



## The Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund 2009 Grants Program A Request for Proposals

The Wildlife Conservation Society's North America Program is pleased to announce the third round of grant making through its Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund - a program to support nonprofit organization and state wildlife agencies in their efforts to implement the State Wildlife Action Plans. Interested organizations and agencies should carefully review the guidelines and recommendations outlined in this Request For Proposals and submit the required pre-proposal application form to [dlong@wcs.org](mailto:dlong@wcs.org) no later than 5:00 PM MST on March 27, 2009.

### I. Program Overview

With funding provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the [WCS Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund](#) provides competitive grants to conservation organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, and tribal governments for projects focused on implementing priority conservation actions and strategies identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. The Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund will provide a total of \$3 million in grants over a two-year period, awarding \$1.5 million in 2009 and \$1.5 million again in 2010. This Request for Proposals (RFP), detailed below, is for 2009 grants only.

More information on State Wildlife Action Plans is available at both [wildlifeactionplans.org](http://wildlifeactionplans.org) and the *Teaming with Wildlife* website [teaming.com](http://teaming.com).

For the first time, this program will be able to provide grants not only to nonprofit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)3 status, but to state wildlife agencies, tribal governments, and regional associations of state fish and wildlife agencies. See Section III below for additional details. Grants can only be awarded for projects within the 50 U.S. states or six U.S. territories with an approved Wildlife Action Plan. The Fund is unable to make grants to for-profit corporations or individuals. The Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund cannot be used to support: capital costs for land acquisition or conservation easements, building construction, political lobbying, organizational capacity building, captive breeding, zoo exhibits, or the gathering of additional data for a State Wildlife Action Plan through biological inventory, monitoring, or research (unless the proposed data gathering is a minor component of a project addressing one of the funding priorities outlined in the next section). Proposals that are primarily focused on research or data collection will not be considered.

### II. Funding Priorities

**Important:** Highest preference will be given to projects that: a) apply sources of matching funds from private, local, state, and federal programs or seek to create new sources of funding for the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plan priorities, b) demonstrate strong working partnerships between state wildlife agencies or tribal governments and nongovernmental conservation organizations; and c) complement or enhance larger-scale regional or multi-state conservation objectives, as defined by State Wildlife Action Plans.

## 2009 Wildlife Action Opportunity Fund Program Priorities

- 1. Promoting Wildlife Resilience to Climate Change** - Projects that demonstrate on-the-ground management responses for wildlife adaptation. Projects designed to work collaboratively with state fish and wildlife agencies to develop strategies and actions for responding to climate change (e.g. use of ecosystem services incentives for habitat protection). Projects that work to incorporate wildlife adaptation into State Wildlife Action Plans and/or with other local, state, and federal planning efforts (e.g. plans for alternative energy development, new protected areas, or county growth). Projects that integrate existing wildlife data with other climate change planning efforts. Projects that conduct wildlife vulnerability assessments for terrestrial and aquatic species in priority regions identified by State Wildlife Action Plans or downscale existing models.
- 2. Communicating about State Wildlife Action Plans** - Projects that publicize and raise the profile of State Wildlife Action Plans with nongovernmental organizations, elected officials, decision and policy makers, and private landowners. For example, a project that works to build new partnerships between state wildlife agencies and nongovernmental conservation organizations.
- 3. State Wildlife Action Plan Accessibility** - Projects that work collaboratively to improve existing State Wildlife Action Plans or that integrate an Action Plan's conservation priorities with other public planning efforts. This funding priority is restricted to four types of projects – a) projects that work collaboratively to integrate State Wildlife Action Plan priorities with other land-use or natural resource planning efforts of public agencies at the local, state, or federal level, such as a county growth or comprehensive plan b) development of or improvements to maps of focal conservation areas (including freshwater and marine), c) development of prioritized strategies and actions that help facilitate conservation action, and d) development of specific actions or guidelines in response to climate change (see priority 1 above).
- 4. Policy research** - Projects aimed towards changes in natural resource policy at the local, state, or federal government level that facilitate implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. We are particularly interested in projects to identify and secure new or existing sources of public and private funding for implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. For example, a project that utilizes impact payments from energy development to fund offsetting conservation actions identified in State Wildlife Action Plans.
- 5. Species and Habitat Management** – Projects aimed towards reintroducing or supplementing populations of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), as identified by a State Wildlife Action Plan, to historical range from which the species has been lost or greatly reduced. Projects proposing to develop and implement specific management guidelines for such species (e.g., a project proposing to reduce or eliminate disturbances to a SGCN). Large-scale stewardship projects that both implement the priorities of State Wildlife Action Plans and can serve as models that may be replicated in other places including projects in terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal marine realms. Projects that propose to re-establish or mimic natural fire regimes or natural flow regimes in streams and rivers.
- 6. Wildlife, Energy, Infrastructure, & Connectivity** – Projects that seek to integrate connectivity needs of wildlife with State Wildlife Action Plans. Projects that seek to integrate State Wildlife Action Plan priorities for the needs of wildlife with plans for energy development, transportation infrastructure, and community development activities. Projects to protect wildlife connectivity areas as prioritized by State Wildlife Action Plans.

