

# Federal Aid Division Resource Requirements Analysis



October 10, 2000



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# *Executive Summary*

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## **Project Purpose**

The Federal Aid Division (FA) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service asked The Center for Organizational Excellence (COE) to conduct a resource requirements analysis that would set the stage for current-state improvements and prepare for future challenges. The purpose of this analysis was to gain an independent evaluation of the structure, capabilities, and performance of FA's workforce and its major work processes.

Two desired outcomes were identified jointly by FA and COE for the project:

*These were four desired outcomes for the project*

1. An improved data baseline for making strategic human resource decisions; and
2. A foundation for systematic, sustainable process improvement.

Each of these outcomes was achieved and is discussed in this report.

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## **Key Findings**

Our main finding is that despite all the turbulence that has been hammering the FA program for the past several years, FA's employees in the Regions are continuing to do an effective job of processing grants and meeting the expectations of their State Agency customers.

*FA is doing its work satisfactorily*

This level of performance was confirmed both through our analysis of the work processes in each Region and through an analysis of results from our Customer Feedback Survey. Over two-thirds of the respondents to this survey rated themselves as "very happy" or "generally satisfied" with the level and quality of services they are receiving from FA. In addition, customers and stakeholders, including the IAFWA, reported that they desire more services from FA in on-the-ground advice and technical support. In general, we found it noteworthy that FA, with a current staff of 130 employees, is able to carry out a demanding, complex mission that involves 50 States and 4 Territories. Each of these entities requires a tailored approach and varying degrees of assistance

as part of the grant administration process. Furthermore, in many States there are multiple agencies with which FA interacts, adding more complexity to the mission.

*FA is operating at capacity to achieve a demanding and complex mission*

Currently, two pending legislative acts may impact FA through potential budget cuts, staffing changes, and new responsibilities.

We found that FA performs five core work processes to achieve its mission:

*FA performs five core work processes*

- Grant administration
- Audit support and resolution
- Policy development and deployment
- State capacity development
- Internal support processes

Each of these work processes involves some degree of coordination between the WO and the Regions, and each is described in detail in Section 2 of this report. There is significant variation in FA's performance of each of these core processes, and we have made a number of recommendations for improvement elsewhere in this report. It is important to note, however, that one of the most important processes from the customer's point of view, grant administration, is the process that we found is being performed at the relatively highest level of effectiveness.

*FA's workforce is well-educated, experienced, and effective*

We found that FA has a well-educated, experienced workforce, as well as a cadre of exceptionally talented employees scattered across the organization. We found that Regional Office and Washington Office leadership in general is perceived by employees and customers as effective, but that there are variations in the perception of leadership effectiveness among the Regional Offices.

Most of the performance metrics we evaluated indicated that three Regions, 1, 2, and 5, perform at a higher level of effectiveness than the other Regions. We caution against placing too much reliance on this information, however, as each Region is faced with a unique set of circumstances that affect its ability to

achieve its mission. COE recommends that FA implement a process for addressing Regional differences in staffing levels, grade distribution, and specialist assignments so that all Regions have the staff needed to successfully carry out its core responsibilities.

*Leadership is improving in FA*

Finally, we found that the new FA Chief is making a difference in the perception of leadership effectiveness within FA. The new Chief's hands-on working style and direct approach to organizational performance issues is having a positive impact across the organization. The Chief has articulated his vision of a more cohesive, effective team of FA employees in the WO and Regions working together, and this message is helping to break down some long-standing barriers.

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## **Summary of Recommendations**

In order to make systematic improvements, COE recommends that FA leadership revisit the mission and values of the organization and develop a strategic plan to meet that mission. All other process and staffing improvements should be driven by the redefined mission and new strategic plan.

COE recommends the following actions:

1. Define and operationalize the mission – FA's mission statement needs to be crisp, energetic, and operational. It should reflect the ideal of what this organization wishes to be.
2. Integrate the mission and values into the daily workplace – The work of the organization should reflect its mission and values. Employees should see how the mission relates to their work and how their work relates to the success of the organization.
3. Communicate the vision of the new FWS – FWS Directorate and management, including FA Chiefs, must have a frank dialogue about the new vision for FWS, particularly the new division of Migratory Birds and State Programs. This new vision must be operationalized through programs and processes.

4. Plan and act strategically – Make strategic planning an ongoing part of FA’s work so that the organization defines important mission elements and deploys resources accordingly.
5. Keep score – FA should hold itself accountable by attaching measures to its core processes. It should use these measures as an indicator of relative success.
6. Build a strong leadership team – Any transformation requires leadership. FA should assemble a cross-organization team to guide its transition.
7. Build in flexible access to technical specialists – FA could benefit from exploring ways to share expertise across the organization. It may no longer be necessary to maintain specific expertise in each region.
8. Deploy staff more systematically – Staffing needs for each Region should be examined. Current allocations of staff are not supported by workload or customer distribution.
9. Capture and respond to customer feedback – FA’s internal and external customers appreciate being a part of the organization’s work. Asking them for their contribution not only provides vital information, but also enhances relationships with the respondents.
10. Partner with States and key stakeholders – States and stakeholders contribute to FA as well as benefiting from its activities. These relationships can help to strengthen the organization.
11. Improve the core work processes – Look at what is most important in the organization. Start from the most central processes and improve from the inside out.
12. Streamline and improve the policy development and deployment process – Timely, consistent policy is key to FA’s effectiveness.

13. Review and revamp the audit function –FA should begin to improve the audit process by reviewing the first audit cycle and correcting those processes that no longer work for the organization.
14. Review and revamp the investment function – FA may be able to centralize investment management with qualified investment professionals.
15. Full speed ahead with FAIMS deployment – FAIMS is poised to provide FA with a fully functioning information system that provides information sharing and efficient retrieval and record keeping. It is critical that the investment in FAIMS deployment continues to full functionality. It may be possible for FWS to migrate FAIMS to other grant-making offices in order to obtain even more efficiencies and return on investment.
16. Web-enable FAIMS as soon as possible – The promise of FAIMS is in the ability of States to access and enter data in it. Web enabling this application will greatly reduce the flow of paper between FA and the States.
17. Apply for Presidential Quality Award (PQA) in 2002 – Setting a stretch goal of competing for the PQA could foster alignment and a common improvement focus. The competition for this award would provide FA with the opportunity to use established criteria for excellence in its transformation.

These recommendations are addressed in detail in Section 5 of this report.

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# *Introduction*

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## **Overview**

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is mandated by the Secretary of the Interior to apportion funds to the States through the Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration grant programs. The Director of FWS delegates this responsibility to the Office of Federal Aid for the administration of the grant programs. The Office of Federal Aid (FA) is an organization committed to serving State and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies in their efforts to create sustainable habitats for fish and wildlife resources.

*FA represents the ideal that fish and wildlife preservation is the responsibility of those who enjoy these resources*

Created through the Pittman-Robertson Act (also called the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act) and the Dingell-Johnson Act (or the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act), the Division of Federal Aid has for over 57 years been the tangible, legislated expression of the ideal that responsibility for the preservation of fish and wildlife resources lies with the people who enjoy them. To this end, Federal Aid administers a “user pays – user benefits” program in which a percentage of the money that hunters and anglers spend on their sports is returned to the States for the purposes of creating and preserving fish and wildlife habitats. Through various amendments and challenges to these acts over the years, Federal Aid has continued to serve as the embodiment of responsible fish and wildlife resource management.

FA is organized into Regions, as shown in Figure 1-1 on the following page.

**Figure 1-1**



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regions**

Currently FA administers the following programs (See Appendix A for a description of these programs):

- Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program;
- Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program;
- Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration program;
- Clean Vessel Act Pumpout program;
- Partnerships for Wildlife program;
- National Outreach and Communications program;
- and
- Boating Infrastructure program.

Legislation has played a crucial role in Federal Aid's history. From the enacting legislation in 1937 and 1950 to the additions and expansions of the last several years, the actions of Congress and the needs of the natural environment have been joined in a relationship of governmental leadership and natural resource responsibility. The ideas brought to fruition in Congress have been responsible for the preservation and growth of the fish and wildlife resources in this country.

The issues facing Federal Aid today have parallels in its rich history. Many of FA's customers are again turning their attention to the need for fish and wildlife habitat protection. FA's employees and partners are contemplating the best ways to deliver service that ensures the greatest environmental benefit. Congress is

discussing changes to the very nature of FA and the manner in which its services are delivered.

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## Project Drivers

*FA is responding to internal and external pressures, new legislation, and changes in leadership.*

Federal Aid initiated this project in response to the internal and external drivers that are currently affecting the organization.

- Externally, FA has recently been reviewed and criticized for its inefficient operations by the General Accounting Office (GAO), Congress, and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA).
- Congress is currently considering legislation that would dramatically impact FA funding levels and operations;
  - The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act (H.R. 3671/S. 2609)
  - Title III of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA)
- Internally, FA has a new mandate from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) leadership – improve FA operations and prepare to take FA into the future. A new FA Chief is in place and is actively seeking to build the FA leadership team, look for processes improvements, and improve the delivery of FA services.

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## Project Goals

*Goals for this project were establishing a baseline for decisions and providing a plan for organizational effectiveness.*

The Center for Organizational Excellence (COE) worked with FA to define the specific project goals that would allow FA to begin current-state improvements and to successfully prepare for the future. The goals were defined as:

- Documenting an accurate view of current work processes, competencies, and other staff attributes (such as education and experience) so that FA will have an improved data baseline for making strategic human resource decisions.
- Providing a plan of action to create a foundation for systematic, sustainable process improvement and organizational effectiveness improvement.

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## Methodology

COE's analysis of the Federal Aid's current and future workforce requirements was conducted using interviews, workgroups, documentation analysis, and survey methodologies. Limited by a timeframe of less than 2 months, COE focused on core work processes—those activities identified as most essential to supporting FA's mission—rather than conducting a full-scale workload analysis.

*COE used multiple methodologies, including interview, focus groups, site visits, and document analyses.*

To obtain this data, COE conducted the following major tasks:

- Interviewed Washington Office (WO) staff
- Interviewed Regional Office (RO) staff
- Conducted a focus group with all FA Chiefs
- Interviewed officers of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA)
- Conducted site visits to Regions 3, 4, 5, and 6. Regions 1 and 2 were represented at the Region 6 meeting.
- Conducted document analysis of FA reports, other organizational documents, legislation, publications from stakeholders, etc. (Documents reviewed are listed in Appendix B.)
- Collected information from FA employees (both ROs and WO) and customers (State Agency staff and related organizations) in an online survey.
  - The surveys included a range of Likert-scale responses (i.e., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), open-ended test responses, and rankings by importance or criticality.
  - There were 84 RO responses, 23 WO responses, and 57 responses from customers.
  - Copies of the surveys appear in Appendix C.

Limitations of the methodology are primarily related to the length of time available to do the research and analysis. For example, due to the seven-week duration of this process, we were unable to conduct thorough RO visits with observation of all employees and collection of detailed workload and task data.

For the survey, the number of responses received from RO and WO staff were more than adequate for a full representation of the population. The survey data did support and complement data gathered through other methods, helping to alleviate some of the potential limitations of self-reported survey data.

For the customer survey, the total number of responses may be adequate to make generalizations about the group; however, the customers who received the survey were not selected by random sample. The customer survey was sent to RO-identified lists of State Agency staff, but we cannot be certain that all State Agency staff working on FA received the survey. Also, as there was not time to send reminders, the customer surveys received may be skewed toward self-motivated respondents, i.e., those very satisfied or those very dissatisfied. However, the customer data does reflect a range of responses.

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## What Is In the Report

*This report contains findings and recommendations for FA's organizational effectiveness*

The purpose of this report is to document the findings of COE's investigation into FA's organizational functioning, from major process and competencies to workforce distribution to organizational effectiveness measures. Based on this statement of findings, the report provides recommendations for improving FA's efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of services in meeting FA's stated mission and strategy.

The report contains the following major sections:

- **Work Processes and Competencies** – Explains the core processes that were defined by FA and provides detailed process maps of these processes; provides recommendations for improving core processes; explains the crucial competencies needed by FA staff in the performance of core processes.

- **Regional Differences** – Presents major differences among ROs, such as differences in staffing levels, classifications, and GS levels. Also explores differences in customer feedback among ROs.
- **Organizational Effectiveness Review** – Presents the analysis of four components of FA performance: purpose, human resources systems, performance systems, and customer responsiveness.
- **Recommendations** – Discusses the short-term and long-term recommendations, integrating the findings of the previous report sections into a clear recommended plan of action.

# ***Work Processes and Competencies***

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## **Introduction**

Our examination of the work performed by FA follows two parallel tracks. An exploration of *processes* sheds light on the actual work being performed, while a look at *competencies* reveals the characteristics of individuals that are important for effective job performance, including knowledge, skills, and abilities. The following section describes and analyzes core processes and then examines the competencies identified by FA employees as most important to performing work in the Regional and Washington Offices.

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## **Core Processes**

FA’s mission to “strengthen the ability of States and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies to restore and manage fish and wildlife resources to meet effectively the consumptive and nonconsumptive needs of the public for fish and wildlife resources” is carried out by the program’s performance of the following five core processes:

- Grant administration
- State capacity development
- Audit support and resolution
- Policy deployment and development
- Internal support processes

Each core process is essential to achieving the program’s mission.

*These core processes are essential to achieving FA’s mission.*

- The administration of grant programs is the vehicle used by States and Territories to restore and manage fish and wildlife resources.
- The audit process ensures that the mission is achieved in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Policy development and deployment provides program guidance and direction.

- State capacity development strengthens the ability of the States and Territories to meet program goals through training, education, guidance and customer service.
- Internal support processes lay the foundation for the performance of the other processes by providing critical systems, technology, and resources. Key internal support processes include General Administration, Budget Formulation and Apportionment, Finance and Investment, Federal Aid Information Management System (FAIMS) Development and Support, Survey Analysis, and Outreach Activities.

Although FA continues to perform the processes that support its mission, there are problems that interfere with the achievement of optimal performance. The following not only describes core processes but also provides a look at the problems that reduce the FA's effectiveness.

### ***Grant Administration***

*FA administers a handful of grants and helps states prepare grant proposals.*

FA is responsible for the administration of two major formula grant programs, Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration, as well as several smaller competitive grant programs, including Boating Infrastructure, Clean Vessel Act, Partnerships in Wildlife, and Coastal Wetlands Conservation. State population, land area and the number of people holding hunting or fishing licenses determine apportionments for major grants. FA helps States prepare their grant proposals and ensures that expenditures are consistent with federal laws. FA oversees the evaluation and award of these grants to individual projects.

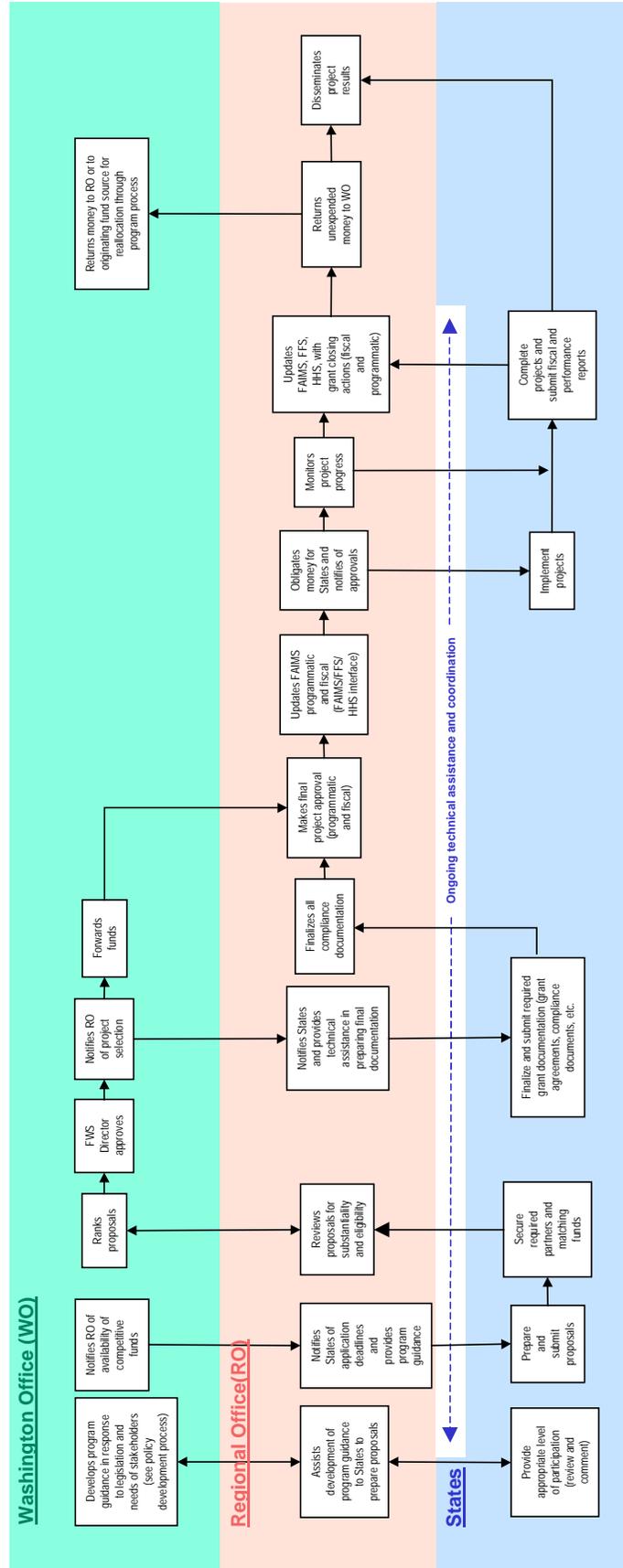
The flow charts on pages 2-4, 2-5, and 2-6 illustrate the steps involved in the administration of formula and competitive grants, as well as Section 6 grants which are allocated and administered in cooperation with the Endangered Species Office. As depicted, the administration of each of these programs depends on ongoing cooperation between the States, the Regional Offices and the WO. The Regional Offices work closely with the States to provide technical assistance and guidance at several points.

