United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

In Reply Refer To
FWS/WSFR/POP: 068585

AUG 17 2018

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Assistant Director, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

Subject: Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program – Fiscal Year 2018

This memorandum seeks your review and approval of awards for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Competitive State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program.

The purpose of the SWG Program is to provide wildlife conservation grants to States for the development and implementation of programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitats, including species that are not hunted or fished. The SWG Program has been funded annually since 2001 through appropriations of Congress.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) recommends fully funding 16 projects (see Attachment 1).

WSFR received 19 eligible applications from 15 States and a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies in response to the published funding opportunity (see Attachment 2). A national panel consisting of Service Regional SWG Program managers scored and ranked the applications.

The total FY 2018 funds available for the Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program are $6,607,192. The awarded Federal funds for these proposals will be matched by over $3 million in non-Federal funds. This will result in more than $9.6 million to be expended for projects that conserve and protect species of greatest conservation need and their habitats, as described and included in these States' Wildlife Action Plans.

If you have questions, please contact Ms. Penny Bartnicki, Acting Chief, Division of Policy and Programs, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, at (703) 358-1783.

Approved: James W. Kurth
Deputy Director

Date: 8/21/2018

Attachment

Director

Attachment 1 FY 2018 State Wildlife Grant Competitive Program Recommended Projects

Region	Lead State	Project Title	SWG Federal Share	Non-Federal Match	Total Project Costs
1	Hawai'i	Hawai'ian Picture-Wing Fly Habitat Enhancement and Reintroduction	$246,255	$86,828	$333,083
1	Hawai'i	Kiwikiu Recovery: Restoration and Reintroduction on Maui Island	$249,993	$88,641	$338,634
1	Hawai'i	Reintroduction of Four Endangered Tree-Snail Species in the Ko'olau Mountai	$249,441	$87,797	$337,238
1	Oregon	Adaptive Management and Conservation of Mesocarnivores	$292,818	$101,268	$394,086
1	Washington	Advancing Northern Leopard Frog Recovery	$500,000	$348,307	$848,307
3	Iowa	Prairie Conservation for Pollinators	$495,572	$264,334	$759,906
3	Michigan	Adaptive Management of Grassland and Savanna Habitats	$500,000	$175,972	$675,972
3	Minnesota	Spectaclecase Mussels in The Upper Mississippi River	$374,913	$151,050	$525,963
3	Ohio	Status Assessment for Blanding's Turtles in Michigan and Ohio	$500,000	$180,220	$680,220
3	Wisconsin	Partnering for Pollinators in the Driftless Area	$500,000	$302,153	$802,153
4	Georgia	Multistate Sandhills/Upland Longleaf Ecological Restoration Project	$407,500	$185,774	$593,274
4	Tennessee	Threat of *Bsal* to Species of Greatest Conservation Need	$499,167	$334,690	$833,857
5	Pennsylvania	Recovery of the Chesapeake Logperch	$499,995	$239,524	$739,519
5	Pennsylvania	Identifying Landscape-Scale Habitats Using Nanotag Technology	$497,929	$230,342	$728,271
6	Nebraska	Strategic Bat Conservation and Recovery in Nebraska and Wyoming	$490,000	$273,850	$763,850
8	Nevada	Conservation Implementation for the Relict Leopard Frog	$204,660	$68,220	$272,880
		Totals	**$6,508,243**	**$3,118,970**	**$9,627,213**

Summaries of Proposed Projects

Competitive State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program, Fiscal Year 2018
Total Amount Available: $6,607,192

Recommended for Funding (16 projects):

Region 1

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Hawai'ian Picture-Wing Fly Habitat Enhancement and Reintroduction on O'ahu Island
State(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources requests funding to conserve three picture-wing fly species of greatest conservation need endemic to the Island of O'ahu. Two of the targeted flies are currently listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the other targeted fly is rare and may require listing in the future unless conservation actions are implemented. Each of these species relies on plant species that are also rare as a result of browsing by introduced ungulates and competition from invasive plant species. The agency will help stabilize and recover the few remaining populations of the three flies within designated conservation areas through habitat enhancement, restoration of host plants, and laboratory rearing and reintroductions. The agency will also co-maintain laboratory populations of the three fly species at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa to provide a genetic safety net for the species into the future while the agency and its partners assess the effectiveness of planned management actions.

