

years during the course of conducting otherwise lawful land use activities on public land. The permit would also cover 8 federally listed plants and 2 currently unlisted plants. Listed species proposed to be covered are the federally-endangered California least tern (*Sterna antillarum brownii*), Morro shoulderband snail (*Helminthoglypta walkeriana*), marsh sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*), La Graciosa thistle (*Cirsium loncholepis*), salt marsh bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *maritimus*), Indian Knob mountainbalm (*Eriodictyon altissimum*), Nipomo Mesa lupine (*Lupinus nipomoensis*), Gambel's water cress (*Rorippa gambellii*), California seablite (*Suaeda californica*); the federally-threatened western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), and Morro manzanita (*Arcotostaphylos morroensis*). Unlisted species proposed to be covered are the State-threatened surf thistle (*Cirsium rhizophylum*) and beach spectacle pod (*Dithyrea maritima*).

Currently, CDPR is requesting a permit for incidental take of the covered animal species on six park units, or portions thereof, in the Estero Bay and Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes areas of San Luis Obispo County. From north to south, the park units are: Estero Bluffs, Morro Strand State Beach, Morro Bay State Park, Montaña De Oro State Park, Pismo Dunes Natural Preserve (a subunit of Pismo State Beach), and Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. Together, the covered units encompass approximately 24 square miles. The proposed HCP would be designed principally to avoid the take of the Covered Species, but it also would include provisions to minimize and mitigate the impacts of any take that may occur.

Activities proposed to be covered by the HCP (Covered Activities) are generally activities that result from visitor use, ongoing operations of the State Parks, or from the resource protection measures needed to avoid and minimize the impacts of park use on the covered species. Covered Activities fall into five broad categories: park visitor activities, general park maintenance and operations, natural resource management, special projects, and special events.

The proposed HCP would describe how the effects of the Covered Activities would be minimized and mitigated under the conservation program. Program components would likely include: avoidance and minimization measures; monitoring; adaptive management; predator control; and

mitigation measures consisting of habitat restoration and enhancement.

Environmental Impact Statement

CDPR and the Service have selected Thomas Reid Associates (TRA) to prepare the EIS/EIR. The document will be prepared in compliance with NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). TRA will prepare the EIS/EIR under the supervision of the Service, which will be responsible for the scope and content of the NEPA document. CDPR will be responsible for the scope and content of the CEQA document.

The EIS/EIR will consider the proposed action, the issuance of a Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit under the ESA, no action (no permit), and a reasonable range of alternatives. A detailed description of the impacts of the proposed action and each alternative will be included in the EIS/EIR. The alternatives to be considered for analysis in the EIS/EIR may include: variations in the scope of covered activities; variations in the location, amount and type of conservation; variations in permit duration; or, a combination of these elements.

The EIS will also identify potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on biological resources, land use, air quality, water quality, water resources, socioeconomic, and other environmental issues that could occur with the implementation of the proposed actions and alternatives. For all potentially significant impacts, the EIS will identify avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce these impacts, where feasible, to a level below significance.

Review of the EIS will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of NEPA, Council on the Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508), the Administrative Procedures Act, other applicable regulations, and the Service's procedures for compliance with those regulations. This notice is being furnished in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.7 of NEPA to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIS. The primary purpose of the scoping process is to identify important issues and alternatives raised by the public, related to the proposed action. Written comments from interested parties are welcome to ensure that the full range of issues related to the permit request is identified. Comments will only be accepted in written form. You may submit written comments by mail, e-mail, or facsimile transmission (see

ADDRESSES). All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

Dated: February 10, 2005.

Ken McDermond,

Deputy Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 05–2965 Filed 2–15–05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Fiscal Year 2005 Landowner Incentive Program (Non-Tribal Portion) for States, Territories, and the District of Columbia

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Service is requesting proposals at this time under the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) for conservation grants to States, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa (all hereafter referred to collectively as States), and Tribes. The Service will address will address the Tribal component of LIP under a separate Federal Register notice.

DATES: The Service must receive your grant proposal no later than April 18, 2005.

ADDRESSES: All parts of the grant proposal must be received prior to the deadline. We will not accept facsimile grant proposals. States are required to submit their proposals in two formats: *electronic* (e.g., Word, Word Perfect or PDF files) and *hard copy*. Electronic files must be sent to Kim Galvan at kim_galvan@fws.gov. In addition, hard copy grant proposals must be hand-delivered, couriered, or mailed to the Service's Division of Federal Assistance at one of the addresses listed in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kim Galvan or Genevieve Pullis LaRouche, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 North Fairfax Drive—Mailstop MBSP 4020, Arlington, VA 22203–1610; telephone, 703–358–2420; e-mail, kim_galvan@fws.gov or Genevieve.LaRouche@fws.gov. Alternatively, you may contact any of the individuals identified under the Regional Office

Addresses in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service will award grants on a competitive basis to State fish and wildlife agency programs that enhance, protect, or restore habitats that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands. A copy of the FY 2005 LIP Guidelines can be obtained at <http://federalaid.fws.gov/lip/lipguidelines.html> or from the Regional Offices listed in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

The Service will distribute any LIP funds made available in the FY 2005 budget in the same manner as that described in this notice. The Service requests that the States number the pages in their proposals and limit each proposal to no more than 50 pages, inclusive of attachments.

