

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants

PURPOSE

One of the primary threats to species is loss of habitat. The Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program provides funding to States and Territories for acquisitions of habitat that support approved recovery plans.

Because the existing Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Land Acquisition Grants Program provides substantial funding for land acquisitions associated with HCPs, the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program will not be used to fund land acquisitions associated with permitted HCPs.

For fiscal year 2003, competition for the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant funds will be held at the Regional level. Grant funding for this program will be allocated to the Regions by the formula used to allocate Recovery Implementation Program funding.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for funding under the Recovery Land Acquisition program, **a land acquisition proposal must meet all of the mandatory conditions listed below**. If a land acquisition proposal does not meet these conditions, do not submit a proposal for consideration.

1. A proposal must include 25 percent non-Federal cost share (decreases to 10 percent if 2 or more States or Territories are contributors to the proposal and its activities) as per section 6 of the ESA. Insular Areas including the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from any matching requirements under all Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Programs (based on an August 23, 1993, Director's Memorandum)
2. A proposal cannot include FWS FTE costs.
3. We do not intend to grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).
4. Habitat must be set aside in perpetuity for the purposes of conservation (this can include easements deeded in perpetuity or other similar instruments).

5. The funds should contribute to the implementation of an approved final or draft recovery plan for at least one listed species. An exception will ONLY be made with sufficient justification, according to the following: (1) newly listed species where sufficient time (2 ½ years) for development of a recovery plan has not passed, (2) if the species is exempt from the requirement for development of a recovery plan, or (3) if a recovery plan has not been developed, but the species conservation planning efforts have identified land acquisition priorities. All exceptions will require a narrative justification.
6. The specific parcel(s) to be acquired with the grant money is identified. NOTE: Evidence demonstrating that the landowners are willing sellers (i.e., a letter or other form of written acknowledgment) will be required prior to transfer of funds.
7. The proposal must state a commitment to funding for, and implementation of, management of the habitat in perpetuity, consistent with the conservation needs of the species.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

States, Territories, or other non-Federal partners will be responsible for ensuring that appraisal and title work are completed. The cost of conducting an appraisal(s) and completing title work, in accordance with Federal requirements, must either be assumed by the State or a non-Federal subgrantee, or included in the total cost of the proposal.

State administrative costs must also either be assumed by the State or included in the proposal in accordance with Federal requirements.

**RECOVERY LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2003 EVALUATION FORM**

FWS Regional Staff: Please fill out this form completely.

May attach written explanations for the categories in this form and any additional information.

Region_____

State(s)_____

Service contact for more information_____

Acreage of land acquisition (break down acreage by parcel if more than one parcel is proposed for acquisition)_____

Estimated total cost of the proposed project (i.e., Federal and non-Federal portions)_____

% of cost to be shared by non-Federal entity (also list entities) _____

Amount of funding requested (total cost minus the non-Federal match) (break down by parcel if more than one is proposed for acquisition)_____

Relative Regional priority for this proposal_____

Justification for Regional priority_____

(Total points available = 100 points.)

SPECIES BENEFITS

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the land acquisition will be for listed, proposed, and candidate species.

Federally listed species are defined as those species listed as threatened or endangered by the Federal Government through section 4 of the Endangered Species Act. Unlisted species include candidate, proposed, State listed and all other species.

1) Listed species benefits. Extent to which the habitat acquisition contributes to recovery. (consideration should be given to the magnitude of the benefit in terms of the proportion of the species range/area encompassed by the acquisition, the contribution to stated recovery goals, and

whether the acquisition will allow for delisting or downlisting of a listed species. Please provide a brief justification for the score.) (20 pts maximum)

___ Low benefit to recovery (acquisition will provide habitat that is currently unoccupied) - 5 pts

___ Medium benefit to recovery (acquisition is necessary to avoid a significant decline of the taxon {due to loss of habitat, increased threats, etc.}) - 10 pts

___ High benefit to recovery (acquisition is necessary to avoid extinction within the next five years, or the acquisition will assist the taxon achieve its recovery criteria within the next five years)- 20 pts

Justification:

2) Listed species recovery priority number. For those listed species that will benefit from the proposed acquisition that do not currently have an assigned priority number, you may calculate the appropriate number using the guidance provided in the *Federal Register* on September 21, 1983 (Pgs.,43098 - 43105, Vol. 48. No. 184 and Correction in FR notice of Nov. 15, 1983 Pg., 51985, Vol. 48. No. 221) (22 pts maximum)

___ 1 to 3 - 10 pts

___ 4 to 8 - 5 pts

___ 9 to 13 - 2 pts

___ 14 to 18 - 1 pt

Identify species and priority number assigned:

3) Number of species benefitted (listed, proposed, and candidate only; at least one listed species must benefit). Draft recovery plans may only be considered if a Notice of Availability for the draft plan has been published in the *Federal Register*. Species that are warranted but precluded from listing are considered candidate species. (20 pts maximum)

___ Species with final recovery plans - 8 pts for each species with a final plan

___ Species with draft recovery plans - 4 pts for each species with a draft plan

___ Listed (without draft or final recovery plan), proposed, or candidate species - 2 pts for each species

Total points for species benefits (sum of 1-3): _____

ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS

The purpose of this section is to evaluate how beneficial the proposed land acquisition will be for the listed, unlisted (including State-listed species), proposed and candidate species.

4) Ecosystem benefits (20 pts maximum)

Function

___ Habitat fills a critical role in the life cycle of the primary species for which the land is acquired (8 pts)

___ Habitat requires little or no management to provide benefits to the primary species (4 pts)

Connectivity

___ Habitat links two existing protected areas together or is adjacent to existing protected areas, to reduce habitat fragmentation (8 pts)

Total points for ecosystem benefits (sum of 4): _____

COST SHARE CONTRIBUTIONS

5) Amount of cost-share. If two or more States or Territories are contributors, the non-Federal cost share decreases to 10 percent. To be eligible for this reduction, each State must actively participate and each State's contribution must be described, e.g., an action in a recovery plan for a species of multi-State concern, in which two or more States or Territories are actively participating in recovery actions. (18 pts maximum)

___ Minimum 25% (or 10% where two or more States are involved, or 0% for identified Insular Areas) (0 pts)

___ Each additional 5% (2 pts)

Total points for cost share contributions (sum of 5): _____

TOTAL POINTS FOR THIS PROPOSAL (sum of 1-5 above): _____