

**Endangered Species Program**  
**Fiscal Year 2006 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund**  
**(Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act) Grant Program**  
**Notice of Availability of Federal Assistance**

**Program Overview Information:**

Federal Agency Name: Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Endangered Species Program.

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal year 2006 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation  
Fund (Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act) Grant Programs

Announcement Type: Initial announcement for the fiscal year 2006 request for proposals

Funding Opportunity  
Number: CESCOF-06

Catalog of Federal Domestic  
Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.615 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

Dates: The due date for proposals submitted for the “Traditional” Conservation Grants program will be determined by our Regional Offices (See Table 1). Proposals for the “Nontraditional” grants (Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition, Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance, and Recovery Land Acquisition Grants) must be submitted via hard copy to our Regional Offices (See Table 1) or electronically through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) APPLY by April 3, 2006. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals to their State Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) for review under Executive Order 12372 (if necessary) concurrent with their submission to our Regional Offices.

**Additional Information:**

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) (Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act) provides funding to States and Territories for species and habitat conservation actions on non-Federal lands. States and Territories must contribute a minimum non-Federal match of 25% for the estimated program costs of approved projects, or 10% when two or more States or Territories implement a joint project. A State or Territory must currently have, or enter into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to receive grant funds.

Four grant programs are available through the CESCF, they include the “Traditional” Conservation Grants and the “Nontraditional” Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition, Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance, and Recovery Land Acquisition Grants.

Information on the CESCF is also available from the Branch of State Grants, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203 or electronically at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/>

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

Because more than half of all species currently listed as endangered or threatened spend at least part of their life cycle on privately owned lands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recognizes that success in conserving species will ultimately depend on working cooperatively with landowners, communities, and tribes to foster voluntary stewardship efforts on private lands. States play a key role in catalyzing these efforts. A variety of tools are available under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to help States and landowners plan and implement projects to conserve species. The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (section 6 of the ESA) has been available for several years to provide grants to States and Territories (hereafter, "States") to participate in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed, and listed species.

We, the Service, are soliciting project proposals for Federal assistance under the CESCOF. This document describes how you can apply for funding under the CESCOF and how we will determine which project proposals will be funded. In fiscal year 2005 the Service awarded approximately \$77 million to projects in nearly all U.S. States through the CESCOF. Four grant programs are available through the CESCOF:

**“Traditional” Conservation Grants** - The Conservation Grants program provides financial assistance to States to implement conservation projects for listed species and species at-risk. Funded activities include habitat restoration, species status surveys, public education, and outreach, captive propagation and reintroduction, nesting surveys, genetic studies, and development of management plans. The project selection process is generally conducted by Service Endangered Species staff in conjunction with the States. Funding is allocated by formula to the Service Regions based on the number of species covered in the cooperative agreements with the States within that Region. Regional offices then further allocate the funding to the States within that Region by formula or through a competitive process.

### **“Nontraditional” Programs:**

**Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) Assistance Grants** - Through the development of regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), local governments incorporate species conservation into local land use planning, which streamlines the project approval process and facilitates economic development. The Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants program provides funding to States to support the development of HCPs. Planning assistance grants may support planning activities such as document preparation, outreach, and baseline surveys, and inventories. Proposals for amendments to existing HCPs will not be accepted.

The Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants program first received funding in fiscal year 2001 of \$6.635 million. In FY 2005, the Service awarded full or partial funding to 22 out of 29 eligible proposals to provide project funding in 14 States. The funding for the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants is competed for at the National level.

**Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Land Acquisition Grants** - The HCP Land Acquisition program was established by Congress in fiscal year 1997. This program was designed to reduce conflicts between the conservation of listed species and land uses on specific parcels of land.

Under this program, the Service provides grants to States for land acquisitions that are associated with approved HCPs. The Service considers the use of Federal acquisition dollars by States for habitat protection within and adjacent to HCP areas to be an important and effective mechanism to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

The HCP Land Acquisition program has three primary purposes: 1) to fund land acquisitions that complement, but do not replace, private mitigation responsibilities contained in HCPs, 2) to fund land acquisitions that have important benefits for listed, proposed, and candidate species, and 3) to fund land acquisitions that have important benefits for ecosystems that support listed, proposed and candidate species.

The program received \$6 million in appropriated funds in each of its first 3 years (fiscal years 1997-1999). In fiscal year 2005, we received approximately \$48 million and fully or partially funded 10 out of 18 eligible proposals. A National competition will be held to select proposals for funding in FY 2006.

**Recovery Land Acquisition Grants** - Loss of habitat is the primary threat to most listed species and land acquisition is often the most effective and efficient means of protecting habitats essential for recovery of listed species before development or other land use changes impair or destroy key habitat values. Land acquisition is costly and often neither the Service nor the States individually have the necessary resources to acquire habitats essential for recovery of listed species. Recovery Land Acquisition grant funds are matched by States and non-federal entities to acquire these habitats from willing sellers in support of approved species recovery plans.

Because the existing HCP Land Acquisition Grants Program provides substantial funding for land acquisitions associated with HCPs, the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program will not be used to fund land acquisitions associated with permitted HCPs.

The Recovery Land Acquisition Grant program first received funding in fiscal year 2001 of \$10.427 million. In FY 2005, the program awarded approximately \$13 million in funding to 28 projects in 20 States, with at least one proposal funded in each Service region. For fiscal year 2006, competition for the Recovery Land Acquisition grants will be held at the Regional level.

Participation in the CESCO programs is limited to State agencies that have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior. That is, only State agencies that have a cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior may apply directly for CESCO grant funding. However, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) may work with a State organization that has a cooperative agreement, on conservation efforts that are mutually beneficial, as a subgrantee. Grant agreements will be used to implement selected projects.

A proposal must include 25 percent non-Federal cost share (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). This cost share decreases to 10 percent if 2 or more States or Territories are contributors to the proposal and its activities as per section 6 of the ESA. The Insular Areas of the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from any matching requirements

under all Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Programs (based on an August 23, 1993, Director's Memorandum). See section III.2 for additional information.

