

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement.** We are collecting this information in accordance with Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C 1535, as amended, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 16 U.S.C 4601, as amended. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. We estimate that it will take applicants under this program about 37 hours to complete an application. We estimate it will take recipients under this program about 8 hours to complete required reporting and 8 hours for required recordkeeping. All burden estimates include the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather data needed and complete and review the submission. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Ecological Services & Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration**

FY 2018 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF)  
Traditional Conservation Grants Program  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.615

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**I. Description of Funding Opportunity**

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) Traditional Conservation Grant program is authorized through Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1535, as amended (ESA). The codified program regulations are found at 50 CFR 81.

More than half of all species listed as endangered or threatened spend at least part of their life cycle on non-federal lands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recognizes that success in conserving species requires working cooperatively with local communities to foster voluntary stewardship efforts on non-federal lands. States and Territories (hereafter, "States") play a key role in catalyzing these efforts. Tools are available under the ESA to help States and landowners plan and implement projects to conserve species.

Section 6 authorizes the Secretary of Interior (Secretary) to enter into cooperative agreements with States that establish and maintain an "adequate and active" program for the conservation of threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are resident in the States. A cooperative agreement sets forth the roles and responsibilities of the State and the Service in the management of threatened and endangered species. Once a State enters into such an agreement, the Service is authorized to provide Federal financial assistance for the implementation of a State's conservation program, through the Traditional Conservation Grant Program.

Financial assistance, provided in the form of Traditional Conservation Grants, can be used to support projects that have direct conservation benefits for federally listed species, candidate species, and recently delisted species. States may apply for funding to conduct work on federally listed resident species that are included in the State's cooperative agreement. States may also apply for funding to monitor candidate and recently delisted species. Candidate Species, as defined at 50 CFR 424.02(b), means "any species being considered by the Secretary for listing as an endangered or a threatened species, but not yet the subject of a proposed rule." Therefore, any species identified by the State that has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Service may be considered a candidate for the purposes of the CESCO grant programs provided that upon selecting a project for an award, or in forwarding that project for consideration for an award, the Regional Director will affirm that the species is being considered for listing, and upon conclusion of the grant project, make a determination of whether the species should or should not continue to be considered for listing as an endangered or threatened species. Further, for the purposes of the CESCO grant programs, a recently delisted species is a species for which post-delisting monitoring has not been completed.

Projects proposed for funding may involve management, research, monitoring, and outreach activities or any combination thereof. Proposals should include clear and specific information about how the proposed work would contribute to species recovery or prevent the need to list a species under the ESA. Successful applications will be those that demonstrate a direct conservation benefit to the species or its habitat.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Introduction of species into suitable habitats within their historic range
- Enhancement or restoration of habitat
- Surveys and inventories of habitats
- Species status surveys
- Propagation of animals and plants
- Research such as genetic analysis to determine genetic health and population structure
- Public education and outreach tools such as website development or coordination workshops with local landowners to address a specific threat to a species
- Monitoring of candidate and recently recovered species

#### *General Program Funding Priorities*

The general program funding priorities for Traditional Conservation Grants address the listing status of the species; if the proposal will accomplish tasks identified in a final or draft recovery plan or similar conservation or management strategy; and the recovery priority number of a species, where applicable.

The recovery priority number is established in recovery plans (and periodically updated as appropriate), including (1) degree of threats facing the target species; (2) potential for recovery of the species; and (3) taxonomic status of the species for which full species have priority over subspecies or population, and (4) presence of conflict with construction or other economic activity. Recovery priority numbers range from a high of 1 to a low of 18, modified by a "C" if conflict is present, based on the magnitude of threat (high, moderate, or low), recovery potential

(high or low), taxonomic distinctness (monotypic genus, species, or subspecies), and conflict with development projects or other economic activity.

In addition, our highest priority is given to projects designed to have a direct impact on the recovery of listed species, prevent extinction of a listed species or prevent the need to list a candidate species. Proposals to monitor candidate and recently delisted species can be addressed even though no recovery plan exists. Proposals, that involve only research, will be considered a lower priority for funding relative to management proposals and must provide information that can be directly used to prevent listing, recover, manage, or improve current management strategies for a species. Proposals involving only public education and outreach activities must demonstrate a high probability of improving or increasing public understanding of and participation in conservation activities.

#### *Department of Interior Priorities*

In addition, the Traditional Conservation Grants Program, as currently executed, supports the following Department of Interior priorities for Federal financial assistance.

Restoring trust with local communities:

- Be a better neighbor with those closest to our resources by improving dialogue and relationships with persons and entities bordering our lands;
- Expand the lines of communication with Governors, state natural resource offices, Fish and Wildlife Service offices, water authorities, county commissioners, Tribes, and local communities.

Striking a regulatory balance:

- Ensure that Endangered Species Act decisions are based on strong science and thorough analysis.

The Traditional Conservation Grants Program meets the Department's priorities by recognizing that, in the exercise of their general governmental powers, States possess broad trustee and police powers over fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats within their borders. Unless preempted by Federal authority, States possess primary authority and responsibility for protection and management of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats. The Section 6 cooperative agreements entered into by the States and Service reflect a common commitment to actively advance the purpose and policies of the ESA, including providing a means to foster relationships with public and private partners, reduce conflicts between listed species and economic development activities, and promote long-term conservation of listed species and the ecosystems on which they depend. The grants authorized through Section 6 encourage the cooperative implementation of the ESA by leveraging Federal investment in species recovery and demonstrate the Service's commitment to cooperative conservation at the local level. Through these grants, the Service works collaboratively with State governments to manage and conserve listed species and their habitats in a manner that respects State management authority over wildlife resources.

