***Disclaimer:*** *This project statement is meant to be used as a training aid. While some of the information provided in the project statement is based upon factual data, the entire project statement is not meant to represent an actual project statement drafted by the state agency.*

**AR - Aquatic Resources Education Program**

**Arkansas Game and Fish Commission**

**7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023**

**GRANT PROPOSAL**

*[Additional grant information to include in TRACS: SAP/PO FBMS # if available, Recipient Grant ID if available, Grant Recipient Contact(s), Federal Grant Specialist Contact(s), Grant Programs(s)]*

**Public Description** *(sections from the need, purpose, expected results and benefits, and/or approach may be useful to include)*

The purpose of this grant is to increase aquatic resources awareness/appreciation and angler participation in Arkansas. There is a need to increase participation, awareness, and appreciation of angling and aquatic resources in Arkansas. According to the 2021 National Hunting and Fishing Survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, angling participation and aquatic resources awareness are declining nationwide. In Arkansas, angling participation is not keeping pace with the state’s population growth. A decline in angling participation and aquatic resources awareness will escalate as Arkansas’ population shifts from rural areas to urban and suburban communities. It is vital to provide opportunities for youth to learn about aquatic resources and angling techniques as organized sports, television, and video games compete for their interest. Arkansas’ ability to sustain participation in and appreciation for angling and aquatic resources will be significantly compromised unless angling skills and educational strategies are cultivated.

*Conflict of Interest Statement*: Not Applicable. (There are no known conflicts of interest)

*Single Audit Reporting Statement*: The state of Arkansas was required to submit a Statewide Single Audit report for its most recently closed fiscal year and that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website. The report is filed under the state of Arkansas’ EIN (99-9999999).

*Indirect Cost Statement*: We are (1) a U.S. state government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of 14.00%. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is on file in the Region 4 Headquarters Office.

**PROJECT STATEMENT**

*[Additional project statement information to include in TRACS: Project Statement Title (if unique), does this include Marine Federal waters, Project Statement Single Point of Contact, Principal Investigator (research objectives only).]*

**Geographic Location**

Statewide.

**Need**

*There is a need to increase participation, awareness, and appreciation of angling and aquatic resources in Arkansas.* According to the 2021 National Hunting and Fishing Survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, angling participation and aquatic resources awareness are declining nationwide. In Arkansas, angling participation is not keeping pace with the state’s population growth. A decline in angling participation and aquatic resources awareness will escalate as Arkansas’ population shifts from rural areas to urban and suburban communities. It is vital to provide opportunities for youth to learn about aquatic resources and angling techniques as organized sports, television, and video games compete for their interest. Arkansas’ ability to sustain participation in and appreciation for angling and aquatic resources will be significantly compromised unless angling skills and educational strategies are cultivated.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this grant is to increase aquatic resources awareness/appreciation and angler participation in Arkansas.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this grant are to:

1. 25,000 students complete training by June 30, 2023.
   * TRACS Strategy: Training/Education
     + TRACS Objective: Students complete training
       - TRACS Activity: Angler Education (# of students)
2. Train 450 instructors by June 30, 2023.
   * TRACS Strategy: Training/Education
     + TRACS Objective: Train instructors/mentors
       - TRACS Activity: Angler Education (# of instructors/mentors)
3. Conduct 250 training events by June 30, 2023.
   * TRACS Strategy: Training and Education
     + TRACS Objective: Conduct training events
       - TRACS Activity: Angler Education (# of events)

**Approach (entered separately for each objective in TRACS)**

*Approach for Objective 1: 25,000 students complete training by June 30, 2023*

* Train 25,00 students statewide in angler education through 1) basic angling/fishing classes, led by volunteer instructors and targeted primarily to youth, who teach basic angling skills such as knot tying, casting, tackle and rigging, fishing techniques, fish identification, angler ethics, and water safety; 2) free fishing events for families; 3) Learn-to-Fish workshops targeting primarily new adult anglers; and 4) aquatic biology classes.
* Implement a fishing tackle loan program to provide rods, reels and equipment to state, county, and municipal parks, schools, libraries and other partners for use by those that wish to try fishing.
* Implement the Passport to Fishing training program. This program trains teachers in Arkansas schools to teach angling methods & aquatic awareness, and form school fishing clubs.

*Approach for Objective 2: Train 450 volunteer instructors by June 30, 2023*

Three full-time professional angler education staff will be maintained to develop, coordinate, and operate the angler education program, including recruiting, training, developing and maintaining a volunteer corps of at least 50 instructors.