Awards for the "Traditional" Conservation Grants will be announced through regional press releases and direct notification of the applicant from the Regional Offices of the Service. Awards for the "Nontraditional" grants will be announced through a national press release and a memorandum to the Regional Directors of the Service for further notification of the applicants' selection for an award. Notification of an award through a press release or letter from a Regional Office is not an authorization to begin performance. The final exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the prospective recipient and the Service's representatives. Please be aware that if an appraisal to Federal standards is not provided with the grant application, the amount specified in the award announcement will be based on the estimate of the property's value as provided in the grant proposal. However, the actual purchase price will not be greater than the current market value as determined by an appraisal completed to Federal standards and subject to a Federal appraisal review. The prospective recipient will be asked to sign an agreement that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, the project design, the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits, and the reporting requirements, and that provides for Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress. In order to receive funding, a prospective recipient will also need to provide assurances and certifications of compliance with other Federal requirements (for example see Standard Form 424-B and Department of the Interior form DI-2010 available at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf>). The recipient is reimbursed based on the cost-sharing formula in the agreement. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of CESCOF funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

Please see Section III for minimum eligibility criteria and Section V for additional application review information, including proposal evaluation criteria.

For general guidance on developing and writing grant proposals, see the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance's Internet site at [http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.GRANT\\_PROPOSAL\\_DYN.show](http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.GRANT_PROPOSAL_DYN.show)

The CESCOF programs are authorized through Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq., as amended. The codified program regulations can be found at 50 CFR 81.

## **II. Award Information**

In fiscal year 2005 the Service awarded approximately \$77 million through the CESCOF. For fiscal year 2006 the Service will make selections for the competitive programs based upon the proposals submitted for consideration through this announcement. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for projects that would supplement existing projects. These proposals will compete along with applications for new awards.

The range of grant awards is typically between \$1,000 and \$14,000,000, but varies greatly by program.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Participation in the CESCFC programs is limited to State agencies that have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior. That is, only State agencies that have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior may apply directly for CESCFC grant funding. However, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) may work with a State agency that has a cooperative agreement, on conservation efforts that are mutually beneficial, as a subgrantee.

The assistance provided to the State agency can include animal, plant, and habitat surveys; research; planning; monitoring; habitat protection, restoration, management, and acquisition; and public education.

Please see Section IV.5 for additional funding restrictions.

#### **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

A proposal must include 25 percent non-Federal cost share (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). This cost share requirement decreases to 10 percent if 2 or more States or Territories are contributors to the proposal and its activities as per section 6 of the ESA (see below). The Insular Areas of the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from any matching requirements under all Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Programs (based on an August 23, 1993, Director's Memorandum).

As defined in the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual (521 FW 4.9), States may increase the rate of Federal participation from 75 percent to 90 percent of total grant costs when two or more States cooperate to conserve an endangered or threatened species of common interest [50 CFR 81.8(a)].

Section 6 (d)(2)(ii), ESA, defines cooperation as "whenever 2 or more States having a common interest in one or more endangered or threatened species, . . . enter jointly into agreement with the Secretary." A cooperative action is one where two or more States work on a mutual problem. This may be an action outlined in a recovery plan for a species of multi-State concern, an action outlined in a memorandum of agreement between cooperating States, an action described in cooperative grants, or an action outlined in a recovery implementation program.

The cooperating States may designate a lead State to coordinate with the Regional Director [43 CFR 12.50(b)(3), 50 CFR 81.6, 50 CFR 81.8(a), 50 CFR 81.9]. To seek an increased rate of participation for a cooperative project within a grant, cooperating States **MUST** (emphasis added) provide the following documentation to the Regional Director with the Grant Proposal:

Documentation of the cooperative action entered into by the cooperating States, which may be in any form (e.g., memorandum, letter of agreement, recovery plan, implementation program) that meets the needs of the cooperating States, provided it contains the responsibilities and work to be carried out by **EACH** (emphasis added) of the cooperating States. Examples follow:

(1) Either (a) one State submits an Application for Federal Assistance, a Grant Agreement, and a letter of agreement from another State sharing cooperative efforts, or (b) each State identifies the joint recovery action from the recovery plan in existing Applications for Federal Assistance or Grant Agreement.

(2) Each cooperating State submits a proposal for the joint project, separate Applications for Federal Assistance and separate Grant Agreements.

(3) When one or more States are participating in a recovery implementation program, one or more may submit separate Application(s) for Federal Assistance, Grant Agreement(s), and certification that they are participating in the recovery implementation program, such as "The Colorado River Recovery Implementation Program."

Each cooperating State is responsible for submitting performance and financial reports related to the joint project, when they are actively participating in Federal reimbursement funding. Incomplete work by any one of the cooperating States may result in a recovery of Federal funds from all States, if it is determined that the joint cooperative objective will not be accomplished [43 CFR 12.80].

Documentation describing the role of each State or Territory in a multi-state proposal must be provided with the proposal if the applicants are requesting a reduced cost share. We suggest that following example one or two above most clearly identifies the joint participation in a given project.

Please see Section IV.5 for additional funding restrictions.

### 3. Other

The following criteria apply to all CESCO grants and **must be satisfied** for a proposal to be considered for funding:

1. A proposal must include 25 percent non-Federal cost share (decreases to 10 percent if 2 or more States or Territories are contributors to the proposal and its activities) as per section 6 of the ESA. The Insular Areas of the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from any matching requirements under all Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Programs (based on an August 23, 1993, Director's Memorandum). See section III.2 above for additional information.
2. A proposal cannot include Fish and Wildlife Service Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) costs.

3. We do not intend to grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).

State administrative costs must also either be assumed by the State or included in the proposal in accordance with Federal requirements.

### **Recovery Land Acquisition Grants:**

To be eligible for funding under the Recovery Land Acquisition program, **a land acquisition proposal must meet all of the mandatory conditions listed below.** If a land acquisition proposal does not meet these conditions, do not submit a proposal for consideration.

1. Habitat must be set aside in perpetuity for the purposes of conservation (this can include easements deeded in perpetuity or other similar instruments).
2. The funds should contribute to the implementation of an approved final or draft recovery plan for at least one listed species. An exception will ONLY be made with sufficient justification, according to the following: (1) newly listed species where sufficient time (2 ½ years) for development of a recovery plan has not passed, (2) if the species is exempt from the requirement for development of a recovery plan, or (3) if a recovery plan has not been developed, but the species conservation planning efforts have identified land acquisition priorities. All exceptions will require a narrative justification.
3. **The specific parcel(s) to be acquired with the grant money is identified.** NOTE: Evidence demonstrating that the landowners are willing sellers (i.e., a letter or other form of written acknowledgment) will be required prior to transfer of funds.

