

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR)**

Federal Agency Name:

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

Funding Opportunity Title:

Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program (C-SWG)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.634

Announcement Type:

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2017

Funding Opportunity Number: F17AS00006

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: We are collecting this information in accordance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act, Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law No. 114-113). Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding. We 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 applicants under this program about 37 hours to complete an application. We estimate it will take recipients under this program about 8 hours to complete required reporting and required recordkeeping. All burden estimates include the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather data needed and complete and review the submission. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

Submission Deadline and Other Information: Grant application packages must be submitted at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than 11:59 PM PST on February 3, 2017. The Service recommends that you submit your application early enough to address any unforeseen technical complications. We recommended that you verify that all documents have been received through Grants.gov with your Regional WSFR Office before the deadline. We recommend you also submit via email a single document (PDF format) containing the entire proposal to your Service Regional WSFR Office (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26) prior to the deadline in case there are

problems submitting your application package through Grants.gov. The Service will not consider applications received after the deadline.

Applicants requesting comments or assistance with their applications are encouraged to submit a draft to the Service Regional WSFR Office at least six weeks prior to the due date. Although there is no guarantee that the Regional WSFR Office will provide comments, feedback may include recommendations to improve the application.

Prospective sub-grantees should check with their eligible State agency for any eligibility requirements, application deadlines, or other requirements. If you are not sure which State agency to contact, your Service Regional WSFR Office may be able to assist you.

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

The State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program provides States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and territories (States) Federal grant funds to develop and implement programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitats, including species that are not hunted or fished. Eligible activities include planning and conservation implementation. Planning activities must contribute directly to the development or modification of a State's Wildlife Action Plan (Plan) approved by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Implementation activities are activities that a State carries out to execute their Plan. Priority for use of these funds must be placed on identified species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) and should take into consideration the relative level of funding available for the conservation of these species. Ineligible activities include wildlife education and law enforcement activities, unless the law enforcement or education component is a minor or incidental activity that is considered critical to the success of a project.

States have made tremendous strides in identifying priority species in need of conservation across the United States, and in designing and implementing strategic conservation actions that can conserve and recover them. Although the development and implementation of the Plans represents a historic conservation achievement, Congress and the American people continue to demand conclusive evidence that the SWG Program has measurably impacted populations of targeted species.

The C-SWG Program supports projects that are designed, implemented, and evaluated within an explicit adaptive management framework. Adaptive management in the context of natural resources conservation involves the integration of project design, management, and monitoring to systematically test clearly-defined assumptions in order to adapt and learn. Adaptive management is a form of structured decision-making that requires careful goal setting, identifying management objectives and causal hypotheses, taking action, measuring results,

and evaluating, documenting, interpreting, and sharing outcomes of management actions. Both the Department of the Interior and the Service endorse an adaptive management-based approach to conservation. A variety of guides and other technical resources on the practice of adaptive management are available. For more information, see:

[Strategic Habitat Conservation: Final Report of the National Ecological Assessment Team](#) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey, 2006)

[Adaptive Management: The U.S. Department of the Interior Applications Guide](#) (Williams and Brown, 2012)

[The Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation](#) (The Conservation Measures Partnership, 2013)

[Measuring the Effectiveness of State Wildlife Grants](#) (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, 2011)

With the submission of revised Wildlife Action Plans in 2015 and 2016, the Service is committed to helping States implement their Plans. Although planning projects may still receive C-SWG Program funding, the Service explicitly favors proactive physical conservation strategies that can demonstrate measurable impacts on populations of imperiled species. Such active conservation projects are typically more likely to be competitive, based on criteria described in this NOFO, than projects that do not have the potential to directly impact species or their habitats within the period of performance.

In addition, proposals that address the following Service priorities will receive additional points in scoring (see Section VI.A, Pages 18-22 for information on scoring criteria):

Landscape-Scale Conservation: The Service supports projects that address SGCN conservation at a large landscape scale. To receive full points your proposed project must:

- Demonstrate a collaborative approach to SGCN conservation through a formal decision-making body that involves a broad spectrum of stakeholders across the project area. For example, the project planning and management team includes a Regional conservation association, a Landscape Conservation Cooperative or other multi-State planning entity, and:
- Explicitly describe habitat-population modeling analyses or other tools that led to identification of biological objectives for SGCN across multiple land management jurisdictions, such as States, tribal or private lands, Federal lands, etc. Distinct population objectives for each participating State or jurisdiction should be identified.

Climate Change: The Service supports projects that significantly incorporate climate change considerations in project design. We encourage applications that align proposed conservation actions with recommendations from the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov), or with other regional climate change planning efforts. Proposals should demonstrate significant collaboration with or use of tools produced by entities specializing in climate science for conservation purposes. Examples include projects that involve staff or products from the [Climate Science Centers](#), [Landscape Conservation Cooperatives](#), universities, and non-governmental organizations that specialize in climate science.

Pollinator Conservation: The Service supports State efforts to conserve pollinators. Pollinators may be addressed at any of the major taxonomic ranks; however, the express purpose of this priority is for a State to actively address pollinator needs through direct management of habitat and/or species augmentation. For guidance, see [Pollinators and the State Wildlife Action Plans](#) (The Heinz Center, 2013).

Candidate Species: The Service prioritizes projects targeting SGCN that are also classified as Candidate species by the Service. A current list of Candidate species is published by the Service at <http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/candidate-species.html>. Proposals must demonstrate how proposed direct management activities will help preclude the need for listing the species under the Endangered Species Act.

Additional information about the State Wildlife Grant Program is available at <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/SWG.htm>. If you do not have access to the Internet and would like to receive information by mail, contact the Service point of contact identified below (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26).

