



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

MAR 10 2006

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

On February 22, 2006, the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) Request for Proposals was published in the *Federal Register*. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (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 Service expects in a Tier-1 proposal; and (3) notify you of the intended timeline for proposals.

Earlier this year, through the *Federal Register*, we invited comments from the States and others 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 4 years, we made some changes to the LIP Guidelines for FY 2006 (attached). The guidelines include the LIP National Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance for Tier-2 Grant Proposals, which should assist you in addressing the 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. We have included within the LIP Guidelines (FY 2006), the LIP Tier 1 Eligibility Requirement Expectations that describe the information that must be included in the applications. We suggest you address these six eligibility requirements individually as subheadings within the Approach or Procedures section of the narrative.

This year, the approximate level of funding available for LIP Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants is \$18.9 million. Each State may apply for up to \$180,000 in Tier 1 funding, and up to \$945,000 in combined Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding. If the final FY 2006 funding level is determined to be less than \$18.9 million, States' requests will be reduced in proportion to this reduction to ensure that no State receives more than 5 percent of the total LIP funds available nationwide. Due to the relatively low level of LIP funding this year, it may 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.

Grant proposals are due April 24, 2006. We will ask the States to submit hard copies of their complete Tier-1 and Tier-2 proposals to their respective Federal Assistance 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 60 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 that have never received Tier-2 funding to submit proposals for FY 2006. We request that States that received funding in the past 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, appearing to read "A. Dale Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DIRECTOR

Enclosure

# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## 2006 LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM (LIP) GUIDELINES

### Included in this document are:

**Section A.** Landowner Incentive Program Final Implementation Guidelines (FY 2006)

Pgs. 2-8

**Section B.** Landowner Incentive Program Tier-1 Eligibility Requirement Expectations

Pgs. 9-12

**Section C.** Landowner Incentive Program Tier 2 National Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance (FY 2006)

Pgs. 13-19

### 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.

## Section A.

### LIP Final Implementation Guidelines (FY 2006)

#### 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, LIP does not require development of comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies (CWCS). However, the Service anticipates that LIP will be an effective tool for implementing conservation actions for at-risk species on private lands that are identified in the States' CWCS.
- 4. Who can apply for a 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?** Unless it is otherwise stipulated in the appropriation, the Service will allocate 10% of the funds to Tribes, 3% of the funds to the Service administer the program, and 87% of the funds for competitive grants (Tier 1 and Tier 2).
- 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.
- 8. 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 2006 appropriation for Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants combined.
- 9. If some FY 2006 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 awarded. States that have not reached the cap may submit an additional proposal during future requests for proposals.
- 10. 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.

## **Grant Administration**

- 11. How will the Service award grants to States?** The Service will use a two-tiered award system. We will approve Tier-1 grant proposals if they meet minimum eligibility requirements (Section B). The Service will rank Tier-2 grants and award grants through a national competition (Section C.).
- 12. 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 8.
- 13. What information must a State include in a Tier-1 and Tier-2 grant proposal?** A 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 expected to be accomplished (for example, the proposal identifies the number of acres of wetlands, or other types of habitat, stream miles to be restored, and/or number of at-risk species whose habitat within the State will be improved) 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 Tier-1 minimum eligibility requirements (see Section B page 9) and the Tier-2 2006 LIP Ranking Criteria Guidance (see Section C page 13) are addressed. The SF-424 is available from FA at any Service Regional Office and in the Federal Assistance Toolkit.

- 14. What are the intended objectives of Tier-1 grants?** The Service intends that Tier-1 grants fund staff and associated support necessary to develop a new, or enhance an existing, landowner incentive program. Through administration of the program, development of plans, outreach, and other associated activities that assist in 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.
- 15. What are the eligibility requirements for Tier-1 grants?** Details on Tier-1 eligibility requirements can be found in Section B on page 9. In summary, to receive a Tier-1 grant a State program must demonstrate in its proposal that it can accomplish 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.
- 16. Should an updated narrative be submitted with Tier-1 proposals?** Yes. In most cases, the narrative can be very similar to narrative used in previously approved proposals. The narrative should address each of the eligibility requirements and include a brief description of what's been completed to date under LIP Tier-1 and why additional funds are needed. Tier-1 Eligibility Requirement Expectations can be found in Section B on page 9.
- 17. How long should the Tier-1 proposal be?** Proposals must be limited to no more than 10 pages including attachments.

