



State of California – Natural Resources
Agency California Department of Fish
and Wildlife



**2022 Endangered Species Conservation
and Recovery Grants
Proposal Solicitation Notice
November 19, 2021**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is seeking high quality proposals for projects that will further the conservation and recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered wildlife, plant, and certain fish species in the state. Projects proposed for funding may involve management, research, monitoring, and outreach activities or any combination thereof. Additionally, applicants may apply for funding to monitor candidate, at-risk, and recently delisted species. Candidate Species are those that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined warrant listing as a threatened or endangered species, but the listing is precluded by other higher priority actions, and for the purposes of this grant program also includes species that are the subject of a positive 90-day finding but not yet the subject of a proposed rule, species that are the subject of a proposed listing rule but not a final rule, species for which the USFWS has initiated an Endangered Species Act (ESA) status review and has announced the review in the Federal Register, and species included on the National Listing Workplan. A full list of such species can be found in the USFWS Legacy Region 8 [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Traditional Conservation Grants Program. Proposals should include clear and specific information about how the proposed work would contribute to species recovery or prevent the need to list a species under the federal ESA. Successful applications will be those that demonstrate a direct conservation benefit to the species or its habitat. Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Introduction of ESA-listed species into suitable habitats within their historic range
 - Enhancement or restoration of ESA-listed species' habitat
 - Surveys and inventories of ESA-listed species' habitats
 - ESA-listed species surveys
 - Propagation of ESA-listed animals and plants
 - Research such as genetic analysis to determine genetic health and population structure of ESA-listed species
 - Monitoring of candidate and recently recovered species
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ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

- Public education and outreach tools such as website development or coordination workshops with local landowners to address a specific threat to an ESA-listed species

Projects designed to benefit listed marine species and anadromous fish are funded under separate CDFW grant programs.

Priority will be given to projects designed to have a direct impact on the recovery of federally listed species, prevent extinction of a listed species, or prevent the need to list a candidate species, although proposals involving candidate and recently delisted species will also be considered. Proposals that involve only research will be considered a lower priority for funding relative to management proposals unless they provide information that can be directly used to prevent listing, recover, manage, or improve current management strategies for a species. Proposals involving only public education and outreach must address an identified recovery need and tangibly improve the species' recovery prospects. Public outreach and education for general species or issue awareness will not be funded.

For the 2022 cycle, CDFW will give priority to projects that address the following themes:

- Actions or assessments directly supporting the de-listing of currently listed species.
- Projects that identify and implement on-the-ground land and water resource management practices for the conservation and recovery of federally listed species.
- Applied science that reduces the impacts of large high intensity wildfires, drought, and other climate-related stressors on listed species or promotes resilience in listed species populations or their habitats to these stressors, with priority given to species listed under both ESA and the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).
- Scientific investigations into the adaptive response of listed species to changing environmental conditions, including prolonged drought, altered water and fire regimes, proliferation of non-native species, and habitat type conversion. See [CDFW Reports, California Climate Assessment](#), and reports on [vulnerable species and ecosystems](#).
- Activities and applied research in natural communities which include assemblages of listed species when grant-funded activities and research will benefit multiple listed species.
- Other assessment or conservation actions critically needed for the conservation and recovery of species listed under both CESA and ESA.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

CDFW receives funding for this program through the federal Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act) which provides funding to states and territories for species and habitat conservation actions on non-federal lands.

States and territories (and by extension, applicants) must contribute a minimum non-federal match of 25% of the estimated program costs of approved projects. CDFW is responsible for managing native fish, wildlife, and plant species in California, and directs the use of federal Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund resources through this ESCRP grant in coordination with USFWS. Authority for CDFW to administer the ESCRP grant is granted through Fish and Game Code §1501.5. Anticipated total funding available for the 2022 grant cycle is estimated to be approximately \$2 million; however, the actual available funding depends on the federal allocation of Section 6 funds to California in the yet to be adopted 2022 federal budget. Awards are generally limited to \$350,000 per project. Proposals requesting more than \$350,000 should include a description of project alternatives with fewer objectives, a narrower scope, or broken into phases that could be funded with a lesser award.

Although the 2022 federal NOFO for this program was not available at the time this Solicitation Notice was prepared, applicants are encouraged to review the 2022 USFWS Region 8 NOFO, once it is released (link). Specifically, applicants are encouraged to consider and address the review criteria in the NOFO. Should the 2022 NOFO contain unanticipated federal requirements, CDFW staff will notify applicants via email or through the [ESCRP](#) web page to address additional application requirements.