Further, State agencies often possess scientific data and valuable expertise on the status and distribution of listed, candidate, and recently recovered species. State agencies, because of their authorities and their close working relationships with local governments and landowners, are in a unique position to assist the Service in implementing all aspects of the ESA. Activities funded through Traditional Conservation Grants such as species status surveys, captive propagation and reintroduction, and genetic studies provide the States and Service with the best available science to determine best management practices for species, guide future conservation efforts, and make informed decisions on ESA listing and delisting actions. The activities funded through these grants ensure that ESA decisions are based on strong science and thorough analysis. Activities funded through these grants can also contribute to the recovery of species, resulting in down or de-listing, and thus contributing further to the priority of striking a regulatory balance.

## **II. Award Information**

Federal financial assistance, provided in the form of Traditional Conservation Grants, can be used to support the implementation of State programs to conserve and recover threatened and endangered species under Service jurisdiction that reside within the State. Grants can also be used to support monitoring of candidate and recently delisted species.

Proposals may address new or ongoing species conservation work. If the proposal includes a continuation of previous or ongoing work, a brief discussion of accomplishments to date and a justification for the continuation of the work must be included in the Project Narrative (See Section IV Application Requirement B). Further, if there is any overlap between the proposed project and any other active or anticipated projects in terms of activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel, applicants must provide a description of the overlap and state if the proposal submitted for consideration under this program is/is not in any way duplicative of any proposal that was/will be submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source (See Section IV Application Requirement I).

The Service awarded approximately \$11.4 million to 272 projects in fiscal year 2016 through the Traditional Conservation Grant Program. The average grant award was \$47,000. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, included \$12,508,000 dedicated to Traditional Conservation Grants. The Service estimates 250 grants maybe funded should the average grant amount remain consistent with previous fiscal years.

Per Section 6(d) of the ESA, the allocation of Traditional Conservation Grant funds are made to the Service Regions based on the considerations of:

- (a) The international commitments of the United States to protect endangered or threatened species;
- (b) The readiness of a State to proceed with a conservation program consistent with the objectives and purposes of the Act;
- (c) The number of endangered and threatened species within a State;
- (d) The potential for restoring endangered and threatened species within a State; and
- (e) The relative urgency to initiate a program to restore and protect an endangered or threatened species in terms of survival of the species.

Funding is allocated by formula to the Service Regions based on the number of listed species covered by the Section 6 cooperative agreements with the States within that Region. Regional offices then further allocate the funding to the States within that Region by formula, a competitive process, or a combination of both, see below.

Allocation Methodology for Region 1: Available funds are allocated to States and Territories within Region 1 based on a formula. Projects compete at the State level. Percent of funding by State or Territory: Hawaii 50%, CNMI 10%, Guam 10%, Idaho 10%, Oregon 10%, Washington 10%.

Allocation Methodology for Region 2: Available funds are allocated to States based on the number of listed species in that State divided by the total number of listed species in the Region. Projects compete at the State level.

Allocation Methodology for Region 3: Available funds are allocated to States based on the number of species covered by their respective cooperative agreement divided by the total number of species covered by cooperative agreements in the Region. Projects compete at the State level.

Allocation Methodology for Region 4: Available funds are allocated to States based on the number of species covered by their respective cooperative agreement/ total number of species covered by cooperative agreements in the Region. Projects compete at the State level.

Allocation Methodology for Region 5: Available funds are allocated to States based on the number of species covered by their respective cooperative agreement/ total number of species covered by cooperative agreements in the Region. However, no State will be given a target of less than 5% or more than 20% of the total available funding. Targets will be further divided proportionally by plant and animal for each State. When different agencies have jurisdiction over plants and animals this breakdown will be applied in deciding awards; however, if a State agency with authority for both plants and animals requests only funds for one group (i.e., plants or animals), the State's full amount will be distributed to that group. Similarly, if only one agency in a State applies for funding, that agency will be awarded the full target amount for the State. Projects compete at the State level. However, any funds remaining after application of the target formula and any recovered funds are awarded based on competition at the regional level.

Allocation methodology for Region 6: Funds are awarded competitively within the Region with the intention of fully funding each State's top priority proposal.

Allocation methodology for Region 7: Projects compete at the State level as there is only one State in Region 7.

Allocation methodology for Region 8: Available funds are allocated to States based on the number of species covered by their respective cooperative agreement/ total number of species covered by cooperative agreements in the Region. Projects compete at the State level. If only one agency in a State applies for funding, that agency will be awarded the full target amount for the State.

Awards for the fiscal year 2018 CESCOF Traditional Conservation Grants will be announced by the Regional Offices through direct notification of the applicant. The Service's goal is to obligate CESCOF funds to States within 120 days of the award announcement. States will assist the Service in meeting the 120-day target by providing the documents necessary for grant issuance as soon as possible following the grant award announcements.

