Public Law 96-366
96th Congress

An Act

Sept. 29, 1980
[H.R. 3292]

To assist the States in developing fish and wildlife conservation plans and actions, and for other purposes.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980.
16 USC 2901 note.
16 USC 2901.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980".

SEC. 2. DECLARATION OF FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) Fish and wildlife are of ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, economic, and scientific value to the Nation.

(2) The improved conservation and management of fish and wildlife, particularly nongame fish and wildlife, will assist in restoring and maintaining fish and wildlife and in assuring a productive and more esthetically pleasing environment for all citizens.

(3) Many citizens, particularly those residing in urban areas, have insufficient opportunity to participate in recreational and other programs designed to foster human interaction with fish and wildlife and thereby are unable to have a greater appreciation and awareness of the environment.

(4) Historically, fish and wildlife conservation programs have been focused on the more recreationally and commercially important species within any particular ecosystem. As a consequence such programs have been largely financed by hunting and fishing license revenues or excise taxes on certain hunting and fishing equipment. These traditional financing mechanisms are neither adequate nor fully appropriate to meet the conservation needs of nongame fish and wildlife.

(5) Each State should be encouraged to develop, revise, and implement, in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, and local and regional agencies, a plan for the conservation of fish and wildlife, particularly those species which are indigenous to the State.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act—

(1) to provide financial and technical assistance to the States for the development, revision, and implementation of conservation plans and programs for nongame fish and wildlife; and

(2) to encourage all Federal departments and agencies to utilize their statutory and administrative authority, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with each agency's statutory responsibilities, to conserve and to promote conservation of nongame fish and wildlife and their habitats, in furtherance of the provisions of this Act.

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SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS. 16 USC 2902.

As used in this Act—

(1) The term "approved conservation plan" means the conservation plan of a State approved by the Secretary pursuant to section 5(a) of this Act.

(2) The term "conservation plan" means a plan developed by a State for the conservation of fish and wildlife which meets the requirements set forth in section 4.

(3) The terms "conserve", "conserving", and "conservation" mean to use, and the use of, such methods and procedures which are necessary to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, the well being and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats for the ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, and scientific enrichment of the public. Such methods and procedures may include, but are not limited to, any activity associated with scientific resources management, such as research, census, law enforcement, habitat acquisition, maintenance, development, information, education, population manipulation, propagation, technical assistance to private landowners, live trapping, and transplantation.

(4) The term "designated State agency" means the commission, department, division, or other agency of a State which has primary legal authority for the conservation of fish and wildlife. If any State has placed such authority in more than one agency, such term means each such agency acting with respect to its assigned responsibilities but such agencies, for purposes of this Act, shall submit a single conservation plan.

(5) The term "fish and wildlife" means wild vertebrate animals that are in an unconfined state, including, but not limited to, nongame fish and wildlife.

(6) The term "nongame fish and wildlife" means wild vertebrate animals that are in an unconfined state and that—

(A) are not ordinarily taken for sport, fur, or food, except that if under applicable State law, any of such animals may be taken for sport, fur, or food in some, but not all, areas of the State, any of such animals within any area of the State in which such taking is not permitted may be deemed to be nongame fish and wildlife;

(B) are not listed as endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543); and

(C) are not marine mammals within the meaning of section 3(5) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1362(5)).

Such term does not include any domesticated species that has reverted to a feral existence.

(7) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(8) The term "State" means any of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SEC. 4. CONSERVATION PLANS. 16 USC 2903.

The conservation plan for any State must—

(1) provide for the vesting in the designated State agency of the overall responsibility for the development and revision of the conservation plan;

(2) provide for an inventory of the nongame fish and wildlife, and such other fish and wildlife as the designated State agency deems appropriate, that are within the State and are valued for ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, economic, or scientific benefits by the public;

(3) with respect to those species identified under paragraph (2) (hereinafter in this section referred to as "plan species"), provide for—

(A) the determination of the size, range, and distribution of their populations, and

(B) the identification of the extent, condition, and location of their significant habitats;

(4) identify the significant problems which may adversely affect the plan species and their significant habitats;

(5) determine those actions which should be taken to conserve the plan species and their significant habitats;

(6) establish priorities for implementing the conservation actions determined under paragraph (5);

(7) provide for the monitoring, on a regular basis, of the plan species and the effectiveness of the conservation actions determined under paragraph (5);

(8) provide for plan review and revision, if appropriate, at intervals of not more than 3 years;

Public views.

