

State Wildlife Grants Competitive Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2011

Notice of Availability of Grants and Request for Applications

Program Overview Information

Federal Agency Name:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

Funding Opportunity Title:

State Wildlife Grants Competitive Grant Program

Announcement Type:

Announcement of availability of grants for fiscal year (FY) 2011 and request for applications.

Funding Opportunity Number: DOI-FWS-WSFR-SWGCOMP11

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.634

Dates: Hard copy applications or electronic applications submitted by mail are due to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Regional Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) Office by December 15, 2010, 4:00 p.m. local time. Electronic applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accepted up until December 15, 2010, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. However, we recommend that you submit electronic applications through Grants.gov by December 13, 2010 to allow for any unforeseen technical complications. We will not consider applications received after the specified time December 15, 2010. We expect to make the announcement of awards before June 2011.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Since 2001, the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) mandatory program has awarded grants for “the development and implementation of programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat, including species that are not hunted or fished...” To participate in the SWG program and as directed by Congress, each State, Commonwealth, territory, and the District of Columbia (State) developed a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan or State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) for review and approval by the Service; all SWAPs were submitted to the Service by October 2005 and approved.

Each SWAP identifies species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) that occur in a State and the habitats needed to conserve them. In addition, the SWAPs provide detailed information on issues affecting SGCN and their habitats and conservation actions and strategies to address these issues.

Congress annually appropriates funds for the SWG mandatory program to support implementation of the SWAPs. The funds are apportioned by the Service to State fish and wildlife agencies through a formula based on population and geographic area.

More information about the SWG Program is on the web at:
<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/SWG.htm>.

Congress established the SWG Competitive Grant Program in 2008 through Public Law 110-161. This nationally competitive program serves to implement the SWAPs by promoting cooperative partnerships.

SWG Competitive Grant Program applications must address: (a) eligible issues identified in Service-approved SWAPs or (b) emerging issues (such as climate change effects on SGCN) that are adequately documented in the grant application and that propose to improve the status of SGCN or their habitats. Funds will be awarded to the highest-scoring applications using the scoring criteria contained in this announcement and awarded based on these criteria, at the discretion of the Service Director. Priority will be given to multistate conservation projects that identify measurable performance results and outcomes.

Please read this announcement carefully prior to applying for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds. Applications that are incomplete or that contain ineligible activities will not be accepted. **We strongly encourage States to coordinate closely with Regional WSFR Staff in the development of applications to assure that applications are complete and eligible for funding.** Contact information is included in Section IV below.

New in FY 2011:

- Budget information may be presented in a similar table to Standard Forms 424A and 424C with cost categories, partners, etc. (Section IV.B.2.(c))
- If you propose a multi-State project, you must detail the Federal and non-Federal share for which each State will be responsible. (Section IV.B.2.(c))
- The Statement of Assurances may be waived if your State agency has a valid approved Statement of Assurances on file with the Service Regional WSFR Office. (Section IV.B.3.)
- There are new requirements for documenting emerging issues, if you propose to address emerging issues in your application. See Section IV. B. 4. c. (Application and Submission Instructions) and Question 8 in Attachment A at the end of this document for the requirements.
- In addition to the requirements for documenting match in third party letters of commitment, for projects with more than one State partner (multi-State project), the letter of commitment from the State partner(s), i.e., besides applicant, must detail that

the activities to which they will contribute are addressed in their own SWAP or are an emerging issue in their own State.

- The application must include a description with appropriate documentation of how the proposed project(s) addresses each of the scoring criteria. (Section IV.B.5.)

II. Award Information:

To date, Congress has not appropriated FY2011 funds for the SWG Competitive Grant Program; however, the WSFR anticipates that approximately \$5,000,000 will be made available based on the FY 2008, 2009, and 2010 Congressional appropriations. If funds are made available, the minimum Federal award will be \$300,000 and the maximum Federal award will be \$1,000,000. SWG Competitive Grant Program applications requesting less than \$300,000 or more than \$1,000,000 in Federal funds will not be evaluated for awards.