The angler education staff will:

* Develop course content and implement multiple course delivery methods. Courses will be scheduled and conducted in strategic locations where demand is highest.
* Develop and maintain an online student course registration and record management and tracking system by securing the services of a private vendor.
* Assure that the Angler Education Program courses are widely advertised by providing program information to Department employees and the public via the internet on Facebook, Twitter, and the Department’s website.
* Review, evaluate, and provide relevant input to angler education programs, initiatives, and materials and determine their use and effectiveness in programmatic approaches towards recruitment and retention of anglers.
* Recruit, train, develop and maintain a volunteer corps of at least 50 instructors. This includes conducting a minimum of 2 new instructor training workshops annually that will provide training on lesson plan development, records management, public speaking, learning styles, educational theory, use of teaching aids, interactive teaching methods, conducting skill-based training exercises, program policy and procedures, child protection and sexual harassment education.
* Acquire, distribute and maintain teaching aids, course materials, volunteer supplies and equipment used in the recruitment, training, recognition and management of all aquatic resource education program instructors.
* Develop and implement an incentive program for volunteer instructors. Instructors will be presented awards based upon established performance standards, such as "number of classes taught", "number of training events attended", etc.

*Approach for Objective 3: Conduct 250 training events by June 30, 2023*

The angler education staff will:

* Conduct 250 fishing clinics and derbies annually. Participants will fish public bodies of water that have been stocked with catchable channel catfish or rainbow trout. Clinics will provide basic instruction on angling technique, safety and ethics and the basics of fish biology as it relates to catching fish.
* Acquire training equipment, event supplies and materials to conduct all aquatic education programs and activities.
* Inspect, clean and repair all training equipment annually.

**Results and Benefits Expected**

* Increased awareness and appreciation of aquatic resources.
* Increased angling participation.
* Increased responsible/ethical behavior towards aquatic resources.
* Fewer angling regulation violations.
* Improved angling skills and knowledge of fisheries management and aquatic ecology.

**Budget Narrative**

Funding for this grant shall be provided by the **Aquatic Education (Freshwater/Inland) subprogram (9511)** of the Sport Fish Restoration Act.

Federal Share: **$200,580** (75%)

State Share: **$66,860** (25%)

**Total cost:** **$267,440**

*[NOTE: Applicants may provide the budget information using the SF 424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs), SF 424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs), or using the applicant’s created budget displaying an equivalent or greater level of detail.]*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Budget Class Category | Cost |
| Personnel | $148,000 |
| Fringe Benefits | $70,500 |
| Travel | $23,940 |
| Equipment | $0 |
| Supplies | $25,000 |
| Contractual | $0 |
| Construction | $0 |
| Other | $0 |
| Total Direct Costs | $267,440 |
| Indirect Costs1 | $0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$267,440** |

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has an approved NICRA of 14.00% applied to the base of salaries. AGFC will not be charging any indirect costs to this grant.

Personnel - budget estimate comprised of staff (3-4) in the following classifications: (1) Aquatic Resource Education Coordinator and (2) Aquatic Resource Education Specialist.

Fringe benefits -consists of the required employer contribution of Social Security, Medicare, unemployment tax, retirement, and employee health insurance, and is estimated at 47.65%.

Travel - staff will travel to and assist with training events (both student and instructor events), fishing events held throughout the state. Staff will also attend city and county government meetings that involve aquatic resources education trainings or fishing events.

Supplies - budget estimate includes general office supplies, fishing rods/reels, monofilament line, terminal tackle, live and artificial bait, raingear, rubber boots, and cameras. Additionally, catchable size channel catfish and bluegill sunfish may also be purchased, as needed, for fishing events.

*In-Kind Match*: **$66,860.** The State Share shall be provided by non-federal funds from donated services of volunteer aquatic education instructors. Volunteer services will be valued at the FY 2022 hourly rate of $24.75 plus fringe (base salary of Wildlife Officer 1).

*Pre-Award Costs*: No pre-award costs are requested for this grant.

*Program Income:* None anticipated.

**Equipment Narrative**

Not applicable.

**Useful Life**

Not applicable.

**Multipurpose Grant**

Not applicable.

**Relationship with Other Grants**

Not applicable.

**Timeline**

* July 2022 - August 2022: All equipment, supplies and materials procured.
* August 2022 - September 2022: Two volunteer instructor training courses conducted regionally.
* One in-service instructor training course and recognition event conducted bi-monthly.
* Aquatic education clinics and workshops conducted monthly.

**General (this is not a field in TRACS)**

50 CFR 80.82 (c) requires that a project statement must include information pertaining to 13 data elements. Element 13 (General) requires that information be included in the project statement that (a) shows that the proposed activities are eligible for funding and substantial in character and design and (b) enables the Service to comply with applicable requirements under NEPA, ESA, and NHPA, and other laws, regulations, and policies. Please see the attached NEPA, ESA, and NHPA documentation for additional information.

*[Please note: Documents with PII (personally identifiable information) or compliance documents (such as NEPA, Section 7, NHPA) must NOT be uploaded into TRACS. These documents should be submitted with your project statement(s) as part of your formal grant application in GrantSolutions.]*