Background Information: Earlier this year, we invited comments from the States regarding proposal ranking criteria the Service uses in evaluating Tier-2 grants for LIP. Based on these comments and our experience operating this program for 3 years, we made some changes to Grant Proposal National Review Team Subcriteria Guidance. It is our hope that these changes will provide greater clarity to the selection criteria and improve the overall fairness of the approval process. The following is a copy of the new Guidance.

Grant Proposal Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance

Tier-2 Grant Proposals

Review and Scoring Based on Criteria

(a) Proposal provides clear and sufficient detail to describe the program. States are encouraged to describe any projects that are part of a broader scale conservation effort at the State or regional level (10 points total).

- Proposal is easy to understand and contains all elements described in 522 FW 1.3C (0–2 pts).
- The objectives are clearly stated and have quantifiable outcomes (0–2 pts).
- Proposal clearly describes the types of conservation projects and/or activities eligible for funding (0–2 pts).
- Proposal clearly describes how conservation project and/or activities will implement portions of conservation plans on a local, State, regional, or national scale (0–2 pts).
- Proposal describes how species and habitats will be monitored and evaluated to determine effectiveness of LIP-sponsored activities (0–2 pts).

(b) Proposal describes adequate management systems for fiscal, contractual, and performance

accountability, including annual monitoring and evaluation of progress toward desired program objectives and performance measures and goals identified in the “expected results or benefits” section of the grant application (7 points total).

- Fiscal accountability process are clearly described (0–2 pts).
- Contractual accountability standards and processes are clearly described (0–2 pts).
- Monitoring process that will ensure accurate and timely evaluation of program performance are clearly described (0–3 pts).

(c) Proposal describes the State’s fair and equitable system for fund distribution (10 points total).

- System described is inherently fair and free from bias (0–3 pts).
- Proposal describes State’s ranking criteria and process of selecting projects (0–3 pts).
- States’ ranking criteria are adequate to prioritize projects based on conservation priorities identified in proposal (0–2 pts).
- Project proposals will be (or were) subject to an objective ranking procedure (diverse ranking panel, computerized ranking model, etc.) (0–2 pts).

(d) Proposal describes outreach efforts to effect broad public awareness, support, and participation (2 points total). LIP outreach efforts funded with Tier-1 grants or other funding sources can be described.

(e) Proposal describes by name the species-at-risk to benefit from the proposal and how the described activities would benefit each species (10 points total).

- 0 points if no species are identified,
- 5 points if 1–5 species are identified,
- 6 points for 6 species,
- 7 points for 7 species,
- 8 points for 8 species,
- 9 points for 9 species, or
- 10 points for 10 or more species.

Note: Assign fewer points if a proposal merely has a long list attached versus one that talks about what will be done for each species and its habitat on private lands if the proposal is funded.)

(f) Proposal describes the percentage of the State’s total LIP Tier-2 program funds identified for use on private lands as opposed to staff and related administrative support (4 points total).

- 0 points if this is not addressed or admin is >35%,
- 1 point if admin is 25 to 35%,
- 2 points if admin is 15 to 25%,
- 3 points if admin is 5 to 15%,
- 4 points if admin is 0 to 5%.

“Use on private lands” includes all costs directly related to implementing

on-the-ground projects with LIP funds. Activities considered project use include technical guidance to landowner applicants; habitat restoration, enhancement, or management; purchase of conservation easements (including costs for appraisals, land survey, legal review, etc.); biological monitoring of Tier-2 project sites; and performance monitoring of Tier-2 projects. Staffing costs should be included in this category only when the staff-time will directly relate to implementation of a Tier-2 project. Standard Indirect rates negotiated between the State and Federal Government should also be included under Project Use.

“Staff and related administrative support” includes all costs related to administration of LIP. Activities considered administrative included outreach (presentations, development, or printing of brochures, etc.); planning; research; administrative staff support; staff supervision; and overhead charged by subgrantees (unless the rate is an approved negotiated rate for Federal grants.)

(g) Proposal identifies the percentage of nonfederal cost sharing (3 points total).

