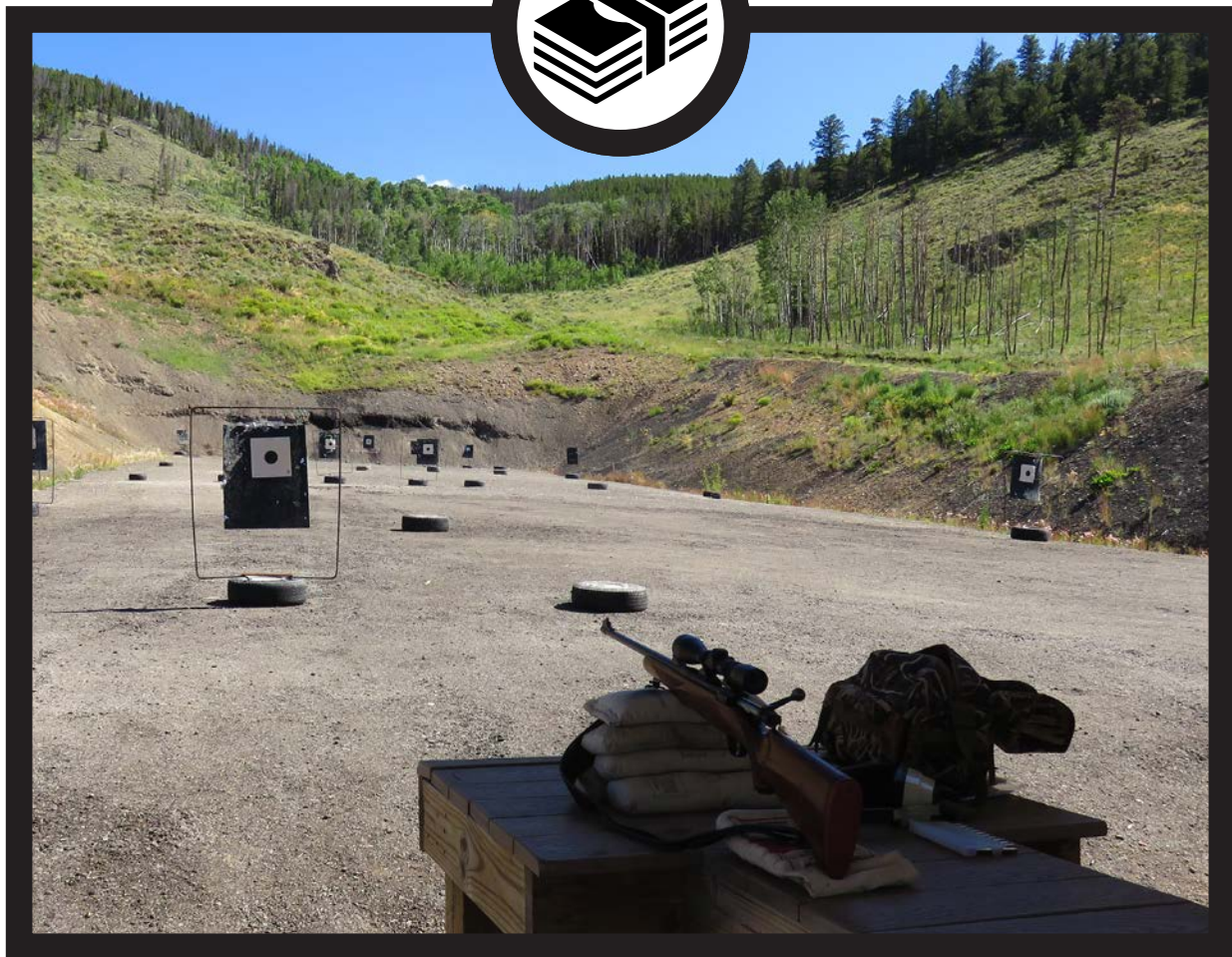


SMALL RANGE GRANTS

USING WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS



NSSF[®]
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association

WHAT IS R3, AND WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC WANT IN A RANGE?

WHAT “R3” IS AND WHY IT’S IMPORTANT

According to the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports, recruitment, retention, and reactivation (also called “R3”) is a nationwide movement focused on strategically increasing and diversifying participation in, and support for, shooting sports, hunting, as well as angling.

On the hunting and shooting sports side, this movement started because of a noticeable decline in hunting and shooting sports participation starting in the 1980s. The decline in those activities, which sustain a multi-billion-dollar industry and provide the primary financial support for State-level wildlife conservation in the U.S., posed a threat to wildlife conservation. These activities have also been integral to the American way of life and our culture and has numerous benefits to those that participate.

