

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

SCIENCE SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Revised June 13, 2006

1. BACKGROUND

This is one in an on-going series of mini-surveys conducted for the general purpose of identifying how satisfied customers are with the science products of the USGS.

Respondents are asked to rate their satisfaction with:

- Various aspects of the products they receive from the SSP study
- Overall satisfaction with the products
- Communications throughout the life of the study

In addition, respondents are asked to describe how they use the products and what decisions are affected by the products. Specific to this mini-survey, respondents are asked if there are SSP-related topics for which they would like more information, if they have suggestions for improving the information flow, and their overall assessment of the effectiveness of the SSP program.

The survey was administered via email. Respondents linked to a webpage to complete the questionnaire online. Non-respondents were sent 2 reminder emails (at 1 to 2-week intervals). Where possible, followup phone calls were made to non-respondents prior to the second reminder email.

The SSP Customer Satisfaction Survey began on March 30, 2006. Data collection ended on May 5, 2006.

2. RESPONSE RATES

The Science Support Partnership program office identified 93 SSP projects completed in the past 2 years. For each project they identified the project title and project ID, the FWS project officer, the USGS principal investigator, and the end date of the project. The survey consisted of a census of the 93 projects. During the course of the survey, 3 additional sample units were added. This was for a project that had 2 parts (each with a separate FWS project officer) and 2 USGS principal investigators for each part. The FWS project officers requested the additional sample units so that they could respond separately for each USGS PI. The final sample size thus was 96.

One sample unit had a bad email address and could not be sent out. Responses were received from 67 of the remaining 95 sample units (71%). 63 of these were useful responses. The 4 non-useful responses were persons who had not yet received the project products. 5 persons refused to participate in the survey.

23 persons responded to the initial email (17 useful, 1 non-useful, and 5 refusals). 22 more persons responded to the first email reminder (21 useful and 1 non-useful). Telephone calls were made to 37 of the 50 non-respondents (13 persons could not be reached by phone). 10 persons were spoken to, and 27 were left messages. The 10 persons spoken to agreed to complete the survey (8 did and 2 remained non-response). The 27 messages resulted in 15 useful and 2 non-useful responses. Of the 13 persons who could not be reached by phone, 2 did respond to the final email reminder.

Table 1. Source of responses

	Number sent	Useful responses	Non-useful responses	Refusal	Non-response	Useful response rate
Initial email	95	17	1	5	72	18%
1 st reminder email	72	21	1	0	50	30%
Phone followup	37	23	2	0	12	66%
2 nd reminder email	13	2	0	0	11	15%
Total	95	63	4	5	23	69%

The FWS region is indicated by the 3rd and 4th digits of the project ID. Projects with codes of FH, IA, and SP are part of region 9.

Table 2. Status by FWS region

Region	Number sent	Useful responses	Non-useful responses	Refusal	Non-response	Useful response rate
1	17	13	0	0	4	76%
2	8	3	1	0	4	43%
3	19	11	1	2	5	61%
4	12	6	0	1	5	50%
5	12	8	1	1	2	73%
6	10	8	1	1	0	89%
7	5	5	0	0	0	100%
9	12	9	0	0	3	75%
Total	95	63	4	5	23	69%

Table 3. Status by year project began

Region	Number sent	Useful responses	Non-useful responses	Refusal	Non-response	Useful response rate
2001	16	13	0	1	2	81%
2002	6	3	0	0	3	50%
2003	32	23	0	4	5	72%
2004	25	16	2	0	7	70%
2005	16	8	2	0	6	57%
Total	95	63	4	5	23	69%

The extent of non-response bias is not known, but is probably not serious. First, the non-response rate is fairly low (31%). This means that, even if the non-respondents differ systematically in their opinions from the respondents, there are too few non-respondents to have a large effect on the aggregate reported percentages.

Second, there are some differences in response rates by FWS region. Regions 2 and 4 have significantly lower response rates, while region 7 has a significantly higher response rate. This means that the regions are not equally represented in the non-response. However, the regions reporting higher dissatisfaction are split between those under-represented and those over-represented. This suggests that any errors based on regional differences tend to offset each other in the aggregate percentages.

Third, there is some evidence that non-respondents do not differ significantly in opinion from the respondents. About 65% of the respondents completed the questionnaire upon receipt of the email, while the others did so only after receiving a telephone reminder. Without the reminder, these would have been non-response. The persons who responded only after a telephone reminder can be thought of as being intermediate between the email responders and the remaining non-response. If the telephone responders systematically differed in opinions from the email responders, this would suggest that the remaining non-response may also differ systematically. There are some differences between email responders and telephone responders – telephone responders are somewhat more likely to be “strongly” supportive of the SSP program than are email responders. However, for almost all aspects reporting is very similar between the two. This suggests that the remaining non-response probably also does not differ significantly from the existing response.