- (Note: I.T. = Insular Territories)
- 0 points if nonfederal cost share is 25%,
- 1 point if nonfederal cost share is >25% to 50% (>0 to 25% I.T.),
- 2 points if nonfederal cost share is >50% to 75% (>25 to 50% I.T.), or
- 3 points if nonfederal cost share is >75% nonfed share (>50% I.T.).

(h) Proposal demonstrates the urgency of the conservation actions, and the short- and long-term benefits to be gained (10 points total).

- Proposal shows no, low, medium, or high urgency of need for identified at-risk species (0–3 pts).
- Proposal shows no or some short-term benefits to be achieved (0–1 pt).
- Proposal shows no or some long-term benefits to be achieved (0–1 pt).

• Proposal describes discrete, obtainable, and quantifiable performance measures to be accomplished (for example, the number of acres of wetlands or stream miles to be restored, or number of at-risk species whose status within the State will be improved) (0–2 pts).

• Proposal, taken as a whole, demonstrates that the State can implement a LIP that has a high likelihood for success in conserving at-risk species on private lands (0–3 pts).

(i) Has applicant received Tier-2 grant funds previously? (5 points total)

- (1) 0 points, if State has received Tier 2-funds previously, or

(2) If State has not received Tier-2 funds previously:
 1 point if State has not applied for Tier-2 funds previously,
 3 points if State has applied one of two previous years,
 5 points if State has applied both previous years.
 Total Score Possible = 61 points
 Total Score ____

Regional Office Addresses: Hard copy grant proposals must be hand-delivered, couriered, or mailed to the Service's Division of Federal Assistance at the following locations:

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 NE., 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181. LIP Contact: Verlyn Ebert, (503) 231-6128; verlyn_ebert@fws.gov.

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 500 Gold Avenue SW, Suite 9019, PO Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103-1306, LIP Contact: Bob Anderson, (505) 248-7459; bob_anderson@fws.gov.

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, One Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056. LIP Contact: Lucinda Corcoran, (612) 713-5135; lucinda_corcoran@fws.gov.

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30345. LIP Contact: Christine Willis, (404) 679-4154; Christine_willis@fws.gov.

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley MA 01035-9589. LIP Contact: Colleen Sculley, (413) 253-8509; colleen_sculley@fws.gov.

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225-0486. LIP Contact: Otto Jose, (303) 236-8156 ext. 236; otto_jose@fws.gov.

Region 7. Alaska

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199. LIP Contact: Nancy Tankersley, (907) 786-3545; nancy_tankersley@fws.gov.

Dated: February 4, 2005.

Kris LaMontagne,

Acting Assistant Director.

[FR Doc. 05-2929 Filed 2-15-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-SS-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Multistate Conservation Grant Program; Priority List for Conservation Projects

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of priority list.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is publishing in the **Federal Register** the priority list of wildlife and sport fish conservation projects submitted by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for funding under the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. This notice is required by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-408). FY 2005 grants may be made from this priority list.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pam Matthes, Multistate Conservation Grants Program Coordinator, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop FA-4020, Arlington, Virginia 22203; phone (703) 358-2066; or e-mail Pam_Matthes@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (Improvement Act) amended the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration

Act (16 U.S.C. 669 *et seq.*) and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777 *et seq.*) and established the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. The Improvement Act authorizes grants of up to \$3 million annually from funds available under each of the Restoration Acts, for a total of up to \$6 million annually. Grants may be made from a priority list of projects submitted by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA), which represent the State fish and wildlife agencies. The Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, exercising the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, need not fund all recommended projects, but must not fund projects that are not recommended.

To be eligible for consideration by the IAFWA, a project must benefit fish and/or wildlife conservation in at least 26 States, a majority of the States in a region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or a regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies. Grants may be made to a State or group of States, to nongovernmental organizations, and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or a State or group of States for the purpose of carrying out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. IAFWA requires proposals to address its National Conservation Needs, which are announced annually at the same time as the request for proposals.

The IAFWA prepares the priority list through a committee comprised of the heads of State fish and game departments (or their designees) in consultation with non-governmental organizations that represent conservation organizations, sportsmen organizations and industries that support or promote hunting, trapping, recreational shooting, bow hunting, or archery. The priority list must be approved by majority vote of the heads of State fish and game departments (or their designees).

The priority list of projects submitted by the IAFWA follows:

Attachments

Dated: December 6, 2004.

Matt Hogan,

Deputy Director.

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

LIP Final Implementation Guidelines (FY 2005)

Definitions of Terms Used in These Guidelines

“Species-at-risk” is defined as any Federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate animal or plant species; species listed by NatureServe as critically imperiled (G1), imperiled (G2), or vulnerable (G3); or species listed by a State agency as endangered, threatened, of special concern, or others with justification. Species classified by the State as a “species-at-risk” must be identified as such in its grant proposal.

