



2017 State Wildlife Grants Proposal Solicitation Notice

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is seeking high quality grant Proposals that contribute to the implementation of the newly revised State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP 2015) and address the priorities in this State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Proposal Solicitation Notice (PSN). SWAP 2015 is considered the current key planning tool for conserving California's fish and wildlife resources by identifying strategies intended to improve conditions of Species of Greatest Conservation Need and the habitats upon which they depend. The SWAP 2015 Update is a guide for resource managers, conservation partners, and the public in how to participate in conserving California's precious natural heritage. The three overarching goals for SWAP 2015 are:

Goal 1 – Maintain and increase ecosystem and native species distributions in California while sustaining and enhancing species abundance and richness.

Goal 2 - Maintain and improve ecological conditions vital for sustaining ecosystems in California.

Goal 3 - Maintain and improve ecosystem functions and processes vital for sustaining ecosystems in California

Congress appropriates funds for the State Wildlife Grant Program on an annual basis. Funds are apportioned to states, commonwealths, and U.S. territories based on a formula that considers each state's population and total geographical area. Anticipated total funding available for the 2017 grant cycle is dependent on federal allocation of SWG funds to California in the 2017 federal budget year. It is anticipated that approximately \$1.2 million will be available for sub-grant award in 2017.

Solicitation Procedure

This document details SWG eligibility requirements, the proposal process, proposal review procedures, and other pertinent topics for the 2017 grant cycle. Potential applicants are encouraged to thoroughly read this PSN prior to deciding to submit a proposal.

In order to be considered for funding, all applications must submit a complete proposal using the supplied templates at the bottom of this page by **5:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time on October 31, 2016**. Project proposals must be submitted to wildlifemgt@wildlife.ca.gov with **SWG 2017** in the subject line. All information requested in this Solicitation is mandatory unless otherwise indicated. Failure to submit any required attachment or complete all required Application components will make the proposal incomplete. Incomplete proposals will not be scored or considered for funding.

Eligibility Information

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) administers the federal SWG Program. Only State and Territorial Fish and Wildlife Agencies are eligible to receive SWG grants. However, CDFW is authorized to award sub-grants and contracts for SWG grant projects to implement California's SWAP. Entities eligible to submit grant proposals in response to this PSN include public agencies, universities, Indian tribes, and nonprofit entities.

In order for a project to be eligible for SWG funding, the project must address conservation strategies for the conservation units listed in Appendix E of California's SWAP or be justified as a critical need for a specific SGCN (priority 3 below). SWG applicants will be required to identify the primary conservation target (e.g., terrestrial vegetation macrogroup or aquatic target) and strategy, and other SWAP components their project proposal addresses.

2017 Priorities

For the 2017 grant cycle, priority will be given to projects that:

1. Address objectives specifically listed for Conservation Targets in the Conservation Strategies Sections of each Province Chapter of SWAP; 5.1.6, 5.2.6, 5.3.6, 5.4.6, 5.5.6, 5.6.6, 5.7.6, or in Table 6.7-1 for anadromous fish;
2. Reduce extinction risk of species of greatest conservation need listed in SWAP by promoting resilience of wildlife populations and their habitats to withstand climate change and other stressors;
3. Address time-sensitive or critical actions necessary to preclude the need for listing native imperiled species designated as species of greatest conservation need in SWAP (Appendix D or Chapter 5 subchapters).

2017 Grant Cycle Timeline*

October 31, 2016	Complete project proposals due to CDFW
Nov 1 – Nov 15, 2016	Administrative review (pass/fail)
November 21, 2016 – January 13, 2017	Responsive proposals scored by Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Management Advisory Committee (MAC)
~Jan 31, 2017	Awards are announced
February 1 – March 1, 2017	CDFW works with applicants to prepare final grant packages for submission to USFWS
March – August 2017	USFWS reviews and approves individual grants*
July – November 2017	Grant agreements prepared and executed by CDFW. Funds available to projects following execution.