Awards are expected to be announced before June 2011, subject to the availability of funds.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The State agency with primary responsibility for fish and wildlife management and conservation in each of the 50 States; the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Marianna Islands; the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa; and the District of Columbia with Service-approved SWAPs are eligible to apply for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds.

B. Cost-Sharing or Matching

For the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the maximum Federal cost share for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds is 75 percent of total grant costs. The Service will waive the 25% non-Federal matching requirement of the total grant cost for the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands up to \$200,000 (48 U.S.C. 1469a (d)).

The overall non-Federal cost share is a factor used in scoring applications. Applicants are encouraged to provide more than the minimum (25%) required non-Federal cost share.

Cost sharing contributions from third parties, e.g., other States, organizations, individuals, or partners, including State partners other than the applicant, must be documented with a signed letter of commitment from an authorized representative of the match provider. The letter of commitment must be included in the application package and must detail the amount of cost sharing funds or value of donated services, equipment, or materials for the application to be eligible. For projects with more than one State partner (a multi-State project), the letter of commitment from the State partner(s), i.e., besides applicant, must also detail that the activities to which they will contribute are addressed in their own SWAP or are an emerging

issue in their own State. If they will address an emerging issue, it must be documented as required (See Section IV. B. 4. c. (Application and Submission Instructions) and Question 8 in Attachment A at the end of this document for the requirements).

NOTE: The State applicant is responsible for ensuring the full amount of non-Federal cost share listed on the Application for Federal Assistance Form SF 424 regardless of the source.

C. Other

Although only designated State fish and wildlife agencies can apply for and receive grant funds under this program, cooperating with partners is encouraged including partnerships with the Service. The scoring criteria include points for collaborating with Tribes, Federal agencies, other State agencies, local governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private landowners, and others. Note that any contributions from Federal sources cannot be used or counted as non-Federal match and no points are received for partnering with the Service.

IV. Application and Submission Instructions

A. Address to Request and/or Submit Application Package

Potential applicants can receive application forms and other materials necessary to apply for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds by contacting one of the Service’s Regional WSFR Offices.

Application forms are also available through the Grants.gov website and the WSFR toolkit (<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/ToolkitFiles/toolkit.pdf>).

State should send applications by mail (either a paper or electronic file as pdf) to the appropriate Service Regional WSFR Office listed below, or online at Grants.gov. Below is a list of Service Regional WSFR Office contact information:

States, Commonwealths, the District of Columbia, and territories by U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Region	Regional Contact Information
American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Migratory Birds & State Programs WSFRP 911 NE 11 th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181 503-231-6758 nell_fuller@fws.gov
Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program P.O. Box 1306; 500 Gold Avenue, SW

	Albuquerque, NM 87103 505-248-7459 bob_anderson@fws.gov
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building 1 Federal Drive Fort Snelling, MN 55111 612-713-5129 mike_sweet@fws.gov
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 240 Atlanta, GA 30345 404-679-7310 christine_willis@fws.gov
Connecticut, Delaware, the 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 Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035 413-253-8513 dee_blanton@fws.gov
Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 134 Union Blvd., P.O. Box 25486 Denver, Colorado 80225 303-236-8179 connie_young-dubovsky@fws.gov
Alaska	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 1011 East Tudor Road Anchorage, AK 99503 907-786-3631 cliff_schleusner@fws.gov
California and Nevada	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 2800 Cottage Way, W-1729 Sacramento, CA 95825 916-414-6182 jill_wright@fws.gov