Table 4. Comparison of email to phone responses

	Email	Phone
Products: % very satisfied		
Content	51	50
Timeliness	29	36
Quality	60	50
Level of detail	47	45
Usability	49	42
Usefulness	40	43
Overall sat.	50	46
Communications: % very satisfied		
From PI	54	48
Guidance	16	0
Desires information		
Develop proposal	43	30
Selection process	58	44
Budget / overhead	58	48
Current activities	45	30
Previous products	48	44
SSP vs. QR	48	44
Assessment: % strongly		
Effective	16	38
Recommend	22	35

3. SATISFACTION with PRODUCTS

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with 6 aspects of the products they received from the SSP project, and their overall satisfaction with the products. The 6 aspects are:

- Content (do the products include the types of information you wanted?)
- Timeliness (did USGS provide products as scheduled?)
- Quality of Analysis/Interpretation (are the analyses rigorous and the conclusions justified?)
- Level of Detail (do the products include the right amount of information?)
- Usability (are the products easy to read and understand?)
- Usefulness (do the products meet your needs?)

Possible responses were:

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- No opinion

The tables that follow include only those responses that expressed an opinion. The first table shows the raw responses. The second table shows the percentages of responses. The third table shows summary statistics.

The mean is the arithmetic average of the responses, where very satisfied =1, satisfied = 2, dissatisfied = 3, and very dissatisfied = 4. The median is the satisfaction of the mid-most response (where half the respondents are more satisfied, and half are less satisfied). The mode is the most frequently expressed level of satisfaction. The standard deviation measures the dispersion of the responses.

Simple satisfaction is the sum of satisfied and very satisfied. Simple dissatisfaction is the sum of dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction is near or above 90% for all aspects. More than 50% of respondents report being “very satisfied” with Content and Quality of Analysis/Interpretation.

Table 5. Number of responses, product satisfaction

Aspect	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissat.	Very dissat.	Simple satisfaction	Simple dissat.
Content	29	23	1	4	52	5
Timeliness	19	34	4	3	53	7
Quality	33	22	2	2	55	4
Level of detail	26	26	2	2	52	4
Usability	25	26	1	2	51	3
Usefulness	23	27	4	2	50	6
Overall sat.	29	24	4	3	53	7

Table 6. Percent of responses, product satisfaction

Aspect	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissat.	Very dissat.	Simple satisfaction	Simple dissat.
Content	51	40	2	7	91	9
Timeliness	32	57	7	5	88	12
Quality	56	37	3	3	93	7
Level of detail	46	46	4	4	93	7
Usability	46	48	2	4	94	6
Usefulness	41	48	7	4	89	11
Overall sat.	48	40	7	5	88	12

Table 7. Summary statistics, product satisfaction

Aspect	No. of responses	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation
Content	57	1.65	1	1	0.83
Timeliness	60	1.85	2	2	0.76
Quality	59	1.54	1	1	0.73
Level of detail	56	1.64	2	1 or 2	0.72
Usability	54	1.63	2	2	0.71
Usefulness	58	1.73	2	2	0.75
Overall sat.	60	1.68	2	1	0.81

Total satisfaction with the SSP project products can be calculated as a weighted average of the aspects and overall satisfaction. The weighting scheme used in this paper is: overall = 40%, usefulness = 20%, all other aspects = 8% each.

Table 8. Total product satisfaction

	Statistics
No. of responses	62
Mean	1.73
Median	1.76
Mode	2
Standard dev.	0.73
Simple sat.	88%

Product satisfaction is lower in regions 4 and 6. However, this generally reflects dissatisfaction with only one project in each region.

Table 9. Product satisfaction by FWS region, means

Aspect	FWS Region							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
No. responses	12	3	11	6	8	8	5	9
Content	1.45	1.33	1.45	2.00	1.75	2.13	1.75	1.50
Timeliness	1.64	1.67	1.73	2.50	1.75	2.00	2.00	1.75
Quality	1.55	1.33	1.36	1.83	1.25	1.88	1.75	1.50
Level of detail	1.70	1.33	1.36	1.80	1.63	1.88	2.00	1.63
Usability	1.56	1.67	1.45	1.33	1.50	2.25	1.75	1.50
Usefulness	1.78	1.67	1.45	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.75	1.88
Overall sat.	1.75	1.33	1.45	2.00	1.63	1.88	2.00	1.50
Total sat.	1.77	1.45	1.46	2.07	1.58	1.96	2.00	1.64

Table 10. Product satisfaction by FWS region, simple satisfaction

Aspect	FWS Region							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
No. responses	12	3	11	6	8	8	5	9
Content	100	100	100	75	88	75	100	88
Timeliness	100	100	100	50	88	88	80	88
Quality	91	100	100	100	100	75	100	88
Level of detail	90	100	100	100	88	88	100	88
Usability	100	100	100	100	100	75	100	88
Usefulness	89	100	100	80	88	75	100	88
Overall sat.	92	100	100	80	88	75	80	88
Total sat.	89	100	100	77	89	77	80	89

Product satisfaction is much lower for projects starting in 2002. However, there are only 3 projects that started in 2002, so this result is not necessarily meaningful.