(9) ensure that the public be given opportunity to make its views known and considered during the development, revision, and implementation of the plan; and

Consultation.

(10) provide that the designated State agency consult, as appropriate, with Federal agencies, and other State agencies during the development, revision, and implementation of the plan, in order to minimize duplication of efforts and to ensure that the best information is available to all such agencies.

16 USC 2904.

SEC. 5. APPROVAL OF CONSERVATION PLANS AND CERTAIN NONGAME FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACTIONS.

(a) APPROVAL BY SECRETARY OF PLANS.—(1) Any State may apply to the Secretary for approval of a conservation plan.

Regulations.

(2) Applications for the approval of conservation plans shall be made and reviewed by the Secretary in such manner as the Secretary shall by regulation prescribe.

(3) As soon as practicable, but not later than 180 days, after the date on which a State submits (or resubmits in the case of prior disapproval) an application for the approval of a conservation plan the Secretary shall—

(A) approve the conservation plan, and designate it as an approved conservation plan, if he determines that the plan—

(i) meets the requirements set forth in section 4, and

(ii) is substantial in character and design; or

(B) disapprove the conservation plan if he determines that—

(i) the plan does not meet the requirements set forth in section 4, or

(ii) to implement any part of the plan on the basis of the specifications, determinations, identifications, or priorities therein would threaten the natural stability and continued viability of any of the plan species concerned.

Written disapproval statement.

If the Secretary disapproves a plan, he shall give the State concerned a written statement of the reasons for disapproval and provide the State opportunity for consultation with respect to deficiencies in the plan and the modifications required for approval.

(b) EFFECT OF APPROVAL OF PLANS.—If the Secretary approves the conservation plan of any State under subsection (a)—

(1) that portion of such plan that pertains to wildlife conservation shall be deemed to be an approved plan for purposes of section 6(a)(1) of the Act of September 2, 1937 (16 U.S.C. 669e(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act; and

(2) that portion of such plan that pertains to fish conservation shall be deemed to be an approved plan for the purposes of section 6(a)(1) of the Act of August 9, 1950 (16 U.S.C. 777c(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. 16 USC 777e.

(c) CONSERVATION ACTIONS.—If the Secretary approves the conservation plan of any State under subsection (a), those conservation actions set forth in the plan which pertain to nongame fish and wildlife shall be deemed to be eligible as nongame fish and wildlife projects for which reimbursement is available under section 6.

(d) NONGAME CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF AN APPROVED PLAN.—In the absence of an approved conservation plan, and on a showing of need by the State, the Secretary may deem certain conservation actions to be nongame fish and wildlife projects for which reimbursement is available under section 6(a)(3) if they—

(1) are consistent with such of the requirements set forth in section 4 as may be appropriate, including, but not limited to, the requirements in paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (7) of such section; and

(2) are substantial in character and design.

SEC. 6. REIMBURSEMENT OF STATE COSTS FOR DEVELOPING, REVISING, AND IMPLEMENTING CONSERVATION PLANS AND IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN NONGAME FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACTIONS. 16 USC 2905.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any State may apply to the Secretary for reimbursement under this section for costs incurred by the State for the following:

(1) The development of a conservation plan.

(2) The revision of an approved conservation plan.

(3) The implementation of nongame fish and wildlife conservation actions approved under section 5 (c) and (d).

(4) The implementation of conservation actions specified in an approved conservation plan.

(5) The coordination, consolidation, or implementation of the conservation plan or conservation actions approved under this Act with other related plans or actions developed pursuant to the Act of September 2, 1937 (16 U.S.C. 669e(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and the Act of August 9, 1950 (16 U.S.C. 777c(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. 16 USC 777e.

(b) APPLICATIONS.—Application for reimbursement under this section shall be made in such manner as the Secretary shall by regulation prescribe and shall contain such information as is necessary to enable the Secretary to determine whether the State meets the eligibility requirements set forth in subsection (c).

(c) ELIGIBILITY.—No State is eligible for reimbursement under this section unless the Secretary finds that the costs, for which reimbursement is sought, have been incurred by the State as follows:

(1) If reimbursement is sought under subsection (a)(1), such costs have been incurred in developing a conservation plan that meets the requirements set forth in section 4.

(2) If reimbursement is sought under subsection (a)(2), such costs have been incurred in revising the plan in a manner consistent with such requirements.

(3) If reimbursement is sought under subsection (a)(3), such costs have been incurred in implementing the conservation actions as approved by the Secretary.