Awarded grant funds must be expended in a timely manner or returned to the Service for reallocation through the next grant award cycle. Service policy is to allow for up to three years from the date of award announcement. If an approved grant award will not be completed within the grant award period, the State Director or Commissioner may request an extension. Regional Ecological Services staff must review all extension requests and will make a recommendation to the Regional Director. Any awarded grant project that will not be completed, and from which funds are deobligated, may be eligible for funding in future competitions. These projects will not be provided any preferential treatment and will be assessed along with all other proposals submitted in response to the current solicitation based solely on the merits of the project.

### **III. Basic Eligibility Requirements**

#### *Eligible Applicants*

Participation in the CESCOF grant programs is only available to States with a current Section 6 cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior. The Service requires a complete, signed cooperative agreement before it can obligate Federal funds to a project [50 CFR 81.3, 50 CFR 81.5, 43 CFR 12.50(b)(3)]. While funding can only be granted to States, individuals or groups (for example counties or conservation organizations) may work with a State agency that has a cooperative agreement on conservation efforts that are mutually beneficial, as a subgrantee.

Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 for more information. Exemptions: The SAM registration requirement does not apply to individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, state, local or Tribal government, academia or other type of organization.

#### **A. DUNS Registration**

Request a DUNS number at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. For technical difficulties, contact Dun & Bradstreet by email at: [govt@dnb.com](mailto:govt@dnb.com), or by calling the Government Customer Resource Center at voice phone: 866-705-5711 or TTY line: 877-807-1679 (hearing impaired customers only). Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

#### **B. Entity Registration in SAM**

Register in SAM at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are

strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

Note: The official U.S. government website address for SAM is [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). There is NO COST to register in or access SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who charge a fee in exchange for registering entities in SAM; please be aware that you can register to do business with the U.S. government FOR FREE directly in SAM at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

### **C. Excluded Entities**

Applicant entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program. The Service conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award.

### **D. Cost Sharing or Matching:**

A proposal must include a minimum 25 percent non-Federal cost share. The cost share may be cash or an in-kind contribution, such as volunteer efforts and donations of goods or services. This cost share requirement decreases to 10 percent when two or more States having a common interest in one or more species, the conservation of which may be enhanced by cooperation of such States, enter jointly into a project [50 CFR 81.8(a)]. The Insular Areas of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from grant matching requirements up to \$200,000 under all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Programs (based on a May 9, 2003, Director's Memorandum).

The cooperating States may designate a lead State to coordinate with the Region. To seek an increased rate of Federal participation for a cooperative project within a grant, cooperating States must provide documentation that meets the needs of the cooperating States, and must contain the responsibilities and work to be carried out by **EACH** (emphasis added) of the cooperating States. Documentation may be in any form (e.g., memorandum, letter of agreement, recovery plan, implementation program). Examples follow:

- (1) Either (a) one State submits an Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) 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 (SF 424).
- (2) Each cooperating State submits a proposal for the joint project and separate Applications for Federal Assistance (SF 424).
- (3) When one or more States are participating in a recovery implementation program, one or more may submit separate Application(s) for Federal Assistance (SF 424) 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.

#### **IV. Application Requirements**

To be considered for funding under this funding opportunity, an application must contain:

##### **A. Application Form**

A completed, signed and dated Application for Federal Assistance form, SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance form: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>  
Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the "Federal" funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the "Federal" funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the "Other" box.

##### **B. Project Narrative**

- 1. Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is being undertaken and how it advances program priorities.
- 2. Project Goals and Objectives:** 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 (including timetable), money, and staffing allocated and specify end point.
- 3. Expected Results or Benefits:** Proposals should include clear and specific information about how the work being proposed would contribute to species conservation or benefit the public. Try to provide quantifiable or verifiable resource benefits.
- 4. Approach:** How will the objective be attained? Include specific project procedures and activities and describe how they relate to the stated objectives.
- 5. Description of Entities Undertaking the Project:** Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis.
- 6. Location:** Where will the work be done? Describe habitat type(s) to be affected and relevant ecosystem/watershed characterization.

### **C. Budget Form**

Complete the Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A) or Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF 424C) form. Use the SF 424A if your project does not include construction and the SF 424C if the project includes construction. The budget forms are available on the Internet at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and subawards are subject to the Federal cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, as applicable to the recipient organization type. Links to the full text of the Federal cost principles are available on the Internet at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

**Note on Multiple Federal Funding Sources:** If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program on the budget form *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding. Enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form, and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

### **D. Budget Justification**

In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**," explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF 424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost. If federally funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment, including the Federal funding source.

**Required Indirect Cost Statement:** Recipients that do not have an approved indirect cost rate cannot charge indirect costs to their Federal award. All applicants except individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate must include in the budget justification narrative one of the following statements and attach to their application any required documentation identified in the applicable statement:

"We are:

1. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached.
2. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We are required to prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation to support those costs.

3. A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: “A copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement is attached. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.” or “A copy of our current, approved rate agreement(s) is attached.”].
4. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.
5. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] of [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs)]. However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 220.68]. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing immediately if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.
6. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization’s indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing immediately if we do establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.
7. A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either “Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program” or “Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network”], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that the basis for direct costs will be the modified

total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 “Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)”. We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement, and that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.