II. Award Information

- A. Competitive Grants:** The C-SWG Program is funded through annual appropriations of Congress. There is no assurance that it will be funded this year or in subsequent years. Congress may appropriate an estimated \$5.5 million for the FY 2017 C-SWG Program. The Service requests applications in anticipation of potential funding. WSFR annually awards approximately 12 to 18 grants through the C-SWG Program.

The amount of individual grant awards for C-SWG projects varies. For most applicants proposing a multi-State project, the maximum award is \$500,000 and the minimum award is \$50,000. Only Alaska, Hawaii, and the other insular jurisdictions of the United States may propose projects benefiting a single State; the maximum award for these States when proposing a single-State project is \$250,000 and the minimum award is

\$25,000. For a complete summary of minimum and maximum award limits, please see the Attachment (Q2).

- B. Funding Restrictions:** The Service will only award funds under the C-SWG Program for projects proposing to: (a) implement eligible actions or strategies identified in Service-approved Plans; or, (b) address eligible emerging issues (e.g., climate change effects on wildlife). See Sections 10.13 and 10.14 of the Service's SWG policy chapter for more information on requirements for documenting emerging issues (<http://www.fws.gov/policy/517fw10.pdf>).

In administration of the C-SWG Program, the Service adopts policies described in the Service's policy manual for the non-competitive apportioned State Wildlife Grant Program (for more information see <http://www.fws.gov/policy/517fw10.pdf>), except where such policies may conflict with information contained in this announcement.

III. Eligibility Requirements

- A. Eligible Applicants:** Eligibility is limited to State agencies with lead management responsibility for fish and wildlife resources in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and to the four Associations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies applying on behalf of eligible State agencies. Eligible State agencies must have a Plan that has been revised within the last ten years and has been approved by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or is currently under review by a Regional Review Team (RRT). States that have not submitted a revised Plan to an RRT by the closing date of this competition (February 3, 2017) are ineligible for FY 2017 C-SWG Program funding as a lead State, a participant State, or as a sub-grantee to another State or Association. Associations with 501(c)(3) status must provide a copy of their non-profit status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- B. Partnership Requirement:** For each of the 48 contiguous United States and the District of Columbia, at least two States (or an Association applying on behalf of at least two States) must propose actions that are identified in their approved Plans, and at least one partnering State plus the lead State must be active participants in proposed conservation actions. An active participant is defined as a significant contributor of resources dedicated to completion of project objectives, such as cash, equipment, or staff time. Alaska, Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa are eligible to apply as single States.

Applicants are also encouraged to engage with other partners beyond the minimum partnership requirement. Other partners may include tribes, Federal agencies, other State agencies (in or out of State), local governments or other jurisdictions, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private landowners, industry groups, and international partners.

C. Adaptive Management: States and Associations applying for C-SWG Program funds are encouraged to design and manage projects and programs within an adaptive management framework. The Service utilizes the [Strategic Habitat Conservation framework](#) to improve the agency's ability to define desired biological outcomes and articulate the consequences of site-scale actions on landscape-scale functions; however, other similar frameworks may be used. Key elements of an adaptive management framework in the context of the C-SWG Program include the following:

1. A focus on one or more Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) that enables or facilitates evaluation of outcomes of proposed conservation actions;
2. Documentation of targeted species population baseline (at the project site scale or larger) against which to measure effects of proposed conservation actions;
3. Explicit identification of assumptions or hypotheses such as habitat-population modeling or other science-based methods used to estimate expected species response to proposed conservation actions;
4. Articulation of population-based biological objectives for SGCN at the largest possible spatial scale;
5. Dedication of sufficient resources for monitoring of SGCN, so that theorized changes can be evaluated;
6. Use of a standard, replicable monitoring protocol by all project partners across the targeted landscape; and
7. Development of a data management plan that includes sharing of monitoring results and analysis so that effectiveness of future conservation actions can be improved.

Project ranking criteria incorporate these elements (see Section VI.A, Pages 16-20). Adherence to an adaptive management framework is a factor in selecting projects for funding.

D. DUNS Registration: Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the [Code of Federal Regulations](#) (CFR), Part 25 for more information.

Request a DUNS number online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. U.S.-based entities may also request a DUNS number by telephone by calling the Dun & Bradstreet Government Customer Response Center, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 8 PM CST at the following numbers:

U.S. and U.S Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711

Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1)

For Hearing Impaired Customers Only call: 1-877-807-1679 (TTY Line)

Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

- E. Entity Registration in SAM:** Register in SAM online at <http://www.sam.gov/>. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.
- F. Excluded Entities:** Applicants or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding through the C-SWG Program.
- G. Cost Sharing or Matching:** For the States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, the Federal share of C-SWG Program grants shall not exceed 75 percent of the total cost, i.e. total C-SWG Program funds plus non-Federal matching funds, excluding other Federal funds. According to 48 U.S.C. 1469(a), the Regional Director must waive the first \$200,000 of match requirement for each project from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories of Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. 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.

NOTE: The State or Association applicant identified in your proposal as the designated lead for a multi-State project is accountable for the full amount of non-Federal cost share as detailed in the Form SF-424 for all States and other partners involved in the proposed project.

- H. Letters Authorizing Associations to Apply:** Associations applying on behalf of one or more State agencies with lead management responsibility for fish and wildlife resources

must provide a statement from each such agency authorizing the Association to apply on its behalf. This statement may be provided in a letter signed by the director of the eligible State fish and wildlife agency or included within a letter of commitment as described in Section IV.F, Page 12 below. A State may authorize an Association to apply on its behalf in the current Fiscal Year, in all future Fiscal Years, or both. If a State authorizes an Association to apply on its behalf in all future Fiscal Years, a copy of the letter must be attached to future applications affecting the State(s) on behalf of which it will apply.