Federal land acquisition grant programs fund the purchase of land at market value, from willing sellers. Market value must be determined by appraisals performed in accordance with the *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions*, and all other applicable laws and regulations. Appraisals are not required to be submitted with the grant proposals, but are required prior to expenditure of funds if the project is selected for funding. Please be aware that if an appraisal to Federal standards is not provided with the grant application, the amount specified in the award announcement will be based on the estimate of the property's value as provided in the grant proposal. However, the actual purchase price will not be greater than the current market value as determined by an appraisal completed to Federal standards and subject to a Federal appraisal review.

4. The proposal must state a commitment to funding for, and implementation of, management of the habitat in perpetuity, consistent with the conservation needs of the species.

States, Territories, or other non-Federal partners will be responsible for ensuring that appraisal and title work are completed. The cost of conducting an appraisal(s) and completing title work, in accordance with Federal requirements, must either be assumed by the State or a non-Federal subgrantee, or included in the total cost of the proposal.

A proposal may not be submitted for funding consideration in both the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant Program and the HCP Land Acquisition Grant Program.

### **Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance:**

To be eligible for funding under the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance program, **a proposal must meet all of the mandatory conditions listed below**. If a proposal does not meet these conditions, do not submit a proposal for consideration.

1. For a proposal involving an ongoing project, evidence of progress made to date must be provided.
2. The proposal must involve a discrete activity(ies) (each activity included in the proposal must have an identified starting point and end point); for example, developing public outreach brochures, gathering baseline data for an HCP, or preparing a draft HCP or associated NEPA documents.
3. The proposal must be for activities to develop a new HCP. Proposals for amendments to existing approved HCPs will not be accepted.

### **Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition:**

To be eligible for funding under the HCP Land Acquisition program, **a land acquisition proposal must meet all of the mandatory conditions listed below**. If a land acquisition does not meet these conditions, do not submit a proposal for consideration.

1. The land acquisition complements, but does not replace, private mitigation responsibilities contained in the HCP.
2. **The specific parcel(s) to be acquired with the grant money is identified.** NOTE: Evidence demonstrating that the landowners are willing sellers (i.e., a letter or other form of written acknowledgment) will be required prior to transfer of funds.

Federal land acquisition grant programs fund the purchase of land at market value, from willing sellers. Market value must be determined by appraisals performed in accordance with the *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions*, and all other applicable laws and regulations. Appraisals are not required to be submitted with the grant proposals, but are required prior to expenditure of funds if the project is selected for funding. Please be aware that if an appraisal to Federal standards is not provided with the grant application, the amount specified in the award announcement will be based on the estimate of the property's value as provided in the grant proposal. However, the actual

purchase price will not be greater than the current market value as determined by an appraisal completed to Federal standards and subject to a Federal appraisal review.

3. Habitat must be set aside in perpetuity for the purposes of conservation (this can include easements deeded in perpetuity or other similar instruments).
4. The proposal must state a commitment to funding for, and implementation of, management of the habitat in perpetuity, consistent with the conservation needs of the species.

**Only one proposal per HCP may be submitted.** However, a proposal may include more than one parcel for funding consideration. For regional HCPs with subarea plans, please submit multiple acquisition proposals under the one regional plan title. The proposal must specifically identify the parcel to be acquired. Proposals that do not identify specific parcels will not be considered. We encourage you to include more than one parcel in the proposal in the event the transaction for the highest priority acquisition cannot be completed; subject to the outcome of fund reassignment procedures, funding of the next highest priority parcel acquisition identified in the proposal may be approved. In addition, acquisition of more than one parcel per HCP may be funded. **If you submit more than one parcel for consideration in your proposal, you must include the relative acquisition priorities for each parcel, the price of each parcel, and the amount of the request (purchase price minus the non-Federal match) for each parcel.**

As in previous years, the ranking factors give priority to land acquisitions associated with larger, multiple species HCPs. The ranking factors assign points according to the number of species covered by the HCP (i.e., included in the section 10 permit).

States, Territories, or other non-Federal partners will be responsible for ensuring that appraisal and title work are completed. The cost of conducting an appraisal(s) and completing title work, in accordance with Federal requirements, must either be assumed by the State or a non-Federal subgrantee, or included in the total cost of the proposal.

Federal land acquisition grant programs fund the purchase of land at market value, from willing sellers. Market value must be determined by appraisals performed in accordance with the *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions*, and all other applicable laws and regulations. Appraisals are not required to be submitted with the grant proposals, but are required prior to expenditure of funds if the project is selected for funding. Please be aware that if an appraisal to Federal standards is not provided with the grant application, the amount specified in the award announcement will be based on the estimate of the property's value as provided in the grant proposal. However, the actual purchase price will not be greater than the current market value as determined by an appraisal completed to Federal standards and subject to a Federal appraisal review.

A proposal may not be submitted for funding consideration in both the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant Program and the HCP Land Acquisition Grant Program.

#### IV. Application and Submission Information

##### 1. Address to Request Application Package

This application package may also be obtained by accessing our Internet site:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/index.html>

or you may contact the appropriate Regional Office program coordinator listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of Regional Program Coordinators and Where To Send Project Proposals			
Service Region	States or Territory where the project will occur	Where to send your CESCOF project proposal	Regional CESCOF Contact and Phone Number
Region 1	Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Eastside Federal Complex 911 N.E. 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181	Heather Hollis (503/231-6241)
CNO	California and Nevada	Office Manager U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Building, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606 Sacramento, CA 95825-1846	Vicki Campbell or Diane Elam (916/414-6464)
Region 2	Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 4012 Albuquerque, NM 87102	Luella Roberts (505/248-6664)

Region 3	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building One Federal Drive Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056	Peter Fasbender (612/713-5343)
Region 4	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200 Atlanta, GA 30345	Erin Clark (404/679-7379) or Ms. Mike Gantt (919/856-4627)
Region 5	Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035-9589	Diane Lynch (413/253-8628)
Region 6	Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 134 Union Blvd., Suite 645 Lakewood, CO 80228	Pat Mehlhop (303/236-4215)

Region 7	Alaska	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199	Michael Roy (907/786-3925)
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## 2. Content and Form of Application

You must follow the instructions in this document in order to apply for financial assistance under the CESCO. For a description of the information that must be included in a project proposal, please follow the format outlined below. Your project proposal must either be received by the appropriate Regional Office listed in Table 1, or submitted electronically through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) APPLY by April 3, 2006. We encourage you to contact the Regional program coordinator listed in Table 1 prior to submitting a project proposal should you have questions regarding what information must be submitted with the project proposal. An incomplete proposal will not be considered for funding.

