

Proposal Solicitation Notice

State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Solicitation Procedure

In order to be considered for funding, all applications must submit a complete proposal by the **November 13, 2015** deadline using the supplied templates at the bottom of this page. Project proposals must be submitted to and approved by the [Regional Manager](#) for the area where the project will be located or the [Branch Chief](#) (if statewide).

The funding amount available for this 2016 SWG Proposal Solicitation Notice (PSN) is: \$800,000.

2016 PROPOSAL TIMELINE*

- Nov 13, 2015 - Complete project proposals due to Regional Manager or Branch Chief
- Dec. 7 – Jan 29, 2016 - Proposals scored by CDFW Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Management Advisory Committee (MAC)
- Feb. 1 – 8, 2016 – Wildlife Branch provides funding recommendations to CDFW Executive Team for final approval.
- February 9 – March 28, 2016 - CDFW works with applicants to prepare final proposal packages for submission to USFWS
- April – August 2016 - USFWS reviews and approves individual grants
- July – November 2016 – Sub-grant agreements prepared and executed by CDFW. Funds typically become available for sub-grant project work 3 months after grants are approved by the USFWS.

***Note** - projects approved for this current grant cycle will not receive funding until after federal appropriation of funds and approval by the USFWS.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

CDFW is authorized to award grants and contracts for SWG grant projects to nonprofit organizations (501(c)(3), local government agencies, tribal governments, public colleges and universities, and state departments. Only proposals received by the appropriate [Regional Manager](#) or [Branch Chief](#) Office by the due date will be considered.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible applicants must have the specific capacity to deliver the objectives as demonstrated by past performance or expertise through a statement of qualifications and experience. Projects that require handling of (or potential impacts to) threatened or endangered species are required to have the appropriate local, state, and federal permits.

Grant recipients must provide a minimum non-Federal match of 35% of the cost of approved project. The match source and amount must be identified in the proposal and can include in-kind services, staff time, operating expenses, volunteer contributions, or partial funding for the project from a non-federal source.

Proposals are encouraged to address the following priority themes identified by CDFW Management for the 2016 grant cycle:

- Assessment or conservation actions critically needed for the conservation and recovery of Species of Greatest Conservation Need that fall in one of the following categories:
 - State or federally listed species, or candidates for listing under CESA or ESA;
 - Species designated as a California Species of Special Concern (www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/ssc/); or
 - Species highly vulnerable to extended drought conditions.
- Scientific investigations into the adaptive response to drought of such wildlife listed above or the ecosystems that support them.
- Actions that reduce extinction risk by promoting resilience of wildlife populations and their habitats to withstand climate change stressors.

To be eligible for SWG funding consideration, projects must also meet the following eligibility requirements.

- **Project must implement a Conservation Action identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan and involve at least one Species of Greatest Conservation Need.**
- Proposal must be submitted through a CDFW Regional Manager or Branch Chief, and identify the assigned CDFW Regional or Branch staff contact.
- Grant applicant and field staff personnel must demonstrate qualification to carry out project field work, including documentation of relevant field experience.
- State scientific collecting permits/MOUs and federal recovery permits must be current for staff identified to conduct work impacting listed species and included with proposal.
- Projects that include proposed work on lands must be accompanied by documented landowner permission to access those lands.
- Project must identify and document non-federal match source, through a letter of commitment on the letterhead of the contributing entities.
- The requested federal funding for the project should not exceed \$200,000.

- All environmental compliance and permits required for the activities proposed must be completed prior to USFWS approval of the grant. See timeline above. If not yet completed, a statement as to when the environmental compliance and permits are anticipated to be finalized shall be included in the appropriate section of the application.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible applicants must submit complete applications using the guidance templates provided at the bottom of this notice, supplemented with documents that support eligibility requirements. All applications must be submitted through the appropriate CDFW Region or Branch by the proposal due date. Incomplete applications will not be considered after the due date.

Proposal Review

Complete project proposals submitted on or prior to the deadline will be evaluated and ranked based on the following administrative and program reviews.