- I. **Period of Availability:** The maximum performance period for grants is three years from the effective date of grant award obligation. If approved by the Service Regional Director or his/her designee, an extension may be approved through an amendment; however, the grant may be extended no more than an additional two years.

IV. Application Requirements

You can download the application package from Grants.gov here: https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms_apps_idx.html, searching by CFDA 15.634. You can also download application forms through the WSFR toolkit under "Forms": <http://fawiki.fws.gov/display/WTk/Forms>. If you have trouble accessing the online forms, you can contact one of the Service WSFR Offices (see Section VIII., Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26).

If you have trouble accessing the online forms, you can contact one of the Service WSFR Regional Offices (see Section VIII., Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26). The page limit for the entire application package is 100 pages; failure to limit the application to 100 pages may cause delay, postponement, or rejection of the application.

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain:

- A. **Standard Form (SF) 424:** Submit a completed, signed and dated Application for Federal Assistance form (Standard Form 424) reflecting the funding request in its entirety. Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the "Federal" funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form; enter only the amount being requested under this Program. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the "Other" box. Please submit a scanned version of the SF-424 that has been manually signed and dated by the individual designated in your State with signatory authority for submission of applications to WSFR. Each Service Regional WSFR Office maintains a list of State-authorized signatories. If you are unsure who is authorized to sign the SF-424 for your agency, please contact your Service Regional

WSFR Office (see Section VIII., Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26). Proposals must be signed by the authorized signatory on file in the Service Regional WSFR Office. Applications for Federal Assistance submitted by Associations must be signed by the individual with signatory authority for the organization.

- B. Project Summary:** Submit a brief, 3-5 sentence summary of your proposed project. The project summary is not included in the Project Statement page limit.
- C. Project Statement:** Submit a Project Statement of no more than 15 pages. Include a “roadmap” in table format specifying where each of the scoring criteria is addressed in the narrative. Any narrative response information contained in this table will not be used to score your proposal, so please include in the table only the page(s) or section(s) where relevant criteria response information can be found in your proposal. The roadmap to scoring criteria responses is included in the Project Statement page limit. You may also consider identifying the locations of responses to specific criteria within the Project Statement itself. Your Project Statement must be formatted to fit 8.5” x 11” paper, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and sides and page numbers at the bottom of the page (starting with the project statement). Font should be Calibri or Times New Roman and must be no less than 12 point.

Your project statement must include all of the following elements:

NEED - The need for the proposed project within the purpose of the Program;

1. Identify the SGCN that are the subject of the proposed conservation actions, and describe the need for conservation action(s) to address the species;
2. Provide data and information to document the current status of the selected SGCN as a population baseline, at a spatial scale consistent with the targeted landscape or larger.
3. Include specific reference to each State’s Plan that identifies priority actions for targeted SGCN.

OBJECTIVES - Discrete, quantifiable, and verifiable objectives to be accomplished during a specific time period. Objectives should be expressed in terms of an anticipated increase in the targeted SGCN population at the scale of the project site(s) at a minimum, but you may also include additional habitat-based or other objectives at larger scales. If your project does not involve direct management of habitats or species, demonstrate how your objectives will directly lead to or enable future actions that will benefit populations of targeted SGCN.

APPROACH - The approach or activities to be used in meeting the objectives, including specific procedures, methods, schedules or timelines, key personnel, and cooperators. Provide a description of the proposed actions in sufficient detail so WSFR personnel are able to evaluate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Your approach should address the following elements:

1. Include a description of consistent conservation protocols and procedures with reference to applicable literature as available.
2. Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals, and identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. **Do not attach Resumes or CVs of participating individuals.**
3. Describe how you will use a standard, replicable monitoring regime across the targeted landscape.
4. Describe your data management plan including how and when you will analyze and share monitoring results.
5. Provide an overall project timeline with significant milestones.
6. Describe any relationship between this project and other work funded by Federal grants that is planned, anticipated, or underway.

EXPECTED RESULTS - Expected results or benefits from accomplishing the objectives. Your narrative must include the following elements:

1. Describe the assumptions or hypothesis linking proposed conservation actions to outcomes for targeted SGCN populations, and support the hypothesis with reference to scientific evidence.
2. Describe any tools such as habitat-population models or other science-based methods you used to estimate SGCN population response to proposed conservation actions.

LOCATION - Describe the location(s) of project activities and the expected area(s) of impact resulting from these activities. Identify public and private lands where applicable. Provide maps or other geographic aids. Please include GPS Coordinates in degrees, minutes, and seconds, if available. If specific locations of project activities are unknown at time of application, please provide the targeted county or counties where conservation actions are expected to take place.

D. Budget Information: Complete the Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A) form, Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF 424C) form, or submit the equivalent or greater level of information in another budget format. You may use the SF 424A if your project does not include construction or land acquisition and the SF 424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. The budget forms are available on the Internet at <https://fawiki.fws.gov/display/WTK/Forms>. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and sub-awards are subject to the Federal cost, as applicable to the recipient organization type. The full text of the Federal cost principles is available at [2 CFR 200](#).

Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding on the budget form. For example, enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form.

- E. Budget Justification:** In a separate narrative titled "Budget Justification," explain and justify all requested budget items/costs proposed in the submitted budget and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. The justification for each budget category should be a brief general description of the costs that make up that category, yet provide enough detail to demonstrate that the applicant has a financial plan for implementation of the proposed objectives. For example, under personnel costs include the total number of staff and the various job titles (classifications) anticipated to be charging to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles in [2 CFR 200.407](#) requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost. Also include:
1. In-Kind Match – Include the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to arrive at the total;
 2. Program Income, if any – Include the source, amount, and the requested method of crediting the program income (i.e. deductive or additive);
 3. Useful life – Propose a useful life for each capital improvement with a value greater than \$100,000, and reference the method used to determine it;
 4. The method for allocating costs in multipurpose projects and facilities; and
 5. When applicable, for any organization charging indirect costs, a copy of a current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
- F. Letters of commitment:** Lead States providing matching funds or other resources are not required to submit letters of commitment, unless match is being provided by one or

more partners. Match sources and attributed values from partnering agencies or other partnering entities must be documented in a letter of commitment that is signed by the director of the eligible State agency or another individual with the authority to commit agency funds. Letters must detail the amount of cost sharing funds and/or the value of staff time, donated services, equipment, or materials, and the valuation methodology used to arrive at the total. Letters of commitment from a non-State partner (for example, a non-governmental organization or university) must be signed by the chief financial officer or other individual with authority to commit funds on behalf of the entity.

For multi-State C-SWG projects, the letter(s) of commitment from the partnering State(s) or other partner(s) should also demonstrate that the activities to which they will contribute are included in their Plan. Contributions must be described in detail and explicitly valued. Valuations of matching contributions given in letters of commitment should match figures given in the SF 424, budget and budget narrative. Matching funds or other resources referenced in a letter of commitment that are not explicitly valued may negatively impact scoring of the proposal. Since eligibility requires a partnership of two or more States (except for Alaska, Hawaii and the other U.S. insular jurisdictions), those States subject to this requirement must demonstrate that at least one other State is an active participant in proposed project actions. You may obtain a copy of an example commitment letter meeting these requirements by contacting your Service Regional WFSR Office (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26 for contact information).

G. Required Indirect Cost Statement: Applicants must include one of the following statements and attach to their application any required documentation identified in the applicable statement:

“We are:

1. A [U.S. State government entity or Association] receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. *A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached; or,*
2. A [U.S. State government entity or Association] receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We are required to prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation to support those costs; or,
3. A [U.S. State government entity or Association] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. In the event an award is made, we will submit an

indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made; or,

4. A [U.S. State government entity or Association] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimus* indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in [2 CFR 200, section 200.68](#). We understand that the 10% *de minimus* rate will apply for the life of the award, including any future extensions for time, and that the rate cannot be changed even if we do establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period; or,
5. We are a [U.S. State government entity or Association] that will charge all costs directly.”

Please note:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. Accepting the 10% *de minimus* rate as a condition of award is an approved rate.
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs under the award unallowable.
- Only the indirect costs calculated against the Federal portion of the total direct costs may be charged to the Federal award. Recipients may not charge to their Service award any indirect costs calculated against the portion of total direct costs charged to themselves or charged to any other project partner, Federal and non-Federal alike.
- Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to transfer unallowable indirect costs to amounts budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service’s **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/grants/>.

Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior: The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant

agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
2180 Harvard Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: 916-566-7111
Email: ics@nbc.gov
Internet address: <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/services/finance/indirect-cost-services>

- H. Single Audit Reporting Statements:** As required in [2 CFR 200, Subpart E](#), all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. All applicants must provide a statement regarding whether your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted. Title these statements "**Single Audit Reporting Statements**".
- I. Assurances:** Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available online at <https://fawiki.fws.gov/display/WTK/Forms>. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF 424D)** for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)** for all other projects. Signing this form does not mean that all items on the form are applicable. The form contains language that states that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program.
- J. Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:** Under [Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352](#), an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). Applicants

that have made or agree to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this project and have proposed a project budget exceeding \$100,000 must complete and submit the **SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form. See [43 CFR, Subpart 18.100](#) for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

- K. Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Applicants must notify the Service in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that are known at the time of application or that may arise during the life of this award, in the event an award is made. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's sub-recipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, the applicant's employees, or the applicant's future sub-recipients in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service Project Officer in consultation with their Ethics Counselor will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the applicant to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the project not being selected for funding.
- L. Additional Requirements for Association Applicants:** Associations applying for C-SWG Program funds must submit evidence of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Associations must also provide a statement from each participating eligible State agency that authorizes the Association to apply for C-SWG Program funds on its behalf. This statement must appear in either an authorizing letter signed by the agency director or within a letter of commitment as described in this section.

Items to Include in Grant Application

- SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance:** Submit a complete, signed and dated SF 424.
- Project Summary:** Submit a brief, 3-5 sentence summary of your proposed project.
- Project Statement:** Submit a complete project statement that addresses all items described above.

- Budget Information or SF 424 budget form:** A complete SF 424-A, SF 424-C, or provide equivalent budget information.
- Budget Justification:** Address all items described above, as applicable.
- Letters of Commitment:** Letters must identify specific financial or other commitments, note the inclusion of proposed activities in the Plans, and be signed by an authorized entity with budgetary authority.
- Indirect Cost Statement and NICRA:** Statement of negotiated indirect cost rate agreement status and, if applicable, a copy of the organization's current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
- Single Audit Reporting statement:** Include a statement regarding applicability of and compliance with Single Audit Reporting requirements ([2 CFR 200.501](#)).
- SF 424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF 424B or SF 424D Assurances form.
- SF LLL form:** *If applicable*, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** *If applicable*, provide a statement as described above.
- Associations:** *If applicable*, submit a Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service. States are not required to submit this documentation. Submit a signed approval statement from all States on behalf of which you will apply. This statement may be included within a Letter of Commitment.

Failure to provide complete information may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

V. Submission Instructions

- A. SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Grant application packages must be submitted at [Grants.gov](#) no later than 11:59 PM PST on February 3, 2017.
- B. Intergovernmental Review:** Before submitting an application, U.S. State and local government applicants should visit the following website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/) to determine whether their application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." E.O. 12372 was issued to foster intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on State and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Applicants may contact the State's designated entity for more information on the process the State requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that

do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

C. Electronic Submission Instructions: Go to www.grants.gov. The application package can be found by entering Funding Opportunity Number F17AS00006 on the “Search Grants” tab. Completed applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. We recommend you also email a single document (PDF) containing the entire proposal to your Service Regional WSFR Office (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26) before the application deadline. However, this submission method is not a substitute for submission via Grants.gov. The applicant is responsible to ensure that the application has been properly and completely submitted by the deadline. The following are items that need to be done before a grant application package can be submitted electronically through Grants.gov:

1. Applicants must register as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and have a user ID and password. The applicant can register on the web at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp;
2. Applicants must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view files on the web. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Standard forms such as SF 424, SF 424A, SF 424B, SF 424 C, and SF 424D are fillable forms on Grants.gov. Applicants may omit the standard budget forms (SF 424 A and C), but must include a budget table as described in this announcement. The project statement and budget narrative must be attachments in one of the following formats: MS Word, Adobe PDF, or MS Excel. The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization’s authorized official.

All forms and attachments in the Application Checklist (see Page 16), as applicable, must be submitted with the grant application package.

Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names: Please do not assign application attachment file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. Assigning file names longer than 20 characters will create issues in the automatic interface between Grants.gov and the Service’s financial assistance management system.

VI. Application Review

- A. Scoring Criteria:** The following criteria express a preference for projects that exemplify an adaptive management approach including explicit articulation of hypotheses and a focus on evaluating effectiveness of proposed actions. The criteria favor projects that identify target and secondary species, explain how the project will benefit those species, explain how project outcomes will be measured, explain why the project did (or didn't) work, and finally, share that knowledge with other conservation professionals to advance the purpose of the C-SWG Program.

Targeted species are those explicitly addressed within an adaptive management framework; project design should reflect items listed in Section III.C, Page 6. Secondary species are those that are expected to also benefit from proposed actions, although monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of conservation actions consistent with adaptive management of these species is not anticipated.

Additional points may be awarded for projects that address Service priorities (see Section I, Pages 3-4). Point scales are guidelines; values may be assigned within the ranges identified. The maximum score is 46 points.

1. Is/are the target species or project site(s) documented as a high priority for the participating State(s)?

*Applicant identifies one or more targeted SGCN and geographical area, and cites the basis for its priority in one or more States. Provide evidence to verify priority of the targeted species/lands including reference to Plans and/or third-party species rankings (such as IUCN or NatureServe). **Scale: 0-5 points***

5 points: Targeted SGCN is/are listed as a State threatened or endangered species in at least one participating State; or, targeted SGCN are identified as Tier 1 or other priority designation, or conservation actions are located within an identified Conservation Opportunity Area or other priority lands, as described in a Wildlife Action Plan in at least one participating State;

3 point: Targeted SGCN and lands are identified, but they are not documented as a State's highest priority;

0 points: Targeted SGCN and/or specific targeted lands are not identified

PRIORITY: Up to 2 additional points may be awarded for projects that target Service-listed animal Candidate Species. Proposals must demonstrate how proposed conservation actions are expected to help lead to removal or withdrawal of the Candidate species listing.

See <http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/candidate-species.html> for a list of current Service Candidate species.

2. How will the project benefit the targeted species?

Applicant predicts the expected SGCN response to proposed activities by clearly presenting identified threats and conservation actions that address the threats, and by referencing science-based methods. Scale: 0-5 points

5 points: Project includes or refers to a hypothesis, conceptual model, or other accepted method that describes how proposed conservation actions are expected to benefit the targeted species and a numeric, population-based expected outcome.

3 points: Project includes a hypothesis, conceptual model or other accepted method and a numeric expected outcome but narrative is vague or unclear, or insufficient evidence is given to judge whether proposed conservation actions will achieve the expected outcome.

1 point: Project includes either a hypothesis, conceptual model or other accepted method or a numeric expected outcome.

0 points: : Project includes neither a hypothesis, conceptual model or other accepted method nor a numeric expected outcome.

PRIORITY: Up to 2 additional points may be awarded for projects that target and benefit pollinator species in the project area through direct management of habitat and/or species augmentation. (For guidance, see [Pollinators and the State Wildlife Action Plans](#) (The Heinz Center, 2013)).

PRIORITY: Up to 2 additional points may be awarded for projects that target and benefit SGCN amphibian, reptile, non-pollinator invertebrate, or non-game fish species in the project area through direct management of habitat and/or species augmentation.

3. Will the project benefit other animal SGCN?

Applicant provides evidence that secondary species will benefit in the project area during the period of performance. Provide references, citations or other evidence to support your hypotheses, and cite Plan(s) that identify specific threats to, conservation actions for, and monitoring of secondary species. Scale: 0-3 points

3 points: Applicant presents evidence to show secondary species are likely to benefit from project activities.

2 points: Applicant describes benefits to secondary species, but evidence describing how or why they will benefit from project activities is insufficient or inconclusive.

1 point: Applicant describes benefits to secondary species, but omits any evidence describing how or why they will benefit from project activities.

0 points: Applicant does not describe secondary species or expected benefits.

4. Does the project contribute to a regional, collaborative landscape conservation strategy or plan (at a scale greater than a Wildlife Action Plan)?

*Applicant identifies one or more landscape conservation plan or strategy at a scale greater than an individual Wildlife Action Plan, shows how proposed actions align with the plan(s), and cites specific page references. **Scale: 0-4 points***

4 points: Landscape conservation plan(s) and pages cited for both target and secondary species;

3 points: Landscape conservation plan(s) and pages cited only for target species;

1 point: Landscape conservation plan(s) are identified, but not specific page references;

0 points: No specific references provided to landscape plans or strategies.