Table 11. Product satisfaction by start year, means

Aspect	Year project started				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
No. responses	13	3	23	15	8
Content	1.75	3.50	1.64	1.36	1.57
Timeliness	1.92	3.33	1.64	1.79	1.88
Quality	1.58	2.67	1.45	1.21	1.88
Level of detail	1.82	3.00	1.50	1.43	1.86
Usability	1.67	3.00	1.77	1.29	1.60
Usefulness	1.92	2.67	1.64	1.50	1.80
Overall sat.	1.75	2.67	1.61	1.53	1.71
Total sat.	1.79	2.79	1.65	1.54	1.82

Table 12. Product satisfaction by start year, simple satisfaction

Aspect	Year project started				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
No. responses	13	3	23	15	8
Content	83	0	95	100	100
Timeliness	85	0	100	93	88
Quality	92	67	95	100	88
Level of detail	82	50	100	100	86
Usability	92	0	95	100	100
Usefulness	83	33	95	100	80
Overall sat.	83	33	91	93	100
Total sat.	86	31	92	93	91

There are too few responses for any individual USGS PI for the results to be meaningful. Most PI's have responses for only 1 project. The table below shows results only for those few PI's with more than one response. There are so few responses that any reported dissatisfaction stands out strongly. However, there are too few responses to draw any conclusions about individual PI's.

Table 13. Product satisfaction, by USGS PI

PI	No. of responses	Total satisfaction	
		Mean	Simple sat.
Anderson	3	1.12	100
Bart	2	2.58	50
Conway	2	1.08	100
Estes	2	1.00	100
Farmer	2	1.08	100
Frederickson	2	1.88	100
Krementz	2	1.18	100
Neves	2	2.00	100
Reynolds	2	1.84	100
Sauer	2	2.24	58
Scoppettone	2	1.95	100

Respondents were asked to describe their use of the project products, including any decisions that were (will be) influenced by the products.

57 persons provided this information.

- Basic research from SSP has evolved into cooperative pilot model for removal of phosphorus with plans to scale to an intermediate treatment unit.
- Development and testing of plague vaccines for black-footed ferrets and prairie dogs is potentially one of the most significant, long range contributions to black-footed recovery and prairie wildlife conservation that can be made. Plague is the principal obstacle in sustaining viable prairie dog complexes today and establishing wild ferret populations. The availability of an efficacious vaccine to protect ferrets and eventually (hopefully) the development of oral delivery mechanisms for prairie dog immunization and protection would ensure species recovery and promote management/protection of declining prairie wildlife communities.
- Field management prescription decisions are currently being formulated based upon the data from the referenced study, and will continue to be into the future. The referenced study data will support the Santee National Wildlife Refuge's annual habitat management plans and the stations overall biological missions and goals.
- Further development of the technique is needed, but holds promise for describing changes in fish condition.
- Helps establish prescribed burning program guidelines.
- I am no longer in the position I was when the project was implemented, therefore, am uncertain how the products are being used. The intent/objective of the project was to prioritize fish passage research and management needs. The product is a very good synopsis of the workshop, but I don't know if the workshop clearly identified the priorities.
- I have not received all of the final products yet. This project was not done by the USGS PI, but by a graduate student who had other funding. In that sense we got more value because NSF paid his salary etc, but it meant we had no control over time lines. We were able to work with the USGS PI to hire two technicians who collected valuable field data that resulted in a publication.
- I have not received the product specified in the QR proposal (a fact sheet). The investigator has been responsive to requests for interim information; however, since this was part of a larger study and not very much money (<10K) the ultimate product that I want/need is still in the works.
- I haven't yet used the study products because I haven't received the finished product. My answers to content and timeliness in question 1 above reflect this. My other answers above indicate my expectations of the final product. Once I see the final project my answers may be elevated to very satisfied. The application of

the final products is expected to be throughout the Southeast Region and may even go beyond the original application.

- Improved management of woodcock habitats. One more piece in the puzzle relative to harvest management for woodcock. The study has stimulated considerable interest in woodcock in Minnesota and Michigan. Private groups are pursuing active woodcock management on private lands.
- Information from this study may help with evaluation of management options, particularly harvest management.
- Information gathered from this study enhances our ability to recover globally imperiled freshwater mussel species through the collection of broodstock, augmentation of populations, and reintroduction of species into historical habitats.
- Investigator needs to provide written report on project. We've discussed the preliminary results and we now need reports so we can begin our 5 year review process of this species.
- No decisions at this point--it might be useful to develop one page fact sheets for the "layman" to explain the results of this work.
- None. The products (final report) was un-useable and will have to be redone.
- Our knowledge of foraging patterns at San Nicolas Island provides a useful comparison to the mainland population of sea otters because it illuminates the differences between southern sea otters that are food limited and those that are not. The study has management implications, in that it suggests that range expansion is a key factor in the recovery of the subspecies. Currently the southern sea otter translocation program (and its associated "no-otter" zone, is under review.
- Potential use toward status determination for various subspecies under ESA. Will be helpful in evaluation of "best available science."
- Product's results are routinely used or cited in biological evaluations, environmental assessments, and biological opinions, and these heavily influence the decisions made by federal agencies in the conservation of natural resources, including endangered species, as well as they help inform State, Tribal, Municipal agencies and the public of the sensitivity of the Rio Grande silvery minnow to pollution. We also use the data, presentations, and reports in our discussions with federal action agencies as examples of the data necessary for a thorough evaluation of potential effects, or to illustrate the type and magnitude of effects an action has had on a federally-listed species and its habitats. I appreciate the Biological Resources Division for their commitment to science excellence.
- Recommendations for the best method of preparing avian blood samples for long-term storage, which will also yield the most available data, will help biologists and managers at Hakalau refuge set guidelines for future researchers who propose to conduct similar studies involving blood sampling for avian disease and DNA studies.
- Results of project are informative about potential tools that may assist management of Pacific lamprey.
- Results of this study will enable the US Fish and Wildlife Service to better restore and understand lake sturgeon population dynamics in the connecting waterways