B. Content and Form of Final Application

Applications submitted for the SWG Competitive Grant Program must include:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424).
2. Budget Information, i.e., estimated costs to attain the project objectives. Applicants should use (a) Standard Form 424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Projects, (b) Standard Form 424C, Budget Information – Construction Projects, or (c) present the information in a similar table with cost categories, partners, etc. The various activities or components of each project should be clearly identified and broken down by cost and by funding partner(s). This must include donated matching funds, services, equipment, or materials. **New in FY 2011, if you propose a multi-State project, you must detail the Federal and non-Federal share for which each State will be responsible.** Statement of Assurances of compliance with applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Applicants should use either Standard Form 424B, Statement of Assurances – Non-construction Projects or Standard Form 424D, Statement of Assurances – Construction Projects. This form may be waived if your State agency has a valid approved Statement of Assurances on file with the Service Regional WSFR Office.
4. A project statement of no more than 20 pages (not including forms, budgets, or letters of commitment). It should include:
 - a. The need for the proposed project;
 - b. Discrete, quantifiable, and verifiable objectives to be accomplished during a specific time period.
 - i. **New in FY 2011, the following requirements for documenting emerging issues must be met if you propose to address an emerging issue in your application:**
 - (1) Describe the emerging issue fully by identifying the wildlife species or habitats that would benefit from the proposed action;
 - (2) Explain why it is an emerging issue; and
 - (3) Commit the State to monitoring the effectiveness of the completed action so the State can adaptively manage future activities.

The application must include a commitment letter that the director of the State fish and wildlife agency has signed stating that the next version of the State Plan will include the issue if it remains a priority.

The Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs, or an official in a similar position associated with WSFR, must review the grant application or any future amendments that include emerging issues not in the State Plan before the application is sent to the national review panel for scoring. The Assistant Regional Director must concur that the

issue is an emerging issue, or the application will not be considered for funding. WSFR must retain the original, a paper copy, or an electronic copy of the concurrence or nonconcurrence.

- c. Expected results or benefits from accomplishing the objectives;
 - d. The approach to be used in meeting the objectives, including specific procedures, schedules, key personnel, and cooperators;
 - e. Description of the activity so Service staff can make a preliminary determination of compliance needs for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Sections 7 and 9 of Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA); and
 - f. A project location and map. The applicant should include two maps: a map of the State showing the general location of the project and a map of the project site(s). Other geographic aids, such as aerial photographs, may be attached. Maps and geographic aids will not be counted as part of the 20-page narrative limitation.
5. A description with appropriate documentation of how the proposed project(s) addresses each of the scoring criteria.
- a. We suggest you address each scoring criterion with a brief statement or table.
 - b. It is not necessary to duplicate information that addresses the scoring criteria in your project statement (#4 above).
6. Signed letter(s) of commitment from an authorized representative of each third party match contributor, e.g., other States (besides applicant), organizations, individuals, or partners, including State partners other than the applicant. The letter(s) of commitment must detail the amount of matching funds or value of donated services, equipment, or materials for the application to be eligible. **New in FY 2011: For projects with more than one State partner (multi-State project), the letter of commitment from the State partner(s), i.e., besides applicant, must also detail that the activities to which they will contribute are addressed in their own SWAP or are an emerging issue in their own State. If they will address an emerging issue, it must be documented as required.**

Note: **We strongly encourage States to coordinate closely with Service Regional WSFR Staff in the development and submission of applications to assure that applications are complete and eligible for funding. Applications that are incomplete or that contain ineligible activities will not be accepted.**

There is a 20 page limit for the narrative section of the application package. This includes the project statement (#4 above), information describing the scoring criteria (#5 above), and accompanying materials. Exempt from the page limit are the forms (SF 424, SF 424C, SF 424D), pages of only maps and/or photos, drawings or schematics of the proposed project, letters of commitment (#6 above), resumes or vitae, or literature cited sections. If the narrative section of the application is over the 20 page limit, the reviewer(s) will not consider the information beyond page 20 when reviewing and/or scoring the application. We suggest that your entire

application package not exceed 30 pages, including all forms, maps, photographs, drawings, and letters.

We request you arrange the application package in the following order:

- a. SF 424
- b. SF 424C (or budget table)
- c. SF 424D (as applicable)
- d. project statement (Part of the 20 page limit)
- e. scoring criteria information (Part of the 20 page limit)
- f. maps and/or photos
- g. letters of commitment
- h. other information (resumes or vitae, or literature cited sections.)

