

Virgin Islands

Federal Aid in Sport Fish & Wildlife Restoration

Division of Federal Aid
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Where the money comes from:

- Federal excise taxes paid by hunters, anglers and boaters on hunting and fishing equipment.
- A portion of the Federal fuel tax.
- Import duties on fishing tackle and pleasure boats.

What the money can be used for:

- Fish and wildlife research.
- Habitat enhancement.
- Technical assistance to private landowners.
- Environmental review of public projects.
- Land acquisition.
- Operation and maintenance of areas and facilities.
- Boating and angler access improvements.
- Comprehensive planning for fish and wildlife resources.
- Hunter and aquatic education.

Amount Virgin Islands received in 2002:

- Sport Fish Restoration: \$975,956
- Wildlife Restoration: \$313,426
- Endangered Species: \$39,293
- State Wildlife Conservation: \$120,983

Questions and Answers

Where does the money come from that supports the Federal Aid program?

The money does not come from the income tax base. Instead, funds are generated by sports people who utilize the resources managed by various programs. For instance, a hunter pays a tax when he or she purchases a firearm, ammunition or archery equipment. A boater pays a tax when the person buys motorboat fuel. A fisherman pays a tax when they purchase fishing equipment. These dollars go to trust funds.

Questions and Answers

Where does the money go?

The trust fund money is transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the Treasury. The Service then distributes the money to state fish and wildlife agencies or the appropriate agency in state government to address the resource management needs.

Why doesn't the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spend the money?

Some of the funds are spent by the Service to administer the program and provide needed administrative support to the states. However, the mission of the Service's Federal Aid Program is to strengthen the ability of state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies to restore and manage fish and wildlife to effectively meet the public's consumptive and non-consumptive needs for fish and wildlife resources. The states have the authority to manage resident species of wildlife unless otherwise defined by Federal law.

How successful have the programs been?

The restoration of numerous wildlife species, many fish management programs, boat ramps and fishing piers for sport fishing, the acquisition of coastal wetlands, the creation of several education and outreach projects, and the construction of pumpouts for boat sewage are examples of some of the benefits the outdoor user receives from these programs. Whitetail deer, wild turkey, black bear, striped bass, and numerous sport fish populations were restored by these programs. Boat ramps and handicap accessible fishing piers improved access to fisheries resources. The acquisition of lands for wildlife management areas enabled states to greatly increase wildlife populations for both game and non-game species. In turn, taxes from dollars spent by hunters on hunting equipment and ammunition enabled states to buy more land. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Federal Aid Program to the states is known to be one of the most efficient and effective Federal programs in the nation.

What management formula lead to these successes?

These programs operate as true partnerships. Program funding and administration take place at the Federal level. Project planning and development take place jointly. Resource management decisions are made at the state level. Funds are distributed between states and territories using formulas based on land area and numbers of users. Most of the funds are permanent indefinite appropriations which allows the states to plan projects and be assured that funding will be there in latter years.

How can someone apply for Federal Aid Funds?

They can't. These funds are specifically appropriated by Congress to the states. State agencies apply to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funds to accomplish specific projects. Service Federal Aid employees review the projects for substantiality in character and design and approve funding. Partners, such as conservation groups and local governments, participate in some of the programs with state agencies.