“Private land” is considered any nongovernment-owned land.

A “project” is a discrete task to be undertaken by or with private landowners for the accomplishment of the defined LIP objectives.

Program Requirements

1. What is the objective of this program? The primary objective of this program is to establish or supplement State landowner incentive programs that protect and restore habitats on private lands, to benefit Federally listed, proposed, or candidate species or other species determined to be at-risk, and provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for habitat protection and restoration.
2. How will the Tribes participate in LIP? The Service will allocate 10% of the total funds appropriated under LIP to Tribes for a competitive grant program that we will describe in a separate Federal Register notice. For Tribal LIP grant information contact Pat Durham, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Native American Liaison, 1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 3251, Washington, D.C. 20240 or call (202) 208-4133.
3. Does LIP require plans to be developed like the State Wildlife Grant Program and the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program? No.
4. Who can apply for an LIP grant? The State agency with primary responsibility for fish and wildlife will be responsible for submitting all proposals to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance (FA). All other governmental entities, individuals, and organizations, including Tribes, may partner with or serve as a subgrantee to that fish and wildlife agency.

Fiscal Issues

5. How will the Service distribute the available funds?

The Service anticipates this and future bills will continue to direct the distribution of funds on a competitive basis. Tribes will be allocated 10% of the annual appropriation and States will be allocated 90% of the annual appropriation. From each of these amounts, up to 3% of the funds will be deducted for administration of the grants. No State may receive more than 5 percent of the total amount available to the States.

6. What is the non-Federal match requirement for LIP grants? The Service requires a minimum of 25% non-Federal match for LIP grants (i.e. at least 25 percent of the total costs must come from sources other than LIP or other federal funds). The U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from matching requirements for this program (based on 48 U.S.C. 1469a. (d)).

7. May the required non-Federal match be in-kind contributions? Yes. Allowable in-kind contributions are defined in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Part 12.64.

Grant Administration

8. How will the Service award grants to States? The Service will use a two-tiered award system. We will assess Tier-1 grant proposals to see that they meet minimum eligibility requirements. The Service will rank Tier-2 grants and award grants after a national competition.

9. What are the intended objectives of Tier-1 grants? The Service intends that Tier-1 grants fund staff and associated support necessary to develop or enhance an existing landowner program. Through the development of plans, outreach, and associated activities that assist in the accomplishment of projects on private lands, these programs should benefit private landowners and other partners to help manage and protect habitats that benefit species-at-risk.

10. What are the eligibility requirements for Tier-1 grants? To receive a Tier-1 grant a State program must demonstrate in its proposal that it can meet all of the following:

- (a) Deliver technical and financial assistance to landowners;
- (b) Provide for appropriate administrative functions such as fiscal and contractual accountability;
- (c) Use LIP grants to supplement and not replace existing funds;
- (d) Distribute funds to landowners through a fair and equitable system;
- (e) Provide outreach and coordination that assist in administering the program; and
- (f) Describe a process for the identification of species-at-risk, and a process for the identification of clear, obtainable and quantified goals and performance measures that will help achieve the management goals and objectives of LIP. Through this program,

the States' efforts and leadership will help the Service meet its Long-Term and Annual Performance Goals.

11. What are the intended objectives of Tier-2 grants? The objectives of a Tier-2 grant should place a priority on the implementation of State programs that provide technical and financial assistance to the private landowner. Programs should emphasize the protection and restoration of habitats that benefit Federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other species-at-risk on private lands. The Service generally intends a Tier-2 grant to fund the expansion of existing State landowner incentive programs or those created under Tier-1 grants.

12. Are there funding limits (caps) for LIP? Yes.

(a) The Service will cap Tier-1 grants at \$180,000 for State fish and wildlife agencies, and \$75,000 for Territories and the District of Columbia.

(b) In addition, no State may receive more than 5% of the total funds available from the FY 2005 appropriation for Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants combined.

13. May a State submit more than one proposal? States may submit one proposal each for Tier-1 and Tier-2 grant under this notice. However, funding limits still apply, as described in the answer to Question 12.

14. If some FY 2005 funds remain after awarding Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants, how will the Service make them available to the States? We will announce subsequent requests for proposals until all LIP funds are obligated. States that have not reached the cap may submit an additional proposal during future requests for proposals.

15. Will interest accrue to the account holding LIP funds and if so how will it be used? No. LIP funds were not approved for investing, and as a result no interest will accrue to the account.

16. What administrative requirements must States comply with in regard to LIP? States must comply with 43 CFR, Part 12 that provides the administrative regulations and OMB Circular A-87 that provides cost principles (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>).