The project proposal is a narrative description of your project and one required Federal form. The ultimate size of the proposal will depend on its complexity, but we request that you attempt to minimize the size of the narrative description of the proposal. Additionally, only information that is pertinent to the proposal should be included (e.g., it is not necessary to include the resumes of project personnel). For hard copy submissions each page should be no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches. This complete application package with detailed instructions and supplementary information can also be found at our Internet site: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/>

The project proposal should also indicate whether partial funding of the project is practicable, and, if so, what specific portion(s) of the project could be implemented with what level of funding. A project proposal that is a part of a longer-term initiative will be considered; however, the proposed project's objectives, benefits, and tasks must stand on their own, as there are no assurances that additional funding would be awarded in subsequent years for associated or complementary projects.

Federal land acquisition grant programs fund the purchase of land at market value, from willing sellers. Market value must be determined by appraisals performed in accordance with the *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions*, and all other applicable laws and regulations. Appraisals are not required to be submitted with the grant proposals, but are required prior to expenditure of funds if the project is selected for funding. Please be aware that if an appraisal to Federal standards is not provided with the grant application, the amount specified in the award announcement will be based on the estimate of the property's value as provided in the grant proposal. However, the actual purchase price will not be greater than the current market value as determined by an appraisal completed to Federal standards and subject to a Federal appraisal review.

The Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Office of Management and Budget have established requirements concerning Federal financial assistance. This includes established principles for determining which costs are allowable or eligible based on the type of applicant (see Table 2 in section VI.2 below). Your project proposal must comply with these requirements.

The narrative description of your project proposal should specifically address each of the eligibility criteria and each of the ranking factors. We recommend the following format for the project narrative

## PROJECT STATEMENT

**NEED:** Why is the project being undertaken?

**OBJECTIVE:** What is to be accomplished during the period of the project pursuant to the stated need? (Specify fully what is to be accomplished within the time, money, and staffing allocated and specify end point.)

**EXPECTED RESULTS OR BENEFITS:** How will the project impact fish and wildlife resources or benefit the public? Try to provide quantifiable or verifiable resource benefits.

**APPROACH:** How will the objective be attained? Include specific procedures, schedules, key cooperators and respective roles.

**LOCATION:** Where will the work be done? Describe habitat type(s) to be affected, and relevant ecosystem/watershed characterization.

**ESTIMATED COST:** Provide a detailed breakdown of what it will cost to attain the objective.

One Federal form, Standard Form-424 "Application for Federal Assistance," must also be completed and submitted with your project narrative description. This form is available on the Internet at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants\\_forms.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_forms.html) , at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf> , or from the Regional CESCFC coordinator.

Your proposal should be submitted with the ranking criteria, as described below, in mind. Project descriptions that clearly address the specific ranking criteria in an organized manner will facilitate proposal review and scoring.

### 3. Submission Dates and Times

“Traditional” Conservation Grants:

Service Regional Offices will independently set submission dates and times for the Conservation Grant Program. You should contact the appropriate individual listed in Table 1 for further information regarding “Traditional” Conservation Grant submission dates and times.

## “Nontraditional” Grants:

Grant project proposals must be received by the appropriate Regional Office program coordinator listed in Table 1, or submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) APPLY by April 3, 2006. The hard copy proposals must be received at the appropriate Regional office by 5:00 pm in that time zone, or through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) APPLY prior to midnight on April 3, 2006. Proposals not received by this date and time will not be reviewed nor considered as eligible for the competition. To confirm the receipt of your hard copy proposal submission you must contact the appropriate individual listed in Table 1.

### 4. Intergovernmental Review

These programs are eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs.” EO 12372, was issued to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on State and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The Order allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function. Applicants should contact the Service’s Regional Office program coordinator (see Table 1) and/or the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. The following States and Territories have designated SPOCs: Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. A complete list of the names and addresses for the SPOCs may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

### 5. Funding Restrictions

Participation in the CESCO programs is limited to State agencies that have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior. That is, only State agencies that have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior may apply directly for CESCO grant funding. However, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) may work with a State agency that has a cooperative agreement, on conservation efforts that are mutually beneficial, as a subgrantee.

The assistance provided to the State agency can include animal, plant, and habitat surveys; research; planning; monitoring; habitat protection, restoration, management, and acquisition; and public education.

The project must involve voluntary conservation efforts within the United States, States and Territories. As a voluntary program, we will not grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act, including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).

The proposal must include a reasonably detailed budget indicating how the funding will be used and how each partner is contributing. The proposal must also indicate the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between you and an authorized representative of the U.S. Government and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse you for time that you expend or costs that you incur in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations you may have with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs you incur, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project objectives during the life of the project. The costs proposed to be funded through the CESCFC may not exceed 75 percent of the total costs, unless you are jointly implementing a project with another State or Territory, or are included as one of the insular areas exempted from the minimum cost share requirement.

Federal land acquisition grant programs fund the purchase of land at market value, from willing sellers. Market value must be determined by appraisals performed in accordance with the *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions*, and all other applicable laws and regulations. Appraisals are not required to be submitted with the grant proposals, but are required prior to expenditure of funds if the project is selected for funding. Please be aware that if an appraisal to Federal standards is not provided with the grant application, the amount specified in the award announcement will be based on the estimate of the property's value as provided in the grant proposal. However, the actual purchase price will not be greater than the current market value as determined by an appraisal completed to Federal standards and subject to a Federal appraisal review.

The final exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the prospective recipient and the Service's representatives. The prospective recipient will be asked to sign an agreement that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, the project design, the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits, and the reporting requirements, and that provides for Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress. In order to receive funding, the prospective recipient will also need to provide assurances and certifications of compliance with other Federal requirements (for example see Standard Form 424-B and Department of the Interior form DI-2010 available at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf>). The recipient is reimbursed based on the cost-sharing formula in the Agreement. You should not initiate your project in expectation of CESCFC funding until you receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

## 6. Other Submission Requirements

At this time, the Service will be accepting both hard copy submissions and electronic submissions of proposals. As previously noted, the project proposal is a narrative description of your project and one required Federal form. The ultimate size of the proposal will depend on its complexity, but we request that you attempt to minimize the size of the narrative description of the proposal. Each page hard copy page should be no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches. Applications

must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Office as indicated in Table 1, or electronically through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) APPLY

## **V. Application Review Information**

### 1. Criteria

Proposals for grant funding must be submitted by a State agency. The State must have an approved cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior which provides for sharing responsibilities for endangered species, prior to receiving CESCOF funds. Individual project proposals must compete with other State submissions for funding.