The R3 movement has continually evolved since its inception. It has become much more than a program and being integrated into many State and Federal agencies, nonprofits, and industry organizations as part of how they do business. The R3 efforts around the country are much more encompassing than just the traditional “learn-to-hunt” programs. Current efforts strive to improve property and information access, reduce regulation complexity, and diversify our participant base, just to name a few. The long-term goal of much of the movement is to provide improved support and experiences for existing participants, ensure that new participants are introduced from all different backgrounds, and ensure that hunting, shooting sports, and angling are seen as relevant throughout all segments of society regardless of the percentage of the population that participates.

These three simple Rs impact many people’s careers, the future of conservation, and the continuation of these activities that we should not take for granted. The R3 movement and your participation in it will play a large role in the continuations of hunting, shooting sports, and angling for generations to come.

WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS IN A RANGE

In 2018 the Ohio Division of Wildlife conducted a survey of the public who utilize State shooting ranges to better understand the user base, and assist with range renovations. A total of 1805 individuals responded with 82% of respondents possessing an Annual Range Permit, while 18% held a one-day Daily Permit. Some key findings include:

- Rifle and handgun are the largest draws with 70% of Ohio’s overall shooters.
- 29% came to site-in for hunting; 70% came for recreational shooting.
- User types have different preferences:

Top Responses from Annual Permit Holders:

Additional Days of Operation
Expanded Hours of Operation
Longer Rifle Ranges
Shorter Pistol Ranges

Top Responses from Daily Permit Holders

Expanded Hours of Operations
Restrooms
Classrooms
WIFI Availability

- While both categories of users were predominantly male, the one-day Daily Range Permit holders were a significantly higher percentage of women by generational category and were overall younger than Annual Permit holders.
- To attract younger and more diverse customers, consider including amenities such as restrooms, WIFI, and classrooms.

HOW THE WILDLIFE RESTORATION PROGRAM CAME ABOUT

1869 - Vast herds of bison, pronghorn antelope, and other game species across the U.S. plains had vanished – many reduced to a tiny fraction of their historic numbers. Thirty to 40 million passenger pigeons—so dense in numbers that reports said it took hours for the skies to clear during their migrations—had disappeared. Waterfowl populations plummeted. Species-rich swamps were drained and converted to corn, cotton, and soybean fields, and market hunting continued unabated.

1936 - A 10 percent Federal excise tax on sporting guns and ammunition already existed. Congress was abolishing such excise taxes, but industry manufacturers, sportsmen groups, and other conservationists saw an opportunity and proposed to divert rather than repeal the tax. Proceeds would go to State fish and wildlife agencies for projects to be matched on a 3:1 basis with State hunting license revenues. Firearm ammunition companies supported the proposal, and legislation was drafted.

1937 – The Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Act) was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 2, 1937 (P. Law 75-415, codified at 16 U.S.C. 669).

1970 - The Act was amended to authorize use of funds for the Hunter Education and Safety Program. The law added provisions for the 10 percent tax on pistols and revolvers to be deposited to the Wildlife Restoration Account, 1/2 of which may be used for hunter safety programs. These funds were previously deposited in the General Treasury (P. Law 91-503, October 23, 1970).

1972 - The Act was amended to add provisions for depositing an 11-percent excise tax on bows, arrows, and their parts and accessories for use in wildlife

projects or hunter safety programs (P. Law 92-558, October 25, 1972).

2000 – The Act was amended to include an \$8 million dollar set aside annually out of the Wildlife Restoration Account to be used for the enhancement of hunter education and shooting range development (Enhanced Hunter Education and Safety Program) (P. Law 106-408, November 1, 2000).

2019 - The Act was amended to provide expanded opportunities for acquiring land for, expanding, and constructing public target ranges (P. Law 116-17, March 10, 2019).

2020 - The Act was amended to allow activities for hunter and recreational

shooter recruitment, retention, or reactivation (R3), and created a \$5 million annual R3-specific program under the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (co-administered by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) (P. Law 116-94, December 20, 2019).

Today the Wildlife Restoration Program has generated over \$14.5 billion and each year that number grows. It is one of the most successful Federal- State-conservationist-sportsmen partnerships in history, and we should be proud of what we have accomplished together!