of the Great Lakes. Folks at the Great Lakes Science Center are great to work with.

- Results will be used to assess fish culture strategies, smolt release timing "windows," and to determine the need for artificial additions of calcium/lime to counter the levels of aluminum that now appear to prevail in certain rivers used by endangered Atlantic salmon.
- Since this effort was designed to create a snapshot of the present science capacity of the Service, the final report has not been analyzed to extent that specific management decisions can move forward.
- Study products are being used to support the Service's Five-year Review of the Florida manatee. The current listing status of this species will be evaluated using this product, among others. As such, it is of paramount importance that this study product meets the highest of standards and currency, which it does.
- The information from this study is critical in developing future management plans for Sauger within the Wind River basin. The lack of juvenile sauger as documented in this study dictates concern for this species and how we will manage to maintain this species within the system.
- The information will be used by whooping crane flock managers in running their breeding programs and their use of mosquito control methods.
- The outcome of the study was critical in directing our conservation efforts and activity. Three important issues were examined during this study 1) the status of mussels in Copper Creek, 2) habitat condition in Copper Creek, and 3) feasibility and direction of recovery activities in Copper Creek. Because of this study, several decisions were made in our strategy to recover the endangered purple bean such as: what species to focus on for recovery, where is the best habitat, where is stream restoration most critical, what strategy do we use to propagate the endangered purple bean in Copper creek
- The product (a sampling framework for a continental marsh bird monitoring program) is incomplete and not acceptable for major portions of the study area. It has essentially been rejected by other statisticians and monitoring program managers.
- The product received was basically unusable for a science reference or for management purposes!!!!!!!!!!!!
- The products will be of great value in analyzing impacts and developing instream flow recommendations concerning any future water development proposals.
- The products will be used in preparing a conservation plan for refuge lands and will important for identification of areas and habitats in need of restoration.
- The project was to design, develop, and test a predictive model for four native plant species wild-collected for international trade. The research included the distribution and population abundance estimations for the species, which will be used to evaluate the harvest levels of these plants and whether stricter regulations are needed to prevent over-exploitation of them.
- The report is not scheduled for delivery until October 2006, therefore we do not yet have anything to evaluate. Will I have another opportunity to complete this survey?

- The results of the study are being practically applied and incorporated into existing host fish and mussel restoration and recovery plans. They have allowed us to treat fish that are in need of therapeutants with mussels attached and not harm the encysted mussel on the fishes' gills.
- The results of this study were directly applicable to management in two arenas: 1) Characterizing the flyway has assisted us in protecting these species by enabling us to appropriately respond to offshore oil development proposals; 2) understanding wintering grounds relative to those of conspecifics from different breeding areas has helped us characterize manageable population units.
- The study has provided a good baseline of data upon which we will build by doing additional monitoring of our habitat restoration projects in the future.
- The study products were used to develop the survey design and sample allocation for the proposed bald eagle post-delisting monitoring plan. The study design requires a change in how the states conduct their bald eagle nesting surveys. Thus, the design has to be rigorous enough to get all the lower 48 states to buy into the plan. The study allowed for four pilot projects. This year, one state volunteered to do it to test the methodology for itself which is a testimony to the interest by the states.
- The study products will be useful, however I have had to hire another contractor to add the details to the contract that I needed. This was an additional expense and time commitment that was unplanned for when I initiated the project with USGS. Since this experience, I will definitely think twice before entering into another SSP/QRP project.
- These responses are based on Courtney Conway's project to develop and field-test of survey methods for a continental marsh bird monitoring program in North America. The objectives of the study were met, the participation was greater than expected, and ultimately, the methods were recommended for use.
- These results are used to guide management decisions regarding horseshoe crab harvest in Delaware Bay.
- This status survey of freshwater mussels helped us focus and refine our questions for the next phase of research: recruitment studies. We intend to use the information for restoration efforts.
- This study provided insights on timing of woodcock migration.
- This study provided insights on woodcock migration corridors and has identified potential for management to provide habitat for stopover areas. The study also identified important habitat types for stopover areas, some of which were not previously thought to be important to woodcock.
- Understanding the possible threats to finfish from mussel propagation at facilities with an historical finfish propagation program.
- Used study products to help guide NWR CCP decisions (whether to prioritize grassland birds. Used study products to help determine which refuges in R5 should continue to focus efforts on managing habitats for grassland breeding birds, and which should not. Am still waiting for final statistical analysis. Am still waiting for data summaries. All products received to date are preliminary, only address portions of a very large research project. Am still waiting for compiled data set. This project was completed in 2004. 13 refuges participated, and worked

