

FY 2009 CHALLENGE COST SHARE PROPOSAL

Station: Lostwood Wetland Management District Complex Date: October 22, 2008
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Project Leader Signature: David Gillund // Doug Leschisin acting

Project Title: Threatened Piping Plover protection and monitoring in the Alkali Lakes Core Area of North Dakota and Montana – a cooperative recovery effort.

Project Description: Each breeding season a team of technicians protects and monitors reproduction of threatened piping plovers over approximately 10,000 square miles, from central North Dakota through eastern Montana, within four National Wildlife Refuges, five Wetland Management Districts, one Nature Conservancy Preserve, and on lands owned privately by more than 80 farmers and ranchers. The piping plover was listed as a “threatened” species in the northern Great Plains states in 1985, and this is the major breeding area in the Great Plains region. More than 400 pairs of plovers nested here in 2008. Since the mid-1990s, this cooperative effort has involved surveying alkali lakes for breeding piping plovers, locating nests, applying predator exclosures to protect nests, and monitoring subsequent reproductive success. With these efforts, reproduction has been raised to a level needed to stabilize the declining population. This success would not be possible without the long history of cooperation and positive relations of 80+ plover landowners who support the program by allowing access to their plover lakes. It is hoped that the nest protection efforts, along with habitat improvement projects underway, will allow the piping plover population to reach levels to remove them from the “threatened” species list.

This project would provide funding for three biological technicians on this team. Technician funding historically came from a cooperative pooling of sources, and 11 were hired annually for work throughout the core area. The Piping Plover Coordinator at the Lostwood NWR Complex provides the lead. In 2009, due to Endangered Species (Section 6) funding cuts for plover work, three technicians are unfunded. The Nature Conservancy is generously offering in-kind service, salary, and equipment to the project if CCS money can match the technician salaries.

Funding Proposal: FWS Request \$ 16,608

PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

1) The Nature Conservancy, Cross Ranch/Williams Preserve: Total \$15,608
Technician Salary: \$6899 Technician Overtime \$247
Supervisor’s Salary: \$1875 Truck and gas: \$3686
Overhead: \$2901

2) Private Landowners (80+) in ND & MT: In-kind assistance with site access and local knowledge for technicians. 50 hrs x \$20/hr = \$1000

Special Considerations: There is no higher responsibility than to protect and recover Threatened and Endangered Species such as piping plovers. The plover technician salaries requested here were previously funded by Region 6 Endangered Species monies (Section 6 - MT). Starting in 2008, these monies were diverted entirely to wolf recovery. A new RONS proposal for plover support will be submitted and hopefully funded in 2010, but there is a dire need to fund 2009 technicians. Project Leaders from the following stations have supported this project and contributed station funds: ND ES, Medicine Lake NWR and WMD, Audubon NWR and WMD, Long Lake NWR and WMD, Crosby WMD, Lostwood NWR and WMD.