See Section III Guidelines/Frequently Asked Questions for further detail on minimum requirements, sources of match, partnerships, requirements for both state agencies and nongovernmental organizations, and other important guidelines.

### III. Guidelines/Frequently Asked Questions

**How do I apply?** Please see instructions and use the pre-proposal application form that begins on page 6 below.

**What is the deadline for submission of pre-proposals?** Pre-proposals are due no later than 5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time on March 27, 2009.

**What is the range of funding that can be requested?** \$20,000 to \$200,000 per project.

**What is the duration of funding for projects?** 12-24 months beginning in August 2009.

**Can organizations or state agencies submit multiple pre-proposals for different projects?** Yes, but only one per state or territory. State agencies may submit only one proposal for their state, but may partner on proposals for multi-state projects with other agencies or projects with nongovernmental organizations as the applicant.

**Can the same project or organization be funded again?** Any organization previously funded through this grants program is eligible to apply for support or new funding for a different project(s).

**Can I reapply for the same project if my proposal was not funded in a previous year's cycle?** Yes, but be aware that program priorities, minimum requirements, and application processes have all changed. Please read this RFP carefully for instructions.

**Will multi-state or national level projects be considered?** Yes, we encourage applications for projects that occur across state boundaries, in multiple states, or which address a national need for State Wildlife Action Plans. Applicants should demonstrate collaboration with all states involved in multi-state projects.

**Are projects that address climate change eligible?** Yes, but they must fit with the priorities of the State Wildlife Action Plans. See Section II of this RFP for more details.

**Who will evaluate the proposals and make decisions on the grant awards?** The Wildlife Conservation Society is responsible for the evaluation of all proposals and final decisions on grant awards. A national advisory committee comprised of representatives from conservation nonprofits, private foundations, state wildlife agencies, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service will assist WCS with the evaluation process.

**Is it appropriate to contact members of the advisory committee?** It is not appropriate to contact committee members to lobby for your proposal. All questions on the grants program, eligibility, funding priorities, and application process should be directed to the Wildlife Conservation Society. See WCS staff contact information on page 6 below.

**What is the source of funding for the Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund?** A grant to WCS from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

**Will pre-proposals that fall outside the funding priorities or geographies be considered?** No, proposals are restricted to those topics outlined in this RFP and the Fund cannot support conservation projects outside of the 50 states or six U.S. territories. If funding is being sought as part of a multinational project, WCS funding can only be used for that part of the project within the 50 states and six U.S. territories.

**How does the grant proposal process work?** WCS is using a 2-step evaluation process: 1) an open call for pre-proposals, and 2) based on review of the pre-proposals, a selected number of applicants will be invited to submit full proposals.

**When will pre-proposal applicants be notified if they have been selected to submit a full proposal?** We anticipate notifying all applicants of their pre-proposal's status within eight weeks of submission. Those invited to submit full proposals will be notified at that time, as well.

**When will award decisions be made?** Grant awards will be announced in August 2009.

**Are partnerships encouraged?** Yes, partnerships of all types, particularly those between a nongovernmental conservation organization and a state wildlife agency, are encouraged. State wildlife agency and tribal government applicants must have a nongovernmental partner on their project.

**Should I contact my state wildlife agency before submitting my proposal?** While not required, we strongly encourage all applicants to speak with state agency personnel about their project(s), its alignment with State Wildlife Action Plan priorities and potential collaborations. A list of current State Wildlife Action Plan coordinators is available at: <http://www.teaming.com/states/>

**Are matching funds required?** Yes, the Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund requires a 1:1 match with a maximum of 50% of match funding from in-kind sources. If matching funds have not yet been secured, please indicate a time frame and sources from which you anticipate securing other funding. Previously expended funds are not eligible as a match.