SMALL RANGE GRANT PROGRAMS AND ELIGIBILITY

Most State fish and wildlife agencies have established shooting range programs, and those States use their Wildlife Restoration funding to develop, operate, and maintain shooting ranges on State-owned lands and/or in partnership with local governments and non-profit organizations. Additionally, some States have developed small grant programs to support work on privately operated ranges. (As of 2022, the following States offer small range grant programs: Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin.) For an updated list of States contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WFSR) Program and request the Hunter Education Program Lead: (703) 358-2156 or visit: <https://www.fws.gov/program/hunter-education>

If you operate a non-profit, private range, and are located in a participating State, the information in this document can help you understand what is involved in the process, and help you participate in one of these programs. (NOTE: Not all States have a third-party shooting range grant program. Check with your State fish and wildlife agency to see if this type of program is offered in your State.)

FAQS

What entities are eligible to apply? Only the State agency with statutory authority to manage wildlife resources is eligible to apply for Wildlife Restoration funds, though such an authorized State agency may choose to pass funds through to a third-party for shooting range grants including:

- Non-profit, membership-based shooting organizations having as their purpose the promotion of firearm and archery safe handling and proper care, and improving shooting technique and marksmanship (e.g., rod and gun clubs, fish and game associations, sportsmen's clubs and firearm and archery ranges).
- Units of State or local governments that own and manage shooting ranges.
- Other governmental agencies (e.g., Indian tribal governments) that own and manage shooting ranges.
- Non-profit youth organizations and educational institutions sponsoring opportunities for youth participation in the shooting sports.

Does your shooting range currently provide regularly scheduled hours of public access? If not, will your organization commit to providing regularly scheduled hours of public access if you receive grant funds?

- Yes—You may be eligible to apply.
- No—You are not eligible.

What is the definition of “public access?”

Grant recipients are required to provide public access during agreed upon times. The standard for public access to ranges is a reasonable number (somewhat correlated with grant investment) of regularly scheduled, continuing public shooting hours for recreational shooting or target practice. Public access does not have to be free, nor does it have to permit access to the entire facility, nor be limited to the facility portion benefited by the work accomplished under the grant. A member of the public should not have to be enrolled in a class, purchase a membership to a club, be a guest of a club member, participate in an organized competitive event, or pay more than a modest fee to access the range facility. If a fee is charged it must be modest cannot be punitive towards public users and may only be used to offset or defray documented operating, maintenance, and management costs of the facility. Any such fee schedule must be approved in writing and in advance by the State and the respective regional WFSR Program staff.

Must my shooting range be non-commercial and for recreational use?

Yes. Facilities funded with Wildlife Restoration (Hunter Education) grant funds must be for non-commercial, recreational range use. Commercial use of the facilities may be permitted provided the commercial use does not interfere with public access during those specific times and events as agreed upon (e.g. associated parking facilities).

FAQS

What kinds of shooting range projects can be funded with Wildlife Restoration (Hunter Education) funds?

- Improve public recreational firearm and archery shooting opportunities by providing small grants to range-owning organizations for range enhancement.
- Accomplish improvements at existing firearm and archery range facilities.
- Develop new firearm and archery range facilities.
- Provide facilities accessible by persons with disabilities, where feasible.
- Integrate safety, accessibility, and environmental best management practices into the physical facilities of ranges and the management of ranges.
- Support firearm and archery education to learn safe and responsible hunting and shooting practices.

What is the grant application process?

Please contact your State fish and wildlife agency for details on the grant application process. This information will normally include:

- Grant program objectives.
- Who may apply.
- Where grant funds can be used.
- Grant and match requirement.
- Grant amounts.

- The grant application, selection, and selection criteria processes.
- The grant approval notification process.
- The grant management specifications.
- The grant recipient obligations (including useful life for a range, public access requirements, etc.)
- The contractual terms that will govern the relationship between the State and the grant recipient(s).

If I apply and receive an award, will I need to provide matching funds?

Yes, although your State fish and wildlife agency may require different matching requirements than the usual 25 percent or 10 percent depending upon funding source. This non-Federal match may include:

- Cash contributions (e.g. private funding or non-Federal, State or local funding) and/or
- In-kind contributions (e.g. the value of donated or discounted labor, materials, services, equipment or land).

Where does the funding come from?

Funding for the Shooting Range Small Grant Program is generated by Federal manufacturer excise taxes collected on the sales of firearms, ammunition, and archery



Photos this page: Brenda VonRueden - WDNR

FAQS

equipment. It is managed as a Federal grant program to the States under the Wildlife Restoration Program by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a “User Pays Public Benefits” program. Therefore, this grant program will involve local communities and/or organizations in a three-way partnership with a State and the USFWS’s WSFR Program.