- v. hard to provide clean data set to USGS. 13 refuges are still waiting for a comprehensive report, results, management recommendations, and simply data informing them of the bird community that was recorded in their respective study sites.
- Used the information in regard to Service and National Marine Fisheries Service 10(j) recommendations for flows and Temperature Control devices for the Klamath River Hydroelectric Project.
 - Very useful! This study provided an improved technique for evaluating the number of shorebirds using the refuge which can be related back to our management practices.
 - Very useful. Helps us with habitat management decisions.
 - We are reviewing and evaluating our current seabird monitoring program in the Pacific Islands. USGS (Michelle Reynolds - PI) is providing us technical assistance in this process. The evaluation and recommendations provided by USGS will be used to justify and implement long-term monitoring of seabirds in this region.
 - We are using the study to direct recovery efforts. Specifically, we are concerned to try to identify what causes of mortality are the most important in suppressing population growth, and among these, which might be most easily ameliorated. This study confirmed that among known sources of mortality, disease is very important. As a result, we are giving water quality issues (such as sewage treatment plant relicensing) increased scrutiny.
 - We are using the tags to develop a correction factor for aerial surveys.
 - We are using this information to build the scientific basis for the delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear population.
 - We have not had time to analyze our data. Some of the data were for inventory purposes, so they are valuable in knowing what we have on the refuge and also for great baseline info. The next step is to analyze the data to see if there's correlation between invert. abundance and the three types of management treatments.
 - We have not yet received a final report on this project so I will defer on answering the questions above on: content, timeliness, quality of analysis, level of detail, usability, and usefulness. However USGS-BRD has delivered many interim reports. I have not looked at these in detail but they seem to be of acceptable quality, sufficient detail, are generally useful, and were provided in a timely manner. I expect that the final report by USGS-BRD Dixon lab on this study will be at least satisfactory with regard to your questions above on the quality of the science products.
 - We relied heavily on the products for development of a proposed rule to designate critical habitat for Canada lynx. We also use the information for inter-agency ESA section 7 consultation work and will likely rely on it heavily for Canada lynx recovery planning.
 - We still need to get a written documentation of USGS survey results. Please push the principal Investigator to complete the report.
 - We supported the development of a habitat-based model for endangered Indiana bats in the Lake Champlain Valley of Vermont and New York. I will be

depending on the model to help me assess the potential for Indiana bat habitat (and possible presence) during project reviews under the End. Species Act. The research also provide me with a greater understanding of Indiana bat habitat components, home range size and roost tree parameters, all information that will be used towards the recovery of this species. The research has also been cited in the draft Indiana bat recovery plan that will be made public within the next month.

4. SATISFACTION with COMMUNICATIONS

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with 2 aspects of their communications during the study. The 2 aspects are:

- Communication from the Principal Investigator throughout the life of the study
- Guidance regarding the SSP program and study selection process

Possible responses were:

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- No opinion

Simple satisfaction is between 80 and 85% for both aspects. Respondents are significantly more likely to be “very satisfied” with communication from the PI.

Table 14. Number of responses, communication satisfaction

Aspect	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissat.	Very dissat.	Simple satisfaction	Simple dissat.
From PI	32	21	4	5	53	9
Guidance	6	40	7	4	46	11

Table 15. Percent of responses, communication satisfaction

Aspect	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissat.	Very dissat.	Simple satisfaction	Simple dissat.
From PI	52	34	7	8	85	15
Guidance	11	70	12	7	81	19

Table 16. Summary statistics, communication satisfaction

Aspect	No. of responses	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation
From PI	62	1.71	1	1	0.91
Guidance	57	2.16	2	2	0.70

Dissatisfaction with communication from the PI comes from the same regions that expressed product dissatisfaction (4, 6, and 9). Dissatisfaction with guidance is higher in regions 2, 4, and 9.

Table 17. Interaction satisfaction by org type, means

Region	No. of responses	Mean		Simple satisfaction	
		From PI	Guidance	From PI	Guidance
1	13	1.54	2.09	100	91
2	3	1.33	3.00	100	33
3	11	1.36	1.73	100	100
4	6	1.83	2.33	67	67
5	8	1.57	2.00	86	88
6	8	1.75	1.88	75	100
7	5	1.80	2.25	100	75
9	9	2.44	3.00	56	33

Dissatisfaction with communication is significantly higher for the older projects.