- 18. 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.
- 19. What are the ranking criteria for Tier-2 grants?** The ranking criteria for Tier-2 grants can be found in Section C on page 13.
- 20. Should a ranking criteria summary sheet be included with the Tier-2 proposal?** It is strongly recommended that a *ranking criteria summary sheet* be included with your proposal. This summary should include a short explanation of how and where (page numbers, section) your proposal specifically addresses each ranking criteria.
- 21. Must a State identify its list of species at risk in its Tier-2 proposal?** Yes. In order to successfully respond to the program criteria, the State must have a list of their species at risk. This list can be included as an attachment to the proposal, or referenced with a website link. 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.
- 22. How long should the Tier-2 proposal be?** Proposals must be limited to no more than 50 pages including attachments.
- 23. Should an abstract be included with the Tier-2 proposal?** Yes, Tier-2 proposals must include a one paragraph abstract highlighting the types of activities and benefits expected to be achieved with 2006 LIP funding.
- 24. Should States that received Tier-2 funding in the past base their request on their ability to use LIP funds in the near term?** Yes. States that received funding in the past should base their funding request on their need for and ability to use additional LIP funds in the near term.

- 25. Will Tier-2 proposals be partially funded?** Partial funding of proposals is a possibility. States should keep this in mind when writing proposals. In the Approach Section, you may want to identify your willingness or unwillingness to accept partial funding and how partial funding would affect proposed work (reduced number of acres protected/restored, removal of certain activities or jobs, etc.)
- 26. Where should a State send Tier-1 and Tier-2 grant proposals?** States should submit paper copies of all LIP proposals (Tier-1 and Tier-2 SF-424 and Narratives) to the appropriate Federal Assistance (Federal Aid) Regional Offices. States should also submit their Tier-2 proposals (Tier-2 Narrative) in electronic format (Word, WordPerfect, or pdf files) to the Washington Office (Kim\_Galvan@fws.gov).
- 27. When are Tier-1 and Tier-2 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. For FY 2006 proposals are due April 24. Both hard copies and electronic copies of the grant proposal must be received no later than the deadline in the Federal Register Notice.
- 28. What process will the Service use to evaluate and select Tier-1 and Tier-2 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 27, above. Successful proposals will then be selected based on the Eligibility Requirements for Tier-1 grants (Section B) and the Tier-2 Ranking Criteria Guidance (Section C) and the Final Implementation Guidelines. LIP Tier-1 and Tier-2 funding decisions 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.
- 29. Once a Tier-1 or Tier-2 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 33 for Regional Office locations.

- 30. What reporting requirements must States meet once funds are obligated under a LIP grant agreement?** The Service requires an annual interim performance report for LIP Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants longer than one year. In addition, a final performance report and Financial Status Report (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 protected, 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 interim performance reports, will be an important factor considered during the grant award selection process in subsequent years.
- 31. 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>).
- 32. 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.
- 33. 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, 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: Dan Edwards, 503-231-6128; dan\_edwards@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: Penny Bartnicki, (505) 248-7465; penny\_bartnicki@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: Ann Schneider, (612) 713-5146; ann\_schneider@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: Bob Gasaway, (404) 679-4169; bob\_gasaway@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; 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) 786-3631; nancy\_tankersley@fws.gov.

California/Nevada Office (CNO). California, Nevada.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2800 Cottage Way, W-2606, Sacramento, CA 95825. LIP Contact: Becky Miller, (916) 978-6185; becky\_a\_miller@fws.gov.

## **Section B.**

### **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 to private landowners (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:

- Adding new staff to a current program and identifying where they would be working (e.g., wildlife division, non-game, etc.);
- Expanding the types of assistance provided (e.g., monetary, plan documents, technical assistance, etc.); or
- 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 prioritize 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. Identification of Species-at-Risk**

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.

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 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)?

## Section C.

### Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) National Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance for Tier-2 Grant Proposals

State: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **OVERALL**—Proposal provides clear and sufficient detail to describe the State’s use of awarded funds from the LIP, and the State’s program has a high likelihood for success. (5 points total)
  - a. Proposal is easy to understand and contains all elements described in 522 FW 1.3C: Need; Objective; Expected Results and Benefits; Approach; and Budget. (0–2 pts)
  - b. 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 (for example, agency support for program, dedicated staff in place to implement program, priorities clearly identified, processes in place to implement program, past successes, etc.). (0–3 pts)
  
2. **NEED**—Proposal describes the urgency for implementing a LIP. States should describe how their LIP is a part of a broader scale conservation effort at the State or regional level. (5 points total)
  - a. Proposal clearly describes the urgency of need for a LIP to benefit at-risk species in the State. (0–2 pts)

- b. Proposal clearly describes conservation needs for targeted at-risk species that relate directly to objectives and conservation actions described in other sections of the proposal. (0–3 pts)