8. A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. Accepting a flat *de minimis* rate as a condition of award is an approved rate.
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Recipients may not charge to their Service award any indirect costs calculated against the portion of total direct project costs paid by any other Federal funding source or non-Federal partner.
- Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to transfer unallowable indirect costs to amounts budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service’s **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>.

**Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior:** Entities that do not have a NICRA must first have an open, active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services  
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-400  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-930-3803  
Email: Through <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/contactus/ibcfeedback> web form  
Internet address: <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/services/finance/indirect-cost-services>

**E. Single Audit Reporting Statements:** As required in [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F](#), all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. All U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants must provide a statement regarding if your organization was/was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted. Include these statements at the end of the Project Narrative in a section titled “**Single Audit Reporting Statements.**”

**F. Assurances:** Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF 424D)** for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)** for all other projects. The form includes a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing this form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law.

**G. Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:** Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this proposal AND the Federal share exceeds \$100,000, complete and submit the **SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1>. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

**H. Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Applicants must notify the Service in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that are known at the time of application or that may arise during the life of this award, in the event an award is made. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's subrecipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, the applicant's employees, or the applicant's future subrecipients in the matter. Applicants must notify the Service in writing in their application if any key project personnel, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are known to be related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in or associated with the program to which you are applying for funding or who otherwise may be involved in the review and selection of the application. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service program, in consultation with their Ethics Counselor, will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the applicant to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the project not being select for funding.

**I. Required Overlap/Duplication Statement:** Applicants must provide a statement that addresses if there is any overlap between the proposed project and any other active or anticipated projects in terms of activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If any overlap exists, applicants must provide a description of the overlap in their application. Applicants must also state if the proposal submitted for consideration under this program is/is not in any way duplicative of any proposal that was/will be submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source (Federal or non-Federal). If such a circumstance exists, applicants must detail when the other duplicative proposal(s) were submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when funding decisions are expected to be announced. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be duplicative of the funding requested from the Service, applicants must notify the Service point of contact for this funding opportunity immediately.

### **Application Checklist**

Failure to provide complete information may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

- Evidence of non-profit status:** If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance:** A complete, signed and dated SF 424, SF 424-Mandatory, or SF 424-Individual form.
- Project narrative**
- Timetable**

- Single Audit Reporting statement:** If a U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, or non-profit organization, statements regarding applicability of and compliance with Single Audit reporting requirements.
- SF 424 budget form:** A complete SF 424A or SF 424C Budget Information form.
- Budget justification**
- Federally funded equipment list:** If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment.
- Indirect cost statement**
- NICRA:** When applicable, a copy of the organization's current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
- SF 424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF 424B or SF 424D Assurances form.
- SF LLL form:** If applicable, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.
- Conflict of Interest disclosure,** when applicable.
- Overlap/Duplication statement**

## V. Submission Instructions

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

Submission date for Traditional Conservation Grants is 30 days after the posting of this Notice of Funding Opportunity on grants.gov.

**Intergovernmental Review:** Before submitting an application, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the following website ([https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/grants_spoc)) to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." E.O. 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 E.O. allows each state to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your state's designated entity for more information on the process the state requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications may be submitted by mail, by email, electronically through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity. Please select **ONE** of the submission options:

***To submit an application by e-mail: (preferred submission option)***

Format all of your documents to print on Letter size (8 ½” x 11”) paper. Format all pages to display and print page numbers. Scanned documents should be scanned in Letter format, as black and white images only. Where possible, save scanned documents in .pdf format. E-mail your application to the Service program point of contact identified in Section VIII. Agency Contacts below.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization’s authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text “Completed by Grants.gov upon submission” or “Completed on submission to Grants.gov.” Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

***To submit an application by mail:***

Number all pages of your printed application. Mail one, single-sided, unbound copy (do not staple or otherwise permanently bind pages) of your complete application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

***To submit an application through Grants.gov:***

Go to the Grants.gov Apply for Grants page (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>) for an overview of the process to apply through Grants.gov. You/your organization must complete the Grants.gov registration process before submitting an application through Grants.gov. Registration can take between three to five business days, or as long as two weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner.

Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names: Please do not assign application attachments file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. Assigning file names longer than 20 characters will create issues in the automatic interface between Grants.gov and the Service’s financial assistance management system.

**VI. Application Review Information**

To be considered for funding, applications must seek funding to conduct work on federally listed resident species currently included in the State’s cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior. States may also apply for funding to conduct work on any species that has become a candidate or proposed species by the grant application deadline. Finally, States may also apply to conduct post-delisting monitoring only for recovered species that are subject to an active post-delisting monitoring plan.

## **Evaluation criteria used to determine funding priorities within a Region or State:**

### **1. Species Listing Status and Implementation of High Priority Recovery Tasks: Up to 30 points**

a. The listing status of the species. Federally listed species will be prioritized. Proposals to monitor candidate and recently delisted species will be a lower priority for consideration. Scoring = 5-15 points, where, for example, 5=recently delisted species, 10= candidate species, 15= threatened species, 20= endangered species.

b. Whether or not the proposal will accomplish tasks identified in a final or draft Recovery Plan, or similar conservation strategy or management plan. Proposals addressing listed species for which the Service has released a draft or final Recovery Plan should indicate how the project would address one or more of the recovery objectives or actions identified and what priority level the actions are assigned. If a species does not have an approved recovery plan in place, the proposed activities should be described in the recovery outline, 5-year review recommendations, delisting monitoring plan, species status assessment, or other conservation or management plan for the species. Scoring = 0-10 points, where, for example, 0= no recovery plan or management plan, 3= management plan, 6= draft recovery plan, 10= final recovery plan.