*Over 65% of FA customers indicated that they were either “very happy” or “generally satisfied” with FA’s performance.*

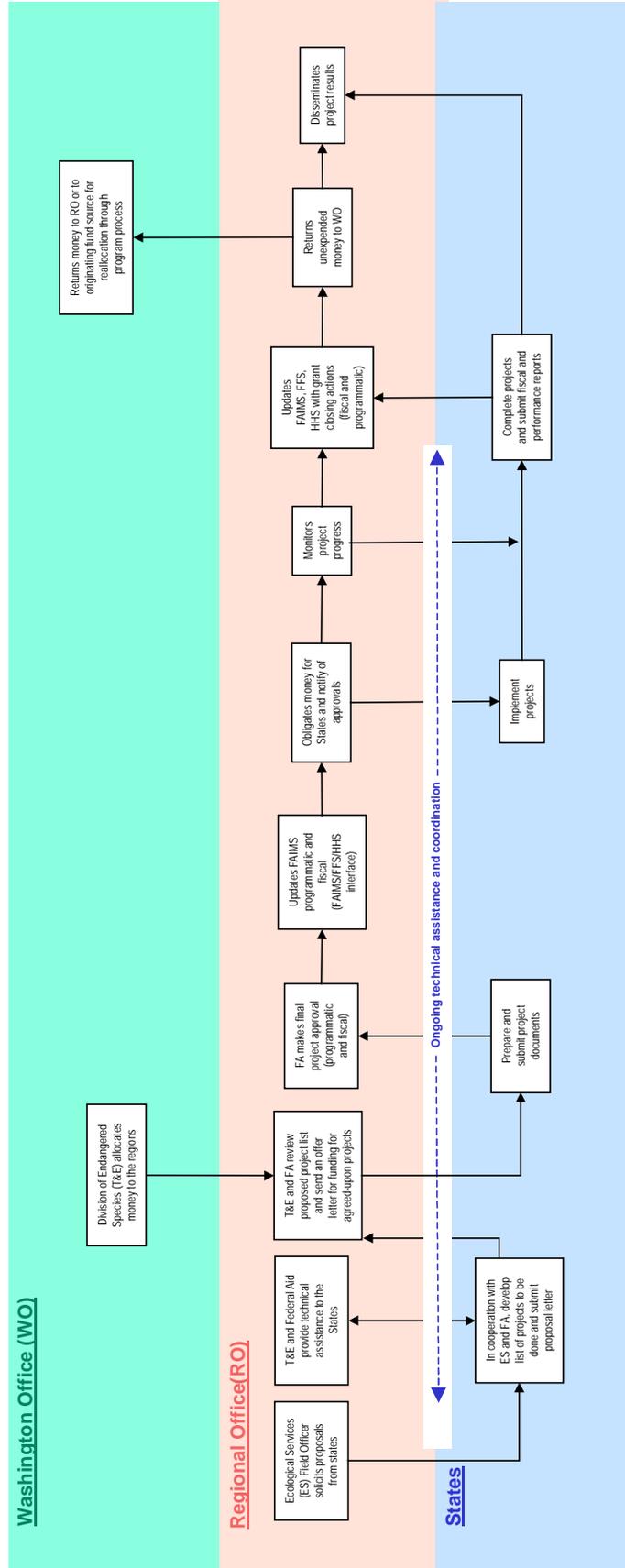
On the whole, this process works. States receive their money and are able to fund programs that support their restoration and conservation activities. As the results of the customer feedback survey presented in Section 4 of this report demonstrate, over 65% of FA customers (primarily State Federal Aid Coordinators) indicated that they were either “very happy” or “generally satisfied” with FA’s performance.

Opportunities exist to further improve this process, however. Later in this report we present recommendations for improving the definition and performance of core processes including grant administration.

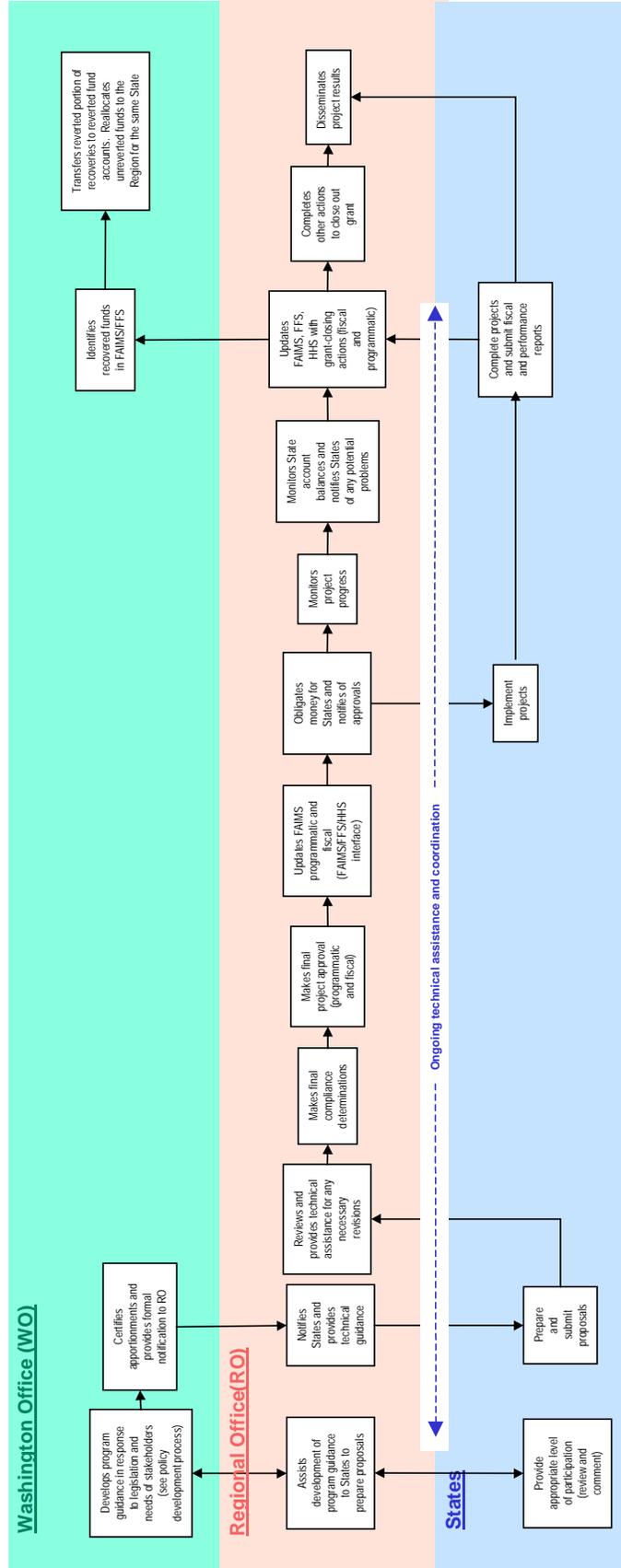
# Figure 2-1: Competitive Grants Administration Process



**Figure 2-2: Section 6 Grant Administration**



# Figure 2-3: Formula Grants Administration Process



*FA employees and customers are concerned about staff shortages*

**Process Issue: Staff Size.** Due to staff retirements and a hiring freeze, FA is operating with fewer people than in the past and is unable to fill these vacant positions. The Washington Office and the Regional Offices report that they are working at their full capacity. As Regions struggle to handle growing backlogs of grant documentation, there is concern that FA will be less able to provide necessary support to the States. Both FA employees and customers indicate concerns about a staffing shortage and the resulting inability of FA to perform important activities. Several cited concerns about slower service and less communication. Even generally satisfied customers noted the lack of adequate numbers of staff. As one customer commented, “Fill vacant positions in a more timely fashion so the professional staff remains at full complement. Lack of qualified personnel in key positions slows down the grant approval process.”

Customers and employees identified several grant-related activities that they thought FA staff should spend more time performing. These activities include visiting States and monitoring FA-funded activities, assisting States in improving systems and processes, reviewing performance reports, assisting States with planning and preparing grant applications, and reviewing States’ use of FA funds. FA will need to have the necessary staff and strategies for deploying them in order to meet these needs.

**Process Issue: Process Management.** Each Region has developed its own customized approach to grant administration based on its staffing configuration, customer requirements, history, and other factors. The differences between Regions are marginal, and mainly relate to what types of staff perform various activities. The core process is largely the same in each Region, and will further standardize as the FAIMS continues to be developed and integrated into the organization. Yet, it is important to remember that FAIMS carries with it the costs of learning and using the system. FA must plan for the additional time and effort required of its staff in using this system.

*There is a lack of focus on managing for effectiveness and efficiency*

Regardless of the degree of standardization, we found a consistent lack of focus on managing processes for optimal effectiveness and efficiency. Effective

process management means defining the process inputs, activities, customers, and outputs, and developing performance metrics and targets for each key process step.

A clear strategy and consistent methodology would also help to clarify the roles of the Regions, States and the WO. As evidenced in survey comments, FA staff and customers are not always clear about their respective roles. A process management focus would make these lines clearer, help to define the appropriate level of monitoring of grant performance, and create a more collaborative style of leadership.

### ***State Capacity Development***

State capacity development is a high priority for FA and its customers. Both FA and its customers want more of the types of services - training, education, and technical guidance - that are intended to bolster fish and wildlife restoration programs in the States. These viewpoints were expressed to us through survey comments, in discussions and focus groups, and during our meeting with the leadership of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA), who told us they envisioned “a more consultative role for Federal Aid” toward the States.

*State capacity development is a high priority for FA*

Both Washington Office and the Regional Offices’ employees ranked “the ability to anticipate, understand and meet the needs of internal and external customers (States)” as the most important employee competency in the employee feedback survey.

Unfortunately, external and organizational pressures, such as reduced staffing levels, limited resources and opportunities for travel to project sites, and, in some cases, a low level of trust between employees and leadership, have limited FA’s ability to perform this process. For example, though customers surveyed are generally satisfied with FA’s services, some commented on the negative implications of the shortage in staff size (slower service, less communication and fewer resources) on customer service quality.

Similarly, the National Training Program’s limited staff size and resources makes delivery of services to States difficult. Also, according to recommendations compiled by FA’s Management Assistance Team (MAT), 91% of stakeholders cited MAT services as “good” or “excellent” in advancing capacity through States’ agency management; yet services by MAT have been significantly curtailed.

### ***Audit Support and Resolution***

In 1992, the Department of the Interior’s Office of the Inspector General’s audit of FA found that under the Single Audit Act of 1984, FA was not receiving substantial audit coverage due to the program’s small dollar amount. In 1996, The Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) was contracted to audit State programs once every five years. (The first audit cycle will take 6 years.) Oversight of this review process is the responsibility of FA.

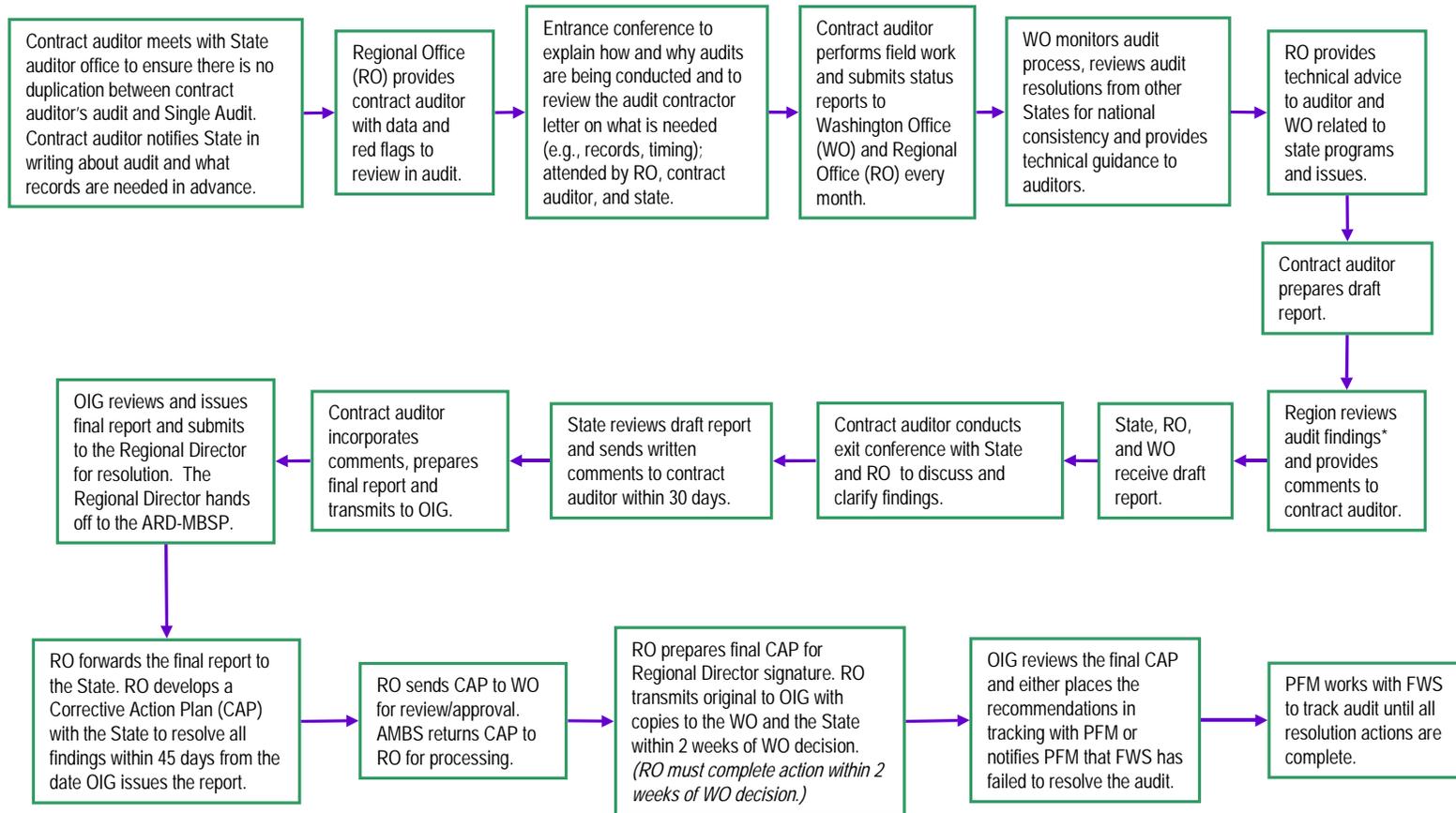
#### **FA Audit Cycle**

- States are audited once every 5 years.
- Approximately 11 States are audited per year
- There are 65 auditable entities (Some States and Territories have more than one entity to audit)

The Audit Support and Resolution Process on the following page appears to be straightforward with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. However, our analysis indicated a high level of tension, poor communication and inconsistency that make the audit support and resolution process the most problematic of the core processes.