17. What information must a State include in a grant proposal? An LIP grant proposal must include an Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) and must identify whether it is a Tier-1 or Tier-2 proposal. The proposal must also include statements describing the need, objectives, expected results or benefits, approach or procedures, location, and estimated cost for the proposed work (OMB Circular A-102). The expected results or benefits section must identify the State's discrete, obtainable and quantified performance measures to be accomplished (for example, the anticipated number of acres of wetlands or stream miles to be restored, or the number of at-risk species with improved status) that will address the goals of LIP and, at the same time, the Service's Long-Term Goals of Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Population (Goal 1.2) and Habitat Conservation (Goal 2.3). The grant proposal should also clearly identify how each of the minimum eligibility

requirements (Tier-1) and ranking criteria (Tier-2) are addressed. The SF-424 is available from FA at any Service Regional Office.

18. Where should a State send grant proposals? States should submit all LIP proposals to the appropriate Federal Assistance (Federal Aid) Regional Offices. States should also submit their Tier-2 proposals in electronic format (Word, WordPerfect, or pdf files) to the Washington Office (Kim_Galvan@fws.gov). Both hard copies and electronic copies of the grant proposal must be received no later than the established deadline.

19. When are proposals due to the Service? The Service will accept proposals between its date of publication in the Federal Register and 60 days after the date of publication in the Federal Register.

20. What process will the Service use to evaluate and select proposals for funding? The Service will evaluate all proposals that are received by the end of the period set forth in the answer to Question 19, above. Successful proposals will then be selected based on the final eligibility and selection criteria in the Implementation Guidelines, and will be subject to the final approval of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The Service will notify all applicants of the results as soon as practicable.

21. Once a proposal is selected for funding, what additional grant documents must the applicant submit and to whom? In addition to the Application for Federal Assistance submitted with the original proposal, the Service requires the following documents: a Grant Agreement (Form 3-1552) and a schedule of work the State proposes to fund through this grant. Additionally, the Service, in cooperation with the applicants, must address Federal compliance issues, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Regional Office FA staff can assist in explaining the procedures and documentation necessary for meeting these Federal requirements. The States must send this additional documentation to the appropriate Regional Office where FA staff will approve the grant agreement to obligate funds. See the answer to Question 24 for Regional Office locations.

22. What reporting requirements must States meet once funds are obligated under an LIP grant agreement? The Service requires an annual progress report and Financial Status Report (FSR) for grants longer than one year. In addition, a final performance report and FSR (SF-269) are due to the Regional Office within 90 days of the grant agreement ending date. In its annual report, the State must include a list of project accomplishments in relation to those which were planned in the grant agreement. The number of upland and wetland acres and the number of riparian/stream miles restored or improved (performance measures), and the species benefited should be provided. This information will help demonstrate the States' efforts and leadership in helping the LIP meet the Service's national goals for Fish and Wildlife Sustainability (1.2) and Habitat Conservation (2.3). The effectiveness of each State's program, as reported in its annual progress reports, will be an important factor considered during the grant award selection process in subsequent years.

23. Will landowners who have LIP projects implemented on their property be required to leave project improvements in place for a specific period? States should address this issue in their grant proposals, landowner incentive programs, and agreements with individual landowners. Habitat improvements should remain in place to realize the desired benefits for species-at-risk.

24. Whom can I contact in the Service about the LIP program in my local or regional area? Correspondence and telephone contacts for the Service are listed by Region below.

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

911 NE 11th Avenue

Portland, Oregon 97232-4181

LIP Contact: Verlyn Ebert, (503) 231-6128

verlyn_ebert@fws.gov

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

500 Gold Avenue SW, Suite 9019

P.O. Box 1306

Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306

LIP Contact: Bob Anderson, (505) 248-7459

bob_anderson@fws.gov

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building

One Federal Drive

Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056

LIP Contact: Lucinda Corcoran, (612) 713-5135

lucinda_corcoran@fws.gov

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200

Atlanta, Georgia 30345

LIP Contact: Christine Willis, (404) 679-7310

christine_willis@fws.gov

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589
LIP Contact: Colleen Sculley, (413) 253-8509
colleen_sculley@fws.gov

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

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486
LIP Contact: Otto Jose, (303) 236-7352
otto_jose@fws.gov

Region 7. Alaska

Regional Director, Division of Federal Aid
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road MS 261
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199
LIP Contact: Nancy Tankersley (907) 786-3545
nancy_tankersley@fws.gov

Region 9. Washington D.C.

