



American Fisheries Society

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March 20, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We are writing to express our support for U.S. Geological Survey's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research (CRU) Program and we ask that you allocate \$23.9 million to the program for fiscal year 2019. CRUs are highly productive, cost-effective, and reputable sources of scientific information. The loss of this critically important research and graduate training program would be a direct and significant loss to our nation's ability to manage its fish and wildlife resources.

AFS is the world's oldest and largest professional society of fishery and aquatic scientists and managers. The Society seeks to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

CRUs have a three-fold mission: produce actionable science to meet the resource management needs of cooperators; provide cooperators technical assistance in applying and integrating new science; and develop the next generation of natural resource professionals through graduate education. This mission is implemented by fostering partnerships between state and federal natural resource agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations, as directed by the Cooperative Units Act of 1960 (P.L. 86-686).

The 40 Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Units (CRUs) across 38 states are embedded in major research universities and bridge the gap between science and natural resource decisions. CRU scientists produce credible, applied science that meets the direct needs of cooperators and empowers the front lines of fish and wildlife conservation. Their research yields both very specific, short-term information and long-term state-of-the-art research on complex, longer-term questions to inform critical conservation work.

Federal and state agencies receive science to support sustainable management of fish and wildlife resources, evaluate and address challenges to endangered species listing and recovery, prevent and control invasive species and wildlife disease outbreaks, and actionable science to address many other natural resource management challenges.

We urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to appropriate \$23.9 million for the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Program in Fiscal Year 2019. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
Executive Director