### **2. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of the Proposal to the Program Goals (30 Points)**

Reviewers will consider whether proposals clearly identify project goals and objectives and whether those goals and objectives are applicable to conservation and recovery of threatened or endangered species, candidate species, or delisted species as specified in previous sections of this document.

Reviewers will consider whether the proposal is designed to have a direct impact on species recovery as a result of implementation of management actions. If the proposal addresses the continuation of previously funded or ongoing work, reviewers should consider whether the applicant provides an adequate justification for the continuation of the same work (e.g., what benefit would additional results have?).

Scoring: 1-30 points; where, for example, 1= no importance/relevance to the program goals or objectives, very limited potential to contribute to species recovery, no implementation of management actions; 15= moderately important/ relevant, reasonably likely to make some meaningful contribution to species recovery; 30= extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to recovery of a threatened or endangered species, involves implementation of significant management actions, addresses a high priority recovery plan action.)

### **3. Technical/ Scientific Merit (20 Points)**

For proposals including management and outreach, this criterion addresses whether the activities and approach described in the project narrative is appropriate for achieving the stated goals and objectives, result in successful execution of the project, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the timeline specified. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient information is provided to evaluate the design of the project relative to the stated goals/objectives.

For proposals including research and monitoring, reviewers will consider the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results, and the inclusion of quality assurance considerations for data collected.

Scoring: 1-20 points; where, for example, 1= completely unsound or unlikely to meet the stated objectives, and information insufficient to evaluate project design; 10= intermediately sound, or reasonably likely to meet the stated objectives; 20 = extremely sound and highly likely to meet the stated objectives.

### **4. Project Costs (10 Points)**

Reviewers will evaluate the budget to determine if it is sufficiently detailed, realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient detail was provided to evaluate how costs were estimated.

Scoring: 1-10 points; where, for example, 1= unrealistic and lacking sufficient detail; 5= adequately detailed and realistic; 10= extremely detailed and realistic.

### **5. Secretarial Priorities (up to 10 points)**

In order to support the Department of Interior's Priorities for Federal Financial Assistance, proposals are to be evaluated with the priorities highlighted in Section I. Description of Funding Opportunity, in mind. Specifically, priority should be given to projects that fund activities that will provide the States and Service with the best available science to make informed decisions on ESA listing and delisting actions. Priority should be given to projects that will contribute to the recovery of a species, resulting in a down or delisting decision. Priority should also be given to projects that will reduce or eliminate threats to candidate species, or undertake restoration actions that will help avert federal listing of the species, furthering the Departmental priority of striking a regulatory balance.

Scoring: 1-10 points; where 0= no importance/relevance to Secretarial priorities and 10= extremely likely to make a significant contribution to recovery of a threatened or endangered species, efforts will avert listing of candidate species, or assure that delisted species do not return to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to the ESA are again necessary.

## **6. Regional Directors' Discretion**

The criteria above provide a rank order of proposals to reviewers in order to make final award recommendations to the Regional Director. Projects will be funded by the rank order of the review criteria unless a proposal is justified to be selected by the Regional Director out of rank order based upon the following considerations, where applicable:

- a. State priority
- b. State's ability to use partial funding
  - If a State indicates that a project cannot be completed with partial funding, a lower State priority project within the target funding amount may be funded instead of a higher priority project.
  - A State may receive less than requested, if an activity identified in the grant has been deemed ineligible, insubstantial, or in conflict with conservation goals. States may be asked to adjust project objectives, tasks, and budgets should an activity be deemed ineligible.
- c. Availability of funding
- d. Matching funds greater than the requirement
- e. Balance/distribution of funds within State or Region
  - i. Geographically
  - ii. By research areas
  - iii. By project types
  - vi. By species or species groups
- f. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded by Service or other agencies
- g. Whether a project would be eligible for funding through a more appropriate Service grant program
- h. The applicant's prior award performance
- i. Partnerships with and/or participation of targeted groups
- j. Adequacy of information necessary for Service staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to Regional Director.

The Service may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration of each project proposed for funding will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the State and the Service.

The Service reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of projects recommended for funding by the Regional Directors will be made in through the Department of Interior's financial assistance review of discretionary grants and cooperative agreements process effective in fiscal year 2018.

**Review and Selection Process:**

Proposals submitted for consideration in the Traditional Conservation Grants program will be reviewed by representatives from Service staff in the Regional Offices (see VIII. Agency Contacts).

Initial Screening:

A. Status of Cooperative Agreement: Applicants must be entered into a Cooperative Agreement pursuant to Section 6(c) to be eligible for grant funding, and have provided the information necessary for annual renewal (reconfirmation) of their cooperative agreement. Applicants that have not fulfilled both criteria will not be awarded funding.