As indicated by survey responses, customers and FA employees are united in their concern about this process.

## Figure 2-4: Audit Support and Resolution Process



\* The Regional Office is not always provided with audit findings in time to review for the exit conference; this lapse sometimes leads to the raising of conflicting interpretations at the exit conference.

**NOTE:** Communication between Regional Offices and Contract auditor varies significantly.

**NOTE:**

PFM refers to the Office of Financial Management at the Department of the Interior; the "P" refers to that part of the Department under the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.

MBSP = Migratory Birds and State Programs

AMBS = Assistant Director - Migratory Birds and State Programs

**Process Issue: Impact on Partnerships.** Some State customers and FA employees reported feeling that program audits have damaged their partnership. For example, several respondents noted differences in expectation between FA and DCAA.

The implementation of a cohesive strategic plan and audit policies would alleviate this issue by clearly defining the purpose of the audit, clarifying roles and strengthening the pre-audit process for all parties involved.

**Process Issue: Inconsistent Communication.** Poor communication pervades all levels of the audit process, beginning at the top, where leadership does not consistently communicate general audit policy or convey related issues. One respondent noted loss of employees and decreased morale as the products of this inconsistency. Miscommunication between FA offices has led to conflicting information and guidance and has resulted in audit resolutions that are inconsistent between Regions.

**Note:** This issue is being addressed by the Audit Policy issued September 14, 2000.

*FA is working to improve communication in the audit process*

There is significant variation in the amount and quality of information shared between DCAA auditors and Regional Office staff during the course of audits. This interaction varies on a Region-by-Region, and auditor-by-auditor, basis. Some Regions are kept up-to-date on findings throughout the process, while in others, little or no information is provided. Lack of communication throughout the audit process has led to unnecessary tension and confrontation.

**Process Issue: Lack of Role Clarity.** Based on survey data, there appears to be some confusion about the roles assumed by the WO and the Regions in the audit process.

- **The WO: Advisor or Administrator?**  
 Regions and States reported their desire for the WO to provide guidance and policy that would improve the audit process. WO has sometimes delayed individual corrective actions by not passing them back to the ROs in a timely fashion (see flow chart on page 2-14).
  
- **Regional Offices: Guide or Enforcer?**  
 Regional staff members responsible for audit resolutions are often also responsible for grant administration. This dual role requires employees to provide guidance to the States when it comes to grants, and to track and enforce resolutions when it comes to audits. Not only do limited staff resources make it difficult for staff members to give each area an appropriate level of time and attention, but the schism between guidance and enforcement splits the Region's relationship with States in a confusing and possibly conflicting way. Further complicating the situation is the close relationship between Regions and States that sometimes makes it difficult for Regions to recognize State problems.

COE sees this as a conflict; however, Regional employees indicated in survey comments that they want to retain responsibility for audit resolutions.

**Process Issue: Slow Resolutions.** Although 30 audits have been completed, large number of audit resolutions have not been solved or followed up. Currently there are 19 audits that are in the process of final resolution and approximately 100 issues to manage.

**Process Issue: Audit Scope.** There is a need for more clarification regarding the proper scope of audits with regard to the issue of programmatic and financial reviews. We found a range of inconsistent views within FA and the States regarding what areas and functions contract auditors should look at (and what areas and functions it is competent to look at). The FA Chief has begun a series of discussions with DCAA officials regarding the audit process and scope,

*There is a need for clarity about the scope of DCAA's role*

so there may soon be more clarity regarding the optimal audit scope.

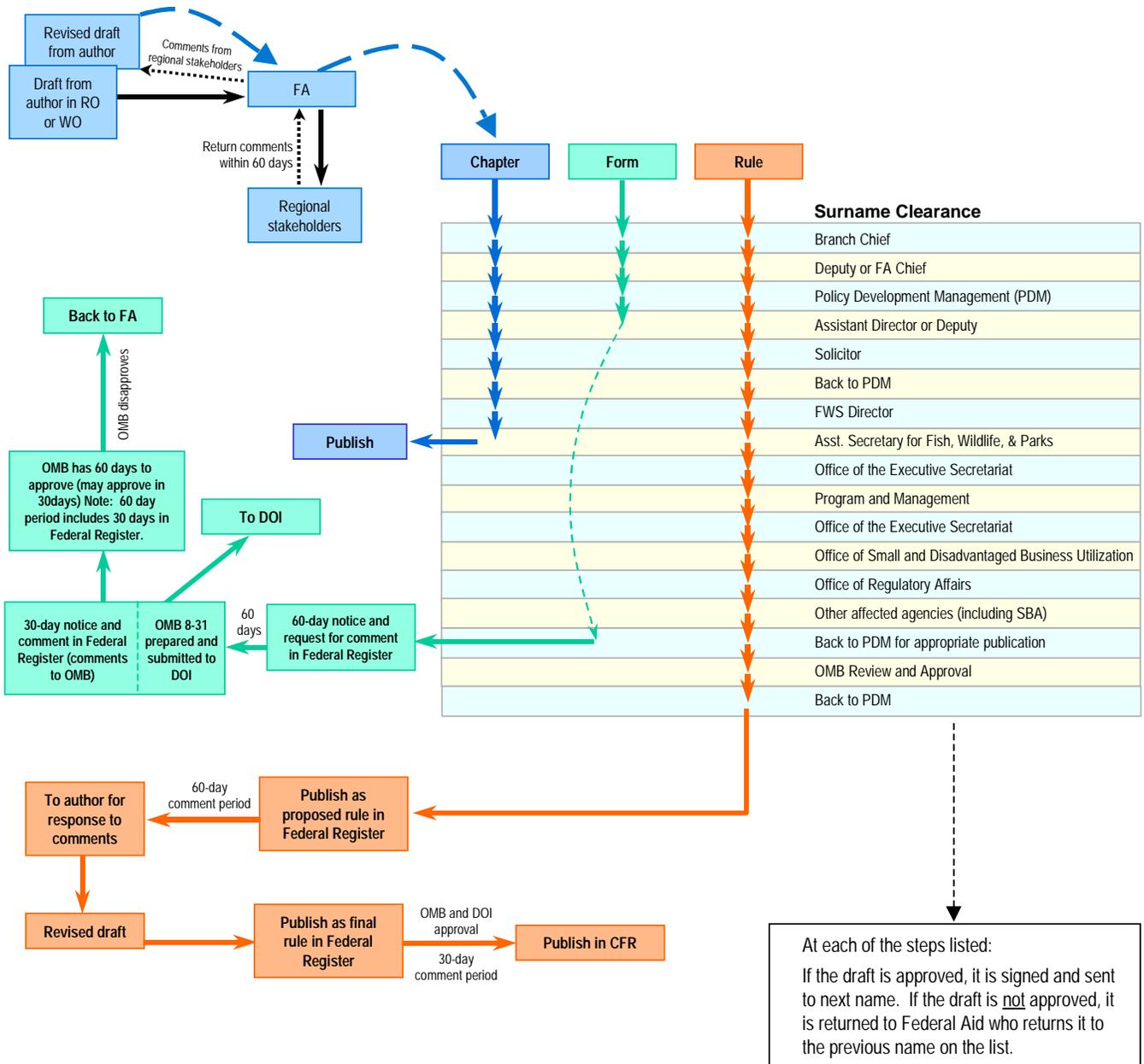
### ***Policy Development and Deployment***

The flow chart on the following page describes a process that requires multiple, redundant, and time-consuming levels of review and approval of policy. While this chart illustrates what happens to policy as it transforms from a draft to a published chapter, rule or form, it does not describe the steps involved in creating a new policy.

*FA must develop a more consistent, transparent process for creating and implementing policy*

FA must develop a more consistent, transparent, process for developing and deploying policy guidance. More importantly, it needs to develop and implement a strategic plan to focus organizational activities, inform program policies, and guide leaders. This call for a cohesive strategy and supporting policies is echoed in each of the core processes. An organizational strategy would assist FA in resolving the inconsistencies among regions in the grant administration and audit resolution processes. In addition, a strategy would direct funding to the more important aspects of State capacity development.

# Figure 2-5: Policy Review Process



## **Internal Support Processes**

*Internal support processes are vital to the implementation of other core processes*

The successful performance of the following internal support processes is vital to the effective implementation of the other core processes. Support processes such as administration, investment management, budget implementation, and FAIMS development are crucial components of FA's infrastructure. Survey and outreach activities disseminate and gather data that directly supports FA's mission.

These processes are not immune to the resource limitations, lack of cohesive strategy, and inconsistency affecting the other core processes. Listed below are key issues impacting each process.

*Workload is unbalanced*

**General Administration.** Staff cuts have reduced the size but not the workload of the administrative staff. The current workload is unbalanced and needs to be redistributed within the administrative branch; increased clerical support is also needed.

**Budget Formulation and Apportionment.** Our analysis of the budget process revealed the following key issues:

- Ongoing control of the budget process is needed to streamline steps and ensure efficient record management.
- Information Technology (IT) support from FWS is needed for improvement and maintenance of the budget tracking system.
- Apportionment certificates go through an extensive and time-consuming review process, requiring review by 26 people at the Department of the Interior, including the Secretary. FA staff and COE recommend streamlining this process by decreasing the number of reviewers required and appointing a FWS representative who would be responsible for walking the apportionments through the signature process.

**Investment Management.** FA's investments are currently managed by different entities. Sport Fish Restoration investments are handled by the

Department of Treasury with assistance from FA, while investments from Wildlife Restoration Projects are managed by the FWS Division of Finance (DF).

*FA's investments should be consolidated and professionally managed*

FA and the DF have both voiced valid concerns about the division of these investments. FA feels that investment interest for Wildlife projects should be returned to FA because it is FA money and beginning in 2005, all interest from these projects will go to FA instead of the North American Wetlands Conservation Account (NAWCA) where it is currently invested. The DF, an internal function responsible for financial oversight for the FWS and the manager of investments for other agencies, emphasized its experience and competency in the management of FA investments.

An important first step in resolving this issue would be to determine whether existing legislation bars the consolidation of these investments. If no such legislation exists, COE recommends that FA place management of both investments in the hands of qualified, internal or external, investment management professionals and that FA assume an active oversight role throughout the investment management process. By professionally managing consolidated investments, FA will achieve increased efficiency and better investment returns, a key mandate of the FA program.

*There is a high level of support for continuing FAIMS development*

**FAIMS Development and Support.** FAIMS is the information backbone of FA, and will eventually form a platform for developing consistent and efficient processes for process management in all Regions and at the WO. FA employees reported a high level of support for continued development and deployment, as there is a general recognition that the paper-based systems of the past are no longer capable of providing the level of detail and information needed by FA leadership in a fast moving environment.

There is already a major backlog of work in the Regions, especially with regard to entering archival data into FAIMS. Closed project reports, realty records, etc. are piling up (we observed the actual piles!) and it will be a major challenge for FA to get caught up on past work without sacrificing current productivity levels. Also, this new system places additional responsibilities on those using it. While the

benefits of using the system are apparent, continued support for it will be engendered by acknowledgement of and planning for the additional resource needs it creates. FA is already working at capacity; the success of FAIMS will depend largely on the ability of FA employees to efficiently integrate it into their work.

*Outreach activities need  
a clear strategy*

**National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation.** A major issue affecting the survey, which measures the value of fish and wildlife recreation, is pending legislation. The possible passage of H.R. 3671/S. 2609 would mean that the survey would no longer be funded from FA administrative funds, but would instead be funded under grants submitted by the states to the IAFWA.

**Outreach Activities.** In order for FA outreach activities to be more consistent, managers in the WO and Regions must work together to make decisions, resolve issues, show support for activities, and build consensus about the desired amount of outreach in the organization.

Outreach activities are not currently driven or coordinated by strategy. A cohesive strategy would ensure that messages are clear and supported by FA's mission, values, and goals.

#### ***Other Federal Aid Sponsored Activities***

Although COE's examination of Federal Aid's programs focused on the core processes being performed, our research also included programs funded by Federal Aid.

**Fish and Wildlife Reference Service.** The Fish and Wildlife Reference Service (FWRS) receives, indexes, stores and distributes copies of reports produced by State fish and wildlife agencies from research studies supported by Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act funding. FWRS also receives reports produced by the Anadromous Fish Conservation Program, the Endangered Species Grant Program, and the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units. Additional collections located at FWRS include the Lead Shot/Lead Poisoning Clearinghouse, Boating Access/Boating Facilities Clearinghouse, and the

Clean Vessel Act Education/Information Clearinghouse.

**Conservation Partnerships Liaison Division.** In 1998, Congress passed legislation requiring that The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council develop a national communications strategy to promote boating and fishing participation and aquatic stewardship. The Conservation Partnerships Liaison Division was established to provide support to the council and to oversee a private foundation created to distribute program funds.

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## Competencies

As a parallel to analyzing FA organizational processes and work activities, COE and FA leadership identified the following basic competencies needed to enable employees to effectively perform the FA core processes:

1. Working knowledge of the laws, regulation, policies, and standards relevant to administration of the Federal Aid program.
2. Working knowledge of the laws, regulations, policies, and standards relevant to the environmental aspects of the Federal Aid program.
3. Working knowledge of the operations, functions, and responsibilities of State agencies with whom Federal Aid interacts.
4. The ability to process grants effectively and efficiently in compliance with Federal laws.
5. The ability to apply biological expertise and knowledge as needed to process grants.
6. The ability to ensure that financial resources are used effectively, efficiently, and appropriately, and that all financial standards are maintained.
7. The ability to utilize information technology tools—computers, e-mail, Internet, FAIMS, etc.—to support daily work processing.
8. The ability to express ideas effectively orally or in writing.
9. The ability to anticipate, understand and meet the needs of internal and external customers.

*These are the competencies needed to enable employees to effectively perform the FA core processes*

10. The ability to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to internal and external requests.
11. The ability to develop networks and alliances with a range of external stakeholders.
12. The ability to use sound judgment to make timely, effective, and well informed decisions regarding daily workplace issues.
13. The ability to identify and respond to the internal and external politics that are inherent to the mission of Federal Aid.
14. The ability to organize and delegate work, provide feedback, and manage other people.

*These competencies can be used to improve work performance*

COE found that these required competencies are generally present in the FA staff population, which is reflected in the findings that ROs are, in general, performing the core processes. We were not able to conduct individual assessment of competency mastery, nor were we able to establish the level for competency mastery required per grade level and job specialty. However, these competencies can be used in continuing efforts to improve work performance. For example, as processes are improved, the process improvement teams can make recommendations on which competencies are especially important per processes and per job that works on the process. Then they can assess the current level of mastery of the staff, and plan developmental activities to attain needed mastery levels.

*FA may need to add new competencies*

COE found that in the future, FA will need the same competencies and will possibly need to add additional competencies, depending on which legislation, if any is passed.

All competencies are not equally important to the performance of FA jobs. The competencies identified as most important in the WO and in the Regions are presented in the table below. The survey results showed a high level of agreement among ROs and WO on the most crucial competencies for successful performance. This indicates that FA staff have a clear understanding of what is important to do and know, which is a positive first step in building a strong mission capability.

Most Important Competencies	Mean Importance Rating <sup>1</sup> and Rank	
	WO (Rank)	RO (Rank)
The ability to anticipate, understand and meet the needs of internal and external customers	6.14 (2)	6.33 (3.5)
The ability to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to internal and external requests	5.95 (4.5)	6.39 (2)
The ability to utilize information technology tools—computers, e-mail, Internet, FAIMS, etc —to support daily work processing	6.05 (3)	6.46 (1)
The ability to express ideas effectively orally or in writing	6.38 (1)	6.25 (6)
A working knowledge of the laws, regulations, policies and standards relevant to administering the FA program.	5.38 (6)	6.33 (3.5)

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree; this scale is represented numerically with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 7 indicating strong agreement.

