



Ms. Theresa Stabo,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Dear Theresa,

I am writing to provide comments on the recently posted (May 15, 2018) DNR Proposed Program Guidance for the “Angler Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Program.” I am speaking on behalf of Wisconsin’s Green Fire, Voices for Conservation (WGF). WGF is an independent nonpartisan organization formed in 2017. WGF supports the conservation legacy of Wisconsin by promoting science-based management of its natural resources. Members have extensive experience in natural resource management, environmental law and policy, scientific research, and education. Members have backgrounds in government, non-governmental organizations, universities and colleges, and the private sector. More information about WGF can be found at www.wigreenfire.org.

The R3 Program Guidance Document describes a new program to provide matching grants to local governmental, non-governmental, and citizen groups to help them promote sport fishing in Wisconsin. Grants are targeted at groups making innovative efforts to increase angling interest and activity among adults and among people of color. I and WGF applaud the emphasis on adults and people of color. Most past R3 efforts in Wisconsin and elsewhere have focused on kids, which is certainly worthwhile, but they often have neglected adult and non-white anglers. In current society, most kids cannot go off to the local river or lake to fish on their own. Rather they will need to be accompanied by an adult, usually a parent or guardian. If adults are not interested in fishing, research shows that the kids likely won’t be able to go regularly and will not develop their own attraction to the sport. But if adults take up fishing, the kids they associate with are much more likely to become anglers as well. Increased efforts to recruit people of color to fishing are also long overdue. Because many communities of color are concentrated in Wisconsin’s cities, where fishing opportunities are sometimes limited, I feel that efforts to increase angling participation should be dovetailed with an increased and enhanced urban fishing program.

My only concern is the complexity of the grant process and application. I understand the need for establishing the bona fides of the applying groups and for tracking their activities and expenditures carefully. However, the many steps and detailed information required to be awarded a grant may discourage smaller or newer groups that lack extensive grant-writing experience. A shorter and simpler application process might encourage more groups to participate.

Sincerely,



John Lyons, Ph.D.

Co-Chair, WGF Fisheries Work Group

cc Dave Vetrano, WGF Fisheries Workgroup Co-chair
 Nancy Larson, WGF Administrative Assistant
 Terry Daulton, WGF Board President