What if the shooting range earns income or revenue while supported by a Wildlife Restoration grant?

Income or revenue is understood to mean gross income earned by the non-Federal entity and is directly generated by a grant-supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance. This is defined as “program income” under WSFR regulations and therefore has special requirements. Applicants should be aware that any income or revenue generated from a WSFR project must be returned to the project as funds available for the regular operations and maintenance of the project. The income must be documented, reported annually, and returned only to the general operations and maintenance

of the range facility within the grant project’s scope. Range fees must meet the definition of program income above to be counted as such. You must retain all documentation of income earned on WSFR-funded projects. More information about program income can be found in 2 CFR 200.307.

Are there any Federal Compliance Requirements?

Yes. A number of Federal requirements have to be addressed for all WSFR-funded projects. These compliance issues are addressed as part of the Federal grant application portion of the process, not during the initial application and panel review process. Depending on the complexity of the projects, substantial delays (nine months or more) may occur as a result of these requirements, although lengthy delays are the exception. The following table lists some compliance assurances that are typically required as part of the Federal review process:

POTENTIAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT	WHAT IT IS, WHO TAKES LEAD ON ADDRESSING
National Historic Preservation ACT (NHPA)	If the project may affect historic, cultural or tribal resources, consultation under NHPA with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) may be necessary for clearing your project. The State or USFWS normally takes the lead on this. If the project requires a Cultural Resource Survey (CRS), additional costs and time will be required. A CRS may be required any time soil is disturbed—building berms, digging foundations, building roads, etc.
Prime and Unique Farmland	If the project may affect sensitive farmland, you’ll need a written confirmation from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (previously SCS) clearing your project site from the unique or prime farmland restrictions. The State normally takes the lead on this.
Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 404 Permit	If the project may affect streams or wetlands, you’ll need a CWA permit or clearance from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The project sponsor normally takes the lead on this, if applicable, through contact with the local ACOE Office.
Endangered Species (ESA)	If projects may affect Federally listed species or critical habitat, consultation with USFWS’s Ecological Services may be necessary. The State normally takes the initial lead on assessing the presence of any ESA species or critical habitat. USFWS normally takes the lead if ESA consultation is necessary. If ESA issues arise, the project sponsor should work with the State to determine how to modify the project to avoid and mitigate any impacts.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	Projects that affect the human environment require NEPA documentation, which can require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). NEPA is a Federal responsibility, but the State normally takes the lead in document preparation. See NEPA section 102. (Full text available: https://www.energy.gov/nepa/downloads/national-environmental-policy-act-1969)
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Projects must be ADA compliant (though public entities may not necessarily need to make their existing facilities ADA accessible.) The State usually takes the lead for ensuring ADA requirements are met.

FAQS

What are the elements of a successful project?

- Start planning your project early and communicate with your State fish and wildlife agency often about your project goals.
- Before applying for a grant, spend some time discussing needs, goals, and expectations of the grant program.
- Employ best management practices (BMPs). Planning and design of improvement projects should conform to generally accepted practices, and the BMPs as described in several publications by governmental agencies and by recognized and respected national shooting sports organizations. A range management plan is an additional BMP consideration. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) BMPs for lead management at ranges should be followed as well.
- A project may only proceed after the State fish and wildlife agency approves and awards the grant.
- Many, but not all, States administer this grant program as a reimbursement program. If your State is one of these, this means you must incur and pay all costs associated with the project before seeking reimbursement from the State. As costs are incurred, save all invoices, receipts, and other proofs of purchase and payment.
- Make sure to document volunteer hours worked as the value of these hours can be used as your local share (match). The State has volunteer time sheets available for your use, and these must include volunteer name, date, hours worked, activities performed, and be signed by both the volunteer and a State employee who can verify the hours. Taking these actions from the beginning of your project eliminates frantically searching for documents, trying to remember number of hours worked, and who worked them at the last minute.
- Finish your grant project before your grant expiration date. If you need an extension to the date on your grant agreement, contact the State fish and wildlife agency

well before the grant expiration date to request an extension. Costs incurred prior to the grant agreement start date, or after the end date of the grant agreement, are not eligible for reimbursement.

- Most importantly, ask questions if you don't know how to proceed or need clarification on topics such as eligible costs or grant administration procedures.

Are there any additional requirements?

A State may include additional requirements for small range grant recipients including requirements to maintain the facility and any improvements as well as public access for a specified time period. States may also require a signed agreement outlining responsibilities. Your State fish and wildlife agency will be the best source of information about requirements and the application process.