PRIORITY: Up to 2 additional points may be awarded for applicants that: 1. Partner with a multi-stakeholder decision-making body that coordinates planning and project implementation; and 2. Incorporate biological objectives for multiple land management jurisdictions (States, tribal or private lands, Federal lands, etc.) in the project design, as cited in a regional, collaborative landscape conservation strategy or plan.

5. Does the project design demonstrate adoption of the following best practices?

*Proposal briefly describes protocols to be used across the targeted landscape, a method that each participating State or partner will use to determine the local population response of targeted SGCN, identifies responsible individual(s), and presents a detailed monitoring plan. **Scale: 1 point for each (additive)***

1 point: Describes the existing baseline SGCN status within the project area or at a larger scale, with reference to supporting evidence;

1 point: Clearly articulates population-based objective(s) at the site scale or larger scale;

1 point: Describes cohesive procedures and protocols clearly;

1 point: Describes clearly-defined performance indicators that are measurable and repeatable;

1 point: Describes entity or entities responsible for each action in detail;

1 point: Describes monitoring activities and a timeline for monitoring.

PRIORITY: Up to 2 additional points may be awarded for projects that significantly incorporate climate change considerations in project design, including projects whose goals and objectives align with published climate change adaptation plans or that incorporate recommendations of organizations specializing in climate science for conservation purposes.

6. Does the proposal demonstrate how proposed actions will comply with relevant State and Federal statutes and other State and/or local compliance processes?

*Application identifies required local, State, Federal, and/or tribal compliance and consultation requirements (if applicable) and how they will be addressed, including but not limited to NEPA, NHPA, ESA, Clean Water Act, Tribal, State and local permits, etc. **Scale: 0-2 points***

2 points: Necessary compliance elements identified and compliance strategy explained;

1 points: Some compliance information is provided but it is vague or incomplete;

0 points: Permitting and compliance is not addressed.

7. Does the proposal document non-Federal match beyond the minimum requirement?

*Application documents non-Federal match in addition to the required 25% of total project costs. **Scale: 1-4 points***

4 points: Non-Federal match is > 40 % of total project costs (>16 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands); or

3 points: Non-Federal match is > 35 to 40 % of total project costs (>11 to 15 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands);

2 points: Non-Federal match is > 30 to 35 % of total project costs (>6 to 10 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or

1 point: Non-Federal match is 26 to 30 % of total project costs (>0 to 5 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

8. Is the budget and budget justification complete, accurate, and sufficiently supported?

*Applicant presents a budget and supporting narrative that is consistent throughout the application and sufficiently documented. **Scale: 0-4***

4 points: All budget figures and budget narrative are consistent throughout the document, are adequately detailed, appropriately organized and easily understandable, and are supported as required with necessary documentation.

2 points: Budget figures and narrative are generally consistent, but are inadequately detailed, poorly organized, or insufficiently documented.

0 points: Budget figures and narrative are inconsistent, inadequately detailed, poorly organized and are not documented.

9. How will applicant capture, store, and analyze data and share project performance results and analysis?

Applicant presents a data management plan that includes analysis and sharing of results. Note significant uses of data/analyses such as a Service listing decision, future habitat management decisions, etc. Scale: 0-3 points

3 points: Proposal includes information on how project data will be captured; where it will be stored; and how it will be analyzed and shared broadly to inform future decision-making.

2 points: Proposal includes information on how data will be captured, stored and analyzed.

1 point: Proposal includes information on how data will be captured and stored.

0 points: Proposal does not include information on data capture or storage.

B. Review and Selection Process: Project selection and award is a seven-step process: acceptance, pre-ranking review, ranking, selection, risk assessment, pre-award notification, and award notification.

- 1. Application acceptance** - The Service will accept applications via Grants.gov for review any time between October 19, 2016 and February 3, 2017. States may revise and resubmit applications until the identified application deadline. We encourage applicants to communicate with the Service Regional WSFR Office at least six weeks in advance of the deadline to ask for a preliminary review; however, we cannot guarantee pre-deadline application review due to limited staff availability.
- 2. Pre-Ranking review** – The Service will conduct a pre-ranking review of proposals to verify eligibility. During February and March of 2017, we may identify errors or other deficiencies in your proposal. During this period, a Service representative may contact the project officer you identify on your SF-424 to clarify information or address minor errors or omissions, if necessary.
- 3. Application ranking** – After the pre-ranking review, a panel of up to eight Service program specialists will complete the review and ranking of the applications using criteria in this announcement. Ranking is tentatively scheduled for April 2017. After the application ranking, you may be asked to revise the project scope and/or budget.
- 4. Application selection** - The review panel recommends a ranked project list to the Assistant Director for WSFR, who recommends a final list of projects to the Service Director. The Service Director makes final selections.
- 5. Risk Assessment** - Each fiscal year, for every entity receiving one or more awards in that fiscal year, the Service conducts a risk assessment based on eight risk categories. The result of this risk assessment is used to establish a monitoring

plan for all awards to the entity in that fiscal year. The Service's risk assessment form is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-2462.pdf>.

6. **Pre-Award Notification**– If selected, the Service Regional WSFR Office will notify State applicants of the award and the process needed to receive a grant, including satisfactory completion of compliance requirements. Applicants are encouraged to submit all required documentation to the Service Regional WSFR Office within six months of receipt of any pre-award notification.
7. **Award Notification** - When compliance requirements are met, the Regional Office will send a Notice of Award to the recipient agency detailing the terms and conditions of the award.

We expect to announce awards by May 2017.