*Note - projects approved for this current grant cycle will not receive funding until after federal appropriation of funds, approval by the USFWS, and execution of a grant agreement between CDFW and grantee. Funds typically become available for sub-grant project work 3-4 months after grants are approved by the USFWS.

Grant Requirements

1. Activities funded by SWG must be completed within 3 years of grant approval date.

2. **Statement of Qualifications.** Grant applicant and field staff personnel must demonstrate qualification to carry out project work, including documentation of relevant field experience. A Statement of Qualifications must be submitted with the proposal and include permit number and expiration date for any relevant take authorizations.
3. **Land Tenure/Site Control/Access Permission.** Applicants for projects proposing on-the-ground habitat improvement must submit documentation showing that they have adequate tenure to the properties to be accessed, improved or restored for at least 25 years. Proof of adequate land tenure includes, but is not necessarily limited to:
 - Fee title ownership
 - An easement or license agreement
 - Other agreement between the applicant and the fee title owner, or the owner of an easement on the property, sufficient to give the applicant adequate site control for the purposes of the project and long-term management

For projects involving multiple landowners, all landowners or an appointed designee must provide written permission to complete the project.

When an applicant does not have tenure at the time of proposal submission, but intends to establish tenure via an agreement that will be signed prior to grant execution, the applicant must submit a template copy of the proposed agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the time of proposal submission. Once a project has been awarded, the applicant must submit documentation of land tenure before a complete grant agreement can be executed.

Applicants proposing on-the-ground surveys or other non-habitat improvement work that requires access to lands must submit documentation showing access is authorized by the land owner or land management agency.

4. **Cost Share and Match.** Cost share is the portion of the project cost not funded by SWG. Cost share must be used to support the proposed project and be spent during the grant term. All or a portion of the non-federal cost share serves as the required match. A minimum non-federal match of 35% of the total cost of the project is required for a project to be eligible for a SWG grant. Applicants must describe how the minimum match will be provided in the proposal, including the match source and amount. Match can include in-kind services, volunteer contributions, or partial funding for the project from another non-federal source. If the project is chosen for award, match commitment letters on the letterhead of the contributing entities will be required to be submitted prior to execution of the grant agreement to certify that match requirements (i.e., 35% non-federal source) will be met during the grant term.
5. **Indirect Costs.** Indirect cost (administrative overhead) rates are limited to 29.68 percent of the total Budget, minus subcontractor and equipment costs [i.e. (Total Project Budget – subcontractor and equipment costs) x 0.2968]. Any amount over this percentage will not be funded but may be used as cost share/match. Indirect costs include but are not limited to workers compensation insurance, utilities, office space rental, phone, and copying which is directly related to completion of the proposed project.
6. **Environmental Compliance and Permitting.** Activities funded under the SWG must be in compliance with all applicable state and federal environmental laws and regulations, including the CEQA, NEPA, CESA, ESA, and other environmental permitting requirements. State scientific collecting permits, CESA MOUs and federal ESA recovery permits must be current for staff identified to conduct work that “takes” fish or wildlife or

otherwise impacts state or federally-listed species, and include the activities proposed in the grant. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all permits necessary to carry out the proposed work.

Applicants must identify the project’s expected permitting requirements, state what permits have been obtained or the process through which the permits will be obtained, and describe the anticipated timeframe for obtaining each permit. Proposals for projects that are subject to CEQA and NEPA must identify the state and federal lead agencies and document whether the agency or agencies have accepted the role. The applicant must coordinate with CDFW prior to proposal submission if CDFW is anticipated to act as CEQA lead agency for the project. Projects that fail to comply with this requirement will not be eligible for funding for this Solicitation.

7. Data and Reports. CDFW’s intent is to improve the management of biological resources over time by incorporating adaptive management principles and processes into conservation planning and resource management. The implementation of SWAP 2015 requires that information gathered through monitoring, evaluation, and other credible sources be evaluated as it becomes available, and adjustments be made in management strategies and practices, as necessary, to assist in attaining conservation goals. In addition, the state is required to provide real-time public access to project information, including project descriptions and accomplishments through the USFWS’s reporting system known as Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species (TRACS). Therefore, as a condition of the receipt of a grant or contract, recipients of SWG grants or contracts will be required to submit data and information in a format acceptable to the Department prior to close of the grant and reports will need to be compliant with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Department-approved format for the types of information generated by a specific project will be provided to the recipient at the time of award and incorporated into any sub-grant agreement or contract.