# *Regional Differences*

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## **Introduction**

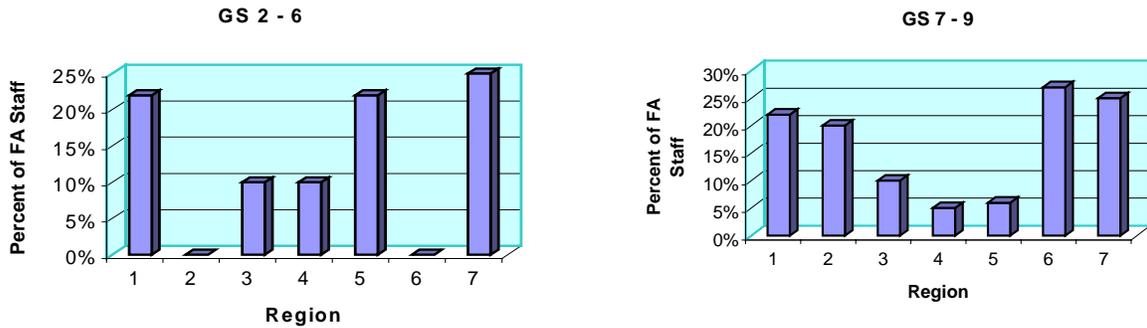
This section presents our observations about differences among FA Regions. In it we will discuss staffing, productivity, and qualitative differences, and we will provide recommendations where appropriate.

Over the years, Regional Offices have added staff in an ad-hoc fashion, based on their interpretation of how best to meet their States' requirements and interests. There was no centralized methodology for determining what types of jobs or at what level are required to perform the workload of the ROs. This may have been the best approach at the time, as the ROs sought to provide the desired level and type of services to the States. However, this lack of systematic staffing planning has led to significant variations in the staffing patterns among Regions, with little clear relationship to the workload of the RO. Most importantly, staffing per Region has not been examined strategically and systematically, to ensure that ROs are staffed to meet the mission of FA.

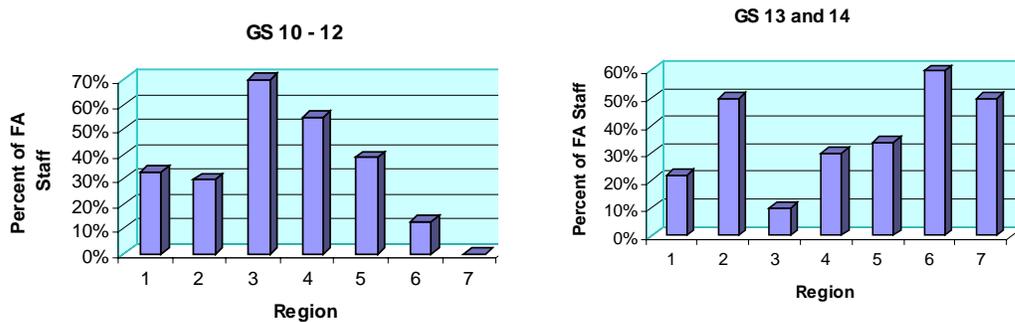
## **Staffing**

There is great disparity across regions in staffing levels and composition. (Appendix D shows number and type of employees per RO. Appendix E shows RO organization charts.) Our investigation of work processes revealed variations in how the core processes are performed and by whom, driven at least in part, by the different types of staff present in each RO. For example, Regions 2 and 6 have no staff in the grade range of GS 2 – 6. This raises the possibility that, as all ROs are performing the same core processes, Regions 2 and 6 have core tasks performed by staff at too high a grade level (which leads to excessive payroll costs).

## Differences in Grade Level per Region



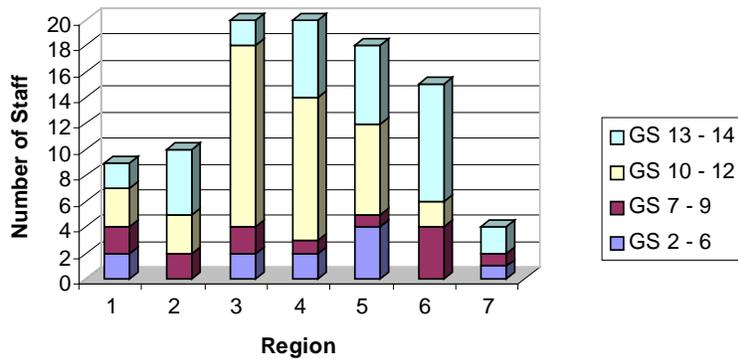
Another example is the distribution of grades 13 and 14. Usually considered management grade, it is difficult to determine why Region 6 would need 60% of its staff to be GS 13 – 14, and Region 3 10%, as all Regions are all performing the same core processes.



*There differences across Regions in staffing and grades*

There are clear implications for the effectiveness by which work is accomplished and results are achieved due to these differences. There are probably also differences in the cost of getting the core processes performed, due to the staffing disparities. Also, there is potentially grade inequity, in that in one Region a GS 7 may be performing the same tasks as performed by a GS 12 in another Region, due to the fact that the RO has to get the work done with the staff at hand. Similar implications are evident in the distribution of job specialties among ROs. For example, Regions 1 and 6 have no computer specialists, while other regions have computer specialists on staff.

**Numbers of Staff by Region by Grade**

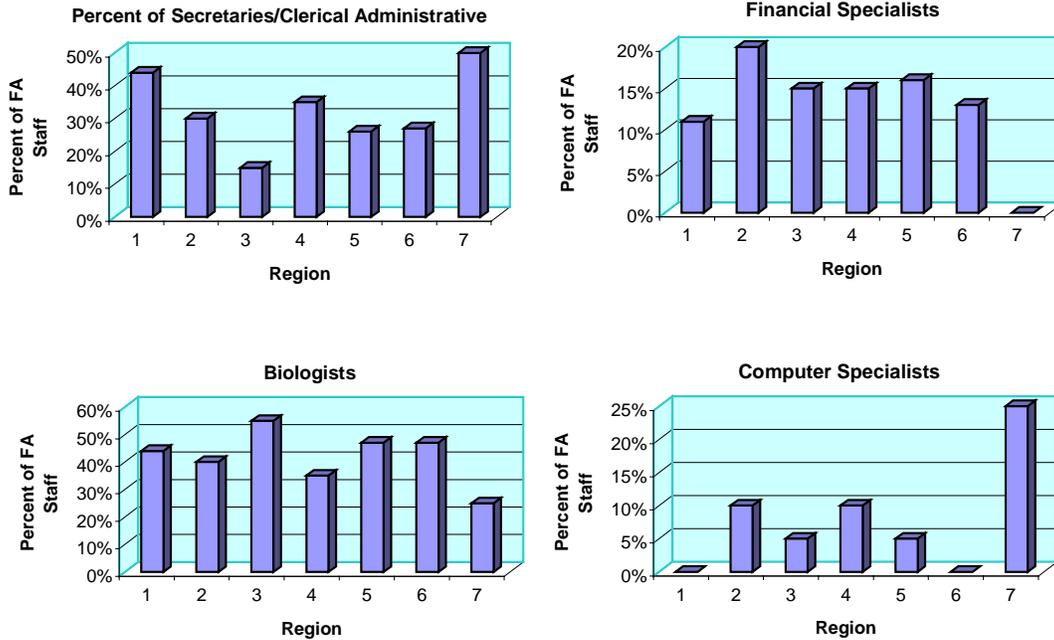


*Some Regions have staff positions that others do not*

There is no clear reason, from the standpoint of the core processes, as to why some ROs should have computer specialists, and others none. Also, there are some job specialties that are present in only one Region. For example, Region 6 has three staff members in the category of “Recreation Planning” specialist, whereas no other Region has these specialists. Region 3 has one staff member who is a realty specialist, and no other Region has this specialist. There may be legitimate reasons for some Regions to have specialists that no other Regions have, but we found no evidence that this type of determination has been made strategically.

COE recommends that the WO and FWS executives consider the workforce distribution from a strategic view. What staff does each RO need to perform the core processes? What specialists does each RO need, unique to the States that it serves? How can specialists be shared among Regions? Adjustments to staff distribution, by grade and specialty, should be made to support the strategic mission of FA.

## Differences in Functional Category (Job Specialty) Assigned per Region

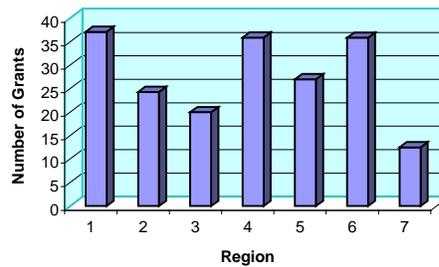


## Productivity

*More information is needed to explain variations in grant actions among staff members*

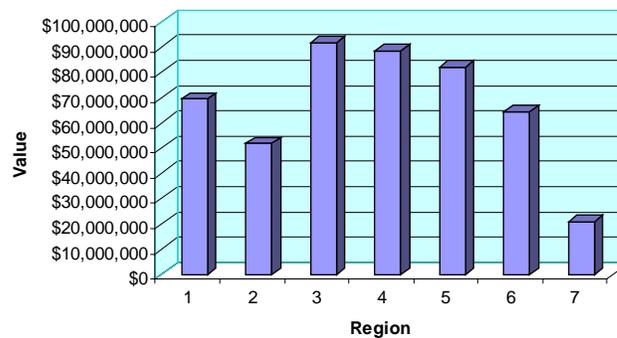
The charts below examine the volume of work and staff productivity. The first chart shows the number of grant actions completed per staff member, per RO. There is a large variation in the number of grant actions completed per staff member (from 12.5 in Region 7 to 37.1 in Region 1). However, no conclusions can be made based on this measurement alone, primarily due to the lack of quality standards for the core work processes. For example, FA does not currently have metrics on how to determine if a grant has been processed to meet the desired quality standards for timeliness, completeness, and adherence to Federal regulations. Therefore it is not possible to tell if a Region that processes 37 grants per staff member is truly more effective than any other Region. Furthermore, Regions that are processing the most grants per staff member may actually be overburdened, and it may not represent the optimal ratio of staff to grants processed. Further investigation into streamlined work processes and effective staff distribution will have to be made in order to establish a measurement in this area.

### Differences in Number of Grant Actions per Staff by RO



The chart on the following page shows the differences in total dollar value of grant actions per Region. Without consistent and improved core processes, it is not possible to correlate the dollar volume with a specific required staffing level. As explained above, staffing distributions will need to be planned considering the strategic needs of FA overall, the needs of the RO and the States it serves, the specialists needed in the RO, and the nature of the work required by the grants processed in the RO.

### Differences in Total Dollar Value of Grant Actions per Region



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## Qualitative Differences

Regional differences were also apparent in qualitative data we collected. The first chart below shows differences among Regions in customer ratings of their service. Interestingly, in all qualitative customer service ratings, a clear pattern emerged of Regions 1, 2 and 5 consistently having highest ratings. This should be considered when undertaking the planned processes improvement projects, because highly rated Regions should be examined for best practices that can be migrated to other Regions.

## Customer Quality Ratings



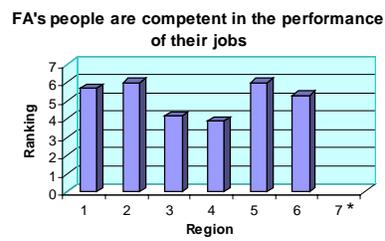
\* No data received from region



\* No data received from region



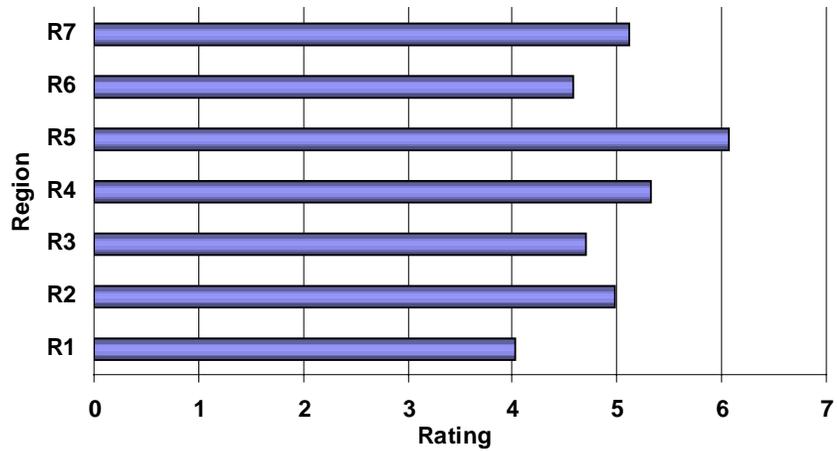
\* No data received from region



\* No data received from region

The following chart presents the results of an analysis of the perceived effectiveness of Regional Leadership, based on responses provided in the employee feedback survey. We compiled a Regional Office Leadership Effectiveness Index based on the average responses from each region to a series of questions that focused on key leadership outcomes.

### Regional Leadership Assessment



The following questions were included in the index:

- My supervisor recognizes the work I do.
- I feel free to challenge the way things are usually done.
- The people in my region work well together.
- We share knowledge effectively within our region.
- My region continuously improves the way it does its work.
- FA's leadership encourages finding new and better ways to do our work.

*There are opportunities for  
standardizing best practices  
across regions*

We assigned scores to each response based on the scale provided in the survey, ranging from 1.0 (strongly disagree with the statement) to 7.0 (strongly agree with the statement). The scores for regions varied from 4.03 at the low end to 6.07 at the high end. This is a significant variation and indicates that there should be opportunities for improving and standardizing regional best practices.

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# *Organizational Effectiveness Review*

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## **Introduction**

During the course of this project, we had the opportunity to observe FA's organizational effectiveness from multiple perspectives, including those of Washington Office and Regional Office employees and customers. This section of the report presents our evaluation of FA's organizational effectiveness.

*The OE review allows leadership to assess its readiness for current and future challenges*

The purpose of this organizational effectiveness review is to allow leadership to look inside the organization and take steps to ensure that it is positioned to address current and future challenges and to become a more effective organization.

In studying and examining organizational effectiveness, we ask four primary questions:

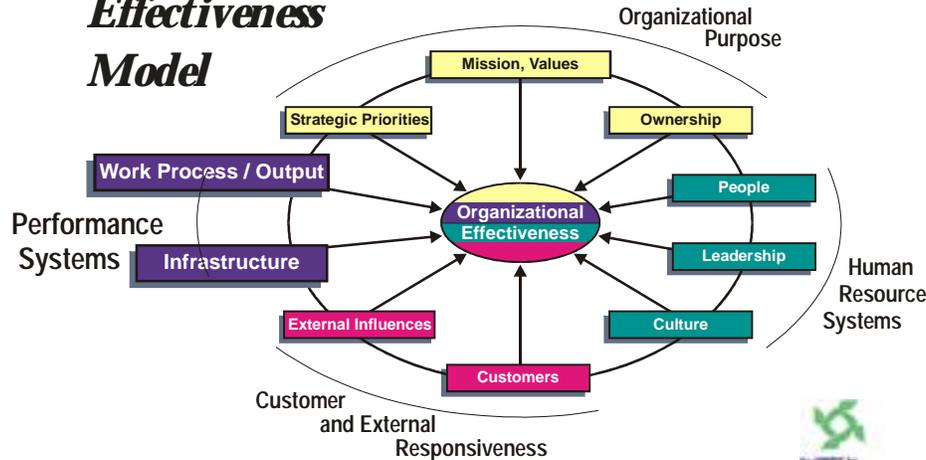
*This review asks four key questions*

1. How well is your organization's purpose and strategy defined and operationalized?
2. How effective and efficient are your core work processes?
3. How effective are your human resource systems?
4. How well does your organization understand and react to external drivers?

By focusing on these four questions, a clear picture emerges of how well the organization is positioned for success and sustained performance. The organization's strengths and weaknesses are clearly articulated, and specific areas needing improvement are identified.

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# Organizational Effectiveness Model



## Findings

### Overview

This section of the report presents the results of our review of each dimension of organizational effectiveness. We present an overall effectiveness indicator for each dimension along with a detailed list of findings and implications.

We also present a series of recommendations for FA management to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency with which FA services are delivered. The recommendations are based on our findings and analysis during the organizational effectiveness review, and are intended to serve as a foundation for building long-term, sustainable improvement into FA's operations.

### Summary of Findings

We found that FA overall operates at a moderate level of organizational effectiveness. A rating of moderate effectiveness (3.0 on a 5 point scale) means that FA is generally successful in accomplishing its mission, but that the level of performance is uneven across the organization, and there is a lack of alignment and systematic processes in each major area.

*FA operates at a moderate level of organizational effectiveness*

In terms of organizational purpose, we found that FA suffers from a lack of a systematic process for defining and achieving the organization's mission, goals, and values. FA has articulated its mission statement –

*The mission of the Federal Aid Program is to strengthen the ability of State and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies to meet effectively the consumptive and non-consumptive needs of the public for fish and wildlife resources.*

However, it lacks an operational definition of this mission that can guide daily work. There are multiple views on what “strengthen the ability” of State Agencies means in practice; and major processes are consequently not fully aligned to support the mission.

