outdoor programming. Many barriers were identified throughout our research, including cost, transportation, adult supervision, and the community's perception of hunting and angling.

If you would like the presentation, we can make that available.

* More to the Hunt – ***Jenifer Wisniewski, 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 mind September 2022 and ran through the beginning of December 2022. Working with various male and female micro-influencers throughout the southeast, the campaign Examples of Previous Grants MORE TO THE HUNT - Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) 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](http://moretothehunt.com/), also saw roughly 27,022 users visiting the website throughout the campaign, with 1,846 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 in which the campaign ran. We hope to see the campaign efforts live on as more people are introduced to the created SEAFWA social media pages and campaign content.

New Business –

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM