

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program**

Competitive State Wildlife Grants Program  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.634

**Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions**

**Federal Agency Name:**

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

**Announcement Type:**

Announcement of availability of competitive grants for fiscal year (FY) 2016 and application instructions.

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Competitive State Wildlife Grants Program

**Funding Opportunity Number:** F16AS00038

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 15.634

**Dates:** Applications for Competitive State Wildlife Grants must be submitted through Grants.gov ([www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)). Applications will be accepted through February 19, 2016, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. We strongly recommend that you submit applications in advance of the deadline to allow for any unforeseen technical complications or system delays.

**I. Description of Funding Opportunity**

The State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program provides States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and territories (States) Federal grant funds for the development and implementation of 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 and should take into consideration the relative level of funding available for the conservation of those 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.

After almost fifteen years of continuous funding and nearly \$1 billion delivered through the SWG Program, 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.

To be able to show the impacts of the program on priority populations and species of greatest conservation need, the Competitive SWG (C-SWG) Program prioritizes and 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 (or “theories of change”), 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 academic institutions and non-governmental conservation organizations have developed and published guides and other technical resources on the practice of adaptive management. For more information on adaptive management, 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)

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) recently published a groundbreaking report titled, [Measuring the Effectiveness of State Wildlife Grants](#) (AFWA, 2011). In this report, a working group consisting of State, Federal, and Non-Governmental partners recommended adoption of standardized measures for evaluating SWG-funded projects based on an adaptive management framework:

*This process of measuring the effectiveness of conservation actions is the key to adaptive management, which requires building monitoring efforts into the overall project management cycle... Under an adaptive management approach, project teams state their theory of change behind each action and then collect the information required to evaluate its effectiveness. If the activity provides the expected results, effectiveness measures help communicate that success so others may follow suit. If, on the other hand, the action does not work as hypothesized, then the managers can identify problems and either modify the action, or try alternatives. The key to adaptive management is to learn*

*from successes, informative failures, and useless failures and respond accordingly so programs can become more effective and efficient over time. (P.3)*

The report also recommended that the Service integrate effectiveness measures for the SWG Program into the [Wildlife TRACS](#) (TRACS) performance reporting and project tracking tool. In 2015, the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) convened a working group to begin designing standardized results chains that link project outputs to long-term outcomes for the SWG Program and other WSFR programs.

While this working group continues to fulfill its mandate, WSFR has modified the C-SWG Program to support conservation projects that adhere to the principles of adaptive management, including the use of results chains and effectiveness measures to hypothesize and evaluate project results. TRACS continues to evolve to enable users to report project results within a framework that demonstrates how intermediate project results relate to, and can ultimately be expressed as, population-based outcomes for priority species and species of greatest conservation need.

Further modification to the C-SWG Program in FY 2016 includes integration of the former State Wildlife Action Plan Enhancement subprogram into an outcomes-based adaptive management framework. In October 2015, most States submitted updated Plans for review and approval by the State/Federal Regional Review Teams, and ultimately by the Service Director. Therefore, the former SWAP Enhancement subprogram has been discontinued at this time. With the submission of revised Plans in October 2015, the Service is now committed to helping States implement their Plans in 2016 and beyond.

Projects that address the priority themes described on Pages 4-5 of this announcement will receive additional points during proposal review and scoring, as articulated in the criteria given on Pages 16-20. These criteria will be used for ranking all proposed C-SWG projects. Although planning projects may still receive C-SWG Program funding, the Service supports projects that at least partially include direct management of natural resources. Through the C-SWG Program, the Service explicitly favors creating or improving habitat, captive rearing and release, translocation, and similar proactive conservation strategies that can demonstrate measurable impacts on populations of imperiled species. Such active conservation projects will be favored over projects that only support planning or analysis without a measurable impact on species or their habitats.

Additional information about the State Wildlife Grants 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 in the Agency Contacts section below (Pages 15-16).

## **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 2016 C-SWG Program.

In anticipation of potential funding, the Service requests applications for competitive grants.

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 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).

WSFR annually awards approximately 12 to 18 grants through the C-SWG Program.

WSFR will not award grants under the former State Wildlife Action Plan Enhancement subprogram for planning and Plan revision this year. Rather, proposals that address the following Service priority themes will receive additional points in project scoring (see Section VI (A), Pages 16-19 for information on specific bonus point descriptions and opportunities). The priority themes this year are:

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

- Demonstrate a collaborative priority setting or decision making 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 team consulted with a Regional Association, a Landscape Conservation Cooperative or other multi-State planning entity in designing the proposed project.
- Explicitly describe habitat-population modeling analyses or other tools that led to identification of population-based 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 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](http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov)), or with other regional climate change planning efforts. Proposals should demonstrate collaborative partnership 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 theme is for a State to actively address the pollinator's 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/Petitioned Species:** The Service prioritizes projects targeting SGCN that have been the subject of a [petition](#) for listing under the Endangered Species Act, or are classified as [Candidate species](#) by the Service. Proposals must demonstrate how proposed data collection and analysis activities are essential to supporting the Service's response to the petition, or show how direct management activities will help preclude the need for listing.

- 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 emerging issues (e.g., climate change effects on wildlife) documented in the grant application that will improve the status of SGCN or their habitats. See Sections 10.13 and 10.14 of the Service's SWG policy chapter for more information on eligible activities including requirements for documenting emerging issues (<http://www.fws.gov/policy/517fw10.pdf>). A WSFR Regional program manager may contact you following submission to address eligibility issues resulting from minor errors or omissions in your proposal.

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 Grants (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 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 approved by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or submit a revised Plan to the assigned Regional Review Team by the closing date of this competition (February 19, 2016).
- 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 the partnering State(s) must be active participants 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. Alaska, Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and America Samoa are eligible to apply as single States. Applicants are also encouraged to engage with other partners beyond the minimum partnership requirement described here. Other partners may include Tribes,

Federal agencies, other State agencies (in or out of State), local governments/jurisdictions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions (e.g., universities), private landowners, industry groups, and international partners.

**C. Adaptive Management:** States and Associations applying for C-SWG Program funds must meet specific criteria demonstrating the proposed project is designed and will be managed in a manner consistent with an adaptive management framework. Adaptive management is a flexible, iterative process that integrates project design, management, and monitoring to systematically evaluate conservation actions in order to improve their effectiveness over time. 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. All SGCN identified in the Plans may not be appropriate for use in an adaptive management framework due to various factors including limited available data. Key elements of an adaptive management framework in the context of the C-SWG Program include:

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 species population baseline (at the project site scale or larger) against which to measure impacts of conservation interventions.
3. Explicit adoption of a logical theory of change based on habitat-population modeling or other science-based methods to estimate population response to conservation actions prior to implementation.
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 population impacts can be evaluated.
6. Use of a standard, replicable monitoring protocol by all project partners across the targeted landscape.
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.

**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).

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:** 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.

**G. Cost Sharing or Matching:**

For the States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of 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 match, 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 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 must appear in either: 1) a separate letter signed by the director of the eligible State fish and wildlife agency; or 2) within the letter of commitment as described in part G. above. 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:**

C-SWG Program funds, if any, are available for obligation until September 30, 2017, or two years from the beginning of the fiscal year in which the funds are appropriated by Congress. Unobligated funds, if any, will be made available through competitive grants to States, together with newly appropriated funds, in 2018.

#### **IV. Application Requirements**

To be considered for funding under this funding opportunity, an application must contain all the following items, as applicable. Application forms are available through the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) website and the WSFR toolkit (<http://fawiki.fws.gov/display/WTK/Toolkit+Homepage>).

