

Wildlife Restoration OPERATING GRANT FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Restoration Grant

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-B-R2-2020

PROJECT NUMBER: 23.2

PROJECT TITLE: DWC Region 2 Coordination

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021; year 2 of a 2-year grant

REPORT DUE DATE: Submit to Coordinator August 28, 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Cynthia Wardlow

COOPERATORS: Jeff Selinger, Thomas Lohuis

1. Need

The State of Alaska Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) is required to implement Federal Aid programs in accordance with the applicable Federal laws and regulations Statewide. There are five regional offices that oversee the operation of 4-6 areas within each region. To ensure that DWC regional staff carry out responsibilities regarding regulatory requirements for participation in and administration of its Federal Aid program, it is essential that sufficient management and coordination be maintained within the regions, as well as among various state and federal agencies that have common interests. Failure to meet these requirements may result in suspension or termination of projects, non-approval of proposed projects, or ineligibility to participate until corrections are made.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this recurring 1-year project is to achieve regional supervision, planning, coordination, management, wildlife information awareness and dissemination, and reporting of the Division's Federal Aid Wildlife Restoration (WR)-funded programs each state fiscal year.

3. TRACS Strategy: Coordination and Administration

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE 1: Administer 14 projects under a grant that includes coordination and administration by 06-30-2021.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

[Activity 1A: Provide quality assurance and support wildlife conservation and research, restoration, management, information dissemination, education, access, and associated recreational benefits.](#)

S&I data was collected throughout the region and summarized by PI's for distribution to other staff for review. Data was analyzed and recorded following each activity and compared to previous years. Regional analysis included consideration of new projects based on changes in population trends or harvest data or exploring development of new protocols to address changing habitat conditions. 5-year management reports and plans were written for two species and submitted for publication. New project proposals were reviewed by the research/management coordinators and regional supervisors, with input during the development of proposals from subject matter experts. Project proposals were evaluated for technical content, substantiality in character and design, and suitability of objectives and procedures relative to the needs of the division. Proposals were also reviewed for future hunter access projects within the region.

[Activity 1B: Establish and maintain necessary practices to meet requirements for participation in and administration of the Wildlife Restoration \(WR\) program. Supervise DWC operations in Region 2 area offices and facilities.](#)

Regional leadership members visited offices in Anchorage, Soldotna, and Homer for programmatic review of P-R projects. Meetings with PI's in Kodiak and Cordova were held on a quarterly basis to discuss planned project execution, budgeting, and staff training on administrative protocols. Other projects received the same review telephonically or through video conferencing.

[Activity 1C: Plan, administer, coordinate, and provide regional oversight for the State of Alaska Pittman-Robertson projects to ensure eligibility in the WR program.](#)

Supervisors and PI's review active budgets monthly with administrative staff, including base and CIP-funded activities. Changes or modifications are communicated to ADF&G headquarters to ensure budget planning for the current and future fiscal years can be accurately projected. Staff associated with this project attended and participated in local state advisory committee meetings throughout southcentral Alaska (Region 2) and federal regional advisory committee meetings to discuss WR grant-funded projects. Most meetings during this reporting period were conducted virtually. Presentations on ongoing research and S&I work in Region 2 were given at different venues either in-person or virtually to engage with other stakeholders during the reporting period to identify and address issues currently effecting wildlife management in Region 2.

[Activity 1D: Prepare and coordinate with the Federal Aid Coordinator all research grant submissions, amendments, and performance report submissions.](#)

Regional leadership consult with the Federal Aid Coordinator during the development of research grants on best practices and current templates, and for advice on standard practices for ADF&G documents. Updates and review of the Federal Aid process and recent changes are given directly to staff by their PI's. When amendments are needed, they are submitted through the Federal Aid Coordinator for review and transmission to Federal Aid for review and acceptance. Performance reports are submitted annually or as scheduled to ensure compliance with federal aid rules.

[Activity 1E: Oversee review and finalization of regional research technical reports and publications](#)

The research coordinator, management coordinator, regional biometrician, and regional supervisor review technical reports in various stages of development and prior to submission for publication. Regional coordinators ensure that other agencies and cooperators are properly acknowledged and that publications meet standards for scientific rigor. Technical reports and publications may be published by ADF&G or submitted to recognized professional journals for review, acceptance, and publication.

OBJECTIVE 2: [Engage 20 organizations by 06-30-2021.](#)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

[Activity 2A: Participate in local, regional, state, and national meetings as a representative of the DWC to address issues related to WR-administered grants.](#)

Staff associated with this project attended and participated in local state advisory committee meetings throughout southcentral Alaska (Region 2) and federal regional advisory committee meetings to discuss WR grant-funded projects. Presentations on ongoing research and S&I work in Region 2 were given at different venues, mostly virtually, to engage with other stakeholders during the reporting period to identify and address issues currently effecting wildlife management in Region 2. Other national conventions and species workshops were attended virtually. More than 30 meetings were attended, and information shared during the reporting period.

OBJECTIVE 3: [Develop/revise 1 plan by 06-30-2021.](#)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

[Activity 3A: Develop new research project proposals.](#)

Regional leadership met to discuss new research proposals on black bear genetics, and potential collaboration with local land managers and military installations. Additional proposals were reviewed to continue and expand habitat work and moose movement on the Kenai Peninsula in the area of the 2019 Swan Lake Fire, and for future collaborative projects on goat habitat use and deer population estimates. A proposal to increase collaring of brown bears near a road being re-routed was also discussed.

Activity 3B: Supervise the research program in Region 2 such that budgeting, planning, implementation, and reporting is achieved.

Research staff and supervisors review active budgets monthly with administrative staff, including base and CIP-funded activities. Changes or modifications are communicated to ADF&G headquarters to ensure budget planning for the current and future fiscal years can be accurately projected. Research operational plans are developed by the PI's and reviewed by regional leadership for accuracy and feasibility. Administrative staff are consulted to ensure that all financial costs are documented within the planning documents for the development of the project statements. Project statements are reviewed by the regional research coordinator and administrative officer for completeness and accuracy prior to submission.

Activity 3C: Oversee the development of operational plans and project statements for research.

The research coordinator, management coordinator, regional biometrician, and regional supervisor review operational plans at various stages of development and prior to approval for submission as a new project. Once active, regional leadership works with PI's to ensure the planned work is consistent with the operational plan and project statements are submitted and approved prior to beginning work and throughout the life of the project.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

Ongoing responsibilities of programmatic review, developing new project statements, budget development and management, and reporting on activities happen annually. Training of new PI's and discussions with existing PI's on W-R program compliance continues throughout the year, as it has previously. Contractual expenditures were lower because of difficulty finding pilots (both fixed wing and helicopter) during the pandemic. Boat charters were also difficult to arrange due to pandemic restrictions. Travel costs were minimal because of restrictions on travel to remote locations and small villages, limiting field camps, and the continuation of virtual meetings. Multiple staff retirements and resignations resulted in extended vacancy factor.

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

None.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

None.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

This project should continue for the duration of the operating grant. The Regional Coordination project 23.2 directly relates to the headquarters Coordination Project 23.0 in the main operating grant of each state fiscal year. Regional objectives ensure the regions comply with the overall coordination necessary to achieve the coordination, management, and reporting requirements of the Division's Federal Aid WSFR-funded programs each state fiscal year, and as such will be ongoing in future years. In FY22, a combined project statement will be submitted to include activities currently in project 23.2 as part of a larger regional operating project statement.

Prepared by: Cynthia Wardlow

Date: May 3, 2022