Director, Division of Federal Assistance
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 North Fairfax Drive, MBSP 4020
Arlington, VA 22203
LIP Contact: Kim Galvan (703) 358-2420 (kim_galvan@fws.gov) or
Genevieve Pullis LaRouche (703) 358-1854



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

JAN 21 2005



To: State Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Secretary, Department of Natural Resources of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Governor of Guam
Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands
Governor of American Samoa
Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mayor of the District of Columbia

In anticipation of upcoming Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) Request for Proposals, the Service would like to share with you supplemental information regarding program improvements and awarding of funds. Specifically, the purpose of this correspondence is to: (1) announce the changes in Tier-2 criteria; (2) clarify what the Fish and Wildlife service expects in a Tier-1 proposal; (3) discuss the definition of species-at-risk; and (4) notify you of the intended timeline for proposals.

Earlier this year, we invited comments from the States regarding proposal ranking criteria the Service uses in evaluating Tier-2 grants for LIP. Based on these comments and our experience operating this program for three years, we made some changes to the attached *LIP Final Program Guidelines (FY 2005)*. Also, we have included a copy of the *Grant Proposal National Review Team Sub-criteria Guidance* which should assist you in addressing each ranking criteria. It is our hope that these changes will provide greater clarity to the selection criteria and improve the overall fairness of the approval process.

We intend to award funding to Tier-1 proposals again this year. States must meet the eligibility requirements for Tier-1 grants as presented in the LIP Implementation Guidelines. To provide further guidance, we have attached a copy of *LIP Tier 1 Eligibility Requirement Expectations* that describes the information that must be included in the applications. We suggest you address these six eligibility requirements individually as a subheading within the *Approach* or *Procedures* section of the narrative. We expect Tier 1 proposal narratives to have no more than 10 pages.

In order to successfully respond to the program criteria, the State must have a list of their species at risk. Developing a list of species at risk is the State's responsibility. In preparing your list, you should consider federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species; species listed under NatureServe as critically imperiled (G1), imperiled (G2), or vulnerable (G3); or species listed by a State agency as endangered, threatened, of special concern; or others with justification. You should describe the process used to develop your State's list and how you will alter it over time. Keep in mind, Congress intended for this program to help with "delisting" (i.e., species recovery) and in preventing other species in decline from being "federally listed." While species that are currently hunted or fished in your State are not excluded from being designated species-at-risk, you should describe your rationale for including harvested species on the at-risk list to assist in the ranking/evaluation process.

This year, the funding available for LIP Tier-2 grants is reduced from approximately \$27 million in 2004 to \$20 million and it may therefore be necessary to consider partial funding of some proposals. You are encouraged to draft your proposals with this possibility in mind, to ensure that viable conservation programs can be conducted if less than full funding is available.

The anticipated schedule for FY 2005 LIP program consists of placing a 60-day Request for Proposals in the Federal Register in February and a posting on grants.gov. We will ask the States to submit hard copies of their complete Tier-1 and Tier-2 proposals to their respective Federal Assistance (Federal Aid) Regional Offices. States will also be asked to submit their Tier-2 proposals in electronic format (Word, WordPerfect, or pdf files) to the Washington Office. The Washington Office will distribute electronic copies of Tier-2 proposals to the LIP National Review Team. The Regional Offices will select Tier-1 proposals for award recommendations. Within 30 days after the proposal submission deadline, the Review Team will meet and select Tier-2 proposals for award recommendations to the Service Director and Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

While all States are eligible to submit proposals, we encourage States that did not receive Tier-2 funding during the last cycle or never have received Tier-2 funding to submit proposals for FY 2005. We request that States that received funding in FY 2004 to base their funding requests on their need for and ability to use additional LIP funds in the near term.

We hope this information has been helpful to you. If you have any questions, please contact your Regional Federal Assistance Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DIRECTOR

Attachment

Landowner Incentive Program Tier-1 Eligibility Requirement Expectations

(A) Deliver Technical and Financial Assistance to Landowners

Technical Assistance

1. If an existing technical assistance program is in place, which LIP will complement, please describe:
 - Who is involved (e.g., what agency divisions, other agencies, nongovernmental organizations, etc.)?;
 - What types of assistance are available (e.g., monetary, habitat plans, brochures, etc.)?;
 - What is the scope of the existing program (e.g., number of staff involved, number of private landowners contacted, the types of approaches used, etc.)?;
 - How will the State incorporate LIP into the existing program (e.g., holding workshops, developing materials, hiring staff, etc.)?; and
 - How will the State monitor and evaluate the results of this expanded program?
2. If a technical assistance program is not in place or will not be complemented by LIP, address the items above based on the State's plans for implementing LIP.

Financial Assistance

1. If an existing financial assistance program is in place, describe the assistance process and:
 - How much funding does the State currently provide for the program?;
 - Has the State identified any existing problems through audits or other system reviews?;
 - Is there adequate existing staff?; and
 - Is the State contemplating changes to the program that relate to the incorporation of LIP?
2. If a financial assistance program is not currently in place, address the items above to be extent possible based on State plans for implementing LIP.

