

Project title	Applicant	Wildlife funds (in dollars)	Sport fish funds (in dollars)
"The Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative: Moving the Plan Forward"	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.	225,000	
Chronic Wasting Disease Prevention and Management Planning .....	IAFWA Wildlife Health Task Force ....	357,500	
Fish & Wildlife Reference Service: Managing and Providing Information to State Wildlife and Natural Resources Agencies.	KRA Corporation .....	249,779	249,779
* Evaluation of the Fish and Wildlife Reference Service .....	Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.	20,356	20,356
Data Management Support for the Chronic Wasting Disease Initiative .....	Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.	92,154	
Unwanted Aquatic Species: A Two-Year Project to Address State, Regional and National Aquatic Invasive Species Issues.	IAFWA Fisheries & Water Resources Policy Committee.		391,840
Conservation Communication Team .....	IAFWA Education, Outreach & Diversity Committee and Point to Point Communications.	114,000	114,000
National 4-H Sportfishing Initiative .....	National 4-H Sportfishing Committee of the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation.		150,623
Creating Master Naturalist programs .....	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department ...	97,325	97,325
National Housing Incident Clearinghouse .....	International Hunter Education Association.	66,800	
Wildlife Law News Weekly Alert and Online Services .....	Center for Wildlife Law at the University of New Mexico Institute of Public Law.	40,500	40,500
Management Assistance Team .....	IAFWA .....	408,272	408,272
Sage Grouse Data Management: Making States' Data Available to Conservation Planning Teams.	WAFWA Sage Grouse and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Technical Committee.	27,800	
Bird Conservation for the Nation: Support for State All-Bird Conservation Efforts.	IAFWA Bird Conservation Committee	214,520	
Assessing Ownership, Use and Modifications of Trapping Systems, and Familiarity of Trapping BMPs by Trappers in the United States.	IAFWA Furbearer Resources Task Force; Education, Outreach & Diversity Committee; and Wildlife Resources Policy Committee.	118,800	
Development of a Detailed National Conservation Need for a National Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation Survey.	IAFWA National Grants Committee ...	125,000	125,000
<b>Totals</b> .....	.....	<b>3,025,757</b>	<b>2,473,146</b>

\* Denotes project submitted pending a final decision of the IAFWA Executive Committee, which is expected December 13, 2002.

The total cost of the proposed Wildlife Restoration projects is more than the amount allocated by Congress for this program. If we were to fund all of these projects, funds allocated, but not spent, from Fiscal Year (FY) 2002 would be used to make up the difference for FY 2003. The rest of the funding would come from FY 2004 and FY 2005 allocations because six of these projects are multi-year projects.

We expect to decide by January 10, 2003, which of the listed projects will be awarded a FY 2003 Multistate Conservation Grant. We will also publish the list of the awards in the **Federal Register** immediately afterwards.

Dated: November 27, 2002.

**Steve Williams,**  
Director.

[FR Doc. 03-565 Filed 1-10-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-M**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Guidance on Streamlining Section 7 Consultation on Hazardous Fuels Treatment Projects**

**AGENCIES:** Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Interior; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (Services) announce the availability of guidance on alternative approaches for streamlining section 7 consultation on hazardous fuels treatment projects. This guidance presents options for land management agencies and the Services

for streamlining consultation conducted under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The guidance encourages early coordination and cooperation at the project planning stage, "batching" of similar projects, and use of design criteria or screens to streamline the consultation process while minimizing the potential for adverse effects to listed species and their habitats at both the landscape and site-specific levels. All procedures identified in this document are consistent with the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the ESA and its implementing regulations (50 CFR part 402).

**ADDRESSES:** Electronic copies of this guidance may be obtained from the USFWS World Wide Web consultation home page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/consultations/streamlining.pdf>. Written copies of this guidance may be obtained from the Chief of the Division of Consultation, Habitat Conservation Planning, Recovery, and State Grants, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401

North Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, Virginia 22203, or the Chief of the Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rick Sayers, Chief, Branch of Consultation and Habitat Conservation Planning (Telephone 703/358-2106, Facsimile 703/358-1735).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

In response to recent damaging wildland fires, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture have developed the National Fire Plan, which, among other things, calls for a substantial increase in the number of forested acres treated annually to reduce hazardous fuels. With this effort comes an increased workload related to compliance with various environmental laws and regulations such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA).

Under section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, each Federal agency must, in consultation with the Services, ensure that any action it funds, authorizes, or carries out will not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Thus land management agencies must complete section 7 consultation in accordance with procedures identified at 50 CFR part 402 for each fuels treatment project they propose prior to implementation. It is essential that these consultations be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to promote the timely implementation of preventative actions that will help to ensure public safety.

This is one of the goals of the President's recently announced Healthy Forest Initiative, which will implement core components of the National Fire Plan. As part of this initiative the Services have developed the subject guidance document to assist in streamlining the section 7 consultation process for hazardous fuels treatment projects. This guidance is founded on the principle that by engaging in early planning and coordination the Services and action agencies can identify and address potential conflicts between fuels treatment projects and listed species conservation during the project design phase while there is the maximum flexibility to modify projects. Incorporating listed species' needs into the project design process, typically in the form of the development of design criteria, is one of the most effective

methods of streamlining the section 7 consultation process.

The guidance provides options for both fire management agencies and the Services and is designed to contain sufficient flexibility to meet the individual needs of varied circumstances across the landscape. While the guidance presents no new or additional requirements, it takes several streamlining techniques that have been successfully used in different areas of the country and under different circumstances, such as the development of design criteria or "screens," the batching of similar projects, and the use of programmatic consultations, and offers ways they can be used individually or in combination to effectively streamline the section 7 consultation process. All procedures identified in the guidance document are consistent with the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR part 402).

Finally, despite the best of intentions, at times the section 7 consultation process has been unduly slowed by disputes among consulting agencies. In an effort to reduce the potential for such delays, the guidance provides a dispute resolution process. This process involves elevation procedures designed to provide timely resolution to such disputes.

The Services are publishing this notice in order to advise other agencies and the public of the existence of the subject guidance and encourage its use.

**Authority:** The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: October 8, 2002.

**William T. Hogarth,**  
*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,*  
*National Marine Fisheries Service.*

Dated: October 11, 2002.

**Steve Williams,**  
*Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*  
[FR Doc. 03-577 Filed 1-10-03; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Guidance on Evaluating the Net Benefit of Hazardous Fuels Treatment Projects**

**AGENCIES:** Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Interior; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (Services) announce the availability of guidance on evaluating the net benefit of projects that reduce hazardous fuels. The guidance recommends that managers evaluate the net benefits of such projects during the consultation process conducted under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). While reducing hazardous fuels may have short- or long-term adverse effects on some species, the long-term net benefit can be substantial and sustaining to the species. This guidance will help ensure consistency in the approach the Services use to analyze the risks and benefits of implementing projects to reduce hazardous fuels.

**ADDRESSES:** Electronic copies of this guidance may be obtained from the USFWS World Wide Web Consultation Home Page at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/consultations/forestplan.html>. Written copies of this guidance may be obtained from the Chief of the Division of Consultation, Habitat Conservation Planning, Recovery, and State Grants, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, Virginia 22203, or the Chief of the Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

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