

Research on State Fish and Wildlife Agency Funding

Overview & Context

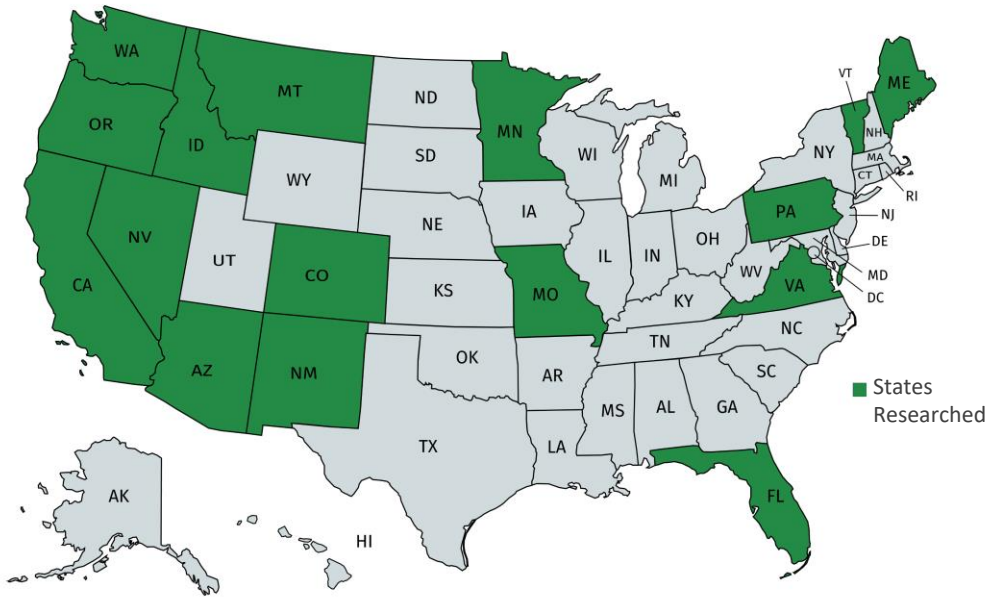
Research Topics:

- State Fish and Wildlife Agency authorities and scope
- Structure of the Agency's funding portfolio, including:
 - General Fund
 - License Fees
 - Non-Consumptive User Fees
 - Federal Funding
 - Other
- Sustainable funding or long-term funding strategy working groups or reports

Process

- Reviewed state fish and wildlife agency website, reports, and budget information
- Currently verifying budget and license fee numbers via contacting state agencies by phone/email