Applications should be on or formatted to print (in the case of an electronic application) on 8.5" X 11" paper, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides, and page numbers at the bottom of the page (starting with the project statement). Fonts should be legible, i.e., preferably 12 point Arial, Times New Roman, or other commonly used font. Please do not bind paper copy applications.

In accepting Federal funds, applicants must comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations. Applicants must supply evidence of compliance with NEPA, ESA, NHPA, and other Federal laws if we select the application for award.

D. Submission Dates and Times:

1. Hard copy applications or electronic applications submitted by mail are due to the Service Regional WSFR Office by December 15, 2010, 4:00 p.m. local time or
2. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accepted until December 15, 2010, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

We will not consider applications received after the specified time December 15, 2010.

E. Intergovernmental Review

The SWG Competitive Grant Program is not subject to EO 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

F. Funding Restrictions

The SWG Competitive Grant Program will only award funds for projects proposing to implement eligible actions or strategies identified in Service-approved SWAPs or projects that address

emerging issues (e.g., climate change effects on wildlife) documented in the grant application that propose to improve the status of SGCN or their habitats.

The SWG Competitive Grant Program is funded through annual appropriations by Congress. There is no assurance that it will be authorized this fiscal year or in subsequent fiscal years.

V. Application Review Information

A. Scoring Criteria

I. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY CRITERIA

This set of criteria assesses the ability or readiness of the applicant(s) and partner(s) to accomplish the proposed work. The grant application must demonstrate that the State(s) can complete the proposed actions that are likely to result in improving the status of SGCN or their habitats (19 points total).

1. Grant application describes how the applicant will coordinate all aspects of work including use of common procedures, data sharing, monitoring, and reporting with partners (0-3 points).
2. Grant application identifies dedicated staff or contractors readily available to implement work (0-3 points).
 - a. Emerging issue that is unplanned, unfunded, and unstaffed (0 points); or
 - b. Emerging issue for which applicant or partners have qualified staff to address (1 point); or
 - c. Previously planned actions with qualified staff, but inadequately funded (2 points); or
 - d. Previously planned actions with qualified staff continuing or increasing the level of existing effort (3 points).
3. Grant application describes specific Federal compliance issues which need to be addressed and what the State has done to address them to date. It is suggested that the applicant discuss each issue individually (0-3 points).
4. Grant application describes how Federal compliance requirements can be addressed in a reasonable time and provides an estimated timeline (0-3 points).
 - a. Compliance documentation effort is expected to be extensive (1 point);
 - b. Compliance documentation effort is expected to be moderate (2 points); or
 - c. Compliance documentation effort is expected to be limited (3 points).

5. Non-Federal Match

- a. Overall: For the total amount of match identified in the Budget and the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), the application identifies the percentage of non-Federal match (0-4 points total).
 - i. Non-Federal match is 25 % (0% for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (0 points); or
 - ii. Non-Federal match is > 25 to 30 % (>0 to 5 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (1 point); or
 - iii. Non-Federal match is > 30 to 40 % (>5 to 15 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (2 points); or
 - iv. Non-Federal match is > 40% (>15 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (4 points).
- b. Source: At least 30% of the non-Federal match comes from one or more partners and the match is well documented through a letter of commitment describing the nature (i.e., cash, waived cost, and/or in-kind), the source, and the value of the match. Partners are defined in this criterion as all participating agencies, tribes, businesses, organizations, and persons other than the Service and the State fish and wildlife agency that submits the SWG Competitive Grant Program application. **For projects with more than one State partner (multi-State project), the letter of commitment from the State partner(s), i.e., besides applicant, must also detail that the activities to which they will contribute are addressed in their own SWAP or are an emerging issue in their own State. If they will address an emerging issue, it must be documented as required.** (3 points).

II. TECHNICAL SCORING CRITERIA

This set of criteria assesses the grant application on its direct and immediate benefit to the SGCN, their habitats, and the overall technical merit of the proposed work. The grant application must provide a clear description of how the proposed actions will implement the applicants' SWAP(s). The scoring criteria listed below are organized by sections of the grant application (71 points total).