**A. Standard Form (SF) 424.** A single Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424) reflecting the funding request in its entirety must be submitted. 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 in the “Federal” funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered 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 table on Pages 15-16). 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 Statement:** Submit a project statement of no more than 20 pages. Your project statement must include all of the following elements. Include a “roadmap” in table format specifying where each of the scoring criteria is addressed in the narrative. Your project statement should describe the:

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

1. Identify the SGCN that will be used to evaluate 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, key personnel, and cooperators. For projects conducted in the United States, a description of the activity in sufficient detail so WSFR staff 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 narrative should address the following elements:

1. Include a description of consistent conservation protocols and procedures and the entity or entities responsible for them.
2. Describe the locations of proposed project activities, and identify public and private lands where applicable.
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.

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

1. Describe the theory or theories of change linking proposed conservation actions to outcomes for targeted SGCN populations, and support the theory with reference to scientific evidence.
2. Describe any tools such as habitat-population models or other science-based methods that 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. Provide maps or other geographic aids. Please include GPS Coordinates in degrees, minutes, seconds, if available. If specific locations of project activities are unknown at time of application, please provide targeted county or counties where conservation actions are expected to take place.

**C. Budget Table:** Provide the estimated costs to achieve the project objectives. The various conservation actions should be clearly identified and broken down by cost, partner(s), and annual funding period in table format. The budget table must also show donated matching funds, services, equipment, or materials broken down by cost, partner, and funding period. Applicants proposing multi-State projects must detail the Federal and non-Federal share for which each State will be responsible. 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. Be sure to identify each Federal program's CFDA number in the budget table, if applicable. Submission of the SF-424 A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs) is not required.

**D. Budget Narrative:** In a separate narrative, explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the totals in your budget table were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the baseline salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be

directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal Cost Principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost. Include a list of any Federally-funded equipment and indicate why it is necessary for achieving the goals and objectives of the project. Distinct activities or components of each project should be broken down by cost and by cooperator. In discussing match (including cash or in-kind), include the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to arrive at the total. If there will be any program income, include the source, amount, and the requested method of crediting the program income (i.e. matching, deductive or additive).

**E. Letters of commitment:** Match sources and attributed values must be documented in a letter of commitment, signed by the director of the eligible State agency or 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. 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 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. 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. Active participation is defined as a significant contribution of resources that are dedicated to completion of project objectives, such as cash, equipment, staff time, etc. These contributions must be described in detail and explicitly valued. Valuations of matching contributions given in letters of commitment should match those 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. You may obtain a copy of an example commitment letter meeting this requirement by contacting your Service Regional WSFR Office (see Pages 15-16 for contact information).

**F. 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:

1. We are a State government entity 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. We are a State government entity 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. We are an Association that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost

rate is [insert rate]. *A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement is attached.* Or,

4. We are an 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,
5. We are an 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 [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 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,
6. We are a [State government of Association] that will charge all costs directly.

**Please note:**

Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate (includes accepting the 10% *de minimus* rate, when eligible) are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award.

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 USFWS 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 USFWS 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: <http://www.aqd.nbc.gov/Services/ICS.aspx>

- G. Statements Regarding Single Audit Reporting:** Following 2 CFR 200, Subpart F, all U.S. States 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, although the report does not need to be attached to your proposal. In your proposal, provide a statement regarding whether your organization was/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/>). Include these statements in a section titled "**Single Audit Reporting Statements.**"
- H. Assurances:** Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)** if the project does not involve construction or land acquisition. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF-424D)** if the project involves construction or land acquisition. 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.
- I. 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. *If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this project AND the project budget exceeds \$100,000*, 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. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.

- J. 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.

### Application Checklist

- SF 424:** A complete, signed and dated SF 424.
- Project Statement:** A complete project narrative must address all items identified above.
- Budget Table:** Provide budget table in the format described above. Do not use the SF-424A.
- Budget Narrative:** Address all items noted 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:** 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.
- Associations:** Submit evidence of your non-profit. 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

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Grant application packages must be submitted at [Grants.gov](#) no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on February 19, 2016.