In terms of human resource systems, we found that while FA has a cadre of talented (extraordinary in some cases) individuals in various positions around the organization, there is no systematic approach for defining and developing its core human resource requirements. There is wide variation across the organization in terms of how employees at all levels perceive the effectiveness of working relationships.

*FA operates from a reactive stance*

In terms of organizational performance systems, we found a lack of a systematic approach to managing and improving work processes. There appears to be no strategic focus on making processes effective, only on reacting to crises or customer requests. Therefore, we believe effectiveness and cost savings may be possible through a focused process improvement review.

The infrastructure to deliver critical internal support processes is in place, but many of these processes are not well managed and do not meet the requirements of internal and external customers.

We found customer and external responsiveness to be a core strength of FA. Customer feedback data demonstrated a generally high level of satisfaction with FA’s performance. Customers generally regard FA’s employees as competent, dedicated to the mission, and effective in meeting customer needs. There is some unevenness in this perception at different Regional Offices; and we will address these differences in the corresponding chapter of this report.

FA is not equally capable in its ability to respond to other external influences, suffering from a “circle the wagons”

mentality that limits its flexibility and capacity for effective response.

### **Scoring Framework**

*OE indicators provide a quick assessment, not an absolute statement*

At the beginning of each dimension, there is an effectiveness indicator or rating. This rating is a quantitative indicator provided by COE intended to reflect our relative assessment of each OE element. The indicator provides a rating ranging from 5 to 1. A definition of these indicators is provided below.

The indicator is designed to provide the reader with a quick assessment of the overall strength of that performance dimension within FA. It is not intended to be an absolute statement of the effectiveness of the element; rather, it is the detailed analysis that provides the true assessment of the element.

An indicator of...	Means...
<b>5.0</b>	The organization is very effective in this dimension or element and has a clear history of operating effectively. OE is embedded as an active and “living” part of the organization. The organization should continue current practices and identify continuous improvement needs over time. External stakeholders recognize this effectiveness.
<b>4.0</b>	The organization is effective in this dimension or element. There is a concentrated effort to become more effective. Improvement is needed in some, but not all, areas. External stakeholders recognize this effectiveness.
<b>3.0</b>	The organization is sometimes effective in this dimension or element, but not always. Some foundation elements exist, but there is no clear concentration on becoming effective, nor is it considered a significant imperative. Organization has difficulty responding to challenges.
<b>2.0</b>	The organization is not effective and may only survive if it is a fixed business enterprise within a stable marketplace or operating environment. There are no systems in place to establish effectiveness, let alone sustain it. Leadership does not place emphasis on effectiveness in words or actions.
<b>1.0</b>	The organization is in danger of failing and requires swift and accurate action. There are few systems in place, and the organization has “bottomed out.” Radical and decisive action is required to turn the organization around.

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## Organizational Purpose

# 2.5

Effectiveness Indicator

*FA needs an operational definition of its mission*

We assigned FA an effectiveness indicator of 2.5 for organizational purpose. There is a lack of a systematic, sustainable method for defining and achieving the organization's mission, goals, and values.

FA has articulated its mission statement as follows:

*The mission of the Federal Aid Program is to strengthen the ability of State and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies to meet effectively the consumptive and non-consumptive needs of the public for fish and wildlife resources.*

What is missing, however, is an operational definition of this mission that can guide daily work. There are multiple views on what "strengthen the ability" of State Agencies means in practice. Consequently, major processes not fully aligned to support the mission.

In July of this year, a FWS reorganization was implemented for the purposes of aligning various FWS programs that serve States and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) through grants. In the new organization FA, North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, and the Office of Migratory Birds Management are now located under one Assistant Director of Migratory Birds and State Programs. The WO organization is replicated in each of the ROs.

COE recognizes this reorganization as having potential for increasing efficiencies in processes through sharing among like-type offices, and also the potential of increasing service quality to States, due to the possibility of increased information sharing and planning among offices that serve States. However, at the time of our RO visits, there had not been enough time since the reorganization went in effect to assess its impact. Most ROs reported being unsure of the purpose or desired outcome for the reorganization. This finding emphasizes the need for FWS Directorate to increase communications efforts on the purpose of the reorganization. Similarly, FWS management need to operationalize the reorganization into concrete project and process changes so that employees can begin to experience the reality of the new organization.

In terms of strategic priorities, we find that FA lacks an effective strategic planning process. Resource allocations

tend to be made on an ad hoc basis, and the organization generally tends to operate in a reactive manner. This is also reflected in a policy formulation and deployment process that has effectively broken down over the past several years.

Each of these elements is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

## Mission and Values

The mission and values are critical as a foundation for success in that they define the purpose (mission) of the organization, and the principles (values) that will provide guidance in achieving that mission. An effective organization works hard to align its daily actions with the overall mission of the organization.



*FA must define its mission and what it means in operational terms*

*Define the required performance levels for the core processes*

### **What We Look For**

- Clear mission statement
- Operational clarity regarding the mission
- Behavior consistent with values
- Consistent promotion by leaders

### **What We Found**

1. While almost 90% of FA’s employees responded in the survey that they “understand the purpose and function of FA,” we did not find a uniform understanding of the mission and what it means in practice. We did not find operational definitions of the mission, nor any evidence that the achievement of this mission is tracked and used as a focal point for building alignment throughout the organization.
2. The mission as it exists is not clearly communicated by senior leadership. Historically, FA has operated as a series of disconnected Regions pursuing their local missions. While some decentralization is necessary to meet customer demands, a lack of alignment ultimately will frustrate mission accomplishment. The time is right for FWS leadership to improve alignment throughout the organization. Similarly, FWS management needs to provide support and guidance to FA RO staff on FA’s role within the new Migratory Birds and State Programs organization.

3. Goals and targets are not established for key performance areas. There are several core processes that are essential to the achievement of the mission, yet there is no standard practice of defining and measuring performance in these key areas. An important step in building alignment around the mission is to define performance metrics for the core processes and manage them accordingly.
4. The compliance mission is not well-defined or -articulated. FA is now five years into the first cycle of audits and there is still ambiguity regarding the roles and functions to be performed by contract auditor (currently DCAA), the Regional Offices, and the Washington Office at each stage of an audit.
5. We found that FA's values tend to be defined on a region-by-region basis. Fewer than 60% of employees agreed with the statement that "FA has a clear set of values." There was also a disparity in that far fewer employees in WO agreed with this statement than did RO employees. The essence of the organization is its decentralized structure and approach to its mission; and the values that are brought into the daily workplace tend to be set and reinforced by the regional leadership. A challenge for FA's leadership, supported by FWS Directorate, will be to develop an integrated organization-wide set of values that support FA's overall mission and performance as a part of the FWS.
6. There is a general lack of mission accountability in the process and structures of the organization. Part of this is due to the lack of operational definition around the mission, and part of this is due to the lack of a systematic performance management culture. We did not find that expectations are being developed and deployed to the FA workforce, and we did not find evidence that lack of performance is dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

## **What This Means**

*FA needs to be crystal clear about its mission and values*

FA is not ready to move forward unless it knows where it is going. An effective organization has a clearly defined mission and values that guide the organization and provide a foundation for world-class performance. Leadership continually addresses the mission and values to provide a clear indication of what is important. It is not about the statement on the wall, but about how this element is realized in every part of the organization through behavior and action.

*FA needs to act upon its values*

Many of the things FA states that it values are not consistent throughout the organization. For example, FA says it values innovation. However, innovative behaviors are not evident in the organization, and there is no evidence of innovation being encouraged. In fact, fewer than 50% of FA employees agreed with the statement that “FA’s leadership encourages finding new and better ways to do our work.” Values are meaningful only when they are consistently acted upon in the workplace.

*FA may be too comfortable*

Although FA’s structure is well defined, the fundamental way work is done has not changed significantly. The organization may be too comfortable. There does not appear to be an urgent desire to reexamine and fundamentally improve work processes to take advantage of emerging technologies and new capabilities. A key focus of leadership must be on stimulating innovation and unlocking the potential that exists throughout the organization.

With a new focus and strong leadership, FA has an opportunity to better define its mission and values and begin the process of orienting and requiring behavior consistent with them. With solidly established mission and values, FA can take responsibility for achieving its customer-focused mission with the best and most appropriate services, performed in the most effective way, under a well-defined performance measurement system.

## Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities form the foundation for accomplishment by providing a clear sense of direction for a certain period of time. An effective organization is aware of its environment and proactively seeks to change it or deal with it through long-range planning.

Strategic planning includes understanding business imperatives and the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; setting goals; strategizing to reach them; and measuring to see if they are being achieved. Organizations need to integrate these strategies and make sure there is accountability for achievement.

### ***What We Look For***

- Existence of a strategic planning process
- History of achieving stated goals
- Measurable results
- Alignment of strategic priorities with customer requirements
- Alignment of strategic priorities with employee performance

### ***What We Found***

1. FA lacks a formal strategic planning process and as a result tends to operate in a reactive mode. For a variety of reasons, including a lack of experience with planning, shifts in legislative and executive branch direction, and downsizing and resource limitations, FA does not systematically plan its approach to accomplishing its mission. Rather, strategies, action plans, and resource deployments are made on a decentralized ad hoc basis at WO and each of the Regional Offices; and there is no overarching strategy guiding the organization in a unified manner toward the achievement of its vision and mission. Similarly, FA does not consider its role in relation to other FWS offices.
2. Resources are not allocated to Regions and functions based on any systematic framework. This relates to the lack of strategic planning described earlier. It is not

apparent that FA currently deploys resources to a particular area on any basis other than that is where resources were deployed last year. There is no evidence that customer requirements, organizational priorities, or other issues are taken into account.

3. The process of developing and deploying policy guidance to FA Regional Offices is slow, cumbersome, non-transparent, and inadequate to meet the expectations and requirements of FA and State Agency personnel. A complication in efforts to improve this process is that many of the key review and approval steps actually occur outside FA, placing a premium on the need for effective communication and coordination at the Service and Department levels.
4. The lack of strategic planning means that there is no basis for establishing performance goals and accountabilities for work units and individuals related to key imperatives that the entire FA organization is working toward.

### ***What This Means***

Strategy provides an organization with short-, mid-, or long-term direction that allows it to evolve, and to recognize and respond to external drivers and other environmental stimuli. FA needs to step back from the event-driven environment that has characterized its history and begin thinking about the future transformationally, not transactionally.

*FA needs leaders who lead strategically rather than managing transactionally*

A strategic planning process is a critical step toward increasing the level of understanding and coordination among members of FA's chain of command.

An organization should effectively plan strategy on a periodic basis in order to address short- and/or long-term issues that have an impact on the future of the organization. Many organizations do plan, but effective organizations are successful in the execution of their plans. Success in execution means, in part, that goals are attained and that work processes, infrastructure, and organizational culture are focused on the same performance and results.

*FA needs a collaborative process for strategic planning*

Without a collaborative process for planning, reviewing plans, executing plans, and measuring results, FA will not be able to sustain performance, nor will it be able to harness

the power of a competent leadership team and consistently drive priorities throughout the organization.

## Ownership

This element of effectiveness focuses on how well the organization meets the expectations of its “owners” and key stakeholders. In FA’s case, we consider the primary ownership element to be comprised of the FWS and the Department of the Interior. Ultimately, it is the American public and their representatives in Congress who are the owners of FA; but this level of ownership is too abstract to be addressed meaningfully in an OE review.

### **What We Look For**

- Organizational actions consistent with expectations of owners
- A strong sense of stewardship over financial resources

### **What We Found**

1. FWS has not clearly communicated to FA how it should function as part of the overall FWS organization, nor is FA held accountable for coordinating with other FWS offices.
2. FA Regional Chiefs report to both the Regional FWS Director and the FA Chief. It is not clear that FWS management has addressed and/or resolved the potential issues and complications that can arise from dual reporting channels. While COE realizes this was part of the design of the reorganization, it is essential that the FA Chief’s authority be delineated to facilitate his efforts to build alignment within the organization.
3. There is a nagging perception that FWS Directorate has not provided an adequate level of support to FA politically and organizationally during the last several years. The establishment of a strong institutional message of support for FA from FWS Directorate will support the ongoing efforts to streamline and improve the FA organization as part of FWS.

*Ownership is poorly defined at FA*

*FA would benefit from clear support from FWS*

4. FA may need to rethink its finance and investment function. We have not explored this area in depth; but it appears from our preliminary analysis that there would be some benefit to starting with a clean slate and creating an optimal finance and investment function within FA that would fully leverage existing resources and tap new outside resources.
5. FA has a finite capacity for providing support to its State and Territory customers and stakeholders. Every hour invested with one State/project is an hour not available for another. There is currently no cost model or strategy in place for determining the value of FA's services, which makes it hard to evaluate and set priorities for resource deployment.

### ***What This Means***

Owners set the direction for how the organization is to perform, what they would like it to do, and its positioning with customers and stakeholders. They are the gatekeepers to ensure the resources are present and that they are managed in a strong and appropriate manner, both operationally and strategically. FWS must function as the "owners" of FA, so that FA leadership can properly guide and implement the FWS mission and goals.

FWS executives and FA leadership must work together to communicate the role of FA within FWS and build alignment among FWS offices. FA leadership must continuously seek ways to improve financial management (especially the budgeting process and the trust fund investments) of FA. FA leadership must prioritize the services provided by RO offices to match the goals of FWS as a whole.

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## Human Resource Systems

# 3.0

Effectiveness Indicator

We assigned an effectiveness indicator of 3.0 for human resource systems. FA has a cadre of talented individuals in various positions around the organization, but lacks a systematic approach to defining and developing its core human resource requirements. This study represents a first step toward defining a more effective human resource management structure.

Most employees know that there is movement afoot to make some changes, but they are wary of leadership commitment and hollow promises. However, employees have expressed a high degree of faith in the ability of the new FA Chief to focus the organization and achieve great things. They don't want to be let down.

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## Leadership

Leadership is the key element in providing direction to the organization. Effective leaders define the mission, strategies, and values of the organization in a way that is meaningful and inspiring for others, and ensure that the organization stays on track to achieve its mission. Leaders create alignment within their organization and build a network of supporting relationships with key stakeholders and customers.

### **What We Look For**

- Consistent direction and focus
- Consistent accountability and performance
- Evidence of leadership capacity
- Evidence of succession planning
- Leaders working together as a team
- Achievement of results

### **What We Found**

1. The FA Chief and his Regional Chiefs are in the process of working together constructively to define an effective working relationship that will create alignment and accountability across the organization. This is a vitally important process because of the animosity and lack of understanding that has developed between WO and the

*A leadership team  
is being shaped*

Regions. In the employee feedback surveys, for example, we asked respondents to identify the three most important issues facing FA at this time. Almost half the comments addressed perceived problems in the working relationship between WO and the Regions. Many comments were critical of WO for not understanding the issues facing Regions. The leadership dialogue now underway is a great first step toward building the necessary bridges between organizational components.

*Favorable early impressions of the new chief, but also a lingering “wait and see” attitude persists*

2. The new FA Chief is perceived positively by leadership and staff across the organization, which are responding well to his direct, hands-on leadership style. These perceptions were reported consistently in focus groups, interviews, and the employee feedback survey. At the same time, there was an undercurrent of a more cautious “wait and see” attitude among a number of Regional Office employees. Several employees told us that it was still likely that at some point the Chief “would have his legs cut out from under him” as he butted heads with higher-ups in the organization. It is evident that a strong show of support from FWS Directorate will go a long way toward solidifying the Chief’s stature within the organization. Outward expressions of the commitment between the FWS Director and the FA Chief to nurturing a strong, unified organization could advance this goal.

*Rebuild trust between FA and FWS*

3. There was a fairly significant distrust of FWS Directorate reported by FA employees both in person and through the feedback survey. Some comments were especially harsh, e.g., “FWS upper level management needs to focus on rebuilding the integrity of the program they have destroyed.” In general, though, comments addressed the need for trust- and confidence-building measures on all sides of the relationship. As noted in the previous finding, a strong show of support by FWS leadership will help in this regard.

4. Pockets of leadership excellence were found throughout FA; but data from surveys indicate that the leadership systems are inconsistent across the organization. For example, significant percentages of employees (from 20% to 50%) reported that they do not feel free to challenge the way things are usually done, and that knowledge is not shared effectively within their

Region/Office and with other Regions/Offices. Over 50% disagreed with the statement that “FA’s leadership encourages finding new and better ways to do our work.” A similar percentage disagreed with the idea that “FA responds well to changes in its external environment.” These questions address key leadership tasks of communicating, innovating, and responding to change.

5. We found significant differences in the perceived effectiveness of Regional Office Chiefs based on data provided by Regional employees through the feedback survey. To establish a baseline for assessing leadership effectiveness, we compiled a Regional Office leadership effectiveness index. This index was calculated by averaging all responses in each region for the following survey questions:

- My supervisor recognizes the work I do.
- I feel free to challenge the way things are usually done.
- The people in my Region work well together.
- We share knowledge effectively within our Region.
- My Region continuously improves the way it does its work.
- FA’s leadership encourages finding new and better ways to do our work.

*Responses included in the RO leadership effectiveness index*

We assigned scores to each response based on the scale provided in the survey, ranging from 1.0 (strongly disagree with the statement) to 7.0 (strongly agree with the statement). The scores for Regions varied from 4.03 at the low end to 6.07 at the high end. This is a significant variation, and indicates that there should be opportunities for improving and standardizing Regional best practices.

6. FA currently does not employ succession planning as it considers its future leadership requirements. Data from employee surveys indicate that the organization will face a turnover in leadership in the coming years, which will provide an opportunity to reshape the leadership culture to meet new challenges.

## ***What This Means***

FA is undergoing a transformation and cannot move forward without a substantial investment in the development of expanded leadership capacity. An integrated WO-RO leadership team is in the early stages of consolidation. FA must also create an environment in which leaders will be attracted to and stay in FA.

## **People**

Effective organizations recognize people as the most critical factor in performing quality work, making decisions, and ensuring that client needs are met. These organizations also realize that the ability to deal with the human side of an organization is dependent on how managers approach the physical, intellectual, and emotional conditions surrounding performance and change. Workforce effectiveness is measured similarly to that of a capital investment.

## ***What We Look For***

- The workforce treated as a strategic asset
- Defined roles and expectations for employees
- Human resource management systems and practices that are aligned with the organizational mission
- Employee competencies and capabilities

## ***What We Found***

1. FA's employees are passionate and committed to the conservation mission. FA employees have a strong sense of the historical role of Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson in conserving America's wildlife and sport fish heritage. This commitment strengthens the organization's ability to respond to short-term pressures.
2. FA has a well-educated and experienced workforce. Over 40% of employees have graduate degrees, and over 80% have a college degree. Almost 70% of employees have at least 10 years of federal government experience.
3. The flip side of an experienced workforce is that it is also an older workforce. FA does not have a strategic approach to building a pipeline of qualified younger employees, either through internal development or external hiring. Youth alone is no panacea—capability

*FA has a well-educated and experienced workforce*

and commitment are always essential mission drivers—but healthy organizations have a blend of experience levels and competencies.

4. FA employees generally have the skills needed to perform their jobs to the satisfaction of customers and stakeholders. Over 90% of employees agreed with the statement that “I have the skills I need to do my job,” and over 80% agreed that “I receive training that I need to do my job.” This self-assessment is reasonably well-supported by data and comments contained in the survey of FA customers, with 67% of respondents agreeing that “FA’s people are competent in the performance of their jobs,” and 70% reporting that they are satisfied customers.
5. There are a number of employees in FA who are regarded by their peers and customers as especially capable and committed to doing quality work. A challenge and opportunity for FA leadership is to leverage the strengths of these exceptional employees for the benefit of the organization.
6. There is a lingering perception in the organization that FA was a “dumping ground” for individuals who were not successful elsewhere in FWS. We have no data to substantiate or refute this perception; but it highlights the need for a vigorous new concept of FA as a dynamic, interesting place to work that will attract and retain talent.

*FA has exceptional employees  
available for development*

### ***What This Means***

FA has some wonderful people with great ideas and the desire to contribute. They need to be shown how, and they need to know what is important. This is leadership’s responsibility. Consistent HR systems need to be created such that people are allowed to contribute to the organization's success at a higher level.

Culture is the often-unconsidered component of organization that has a tremendous impact on effectiveness. It is defined as how we work together to achieve results.

### **What We Look For**

- Cultural norms that contribute to organizational success
- Ability for people to challenge systems and continuously improve the organization
- Effective communications
- Continuous learning
- Consistency with leadership vision

### **What We Found**

1. FA's resilient culture has been shaped by over half a century of history and performance, and is both a strength and weakness of the organization. The strength is that the sense of dedication and passion felt by many FA employees to the goals and objectives of wildlife conservation provides an underlying energy and drive to the entire organization in the face of a stream of external criticisms and challenges. The weakness is that the culture serves to entrench existing methods and approaches to carrying out the mission, which makes it harder to conceive of newer and more appropriate ways to do the work.
2. FA's culture is regionally driven in the sense that it is in the Regions where interactions with customers mainly take place, and it is in the Regions where the culture and values of FA are transformed into daily work practices. It was consistently pointed out to us that virtually no WO employees had Regional experience. This makes it hard to achieve a uniform culture across FA.
3. There is a strong customer service culture in several Regions. This was borne out in a significant variation in customer satisfaction ratings between the highest-performing and lowest-performing Regions. We understand that each Region is faced with a different set of challenges, and that the composition of States and Agencies varies widely, but we think there are opportunities to leverage the proven customer-focused

*FA's culture has been shaped  
over many years of field  
experience*

approaches in strong Regions for the benefit of all Regions.

4. In the employee survey, only about 60% of employees agreed with the statement that “FA has a clear set of values.” Opportunities exist to do a better job of communication cultural norms and values to all employees. The Internet and other communication technologies are making this easier all the time.

### ***What This Means***

FA’s culture represents certain strengths and potential challenges. The strengths — commitment to wildlife and sport fish restoration, a focus on the customers — are powerful and position FA to remain consistent in the face of external pressures. At the same time, FA’s long history and the experience of its employees mean that it may be difficult to mobilize the organization to find new and better ways to pursue its mission. The wide variation in responses to the question about whether or not the organization seeks out new and better ways to accomplish its work indicates that introducing change into FA will require a lot of attention and skill. This is not an organization that is naturally comfortable with transition.

*FA’s solid, established culture is both a strength and a weakness*

FA’s leadership must recognize the importance of dealing with the cultural dimensions of the organization as they engage the workforce in a dialogue about how to best accomplish the mission in the future. Building trust with people will be the big issue, but it will help make the transition easier. Developing a clear cultural statement as part of the vision and then determining how it will be operationalized is critical to success.

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## Performance Systems

# 3.0

Effectiveness Indicator

We assigned an effectiveness indicator of 3.0 for performance systems. This score addresses FA's work processes and the infrastructure that supports this work.

In the course of our review, we identified five core processes (described below). We analyzed each process and captured a variety of performance and outcome data. In general, we found the FA is doing a good job of performing its core grant administration process, but that other core processes are less clearly defined and are not consistently executed. Therefore, we believe that effectiveness and cost savings may be possible through a focused process improvement review.

The infrastructure to deliver critical internal support processes is in place, but many of these processes are not well managed and do not meet the requirements of internal and external customers.

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## Work Process/Output

Processes are the formal systems for accomplishing work. They result in the output of a product or service. We evaluated work processes in FA by identifying key processes and reviewing evidence of performance and efficiency.

### ***What We Look For***

- Defined purpose
- Contributes to organizational goals
- Provides clear added value to customers
- Efficient execution
- Efficient resource utilization

### ***What We Found***

1. As highlighted earlier in this report, we identified five core work processes at FA:
  - Grants administration
  - Audit support and resolution
  - Policy development and deployment

- State capacity development
- Internal support processes (including IT, FAIMS, HR, Survey, Finance and Investment, Policy, etc.)

These core processes comprise the vast majority of the activities within FA. Core processes are those critical processes that the organization must do well to achieve its mission. The purpose of identifying core processes is that they represent a framework for thinking about how to build systematic improvement into an FA organization. Achieving a state of organizational effectiveness requires systematically defining each core process; determining the inputs, tasks, activities, and outputs of each process; and using customer- and performance-oriented metrics to evaluate how well each process is performing. FA is taking its first small steps toward developing this mastery of understanding of its core work processes.

*Value-added work in the Regions is discretionary in nature*

2. In several cases we found that FA’s work processes and resources, as currently designed and implemented, are not adequate for coping with the current workload. For example, due to the pressure to process incoming grant applications in a timely manner with lean staffs, several Regional Offices are not addressing the core process of developing State capacity. This reflects a critical fact about FA’s work in the Regions: Much of the potentially important value-added work is discretionary in nature. For example, FA can always achieve its basic administrative mission of getting grants out the door with only a minimal amount of communication and coordination with the States.

*Customers want more direct technical support*

This is not what the State customers want, however, as expressed in the customer survey. State customers, and the IAFWA, consistently reported they would like to see a larger amount of direct technical support for State programs. As one respondent to our customer survey (who stated that “I am a very happy customer”) noted: “Sometimes it’s hard to find the time, or make time, to get into the field and perform site visits . . . I would like to see more site visits — I believe they’re important to overall communication and understanding of our respective programs.” Another “generally satisfied” customer noted that “the States and Federal Aid must work together as program partners to make this program continue serving the hunters/anglers of the

nation within the States.” Finally, another “generally satisfied” customer requested that FA “shift the whole focus of the role of Federal Aid to that of helping States with compliance systems . . . have specialists who can help the State make sure its NEPA and other environmental compliance systems are solid, and the same with financial management systems, land acquisition, and civil rights.”

*FA must freely share its  
expertise and exploit its  
internal knowledge*

3. New technology is being integrated into the core grant administration process through the deployment of FAIMS. This will be a wrenching transition but will ultimately result in a more capable FA organization. FA today is too dependent on the knowledge maintained by individual employees. With the rapid evolution of networking and Internet-based technologies, it is likely that FA will soon be in a position to dramatically recast its work processes to leverage the expertise of its workforce to better achieve key customer requirements.
4. The quality of FA’s work processes depends to a significant extent on the quality of the information and documentation provided by State customers. This is an example of where an investment today, such as working with States to build improved systematic approaches to working with FA, will result in overall improvements in FA service delivery and higher mission effectiveness. FA survey respondents indicated that they thought they were spending a disproportionate amount of their time “reworking” poorly drafted and/or documented submissions from States, incurring a large but hidden cost of value-added activities they could be doing instead of performing this work.
5. We found pockets of “best practices” in various FA Regional Offices, but no systematic approach to deploying these practices across the wider organization. For example, one Region had developed a capable real estate information system to track key data related to realty grants, which would likely be useful to other Regions with similar types of grants. Currently, there is no systematic approach to seeking out and implementing such best practices.

6. The Regional Offices and Washington Office do not coordinate well on several core processes, including audit resolution and policy development and formulation. The common denominator is a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities for these processes.
7. Process management is not well understood or defined in the organization. There are no clear metrics for evaluating the quality and performance of core work processes, which limits management's ability to drive systematic improvement into the organization. A key task for leaders at all levels is to define work processes in a way that employees understand and can execute, and to maintain control and accountability over the performance and outcomes of these processes. It is important that data be primarily used for improvement and development, and not to evaluate or punish individual performers.

*Work processes must be  
better defined*

### **What This Means**

An effective organization works hard to ensure that all major work processes are well thought out, focused on what is important from a client's point of view, and aligned with the overall mission and goals of the organization. Work processes are designed to leverage available technology and other resources. Such an organization creates a climate of continuous improvement to focus everyone's efforts on finding better ways to get work done.

We found that FA does not have a systematic approach to defining, measuring, and improving work processes. FA leadership has expressed a commitment to innovation and openness; but there is no structure for operationalizing these ideas. In fact, there seems to be a wealth of ideas available in FA, but many either go unheard or float through the air and never come down for action. As FA's workload continues to increase, it is likely that the current work processes will become even more burdened and incapable of meeting client requirements.

*FA must operationalize its  
commitment to innovation  
and openness*

With this OE review, FA has taken the first step toward defining a more effective organization. FA must recognize that long-term improvement is not the result of random or spontaneous activity, but instead results from a focused and disciplined application of resources and the willingness to implement improvement activities. Work processes must

be defined from beginning to end, with the customers' needs and expectations at the forefront; and leadership must provide the support and guidance to deploy improved processes and resources throughout the organization.

## Infrastructure

Infrastructure is comprised of the key internal support processes that support front-line personnel who are providing services to State Agencies and customers. The efficient and effective delivery of these support processes is especially important in a decentralized organization like FA, where the employees delivering services to State Agencies and customers are often geographically remote from the WO.

In many cases, the ability of front-line employees to deliver services that meet customer expectations depends directly on the quality of the support provided by the infrastructure processes. For example, employees are often asked to provide technical guidance on policy issues surrounding a specific project or activity. The ability of the employee to meet customer expectations depends directly on the ability of the internal policy development process.

### ***What We Look For***

- The existence of key infrastructure components
- Effective support as organizational partners

### ***What We Found***

1. There are a number of key internal support processes that are critical to the achievement of FA's mission. We have designated two of these—policy development, and deployment and audit support and resolution—as core FA work processes. Other internal support processes include FAIMS, Survey, Finance, Investment, and Human Resources.
2. It is not clear that internal support processes are managed with the necessary rigor and discipline to promote high performance. For example, we found no evidence of performance measures or targets for any of these processes. Effective organizations generally manage internal support processes the same way they manage their core, customer-focused processes: customer expectations are clearly defined; work

*FA needs more rigor and discipline to realize high performance in its internal support processes*

processes are well thought out and managed for optimal performance; process performance metrics and customer feedback are used to evaluate and further improve support processes; accountabilities and communication channels are established. This rigorous approach to support process management is not in place at FA. As a result, customers of these processes are frequently frustrated and unable to serve their own external customers.

*Internal customers need  
to be defined*

3. The concept of an “internal” customer is not part of the traditional FA lexicon or culture. A key first step toward improving infrastructure is to define internal customers and their requirements, and to use this information to implement or improve the process. At a minimum, it is important to alert internal customers when there is a process problem that is preventing important information or services from being delivered.
4. Continuing investment in FAIMS is essential to the ongoing maturation and improvement of FA’s core grant administration process. Many of the benefits of this integrated process management system remain in the future; but the development of this information backbone is important to promote the standardization and effective management of grant information. FAIMS will position FA to make strategic decisions based on more efficient access and utilization of grants data that has historically resided in hundreds of paper-based grant files in Regional Offices.
5. The benefits of FAIMS to those required to use it are not immediately obvious. This creates the possibility of a situation in which employees see only additional duties, especially with FA currently operating at capacity. This piece of the FA infrastructure will require the addition of human resources to support it. That support will be especially critical during the swell of archival data entry.

### ***What This Means***

FA cannot achieve world-class levels of performance without an energized, internal-customer-focused infrastructure that provides timely and effective support to front-line personnel in the Regional Offices and at the WO. Currently, FA’s infrastructure is comprised of pockets of strong technical and operational capability but lacks a clear

*FA needs operational definition  
around its capabilities*

operational definition of its mission, goals, performance requirements, and opportunities for ongoing improvement. FA's front-line personnel and customers are frequently stymied by a perceived lack of performance and support by FA's internal support processes. Without a systematic approach to managing internal support processes, it is likely that this gap in perceptions and performance will continue.

FA cannot increase its capacity and achieve world-class performance without a strong infrastructure. Technology needs to be maintained; human resources need to be developed and supported; finances need to be managed; facilities need to be repaired; and customer needs must be addressed. The strategic plan should include an appropriate infrastructure that is identified and its development prioritized.

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## Customer and External Responsiveness

# 3.5

Effectiveness Indicator

We assigned an effectiveness indicator of 3.5 for customer and external responsiveness. This dimension represents a chief strength of FA. Customer feedback data demonstrated a generally high level of satisfaction with FA's performance. Customers generally regard FA's employees as competent, dedicated to the mission, and effective in meeting customer needs.

FA is not equally capable in its ability to respond to other external influences, suffering from a "circle the wagons" mentality that limits its flexibility and capacity for effective response.

### Customers

FA's primary customers are the different State Agencies that work with FA to develop and implement wildlife, sport fish, and other programs. The needs of these customers drive the quality of FA's operation, the creation of its systems, and the quality of its output.

#### ***What We Look For***

- Customer focused operating systems
- Management that is supportive
- Seeks and responds to customer feedback
- Quality perceptions and measures from customers
- Clear indications of value-added services

#### ***What We Found***

1. FA's key customers are the State Agencies with whom FA works to develop and fund grant activities. There may be several Agencies in one State that use FA resources, so there is no firm connection between numbers of States in a Region and numbers of Agency customers. There are 12 States in Region 4, for example, but over 27 Agencies with whom FA interacts. In other Regions, primarily in the West, there tends to be more one-on-one relationships.