B. Completeness and Eligibility: Proposals will be screened to ensure that application packages have all required forms, application elements, and meet all of the eligibility criteria. Regions will review the status of applicants' administration of other grants, including Single Audit submissions, past performance, financial strength and management capabilities, and procedures and methods for monitoring subrecipients or vendors. Applicants in poor standing may not be considered for funding. If there are any questions about the ability of the project to be completed in compliance with Federal laws and regulations, additional information may be requested from the State. A project may be disqualified if Service staff determine the project cannot meet Federal requirements. Incomplete applications will be returned for corrections. Corrections must be submitted within two weeks of the returned application. Applicants that do not respond within two weeks with corrected materials will be disqualified. The Service, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

Merit Review: After initial screening, applications meeting the basic eligibility requirements will undergo merit review based on the criteria outlined above. Each application will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored independently by Regional staff with appropriate subject-matter expertise (e.g., species recovery, candidate conservation, ESA policy and programs, Federal financial assistance). Reviewers may discuss individual applications, but not all scoring will be based on consensus. The reviewers' scores will be averaged and used to produce a rank order of the proposals for consideration by the Regional Director.

Selection by Regional Director: After applications have undergone merit review, the Regional Director will consider the factors outlined in criterion 6 as described in Section VI. Application Review Information above. The Regional Director will decide which applications will be forwarded to the Department of Interior for final approval.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Prior to award, the Service reviews the selected applicant's statement regarding potential overlap or duplication in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel and makes a determination regarding Service funding. Depending on the circumstances, modification of the application, other pending applications, or an active award may be necessary, or the Service might choose not to fund the proposed project.

Each fiscal year, for every entity receiving one or more awards in that fiscal year, the Service conducts a risk assessment based on eight risk categories. The result of this risk assessment is used to establish a monitoring plan for all awards to the entity in that fiscal year. For a copy of the Service's risk assessment form, go to <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>.

Prior to approving an award with a Federal funding amount that exceeds or is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as adjusted (see 2 CFR 200.88), the Service must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS; <https://www.fapiis.gov/fapiis/index.action>) to determine if, at a minimum, the information found in the system for the applicant demonstrates a satisfactory record of Federal award performance and integrity and business ethics (see 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2)). The Service must also report to FAPIIS if an applicant subject to this review is found not qualified for a particular award due to its prior record of integrity or performance under Federal awards (see 2 CFR 200.212).

## **VII. Award Administration**

**Award Notices:** Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information required and where to submit payment requests. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

**Domestic Recipient Payments:** Prior to award, the Service program office will contact you/your organization to either enroll in the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system or, if eligible, obtain approval from the Department of the Interior to be waived from using ASAP.

Domestic applicants subject to the SAM registration requirement (see Section III B.) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP must maintain current banking information in SAM. Domestic applicants exempt from the SAM registration Requirement who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP will not be required to submit their banking

information directly to the Service program. However, ***do NOT submit any banking information to the Service until it is requested from you by the Service program!***

**Transmittal of Sensitive Data:** Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.

**Award Terms and Conditions:** Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Service's Standard Award Terms and Conditions are available on the Internet at <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

**Special Award Terms and Conditions:**

The following additional criteria apply to Traditional Conservation Grants and must be satisfied for a proposal to be considered for funding:

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

Projects within a grant must be consistent with approved or draft species recovery plans or similar. Proposed in conflict with conservation objectives will not be funded.

The State must assure and certify that it will comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and requirements as they relate to the application, acceptance, and use of Federal funds for projects under the Act [50 CFR 81.9].

A permit from the Regional Director may be required if a project within a grant involves taking, transporting across State lines, introduction into an area beyond its historic range, or holding wildlife in captivity for more than 45 days.

A proposal cannot include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) costs.

State administrative costs must either be assumed by the State or included in the proposal in accordance with Federal requirements. Grants may not be submitted to cover administrative costs alone.

Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, pre-award costs in this program are not allowed under the award unless approved by the Service in accordance with 2 CFR §200.458. Pre-award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of the Federal award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award and only with the written approval of the Federal awarding agency.

Projects that include proposed work on private or federal lands must be accompanied by documented landowner permission to access those lands.

**Recipient Reporting Requirements:**

The Service will specify in the notice of award document the reporting and reporting frequency applicable to the award.

**Financial and Performance Reports:**

Recipients must use the Standard Form 425, Federal Financial Report for financial reporting, available on the Internet at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1>.

Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results.

**Final Reports:** Recipients are required to submit final financial and performance reports no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date, whichever comes first. For awards lasting 12 months or less, the final reports will be the only financial and performance reports required, except in unusual circumstances or if waived.

**Interim Reports:** For awards that last longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial and performance reports no less frequently than annually and no more frequently than quarterly, except in unusual circumstances or if waived. Requiring a higher frequency of reporting than annual reporting will be based on the Service's assessment of higher or other unusual circumstance. Quarterly and semiannual interim reports are due within 30

calendar days of the reporting period end date. Annual interim reports are due within 90 calendar days of the reporting period end date.

**Significant Developments Reports:** Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- Problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
- Favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Recipients are responsible for notifying the Service Project Officer in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter that might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's subrecipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under this award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to: direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the Recipient, the Recipient's employees, or the Recipient's subrecipients in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service Project Officer in consultation with their Ethics Counselor will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the Recipient, the Recipient's employee(s), or the Recipient's Subrecipient(s) that could reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of this award.

