

**VIRGINIA RECREATIONAL FISHING DEVELOPMENT FUND
SUMMARY PROJECT APPLICATION***



<p>NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT:</p> <p align="center">Virginia Marine Resources Commission Virginia Marine Police - Special Investigative Unit 804 Omni Boulevard Suite # 104 Newport News, VA. 23606</p>	<p>PROJECT LEADER (name, phone, e-mail):</p> <p align="center">Lieutenant John E. Croft Special Agent in Charge Office: (757) 594-8800 Fax: (757) 594-7848 mrcsiu@visi.net</p>
<p>PRIORITY AREA OF CONCERN:</p> <p align="center">Commonwealth of Virginia</p>	<p>PROJECT LOCATION:</p> <p align="center">Commonwealth of Virginia</p>
<p>DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF PROJECT:</p> <p align="center">Undercover Law Enforcement Funds for Covert Fisheries Operations.</p>	
<p>PROJECT SUMMARY:</p> <p align="center">See the Attached</p>	
<p>EXPECTED BENEFITS:</p> <p align="center">See the Attached</p>	
<p>COSTS:</p> <p>VMRC Funding: No matching funds Recipient Funding: \$25,000.00 Total Costs: \$25,000.00</p> <p>Detailed budget must be included with proposal.</p>	

Updated 6/1/05

*This form alone does not constitute a complete application, see application instructions or contact Sonya Davis at 757-247-8155 or sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov

PROJECT SUMMARY - ATTACHMENT

Undercover funds in the amount of \$25,000.00 are requested to for use by the Virginia Marine Police, Special Investigative Unit. The funds will be utilized to finance ongoing undercover operations, obtain specialized training and for the purchasing of needed surveillance equipment.

This is an ongoing project that is used to protect Virginia's recreational fishery stock.

Agents within the Special Investigative Unit are trained to conduct undercover operations, surveillance operations and overt criminal investigations.

These operations may require agents to infiltrate illegal networks that exploit Virginia's marine resources. This requires extensive manpower hours, training and equipment. Agents must be capable of working in dangerous environments and documenting the violations with sophisticated recording equipment. This equipment is a prerequisite to successful court prosecutions resulting in convictions.

The SIU is an important component in dismantling persons, businesses and firms who engage in the illegal harvesting and black-market of our marine resources.

The Special Investigative Unit (SIU) was formed six years ago and is a permanent branch of the law enforcement division. The SIU is the only law specialized unit in the United States dedicated to full-time undercover maritime law enforcement.

The SIU formed the Virginia Marine Fishery Task Force which includes the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. This task force combines the assets of three agencies in an attempt to combat national black marketing of regulated saltwater fish stocks from Virginia's tidal tributaries and territorial sea.

It should be noted that every regulated species of finfish is targeted for protection. SIU undercover operations have dismantled interstate poaching operations, the harvesting of prohibited species, under-size species, over the limits and gross harvests. The SIU also targets buyers who seek threatened or prohibited species. Other targets include unlicensed individuals who target saltwater fish stocks for financial gain.

The SIU is a proactive unit that is responsible for hundreds of misdemeanor and felony arrests. The court conviction rate for those arrested is a 97%.

NEED:

Black-marketers, rogue commercial fisherman and the unethical sport fisherman have a direct and negative impact on our fishery stocks. Illegal buyers, marketers, importers and exporters perpetuate this activity and drive the illegal markets.

This proposed grant program is designed to directly target gross violators of Virginia's recreational fisheries. The Virginia Marine Police, Special Investigative Unit is professional solution used to attack these difficult enforcement problems.

Through the use of covert law enforcement operations, Special Agents of the Virginia Marine Police infiltrate the various networks that exploit and unlawfully market our marine resources. The SIU uses specialized infiltration techniques, surveillance operations and overt operations to arrest and prosecute violators.

These operations are extremely successful but require special funds for buying evidence and purchasing specialized recording equipment that is used to document the violations. Specialized training goals are needed to ensure that cases are properly planned, documented, executed and prosecuted. Covert audio & video systems are complicated and require extensive training regarding installation and field use. Specialized training is now available to departments that deal exclusively with covert fish & wildlife operations.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the program will be to identify and target violators in the commercial fisheries, sport fisheries, seafood buyers, exporters and importers and or any person who has an interest in Virginia's fisheries.

There are no target dates and this program will run indefinitely.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

The SIU will continue to investigate all areas of illegal harvesting and the illegal marketing of Virginia's fish stocks.

Many of the gross violators are prosecuted under a federal felony statute.

As in all previous years, we expect to identify, arrest and prosecute violators. In the past, hundreds of high-profile arrests resulted in convictions. The arrests, punishments and media attention resulted in a marked deterrent.

APPROACH:

Respectfully, the approach is based on covert operations and is classified.

LOCATION:

The investigations will focus on the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. Any illegal harvester, buyer, seller, importer or exporter will be target for prosecution.

ESTIMATED COST:

\$25,000.00

No matching funds exist.

To enhance the overall effectiveness of the program, funds will be disbursed into three (3) expenditure categories:

- 1. Surveillance equipment**
- 2. Evidence buy money**
- 3. Training cost**

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT:

\$12,500.00 in grant funds will be used for the sole purpose of purchasing specialized audio and video recording equipment.

This equipment is necessary to document undercover buys & sales, illegal fishing activity and to record surveillance operations. This recording equipment is small and specialized and is designed for covert operations.

Equipment will also be used to play back documented violations in a court of law.

EVIDENCE BUY MONEY:

\$10,000.00 in grant funds will be deposited into the SIU Criminal Fund checking account.

The funds will be used to purchase evidence during covert operations. The funds are an important necessary when buying illegal, prohibited, undersize or over the limit species. This is tangible evidence, when used in conjunction with video and audio documentation, results in court convictions.

TRAINING:

\$2,500.00 will be budgeted for specialized training expenses. Tuition & cost for undercover schools, surveillance equipment schools and undercover fish & wildlife training seminars provide invaluable training for the agent.