VII. Award Administration

A. Award Notices: Applicants that receive pre-award notification and meet all identified compliance and other requirements will receive a Notice of Award. Notices of Award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The Notice of Award will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Consult with your Regional Office regarding the earliest start date for your project.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

- a. Compliance with environmental laws such as the ESA, the NEPA, and the NHPA must be satisfied before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can approve a grant proposal.
- b. In accepting Federal funds, applicants must comply with [2 CFR 200](#) (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards).
- c. All organizations must obtain a DUNS number, a unique identifying number, before applying for Federal funds. Only private individual landowners are exempted. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at 1-866-706-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

- d. States must have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). Register in SAM online at <http://www.sam.gov/>. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and corresponds with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program.
 - e. States must complete and submit an Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system [Participation Form](#) if not already enrolled in ASAP. If you have an existing account with another Federal agency, please indicate your ASAP ID on the form. For further instructions visit the [FA Wiki](#).
 - f. Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Awards are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the Notice of Award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; Service policy, and special award terms and conditions. The Federal regulations applicable to Service awards are available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/grants/>. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below (Section VIII, Pages 25-26).
- C. Transmittal of Sensitive Data:** Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.
- D. Recipient Reporting Requirements:** Interim financial reports and performance reports may be required. Interim reports will be required no more frequently than quarterly, and no less frequently than annually. A final financial report and a final performance

report will be required and are due within 90 calendar days of the end date of the award. Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results.

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- Problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
- Favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

The Service will specify in the Notice of Award the reporting frequency applicable to the award.

Financial and performance reporting requirements and retention and access requirements are specified in [2 CFR 200 \(Subpart D\)](#) and in Service Manual Chapters [516 FW 1](#) and [516 FW 2](#). Electronic submission of performance information using the Wildlife TRACS system may be required, as detailed in the terms and conditions of the award.

VIII. Agency Contacts

The Service administers the C-SWG Program through WSFR. Additional program information can be found by contacting your Regional Service WSFR Office (see contact information below) or go to <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/ContactUs/ContactUs.htm>.

National-level program information can be obtained by contacting:

Paul Van Ryzin
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
Mailstop: WSFR
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

(703) 358-1849

paul_vanryzin@fws.gov

For project- and Region-specific information, contact your Regional WSFR Office:

Region 1 - American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Contact Person: Karla Drewsen, 503-231-2389, karla_drewsen@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: r1fa_grants@fws.gov.

Region 2 - Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Contact Person: Susan MacMullin, 505-248-7476, susan_macmullin@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: fw2fa@fws.gov.

Region 3 - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Contact Person: Jessica Piispanen, 612-713-5142, jessica_piispanen@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: R3fedaid@fws.gov.

Region 4 - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Contact Person: LeAnne Bonner, 404-679-7357, leanne_bonner@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: r4federalassistance@fws.gov.

Region 5 - Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia.

Contact Person: Dee Blanton, 413-253-8513, dee_blanton@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: fw5fareports@fws.gov.

Region 6 - Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

Contact Person: Amanda Horvath, 303-236-4414, amanda_horvath@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: FW6_FAGrants@fws.gov.

Region 7 – Alaska.

Contact Person: Steve Klein, 907-786-3322, steve_klein@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: ak_fa@fws.gov.

Region 8 - California and Nevada.

Contact Person: Bart Prose, 916-414-6558, bart_prose@fws.gov.

Electronic Documents to: R8FA_Grants@FWS.gov.

Attachment: Fiscal Year 2017 Competitive State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program**Questions and Answers****Q1. Will grant applications from a single State be considered for funding?**

- A. Only the State fish and wildlife agencies of Alaska, Hawaii, and the other insular U.S. jurisdictions may apply for C-SWG Program funds as a single State. Other States must identify at least one other State agency partner outside of their State, and the agency must be an active participant in proposed conservation actions. Active participation is defined as a significant contribution of resources that are dedicated to completion of project objectives, such as cash, equipment, or staff time. Wherever appropriate, we encourage partnering with additional State agencies, tribes, Federal agencies, academic institutions, organizations, businesses, or individuals (e.g., private landowners), etc.

Q2. What are the minimum and maximum Federal awards through the C-SWG Program?

- A. Single State fish and wildlife agencies may apply for a minimum of \$25,000 and a maximum of \$250,000 in Federal C-SWG funds. Two or more State fish and wildlife agencies may apply for a minimum of \$50,000 and a maximum of \$500,000 in Federal C-SWG funds. Associations applying on behalf of two or more State fish and wildlife agencies may apply for a minimum of \$50,000 and a maximum of \$500,000 in Federal C-SWG funds.

Q3. What are the Federal cost-sharing requirements for this competitive program?

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

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

- A. The C-SWG Grant Program is appropriated annually by Congress; there is no assurance that it will be funded in Fiscal Year 2017 or in subsequent years.

Q5. How long are funds available for obligation?

- A. C-SWG Program funds are available until expended. Applicants selected for funding are encouraged to submit all required documentation to the Service Regional WSFR Office within six months of initial pre-award notification of selection for an award.

Q6. Is there a maximum grant period?

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

Q7. How must a project statement document an emerging issue?

- A. We consider emerging issues relevant to SGCN or their habitats although they are not included in the State's Wildlife Action Plan.

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

Q8. For multi-state projects, should one State be the project lead?

- A. Partnerships of multiple States may designate a lead State that administers funds to partnering States, non-State entities such as universities, and other non-governmental organizations through sub-awards. The lead State must prepare and submit financial status and performance reports on behalf of all partners for the entire project.

Alternatively, each State in a multi-State project may choose to directly receive grant funds from the Service. In this case, after the Service Director approves an award, each participating State must submit an Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) to the Service Regional WSFR Office 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.

Associations must administer funds to partnering States, non-State entities, and other non-governmental organizations through sub-awards, and must submit financial status and performance reports on behalf of all partners for the entire project.