Review Process

Administrative Review. An administrative review will determine if the proposal is complete and meets all the requirements for technical review. This review will use a “Pass/Fail” scoring method, based on the criteria presented below. Proposals which receive a “Fail” for one or more of the criteria will be considered incomplete and will not be considered for funding under this PSN.

Criteria	Score
Proposal was received by the deadline.	Pass/Fail
Applicant is an eligible entity.	Pass/Fail
Proposal is responsive to the Solicitation’s priorities and represents an eligible project type.	Pass/Fail
All proposal components have been completed in the required formats, including all proposal forms and associated documents. (See Proposal Cover Sheet)	Pass/Fail
Budget is included using supplied templates and includes identification of adequate non-federal match.	Pass/Fail

Technical Review. 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

median scores of the TAC will then be calculated for each criteria and overall. Technical reviewers may make narrative comments that support their scores.

The scoring of each proposal will use the following criteria:

1. Project addresses objectives specifically listed for Conservation Targets in the Conservation Strategies Sections of each Province Chapter of SWAP; 5.1.6, 5.2.6, 5.3.6, 5.4.6, 5.5.6, 5.6.6, 5.7.6, or in Table 6.7-1 for anadromous fish.
2. Project reduces extinction risk of species of greatest conservation need listed in SWAP by promoting resilience of wildlife populations and their habitats to withstand climate change or other stressors.
3. Project addresses time-sensitive or critical actions necessary to preclude the need for listing one or more native imperiled species designated as species of greatest conservation need in SWAP (Appendix D or Chapter 5).
4. Project also implements a conservation priority identified in a conservation strategy document other than SWAP.
5. Project actively restores, enhances, or preserves habitat for one or more populations of SGCN.
6. Project objectives include the following “SMART” elements: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Bound.
7. Proposal identifies appropriate, defensible, and achievable scientific and non-scientific methodology.
8. 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.
9. Project will provide information (measurable indicator) on the condition or status of the Key Ecological Attributes or Stressors identified in SWAP for the specific conservation target being addressed that can be used to inform adaptive management of the target.
10. Project includes an education and/or outreach effort to the appropriate audience that will substantially benefit one or more conservation targets or SGCN.

Management Review. TAC proposal scores are provided to the Management Advisory Committee (MAC). MAC then ranks the proposals based on a combination of considerations, including TAC scores, responsiveness to this solicitation notice, project budget, match, cost share, and past performance of grantee. Each MAC member is allocated 15 points to distribute among projects. The list of proposals recommended for funding is then based on a combination of TAC scores and MAC ranks, as well as other factors such as final SWG funding apportionment to California, relative distribution of funds between 2017 priorities, geographic provinces, or strategies, and other regional management and statewide considerations that extend beyond technical scientific and conservation benefit. 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

Once the final list of projects to be awarded is determined and announced, CDFW prepares the Federal Assistance Application (FAA) package for submittal to USFWS. Every project will be assigned a CDFW Grant Lead who is responsible for managing the grant from start to finish, including all sub-awards or contracts. The CDFW Grant Lead will work with any sub-awardees and CDFW's Federal Assistance Section to prepare the required elements of the FAA. At this time in the process, the grant proposal and budget is updated to reflect current project status, rates, and approved funding level. 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 sub-awardee.

Proposal Forms and Templates

[2017 SWG Proposal Cover Sheet](#)

[2017 SWG Proposal Template](#)

[2017 SWG Budget Worksheet](#)

For questions regarding navigation of the SWAP document, please contact Junko Hoshi at Junko.Hoshi@wildlife.ca.gov or 916-445-3395.

For all other questions regarding this PSN or the SWG program, please contact Karen Miner at Karen.Miner@wildlife.ca.gov or 916-445-3685.