

Project Abstract Summary

This Project Abstract Summary form must be submitted or the application will be considered incomplete. Ensure the Project Abstract field succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. Use 4,000 characters or less. Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive or proprietary information. Refer to Agency instructions for any additional Project Abstract field requirements. If the application is funded, your project abstract information (as submitted) will be made available to public websites and/or databases including USAspending.gov.

Funding Opportunity Number

F-FWS-WSFR-23-001

CFDA(s)

15.628

Applicant Name

SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project

Enhancing Support for WSFR Among Recreational Shooters Through Targeted Research and Communications

Project Abstract

The purpose of this project is to determine what non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners know and think about Pittman-Robertson and the conservation efforts it funds; develop effective messages to encourage their support for PR and the work of the agencies; and put the research into action via a new digital communications campaign in two southeastern pilot states. Because non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners may feel less connected to wildlife conservation issues, the Pittman-Robertson funding structure is in danger of being disrupted. Legislators may also attempt to address funding gaps by redirecting PR excise tax revenues from non-hunting shooters and firearms owners to programs other than wildlife conservation.

For this project, our team will conduct a probability-based multi-modal survey of non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners across the United States. The survey will assess knowledge and awareness of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program, including the excise tax on firearms and ammunition and the programs funded through these revenues. Findings from this research will then inform a communications campaign implemented in Tennessee and Texas, two states with sizable populations of firearms owners. The campaign will target non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners with data-based education and outreach to increase their knowledge of Pittman-Robertson and help them develop a stronger connection to wildlife conservation, especially through messages determined to be effective in the survey. The campaign will be encompassing of distinct subgroups within the overall population of non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners based on data from the survey. As a result of this project, non-hunters whose purchases contribute to Pittman-Robertson will become stronger advocates for wildlife conservation and stronger proponents of the current Pittman-Robertson excise tax funding mechanism. Our team will produce a final report that details how to increase non-hunting Pittman-Robertson contributors' knowledge of and support for America's conservation funding structure, including through recommendations based on the initial results of the pilot communications campaign.

Objective 1 Title: Conduct a national survey of non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners, including oversamples in Tennessee and Texas. Objective 2 Title: Develop and implement a pilot communications campaign targeting non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners in Tennessee and Texas. Objective 3 Title: Produce a comprehensive final report and communicate results to all 50 state fish and wildlife agencies.

This project will produce actionable research findings that drive concrete recommendations for communications and marketing—the recommendations will be further informed by the results of a new communications campaign implemented in two southeastern pilot states. Another benefit of the proposed project will be new information that states can use to engage an important audience for R3, as the attitudes of non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners regarding the programs of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act have never been explored on the national scale. The project results will help to safeguard state conservation funding in the years to come by strengthening the connection between non-hunting Pittman-Robertson contributors and the wildlife projects they help to fund. Additionally, the proposed project includes a results-driven campaign component, meaning the research will immediately be put into action. The overall effect will be to substantially improve the relevancy of state fish and wildlife agencies among a broader segment of the public. Project findings and implications will be shared at national and regional conferences and in industry newsletters and publications.