The following criteria will be used by Regional Office staff to evaluate project proposals. Your proposal should be submitted with the ranking criteria, as described below, in mind. Project descriptions that clearly address the specific ranking criteria in an organized manner will facilitate proposal review and scoring.

**RECOVERY LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM  
FISCAL YEAR 2006 EVALUATION FORM**

**FWS Regional Staff: Please fill out this form completely.** You may attach written explanations for the categories in this form.

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Region \_\_\_\_\_

State(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Service contact for more information \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage of land acquisition (break down acreage by parcel if more than one parcel is proposed for acquisition) \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated total cost of the proposed project (i.e., Federal and non-Federal portions) \_\_\_\_\_

% of cost to be shared by non-Federal entity (also list entities) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of funding requested (total cost minus the non-Federal match) (break down by parcel if more than one is proposed for acquisition) \_\_\_\_\_

Relative Regional priority for this proposal \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for Regional priority \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Total points available = 100 points.)

**SPECIES BENEFITS**

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the land acquisition will be for listed, proposed, and candidate species.

Federally listed species are defined as those species listed as threatened or endangered by the Federal Government through section 4 of the Endangered Species Act. Unlisted species include candidate, proposed, State listed and all other species.

1) Listed species benefits. Extent to which the habitat acquisition contributes to recovery. (This factor should be scored based on benefits to the individual species as opposed to the aggregate. To score 20 points, the applicant must document that the proposal will potentially result in a high benefit to recovery of at least one species. Consideration should be given to the magnitude of the benefit in terms of the proportion of the species range/area encompassed by the acquisition, the contribution to stated recovery goals, and whether the acquisition will allow for delisting or

downlisting of a listed species. Please provide a brief justification for the score.) (20 pts maximum)

\_\_\_ Low benefit to recovery (acquisition will provide habitat that is currently unoccupied) - 5 pts

\_\_\_ Medium benefit to recovery (acquisition is necessary to avoid a significant decline of the taxon {due to loss of habitat, increased threats, etc.}) - 10 pts

\_\_\_ High benefit to recovery (acquisition is necessary to avoid extinction within the next five years, or the acquisition will assist the taxon achieve its recovery criteria within the next five years)- 20 pts

*Justification:*

2) Listed species recovery priority number. For those listed species that will benefit from the proposed acquisition that do not currently have an assigned priority number, you may calculate the appropriate number using the guidance provided in the *Federal Register* on September 21, 1983 (Pgs.,43098 - 43105, Vol. 48. No. 184 and Correction in FR notice of Nov. 15, 1983 Pg., 51985, Vol. 48. No. 221) (22 pts maximum)

\_\_\_ 1 to 3 - 10 pts

\_\_\_ 4 to 8 - 5 pts

\_\_\_ 9 to 13 - 2 pts

\_\_\_ 14 to 18 - 1 pt

*Identify species and priority number assigned:*

3) Number of species benefitted (listed, proposed, and candidate only; at least one listed species must benefit). Draft recovery plans may only be considered if a Notice of Availability for the draft plan has been published in the *Federal Register*. Species that are warranted but precluded from listing are considered candidate species. (20 pts maximum)

\_\_\_ Species with final recovery plans - 8 pts for each species with a final plan

\_\_\_ Species with draft recovery plans - 4 pts for each species with a draft plan

\_\_\_ Listed (without draft or final recovery plan), proposed, or candidate species - 2 pts for each species

**Total points for species benefits (sum of 1-3): \_\_\_\_\_**

## ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the proposed land acquisition will be for the listed, unlisted (including State-listed species), proposed and candidate species.

### 4) Ecosystem benefits (20 pts maximum)

#### Function

Habitat fills a critical role in the life cycle of the primary species for which the land is acquired (8 pts)

Habitat requires little or no management to provide benefits to the primary species (4 pts)

#### Connectivity

Habitat links two existing protected areas together or is adjacent to existing protected areas, to reduce habitat fragmentation (8 pts)

**Total points for ecosystem benefits (sum of 4): \_\_\_\_\_**

## COST SHARE CONTRIBUTIONS

5) Amount of cost-share. If two or more States or Territories are contributors, the non-Federal cost share decreases to 10 percent. To be eligible for this reduction, each State must actively participate and each State's contribution must be described, e.g., an action in a recovery plan for a species of multi-State concern, in which two or more States or Territories are actively participating in recovery actions. (18 pts maximum)

Minimum 25% (or 10% where two or more States are involved, or 0% for identified Insular Areas) (0 pts)

Each additional 5% (2 pts)

**Total points for cost share contributions (sum of 5): \_\_\_\_\_**

**TOTAL POINTS FOR THIS PROPOSAL (sum of 1-5 above): \_\_\_\_\_**

**HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FISCAL YEAR 2006 EVALUATION FORM**

**FWS Regional Staff: Please fill out this form completely.** You may attach written explanations for the categories in this form.

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Region \_\_\_\_\_

State(s) \_\_\_\_\_

HCP name (As entered in ECOS) \_\_\_\_\_

Service contact for more information \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated total cost of proposal \_\_\_\_\_

% of cost to be shared by non-Federal entity (also list entities) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of funding requested (total cost minus the non-Federal match) \_\_\_\_\_

Relative Regional priority for this proposal \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for Regional priority \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Total points available = 100 points.)

**SPECIES BENEFITS**

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the proposal will be to listed and unlisted species proposed to be covered by the HCP. A covered species is any species (listed or unlisted) that is proposed to be identified on the section 10(a)(1)(B) permit, thus receiving incidental take authorization.

Federally listed species are defined as those species listed as threatened or endangered by the Federal Government through section 4 of the Endangered Species Act. Unlisted species include candidate, proposed, State listed and all other species.

1) Planning efforts that will benefit more species will score higher. Listed and unlisted species that are proposed to be covered by the HCP can be considered.