(4) If reimbursement is sought under subsection (a)(4), such costs have been incurred in implementing conservation actions specified in, and in a manner consistent with, the approved conservation plan.

(5) If reimbursement is sought under subsection (a)(5), such costs have been incurred in consolidating, coordinating or implementing conservation plans and actions approved under this Act with approved plans and actions under the Act of August 9, 1950 (16 U.S.C. 777c(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act and the Act of September 2, 1937 (16 U.S.C. 669e(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act in a manner consistent with sections 2 and 4 of this Act.

16 USC 777e.

(d) REIMBURSEMENT.—Subject to the limitations in subsection (c) and the terms and conditions imposed under section 7, and to the availability of funds appropriated under section 11, the Secretary shall reimburse each State which the Secretary finds to be eligible therefor under subsection (c).

(e) LIMITATIONS.—(1) The total amount of the reimbursement paid to any State under this section with respect to any fiscal year may not exceed the allocation available to the State under section 8 for such year.

(2) No reimbursement may be paid under this section to any State for any cost incurred by the State during any fiscal year—

(A) after September 30, 1991, in developing a conservation plan;

(B) after September 30, 1986, for costs incurred in implementing certain nongame fish and wildlife actions approved under section 5(d);

(C) in which less than 80 percent of the costs to be reimbursed are for the principal benefit of nongame fish and wildlife or the users of nongame fish and wildlife;

(D) in implementing an approved conservation plan, unless the cost was incurred in implementing actions approved under section 5 (c) or (d);

(E) in implementing an approved conservation plan covering only nongame fish and wildlife, or any nongame fish and wildlife conservation action approved under section 5 (c) or (d), to the extent that more than 10 percent of such costs are paid for with moneys collected during such year by the State—

(i) from the sale of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, and

(ii) as penalties (including forfeitures) for violations of the hunting, fishing, and trapping laws of the State; or

(F) in implementing an approved conservation plan or any nongame fish and wildlife conservation action approved under section 5 (c) or (d), to the extent that—

(i) more than 10 percent of such costs are applied for purposes of conservation law enforcement under any such plan or action, and

(ii) more than 10 percent of such costs in any such year are accounted for by personal service or other inkind contributions.

(3) The amount of the reimbursement paid to any State under this section with respect to any fiscal year—

(A) may not exceed 75 percent for the development of a conservation plan except that during fiscal years 1982, 1983, and 1984 such amount shall not exceed 90 percent;

(B) for the implementation of nongame fish and wildlife conservation actions approved under section 5 (c) or (d), may not exceed 75 percent of the cost of implementing the action during such fiscal year, except that if such action is undertaken by two or more States such amount shall not exceed 90 percent;

(C) during and after the fiscal year in which the conservation plan of the State is approved under section 5(a), may not exceed 75 percent of the cost of implementing and revising the conservation plan during such fiscal year, or if two or more States cooperate in implementing or revising such plan, such cost shall not exceed 90 percent, and

(D) after September 30, 1991, may not exceed—

(i) 50 percent of the cost of implementing and revising the plan during the fiscal year, if the approved conservation plan of the State covers only nongame fish and wildlife, or

(ii) 75 percent of the cost of implementing and revising the plan during such fiscal year, if the approved conservation plan of the State coordinates and consolidates planning for fish and wildlife.

(4)(A) In computing the costs incurred by any State during any fiscal year in developing or revising conservation plans, in implementing approved conservation plans, or in implementing nongame fish and wildlife conservation actions approved under section 5 (c) or (d), for which reimbursement may be available under this section, the Secretary shall—

(i) take into account, in addition to each outlay, the value of inkind contributions and real and personal property received and applied during such year by the State for such purposes; and

(ii) not include any other Federal moneys received by such State and applied by it, directly or indirectly, for such purposes.

(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), inkind contributions may be in the form of, but are not limited to, personal services rendered by volunteers in carrying out surveys, censuses, and other scientific studies regarding fish and wildlife. The Secretary shall by regulation establish (i) the training, experience, and other qualifications which such volunteers must have in order for their services to be considered as inkind contributions; and (ii) the standards under which the Secretary will determine the value of inkind contributions and real and personal property for purposes of subparagraph (A).

(C) Any valuation determination made by the Secretary for purposes of this paragraph shall be final and conclusive.

SEC. 7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF REIMBURSEMENT. 16 USC 2906.