Table 18. Interaction satisfaction by start year

Year	No. of responses	Mean		Simple satisfaction	
		From PI	Guidance	From PI	Guidance
2001	13	2.38	2.78	62	56
2002	3	3.00	2.33	0	67
2003	23	1.45	2.00	95	91
2004	16	1.44	2.00	100	87
2005	8	1.38	2.14	100	71

Respondents were asked if there were any topics for which more information should be made available to FWS Project Officers. Possible answers were:

- Developing an SSP proposal
- The selection process
- Budget / overhead regulations
- Activities currently funded by the SSP
- Products from previously funded SSP activities
- Distinctions between the SSP and Quick Response programs

No one topic stands out: more information on each of the topics is desired by approximately 40 to 50 percent of respondents.

Table 19. Topics where more information is desired

Topic	Number	Percent
Develop proposal	24	38
Selection process	33	52
Budget / overhead	34	54
Current activities	25	40
Previous products	29	46
SSP vs. Quick Response	29	46

Desire for more information is strongest in region 4 – the same region reporting the highest level of dissatisfaction.

Table 20. Percent desiring more information, by FWS region

Aspect	FWS Region							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
No. responses	13	3	11	6	8	8	5	9
Develop proposal	54	33	55	67	13	13	20	33
Selection process	62	67	27	83	75	38	40	44
Budget / overhead	62	67	27	100	63	38	40	56
Current activities	46	33	27	67	25	25	40	56
Previous products	54	33	36	67	63	13	40	56
SSP vs. QR	54	33	36	67	38	38	60	44
Average	55	44	35	75	46	28	40	48

Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions to improve the amount or quality of SSP-related information that is available to Project Officers.

22 persons made suggestions.

- A web site. Maybe it's there but I don't know about it.
- Are completed studies posted on the USGS Web site? How are other completed projects accessed? Is there a clearing house for such info?
- Clearer distinctions between QR and SSP Clear guidance on what priorities for funding are.
- Difficult to comment on this as I'm not familiar with the selection process.
- Direct communications from SSP originators with field-level project leaders (rather than with Regional Offices only, as appears to be the current case).
- Generally, focus should be on funding few projects well than many projects poorly.
- How word of the SSP gets out and how projects are ultimately selected is too much of a mystery. . . and if there is a disconnect between the project and the interest of USGS-BRD personnel or the likelihood of funding success, then all the effort to develop a proposal is for naught; and who wants to waste time.?!?
- I can't speak relative to all projects, but we had an excellent working relationship with Dr. Andersen. Personally, my relationship has been good with almost all of the USGS scientists I have worked with.
- I do not have any suggestions on this point.
- I have no complaints regarding the clarity, communication, and process of the SSPP. Need more of it\$\$\$.
- I was not consistently informed of the status of the development of the products. Initially, when the project started I was very informed but in the middle and later stages I did not receive any information. Milestones need to be set and followed in regard to product development.
- Identify a liaison between FWS & BRD to promote the program.
- It would be helpful to know upfront program targets, if any, that the SSP is focusing on. This would eliminate unnecessary proposal writing and alleviate SSP manager concerns about untargetted programs seeking funding.
- More funding to promote essential USGS research on both vaccines and ecology of diseases impacting native prairie ecosystems. Greater assurances for longer term funding (+5 years).
- More information about the proposal vetting/approval process at USGS-BRD *subsequent* to recommendation for funding by USFWS.
- More information on allocation of funds would be helpful up front.
- No, this seemed fine.
- Perhaps a little brochure on what makes a good SSP project, so that we don't spend our time developing projects that don't stand a chance getting funded.
- Provide all the information regarding the differences between QRP and SSP proposal requirements such as the fact that technical support does not require a full proposal.

- The products required by the Science advisor and the due dates and the SSP database were all a little unclear. A secure website where you could check on products, due dates, even other reports would be helpful.
- The website and survey is a good start. It's nice that USGS put it together, since USFWS has nothing. To ensure highest quality of SSP projects, there should be a mechanism for feedback to USGS (beyond an anonymous survey), specifically with regards to performance of the Principle Investigator's chain of authority.
- Workshops between land managers and potential PI's, fleshing out potential SSP projects/topics are critical to assembling quality SSP projects.

5. OVERALL ASSESSMENT of SSP PROGRAM

Respondents were asked 2 questions about the SSP program as a whole.

- Do you consider the SSP an effective program for addressing your science needs?
- Would you recommend the SSP to other FWS personnel?

Possible answers were:

- Strongly
- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- No opinion

Most respondents gave an unqualified “Yes” to both questions, with most remaining respondents answering “Maybe.”

