

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Southwest Region 2, New Mexico

Burn Area Rehabilitation (BAR)

This is notice of a request for proposals on Burn Area Rehabilitation (BAR) activities on private lands adjoining Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in Socorro County, New Mexico. A managing cooperator is needed for project activities and a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program <http://ecos.fws.gov/partners>. The project activities are outlined in this announcement and individual specifications can be found in the Marcial Fire Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan on the Refuge web site:

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/newmex/bosque/index.html>. Partial funding for BAR activities was awarded to the Refuge and to a managing cooperator for the private lands in Federal fiscal year 2007. The activities in this announcement are a continuation of what was done in 2007. Proposals for this announcement need to be submitted with activities designated as phase I-Federal fiscal year 2008 (FY08) and phase II-Federal fiscal year 2009 (FY09)-if funds are available.

BAR FUNDING AUTHORITY

BAR activity is an integral part of wildfire incidents, and the Department of the Interior has made it a priority to repair or improve lands damaged by wildland fire and to rehabilitate or establish healthy, stable ecosystems in the burned areas. (Department of the Interior BAR policies are found in the Department of the Interior (620DM3) policy documents and are available on the Department of the Interior Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation website. <http://fire.r9.fws.gov/ifcc/Esr/home.htm>)

Through the Branch of Fire Management, the Service provides BAR funds to National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) for non-emergency activities and treatments that are compatible with approved unit management plans and can be accomplished within 3 years of wildfire containment. The Wyden Amendment (16 U.S.C. 1011(a) as amended) (www.blm.gov/nhp/eoia/wo/fy00/im2000-179c.pdf) provides the authority by which the Service may consider funding work on private land that will have a benefit to NWRs. The Wyden Amendment is a law that provides the Service the authority to enter into watershed restoration and enhancement agreements (i.e., cooperative agreements) with private landowners such as Tribal, State, local governments, and private or nonprofit entities for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and other resources on public or private land and the reduction of risk from natural disaster where public safety is threatened that benefit these resources on NWRs within the watershed.

FIRE BACKGROUND and NEEDED TREATMENTS

The Marcial Fire ignited on May 3, 2006 near the historic town-site of San Marcial, New Mexico. It was controlled on May 11 after 4,857 acres burned within the historic floodplain of the Rio Grande in rural Socorro County. Land ownership is a mix of public and private, with large portions managed by the Refuge, New Mexico Ranch Properties, and other land-owners.

The fire burned a mosaic of non-native and native floodplain forest (bosque) vegetation. Overstory vegetation at the burn site was dominated by non-native saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) with large patches of native Rio Grande cottonwood (*Populus deltoides* var. *wislenzii*), and Goodding's willow (*Salix gooddingii*). Understory vegetation was dominated by native willows (*Salix exigua*), honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), and other native and non-native shrubs, forbs, and grasses.

The general area contains or is adjacent to Critical Habitat and/or known nesting areas for two federally-listed Endangered species; the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax trailii extimus*) (SWFL) and the Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) (*Hybognathus amarus*). The Refuge implements comprehensive maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration to habitat for these species, including converting non-native saltcedar and Russian olive stands to native riparian-wetland habitat. The SWFL Critical Habitat near the Refuge is immediately adjacent to the Marcial Fire burned area and the SWFL likely utilized habitat within the burned area. The RGSM is present in the Rio Grande adjacent to the entire project area, although habitat for this species was likely not adversely affected.

The greatest post-fire threats to resources are:

- Continued exotic saltcedar (a Class C noxious weed) resprouting, seeding, and invasion within burned area and to adjacent habitat.
- Increased cover and density of exotic species and noxious weeds within the burned area and adjacent Critical Habitat for the SWFL. Two New Mexico Class-A noxious weeds, Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*) and perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) are present and spreading on and off the Refuge. Other species such as camelthorn (*Alhagi pseudalhagi*) and Russian olive are also present and may invade newly exposed soils if not actively monitored and promptly treated.

REHABILITATION OBJECTIVES

- Control re-growth and spread of invasive, noxious, and exotic species, particularly saltcedar, in order to mitigate future threats to Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate species, and important watershed and wildlife resources.
- Rehabilitate native vegetation that is more suitable for Threatened and Endangered species, wildlife, watershed and ecosystem function, and less prone to wildfire impacts.

