

All industry interview guides follow the example format below, with slight variability in some questions to match the industry – 1) Fishing, 2) Boating Manufacturing, or 3) Firearms, Ammunitions, and Archery. For example, the firearm industry questions uses messages about restoring or maintaining healthy wildlife populations and access to hunting and shooting opportunities, while fishing industry questions use messages about restoring and maintaining healthy fish populations and access to waterways for fishing and boating. Below is the interview guide for the Firearms, Ammunitions, and Archery industry.

## **Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Strategic communications Plan - Interview Guide Industry (Firearms/Ammunitions/Archery)**

This interview is designed to collect the knowledge, awareness and opinions of members of your industry about Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs and the equipment excise tax.

### **Interview Guide**

#### **Introduction**

We're speaking to people employed in the outdoor recreation equipment industry 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. To get started, please tell me a bit about what you do at your company.
  - a. How long have you been at your company? (If not provided)

#### **Knowledge and Perceptions of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs**

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 out at your company, and you needed to explain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs. What would you say? How would you describe it?
4. What are your perceptions of 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 company, how do they perceive Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs? Why?
  - a. Do you or others in your company have concerns about any elements of the program?
6. As far as you know, does your company promote or celebrate its contributions to conservation achieved through the taxes you pay into the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration grant programs in any way?
  - a. Prompt if needed: Put a different way, are Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration grant programs something that colleagues talk about, or is your company's involvement more behind the scenes?

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

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) works with states, insular areas and the District of Columbia to use the excise taxes paid by industry 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 WSFR and its benefits to folks in your industry. I'm going to provide an example topic. After each one, I'd like you tell me what you think and how it resonates with you.

7. The first one is, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration grant programs have helped to increase populations of wildlife such as elk, wild turkey, white-tailed deer and wood duck.
  - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
8. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs administers funds that State Agencies use to maintain recreational access on more than 464 million acres of land, marine waters, and 167 million acres of fresh waters across the United States.
  - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
9. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs administers funds that State Agencies use to maintain recreational access on more than 500 firearm/archery nationally.

- a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
10. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs provides 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?
  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 hunters as well as to learn more about the motivations and obstacles affecting their participation.
    - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
  12. 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?
  13. Outdoor recreation and conservation create jobs and improve the economy.
    - a. Does this message resonate with you? Why?
  14. I've just mentioned several topics. Which of these WSFR functions is most important to you?
    - a. Restore or maintain healthy wildlife populations
    - b. Access to hunting and shooting opportunities
    - a. Provide fiscal oversight, checks and balances for grant funds, and ensuring grant funds are used for intended conservation purposes
    - c. Recruiting and retaining hunters
    - d. The social impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation
    - e. The economic impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation
  15. Looking again at those same topics: Which of these do you feel would persuade your coworkers that the excise tax dollars being paid by your industry are being put to good use?
    - a. Restore or maintain healthy wildlife populations
    - b. Access to hunting and shooting opportunities
    - b. Provide fiscal oversight, checks and balances for grant funds, and ensuring grant funds are used for intended conservation purposes
    - c. Recruiting and retaining hunters
    - d. The social impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation
    - e. The economic impacts of conservation and outdoor recreation

16. Going forward, what topics would you like to be kept up to date on regarding Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs?
17. Did we miss anything? 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. US Fish and Wildlife Service offer a great many resources to help with media content and public relations efforts.

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

How often would you like to receive such stories?

(Use this message only if needed) The US 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!