Federal Funds Requested: $246,255; **Non-Federal Match:** $86,828

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Kiwikiu Recovery: Restoration and Reintroduction on Maui Island
State(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: The Kiwikiu or Maui parrotbill is a federally-endangered honeycreeper endemic to the Island of Maui that is also identified as a species of greatest conservation need in Hawaii's State Wildlife Action Plan. The current population is estimated at less than 300 individuals and declining due to habitat destruction, depredation by non-native mammals, and introduced avian diseases. The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources seeks to establish a second population of Kiwikiu in a State natural area reserve that is within a portion of their historical range, a step that is critical to reduce the risk of extinction of the species. In doing so, the agency expects to increase Kiwikiu population numbers and range, gather data on Kiwikiu behavior, reproduction and management, and share collected data with other agencies concerned with recovery of the species, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service).

Federal Funds requested: $249,993; **Non-Federal Match:** $88,641

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Reintroduction of Four Endangered Tree-Snail Species in the Ko'olau Mountains of Oahu Island
State(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: Over the past two years on the Island of Oahu, the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources and partners have observed the extirpation of many of the endangered land snail species in the genus *Achatinella* from across the Ko'olau and Wai'anae Mountains, as an invasive predatory snail penetrates into the most remote native forests. The agency will use habitat suitability modeling to select sites within existing conservation areas for the reintroduction of the four snail species identified and described in Hawai'i's Wildlife Action Plan. Once a suitable site has been selected, agency biologists will construct a predator-proof fence capable of accommodating all four targeted species. In addition, the agency will use demographic modeling to achieve maximum reproductive efficiency for captive populations of the snails, and will ultimately release and monitor up to 200 snails of each of the four species into the protected habitat.

Federal Funds requested: $249,441; **Non-Federal Match:** $87,797

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Title: Adaptive Management and Conservation of Mesocarnivores in a Landscape of Working Forests and Mixed-Severity Wildfire
State(s): Oregon, California

Project Summary: The Oregon and California Departments of Fish and Wildlife will work cooperatively with university partners, the Service, the U.S. Forest Service and private industry groups to investigate possible explanations for observed decreases in fisher density in post-fire landscapes. The partners hypothesize that fisher populations decrease in response to reductions in canopy cover associated with mixed-severity wildfire, post-wildfire salvage logging, decreases in prey occupancy, and increases in predator and competitor occupancy. Results will inform decision-support tools for land managers and enable Federal and private-industry stakeholders to tailor fuels management, fire suppression, and post-fire harvest for maximum benefit to fisher and other mesocarnivores, while also maximizing timber harvest yields.

Federal Funds requested: $292,818; **Non-Federal Match:** $101,268

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Title: Advancing Northern Leopard Frog Recovery in Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia through Reintroduction and Habitat Management
State(s): Washington, Idaho

Project Summary: Although northern leopard frog is common in parts of the United States and Canada, many other populations have declined, especially in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana where the species is no longer extant in most localities where it historically

occurred. Fish and wildlife agencies in Washington and Idaho and a partnering agency in Canada will implement priority recovery actions designed to preserve the last populations of the frog and examine the feasibility of reintroducing it to northern Idaho where the species has been extirpated. Conservation actions will include reintroduction, enhancing habitat conditions and ameliorating specific threats. These proactive conservation activities are expected to help prevent the need to list western populations of the northern leopard frog under the ESA in the event the observed declines continue.

Federal Funds requested: $500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** $348,307

Region 3

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Title: Prairie Conservation for Pollinators
State(s): Iowa, Minnesota

Project Summary: Tallgrass prairie ecosystems continue to be threatened by competing land uses despite increased recognition of their importance to declining pollinators and grassland birds. To address this and other threats, the Iowa and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources will restore and diversify native prairies in the intensively row-cropped landscape of northern Iowa and southwestern Minnesota. The project focuses on creating new habitat for prairie-associated pollinator and bird species as well as managing existing habitats through various methods. The partners will enhance habitat for the monarch butterfly and the regal fritillary, species that are under review by the Service for listing pursuant to the ESA. The partners have determined these iconic species are limited by availability of their larval hostplants, which require restoration and management as detailed in this proposal. The agencies will also partner with Iowa State University in an effort to identify best practices and measure impacts of conservation activities on prairie communities.

Federal Funds requested: $495,572; **Non-Federal Match**: $264,334

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Title: Adaptive Management of Grassland and Savanna Habitats in Michigan and Ohio for Species of Greatest Conservation Need
State(s): Michigan, Ohio

Project Summary: A significant threat to sensitive and declining grassland species in the upper Midwest is loss, degradation, and fragmentation of habitat. Michigan and Ohio Departments of Natural Resources will restore and enhance at least 1,000 acres of grassland, prairie, and savanna habitat to benefit the frosted elfin butterfly as well as several other declining or at-risk species. Although the frosted elfin is widespread in the eastern United States, it has more state-level listings than any other non-federally listed species—eleven in total—which is indicative of its rarity. Proactive conservation to protect and enhance its habitat is likely to be a cost-effective measure helping avoid potential future listing under the ESA. The partners will implement habitat

management actions on public and private land in Michigan and Ohio, and establish a long-term monitoring program to measure effects of habitat management activities.