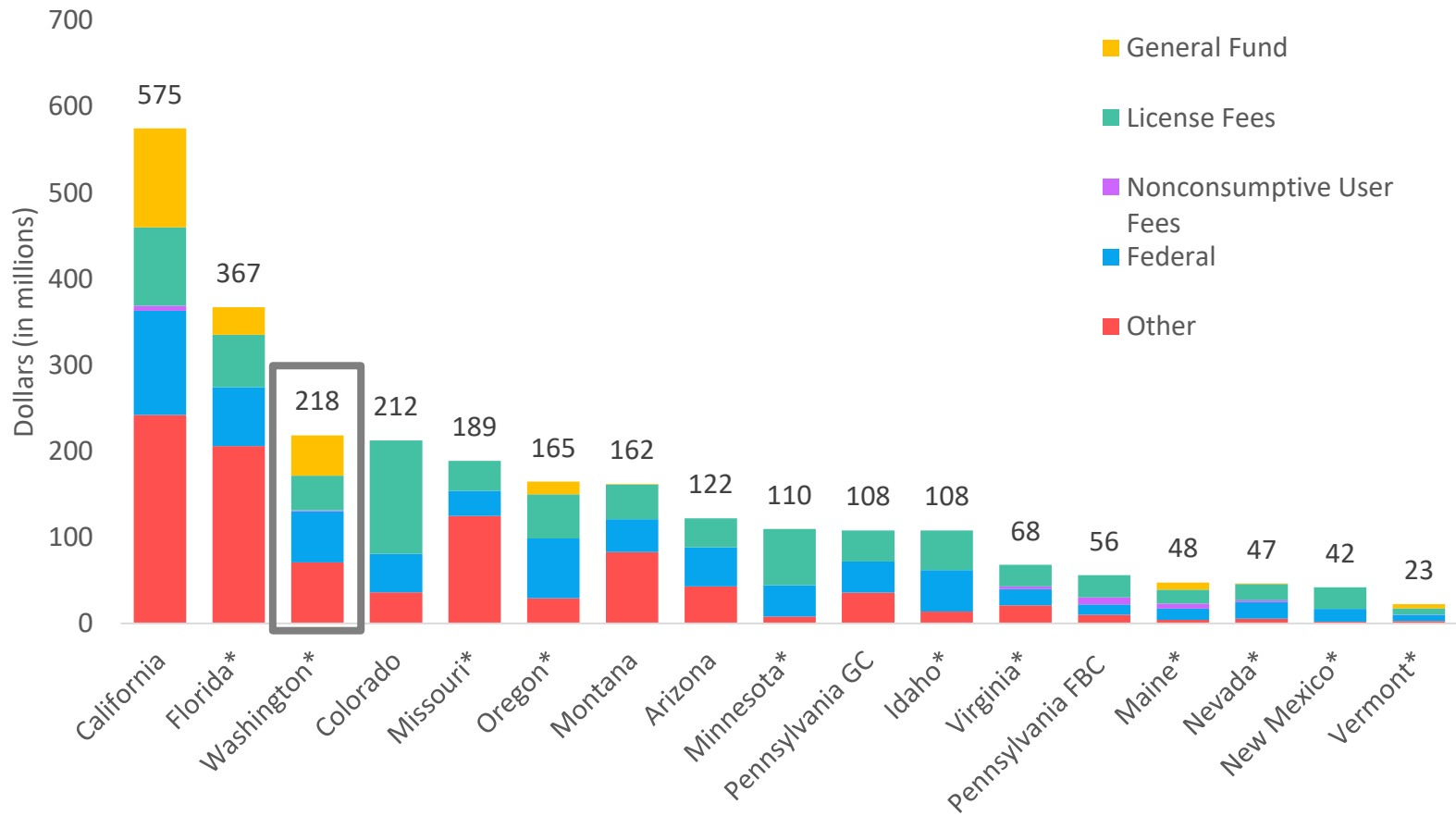
Overview & Context



States Researched	
Arizona	Montana
California	Nevada
Colorado	New Mexico
Florida	Oregon
Idaho	Pennsylvania
Maine	Vermont
Minnesota	Virginia
Missouri	Washington