**Other Mandatory Disclosures:** The non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment. (See also 2 CFR Part 180, 31 U.S.C. 3321, and 41 U.S.C. 2313.)

2 CFR Part 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters is applicable to awards with a total Federal share of more than \$500,000, except those to individuals and foreign public entities.

## **VIII. Agency Contacts**

Please refer below for a list of Regional Program Coordinators. States must confer with their Regional Service Office on potential projects prior to submitting a proposal for consideration under this grant program. Coordination and communicating early and often will enable both the States and Service to ensure mutual priorities are addressed when awarding these funds. Information on the CESCO is also available from the Division of Restoration and Recovery, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS:ES Falls Church, VA 22041-3803, or electronically at <http://www.fws.gov/angered/grants/index.html>

### **Regional Program Coordinators and Where to Submit Proposals**

#### **Region 1**

Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Eastside Federal Complex  
911 N.E. 11th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97232-4181

David Leonard (503/231-2372)  
[David\\_Leonard@fws.gov](mailto:David_Leonard@fws.gov)

#### **Region 2**

Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 6018  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Vanessa Burge (505/248-6420) &  
Janet Huff (505/248-6477)

[Vanessa\\_Burge@fws.gov](mailto:Vanessa_Burge@fws.gov)

#### **Region 3**

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Ecological Services  
5600 American Blvd. West  
Suite 990  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55437-1458

Laurel Hill (612/713-5194)

[R3FedAid@fws.gov](mailto:R3FedAid@fws.gov)

**Region 4**

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200 Atlanta, GA 30345

Drew Becker (404/679-7226)  
[Drew\\_Becker@fws.gov](mailto:Drew_Becker@fws.gov)

**Region 5**

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

Sadie Stevens (413/253-8677)  
[FW5FAReports@fws.gov](mailto:FW5FAReports@fws.gov)

**Region 6**

Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Ecological Services  
134 Union Blvd., Suite 645  
Lakewood, CO 80228

Amelia Orton-Palmer (303/236-4211)  
[Amelia\\_Orton-Palmer@fws.gov](mailto:Amelia_Orton-Palmer@fws.gov)  
CC: [Angela\\_Burgess@fws.gov](mailto:Angela_Burgess@fws.gov)

**Region 7**

Alaska  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199

Drew Crane (907/ 786-3323)  
[Drew\\_Crane@fws.gov](mailto:Drew_Crane@fws.gov)

**Region 8**  
California and Nevada

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

Karen Jensen  
(916/ 414-6557)  
[Karen\\_Jensen@fws.gov](mailto:Karen_Jensen@fws.gov)

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**1. Q: Can grant funds be used to assist an entity with Federal mitigation, minimization, and/or monitoring requirements contained in an HCP or the section 10 permit conditions?**

A: No. A proposal cannot include actions required to satisfy a permittee's Federal mitigation requirements. A proposal can include actions that complement mitigation, minimization, and/or monitoring actions. Proposals that include fees collected or used or lands acquired to satisfy the obligations of a State's conservation obligation can be submitted (e.g., fees collected or used or lands acquired that exceed the Federal permit requirements and are collected, used, or acquired to meet a State's conservation obligation of a joint HCP/NCCP). However, grant funds can assist in conservation obligations pursuant to State law or local ordinance that are above and beyond (or additive to) the Federal mitigation requirements for that HCP.

**2. Q: Can grant funds be used to help an entity come into compliance with a biological opinion?**

A: No. Federal action agencies and their permittees are responsible for meeting the terms and conditions in biological opinions.

**3. Q: Can grant funds be used to assist an entity in complying with other Federal regulations?**

A: No. We do not intend to grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements at the Federal level (e.g., mitigation for Clean Water Act permits).

**4. Q: Can Section 6 grant monies be applied to projects that have obtained funds through another Federal nexus, such as the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration and the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration programs?**

A: Yes. These grants may be used to fund distinct aspects of complex or ongoing projects that have obtained grant funds from other Federal sources. Full disclosure of the project including,

but not limited to, the specific projects and respective funding from each Federal program must be fully described in the proposal. However, accomplishments anticipated under the Traditional Conservation grant should stand on their own and not rely on monies obtained from other Federal sources. If it is an ongoing project, previous phases must already be successfully completed and discussed in the proposal.

**5. Q: Can projects that have multiple sources of Federal funding use these other sources of funding as part of the non-Federal match?**

A: No. Any and all sources of Federal funding are considered Federal, and therefore cannot be included as part of the non-Federal match.

**6. Q: Can National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funds be used as part of the non-Federal cost share?**

A: Yes and No. NFWF funds cannot be used as part of the non-Federal cost share unless it can be demonstrated that the origin of such funds is non-Federal. NFWF receives funding from a variety of sources, including Federal sources. Therefore, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that NFWF funds are non-Federal in nature, and not commingled with Federal funds, use of NFWF funds will not be accepted as part of the non-Federal cost share.