NEED – This section describes the reason or unique opportunity for completing the proposed actions (28 points total).

1. Grant application clearly describes the need(s) identified in each participating States' SWAP (reference relationship to SWAP, including page numbers or section) or the

need(s) is documented as an emerging issue in the grant application to address a critical or unanticipated need such as a wildlife health/disease or climate change issue (0-3 points).

- a. The need is not clearly linked to any participating State's SWAP or to a documented emerging issue (0 points); or
 - b. The need is clearly described, but not clearly linked to the SWAP for each participating State or to a documented emerging issue (1-2 points); or
 - c. The need is clearly described and linked to the SWAP for each participating State or to a documented emerging issue (3 points).
2. Grant application proposes that each State partner (other than the applicant) will implement priority conservation actions identified in the SWAPs or that each State partner (other than the applicant) will address the emerging issue documented. For this criterion, a State partner may include agencies from other States and is actively conducting work to complete the objectives of the grant application. (3 points per State partner, maximum of 15 points).
3. Grant application directly targets improving the status of SGCN as described in each partners' SWAP (0-5 points).
- a. 1 SGCN (1 point); or
 - b. 2-5 SGCN (2 points); or
 - c. 6-10 SGCN (3 points); or
 - d. 11-15 SGCN (4 points); or
 - e. More than 15 SGCN (5 points).
4. Grant application describes critical geographical location(s) to be improved for SGCN, why they are critical, and is a substantial effort to improve these areas (0-5 points).
- a. Critical for 1 SGCN (1 point); or
 - b. Critical for 2-5 SGCN (2 points); or
 - c. Critical for 6-10 SGCN (3 points); or
 - d. Critical for 11-15 SGCN (4 points); or
 - e. Critical for more than 15 SGCN (5 points).

OBJECTIVES – This section describes the accomplishments that will improve the status of SGCN or their habitats (5 points total).

1. Objectives are distinct, obtainable, and quantifiable or verifiable (for example, the number of stream miles, the number of acres of wetlands, or other type(s) of habitat to be restored; the increase in available habitat for SGCN; or the expected percentage increase in a population of one or more SGCN) (0-5 points).

EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS – This section describes how the accomplishment of the objectives will benefit targeted SGCN or their habitats (10 points total).

1. Grant application describes the connections between the proposed conservation actions and the expected short-term benefits for SGCN or their habitats to be achieved within a ten-year period (0-5 points).
2. Grant application describes the connections between the proposed conservation actions and the expected long-term benefits for SGCN or their habitats to be achieved beyond ten years (0-5 points).

APPROACH – This section describes how the State(s) will accomplish and monitor program objectives (28 points total).

1. Grant application describes the specific types of conservation projects/actions that the States and its partners will conduct and provides adequate detail to understand how the States and its partners will implement the project/actions (0-6 points).
 - a. Methods/procedures used in conservation action (1-2 point); and
 - b. Who will implement the practices (1 point); and
 - c. Credentials and training of key project personnel (1 point); and
 - d. Any local, State, or Federal permits needed to undertake the work (1 point); and
 - e. Schedule of work (1 point).
2. Projects/actions involve at least one partner from any one of the following entities: other State agencies in the same State as the applicant; other States; other country, e.g., Canada or Mexico; Tribes; academic institutions, private landowners; nongovernmental organizations; or Federal agencies other than the Service; and at the level of involvement described below (0-4 points).
 - a. Simple involvement by a partner in completing proposed actions (e.g., a letter of support , up to 5% of the total grant costs, or both provided) (1 point); or
 - b. Partner engaged and committed to completing proposed actions (e.g., committing > 5% and up to 15% of the total grant costs with some staff provided) (2 points); or
 - c. Partner engaged and substantively committed to completing proposed actions (e.g., committing >15% and up to 25% of the total grant costs with staff committed to the project/actions) (3 points); or
 - d. Complex and dedicated role of a partner in completing proposed actions (e.g., committing > 25% or more of the total grant costs with staff committed to providing a primary role in completing project/actions) (4 points).
3. Projects/actions are accomplished, in part, on private lands, including lands owned by individuals, private academic institutions, or nongovernmental organizations. Points are awarded on the percentage of the total acres affected (0-5 points).
 - a. Private land component up to 10 % of the total acreage affected (1 point); or
 - b. Private land component > 10% and up to 20% of the total acreage affected (2 points); or

