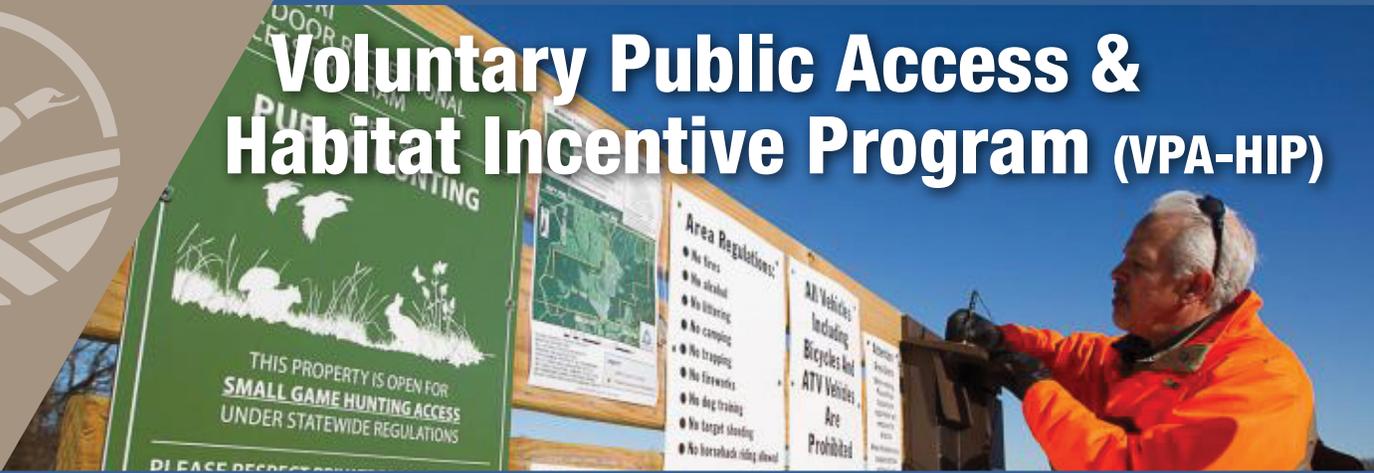




# Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- VPA-HIP is a competitive grant program that helps enhance public access to private lands for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities such as hiking and bird-watching.
- The program was created in the 2008 Farm Bill and reauthorized with an additional \$40 million in the 2014 Farm Bill.
- State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies compete for VPA-HIP grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and use the funding to create or expand existing state access programs, which often lack adequate funding.
- State access programs incentivize landowners to open their land to the public for outdoor recreation by providing lease payments, liability coverage, or technical assistance.
- Since 2014, more than 950,000 acres have been made available for public access through VPA-HIP.

Private lands in the United States are home to many fish and wildlife species, and offer some of the best opportunities for outdoor recreation. Most of the land in the United States is privately-owned, and for many Americans, finding quality places to hunt and fish is difficult. Introduced in the 2008 Farm Bill and reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program helps open more public access to hunting and fishing on private lands, boosting the outdoor recreation economy that supports rural jobs.