Federal Funds requested: $500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** $175,972

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Title: Spectaclecase Mussels in The Upper Mississippi River: Current Status And Steps To Accelerate Recovery
State(s): Minnesota, Wisconsin

Project Summary: Freshwater mussels filter and clean vast volumes of water and cycle nutrients that form the basis for aquatic food webs on which many other species rely. They are also dramatically declining in North America: 30 mussel species are extinct and more than half of remaining species are considered endangered, threatened, or vulnerable. The partnering agencies will evaluate population status and characterize habitats of the federally-endangered spectaclecase mussel, use fishery data to identify distributions and abundance of host fishes, and evaluate new methods to improve lab culture and propagation success. Results of these investigations will help guide completion and implementation of a spectaclecase propagation and reintroduction plan. The project will also be useful to the Service by providing key information on salamander mussel, a species now under review for Federal listing.

Federal Funds Requested: $374,913; **Non-Federal Match:** $151,050

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Title: Status Assessment for Blanding's Turtles in Michigan and Ohio
State(s): Ohio, Michigan

Project Summary: Blanding’s turtles are of conservation concern throughout their range in the United States and Canada and have State conservation status in 14 of the 15 States in which they occur. The species has been petitioned for Federal listing under the ESA. Recently, many States have initiated Blanding’s turtle monitoring and conservation programs. To contribute to this large-scale effort, Ohio and Michigan Departments of Natural Resources will engage with university researchers to assess the distribution of Blanding’s turtles in the two States utilizing field surveys and genetic analyses. Relying on collected data, the conservation partnership will develop spatially explicit models to inform and prioritize future management efforts. The partners’ overall goal is to determine the status of Blanding’s turtles in Michigan and Ohio and identify high-priority sites to implement future conservation and management actions to protect and restore them. These efforts are likely to contribute key information to the Service that would inform any future listing decisions for Blanding’s turtle.

Federal Funds Requested: $500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** $180,220

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Title: Partnering for Pollinators in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin and Minnesota
State(s): Wisconsin, Minnesota

Project Summary: The ancient Driftless Area—a hilly region that was never covered by glaciers—supports a diversity of plants and animals unique to the Upper Midwest. Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources will expand upon a successful partnership that has resulted in restoration of over 13,000 acres of public and private lands for the benefit of species in greatest need of conservation support. The partners will restore habitats on public lands and provide technical assistance to private landowners to implement voluntary restoration activities on their lands. Among a suite of benefiting species are rusty patched bumblebee, listed as endangered under the ESA in 2017 and regal fritillary, a butterfly that is currently under review by the Service for listing. Because private lands make up the majority of the Driftless Area, they are critical to any regional planning and conservation management for these and other at-risk species. This conservation partnership builds trust with landowners and rural communities by supporting voluntary efforts of citizens to protect and restore the natural heritage of this region.

Federal Funds requested: $500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** $302,153

Region 4

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Title: Multistate Sandhills/Upland Longleaf Ecological Restoration Project (Phase 4)
State(s): Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina

Project Summary: The longleaf pine ecosystem once covered the southeastern United States from Virginia to Texas and remaining longleaf pine habitats have been identified as high priorities for conservation in the partnering agencies' Wildlife Action Plans. The gopher tortoise, a keystone species that relies on this ecosystem, provides refuge for over 300 species of invertebrates and a number of rare vertebrate species. The gopher tortoise is federally threatened in the western portion of its range. In the eastern part of its range the Service determined gopher tortoise, a candidate species, to be "warranted but precluded" by other priorities. The partners will implement prescribed fire, native plant restoration, and related conservation actions that are expected to contribute significantly toward a decision not to list the species in its eastern range. The project is also expected to benefit eastern indigo snake, a threatened species, which is known to utilize the burrows of gopher tortoise.

Federal Funds Requested: $407,500; **Non-Federal Match:** $185,774

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Title: Threat of *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (*Bsal*) to Species of Greatest Conservation Need and Proactive Development of Disease Management Strategies

State(s): Tennessee, California, Delaware, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, Washington

Project Summary: Emerging infectious diseases are identified in a majority of State Wildlife Action Plans as a serious threat to the conservation of biodiversity, including the potential threat of *Bsal* in the United States. *Bsal* is a fungus responsible for precipitous declines in some European salamander populations, and it is pathogenic to salamanders native to the United States. The fungus has been detected in internationally traded amphibians. Infection in wild salamander populations in this country could lead to similar declines, and an abrupt increase in petitions for listing species under the ESA. State agency and university partners will model and map the risk of *Bsal* to nearly 40 sensitive species. The team will also test the effectiveness of several adaptive disease management strategies, including manipulation of salamander densities, use of fungicides, and release of captive-bred animals. By taking proactive measures now, States and their partners may be able to minimize this emerging threat and ensure species like striped newt, a candidate for listing under the ESA, are protected while maintaining State agency management authority for such species.