*Score:* Number of species proposed to be covered by the HCP (listed on the permit) (provides more weight for including unlisted species) (15 pts maximum)

\_\_\_ 1 species (1 pt)

- \_\_\_ 2-5 species (5 pts)
- \_\_\_ 6-10 species (10 pts)
- \_\_\_ 11+ species (15 pts)

*Justification (identify species):*

2) Planning efforts for HCPs that will provide greater benefit to covered listed and unlisted species will score higher. The benefits to species will be considered **High** if, through the HCP planning effort, the majority of the species' range-wide habitat (75% or greater) or an essential piece of habitat will be protected, a major population necessary for recovery may be protected, or major threats to the species will be eliminated. The benefits to the listed species will be considered **Low** if, through the planning effort, only a small percentage of the species' range-wide habitat is considered (20% or less), etc.

*Score:* Amount of benefit the HCP will potentially provide to species proposed to be covered. (This factor should be scored based on benefits to the individual species as opposed to the aggregate. To score 15 points, the applicant must document that the HCP will potentially result in a major benefit to at least one species.) (15 pts maximum)

- \_\_\_ Low benefit to conservation (5 pts)
- \_\_\_ Medium benefit to conservation (10 pts)
- \_\_\_ High benefit to conservation (15 pts)

*Justification:*

**Total points for species benefits (sum of 1-2): \_\_\_\_\_**

## **ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS**

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the proposed HCP will be for the covered listed and unlisted species.

3) Lands that require little or no management to provide benefits for covered species will score higher in this evaluation factor. This habitat can include occupied or suitable, unoccupied habitat. The level of management expected to be necessary is based on an evaluation of the biotic and abiotic components and ecological processes. Biotic factors include the structure and composition of plant and animal communities. Abiotic factors include soil, hydrology, natural

topography, and salinity gradients. Ecological processes include succession, trophic energy flows, and disturbance regimes.

*Score:* When considered in the context of the surrounding landscape, the HCP plan area contains \_\_\_\_\_ of the naturally occurring biotic and abiotic components and ecological processes necessary to maintain a fully functioning ecosystem that contains the habitat necessary to support the covered species and other non-covered species associated with that ecosystem. (15 pts maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_ None (0 point)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some/Most (8 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ All (15 points)

<i>Justification:</i>
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4) Plan areas for developing HCPs that cover a large area are more likely to consider landscape-level or ecosystem-level planning issues. This type of regional planning benefits numerous species within an ecosystem while streamlining ESA compliance for the smaller landowners within the planning area.

*Score:* Size of plan area to be covered by the HCP (provides more weight for large plan areas) (15 pts maximum)

- \_\_\_ 0-100 acres (1 pt)
- \_\_\_ 101-1,000 acres (5 pts)
- \_\_\_ 1,001-10,000 acres (10 pts)
- \_\_\_ 10,001+ acres (15 pts)

**Total points for ecosystem benefits (sum of 3-4): \_\_\_\_\_**

### **FOSTERING HCP PARTNERSHIPS**

The purpose of this section is to emphasize the importance of involving stakeholders in the development of the HCP. This section includes consideration of the number of partners and the amount of cost share contributions.

5) Proposals with a larger number of stakeholders involved in the development of the HCP will score higher. Stakeholders are public or private entities that will play a significant role in the development of the HCP, that is, entities that participate on the HCP steering committee or that will make a contribution in the scoping for, and preparation of, the HCP. Consultants or consulting firms who are preparing the HCP should not be counted.

*Score:* Number of stakeholders involved in the development of the HCP. (20 pts maximum)

- 1-5 stakeholders (5 pts)
- 6-10 stakeholders (10 pts)
- Greater than 10 stakeholders (20 pts)

*Justification:*

6) Commitment to the successful development of a HCP can be evidenced by cost share contributions. Cost share is the percent of the total project cost that will be provided by non-Federal partners. Proposals that include a greater than minimum cost share contribution will be ranked higher. When both the State and local governments are involved, cost sharing by both governments is generally preferred.

*Score:* Percentage of cost share provided by non-Federal partners. (12 pts maximum)

- Minimum 25% (or 10% where two or more States are involved, or 0% for identified Insular Areas) (0 pts)
- Each additional 5% (2 pts)

**Total points for HCP partnerships (sum of 5-6): \_\_\_\_\_**

## **DELIVERY OR COMPLETION**

This section is to recognize proposals that will result in the initiation or completion of planning activities.

7) Proposals to initiate planning for a new HCP or to complete an HCP already under development will score higher.

*Score:* Initiation or completion of the planning process. (4 pts maximum)

- Is instrumental in initiating a planning process (4 pt)
- Finalizes a planning process (4 pts)

*Justification:*

8) Each activity included in the proposal must have an identified starting point and end point. For example, developing public outreach brochures, gathering baseline data for an HCP, or preparation of the draft HCP. Discrete activity(ies) which can be completed within one year, as opposed to the completion of the entire HCP over multiple years, will score higher. **ALL** discrete activities identified in the proposal, for which funding is sought, must be completed in one year to receive points in this category, it is **NOT** sufficient for one or more discrete activities to be completed in one year with other identified discrete activities being completed in subsequent years, if funding for those additional activities is being sought through this proposal. (4 pts maximum)

- \_\_\_ The activity(ies) for which funding is requested cannot be completed within 1 year (0 pts)
- \_\_\_ The activity(ies) for which funding is requested can be completed within 1 year (4 pts)

One Year, for the purposes of this grant program, is defined as the close of the calendar year subsequent to the calendar year in which funding was appropriated. For example, if funding was awarded in September of 2005, ALL discrete activities for which funding is sought must be completed by December 31, 2006 in order to receive the additional points in this category.

<i>Justification:</i>
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**Total points for Delivery (sum of 7-8): \_\_\_\_\_**

**TOTAL POINTS FOR THIS PROPOSAL (sum of 1-8 above): \_\_\_\_\_**

**HCP LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM  
FISCAL YEAR 2006 EVALUATION FORM**

**FWS Regional Staff: Please fill out this form completely.**  
May attach written explanations for the categories in this form.