- c. Private land component > 20% and up to 30% of the total acreage affected (3 points); or
 - d. Private land component > 30% and up to 40% of the total acreage affected (4 points); or
 - e. Private land component > 40% of the total acreage affected (5 points).
4. Project actions are conducted on lands owned or managed by other State or local agencies (including academic institutions owned or managed by the State), Federal agencies other than the Service, or Tribes (0 or 4 points).
 - a. There are no project actions that take place on lands owned or managed by these entities (0 points).
 - b. Project actions take place on lands owned or managed by one or more of these entities (4 points).
 5. The grant application describes a monitoring plan that each participating State or partner will use to ensure SGCN and/or habitats are adequately monitored and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of conservation actions and provide for adaptive management (0-5 points).
 - a. One point for describing each of the following items clearly and in sufficient detail:
 - b. Approach for establishing baseline conditions;
 - c. Monitoring procedures and protocols described;
 - d. Performance measures;
 - e. Roles and responsibilities of each partner; and
 - f. Timeframe for monitoring activities.
 6. The grant application describes how performance reports will clearly document monitoring results and how they will be used for adaptive management for improving future efforts (0-4 points). Two points for each of the following:
 - a. Discusses performance measures relative for monitoring progress toward meeting the objectives.
 - b. Discusses a process that will be used to incorporate data into adaptive management decisions.

Total Score Possible = 90

B. Review and Selection Process

Award selection is a three-step process: application acceptance, application scoring, and application selection.

1. Application acceptance - The Service Regional WSFR Offices determine that applications are complete and include eligible projects that are substantial in character and design.

2. Application scoring – Once an application is accepted, the Service Regional WSFR Office sends the application to the Service WSFR Washington Office (WO), which coordinates the review and scoring of the applications. A national review team will review and rank the applications and provide award recommendations to the Assistant Director, WSFR.
3. Application selection - Funding awards will be subject to the final approval of the Service Director.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The awards are expected to be announced before June 2011. Applicants will be notified by the Service Regional WSFR Offices of the process needed to complete the grant award.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

Service Regional WSFR Office will notify successful applicants that they have been selected for award and the remaining process needed to complete the grant award. The Service will also publish a press release announcing the awards.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Compliance with all applicable Federal laws, policies, and regulations, including environmental laws such as the ESA, NEPA, and NHPA must be addressed before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can approve an award.

3. Reporting

Reporting requirements, including general records retention and access requirements, are specified in 43 CFR 12.82. Additional details regarding requirements, guidance, consequences, etc. are available in the document Interim Guidance for Financial and Performance Reporting, located at:

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/subpages/toolkitfiles/intgdrpt.pdf>.

VII. Agency Contacts

The SWG Competitive Grant Program is administered by the Service through the WSFR. National level program information can be obtained by contacting:

Christy Vigfusson
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
Mailstop WSFR-4020

4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
(703) 358-1748
Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov

For project specific information, please contact your Service Regional WSFR Office:

Region 1: Nell Fuller, Nell_Fuller@fws.gov, 503-231-6758

Region 2: Bob Anderson, Bob_Anderson@fws.gov, 505-248-7459

Region 3: Mike Sweet, Mike_Sweet@fws.gov, 612-713-5129

Region 4: Christine Willis, Christine_Willis@fws.gov, 404-679-7310

Region 5: Dee Blanton, Dee_Blanton@fws.gov, 413-253-8513

Region 6: Connie Young-Dubovsky, Connie_Young-Dubovsky@fws.gov, 303-236-8179

Region 7: Cliff Schleusner, Cliff_Schleusner@fws.gov, 907-786-3631

Region 8: Jill Wright, Jill_Wright@fws.gov, 916-978-6182

VIII. Other Information

The Federal government is not bound to financially support any selected project until a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorized representative has approved the award.