*FA covers a lot of ground  
and does it well*

2. FA's customers are generally satisfied with the level of services provided by FA, with a significant minority indicating they are "very happy" customers. In general, Regions 1, 2, and 5 had the highest satisfaction ratings from customers; but the numbers of responses in each Region were too small to draw firm conclusions. We received a total of 54 responses to the customer feedback survey overall. Customers made a number of informative comments regarding ways to further improve FA's delivery of services; we have included many of these comments as an appendix to this report.
3. In general, we were impressed with the ability of FA, with only 130 employees (96 of these in Regional Offices), to maintain effective working relationships with a diverse set of customers in 50 States and 4 Territories. FA covers a lot of ground and does it well, based on the results of our customer survey, observations, and other analyses.
4. FA's customer relationships tend to be "high touch." FA grant specialists and their State counterparts tend to develop personal and effective working relationships. Both States and FA grant specialists told us that it was important for FA staff and State staff to work together as closely as possible on the design and implementation of projects. The majority of State respondents to our survey wanted a closer working relationship with FA than exists today.
5. Twenty percent of FA's customers indicated they were "generally dissatisfied." The following comments, made by dissatisfied State customers, give examples of reasons for this:
  - A lack of exposure on the part of FA employees "to the good work that they are a part of in the States."
  - A lack of "appropriate staffing levels to provide timely service to states."
  - "Need more simplification of FA guidelines and mandates."
  - "Need more staff so coordinators can get beyond just approving projects and perhaps even work with States on Regional level efforts."

- “A lot of this tension resulted from the inconsistency of information and guidance provided between Regions and often within the Regional staff.”
  - “Add qualified staff.”
  - “Federal Aid personnel need to be competent in their jobs. Shouldn’t try to impose personal interpretations of rules and regulations in their decision making.”
  - “Get staff with common sense at all levels . . . lighten up on the audits – the States are partners, not thieves.”
  - “Finish the new financial system . . . allow electronic submittals.”
6. A number of customers referred to the need for the WO to listen to the States and Regional Offices before developing and implementing policies.
  7. There is no constructive method currently employed for regularly collecting customer feedback and responding to it. It is only on an “as needed” basis and reactionary at best.

### ***What This Means***

FA continues to provide a high level of service to its State customers in the face of a number of significant internal and external challenges. This is a tribute to all FA employees. These challenges are profound. They include: (1) increasing scrutiny from federal and State stakeholders, (2) an increasing number of policy and compliance issues surfacing as a result of the DCAA audit cycle, (3) a downsized workforce as a result of retirements and a hiring freeze, and (4) an increasingly politicized State environment where the Departments of natural resources/conservation are pressured by multi- and recreational-use advocates to open up more FA-funded lands. Through it all, FA’s employees have continued to perform their core work processes in a way that enables States to advance their wildlife, sport fish, and other small grant activities within the spirit of the law and the relationship that FA is developing with the States.

*FA provides a high level of service despite significant challenges*

Opportunities for improving the customer relationship exist, especially in the areas of policy clarification, audit support and resolution, and technology integration. FA will need to continue to find creative ways to listen to and respond to the voice of the customer.

## External Responsiveness

External responsiveness addresses how well the organization is able to respond to key external influences and drivers.

### ***What We Look For***

- Knowledge of the operating environment
- History of response to external influences
- Capacity to respond to external influences

### ***What We Found***

1. FA is faced with achieving its mission in an environment of increasing complexity. There are several factors behind this complexity, including:
  - The ongoing cycle of audits that are uncovering new issues requiring policy and regulatory guidance,
  - Increasing demands for access to FA acquired land by recreational and other non-game users, and
  - Increasingly contentious issues involving endangered species, environmental protection, disability access, and other “green” issues.
2. FA’s State counterpart resource and conservation Agencies are facing the same political and external influences that FA is. State FA coordinators have a greater need for FA to provide “air cover” to maintain program integrity through policy guidance and support from WO and the Regions.
3. FA does not generally do a good job of getting its resource management message out into the broader

*States rely on FA to provide  
“air cover”*

community. FA resources have made an impact on hundreds if not thousands of communities around the country; yet the genius and success of P-R and D-J are largely unknown to the general public. We are not recommending using FA administrative funds for marketing or PR; but there is a need for a more creative and consistent outreach effort that will establish the FA “brand” as appropriate on all FA-funded activities.

4. FA is subject to a “circle the wagons” mentality that limits its ability to respond effectively to external pressures and criticisms. For a variety of reasons, FA has served as a lightning rod for a number of other sport fish and wildlife organizations, including the IAFWA and certain Congressional committees. Despite this turmoil, the Regional Offices have continued to achieve their core grant administration mission with a generally satisfactory level of performance. The time is now right for FA to “go on the offensive” and reestablish its mission and operations in a transparent, customer-focused manner.

### ***What This Means***

The external environment in which FA operates will become more complex in the coming years. To achieve the status of an effective organization, FA will need to develop a greater institutional capacity for assessing and responding to external changes.

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# *Recommendations*

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## **Introduction**

This section of the report contains our recommendations for improving FA's organizational effectiveness in all performance areas. These recommendations are based on an integration of findings and observations presented throughout this report.

*FA is capable of significant performance improvements*

As stated previously, we found that FA is operating at a moderate level of effectiveness. It is evident to us, however, that the organization is capable of significant performance improvements. Further, based on the strong foundation that already exists in many areas, we think it is possible for FA to achieve a breakthrough level of performance to world-class status.

### ***1. Define and operationalize the mission***

FA defines its mission as "strengthening the ability of State and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies to meet effectively the consumptive and non-consumptive needs of the public for fish and wildlife resources." There are several problems with this mission as currently defined. First, we think the statement itself lacks crispness and energy. There is a tremendous passion that drives the people of FA that is simply not captured in the wording of this statement.

*What is FA's purpose?*

Second, the mission is not operationally defined in a way that is meaningful to driving the work of the organization. It is not clear what FA's purpose is nor its role within FWS. There are wide differences of opinion regarding the meaning of fundamental terms in the mission statement. For example, what does "strengthening the ability" mean? Is that achieved through consultation or compliance? How is this done? What are the measures for "meet effectively the consumptive and non-consumptive needs."?

The mission is really the starting point for building sustainable organizational effectiveness. Without a purpose, there can be no system.

We recommend that FWS management embark immediately on a process to develop a new mission statement for FA that can be embraced by its employees, State customers, and other stakeholders. Senior leadership must lead this effort, but it should be inclusive and involve the entire FA workforce. Use the internet, meetings, focus groups, and other avenues to solicit the widest possible range of inputs, and employ a credible process to winnow down and crystallize the mission.

As part of this mission redefinition, FA must address performance measures and accountabilities, and determine how this interactive process can be communicated to all employees and stakeholders.

### ***2. Integrate the mission and values into the daily workplace***

*Reflect the mission in the work*

The mission and values of an organization only come alive when they are integrated into the daily workplace routines in all parts of the organization. Employees should always be aware of the mission and how it relates to the work they are doing, and the organizational values that surround that mission. Employee motivation is generated intrinsically when they are given the opportunity to see how their work contributes to the overall success of the organization.

This level of integration requires a consistent focus by leadership at all levels of FWS. With a defined mission and set of values in hand, senior leadership must work with leaders across the organization to build alignment toward the mission. This requires a significant investment of time and commitment. Ultimately, everything everyone does should embody the mission and values of FWS and FA as an integral part of FWS. Training and management development should reinforce this effort. Opportunities to implement the values should be communicated to all. Success should be reinforced and rewarded.

### ***3. Communicate the vision of the new FWS.***

FWS management must seek to overcome a perception that FWS leadership has not provided FA

with the necessary support during the past several difficult years.

*Communicate the vision*

It is imperative that FWS Directorate and management, including FA Chiefs, have a frank and productive dialogue aimed at communicating the vision of the new FWS, particularly the new division of Migratory Birds and State Programs. In addition to communicating the vision, FWS management must operationalize the new structure through programs and processes so that all staff can experience the benefits of the new organization. FA must be led out of their old ways of doing things by empowering RO staff to take ownership of the changes and make improvements that will effect the change.

The results of this dialogue should be communicated to all FA employees. The negative perceptions of FWS leadership within FA are a reality, and should be addressed head-on in the light of a new spirit of openness and win-win collaboration.

#### ***4. Plan and act strategically***

Strategic planning is an essential part of building organizational effectiveness. This is especially important in a decentralized organization like FA that deploys resources and delivers professional services in all 50 states and 4 territories. Strategic planning provides the discipline of a common aim, a clear set of priorities and actions, and the means to bring together resources effectively and efficiently to meet customer needs.

*Strategic planning is an ongoing process*

Effective strategic planning is not a static process, but rather is part of an ongoing dialogue among all key stakeholders. We recommend that FA involve customers and stakeholders such as the IAFWA, Congress, industry groups, and others in an integrated effort to define a strategic plan that optimizes the effectiveness of FA's resources. The aim should be to define the most important mission elements and then to deploy resources accordingly. Today, there is no clear basis for the deployment of staff and resources to the various ROs. Strategic planning is a first step in shifting from a reactive to a proactive

posture as an organization.

Typical components of FA's strategic plan would include a definition of the mission and organization, its leadership and management, revenue goals, budgets and operating costs, schedule, strategic initiatives, and measures of success. The FA-specific plan must be linked to the overall FWS plan and mission.

The dialogue with stakeholders that emerges from this plan will represent an important first step on the path toward sustainable excellence.

### ***5. Keep score***

*What gets measured gets done*

What gets measured gets done. FA should develop measures for all core processes, linked to the mission and strategic plan. Leaders need to communicate the measures and hold job performers accountable.

### ***6. Build a strong leadership team***

It is imperative that WO and regional leadership work together to build a strong leadership team that can guide FA in its ongoing transformation. This team should be comprised of a core group (FWS management and Regional Chiefs) augmented by an extended group of rotating members from across the organization, especially representatives from other offices of Migratory Birds and State Programs. These rotating members should be employees at various levels and locations, who are selected for their vision, energy, and ability to contribute. Leadership should be rightfully viewed as a process at FA, with the flexibility and capacity to meet evolving organizational needs.

Role descriptions and accountability systems should be developed for each member of the leadership team. Each leader's role should include:

- Daily leadership within their work unit
- Membership on the leadership team, which meets a minimum of twice per month with a major, retreat once or twice per year.
- Performance management

- Budget development and implementation
- Quality and productivity improvement
- Collaboration and sharing
- Reporting to the team and the customers
- Organizational problem solving
- Developing people

All meetings of the leadership team should be recorded and action items identified, ownership established, and reacted to.

### ***7. Build in flexible access to technical specialists***

A longer-term goal for FA should be to build more flexible access to technical specialists. There is currently a wide disparity in the staffing configuration of specialists across the regions. This disparity exists regarding classifications and grade levels, position descriptions, numbers of staff in each position, etc. Some regions assign specialists to specific states; others focus on types of grants, for example, hunter education, research, etc. Each of these staffing configurations has evolved over time based on the workflow and requirements within each region.

*Revisit the staffing structure  
in each Region*

The time is right for FA to revisit the structure in each region. As FA moves toward a Team FA concept, it should reexamine the deployment of technical expertise. In particular, we think there may be too much specialization within the core grants administration process. Today it is much easier to share specific technical expertise across the organization; regions do not need to maintain a full complement of technical expertise on hand to cover every possible work scenario. The aim should be for FA to evolve toward a “neural network” of knowledge, experience, and expertise, able to deploy expertise as needed through multiple channels. The idea of maintaining a full roster of specialists in each region may not be appropriate going forward.

We do not make this recommendation lightly. We recognize the good job that dedicated regional staff are doing carrying out the FA mission across the country. As part of its strategic focus and integrated

team management approach, however, FA must begin evaluating alternative deployments that make sense in a net-centric world.

### ***8. Deploy staff more systematically***

FA must adopt a more systematic method for deploying staff resources across the organization. Core staffing needs for each Region should be established. While there are a handful of unique technical issues within each region, the vast majority of work can be handled by a core group of trained and competent employees who possess the general competencies described in Section 2. The current allocation of staff among regions is not supported by any measure of workload or customer distribution.

FA should initially strive to retain a comparable level of grant specialists across regions as measured by numbers of grants processed per staff. There is of course a variation in complexity grant-to-grant, but there must also be a starting point for evaluating staffing alternatives. Based on our evaluation we think that grant activity measures per staff are better proxies than grant dollars per staff.

*Develop a systematic approach to staff deployment*

The key point for FA, however, is to develop a systematic approach. If grant activity alone is not an adequate basis for determining resource allocations, integrate additional relevant decision criteria into the process. Follow a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model in making this change:

- Plan the allocation methods
- Implement the allocation methods
- Study the outcomes—did it achieve the desired effect
- Take actions as appropriate based on the previous step; recycle back to the beginning of the PDSA loop.

*Customer feedback builds strong relationships*

### ***9. Capture and respond to customer feedback***

There were a number of favorable comments by customers about the fact that FA was reaching out to them through the online survey administered as part of this project. FA should continue this momentum by developing a systematic approach for surveying customers on an ongoing basis and using this information to support improvement efforts. It is easy to do with the latest internet-based methodologies, and will provide a steady stream of valuable information.

Other methods can also be used for collecting this information including focus groups, telephone interviews, etc. Form a working group of FA employees to develop ways to respond to feedback. Communicate the results to all, along with a description of what actions will be taken to incorporate changes into the FA operating systems, etc.

### ***10. Partner with States and key stakeholders***

The time is right for FA to take the lead in working proactively with the states and other stakeholders to redefine roles, responsibilities, and common aims. This is essential if FA is to achieve significant breakthroughs in quality and performance. States are important suppliers as well as customers of FA. The quality of inputs from the states is a key driver of the quality of outputs from FA.

### ***11. Improve the core work processes***

Begin the improvement effort by focusing on the core work processes. Involve employees at all levels. Bring your customers into the process. Set targets. Apply the Plan-Do-Study-Act concept to all improvement efforts. Plan the improvement action. Do it. Study the result. Act accordingly. And do it all over again.

There are lots of ideas out there. But improvement takes more than ideas—it takes systems. To act wisely, it is not enough to be wise. Focus on

systematic improvement. Break down barriers. Bring people together. If resources are scarce, begin with one improvement team. Promote involvement, implement and celebrate changes, provide recognition, and don't quit.

*COE recommends a pilot approach*

With some of these recommendations, FA may want to select one region to develop and implement a process improvement. This "pilot" approach helps FA to try something, realize success, develop and enhance a working model and then transition it to other operating groups.

### ***12. Streamline and improve the policy development and deployment process***

The lack of timely and effective policy guidance has been cited as a major problem for the Regional Offices. The WO needs to continue its effort to establish clear policies and guidance that are distributed in a timely manner, and that are interpreted consistently State to State.

### ***13. Review and revamp the audit function***

*Capture lessons learned*

The first five-year DCAA audit cycle is winding down and the time is right to conduct a thorough review of lessons learned with the aim of revamping the audit function to better support the mission going forward. One audit every five years doesn't seem like too much of a burden to place on a state given the amount of FA funds that flow into each state. At the same time, it seems to make sense at this time to conduct a thorough evaluation of the lessons learned in the first cycle prior to embarking on the next round of audits.

The audit support and resolution process is a core work process that involves a convoluted set of players including DCAA, OIG, WO, RO, DOI, and state agencies. The audit resolution process in particular is not operating effectively; FA, states, and the GAO hold this view. A logical starting point for improvement is an evaluation of the process that is currently in place.

Over the longer term FA should transition the audit function out of the Regional Offices into an enhanced centralized audit function in WO. This would focus the front line troops in the regions on working with State agencies to develop and implement good projects and place the audit function with the WO.

#### ***14. Review and revamp the investment function***

FA's investments are currently managed by different entities. Sport Fish Restoration investments are handled by the Department of Treasury with assistance from FA, while investments from Wildlife Restoration Projects are managed by the FWS Division of Finance (DF).

FA should investigate any legal restriction on the placement of the investments. If not prohibited, the investment funds should both be placed in the hands of qualified (internal or external) investment management professionals and that FA assume an active oversight role throughout the investment management process.