Photos this page: Nevada Department of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Find your State's Hunter Education Administrator contact here and ask if your State offers a small range grant program:
iheia-usa.com/instructors/directory-of-administrators

EXAMPLES OF SHOOTING RANGES THAT RECEIVED WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS

Below are some examples of small range grant recipients and projects. For more information on Wildlife Restoration funded target ranges and project examples please visit our Partner With A Payer website: partnerwithapayer.org/ This is an initiative involving NSSF, USFWS-WSFR, State fish and wildlife agencies and industry partners that strengthens the ties between people who make this successful conservation partnership work!



Photo: Connie Martin - Board Member for Tioga Sports Park Association

Oregon's Tioga Sports Park is a shooting range complex that is currently under construction, and is being developed in Coos County, Oregon - a portion of the new firearms training facilities are now available for public use. The cost is over \$1 million, but the range is benefitting from a partnership project utilizing funds from the Wildlife Restoration Program, NSSF, Oregon Hunters Association and the National Rifle Association (NRA). This facility will include:

- 600-yard and 100-yard ranges.
- A tactical range.
- Archery ranges.
- Plans to provide hunter education, firearms safety classes, and youth programs for hunter safety.

Sometimes, shooting range grant projects solve complex problems. The Douglas Ridge Rifle and Pistol Club is located 20 miles from Portland, Oregon. With \$20,000 of Wildlife Restoration funding, Douglas Ridge was able to install an enormous shot curtain to contain shot from shotguns, allowing the facility to host shotgun shooting

disciplines. This project protected wetlands on the property from being impacted by shotgun pellets, making the range environmentally safe and provided additional shooting opportunities. The total project cost was approximately \$500,000 and involved a 50-foot-high by 500-foot-long shot containment curtain. This unique project serves as an example of how shooting ranges can add shotgun disciplines while providing for high level of safety and environmental stewardship.

Maine's Big Pine Gun Club is a rural facility in Willimantic. Members and non-members travel more than an hour to get there. After receiving Wildlife Restoration Program grant in 2013, the range has seen a major increase in non-member usage, due to increased shooter capacity. Improvements completed include:

- A new covered shooting area on a concrete pad and employing maximum use of natural light via clear panels in the roof, plus a storage shed for range supplies and maintenance tools.
- Four shooting stations and an ADA station, with ADA parking next to the concrete pad.
- The range covers 25-, 50- and 100-yard shooting opportunities.
- Side berm and erosion control work.



Photo: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

EXAMPLES OF SHOOTING RANGES THAT RECEIVED WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS

Nevada's Humboldt County Shooting Park project in Winnemucca is a true grassroots effort that brought many volunteers and donors together at the local level. The shooting range includes:

- Two 50-yard pistol ranges, 100-yard and 400-yard rifle ranges, and a parking area.
- The building is the first county building to be totally powered and heated by solar energy, and provides recreational shooting opportunities and hunter education classes.



Photo: Nevada Department of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Colorado's Summit County Shooting Range, located outside of Frisco, received a \$100,000 Wildlife Restoration grant, along with other monies, to help with facility renovations and upgrades. Upgrades included new concrete pads on the pistol and rifle ranges, redesigned culverts for drainage in the mud season, a new restroom, two ADA-approved benches, an ADA-accessible ramp from the parking lot, and a staircase at the main entrance. These upgrades make the shooting range more accessible to everyone, including recreational shooters with disabilities. The Summit Range Association worked closely with a local double amputee and sportsman who helped fine-tune the plans for the ADA benches. When paired with the ADA ramp, the 50-yard pistol range and 100-yard rifle range are now easily accessible by wheelchairs.



Colorado Photos: U.S. FWS / WSFR

Thank you

We would like to thank the dedicated staff of the firearms and ammunition manufacturers, USFWS-WSFR, State fish and wildlife agencies and the men and women of America who engage in hunting and target shooting for their support of the Wildlife Restoration Program. This document would not have been possible without the efforts of Zach Snow, Director, Member Development and Christina Milloy, National Lead for the Wildlife Restoration Program and Hunter Education for USFWS-WSFR. Many others provided input and review of the document, including the USFWS-WSFR Regional Hunter Education Coordinators and many State fish and wildlife agency Hunter Education Administrators.

For more information visit:

fws.gov/program/hunter-education

partnerwithapayer.org/ranges/



Photo: Keith Warnke – WI Department of Natural Resources

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