Federal Funds Requested: $499,167; **Non-Federal Match:** $334,690

Region 5

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Title: Recovery of the Chesapeake Logperch
State(s): Pennsylvania, Maryland

Project Summary: The Chesapeake logperch is a native darter that has lost an estimated 70 percent of its historic range, and is considered extirpated from the Potomac River. The species is currently under review for potential listing under the ESA and is a priority species for conservation as described in the partnering States' Wildlife Action Plans. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources will determine life history, behavior, and habitat characteristics of this species and identify suitability of release sites. Partners will experiment with various breeding and incubation techniques to develop a successful captive breeding regimen and propagate stocks for release in pools impounded by the Susquehanna River's Holtwood and Safe Harbor dams and their tributaries. Maryland Department of Natural Resources will develop a Conservation Action Plan for Chesapeake logperch in that State. The partners anticipate these efforts will result in the reoccupation of the entire known range of this species in the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, potentially providing justification to preclude the listing of this darter.

Federal Funds requested: $499,995; **Non-Federal Match:** $239,524

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Title: Overcoming Geographic and Temporal Barriers to Identifying Landscape-Scale Habitat Use of Multiple Species in the Mid-Atlantic Region Using Nanotag Technology

State(s): Pennsylvania, Maryland

Project Summary: The Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources along with eight partnering organizations will employ automated radio telemetry technology to document the regional movements of species of greatest conservation need. By adding new receiver stations to the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, partners will be able to collect data on bird migrations and post-breeding dispersal movements within one of the most important inland bird migration corridors in North America. Using nanotags attached to captured animals, the partners will track large-scale movements of high-priority at-risk birds and bats identified in the two States' Wildlife Action Plans. Key data necessary for cost-effective management of a suite of species, including the ESA listed northern long-eared bat and declining rusty blackbird, will be acquired and analyzed. The information obtained through this project will inform agency habitat management and other decision-making, helping ensure the highest value habitats of targeted species are protected and enhanced.

Federal Funds requested: $497,929; **Non-Federal Match:** $230,342

Region 6

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Title: Strategic Bat Conservation and Recovery in Nebraska and Wyoming
State(s): Nebraska, Wyoming

Project Summary: White-nose syndrome, an emergent disease of hibernating bats, has spread from the northeastern United States to 32 States, and studies suggest that hundreds of thousands of bats are killed annually by wind turbines. In Nebraska and Wyoming, there is an opportunity now to improve habitat and bolster the resilience of bat populations by investigating how disease and habitat changes impact bat populations, and by establishing a regional monitoring program that supports local and national action. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will restore over 500 acres of priority habitats, implement the North American Bat Monitoring Protocol in the two States, and use new and existing data to develop decision-support tools for identifying the highest priority habitats for future conservation. Targeted bat species include an ESA listed species, a species on the Service's National Listing Workplan, a petitioned species, and numerous other at-risk bat species.

Federal Funds requested: $490,000; **Non-Federal Match:** $273,850

Region 8

Nevada Department of Wildlife

Title: Conservation Implementation for the Relict Leopard Frog
State(s): Nevada, Arizona, Utah

Project Summary: The rare relict leopard frog is endemic only to the Colorado River and tributary drainages in southern Nevada, northwestern Arizona and southwestern Utah. It was petitioned for listing under the ESA in 2002, and found warranted for listing but precluded due to other listing priorities. Intensive management efforts conducted under a voluntary multi-partner conservation agreement and strategy signed in 2005 contributed to a decision by the Service in 2016 that listing was no longer warranted. The decision, however, indicated that intensive management for the species was expected to continue to ensure the persistence and further enhancement of natural and established populations of the frog. Nevada, Arizona, and Utah fish and wildlife agencies will continue implementation of the strategy, with assistance from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Activities include site surveys, mark-recapture, establishment of one or more populations within the frog's historical range in Utah, assessment of ongoing translocation efforts, and disease detection. These proactive efforts will help ensure the partnering State agencies continue to maintain management authority for relict leopard frog.

Federal Funds requested: $204,660; **Non-Federal Match:** $68,220