Q9. For multi-state projects, does each State need to contribute the minimum required 25% match?

- A. 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, the designated lead State or Association must document at least 25% match on the SF 424 (regardless of the source). The non-Federal share may not include Federal funds or Federal in-kind match unless specifically allowed by law.

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

- A. The C-SWG Program was created to meet the needs of SGCN and their habitats through activities that are identified in a State's Plan, with a focus on conservation projects yielding measurable results for these species. Activities eligible for funding are described in detail in Table 10-1 of the Service Manual Chapter 517 FW 10, *State Wildlife Grants – Mandatory Subprogram* which is located at <http://fawiki.fws.gov/display/WTK/Toolkit+Homepage>. While any activity described in the Service Manual is eligible, the ranking criteria described in Section VI. Application Review, Page 15, provide current priorities for funding under the C-SWG Program.

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 C-SWG Program include 43 CFR Part 12, 2 CFR 200, ESA, NEPA, NHPA, and other applicable State and 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 non-construction grants (SF-424B) that States may use to develop a grant application (Service Manual [522 FW 1.3B and C](#) and [523 FW 1](#)).

The Service, in cooperation with grantees, must address Federal compliance issues relating to the ESA, NEPA, and NHPA prior to 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.

Q12. Are there additional formatting criteria?

- A. Formatting criteria for the Project Statement are included in the NOFO, Section IV.C, Page 9. Formatting requirements for document submission at Grants.gov can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/>.

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

- A. All applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov/), Funding Opportunity Number XXXXXXXX. We recommend you also submit via email a single document (PDF format) containing the entire proposal to your Service Regional WSFR Office (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts, Pages 25-26) prior to the deadline in case there are problems submitting your application package through Grants.gov.

Q14. Who announces the awards, and what additional documentation is required of selected applicants?

- A. The Service Director makes selections for awards based on scored ranking of the criteria. The Service Regional WSFR Office will notify successful applicants of the selections and provide any additional information requirements.

Q15. 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 proposed objectives. The Service Regional WSFR Office has discretion to determine whether proposed changes can be accepted if the original objectives still will be met and the resulting benefits will be equivalent to those initially 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.

Q16. 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.

Q17. What is included within the 15 page limit for the Project Statement, and what is not?

- A. **Included in project statement page limit:** Project Statement including any graphs or tables within the text, Location Description, Project Leader Information (do not include CVs or resumes), roadmap to scoring criteria responses, and any addenda that explain or provide additional information to supplement the narrative. **Not included in project statement page limit:** Federal forms, Project Summary, Budget and Budget Justification, Maps, Photos, Drawings or Schematics, Citations to Literature, Letters of Commitment, and any statements pertaining to indirect costs, audits, or conflicts of interest.

Please limit the total application package to 100 pages or less.

Q18. What resources are available to help with project design and proposal development?

- A. States seeking to submit applications to the C-SWG Program may benefit from information contained in the document, "Measuring the Effectiveness of State Wildlife Grants," available at: http://www.fishwildlife.org/files/Effectiveness-Measures-Report_2011.pdf.

Additional resources focusing on adaptive management are available in the following:

- [Strategic Habitat Conservation: Final Report of the National Ecological Assessment Team](#) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey, 2006)
- [Adaptive Management: The U.S. Department of the Interior Applications Guide](#) (Williams and Brown, 2012)
- [The Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation](#) (The Conservation Measures Partnership, 2013)

Q19. Are land values eligible as match?

- A. Although land value is allowable for use as match, we generally discourage this source of match in the C-SWG program. In order for the value of land to qualify for match, you must show that the expenses associated with acquisition of a specific parcel, appraised and reviewed properly following Federal standards, are necessary for the achievement

of project objectives. This justification should address why acquisition of the subject parcel was necessary, and could not be accomplished through another less expensive action such as an easement. Value of lands acquired in previous years or lands that have not yet been acquired may be disqualified if they are not shown to be necessary for achieving project objectives.

Q20. Ranking criteria provide extra points for certain classes such as amphibians. Are projects targeting birds, mammals, and fish projects still eligible?

- A. Yes, any project targeting a designated SGCN (or an animal species impacted by an emerging issue) may be considered for funding under this program.

Q21. Can I still apply for a State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Enhancement grant through the C-SWG Program?

- A. No. The former SWAP Enhancement subprogram has been discontinued. With the submission of revised Plans in October 2015, the Service is committed to helping States implement their Plans in 2016 and beyond.

Q22. Is student tuition an eligible cost under the C-SWG Program?

- A. Yes. Tuition remission and other forms of compensation paid as, or in lieu of, wages to students performing necessary work are allowable provided that such compensation meets the five criteria described at [2 CFR 200.466](#). You should note in your application whether any students will receive a stipend in addition to tuition remission, and justify why hiring a student is more cost-effective than other hiring arrangements such as hiring seasonal technical field staff.

Q23. Are pre-award costs eligible under the C-SWG Program?

- A. Yes. Pre-award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of a Federal award and are necessary for efficient and timely performance of proposed activities. Such costs may be eligible for reimbursement or use as match with written approval of a Regional WSFR Chief or designee. Pre-award costs are limited to those that are directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the pending Federal award, and they must be otherwise allowable if they were incurred after the date of the Federal award ([2 CFR 200.458](#)). Generally, only those costs incurred between the date of project selection for funding and obligation of the award by the Region are eligible as pre-award costs. Costs meeting this definition include, for example, required compliance activities that are performed after selection of the project for funding by the Service Director but

prior to receipt of an award letter from the Region. Previous project costs do not meet the criteria for eligible pre-award costs because they are not directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the pending Federal award.