OMB Control Number 1018-0109 - PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

The Paperwork Reduction Act requires us to tell you why we are collecting this information, how we will use it, and whether or not you have to respond. We will use the information that we collect to evaluate applications submitted to acquire funding for Clean Vessel Act Grant Program funds. Your response is required to receive funding. A Federal agency 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 an average of 50 hours to complete the application. The average estimated annual burden associated with writing and submitting required performance reports is 6 hours. You may send comments concerning the burden estimates or any aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS 222 ARLSQ, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203.

Attachment A provides additional information for the FY2011 SWG Competitive Grant Program.

Attachment A

Fiscal Year 2011 State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Competitive Grant Program Questions and Answers

Q1. Will grant applications from a single State be considered for funding?

- A. Yes, a single State fish and wildlife agency may apply for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds. However, we encourage partnering with other State agencies, Tribes, Federal agencies, academic institutions, organizations, businesses, or individuals (e.g., private landowners).

Q2. Is there a minimum or maximum Federal share for an application?

- A. The SWG Competitive Grant Program will promote cooperation among States and other partners to address the needs of SGCN and their habitats over a larger landscape. To encourage cooperative ventures, the minimum SWG Competitive Grant Program Federal share of grant application is \$300,000 with a maximum SWG Competitive Grant Program Federal share up to \$1,000,000.

Q3. If Federal funds remain after awarding competitive grants, how will the Service make them available to the States?

- A. Remaining funds will be added to monies appropriated the following fiscal year, if applicable, and used in the next cycle of awards through this competitive program. If subsequent competitive program funds are not authorized, the Service will use the funds as approved by Congress.

Q4. Will the SWG Competitive Grant Program continue in future years?

- A. The SWG Competitive Grant Program is appropriated annually by Congress; there is no assurance that it will be authorized this year or in subsequent years.

Q5. How long are funds available for obligation?

- A. Funds awarded to a selected grant must be obligated with an approved Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) within six months of the notice of selection (as determined by date of publication of the Service press release). Unobligated funds and unused balances on awarded grants will revert to the Service and be added to available funds for the next cycle of awards through this competitive program. The funds will be used for other purposes approved by Congress if competitive program funds are not authorized for the subsequent fiscal year(s).

Q6. Is there a maximum grant period?

- A. Yes. The maximum period for grant applications is three years from the effective date of grant award obligation. If approved by the Regional Service Director or his designee, an extension may be approved through an amendment; however, the grant may be extended no more than an additional two years.

Q7. What are the cost-sharing percentages for this competitive program?

- A. The Federal share for SWG Competitive Grant Program grants may not exceed 75 percent of the total grant cost. Matching requirements are waived for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands up to \$200,000 (48 U.S.C. 1469a. (d)). The non-Federal share may not include Federal funds or Federal in-kind match unless specifically allowed by law.

Q8. How must a project statement document an emerging issue? (NEW IN FY 2011)

- A. We consider emerging issues relevant to species of greatest conservation need or their habitats although they are not included in the Plans.

A project statement must:

(1) Describe the emerging issue fully by identifying the wildlife species or habitats that would benefit from the proposed action;

(2) Explain why it is an emerging issue; and

(3) Commit the State to monitoring the effectiveness of the completed action so the State can adaptively manage future activities.

The project statement must include a commitment letter that the director of the State fish and wildlife agency has signed stating that the next version of the State Plan will include the issue if it remains a priority.

The Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs, or an official in a similar position associated with WSFR, must review grant applications or amendments that include emerging issues not in the State Plan. The Assistant Regional Director must concur that the issue is an emerging issue. WSFR must retain the original, a paper copy, or an electronic copy of the concurrence or nonconcurrence.