Reimbursements made to the States under section 6 shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary shall by regulation prescribe as being necessary or appropriate to protect the interests of the United States. Such terms and conditions shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Each State and each designated State agency shall keep such records as the Secretary shall require as being necessary or Recordkeeping.

appropriate for fully disclosing the amount and purposes of costs incurred by the State for which reimbursement under section 6 is, or may be, sought. The Secretary and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access, for purposes of audit and examination, to such records.

Access to records.

Hearing.

(2) Upon a finding by the Secretary, after notice and opportunity for an agency hearing on the record, that any State has received reimbursement under section 6 for which it is not eligible, or has violated any term or condition imposed under this section, the State shall thereafter be ineligible to receive reimbursement under such section until restitution satisfactory to the Secretary is made, such violation ceases, or adverse effects resulting from such violation are remedied.

16 USC 2907.

SEC. 8. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR ADMINISTRATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The total amount appropriated pursuant to section 11 for any fiscal year shall be available for administration and for allocation among the States as provided in this section.

(b) ALLOCATION FORMULA.—Of the total amount appropriated for any fiscal year pursuant to section 11—

(1) the Secretary shall deduct so much, but not to exceed 8 percent thereof, as may be necessary for administering during such fiscal year the provisions of this Act relating to the purposes for which so appropriated;

(2) less the deduction under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall allocate—

(A) for the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico each a sum equal to not more than one-half of 1 percent of such amount; and

(B) for Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands each a sum equal to not more than one-sixth of 1 percent of such amount; and

(3) less the deduction under paragraph (1) and the sums allocated under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall allocate for each of the States (other than those provided for in paragraph (2)) a sum—

(A) one-third of which is based on the ratio to which the area of such State bears to the total area of all such States, and

(B) two-thirds of which is based on the ratio to which the population of such State bears to the total population of all such States,

except all sums allocated under this paragraph shall be adjusted equitably so that no State shall be allocated a sum which is less than one-half of 1 percent of the amount available for allocation under this paragraph for any fiscal year or more than 5 percent of such amount.

(c) TREATMENT OF AMOUNTS ALLOCATED BUT NOT USED FOR ANY FISCAL YEAR.—(1) That portion of any amount deducted by the Secretary under subsection (b)(1) for administrative purposes for any fiscal year and not expended during such fiscal year shall remain available for administrative purposes until the close of the next succeeding fiscal year and if not obligated or expended by the close of such succeeding fiscal year shall be available for disbursement by the Secretary without regard to subsection (b), to the States to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(2) That portion of any amount allocated to any State under subsection (b) (2) or (3) for any fiscal year and not disbursed to the State for such fiscal years under section 6 shall remain available for disbursement to the State under such section for the next succeeding fiscal year and if not disbursed for such succeeding fiscal year shall be available for disbursement by the Secretary, without regard to subsection (b), to the States to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 9. OTHER FEDERAL ASSISTANCE AND ACTIONS. 16 USC 2908.

The Secretary and the chief executive officer of any other appropriate Federal department or agency may loan to any State such personnel and equipment of the department or agency, share such scientific or other appropriate information, and provide such other assistance as the Secretary or officer determines appropriate for purposes of assisting any State to develop or revise conservation plans.

SEC. 10. DISCLAIMERS. 16 USC 2909.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting—

(1) the authority, jurisdiction, or responsibility of the States to manage, control, or regulate fish and resident wildlife under State law;

(2) any requirement under State law that lands, waters, and interests therein may only be acquired for conservation purposes if the owner thereof is a willing seller; and

(3) the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture under the Act of March 2, 1931 (46 Stat. 1468–1469; 7 U.S.C. 426–426b).

SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. 16 USC 2910.

There are authorized to be appropriated for purposes of making reimbursements under section 6 to States for the development and implementation of conservation plans and for administration of this Act under section 8 not to exceed $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985.

16 USC 2911.

SEC. 12. STUDY.

The Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in consultation with affected parties, shall conduct, out of funds available for the administration of this Act a comprehensive study to determine the most equitable and effective mechanism for funding State conservation plans and actions under this Act, including, but not limited to, funding by means of an excise tax on appropriate items. On or before the expiration of the 30-month period following the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall report to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries of the House of Representatives the results of such study, together with his recommendations with respect thereto.

Report to congressional committees.

Approved September 29, 1980.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 96-168 (Comm. on Merchant Marine and Fisheries).
SENATE REPORT No. 96-768 accompanying S. 2181 (Comm. on Environment and Public Works).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:
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Sept. 9, considered and passed Senate amended.
Sept. 16, House concurred in Senate amendments.
WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 16, No. 40:
Sept. 30, Presidential statement.