**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/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/)) to determine whether their application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (EO) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." EO 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 EO allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your 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.

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. We recommend you also submit a single document (PDF) containing the entire proposal to your Service Regional WSFR Office (see table on pages 15-16).

#### Electronic Submission Instructions:

Go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

- a. Click the "Apply for Grants" tab and use Funding Opportunity Number F16AS00038 to search for the funding opportunity.
- b. The following are items that need to be done before a grant application package can be submitted electronically through Grants.gov:
  - i. 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](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp);
  - ii. Applicants must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view files on the web. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.
- c. Standard forms such as SF 424, SF 424A, SF 424B, SF 424 C, and SF 424D are fillable forms on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). You may omit the standard budget forms (SF 424 A and C), but you must include a budget table as described in this announcement. The project narrative 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.
- d. All forms and attachments mentioned above must be submitted with the grant application package.
- e. **Important note on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) application attachment file names:** Please do not assign application attachments 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.
- f. Applications must be submitted online at [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The application package can be found by using Funding Opportunity Number F16AS00038 on the "Search Grants" tab. The applicant is responsible to ensure that the application has been properly and completely submitted by the deadline. You may also send a complete copy of your application(s) to the "Electronic Documents" email address below, as a backup in case you experience technical issues with

[Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). However, this submission method is not a substitute for submission via Grants.gov.

States, Commonwealths, the District of Columbia, and Territories by U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Region	Regional Contact Information
<p><b>Region 1:</b> American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington</p>	<p><b>Electronic Documents to:</b> r1fa_grants@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Karla Drewsen 503-231-2389 <a href="mailto:karla_drewsen@fws.gov">karla_drewsen@fws.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Region 2:</b> Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas</p>	<p><b>Electronic Documents to:</b> fw2fa@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Vanessa Martinez 505-248-7452 <a href="mailto:vanessa_martinez@fws.gov">vanessa_martinez@fws.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Region 3:</b> Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin</p>	<p><b>Electronic Documents to:</b> R3fedaid@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Jessica Piispanen 612-713-5142 <a href="mailto:jessica_piispanen@fws.gov">jessica_piispanen@fws.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Region 4:</b> Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the U.S. Virgin Islands</p>	<p><b>Electronic Documents to:</b> r4federalassistance@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Diana Swan 404-679-7058 <a href="mailto:diana_swan@fws.gov">diana_swan@fws.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Region 5:</b> Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia</p>	<p><b>Electronic Documents to:</b> fw5fareports@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Dee Blanton 413-253-8513 <a href="mailto:dee_blanton@fws.gov">dee_blanton@fws.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Region 6:</b> Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming</p>	<p><b>Electronic Documents to:</b> FW6_FAGrants@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Amanda Horvath 303-236-4414 <a href="mailto:amanda_horvath@fws.gov">amanda_horvath@fws.gov</a></p>

<b>Region 7: Alaska</b>	<b>Electronic Documents to:</b> ak_fa@fws.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Trent Liebich 907-786-3696 <a href="mailto:trent_liebich@fws.gov">trent_liebich@fws.gov</a>
<b>Region 8: California and Nevada</b>	<b>Electronic Documents to:</b> R8FA_Grants@FWS.gov <b>Contact Person:</b> Bart Prose 916-414-6558 <a href="mailto:bart_prose@fws.gov">bart_prose@fws.gov</a>

## **VI. Application Review**

### **A. Scoring Criteria:**

The following criteria prioritize projects that exemplify an adaptive management approach including an explicit articulation of a “theory of change” and a focus on evaluating project effectiveness. The criteria favor projects that are able to identify target and secondary species, explain how the project will benefit those species, measure the actual project outcomes, explain why the project did (or didn’t) work, and finally, share that knowledge with other conservation professionals to advance the mission 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 adaptive management of these species is not required.