**Can funds from mitigation or environmental damage awards be used as a match?** Yes, we are very interested in supporting projects that direct mitigation funds or payments of natural resource and environmental damage awards toward priority actions of State Wildlife Action Plans consistent with the program requirements for use of such funds (e.g., mitigation funds from highway projects or settlements reached at EPA Superfund sites). WCS funds may not be used to do mitigation that is required under the law.

**Can Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund support be used on State Wildlife Grant (SWG) –funded projects?** Yes, our funds can be used to match SWG grants and vice versa.

**What other local, state and federal funds can be used as match?** We look favorably upon projects that apply funding from innovative sources to the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. Examples include, but are not limited to: county bond referendum dollars for land conservation (though WCS funding can not be used directly for land acquisition capital); other state wildlife, transportation, or environmental protection programs; and federal incentive programs through the Farm Bill (e.g., National Resource Conservation Service's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative), Department of Interior Land and Water Protection Fund, Department of Defense Buffer Program, any funds available through the new federal stimulus

package, National Marine Fisheries Service Species of Concern Program, Federal Highway Administration transportation mitigation funding, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' Multi-state Conservation Grants Program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Keystone and Special Initiative Grants programs.

**What other types of funds can be used as a match?** Funds from private sources, corporate donors, foundations, memberships, and other public sources may all count as match. Some matching funds may be "in-kind"; i.e. a donation of goods or services rather than cash or property. Funds previously expended on a project or property donations will not be accepted as match. Please check with us if you have questions on use of matching funds.

**What are the evaluation criteria?** Pre-proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: a) alignment with the priority actions and strategies of a State Wildlife Action Plan(s) in states where conservation work will be implemented; b) conservation outcomes are well-defined, impact-oriented, and attainable in a 12-24 month time period; c) project fits within the scope of the funding priorities identified in this RFP; d) qualifications of organization and individuals involved in the project; e) availability of matching funds and; f) demonstrated coordination with a diversity of partners, especially between state wildlife agencies or tribal governments and nongovernmental conservation organizations for implementing State Wildlife Action Plans.

**If my project is funded, what requirements will I need to meet?** All successful applicants are required to submit a brief progress report every six months and a comprehensive final report at the end of the project. Grantees will be required to post their project information on the Conservation Registry ([www.conservationregistry.org](http://www.conservationregistry.org)) and create a 2-page fact sheet about their project for use in communications materials. Grantees are occasionally asked to participate in surveys, evaluation activities, and other learning opportunities.

**How can I find out information about my state's Wildlife Action Plan?** Contact your state wildlife agency, visit [wildlifeactionplans.org](http://wildlifeactionplans.org) or go to the [teaming.com](http://teaming.com) web site for more information and to obtain contact information for each State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies also offers a list of state wildlife agencies websites at [fishwildlife.org/where\\_us.html](http://fishwildlife.org/where_us.html).

**How can I get more information on this process?** The WCS website ([wcs.org/wildlifeopportunity](http://wcs.org/wildlifeopportunity)) provides more information on the grant program, including a list of previously funded projects. If you have further questions, please contact Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund Program Officer Darren Long at (406) 556-7203 or email [dlong@wcs.org](mailto:dlong@wcs.org).

#### IV. Instructions and Application for Submission of Pre-proposals

Please read these instructions carefully, as well as all of the guidelines provided above.

Pre-proposals must be submitted as email attachments in MS Word or plain text format (no PDF's please) to [dlong@wcs.org](mailto:dlong@wcs.org) no later than **March 27, 2009 at 5:00 PM** Mountain Standard Time. Grant applicants will be notified by email that their application has been received.

The pre-proposal is limited to a total of five pages:

- Page 1 is a single cover page with contact information and references
- Pages 2-4 are three pages of detail about the proposed project, including a budget
- Page 5 is a single page outlining the qualifications of the individuals and organizations involved in the project.

Requirements:

**Please use the document titled, "WCS Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund Pre-Proposal Application Form.doc to submit your application.** The document is available for download from our website at [www.wcs.org/wildlifeopportunity](http://www.wcs.org/wildlifeopportunity).

Please include the name of the applicant organization in the file name. Font size should be 11 point or larger and margins should be at least 1 inch on all sides. Proposals must be submitted as MS Word, rich text or plain text attachments via email. **Please, no PDF formatted attachments.**

Please keep the question numbers and question text intact within the main "Proposal" section application on pages 2-4. If you need extra space, you may delete the accompanying text in *italics*.

Proposals submitted by regular mail or in any other electronic format than specified above will not be considered. **Please do not send letters of support, appendices, brochures, or other supplementary information with your pre-proposal.** In order to conserve paper resources, please do not send a hard copy of your pre-proposal application.

Contacts:

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