(B) Provide for Appropriate Administrative Functions Such as Fiscal and Contractual Accountability

Please describe:

- How will the State track the receipt and use of federal funds?;
- How will the State distribute funds to private landowners?;
- How will the State document private landowner (matching or contributing) costs?;
- What type of contractual standards will the State require in its agreements with private landowners?;
- How will the State monitor and verify the contractual standards?;
- Who will develop and where will the State file fiscal and contractual reports?;
- What type of actions does the State propose to take if a private landowner fails to adhere to the contractual standards?;
- What kind of experience does the State have in providing similar administrative support to other programs particularly where funding or in-kind match was provided to or received from other State or Federal agencies, NGO's, or private parties?; and
- Have any audits verified the State's ability to perform such functions?

(C) Use LIP Grants to Supplement and Not Replace Existing Funds

The State should provide an assurance statement that it will only use LIP funds for new programs or to supplement existing programs. (If an existing program is scheduled to be terminated or decreased, LIP funds should not be used to continue the program or replace decreased funding. The Service would consider this action the same as replacing existing funds.)

Supplementing existing programs includes:

1. Adding new staff to a current program and identifying where they would be working (e.g., wildlife division, non-game, etc.);
2. Expanding the types of assistance provided (e.g., monetary, plan documents, technical assistance, etc.); or
3. Broadening the scope of an existing program (e.g., increasing the number of landowners to be contacted or types of outreach to be used, etc.).

(D) Distribute Funds to Landowners Through a Fair and Equitable System

Please describe:

- How does the State propose to develop a fair and equitable system?;
- Does the State propose to weight any specific areas, habitats, or species, and, if so, on what basis?;
- How will the State choose landowners for participation (i.e., Would the State serve landowners on a “first come, first served” basis or would it use some other objective process)?;
- Will the State consider the landowner’s ability to provide match in setting priorities?; and
- Does the State plan to have any additional eligibility requirements to enable landowners to participate in the program?

(E) Provide Outreach and Coordination that Assist in Administering the Program

Please describe:

- Who (division and staff) would oversee the day-to-day administration of the program, prepare grant amendments when needed, prepare program annual performance reports, etc.?;
- Who (division and staff) will be responsible for program outreach?;
- How does the State propose to inform the public and landowners about the program?;
- What mechanisms and approaches does the State propose in this outreach (e.g., a web page, press releases, public workshops, interagency meetings, program literature, etc.)?; and
- How will the State coordinate the program within the agency and with other agencies involved with private lands conservation?

(F) Describe the Process the State will Use for the Identification of Species-at-risk, and the State’s Process for the Identification of Clear, Obtainable and Quantified Goals and Performance Measures That Will Help Achieve the Management Goals and Objectives of LIP

Identification of Species-at-Risk

The State should consider use of a table if it has already developed its species-at-risk list prior to this grant period, and it should describe:

- What existing State and federal species lists did the State use (or does it propose to use) in developing its LIP list?;
- Did the State use (or does it propose to use) the NatureServe species listed as critically imperiled, imperiled, or vulnerable in developing its LIP list?;
- What additional species are considered at-risk and on what basis was (or will) this determination made?;
- Did the State include (or does it intend to include) species that are hunted or fished for on its species-at-risk list? If so, it should include a compelling explanation regarding how these species can be both “at-risk” and available for harvest.

Note: If the State plans to control overabundant species with LIP funds, describe how, and which, species-at-risk would benefit from this activity.

Identification of Clear, Obtainable and Quantified Goals and Performance Measures That Will Help Achieve the Management Goals and Objectives of LIP

Describe:

- What are the goals of the State’s LIP? Goals should be broad statements regarding what the State hopes to accomplish with the program (e.g., “The goal of our LIP is to conserve, protect, and enhance habitat for at risk species on private lands by providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners.”);
- What are the objectives of the State’s LIP? Objectives should be specific, time-bound, output-oriented, realistic, and measurable (e.g., “To develop a written outreach brochure on the LIP for private landowners in 2004.”);
- Who would develop, review and approve additional LIP objectives?;
- What criteria does the State think its objectives should meet?; and
- How will the State conduct monitoring to determine if the goals and objectives have been met for the program (performance measures)?