Additional bonus points may be awarded for projects also addressing Service priorities (Criteria 1,2, and 3; see descriptions on P. 4-5) and for projects targeting SGCN for which other sources of funding are limited or unavailable (Criterion 3).

Point scales are guidelines; values may be assigned within the ranges identified. The maximum score is 50 points.

#### **1. Does the project contribute to a regional, collaborative landscape conservation strategy or plan (other than a Wildlife Action Plan)?**

*Applicant identifies one or more landscape conservation plans or strategies 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: 0-5 points***

**5 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.

**BONUS:** Up to 3 bonus points available for applicants that 1) Consult with or are advised by a regional multi-agency/stakeholder entity and 2) Cite biological objectives for multiple land management jurisdictions (States, tribal or private lands, Federal lands, etc.).

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

*Applicant identifies a target SGCN and area, and cites the basis for its priority in one or more States. Provide evidence to verify priority species/lands including reference to Plans with page numbers. 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

**BONUS:** Up to 3 bonus points available for projects that target Service [Candidate](#) or [Petitioned](#) Species. Proposals must demonstrate how data collection and analysis activities can support the Service's response to the petition, or show how direct management activities can help preclude the need for listing.

**3. How will the project benefit the targeted species?**

*Applicant predicts the expected SGCN response to proposed activities by clearly presenting a "theory of change" linking the actions to the targeted species response. Scale: 0-5 points*

**5 points:** Project includes or refers to a scientifically valid explanation, conceptual model, or other "theory of change" that predicts how the project will benefit the targeted species and presents a numeric, population-based expected outcome.

**3 points:** Project includes a theory of change and 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 numeric expected outcome or a theory of change.

**0 points:** Project includes neither a numeric expected outcome nor a theory of change.

**BONUS:** Up to 3 bonus points available 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).*)

**BONUS:** Up to 3 bonus points available for projects that target and benefit SGCN amphibian, reptile, invertebrate or non-game fish species in the project area through direct management of habitat and/or species augmentation.

**4. Will the project benefit other species?**

*Applicant demonstrates that secondary species will benefit in the project area during the period of performance. Provide references, citations or other evidence to support your hypotheses. 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.

**5. Does the project design demonstrate adoption of an adaptive management framework?**

*Proposal briefly describes protocols to be used across the targeted landscape, and a monitoring plan that each participating State or partner will use to determine the local population response of targeted SGCN. Scale: 0 to 6*

**1 point:** Describes baseline SGCN status with reference to supporting evidence;

**1 point:** Identifies clearly articulated 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.

**BONUS:** Up to 3 bonus points available for projects that include climate change considerations in their project design, or that align or consult with published climate change plans or planning organizations.

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

*Application identifies required local, State, Federal, and/or tribal permits and describes 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 permits identified and compliance strategy explained;

**1 point:** Necessary permits identified;

**0 points:** Permitting and compliance 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. 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: 0-5 points*

**5 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.

**3 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 is a seven-step process: acceptance, pre-ranking review, ranking, selection, risk assessment, pre-award activities, and award notification.

- **Application acceptance** - The Service will accept applications via [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) for review any time between November 20, 2015 and February 19, 2016. We determine that applications are complete, substantial, and eligible. States may revise and resubmit applications until the identified application deadline. We encourage applicants to communicate with the Service Regional WSFR Office well in advance of the deadline to ask for a preliminary review; however, we cannot guarantee pre-deadline application review due to limited staff availability.
- **Pre-Ranking review** – The Service will conduct a pre-ranking review of proposals to verify eligibility. During late February and March of 2016, 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 and negotiate revisions, if necessary.