Table 21. Effective program, number of responses

Region	Strongly	Yes	Maybe	No
1	2	8	3	0
2	0	2	1	0
3	0	9	2	0
4	1	3	0	0
5	3	2	3	0
6	2	4	1	0
7	2	1	1	1
9	4	2	1	0
Total	14	31	12	1

Table 22. Effective program, percent of responses

Region	Strongly	Yes	Maybe	No
1	15	62	23	0
2	0	67	33	0
3	0	82	18	0
4	25	75	0	0
5	38	25	38	0
6	29	57	14	0
7	40	20	20	20
9	57	29	14	0
Total	24	53	21	2

Table 23. Recommend, number of responses

Region	Strongly	Yes	Maybe	No
1	2	9	2	0
2	1	2	0	0
3	1	9	1	0
4	1	3	2	0
5	3	4	0	0
6	2	4	1	0
7	1	3	1	0
9	5	2	1	0
Total	16	36	8	0

Table 24. Recommend, percent of responses

Region	Strongly	Yes	Maybe	No
1	15	69	15	0
2	33	67	0	0
3	9	82	9	0
4	17	50	33	0
5	43	57	0	0
6	29	57	14	0
7	20	60	20	0
9	63	25	13	0
Total	27	60	13	0

Table 25. Summary statistics, overall assessment

Statistics	Effective	Recommend
No. of responses	58	60
Mean	2.03	1.87
Median	2	2
Mode	2	2
Standard dev.	0.86	0.62

Respondents were asked if they had any general comments/feedback regarding the SSP.

38 persons provided comments.

- As far as I am concerned, it is not working.
- Continuing increases in overhead makes USGS less competitive for addressing FWS research needs and makes SSP funds less effective and efficient.
- For USFWS: would like feedback to the field on proposals that we submit but that are not recommended to USGS for funding.
- Generally the amount of money available in QR is not enough to get a USGS investigator involved in the project. I have had several USGS scientists express interest in my needs but could not do a project for the amount in QR because of overhead bumping the project cost above the amounts available for QR
- I am not sure of what exactly is the SSP. This project was funded pursuant to the USGS Quick Response Program. Quick Response can provide the technical assistance to provide tools to assist FWS biologists in evaluating multi faceted multi resource problems.
- I appreciate the program and the contributions of USGS to our FWS program.
- I appreciate this program and this initiative to re-establish a connection between USGS BRD and National Wildlife Refuges. However, I wish the Co-Op Units had never left the USFWS. We lost our research branch and do not receive the same level of attention or service. I'd like to know the reasoning behind the decision back in the 90s to separate Co-Op units. When NBS fell apart, why didn't the Units return to USFWS?
- I think the amount of overhead charged by both USGS and USFWS is ridiculous. Both agencies should be adequately funded so they do not have to rely on taking money from research dollars to run their respective offices.
- I think the amount of overhead charged by both USGS and USFWS is ridiculous. Both agencies should be adequately funded so they do not have to rely on taking money from research dollars to run their respective offices.
- I think the FWS might do a better job of indicating to the FWS staff how much funding and/or what kinds of projects are open to funding (i.e. not likely earmarked by another program or on-going project)when it calls for proposals. We do not want staff to waste time generating proposals that are not likely to get funded, based on feedback from staff who have attempted SSPs and not succeeded. John Sauer and Mark Otto (FWS) did an excellent job for this effort. It required a lot of interactions with a lot of state and federal biologists, three workshops, conference calls, etc...much more than performing a study and writing a report. They both deserve performance awards....I think I will recommend them....
- I would like to see a list of all publications generated nation-wide under the SSP/QRP program. Every year USGS could develop a list of all the publications that resulted from SSP funding. Thanks
- I would like to see more accountability for products.....one of the most critical parts of the grant should be to deliver good quality, useful products, and this hasn't been in the past.

- It is critical that this program continue, if anything should change, it should be an increase in funding support for the program. There are a plethora of research needs out there--research that, in many cases, is critical in guiding the development and implementation of recovery activities. There are few funding sources that offer financial support for such applied research. This program is incredibly valuable to the FWS. I have also enjoyed working directly with the USGS project officer with little overhanging bureaucratic oversight.
- More closely coordinate the request by providing expertise available from BRD. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
- Need more funding.
- No, I am satisfied with the experience and have been considering submissions in the future.
- Not enough funding in the program which limits the types of studies that will get funded.
- Nothing but positive experiences: We are fortunate in having Dr. Stephen McCormick involved in our needs. He is a consummate professional who is addressing FWS management-related priorities in the recovery of endangered Atlantic salmon. His products are timely and his science is top-notch.
- Outstanding program, but very much dependent on the individual researcher to make it successful.
- Over the last several years, in particular 2005, we received notice from the FWS for research proposals very late to adequately prepare research studies. If there could be a better mechanism in place to ensure that funds are available and more lead time to prepare research proposals. Perhaps better communication within the FWS on this issue.
- Regarding this specific project work done for USFWS by the USGS-BRD I offer the following: The overall quality of the products (interim ones) is not an issue. As mentioned above these seem fine. Rather the main issue with regard to this project is not with the quality of the science products delivered by USGS-BRD personnel. Rather there was some quite a bit of dissatisfaction with the main USGS BRD wildlife biologist conducting this study. This individual was lacking in maturity. Since the work involved working with, and coordinating with other state and federal agencies, I would say this was a liability. The person did not foster good relationships with other partner agencies on a consistent basis. The person alienated personnel with other state and federal agencies by actions, and in things this person said in phone conversations, emails, discussions, meetings, etc. I think this individual should have had more oversight and supervision from his home lab and should have been counseled regarding his behavior. With the potential for listing of the species, and past strained relationships amongst state and federal resource agencies, already at issue this persons behavior did not help the situation and was a negative. His behavior did more to detract from the goals of improving the situation than it did to resolve issues and move forward toward solutions. This person also had several wildlife graduate students working under him on the study and I do not believe he provided a good professional role model for these students. Without changes in the behavior and attitude of this one USGS-BRD employee I could not recommend my agency ever working with this