Created with mapchart.net ©

Budget of State Fish & Wildlife Agencies



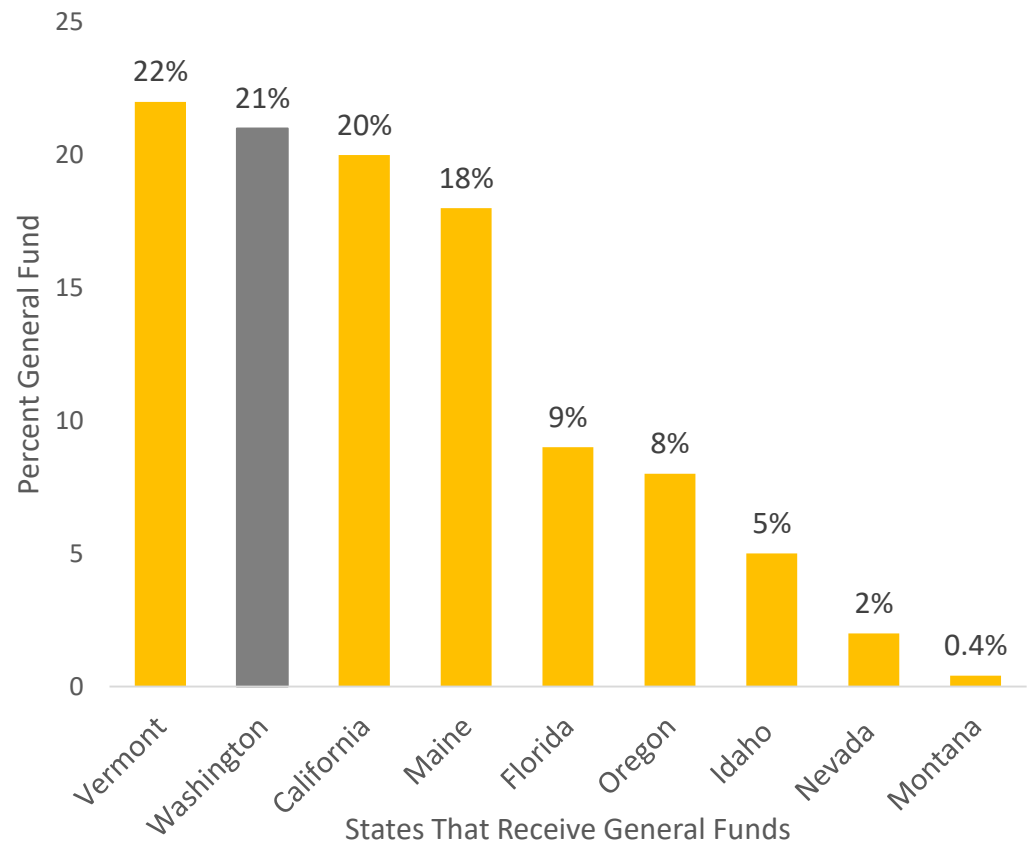
Note: State budget information is based on publicly available information on Agency website and in published reports. An asterisk (*) indicates the budget information has been confirmed.

Agency Management Responsibility Comparison

	WA	AZ	CA	CO	FL	ID	ME	MN	MO	MT	NV	NM	OR	PA	VT	VA
Population (millions) (5 th largest)	7.4	7.0	39.5	5.5	21.0	1.7	1.3	5.6	6.1	1.0	3.0	2.1	4.1	12.8	0.6	8.5
Size (sq. miles, in thousands) (11 th largest)	66.5	113.6	165.4	104.2	53.6	82.7	30.8	79.6	68.7	154.5	109.8	121.3	98.5	44.7	9.2	39.5
Game Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Freshwater Fish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marine Fish	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X
Enforcement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Wildlife Area (acres, in thousands) (4 th largest)	1,000	267	690	769	5,800	587	106	1,290	1,000	598	120	166	200	1,500	345	203