- Collect and evaluate current site condition data to inform future planning for rehabilitation alternatives to enhance cost efficient and successful rehabilitation treatments.

Recommended BAR activities and treatments for the Marcial Fire on the Refuge and a portion of the adjacent private lands include the following:

- Complete Environmental Compliance on non-federal acreage included in this proposal.
- Herbicide treatment of exotic and noxious weeds in priority areas where resprouting is prevalent.
- Root plow, rake, pile and burn salt cedar in priority areas on the Refuge and private lands where resprouting is prevalent.
- Monitor and quantify invasive exotic species post-fire response in burned area to guide subsequent rehabilitation treatments.
- Perform Rehabilitation Planning on the Refuge and private lands including;
 - Measure and map soil salinity over the burned area.
 - Perform high resolution topographic survey.
 - Measure and map groundwater depth over the burned area.
- Plant native tree species to benefit the SWFL in areas determined suitable for pole or trenched plantings on the Refuge and private lands.
- Seed native grasses in areas determined suitable for grass establishment on the Refuge and private lands.

SPECIFIC TASKS TO BE BID ON FOR THIS ANNOUNCEMENT:

- **Chemical (herbicide) treatment of non-native noxious plants**
- **Mechanical treatment of non-native noxious plants**
- **Riparian tree establishment**
- **Xeric grassland establishment**
- **Project monitoring**
- **Project management**

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible funding recipients include:

- Private nonprofit entities or institutions
- Public nonprofit entities or institutions

REQUIREMENTS:

- The project proposal needs to include a SF 424, 424A, and 424B.
- The selected cooperator will be required to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the Service.
- The selected cooperator needs to have the means to enter into an Agreement with the private landowner for the needed access and rehabilitation activities on the private land.
- The selected cooperator will be required to coordinate with the Service's project manager and the private land owner.
- The selected cooperator needs to supply a tax payer identification number (TIN), along with Dunn and Bradstreet registration as a vendor with the Federal Government, CCR Registration, and an ACH form for electronic transfer of funds.
- The funds are reimburseable.
- Project activity is according to the Marcial Fire Burned Area rehabilitation Plan.
- Environmental compliance must be met before project activity commences.

CONTENT OF BID:

- 1. Name of private or public not-for-profit entity.**
- 2. Primary contact (name, title, mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail address).**
- 3. Detailed budget for each task (list details such as labor costs (staff and wages), vehicles, fuel, equipment, supplies, materials, matching funds, in-kind contributions and indirect costs.**
- 4. Project activities specified as Phase-I activities and Phase-II activities.**
- 5. List of herbicides and application procedure to be used.**
- 6. Estimated period of performance.**

REVIEW and SELECTION PROCESS:

- Proposals will be reviewed by the Service's Partners Program and Bosque del Apache project managers.
- The contact person for the selected proposal will be notified by the Service's Partners Program Coordinator to coordinate on the Cooperative Agreement.
- The Service's Division of Contracting and General Services (CGS) will send the contact person the Cooperative Agreement for the signature/acceptance.
- Work can not begin until the Cooperative Agreement is in place and NEPA requirements have been met.

FUNDING OVERVIEW INFORMATION:

Federal Agency: Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Opportunity Title: Partners for Fish and Wildlife/Burn Area Rehabilitation
2008

Opportunity Number: PFW-BAR-08

CFDA Number: 15.631

Estimated dollar request: Phase-I activities: \$413,675 / Phase-II activities: \$400,000.
Awards and amendments are dependent on available funds.

Cost-sharing or matching: yes, 10%

Partners: Encouraged.

Limitations: Project activity can not begin until Cooperative Agreement
is in place with the Service, Agreement is in place with the
private land owner, and NEPA requirements have been
met. Project activity and location is according to Marcial
Fire BAR Plan. Work activity is for Phase-I Federal fiscal
year 08 and Phase-II Federal fiscal year 09, if funds are
available, (unless dictated differently by plant phenology).

Deadline for submitting: Midnight April 5, 2008

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Submit proposals on www.Grants.gov or send via U.S. Post, Federal Express, fax, or e-mail to:

Nancy Baczek
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2105 Osuna Road NE
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Please contact Nancy Baczek if you have any questions or need additional information.