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Region \_\_\_\_\_

State(s) \_\_\_\_\_

HCP name (As entered in ECOS) \_\_\_\_\_

Permit number \_\_\_\_\_

Service contact for more information \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage of land acquisition (break down acreage by parcel if more than one parcel is proposed for acquisition) \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated total cost of land acquisition (including management) \_\_\_\_\_

% of cost to be shared by non-Federal entity (also list entities) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of funding requested (total cost minus the non-Federal match) (break down by parcel if more than one is proposed for acquisition) \_\_\_\_\_

Relative Regional priority for this proposal \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for Regional priority \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Total points available = 100 points.)

**SPECIES BENEFITS**

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the land acquisition will be for listed and unlisted species covered by the HCP. Federally listed species are defined as those species listed as threatened or endangered by the Federal Government through section 4 of the Endangered Species Act. Unlisted species include candidate, proposed, State listed and all other species. A **covered species** is any species (listed or unlisted) that is identified on the section 10(a)(1)(B) permit, thus receiving incidental take authorization.

**Listed Species**

1) Acquisitions that benefit more covered listed species will score higher. Only those federally listed threatened or endangered species that are covered in the HCP and will benefit from the proposed land acquisition should be counted. Listed species that are expected to benefit from the land acquisition but not covered by the permit should not be counted.

*Score:* Number of federally listed species **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)** that will benefit from the land acquisition. (15 points maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 species (1 point)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2-5 species (5 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 species (10 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11+ species (15 points)

*Justification (identify species):*

2) Acquisitions that provide greater benefit to covered listed species will score higher. The benefits to the listed species will be considered **major** if, through the acquisition, the majority of the species’ range-wide habitat or an essential piece of habitat is protected, a major population necessary for recovery is protected, or major threats to the species are eliminated. The benefits to the listed species will be considered **minor** if, through the acquisition, only a small percentage of the species’ range-wide habitat is protected, etc.

*Score:* Magnitude of benefits for listed species **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)** that will result from the land acquisition. (15 points maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly minor benefits will result for the listed species (1 point)
- \_\_\_\_\_ A combination of major and minor benefits will result for the listed species (10 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly major benefits will result for the listed species (15 points)

*Justification:*

**Unlisted Species**

3) Only acquisitions that benefit more covered unlisted species will score higher. Unlisted species include species proposed for Federal listing, candidates for Federal listing, State listed species, and other species not federally listed as threatened or endangered.

Unlisted species that are expected to benefit from the land acquisition but are not covered by the permit should not be counted.

*Score:* Number of unlisted (including State-listed species), proposed and candidate species for Federal listing **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)** that will benefit from the land acquisition. (10 points maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 0 species (0 points) - **Skip to Question 5**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 species (3 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 species (6 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11+ species (10 points)

*Justification (identify species):*

4) Acquisitions that provide greater benefit to unlisted covered species will score higher. The benefits to the species will be considered **major** if, through the acquisition, the majority of the species' range-wide habitat is protected, an essential piece of the habitat is protected, a major population necessary for conservation is protected, or major threats to the species are eliminated. The benefits to the species will be considered **minor** if, through the acquisition, only a small percentage of the species' range-wide habitat is protected, etc.

*Score:* Magnitude of species benefits for unlisted species **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)**. (10 points maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly minor benefits will result for the unlisted species (1 point)
- \_\_\_\_\_ A combination of major and minor benefits will result for unlisted species (6 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly major benefits will result for the unlisted species (10 points)

*Justification:*

**Total points for species benefits (sum of 1-4):** \_\_\_\_\_

## **ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS**

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the land acquisition will be for the covered listed and unlisted species.

5) Lands that require little or no management to provide benefits for covered species will score higher in this evaluation factor. This habitat can include occupied or suitable, unoccupied habitat. The level of management expected to be necessary is based on an evaluation of the biotic and abiotic components and ecological processes. Biotic factors include the structure and composition of plant and animal communities. Abiotic factors include soil, hydrology, natural topography, and salinity gradients. Ecological processes include succession, trophic energy flows, and disturbance regimes.

*Score:* When considered in the context of the surrounding landscape, the land targeted for acquisition contains \_\_\_\_\_ of the naturally occurring biotic and abiotic components and ecological processes necessary to maintain a fully functioning ecosystem that contains the habitat necessary to support the covered species associated with that ecosystem. (15 points maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_None (0 point)
- \_\_\_\_\_Some/Most (8 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_All (15 points)

*Justification:*

6) Land acquisitions that fill in critical components for land protection will score higher (e.g., lands that link two preserves together to reduce habitat fragmentation).

*Score:* Do the lands proposed for acquisition fill a critical void in the matrix of protected lands, such as a connection between protected areas or protection of a core population area? (15 points maximum)

- \_\_\_\_\_To some degree for at least one listed species **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)**(5 point)
- \_\_\_\_\_To a great degree for one listed species and some degree for one or more unlisted species **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)**(10 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_To a great degree for more than two species **covered by the HCP (listed on the permit)**(15 points)

*Justification:*

**Total points for ecosystem benefits (sum of 5-6):**\_\_\_\_\_

## FOSTERING HCP PARTNERSHIPS

The purpose of this section is to emphasize the importance of partners in significantly contributing to implementation of the HCP. This section includes consideration of the number of partners and amount of cost share contributions.

7) Proposals with a larger number of significant partners involved in the HCP will score higher. A significant partner is a public or private entity that is a significant player in the implementation of the HCP. For example, they are signatories to an implementing agreement, are signatories to some other agreement regarding participation in implementation, or received their own section 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit. Subpermittees or entities receiving certificates of inclusion are not significant partners to an HCP; however, they typically make a contribution toward implementation in return for receiving the benefits of incidental take authorization. If an entity that is receiving incidental take authorization is also contributing toward the proposed land acquisition, an additional point is accrued.

*Score:* Number of significant partners involved in the implementation of the HCP. (8 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 significant partners (1 point)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 significant partners with contributions toward implementation of the HCP from non-significant partners (subpermittees or entities receiving certificates of inclusion and making a monetary contribution toward HCP implementation) (5 points)

\_\_\_\_\_ Greater than 5 significant partners (8 points)

*Justification:*

8) Commitment to a successful HCP can be evidenced by cost share contributions. Cost share is the percent of the total project cost that will be provided by non-Federal partners. Proposals that include a greater than minimum cost share contribution will be ranked higher. When both the State and local governments are involved, cost sharing by both governments is generally preferred.