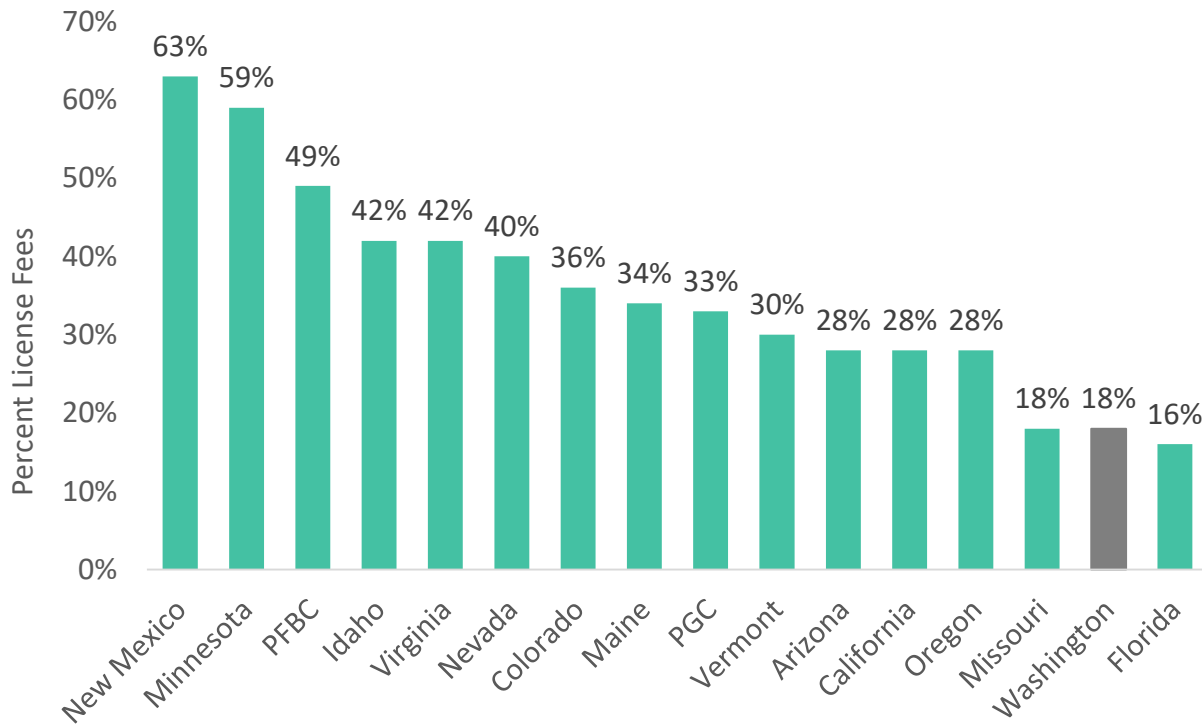
Percent of Total Funding from General Fund

- AZ, CO, MN, MO, NM, PA, and VA do not receive State General Fund money.
- Washington receives 21% of its budget from the State General Fund
 - Second highest of any state reviewed



Percent of Total Funding from License Fees

- The average percent total funding from license fees across the 16 states is 35%.
- Washington receives 18% of its budget from license fees.



License Fees – Resident

- Washington license fee comparison:
 - Elk and freshwater fishing license fees are the median.
 - The deer license fee is above the median.
 - The small game license fee is the highest license fee.

	Washington	Low	Median	High
Deer	\$67	\$5 (FL)	\$41 (CO)	\$82 (AZ)
Elk	\$73 (median)	\$25 (NM)	\$73 (WA)	\$493 (CA)
Small Game	\$41 (high)	\$10 (MO)	\$22 (ID)	\$41 (WA)
Freshwater Fishing	\$30 (median)	\$12 (MO)	\$30 (WA)	\$48 (CA)
Sports Package	N/A	\$40 (NM)	\$57 (AZ)	\$191 (OR)

License Fees – Non-Resident

- Washington license fee comparison:
 - The elk license fee for non-residents is below the median.
 - The freshwater fishing license for non-residents is above the median.
 - The deer license fee for non-residents is one of the highest.
 - The small game license fee is the highest.

	Washington	Low	Median	High
Deer	\$532	\$5 (FL)	\$172 (MN)	\$600 (OR)
Elk	\$594	\$75 (NM)	\$651 (CO)	\$1,529 (CA)
Small Game	\$184 (high)	\$25 (MT)	\$80 (MO)	\$184 (WA)
Freshwater Fishing	\$85	\$42 (MO)	\$66 (CO, NM)	\$130 (CA)
Sports Package	N/A	\$10 (CO, NM)	\$138 (VT)	\$201 (NV)

License Fees – Process Simplification Measures

- Common process simplification measures implemented in other states:
 - Lifetime licenses
 - Multi-year licenses
 - Sports packages

	States with License Process Simplification Measures
Lifetime License	AZ, CA, FL, ID, ME, MN, MO, PA, VA
Multi-Year License	FL, ID, MN, PA, VA, VT
Sports Package	AZ, CO, ID, ME, MN, MT, NM, NV, OR, VT, VA

Long-Term Funding Working Groups

- Nine of the states have undergone or are conducting processes to review agency funding options.

