

# News Release



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## **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SEEKS PROPOSALS FROM STATES FOR 2009 ENDANGERED SPECIES GRANTS**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking proposals from states and U.S. territories interested in obtaining federal grant assistance to acquire land or conduct planning for endangered species conservation efforts. For fiscal year 2010, the President's budget request for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund includes approximately \$100 million in grant funding for conservation planning activities and habitat acquisition benefitting federally protected species. Proposals must be submitted to the appropriate Service Regional Offices by August 19, 2009.

"These grants are among the Service's most important tools to build partnerships with the States," said Acting Service Director Rowan Gould. "They provide states and territories with vital funding, enabling them to work with local communities and private landowners to protect habitat and conserve threatened and endangered species."

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund is authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act and provides grants to states and territories to support participation in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for species on the federal list of threatened and endangered species, as well as for species that are either candidates or have been proposed for listing.

The Service is seeking proposals under the following three Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund categories:

**Recovery Land Acquisition Grants** – These grants provide funds to states and territories for acquisition of threatened and endangered species habitat in support of approved and draft species recovery plans. Acquiring habitat in order to secure long term protection is often the critical element in a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species. One example from last year's recipients include a grant for \$840,593 to acquire a 1,242-acre tract that protects the ocelot, jaguarundi, northern aplomado falcon, and several state-protected species in Cameron County, Texas.

**Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants** – This category provides funds to states and territories to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). The purpose of an HCP is to ensure adequate protection of suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species, while at the same time providing for economic growth and development. These grants provide support for baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities. For instance, the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas received a total of \$1,080,990 last year to assist in the development of a landscape level, multi-species HCP designed to avoid and minimize impacts to endangered and threatened species associated with wind energy development.

**HCP Land Acquisition Grants** – These grants provide funds to states and territories to acquire land associated with approved HCPs. They do not fund mitigation required of an HCP permittee, but rather, support acquisitions by the state or local governments of habitat that complement actions associated with the HCP. For example, one of last year's recipients was the state of Wisconsin, which received \$1.5 million to acquire 1,110 acres in the Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area to permanently protect habitat for the Karner blue butterfly, which provided substantial benefits for the recovery efforts of the Glacial Lake Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Unit.

For the first time, through this notice for fiscal year 2010, the Service is incorporating aspects of climate change when evaluating the proposals submitted through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The Service will look at criteria that address concerns and methodological approaches to the emerging science and potential impacts of climate change on listed species.

By law, the state or territory must have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of Interior and contribute 25 percent of the estimated program costs of approved projects, or 10 percent when two or more states or territories undertake a joint project. The grants are expected to be awarded soon after federal appropriations are provided for fiscal year 2010.

For more information about these grants and grant application requirements contact: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Consultation, Habitat Conservation Planning, Recovery and State Grants, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203, 703-358-2106. Information also can be accessed at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/>.

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund is identified in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance as number 15.615.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.