SOLICITATION PROCEDURE

This document details the ESCRP grant eligibility requirements, the proposal submission process, proposal review procedures, and other pertinent topics for the 2022 grant cycle. Potential applicants are encouraged to thoroughly read this Proposal Solicitation Notice (PSN) prior to deciding to submit a proposal.

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must submit a complete proposal using the supplied templates at the bottom of this notice by **5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on December 22, 2021**. Project proposals must be submitted to wildlifemgt@wildlife.ca.gov with only **“ESCRP 2022”** in the subject line. Incomplete proposals will not be considered for funding.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION AND GRANT REQUIREMENTS

1. Entities eligible to submit grant proposals in response to this PSN include public agencies, state departments, colleges and universities, tribal governments, and nonprofit entities.
2. The proposed project must address the conservation of federally listed endangered, threatened, candidate, proposed, or recently recovered wildlife, plant, or fish species that are managed by USFWS. Projects involving marine species, including sea turtles, marine mammals, and anadromous fish are managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] Fisheries) and funded under separate state and federal grant programs.
3. For candidate species (as defined above) and recently recovered species, only species monitoring projects are eligible.
4. Proposals must be developed in consultation with [USFWS biological staff](#) and [CDFW biological staff](#) and identify a CDFW staff person willing to sponsor the project by administering the sub-grant between CDFW and the project lead. Proposals developed without first consulting agency biologists, and those that fail to identify a CDFW sub-grant sponsor will not be considered for funding.
5. Funded activities must be completed within the grant performance period which may not exceed 3 years from the project start date. For “pass through” projects providing funding to non-CDFW partner organizations be sure to allot for time within the 3-year performance period for CDFW sponsors to execute and close out a sub-grant with the partner organization. We recommend allowing at least 3 months after the USFWS grant award is made to execute the sub-grant, and at least 3 months prior to the end of the 3-year federal grant performance period to close out the sub-grant.
6. A minimum non-federal match of 25% of the total cost of the project (25% of the sum of the federal amount requested plus the non-federal match) is required and must be provided by applicants. It must be spent during the grant term and described in the proposal for a project to be eligible. Applicants must describe in the proposal how the minimum match will be provided, including the match source and amount. Match may include in-kind services, volunteer contributions, use of donated equipment, or partial funding for the project from a non-federal source. If match will be provided by entities outside of CDFW, a letter on the entity’s letterhead indicating their commitment to provide the described non-federal match contribution must be included with the application.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

7. Grant funds cannot be used for federal compliance or to obtain any federal permits for the project.
8. Grant funds cannot be used to satisfy federal, state, or local regulatory requirements, including mitigation, avoidance, minimization, and monitoring.
9. Funds may be granted for EITHER the planning phase, OR the implementation phase of habitat restoration projects, but not both phases in the same grant cycle.
10. Landowner Permission: For work proposed to be performed on lands not owned or managed by the applicant, written proof of permission to access the land from the fee title owner or land management agency must be supplied. For projects involving multiple landowners, all landowners or appointed designees must provide written permission to access properties and carry out the project. 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
11. Environmental Compliance and Permitting: Activities funded under this program must comply with all applicable state and federal environmental laws and regulations, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), CESA, ESA, and other environmental permitting requirements. State scientific collecting permits, CESA Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) and federal ESA Recovery Permits must be current for staff identified to conduct work that “takes” or otherwise impacts state or federally listed species and must be in place prior to start of the maximum 3-year grant performance period. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all permits necessary to carry out the proposed work. Applicants must identify the project’s expected permitting requirements and state which permits have been obtained and the process through which additional permits will be obtained, including the anticipated timeframe for obtaining each permit. 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.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

12. 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. Recipients of ESCRP grants or contracts will be required to submit data and information in a format acceptable to CDFW prior to close of the grant. Reports must be compliant with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
13. Projects involving translocation must attach a draft Evaluation Factors for Conservation Translocations (Appendix C of [CDFW Departmental Bulletin 2017-05 Policy and Procedures for Conservation Translocations of Animals and Plants](#)). Projects involving captive propagation must attach a draft captive propagation plan and an evaluation of the need and risks per [CDFW Departmental Bulletin 2017-04 Captive Propagation of Fish, Wildlife and Plants for Conservation Purposes](#). The evaluation(s) and/or plan must be approved by the appropriate Regional Managers, Branch Chiefs, and Deputy Directors prior to project implementation.

