of cooperating agencies assigned to units. Units constantly had to seek research funding from elsewhere.

1960-Present

The Unit Program Review Task Force of 1972 studied optimal funding of unit research. The task force recognized that potential research, training, and technical assistance by the units exceeded available funding. The states could not fund all research that was important to them, and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife had no mechanism to regularly provide research funds to units because of the restrictive provisions of the Cooperative Units Act. The task force recognized that the agency could and did contract for research projects and that universities with units could bid on these, but it also recognized the limitations of this process. Usually, the absence of direct research funding precluded full use of expertise of unit researchers by the agency. The task force recommended finding ways to increase research budgets of units.

Amendment of the Cooperative Units Act in 1978

Amendment of the Cooperative Units Act in 1978, as part of the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act, created a direct mechanism for the use of federal funds for research by the units. The amendment added enabling language for direct funding of research by the federal government (Appendix A).

The enabling language allowed use of the Economy Act for the transfer of funds between agencies and the extension of research expertise of the units and their cooperators to the federal government at large. The purpose of the Economy Act was to circumvent the necessity for hiring duplicate expertise in multiple federal agencies. Unit research capability and structure required a mechanism for funding research that could take advantage of the cooperator expertise, yet focus on the unit leader and assistants. With the passage of the 1978 amendment, the Service only had to work out the appropriate guidance mechanism to allow federal funding of research by the units.

The Research Work Order

The guidance for putting provisions of the 1978 amendment into practice was developed by the Division of Cooperative Units with the assistance of Service contracting personnel. The mechanism is known as the Cooperative Unit Research Work Order (RWO) Process (Appendix F). A RWO document is developed to define explicitly a part of the research in a unit cooperative agreement and establishes guidelines for the funding and conduct of specific research.

A RWO is an extension of the Cooperative Agreement and incorporates all of its provisions. Participation in RWO projects is limited to unit