Q9. For multistate grant applications, should one State be the project lead and does each State need to contribute a 25% match?

- A. One State should be the lead in submitting the grant application and coordinating most aspects of the grant application including: writing a single project narrative; coordinating work; coordinating monitoring; and writing a final performance report that summarizes overall results with specific data from all participating States.

Each participating State that is an active partner wishing to directly receive grant funds from the Service must submit an Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) to obligate its portion of awarded funds. In addition, each State must prepare and submit individual financial status and performance reports for its portion of the overall project.

For multi-State projects, the overall match must be at least 25%, however, each State may provide more or less than 25%. For States that provide less than a 25% match, they must document at least 25% match on the SF 424 (regardless of the source).

The lead State may also choose to develop a subgrant or a contract with another State.

Q10. What activities are eligible for funding under this program?

- A. 1) Conservation actions such as research, surveys, species and habitat management, land acquisition, facilities development, and monitoring.
- 2) Development of habitat mapping, data management systems, and monitoring protocols.
- 3) Education and law enforcement activities, but only when each comprises a minor portion of a grant project objective, is critical to project success, and specifically addresses a threat or issue identified within the SWAP. "Minor" is considered no more than 10 percent of an individual project cost.

Q11. What are the compliance requirements for activities funded under this program?

- A. States must comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations as a condition of acceptance of Federal funds. In addition to the authorizing legislation, compliance requirements for the SWG Competitive Grant Program include 43 CFR Part 12, 2 CFR 225, OMB Circulars (A-87, A-102, and A-133), ESA, NEPA, NHPA, and other applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Applicants must provide assurance that they will comply with applicable provisions. [Appendix 2, 522 FW 1](#) of the Service Manual provides an assurances checklist for construction grants (SF 424D) and for nonconstruction grants (SF 424B) that States may use to develop a grant application (Service Manual [522 FW 1.3B and C](#) and [523 FW 1](#)).

Q12. Are there additional formatting criteria?

- A. Formatting criteria are included in the “Request for Application.” There are no additional requirements unless an applicant applies via Grants.gov. Those formatting requirements can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/>.

Q13. Where should an applicant submit SWG Competitive Grant Program applications?

- A. Applicants must submit applications to the appropriate Service Regional WSFR Office or to Grants.gov. Service Regional WSFR Office addresses may be found in Section IV. A of the Request for Applications.

Q14. Who recommends grant applications for funding and who announces the upcoming awards?

- A. The Service Director will approve applications for awards. The Service will notify applicants of the selections.

Q15. Once an application is selected for funding, what additional documents must the applicant submit and to whom?

- A. The Service, in cooperation with grantees, must address Federal compliance issues such as the ESA, NEPA, and NHPA prior to approving the application and obligating awarded grant funds. Service Regional WSFR Staff can assist grantees in explaining the procedures and documentation necessary for meeting Federal requirements prior to approval of the Application for Federal Assistance to obligate funds.

Q16. What must be done during the grant period if a change in objectives or approach is needed?

- A. This is a competitive program. Therefore, each grant application is judged to be complete with all costs needed to accomplish the objectives of the application. The Service will have discretion, however, to determine if proposed changes can be accepted if the original objectives will be met and the resulting benefits will be equivalent to those previously described. Otherwise, no changes to costs, objectives, benefits, or approach will be allowed.

If the State(s) cannot complete the grant as approved, the grant will be terminated; all remaining unexpended funds will revert to the Service; the State must submit a final report within 90 days of the termination date. The Service may require that the State(s) repay all expended funds if the final financial status report and the final performance report indicate that no substantive accomplishments were made. In addition, the Service will not accept applications from the grantee to participate in the next two award cycles following the termination date.

Q17. Who has the authority to terminate a grant?

- A. Grants may be terminated by the Service Director or by mutual agreement between the State Director and the Service Regional WSFR Chief. A termination decision by the Service Director is not subject to appeal.