lab as long as this person was lead for the study. I do not mean to denigrate USGS-BRD with my remarks, rather they are a comment on the lack of professionalism exhibited by this one USGS-BRD wildlife biologist. I think USGS-BRD is a good organization that in general produces high quality science products. I know and have worked with several USGS-BRD biologists and I value both their professional expertise and the way they conduct themselves as professionals.

- SSP is a good program. The selection process is a bit clouded, but seems to be improving. The limiting factor appears to be funding which dramatically effects the number of projects underway.
- The only reason I didn't mark #7 "Strongly" was there simply aren't enough funds to effectively meet our need for new information which can be used to better manage migratory birds. The portion of it which goes to bird work seems to be well used. Would love to see more funding available for waterfowl research.
- The project went, but the funding was a little late.
- The Region 9 SSP process is "broken." The FWS Office of Research Coordination does not fulfill its responsibilities with regard to providing information or updates and has not established a process for clear and consistent solicitation and selection of R9 projects. I do not believe that the ADs are engaged or informed of deliberations of Service Science Priorities or specific projects. In 2006, the FWS Office of Research Coordination withheld any call for R9 proposals until late in the year, then allowed a very short window for submissions based on new guidance. It was unclear if submissions were even considered, as it appears the selections were essentially made prior to the conference call with Regional Research Coordinators to debate them. Over its 6 year history, SSP in R9 has been disorganized and frustrating, and does not seem to reflect the research priorities identified by our Division.
- There needs to be better guidance on the type of projects to be funded by SSP. Overhead costs need to be understood by all and there needs to be enough funding to cover them as well as project costs.
- There was no information provided in the original documentation to note that a full proposal is not required for technical support. This then significantly reduced the quality of the product I received because I was unable to note exactly what I wanted out of the product other than the overall information provided in the initial proposal limited to 3-pages.
- This is a difficult project to comment on as it is still not complete. Once I am able to see a draft/final report it will be much easier to evaluate.
- This is an effective program when we understand 1) how projects are selected, 2) what makes a desirable project, 3) how to approach the appropriate USGS person (could have a list of staff in the area and general expertise for example, 4) how much money is available (and generally what the competition is like). This can be an effective, but limited program. How many projects that are submitted actually get funded? How can we judge whether we should spend a lot of time putting together proposals (i.e. is it worth our limited time???)

- This project was handed to me when I obtained my position in Arlington. I now am no longer in that position. Therefore, I had very little involvement with this project and never really evaluated the work or products.
- This was a case where I did not have any involvement with the proposal or have expertise with the subject matter, but was named Project Officer (PO) after the project was selected for funding. I admit that I was clearly at fault by not following the study or asking that someone else be named as PO. I had forgotten about the study since I did NOT receive any progress or final reports from the Principal Investigator until I asked, after receiving this survey to complete. In the future, the PO needs to be part of the process from the beginning, i.e., approving a proposal and agreeing to be a PO. I asked our woodcock expert to review the final report and make comments.
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- Unfortunately this study was not completed in a timely manner, nor was a final report written that could be used for management purposes as a sound reference for fish losses in the Wind River Irrigation unit.
- USGS costs too much to contract out a lot of the scientific work that could be done, and as a result, the scientific work that does get done is not to the same caliber, and ultimately, budget is a primary consideration. It would be better if kernels of a project idea could be submitted by anyone at anytime, via a web page, and then once a year, these ideas could be mutually reviewed by Project Managers and the USGS to determine which ideas would be most beneficial and therefore would need a full blown project proposal developed.
- We have a strong, long-standing working relationship with the bird researchers in USGS. They have made many important contributions to our ability to effectively manage waterfowl populations in Alaska. We would like to see them receive more base money in order to maintain the level of staffing and research that is needed.
- With budget constraints, SSP projects are often the only way for NWR's to accomplish baseline and directed research. Thanks for filling the void.
- Wonderful opportunities for collaboration and focusing USGS expertise on critical resource issues. Program should be expanded. All of my experiences in working with USGS personnel on plague, ferrets, and prairie ecology have been exceptional.
- Yes - it would be great to have a listing of all USGS-BRD personnel and their expertise/research interests with their contact information. This would be very helpful when we are looking to develop new proposals.