**7. Q: How is the cost share by non-Federal partners determined?**

A: The non-Federal cost share is determined as a percent of total project costs. The cost share can include cash, allowable costs incurred, and third party in-kind contributions. The cost share must be expended within the grant period. A proposal must include at least 25 percent non-Federal cost share per Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, if one State is involved. If two or more States or Territories are contributors to the project, the non-Federal cost share decreases to 10 percent. To determine the cost share necessary, first determine the total cost of the project then multiply the total cost by .25 or .10, this is the amount necessary for the cost share. For example, if the estimated project cost is \$1,000, then \$250 ( $1000 * .25$ ) must be provided by our non-Federal partners, and the Federal share would be \$750. If two or more States are contributors, the non-Federal cost share drops to \$100 ( $1000 * .10$ ), and the Federal share would be \$900. Proposals that have a non-Federal cost share greater than the required minimum will receive additional points in the ranking.

**8. Q: What evidence must be provided by the States to qualify for a higher Federal participation rate? OR What evidence must be provided by the States to qualify for 90:10 cost share ratio?**

A: As described 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 (SF 424) 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 (SF 424).
- (2) Each cooperating State submits a proposal for the joint project and separate Applications for Federal Assistance (SF 424).
- (3) When one or more States are participating in a recovery implementation program, one or more may submit separate Application(s) for Federal Assistance (SF 424) 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].

We have limited funds available for these programs, and each project we fund at the increased Federal cost share rate reduces our ability to support other projects, in other States and Territories; we believe it is most appropriate for States to follow example one or two above to demonstrate a level of support for each project we fund at the higher rate. This will not change the underlying requirements that qualify a proposal for this higher Federal cost share, and we expect that projects that have qualified for this cost share level in the past will be able to provide this information, and so will continue to qualify for the higher rate in the future.

## **9. Q: What is the grant agreement period?**

A: The Service has determined that the grant agreement period shall be for up to three (3) years (i.e., three years or less). Therefore, any work proposed in a project proposal must be completed

within a three-year period. This period begins when the grant is accepted (see Section VII. Award Administration) and ends with grant closeout. All work must be completed within this time. We highly recommend that project proposals be structured in such a way that annual costs and related accomplishments are clearly identifiable. In this way, partial funding may be awarded based on the reported annual expenditures and anticipated accomplishments stated in the proposal, should this prove necessary. Please keep in mind that submitting a project in one fiscal year does not preclude submitting the same or similar proposal in subsequent years for additional funding. Further, if an approved grant award will not be completed within the grant award period, the State Director may request an extension of a Traditional Conservation Grant from the Regional Director. Regional Ecological Services staff must review all extension requests and will make a recommendation to the Regional Director.

**10. Q: Can activities such as habitat and species surveys be used as the State match for these grant projects?**

A: Yes. Initial management costs including habitat and species surveys may be used as the State match provided that the costs are in accordance with 2 CFR §200.458 and the State applicant has received written or verbal permission to include such costs in the proposal by the Region. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, pre-award costs in this program are not allowed under the award unless approved by the Service in accordance with 2 CFR §200.458. Pre-award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of the Federal award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award and only with the written approval of the Federal awarding agency.

**11. Q: Will States and Territories be able to claim reimbursement for administrative costs (overhead), especially for those funds that will be forwarded to local or private conservation efforts, and how will appropriate overhead rates be determined?**

A: Yes. These costs can be included as long as they are included in the proposal and follow the OMB guidelines for administrative costs, which can be obtained through our Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Office in each U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region (<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/ContactUs/ContactUs.htm>). Please note that full-time equivalents (FTE) costs by States, Territories, counties, and other entities must be tied to a specific project and should be included in these proposals sparingly. Likewise, third party administrative costs should be kept to a minimum and used sparingly.

**12. Q: Given that listed plants are usually not protected on non-federal lands, will plants be eligible for consideration?**

A: Yes. We encourage the recovery of plants on non-federal lands, especially for plants that are unique within their area or region, last known populations, or for other unique considerations.

**13. Q: Are Tribes eligible to receive funding directly through these grant programs?**

A: No. By law, these grant programs apply only to State and Territorial agencies that have current Cooperative Agreements with the Service. However, States may submit proposals involving Tribes, i.e., Tribes may receive funding by working cooperatively with the State. Other funding opportunities for tribal wildlife conservation have been available since FY 2002. We encourage Tribes to contact the Native American Liaison in each U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region to find out more about these opportunities.

<http://www.fws.gov/nativeamerican/contact.html>

**14. Q: Can National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed species be included in proposals?**

A: Yes and No. Project proposals may be submitted for species with which the Service shares joint jurisdiction with NMFS when that proposal would benefit the jointly listed species while it is within the jurisdiction of the Service (e.g., a proposal for beach acquisition that would benefit a jointly listed sea turtle species would be acceptable). Proposals for those species solely under NMFS jurisdiction, or that benefit a shared jurisdiction species only while it is within the jurisdiction of NMFS, will not be considered. This is not to say that a proposal should not point out additional benefits to NMFS listed species when discussing other merits of the proposal, only that these benefits will not contribute to any of the ranking factors.

**15. Q: Must a State or Territory have a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number to apply for these grants?**

A: Yes. On June 27, 2003, 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 number, as necessary. Grant and cooperative agreement applicants (excluding individuals) need to ensure they have a DUNS number. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

**16. Q: Can additional project information, not contained in the written project narrative, be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for consideration after the closing date for submission of proposals?**

A: No. Any and ALL information that the applicant would like to have considered MUST be included in the written proposal. Project applicants may have discussions with Service personnel to clarify information that is contained in the written proposal. However, any new or additional information will not be considered. The proposal must be a stand-alone document.