#### ***15. Full speed ahead with FAIMS deployment***

FA must continue to invest in the full development and deployment of FAIMS. FAIMS is the key to longer-term process standardization and improvement in all future scenarios. FAIMS creates a "no-excuses" environment and will provide the information backbone for FA for many years to come. Significant grant information is today stored in hundreds of paper-based files at each region and in WO. FAIMS will provide a common storage platform and enable FA's managers to make better decisions because of better access to more reliable data.

*FAIMS can introduce  
accountability and sharing  
of expertise*

It is important that the FAIMS team speaks in the language of users, avoiding an internal focus and an over-reliance on jargon. The FAIMS team should facilitate the transition to the maximum extent possible, but at the same time it is important that internal resistance not unduly slow deployment.

It is equally important that FAIMS be expandable and updateable to account for new equipment or business needs. For example, provisions of the current version of CARA would require changes or enhancements to the system in order to accommodate new business requirements. The investment in this system will continue to be justified as FAIMS reflects the transformation of FA.

#### ***16. Web-enable FAIMS as soon as possible***

The full benefits from the investment in FAIMS will only be realized when States are able to access and enter data into FAIMS through a uniform set of browser-based interfaces. The paper flow into the regions to support grant submissions should eventually slow to a trickle, enabling FA staff to focus on adding value to current and new projects through focusing on the substantiality and content of project activities.

#### ***17. Apply for Presidential Quality Award in 2002***

We recommend that FA consider applying for the Presidential Quality Award or the Quality Improvement Prototype Award. We are convinced that the focused pursuit of a federal quality award would be a catalyst for improvement and a unifying event within FA. It would not be a stretch for FA to become competitive for an award if leadership commits itself to systematic improvement within the organizational effectiveness framework. Here is a brief description of these awards.

The award criteria are an adaptation of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria, but reflect the unique federal environment and culture. Federal agencies competing for these awards are now evaluated against the same standards of excellence used for private sector companies. The Presidential Award for Quality and the Quality Improvement Prototype (QIP) Award are designed for organizations that have mature quality management efforts, well-advanced in the quality transformation process. Winners of both awards provide excellent models of quality management systems that produce impressive

results. The Presidential Award is reserved for the best of these outstanding organizations. Applicants for both awards must be part of the Executive Branch of the federal government, and have at least 100 federal employees. The Presidential Award may be given to as many as 2 organizations each year. The QIP Award may be given to as many as 6 organizations each year.

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## Next Steps

COE recommends the following next steps as a starting point for the recommendations in this report.

Use the October Chiefs meeting as your beginning. Use the opportunity of this meeting not only to go over the results of this report, but also as a way to begin defining, articulating, embracing, and sharing the vision of FWS. Emphasize the role of FA alongside Migratory Birds and North American. Discuss how the core processes of FA can reflect this vision. Use the future state to determine how to reach it.

- Share the vision openly and often. Make it a part of the everyday work of FA, and demonstrate it to FWS as evidence of what FA is becoming as a part of FWS. Attach it to every part of the work of FA.
- Revise FA's mission. Make it tangible, crisp, and obvious. Create a mission that reflects exactly what you want FA to be doing as a part of FWS.
- Encourage employees to be creative in identifying ways in which their work can reflect the mission and values of FA. If that mission and those values come from the employees, chances are good that they will have strong ideas about how to reflect them in their work.
- Reward behaviors that reflect the mission and values of FA. Recognize excellence. Devise a recognition program immediately to reward the behaviors you seek.
- Begin identifying ways to measure the work you do. Calibrate this with the goals you have set.

## **Glossary of Acronyms**

## **Glossary of Acronyms**

**CAP** – Corrective Action Plan; a plan provided to States to correct issues found during an audit.

**COE** – The Center for Organizational Excellence; Rockville, MD, firm providing consulting services for FA.

**DCAA** – Defense Contract Audit Agency; the agency currently responsible for performing FA audits during the current 5-year audit cycle.

**DF** - Division of Finance (within the Fish and Wildlife Service); the division of the Service responsible for matters of financial management.

**D-J** – Dingell-Johnson; also known as the Sport Fish Restoration Act.

**DOI** – Department of the Interior; the parent department of which FWS is a part.

**FA** – Federal Aid; the division of FWS responsible for administration of fish and wildlife restoration activities.

**FAIMS** – Federal Aid Information Management System; the computer system used by FA to track and manage grants.

**FWS** – Fish and Wildlife Service

**FWRS** – Fish and Wildlife Reference Service; also known as the Library Reference Service (LRS); a service that receives, indexes, stores and distributes copies of reports produced by State fish and wildlife agencies from research studies supported by Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act funding.

**GAO** – General Accounting Office; the investigative arm of Congress responsible for auditing the use of federal money and evaluating government programs and activities.

**HR** – Human Resources; refers to activities supporting the workforce such as compensation and benefits.

**IAFWA** – International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; an organization of State fish and wildlife agencies.

**IT** -- Information Technology; refers to the use of technology resources to manage mission-critical information.

**LRS** – Library Reference Service; also known as the Fish and Wildlife Reference Service (FWRS), see above.

**MAT** – Management Assistance Team; an internal FWS management and organization development consultancy.

**NAWCA** – North American Wetlands Conservation Act; an act whose purpose is to encourage voluntary, public-private partnerships to conserve North American wetland ecosystems.

**OE** -- Organizational Effectiveness; a holistic approach incorporating four key areas and ten elements of effective organizational functioning.

**OIG** – Office of the Inspector General; provides policy direction and conducts, supervises and coordinates all audits, investigations, and other activities in the DOI, designed to promote economy and efficiency or prevent and detect fraud, waste and abuse.

**PDSA** – Plan-Do-Study-Act; refers to a model for change in which an organization plans an action, implements it, studies the outcomes, takes action based on these outcomes, and repeats the process.

**PFM** – Office of Financial Management (DOI); the focal point for Department-wide financial matters, providing direction, planning and oversight for financial policy and procedures, financial reporting, the management control programs, accounting policy and systems, and audit follow-up.

**P-R** – Pittman-Robertson; also known as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act.

**QIP** -- Quality Improvement Prototype; an award recognizing excellence in quality management systems that produce impressive results.

**RO** -- Regional Office; the offices of FA located in the FWS Regional Offices.

**WO** – Washington Office; the FA office located in the nation’s capitol.

*Appendix A:*

**National Grant Programs Administered  
by Federal Aid**

## **National Grant Programs Administered by Federal Aid**

The 7 national grant programs listed below are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve recreational opportunities for wildlife-related recreation and/or boating in the U.S. This is accomplished primarily by providing financial assistance to or through the States and Territories. The Federal Aid offices in the Washington and Regional Offices administer all those programs with the exception of the National Outreach and Communications program, which is administered by the Conservation Partnerships Liaison Division in the Washington Office.

1. Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program
2. Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program
3. Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration program
4. Clean Vessel Act Pumpout program
5. Partnerships for Wildlife program
6. National Outreach and Communications program
7. Boating Infrastructure program

The Federal Aid offices in the Regions also have responsibilities for administering grants provided under the Endangered Species Act, and, in Region 4, for the Everglades Restoration-Land Acquisition program (1996 Farm Bill Act) as well. Federal Aid work on those programs is paid for from the respective programs' appropriations.

### ***Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act – Coastal Wetlands***

The Coastal Wetlands grant program provides approximately \$10-15 million annually on a competitive basis to the coastal states, the Great Lake states and the territories. The purposes of the competitive grants are for acquisition, enhancement, management, or restoration for the long-term conservation of such lands and waters and the fish and wildlife. On the average 25 grant proposals are submitted annually nationwide that exceeds the available funds, the number of grants awarded each year varies, but on the average 15 grants are awarded nationwide annually based on the available funds.

### ***Clean Vessel Act – Clean Vessel***

The Clean Vessel grant program provides \$10 million annually on a competitive basis to all the states and territories with emphasis on the coastal states, Great Lake states and the territories. The primary purposes of the grant program are the construction and renovation of pumpout stations and dump stations, to inform the public of the benefits of properly disposing of boat sewage, and to inform the public of the locations of facilities

for doing so. On the average 48 grant proposals are submitted annually nationwide that exceeds the available funds by double. About 30 grants are coastal projects and 20 grants for inland projects. Many states are only partially funded.

### ***Endangered Species Act***

Section 6 Cooperative grant program provides approximately \$7.5 million annually to be apportioned to the states and territories based on the number of international commitments, number of endangered species and threatened species within a state, potential for restoring endangered species and threatened species within a state, and status of candidate species within a state. The purposes of the grant program is to assist the states in recovering and restoring endangered and threatened species and the prevention of listing and the monitoring of candidate species.

Section 6 Habitat Conservation Plan land acquisition grant program provides approximately \$15 million annually on a competitive basis to states and territories. Under this program, the Service provides grants to states and territories for land acquisitions that are associated with approved Habitat Conservation Plans. The Service considers the use of federal acquisition dollars by states for habitat protection within and adjacent to HCP areas to be an important and effective mechanism to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species. The three primary purposes are: 1) to fund land acquisitions that complement, but not replace, private mitigation responsibilities contained in the HCP, 2) to fund land acquisitions that have important benefits for ecosystems that support listed proposed and candidate species, and 3) to fund land acquisitions that have important benefits for ecosystems that support listed, proposed and candidate species.

### ***Partnerships for Wildlife Act***

Partnerships for Wildlife grant program provides \$800,000 annually on a competitive basis to the states and territories. The purpose of the grant program is to encourage conservation, restoration, and enhancement management of members of the animal kingdom that are not hunting or taken for sport or commercial use and are not on the Federal endangered and/or threatened species list. On the average 50-60 grant proposals are submitted annually nationwide that exceeds the available funds, the number of grants awarded each year varies, but on the average 40+ grants are awarded annually based on the available funds.

### ***Boating Infrastructures Program – BIG-P***

The Boating Infrastructure program will provide \$32 million to the state and territories over four years starting with the fiscal year 2000, to build transient tie-up facilities for recreational boats 26 feet or more in length. The program also allows funding from boating access money to be used to complete the survey of recreational boating needs. Eligible projects under the program will provide for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of public and private boating infrastructure tie-up facilities. These facilities

must be placed on navigable waters, and available to the public. The facilities will be designed for temporary use of recreational vessels 26 feet or more in length. Temporary use means not to exceed 10 consecutive days. Some examples of eligible activities would be placement of mooring buoys, construction of day docks, placement of navigational aids, construction of seasonal slips, piers, breakwaters, and one-time dredging, and grant administration and some preliminary costs.

### ***Florida Everglades Restoration – Land Acquisition***

The Everglades Restoration Land Acquisition activities are funded under several appropriations (approximately \$300 million through FY 2000) that have been provided to the Secretary of the Interior. The purpose of the land acquisition activities is to have land available for incorporation into the Corps of Engineers Central and Southern Florida Project (the Restudy). The Restudy is to determine the feasibility of structural and operational modifications to restore the Everglades, Florida Bay and other South Florida ecosystems while providing for other water-related needs. These land acquisition activities are being accomplished under several grants with the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The Southeast Region (Division of Federal Aid) is acting as the grant manager for the Secretary. The Secretary's office has provided the Southeast Region the necessary administrative funds to cover the cost of the Region efforts.

***Appendix B:***

**List of Documents Reviewed**

## **Legislation**

1. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000; April 5, 2000
2. Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 2000; May 11, 2000

## **Reports**

1. Implementation Plan: Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program—Title III of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999; by Federal Aid Legislative Team, March 15, 2000
2. Region 3: Programmatic Review of Illinois Federal Grant W-8-L, Green River State Wildlife Area Report to the Regional Director—Wildlife Restoration; Bud Fuchs, Region 3, October 1998
3. Federal Aid Project W-48-46 Statewide Wildlife Investigations Annual Performance Report; Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, July 1, 1998-June 30, 1999 (Wildlife Restoration)
4. Recommendations for the Division of Federal Aid Management Assistant Team; by the Partnership for charting MAT's future, March 1999 (Dwight Guynn, Ph.D., Project Leader)

## **FWS Financial Management Documents**

1. The Federal Investment Program: Dept. of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt
2. Sport Fish & Wildlife Restoration: Federal Aid Activity Analysis, December 1992; Bruce Blanchard, John C.
3. Memorandum: Aquatic Resources Trust Fund; faxed Dec. 14 and 15, 1999

## **Magazines & Publications**

1. Celebrating 50 Years of the Sport Fish Restoration Program: Supplement to FISHERIES, July 2000
2. Wild Turkey Harvest Management: Biology, Strategies, and Techniques; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, April 2000
3. ND Outdoors, July 2000: "A Bill for Fish: Landmark Legislation Marks 50 Years of Success"; by Craig Bihrlle

## **Press Kits and Informational Brochures**

1. The Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program—Creating Hunting, Fishing, Boating, and Wildlife-Oriented Recreational Opportunities (press kit): U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
2. Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation: Phil Million, 8/10
3. The Economic Importance of Sport Fishing: Sport Fish Restoration
4. The Economic Importance of Hunting: IAFWA

## **Organizational Charts**

1. Organization Chart: Division of FA, Washington Office
2. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Organization Charts Effective 7/2/00

## **Miscellaneous**

1. Administration of the Federal Aid Program
2. Federal Aid Summary of Programs; March 30, 2000
3. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional & Field Offices; 7/28/00
4. Sport Fish and Wildlife Program Review and Recommendations for Improvement; November 17, 1999
5. Testimony Before the Senate Subcommittee on Environment and Public Works, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Water, on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Administration of the Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs; by R. Max Peterson, July 19, 2000
6. Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program Update; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, September 1999
7. Status Report: Federal Aid Audits; March 31, 2000

***Appendix C:***

**Surveys**

## Surveys

If you would like to view the surveys used in data collection for this report, open your Internet browser to the following addresses:

- For the Federal Aid Division Employee Feedback survey, go to <https://forms.flashbase.com/forms/FedAidEmployees>.
- For the Federal Aid Division Washington Office Employee Feedback survey, go to <https://forms.flashbase.com/forms/FedAidWO>.
- For the Survey of Federal Aid Customers, go to <https://forms.flashbase.com/forms/FACustomers>.

***Appendix D:***

**Number and Type of Employees by Region**

## Number and Type of Employees by Region

Count	Series	Series Description
Region 1		
1	0318	Secretary Series
2	0326	Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series
3	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0482	Fishery Biology Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
1	0525	Accounting Technician Series
Total=9		
Region 2		
1	0303	Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series
1	0318	Secretary Series
1	0334	Computer Specialist Series
2	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0482	Fishery Biology Series
1	0486	Wildlife Biology Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
1	0501	Financial Administration and Program Series
1	1171	Appraising Series
Total=10		
Region 3		
1	0318	Secretary Series
1	0326	Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series
1	0334	Computer Specialist Series
6	0401	General Biological Science Series
3	0482	Fishery Biology Series
1	0486	Wildlife Biology Series
1	0499	Biological Science Student Trainee Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
3	0501	Financial Administration and Program Series
1	1001	General Arts and Information Series
1	1101	General Business and Industry Series
Total=20		

Region 4

4	0301	Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series
1	0318	Secretary Series
1	0326	Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series
2	0334	Computer Specialist Series
6	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0482	Fishery Biology Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
1	0501	Financial Administration and Program Series
1	0510	Accounting Series
1	0525	Accounting Technician Series
1	1170	Realty Series

Total=20

Region 5

3	0303	Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series
1	0318	Secretary Series
1	0334	Computer Specialist Series
1	0343	Management and Program Analysis Series
5	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0482	Fishery Biology Series
2	0486	Wildlife Biology Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
2	0501	Financial Administration and Program Series
1	0525	Accounting Technician Series

Total=18

Region 6

3	0023	Outdoor Recreation Planning Series
2	0303	Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series
5	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0482	Fishery Biology Series
1	0486	Wildlife Biology Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
1	0501	Financial Administration and Program Series
1	0525	Accounting Technician Series

Total=15

Region 7

1	0318	Secretary Series
1	0334	Computer Specialist Series
1	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series

Total=4

Washington  
Office

3	0110	Economist Series
3	0301	Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series
2	0303	Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series
1	0318	Secretary Series
3	0334	Computer Specialist Series
3	0343	Management and Program Analysis Series
4	0401	General Biological Science Series
1	0341	Administrative Officer Series
2	0480	General Fish and Wildlife Administration Series
1	1001	General Arts and Information Series
3	1701	* Not listed in the handbook; Falls under "Education"

Total=26

***Appendix E:***

**Organization Charts for Regions and Washington Office** *(Available at a later date.)*