2022 GRANT CYCLE TIMELINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Note that funds awarded pursuant to this solicitation will likely not be available to successful applicants until late 2022. This timeline may be adjusted depending on the deadline specified in the 2022 NOFO.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

Timeframe	Key Steps
Nov. 17 – Dec. 22, 2021	Public Solicitation Period
Jan. 3 – 7, 2021	Administrative review (pass/fail)
Jan 10 – Feb 21, 2022	Responsive proposals ranked by Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Management Advisory Committee (MAC). Director selects CDFW priority projects to forward to USFWS
Feb 28 – April 30, 2022	Applicants work with CDFW Federal Assistance Program to finalize federal grant application packages. Packages submitted to USFWS by the NOFO deadline.
Summer 2022	USFWS reviews and ranks proposals and announces grant awards
Fall 2022	CDFW works with applicants to prepare final Federal Assistance Packages for submission to USFWS
Fall – Winter 2022	USFWS reviews and approves final Federal Assistance Packages and transmits funds to CDFW
Winter – Spring 2022	CDFW grant sponsors work with CDFW Payable Grants staff to execute sub-grants between CDFW and project leads. Funds become available to projects following execution of sub-grants. Projects carried out entirely by CDFW staff skip this step.

REVIEW PROCESS

Administrative Review: An administrative review will determine if proposals are complete and meet 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 deemed 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 for an eligible activity and involves and eligible species	Pass/Fail
Proposal was developed in consultation with CDFW and USFWS staff	Pass/Fail
Applicant identifies CDFW grant sponsor	Pass/Fail
Proposal is responsive to this Solicitation’s priorities and represents an eligible project type	Pass/Fail
Proposal identifies source of matching non-federal funds or services totaling at least 25% of the total project cost	Pass/Fail

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

<p>All proposal components have been completed in the required formats, including all proposal forms and associated documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposal Narrative using the 2022 templateBudget Worksheet using the 2022 template (must agree with amounts listed in the narrative)Permits included or in application processProof of land ownership or landowner permission to conduct work (if applicable)Match commitment letters (if applicable)Copies of any required permits that are already approved or issued for the project (if applicable)Translocation and/or Propagation evaluations (if applicable)	Pass/Fail
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Technical Review. CDFW 's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will evaluate and score proposals using the below criteria:

1. Need:
 - Maximum possible points if the project is urgently needed to avoid imminent extinction of a federally listed or candidate species.
 - Next most possible points if the project is necessary to avoid a significant decline in a federally listed or candidate species' population, distribution, or range; or to avoid or reverse a significant reduction in habitat quality.
 - Least possible points if the project generates scientific information needed to support recovery planning, management, and conservation actions of federally listed, candidate, or recently recovered species.

2. Relationship to Recovery Plan:
 - Maximum possible points if the project is or supports the last action required to meet federal recovery plan goals.
 - Next most possible points if the project is the necessary next identified step from the species' federal recovery plan.
 - Next most possible points if the project implements a priority action from the species' federal recovery plan.
 - Next most possible points if the project implements an identified recovery action from an effort other than a federal recovery plan.
 - Least possible points if the project implements an important recovery action, although the action has not been identified in an existing plan.

3. Project will increase the statewide population, distribution, or range of federally listed, candidate, or recently recovered species.

4. Project actively restores, enhances, manages, or preserves a substantial portion of a federally listed, candidate, or recently recovered species' habitat.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

5. Proposal demonstrates substantial benefits to multiple Species of Greatest Conservation Need as identified in the [State Wildlife Action Plan](#) (see Appendix C).
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 includes an education and/or outreach effort AND the proposal demonstrates how the education or outreach will substantially benefit one or more federally listed, candidate, or recently recovered species.

Management Review: TAC proposal scores are provided to CDFW’s Management Advisory Committee (MAC). The MAC ranks the proposals based on a combination of considerations, including: TAC scores, responsiveness to the priorities identified in this PSN, project budget, cost share, and past performance of grantee. The list of proposals recommended for funding is then based on a combination of TAC and MAC ranks, as well as other factors such as final Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund apportionment to California, relative distribution of funds between priorities and geographic provinces, and other regional management and statewide considerations that extend beyond technical scientific and conservation benefit. The Director of CDFW, 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. A list of the highest ranked proposals is then conveyed to the USFWS.