- **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 given in this announcement. Ranking is tentatively scheduled for April 2016. After the application ranking, you may be asked to revise the project scope and/or budget.
- **Application selection** - The review panel scores and ranks applications and recommends a ranked list to the Assistant Director - Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration, who may revise the list prior to forwarding to the Service Director. The Service Director makes final grant selections.
- **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>.
- **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.
- **Award Notification** - When these requirements are met, the Regional Office will send a letter to your agency detailing the terms and conditions of the award.

We expect to announce awards by June 2016.

## **VII. Award Administration**

**A. Award Notices:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director or his/her designee approves or disapproves grant proposals. Regional Offices are responsible for notification of grant approval to the applicant. Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of 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.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

- a. Compliance with environmental laws such as the ESA, NEPA, and 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 Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, [Part 200](#).

- 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.

**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 Part 200 (Subpart D) and in the Interim Guidance for Financial Status and Performance Reporting, dated May 15, 2009. 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 the table on P. 15-16) 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](mailto:paul_vanryzin@fws.gov)

**IX. 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. A response to this Notice of Funding Availability 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. OMB has approved this collection and assigned OMB Control No.1018-0109, which expires on 11-30-2015. The public

reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average of 37 hours per application and 8 hours per performance report. These burden estimates include time for reviewing instructions and gathering data, but do not include the time needed to complete government-wide Standard Forms associated with the application and financial reporting. You may send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PDM, Falls Church, VA 22041.

## Attachment: Fiscal Year 2016 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.

Applicant Status	Competitive SWG Program	
	Minimum per grant award	Maximum per grant award
Single State	\$25,000	\$250,000
Two or More States	\$50,000	\$500,000
Associations	\$50,000	\$500,000

#### 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 2016 or in subsequent years.

#### Q5. How long are funds available for obligation?

- A. Funds awarded to selected applicants must be obligated with an approved Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) within two years of the beginning of the fiscal year in which they



are appropriated by Congress. All of the entities directly receiving funds under a single grant application must have their funds obligated within this timeframe, or the entire award will be disqualified and all funds returned to the Service. 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. These unobligated funds may be used for other purposes approved by Congress if competitive program funds are not authorized for the subsequent fiscal year(s).

In addition, this is a competitive grant program and each grant application must be complete, including a detailed budget reflecting all costs associated with the project. Any changes made to the overall percentage of the Federal share of the total costs of a successful application must be approved by the Service Regional WSFR Office. Similarly, project objectives found in the original grant application may not be removed or diminished by the entities submitting individual grant applications for obligation, unless approved by the Service Regional WSFR Office.

**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, and does each State need to contribute a 25% match?**

- 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 (see Pages 15-16 of this announcement) 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.

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.

**Q9. 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 on Pages 16-19 prioritize direct management of natural resources.

**Q10. 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.

**Q11. Are there additional formatting criteria?**

- A. Formatting criteria are included in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions. Formatting requirements for document submission at Grants.gov can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/>.

**Q12. Where should an applicant submit C-SWG Grant Program applications?**

- A. All application must be submitted through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov/), Funding Opportunity Number F16AS00038.

**Q13. 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.

**Q14. 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. In addition, the Service will not accept applications from the grantee to participate in the next two award cycles following the termination date.

**Q15. 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.

**Q16. What is included within the 20 page limit for the project statement, and what is not?**

**A.**

<b>Included in page limit</b>
Narrative describing needs, objectives, Results and benefits, approach (methods)
Location description
Project leader information (i.e., name, address)
Graphs and tables inserted within the narrative
Roadmap to scoring criteria responses.
Addenda that explain or provide additional information to supplement the narrative
<b>Not included in page limit</b>
Forms (e.g., SF424, assurances, pdf of the SF 424 with authorized signature)
Budgets
Maps
Photos
Drawings
Schematics
Literature cited
Resume/vitae
Letters of commitment

**Q17. 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](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)

**Q18. Are land values eligible for 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.

**Q19. 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 a species impacted by an emerging issue) may be considered for funding under this program.

**Q20. 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 now committed to helping States implement their Plans in 2016 and beyond.