First, projects undergo an administrative review to determine if applications are complete and projects meet the Federal SWG Grant criteria and CDFW eligibility requirements. Qualifying projects will be assigned a CDFW contact and moved forward to technical review.

Proposed projects are scored and ranked at two levels (technical and management) prior to the final project list being approved by the Executive Team for submittal to the USFWS:

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) - This is a committee that consists of CDFW technical staff representing scientific programs in headquarters branches and regions statewide. The Committee evaluates and scores proposed projects based on biological need, feasibility, and anticipated benefit.

Management Advisory Committee (MAC) - This is a committee that consists of CDFW managers from headquarters and regions, which has the responsibility to review and comment relative to current conservation priorities in California as identified in the priority themes above. The MAC ranks the proposals forwarded from the TAC, and then forwards their recommendations for award to the Department's Leadership Team for approval.

Each proposal will be evaluated and scored based upon the criteria below by CDFW's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Proposals will be distributed among TAC members such that a minimum of three members read, evaluate, and score each proposal.

The scores of the TAC will then be averaged and ranked numerically.

The scoring of each proposal will use the following criteria:

1.1 – 1.4: IMMEDIATE THREAT/BENEFIT TO SPECIES (points are awarded for only one criterion in 1.1-1.4 below):

1.1 Project is necessary to avoid imminent federal listing of a species of greatest conservation need (SGCN).

- 1.2. Project is necessary to avoid a significant decline in an SGCN's population, distribution, or range; or to avoid or reverse a significant reduction in habitat quality.
- 1.3. Project acquires information, through research, surveys or monitoring, essential to the management and/or recovery of one or more populations of a SGCN.
- 1.4. Project will avoid, slow, or prevent a SGCN from meeting federal listing criteria.

2. Project implements a conservation priority identified in the SWAP, essential for conserving one or more populations of a SGCN.
3. Project also implements a conservation priority identified in a conservation strategy document other than the SWAP.
4. Project actively restores, enhances, or preserves habitat for one or more populations of SGCN.
5. Project provides a substantial conservation benefit to multiple SGCN.
6. Project provides a substantial conservation benefit to multiple non-SGCN native species.
7. Project objectives include the following "SMART" elements: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Bound.
8. Proposal identifies appropriate, defensible, and achievable scientific and non-scientific methodology.
9. Project assesses or contributes to species ability to persist in a changing climate.
10. Project includes an education and/or outreach effort and this effort demonstrates it will substantially benefit one or more SGCN.
11. Project contributes to the development or refinement of a larger series of project or conservation planning efforts (e.g. NCCP, HCP, or Conservation Strategy), for the target SGCN.

Scored proposals are delivered to the MAC by the TAC, where they are reviewed and ranked based upon how well the proposals address the identified themes, as well as by other regional management and statewide priorities that extend beyond technical scientific and conservation benefit. Each MAC member is allocated 15 points to distribute among projects.

Finally, the Director, or his designee, has the discretion to adjust project ranks or recommended funding levels in order to address any conservation issues critical to the State at the time.

Final Approval Process

The CDFW approved proposal list is submitted to the Business Management Branch for preparation of the Federal Assistance Application (FAA) package. At this time, the grant proposal and budget is updated to reflect current project status, costs, and approved funding level in consultation with the project applicant. Significant changes in scope and funding are not allowed. The FAA is then submitted to USFWS for their review and approval (assumes federal funds for SWG have been appropriated in the current budget year). Once the grant is approved and funding obligated by USFWS, CDFW commences processing of any sub-grant associated with the project. Funding is not available for use by non-Department applicants until any sub-grant associated with the project is fully executed between CDFW and the

applicant.

Proposal and Concept Templates

…>> [2016 Project Proposal Template](#)

…>> [2016 Budget Template](#)

For questions regarding the SWG Grant proposal scoring process or preliminary project consultation contact: Chris Stermer, (916) 445-2626 or (Chris.Stermer@wildlife.ca.gov).