**3. OBJECTIVES**—Proposal provides clear objectives that specify fully what is to be accomplished. (6 points total)

- a. The objectives of the proposal describe discrete obtainable and quantifiable outputs to be accomplished (for example, the proposal identifies the number of acres of wetlands or other types of habitat, the number of stream miles to be restored, the number of landowners served, the number of management plans developed, etc.) (0–3 pts)
- b. The objectives of the proposal describe discrete, obtainable and quantifiable outcomes to be accomplished (for example, the proposal identifies the number of at-risk species whose habitat within the State will be improved; the percentage increase in a population(s) of one or more at-risk species on LIP project sites; the increase in number of individuals of one or more at-risk species on LIP project sites, etc). (0–3 pts)

**4. EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS**—Proposal clearly describes how the activities will benefit targeted at-risk species. (13 points total)

- a. Proposal describes by name the species-at-risk to benefit from the proposal. (0–2 pt)
- b. Proposal identifies habitat requirements for these targeted at-risk species. (0–3

pts)

- c. Proposal makes clear connections between the conservation actions proposed and expected benefits for species and habitats (i.e., describes how conservation actions will result in benefits). (0–3 pts)
- d. Proposal describes the short-term benefits for at-risk species to be achieved within a 5- to 10-year period. (0–2 pts)
- e. Proposal describes the long-term benefits for at-risk species to be achieved beyond 10 years. (0–3 pts)

**5. APPROACH**—Proposal clearly describes how program objectives, contractual and fiscal management, and fund distribution will be accomplished and monitored. (24 points total)

**Program Implementation** (6 points total)

- a. Proposal describes the conservation priorities for the State’s LIP (0–2 pts)
- b. Proposal describes the types of conservation projects and/or activities to be undertaken to address these priorities. (0–2 pts)
- c. Proposal describes how conservation projects and/or activities will implement portions of conservation plans at a local, state, regional, or national scale, including the State’s Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. (0–2 pts)

**Fiscal Administrative Procedures**—Proposal describes adequate management systems for fiscal and contractual accountability. (3 points total)

- d. Processes to ensure contractual and fiscal accountability between the State and participating landowners. (0–2 pts)
- e. Proposal indicates that the State has an approved legal instrument to enter into agreements with landowners. (0–1 pt)

**System for Fund Distribution**—Proposal describes the State’s fair and equitable system for fund distribution. (9 points total)

- f. System described is inherently fair and free from bias. (0–2 pts)
- g. Proposal describes State’s selection or ranking criteria and process to select projects (include copies of any relevant ranking or selection forms). (0–3 pts)
- h. State’s ranking or selection criteria are adequate to select projects based on conservation priorities identified in the proposal. (0–2 pts)
- i. Project proposals will be (or were) subject to an objective selection procedure (for example, internal ranking panel, diverse ranking panel comprising external agency members and/or members of the public, computerized ranking model, or other non-ranking selection process). (0–2 pts)

**Monitoring**—Proposal describes State’s biological and compliance monitoring plan for LIP including annual monitoring and evaluation of progress toward desired program objectives, results, and benefits. (6 points total)

- j. Proposal describes *compliance monitoring* that will ensure accurate and timely evaluation to determine if landowners have completed agreed-upon practices in accordance with landowner agreement, including the process for addressing

landowners who fail to comply with agreements. (0–3 pts)

- k. Proposal describes *biological monitoring* that will ensure species and habitats are monitored and evaluated adequately to determine the effectiveness of LIP-sponsored activities and progress towards accomplishment of short- and long-term benefits (Monitoring items may entail approaches for developing monitoring protocols and establishing baselines, monitoring standards, timeframes for conducting monitoring activities, and expectations for monitoring.) (0–3 pts)

**6. BUDGET**—Proposal clearly identifies funds for use on private lands, identifies percentage of non-federal cost match, and identifies past funding awards. (7 points total)

- a. 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 point 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; compliance 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* includes 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.

- b. 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 point if nonfederal cost share is > 25 to 30 % (>0 to 25 % I.T.)

2 points if non federal cost share is > 30 to 35 % (>25 to 30 % I.T.)

3 points if nonfederal cost share is > 35 % (>30 % I.T.)

- c. Proposal identifies percentage of previously awarded funds (exclude last fiscal year's awarded funds) that have been expended or encumbered. (Expended or encumbered funds are those Tier 2 funds that a State has either spent or has dedicated to a landowner through a signed contract between the landowner and

the State. Funds must be expended/encumbered on or before the due date for  
submittal of the Tier 2 grant proposal to the USFWS) (subtract maximum of 3  
points total.)

3 points subtracted if  $\leq 25$  % funds expended/encumbered

2 points subtracted if  $> 25$  to  $50$  % funds expended/encumbered

1 point subtracted if  $> 50$  to  $75$  % funds expended/encumbered

0 point subtracted if  $> 75$  to  $100$  % funds expended/encumbered

Total Score Possible = 60 points

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_