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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



NOV 21 2012

Memorandum

To: Assistant Regional Directors – Ecological Services, Regions 1-8

From: Chief, Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation *Bill C. Nieren*

Subject: ^{Acting} Solicitation of Nominations for the Transportation Environmental Stewardship Excellence Award (Due: January 31, 2013)

The Service is requesting nominations for the Transportation Environmental Stewardship Excellence Award. This award recognizes Service employees or offices that use partnership-based approaches to streamline Federal Highway Administration and State Department of Transportation project planning and environmental reviews and promote ecosystem sustainability.

The Service's partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and state transportation agencies provides an excellent opportunity to improve natural resource conservation through landscape-level planning associated with transportation infrastructure projects. The Service encourages integration of resource management plans, state wildlife action plans, community growth plans, and other landscape-scale planning efforts to identify geographic focus areas where development pressures and valuable Service trust resources overlap. Such integrated planning applies a "green infrastructure" approach to land conservation and land-use planning. This green infrastructure approach provides a framework that can be used to guide future growth and future land development decisions, while facilitating large-scale conservation and restoration efforts that provide a greater ecological benefit and are more cost-efficient to implement.

As highlighted in "Eco-Logical: An Ecosystem Approach for Developing Infrastructure Projects," nominations should integrate development projects and ecosystem conservation to achieve economic, environmental, and social objectives. The Service also encourages nominations that reflect efforts to advance the following national incentives:

- ◆ Executive Order 13604 – Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects
(<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/DCPD-201200202/pdf/DCPD-201200202.pdf>).
- ◆ Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation Initiative
(<http://www.fws.gov/landscape-conservation/shc.html>).
- ◆ Executive Order 13186 – Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds (<http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/eos/eo13186.html>).

- ◆ Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Interagency Policy to Incorporate Ecosystem Considerations in Endangered Species Act Actions (<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/policy-ecosystem.html>).

The criteria for evaluating nominations will include consideration of one or more of three essential elements for environmental stewardship and streamlining of transportation project planning, for projects developed or implemented within the last three years. Please refer to the attachment of the evaluation criteria:

1. Strategic Environmental Stewardship
2. Streamlining (cross-program/agency planning and coordination)
3. Accountability/Adaptive Management.

In recognizing the value of Federal, State, and local partners in guiding stewardship efforts, a panel of judges will include representation from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Federal resource agencies, and local government transportation planning agencies. The judges will evaluate the nominations and make a recommendation to the Service. The Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, in consultation with the Assistant Director for Endangered Species will make the final decision. The award winner will be notified and invited to attend an award ceremony with their Federal, State, and local project partners. The name of the award winner is also inscribed on a permanent plaque located in the Service's Headquarters Office.

Additional information and applications are attached and available online:

http://www.fws.gov/transportationplanning/transportation_winners.html. Applications may be emailed directly to the National Transportation Liaison (Catherine_Liller@fws.gov) NLT COB, January 31, 2013.

If you have any questions or for more information, contact Catherine Liller, National Transportation Liaison, at 303-236-4318.

Attachment