

# **Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Strategic Communications Plan - Interview Guide State Fish and Wildlife Agencies**

This interview is designed to collect the knowledge, awareness and opinions of employees of state fish and wildlife agencies about Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs.

## **Interview Guide**

### **Introduction**

We're speaking to people from several state fish and wildlife agencies to get an understanding about what they know about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. I won't be trying to persuade you or talk you into any programs. We simply want to know your thoughts on the issues we'll discuss.

### **Respondent Background**

1. Please tell me a bit about what you do at your agency.
  - a. How long have you been at your agency? (If not provided)

### **Knowledge and Perceptions of WSFR**

2. Are you familiar with the term "Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program," or the "WSFR program"? How about PRDJ, or "Pittman-Robertson / Dingell-Johnson"?
  - a. If no, skip 3, 4, and 5. Read the definition of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs to the interviewee before moving onto to the "Importance of Topics Section".
3. Now let's say someone was just starting at your agency, and you needed to explain Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. What would you say? How would you describe it?
4. What are your perceptions of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs?
  - a. Prompt if needed: Is it a good thing, a bad thing, are you neutral toward it? Why?
5. Thinking about others at the agency, how do they perceive Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs? Why?
  - a. Do you or others in your agency have concerns about any elements of the program?

Just so we are on the same page going forward, I am going to read the following definition of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs to you:

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs (WSFR) works with states, insular areas and the District of Columbia to provide grant funding to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, their habitats, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities.

### **Importance of Topics**

Now I want to switch gears and ask you some questions about what topics are important to you. We're thinking about how to better communicate about Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs and its benefits to folks in your agency I'm going to provide an example message. After each one, I'd like you tell me what you think and how it resonates with you.

6. You and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs share the same conservation priorities. You both help to keep species of greatest conservation need from becoming endangered and to keep common species common.
  - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
  
7. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs grants funds help to increase populations of fish and wildlife species such as striped bass, salmon, red drum, white-tailed deer, trout, elk, wild turkey and osprey.
  - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
  
8. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs provide fiscal oversight, checks and balances for grant funds, and ensures funds are used for intended conservation purposes.
  - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
  
9. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs help states prevent license funds from being diverted to non-conservation purposes.
  - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?

10. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs award and administer 16 different grant programs to assist states, tribes and non-profit organizations in their efforts to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats and to connect people with nature.

(Use list below only if needed)

Aquatic Education Subprogram	Boating Access Subprogram
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program	Clean Vessel Act Program
Endangered Species Act Program	Hunter Education Programs
Landowner Incentive Program	Multistate Conservation Grant Program
Nat'l Coastal Wetlands Cons Grant Prog	Sport Fish Restoration Program
State Wildlife Grants Program	Tribal Wildlife Grants Program
Wildlife Restoration Grant Program	National White-nose Syndrome Grants Highlands
Conservation Act Grants	Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grants

- a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?

11. Through Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides technical support and funding for efforts to recruit and retain outdoor recreation participants as well as to learn more about the motivations and obstacles affecting participation in outdoor activities.

- a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?

12. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs administers funds that State Agencies use to maintain recreational access on more than 464 million acres of land and 167 million acres of lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands across the United States.

- a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?

13. Conservation sustains natural resources and enables outdoor recreation connecting people with nature and improving quality of life.

- a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?

14. Outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources create jobs and improve the economy.

- a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?

15. I've just mentioned several topics. Which of these Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs functions is most important to you?

- a. Restore or maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations
- b. Fiscal oversight, checks and balances for grant funds, and ensuring grant funds are used for intended conservation purposes
- c. Protecting hunting and fishing license fees for state conservation efforts
- d. Recruiting and retaining outdoor recreation participants
- e. Overseeing a variety of grant programs
- f. The scope of American conservation efforts
- g. The social impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation
- h. The economic impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation

16. Thinking again about those same topics: Which do you feel would persuade your coworkers that Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs are a valuable ally to the conservation efforts of States?

- a. Restore or maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations
- b. Fiscal oversight, checks and balances for grant funds, and ensuring grant funds are used for intended conservation purposes
- c. Protecting hunting and fishing license fees for state conservation efforts
- d. Recruiting and retaining outdoor recreation participants
- e. Overseeing a variety of grant programs
- f. The scope of American conservation efforts
- g. The social impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation
- h. The economic impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation

17. Going forward, what topics would you like to be kept up to date on regarding Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs? Did we miss any topics that you are interested in?

18. Can you think of anything else we can do that would be relevant or important in assisting the efforts of your organization in the future?

### **Communicators Only**

- 1. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers a great many resources to help with media content and public relations efforts.

Would you find it helpful if the Fish and Wildlife Service occasionally shared *relevant* conservation and outdoor recreation stories with you that you might share with your

audiences?

If Yes, How often would that be helpful? If No, is there a reason it would not be helpful for stories to be shared with you?

(Use this message only if needed) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has media relations professionals, subject matter experts and information resources that can help you with your stories.)

2. We all want to connect people with nature and conserve wildlife. We are more likely to achieve our goals if we work together to share the conservation success stories.
  - a. Do you agree? Why/why not?
3. Together, we'll reach a larger audience using similar messages.
  - a. Do you agree? Why/why not?
4. Do you think U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a good resource in your effort to find and produce content for your communication efforts?

## **Closing**

Thank you very much. I appreciate your taking the time to talk and it's been very helpful. Any final thoughts or comments before we end our conversation?

Thank you again and you have a great day!