*Score:* Percentage of cost share provided by non-Federal partners. (12 points maximum)

\_\_\_ Minimum 25% (or 10% where two or more States are involved, or 0% for identified Insular Areas) (0 pts)

\_\_\_ Each additional 5% (2 pts)

**Total points for HCP partnerships (sum of 7-8):** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL POINTS FOR THIS PROPOSAL (sum of 1-8 above):** \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted for consideration in the “Traditional” Conservation Grants program will be selected by representatives from our Regional Offices (see Table 1).

Recovery Land Acquisition proposals will compete at a Regional level for funding. Within each Region, a panel of Service representatives will assess the applications and make funding recommendations to the Regional Director. The Service’s Regional Director will then forward Regional recommendations to the Service’s Director. The Regional Director will use the individual panel member recommendations in selecting projects, although geographic distribution of projects, the amount of funding requested for a project compared with the total amount of funding available, and other such factors may also be considered. Partial funding of one or more projects, when practicable, may be considered. After reviewing the Regional Directors recommendations and the other factors, the Service’s Director will make funding selections.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance and Land Acquisition proposals will compete at a national level for funding. A panel of Service representatives will assess the applications submitted from the Regional Offices at the national level and make funding recommendations to the Service’s Director. The Director will use the panel member recommendations in selecting projects, although geographic distribution of projects, the amount of funding requested for a project compared with the total amount of funding available, unique single species projects, and other such factors may also be considered. Partial funding of one or more projects, when practicable, may be considered. After reviewing the panel members recommendations and the other factors, the Service’s Director will make funding selections.

## 3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The Service anticipates making award announcements for the fiscal year 2006 “non-traditional” grant competition in the summer of 2006. Announcements for the “Traditional” grants will be determined by our Regional Offices.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### 1. Award Notices

Awards for the “Traditional” Conservation Grant program will be made through regional press releases and direct notification of the applicant from the Regional Offices of the Service. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of CESCOF funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

Awards for the “Nontraditional” grants will be announced through a national press release and a memorandum to the Regional Directors of the Service for further notification of the applicants’ selection for an award. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of CESCOF funding, nor should they purchase

materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

## 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Listed in the table below are administrative requirements that may apply to your project if funded through the CESCOF. The documents listed below establish principles for determining which costs are allowable or eligible (“cost principles”) and describe other requirements that apply to receiving CESCOF funding. These requirements apply to recipients and subrecipients of CESCOF funding. In some cases, the requirements vary depending upon the type of organization receiving the funding or that is a subrecipient of the funding. Each of these documents can be found at our Internet site: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/index.html> For projects that are selected for funding, we will also offer additional technical assistance to facilitate the prospective recipients’ understanding of the financial requirements.

On June 27, 2003, The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a *Federal Register* notice (68 FR 38402) that announced final policy issuance on the use of a universal identifier by grant applicants. The policy requires applicants applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003, to acquire a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. It is the responsibility of the organization seeking Federal funds to obtain a DUNS, as necessary. Grant and cooperative agreement applicants (excluding individuals) need to ensure they have a DUNS number. Therefore, all applicants for CESCOF funding MUST acquire a DUNS number to be submitted with the proposal. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

Table 2. Administrative Requirements for CESCOF Funding Awards	
Category:	Specific Requirements:
Individuals, private firms, and other non-profits excluded from coverage under OMB Circular No. A-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 31.2</li> <li>* 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying)</li> <li>* 48 CFR 31 (Contracts with Commercial Organizations)</li> </ul>
Non-Profit Organizations covered under OMB Circular No. A-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs)</li> <li>* 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying)</li> <li>* OMB Circular No. A-110 (Administrative Requirements for Grants)</li> <li>* 2 CFR 230 (Cost Principles)</li> <li>* OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)</li> </ul>

Educational Institutions (even if part of a State or local government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs)</li> <li>* 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying)</li> <li>* 2 CFR 220 (Cost Principles)</li> <li>* OMB Circular No. A-110 (Administrative Requirements for Grants)</li> <li>* OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)</li> </ul>
States, local governments, and Indian Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs)</li> <li>* 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying)</li> <li>* 2 CFR 225 (Cost Principles)</li> <li>* OMB Circular No. A-102 (Grants and Cooperative Agreements)</li> <li>* OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)</li> </ul>

Please be aware that when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funds fire management on lands other than the National Wildlife Refuge System lands, the activity must be conducted by qualified personnel who meet agency or interagency standards as identified in established policy documents for wildland fire management activities (for further information please see the September 16, 2005, Director’s Memorandum “Final Addendum to Chapter 18 of the Service Fire Management Handbook Regarding Prescribed Burning Off-Service Lands” at <http://www.fws.gov/angered/grants/section6/FY2006/fire.pdf>).

The CESCFC programs are also eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs.” Applicants should contact the Service’s Regional Office program coordinator (see Table1) and/or the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. The following States and Territories have designated SPOCs: Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. A complete list of the names and addresses for the SPOCs may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

Length and Time Phasing of Assistance: Any amount obligated to any State for any fiscal year remaining unused at end of the year is available to that State until the close of the succeeding fiscal year. Any amount obligated to any State that remains unused at the end of the succeeding fiscal year is available to the Service as reverted funds to conduct other section 6 programs.

### 3. Reporting

In general, OMB Circulars A-102 §\_.40 and \_.41 and A110 §\_.51 and \_.52 specify requirements for both financial and program performance reporting. Grant recipients may be required to complete one or more of the following financial forms:

- SF - 269/269A, Financial Status Report;
- SF - 270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement;

- SF - 271, Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement for Construction Programs; and
- SF - 272, Federal Cash Transactions Report.

OMB Circulars A-102 §.40 and A-110 §.51 also set forth requirements for submission of recipient program performance reports. A performance report is required for each project segment within 90 days following the close of the segment.

Audits: In accordance with the provisions of OMB Circular No. A- 133 (Revised, June 24, 1997, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit organizations," non-federal entities that receive financial assistance of \$500,000 or more in Federal Awards will have a single or a program-specific audit conducted for that year. Non-federal entities that expend less than \$500,000 a year in Federal awards are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in Circular No. A-133.

Records: Records must be maintained for 3 years following the submission of request for final reimbursement.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

Please refer to Table 1 for a list of Regional Office program contacts. Information on the CESCOF is also available from the Branch of State Grants, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203 or electronically at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/index.html>

## **VIII. Other Information**

Please note that the Federal Government is not obligated to make any awards as a result of this announcement, and only official Service grant officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds.