

INCREASE FUNDING TO PROVIDE FOR HUNTER RETENTION, RECRUITMENT, AND EDUCATION

There is a need to advance wildlife conservation in the United States. Hunting and trapping have been the key elements in providing funding for wildlife conservation programs for state and federal wildlife agencies (approximately \$2 billion annually). This support will be even more important in the future to benefit the nation's wildlife and to conserve America's great outdoor heritage.

In 1998, Congress approved an outreach program designed to improve communication with and among existing and potential anglers, boaters and the general public. A similar program is needed to foster communication on behalf of hunters and trappers, wildlife professionals, private landowners, and the general public as a means of reducing barriers to participation in these activities. Such programs would advance recruitment and retention of hunters, promote communication among private landowners, hunters, and the wildlife management community, and enlighten the public at large on principles of sound wildlife management.

Increased funds should enable the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to cooperate with wildlife conservation organizations and the states to advance these causes. The program could authorize the states to spend additional federal payment dollars to enhance state wildlife agency outreach programs advocating hunting and trapping and their vital role in wildlife management. ■

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration should provide increased funding to enhance hunter recruitment, retention, education, and public outreach on behalf of hunting, trapping and wildlife management.