Landowner Incentive Program (FY05)
Grant Proposal National Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance

State: _____

Tier 2 Grant Proposals

Review and Scoring Based on Criteria

- a) Proposal provides clear and sufficient detail to describe the program. States are encouraged to describe any projects that are part of a broader scale conservation effort at the State or regional level (10 points total).
- Proposal is easy to understand and contains all elements described in 522 FW 1.3C (0-2 pts)
 - The objectives are clearly stated and have quantifiable outcomes (0-2 pts)
 - Proposal clearly describes the types of conservation projects and/or activities eligible for funding (0-2 pts).
 - Proposal clearly describes how conservation projects and/or activities will implement portions of conservation plans at a local, state, regional or national scale (0-2 pts)
 - Proposal describes how species and habitats will be monitored and evaluated to determine effectiveness of LIP-sponsored activities (0-2 pts)
-
- b) Proposal describes adequate management systems for fiscal, contractual, and performance accountability, including annual monitoring and evaluation of progress toward desired program objectives and performance measures and goals identified in the “expected results or benefits” section of the grant application (7 points total).
- Fiscal accountability processes are clearly described (0-2 pts)
 - Contractual accountability standards and processes are clearly described (0-2 pts)
 - Monitoring processes that will ensure accurate and timely evaluation of program performance are clearly described (0-3 pts)
- c) Proposal describes the State’s fair and equitable system for fund distribution (10 points total).
- System described is inherently fair and free from bias (0-3 pts)
 - Proposal describes State’s ranking criteria and process to select projects (0-3 pts)
 - States’ ranking criteria are adequate to prioritize projects based on conservation priorities identified in proposal (0-2 pts)
 - Project proposals will be (or were) subject to an objective ranking procedure (diverse ranking panel, computerized ranking model, etc.) (0-2 pts)
- d) Proposal describes outreach efforts to effect broad public awareness, support, and participation (2 points total). LIP Outreach efforts funded with Tier 1 grants or other funding sources can be described.

- e) Proposal describes by name the species-at-risk to benefit from the proposal and how the described activities would benefit *each* species (10 points total).

0 points if no species are identified
5 points if 1-5 species are identified
6 points for 6 species
7 points for 7 species
8 points for 8 species
9 points for 9 species
10 points for 10 or more species

(Note: assign fewer points if a proposal merely has a long list attached versus one that talks about what will be done for those species and their habitats on private lands if the proposal were funded.)

- f) Proposal describes the percentage of the State's total LIP Tier-2 program funds identified for use on private lands as opposed to staff and related administrative support (4 points total).

0 points if this is not addressed or admin is >35%
1 point if admin is 25 to 35%
2 points if admin is 15 to 25%
3 points if admin is 5 to 15 %
4 points if admin is 0 to 5% admin

("Use on private lands" include all costs directly related to implementing on-the-ground projects with LIP funds. Activities considered project use include: technical guidance to landowner applicants; habitat restoration, enhancement or management; purchase of conservation easements (including costs for appraisals, land survey, legal review, etc); biological monitoring of Tier 2 project sites; performance monitoring of Tier 2 projects. Staffing costs should only be included in this category when the staff-time will directly relate to implementation of a Tier 2 project. Standard Indirect rates negotiated between the State and Federal government should also be included under Project Use. "Staff and related administrative support" include all costs related to administration of LIP. Activities considered administrative include outreach (presentations, development or printing of brochures, etc.); planning; research; administrative staff support; staff supervision; overhead charged by subgrantees unless the rate is an approved negotiated rate for Federal grants.)

- g) Proposal identifies the percentage of nonfederal cost sharing (3 points total).

(Note: I.T.=Insular Territories)

0 point if nonfederal cost share is 25%
1 points if nonfederal cost share is >25% to 50% (>0 to 25% I.T.)
2 points if non federal cost share is >50% to 75% (>25 to 50% I.T.)
3 points if nonfederal cost share is >75% nonfed share (>50% I.T.)

- h) Proposal demonstrates the urgency of the conservation actions, and the short and long term benefits to be gained (10 points total).
- Proposal shows no, low, medium or high urgency of need for identified at-risk species (0-3 pts)
 - Proposal shows no or some short-term benefits to be achieved (0-1 pt)
 - Proposal shows no or some long-term benefits to be achieved (0-1 pt)
 - Proposal describes discrete, obtainable and quantifiable performance measures to be accomplished (for example, the number of acres of wetlands or stream miles to be restored, or number of at-risk species whose status within the State will be improved) (0-2 pts)
 - Proposal, taken as a whole, demonstrates that the State can implement a Landowner Incentive Program that has a high likelihood for success in conserving at-risk species on private lands (0-3 pts)
- i. Has applicant received Tier 2 grant funds previously? (5 points total)
- a) If State has received Tier 2 funds previously 0 points
- b) If State has not received Tier-2 funds previously 1, 3 or 5 points
- If State has not applied for Tier-2 funds previously 1 point
 - If State has applied one of two previous years 3 points
 - State has applied both previous years 5 points

Total Score Possible = 61 points

Total Score _____