USFWS Review and Award: USFWS Regional Office Traditional Section 6 Program staff review CDFW’s list of proposals to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements of the federal program and to confirm USFWS Field Office staff were consulted by project proponents to identify priority species recovery actions. The USFWS Regional Director then makes the final selection of proposals based upon Merit Review Criteria below and consideration of CDFW’s ranking. The USFWS Regional Office forwards the selected grants to USFWS headquarters for approval. When approved, the USFWS Regional Director will issue a letter to CDFW announcing which proposals have been awarded funding. The number of proposals selected will be determined by the size of the federal allotment and the budgets of the top ranked proposals.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

USFWS Merit Review Criteria:

- A. The listing status of the species. Federally listed species will be prioritized. Applications to monitor candidate, at-risk and recently delisted species will be a lower priority for funding consideration.
[Scoring = 5-20 points, where, for example, 5 = recently delisted species, 10 = candidate or at-risk species, 15 = threatened species, 20 = endangered species.]
- B. Whether or not the project will accomplish tasks identified in a final or draft Recovery Plan, Recovery Outline, or similar conservation strategy or management plan. Applications addressing listed species for which the Service has released a draft or final Recovery Plan should indicate how the project would address one or more of the recovery objectives or actions identified and what priority level the actions are assigned. If a species does not have an approved recovery plan in place, the proposed activities should be described in the recovery outline, 5-year review recommendations, delisting monitoring plan, species status assessment, or other conservation or management plan for the species.
[Scoring = 0-10 points, where, for example, 0 = no contribution to identified tasks, 5 = contributes to an identified task but additional projects are necessary to complete the task, 10=completes an identified task.]
- C. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of the Application to the Program Goals. Reviewers will consider whether applications clearly identify project goals and objectives and whether those goals and objectives are applicable to conservation and recovery of threatened or endangered species, candidate or at-risk species, or delisted species. Reviewers will consider whether the application is designed to have a direct impact on species recovery as a result of implementation of management actions. If the application addresses the continuation of previously funded or ongoing work, reviewers should consider whether the applicant provides an adequate justification for the continuation of the same work (e.g., what benefit would additional results have?).
[Scoring: 1-30 points; where, for example, 1= no importance/relevance to the program goals or objectives, very limited potential to contribute to species recovery, no implementation of management actions: 15= moderately important/ relevant, reasonably likely to make some meaningful contribution to species recovery; 30= extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to recovery of a threatened or endangered species, involves implementation of significant management actions, addresses a high priority recovery plan action.]
- D. Technical/ Scientific Merit. For applications including management and

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

outreach, this criterion addresses whether the activities and approach described in the project narrative is appropriate for achieving the stated goals and objectives, result in successful execution of the project, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the timeline specified. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient information is provided to evaluate the design of the project relative to the stated goals/objectives. For applications including research and monitoring, reviewers will consider the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results, and the inclusion of quality assurance considerations for data collected.

[Scoring: 1-20 points; where, for example, 1 = completely unsound or unlikely to meet the stated objectives, and information insufficient to evaluate project design; 10 = intermediately sound, or reasonably likely to meet the stated objectives; 20 = extremely sound and highly likely to meet the stated objectives.]

E. Project Costs. Reviewers will evaluate the budget to determine if it is sufficiently detailed, realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient detail was provided to evaluate how costs were estimated.

[Scoring: 1-10 points; where, for example, 1 = unrealistic and lacking sufficient detail; 5 = adequately detailed and realistic; 10 = extremely detailed and realistic.]

Final Approval Process: Once the final list of projects to be awarded is announced by the USFWS, CDFW prepares a Federal Assistance Application (FAA) package for submittal to USFWS. CDFW grant sponsors are responsible for managing the grant from start to finish, including all sub-grants or contracts. The CDFW grant sponsor will work with any sub-grant 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 may be updated to reflect current project status, current state overhead and salary rates, and the approved funding level. Significant changes in scope and funding are not allowed. The FAA is then submitted to USFWS for their review and approval. Once the grant is approved and funding is obligated by USFWS, CDFW commences processing any sub-grants or contracts associated with the project. Funding is not available for use by non-CDFW applicants until a sub-grant or contract is fully executed between CDFW and the sub-grantee or contractor.

ESCRP Proposal Solicitation Notice

Proposal Forms and Templates

[2022 ESCRP Proposal Template](#)

[2022 ESCRP Budget Worksheet](#)

For questions regarding this PSN or the ESCRP program, please contact Daniel Applebee at Daniel.Applebee@wildlife.ca.gov.