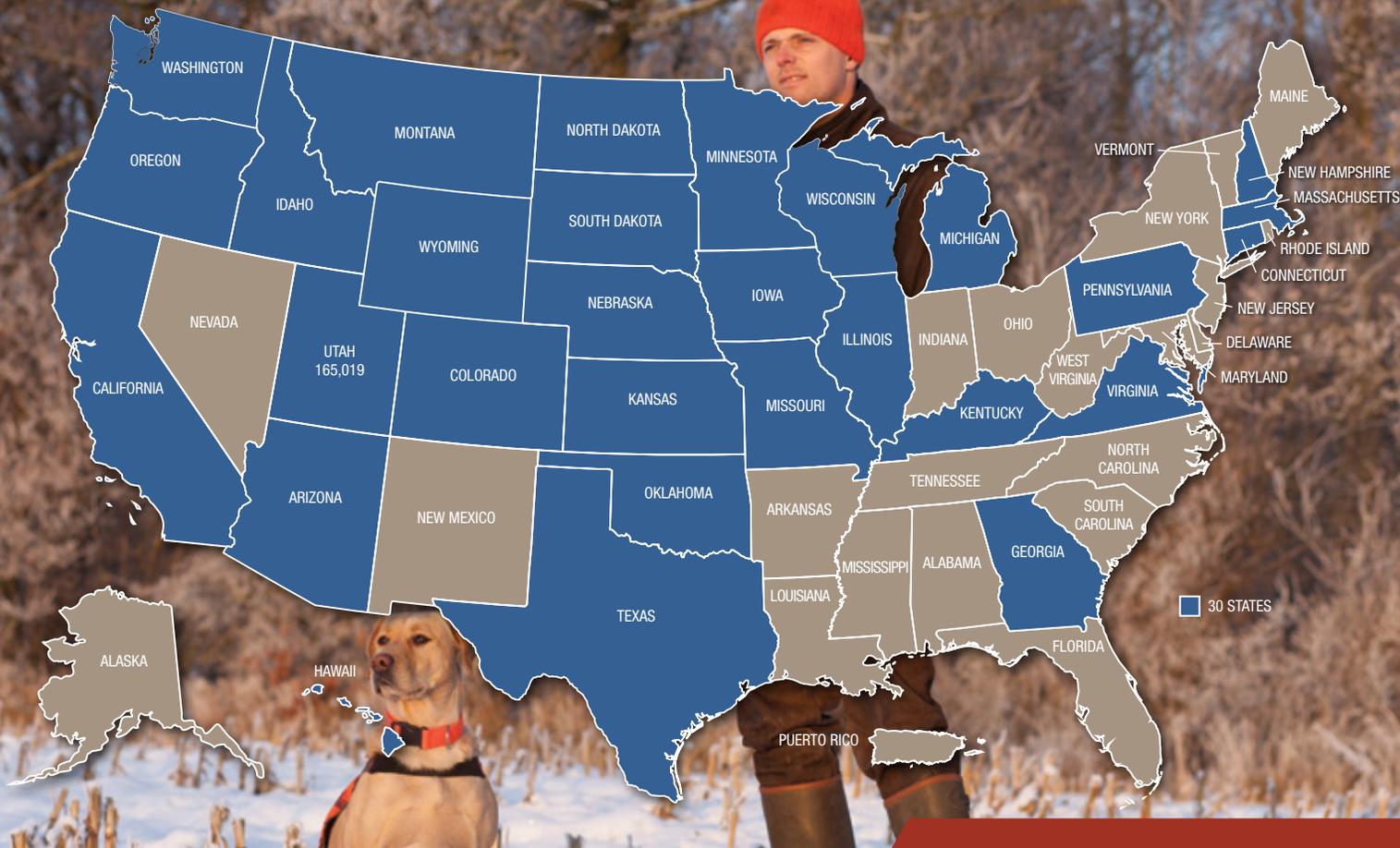
## AWWG Recommendations

- Reauthorize VPA-HIP at no less than \$150 million over five years.
- This request reflects the annual level of demand from applicants and the economic benefits of program investment.

For more information, please visit [www.trcp.org/farmbill](http://www.trcp.org/farmbill) or contact Alex Maggos ([amaggos@trcp.org](mailto:amaggos@trcp.org))



## 30 States awarded VPA-HIP funds since 2010



### Delivering Access Across the Country

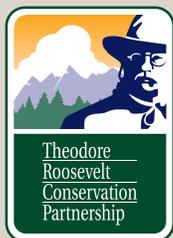
VPA-HIP has enhanced access in 30 states, including:

- **Kansas:** \$2.7 million to expand the state Walk-In Hunting Access Program
- **Iowa:** \$3 million to assist landowner conservation practices and open 22,000 acres for public access
- **Michigan:** \$2.2 million to expand an existing access program to the Northern Lower Peninsula
- **Montana:** \$1.2 million to provide recreational access to critical sagebrush habitat

### An Economic Driver

A recent economic study found that \$9.1 million in VPA-HIP investments made across 13 states in 2011 spurred \$18.2 million in recreational spending—**a 99% return** on taxpayer investment.

It is estimated that this spending produced **\$14.6 million** in salaries and income and generated **322 new jobs**, many of them in rural communities.



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