- California
- Colorado
- Maine
- Montana
- New Mexico
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Vermont
- Washington

- Working Group Outcomes:






- Criteria for evaluating funding sources
- Recommended sources for alternative funding
- Funding principles



Criteria for Evaluating Funding Options

- Sufficient funding to meet needs
- Long-term stability
- Cost-effectiveness
- Ease of administration
- Political viability
- Success in other states
- Fair to all license buyers
- Effectively target the intended customer
- Contribution from individuals that benefit
- Maximize recruitment and retention of hunters and anglers

Recommended Funding Source Examples

-  **Dedicated percentage of state tax (e.g., sales, rooms/meals, severance, lodgers, real estate transfer, resource extraction)** FL, MO, MN, NM, ME
-  **Dedicated percentage of lottery funds or dedicated lottery ticket** MN, VT
-  **Hunting and fishing license fee increase** CO, MT, MO
-  **Product taxes (wholesale beverage, outdoor equipment)** OR, NM, MN
-  **User fees (boat launch fee, recreation license, watercraft/ATV gas tax)** MO, MN

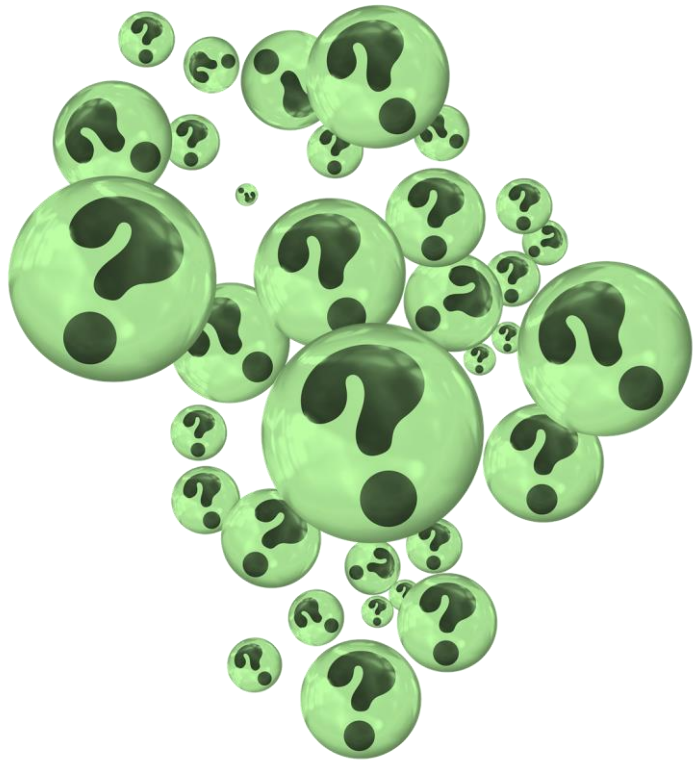
Note: this list does not represent all the possible alternative funding options.

Principles for Funding Fish & Wildlife Agencies

- Diversify funding sources
- Provide mechanisms in addition to license dollars to fund resource management
- Make small adjustments to license fees over time
- Advocate for legislative opportunities to maintain and increase revenues
- License fees should be reviewed and adjusted to reflect the cost of providing licenses
- Evaluate and implement efficiencies
- Simplify the license structure
- Regularly review budget expenditures and revenues
- Implement open and transparent accounting
- Use effective outreach when changing license fees
- Develop broad public understanding of the agency's benefits, challenges, and opportunities
- Monitor and manage outcomes
- Consider opportunities for partnerships
- Balance the needs of fish, wildlife, and humans

Conclusion – Key Takeaways

- State wildlife agencies have variable budgets and funding portfolios.
- Washington has a high percentage of general fund and low percentage of license fee contribution to its budget relative to other states.
- Washington is the only state examined that has not implemented license simplification programs.
- Other states have undertaken or in the process of similar long-term funding working groups; this may provide lessons learned or ideas for WDFW's work.



Questions?
