

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Proposal Solicitation Notice

Golden Eagle Conservation Grant

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Application Deadline: June 16, 2025

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is seeking high quality proposals for projects to promote golden eagle conservation primarily in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, as well as the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area (TWRA) in Kern County, California, and fill in key data gaps. Studies at the APWRA indicate that the local golden eagle population is sustained by immigration from other western populations and that there is a greater interconnectedness between populations across North America than previously understood. Changes in golden eagle populations can also have ecosystem-wide impacts. Therefore, a better understanding of how the local population is impacted by wind generation and how that can affect golden eagles across their range is needed to develop effective management strategies.

Proposals proposed for funding may include conducting golden eagle studies and surveys, assessing habitat suitability and factors affecting survival, developing models to assess spatial and temporal collision risk, evaluating the effectiveness of management practices and deterrents, collecting and analyzing telemetry data on movement and habitat use, evaluating ecosystem impacts, and/or acquiring habitat.

Priority will be given to projects designed to support the needed research to better understand how the local golden eagle population is impacted by wind generation and how that affects golden eagles across their range to develop effective management and conservation measures.

Background

ESI Energy, LLC (ESI), wholly owned Subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources LLC, entered into a plea agreement with the United States District Court, District of Wyoming for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) associated with the unpermitted take of bald and golden eagles. As part of that agreement, ESI was required to pay restitution in the amount of \$6,210,991 to the relevant state agencies and a five-year period of probation during which it must follow an Eagle Management Plan (EMP), in which any of the 123 eagle fatalities/injuries occurred on a proportionate basis. The greatest take occurred at five facilities in California within the APWRA and TWRA with the total loss of 92 golden eagles. The final settlement amount for California was

\$2,439,359.83 after the application of a credit for a prior civil agreement with California's Attorney General's Office, four Audubon Chapters (Golden Gate, Ohlone, Mount Diablo, Santa Clara Valley, and Marin), and Californians for Renewable Energy. These funds must be used to benefit golden eagle conservation in California. Golden eagles are designated as a fully protected species per Fish and Game Code Section 3511.

Under the terms of the final settlement, the funds CDFW received are to benefit golden eagles in California to offset the impacts from wind energy generation, particularly in the APWRA as well as the TWRA.

Solicitation Procedure

This document details the Golden Eagle Conservation grant eligibility requirements, the proposal submission process, proposal review procedures, and other pertinent topics for the 2025 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 end of this notice by **5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on June 16, 2025**. Project proposals must be submitted to R3CESA@wildlife.ca.gov with **“Golden Eagle Conservation Grant 2025” included in the subject line**. Late or 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 [Fish and Game Code section 1501.5 (b)].
2. 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 at the time proposal is submitted.
3. The requested funding for each proposal should not exceed \$1,500,000.00. Partial funding for a proposal may be awarded.
4. Funded activities must be completed within the grant performance period which may not extend past March 30, 2031.
5. Grant funds cannot be used to satisfy federal, state, or local regulatory requirements, including mitigation, avoidance, minimization, and monitoring.
6. All Public Entities will require either a resolution, signature authority or delegation of authority. The document will need to be reviewed and approved by the Payable Grants Unit (PGU) prior to execution of the grant agreement.
7. 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.
8. 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), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and other environmental permitting requirements. State Scientific Collecting Permits, CESA Memoranda of Understanding (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 such authorizations must be in place prior to start of the 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 the CEQA lead agency for the project. Projects that fail to comply with this requirement will not be eligible for funding.
9. 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 Golden Eagle Conservation subgrants 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. Recipients of a grant or contract will be provided with metadata (deployment and project information) and processed data (species identifications) templates by their grant or contract manager, which must be completed. Recipients will work with the CDFW contract manager to determine the best way to transfer photo and sound files.

Grant Timeline (Subject to Change)

The timeline for grant implementation appears in Table 1. Applicants should anticipate a Project start date no sooner than early 2026.

Table 1. Proposal Solicitation Schedule

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Schedule</u>
Solicitation Released	April 18, 2025
Proposals due by 5:00 PM (Pacific Standard Time)	June 16, 2025
Committee Review and Selection	June 16-July 16, 2025
Award Notification Distributed	July 30, 2025
Development of grant agreements between CDFW and grantee for each project	August – November 2025

Review Process

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 responsive to this solicitation’s priorities and represents an eligible project type	Pass/Fail
All proposal forms and associated document have been completed including the Project Statement and Budget Worksheet (Appendix A), required environmental permits, proof of land ownership or landowner permission to conduct work (if applicable), copies of any required permits that are already approved or issued for the project (if applicable)	Pass/Fail

Following administrative review, CDFW will establish a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with members from the CDFW Bay Delta Region (R3), Central Region (R4) and Wildlife Branch in Sacramento to evaluate and score proposals using the following criteria:

1. The project generates scientific information, through research, surveys or monitoring, essential to the conservation and/or management of populations of golden eagles in the Diablo Range, primarily in the APWRA - up to 20 points, and the TWRA - up to 15 points.
2. The project contributes to a better understanding of how golden eagle populations are impacted by wind generation which can lead to development of effective management and conservation measures- up to 20 points, and may benefit other avian species- up to 5 points.
3. The project assesses or contributes to the ability of golden eagles to persist in a changing climate- up to 15 points.
4. The project identifies appropriate, defensible and achievable scientific and procedural methodology- up to 15 points.
5. Project objectives include the “SMART” elements: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound- up to 10 points.

Scored proposals will be provided to CDFW’s Management Advisory Committee (MAC). The MAC will then rank the proposals based on a combination of considerations, including: TAC scores, responsiveness to the priorities identified in this PSN, project budget and past performance of grantee (if applicable). The proposals recommended for funding is then based on a combination of TAC and MAC ranks.

Awards

Successful applicants will receive an award letter notifying them of their proposal selection and the funding amount. Full or partial funding may be awarded. Development of the grant agreements will begin following the announcement of awards. CDFW will complete the grant agreement but will provide a copy of the grant agreement template to the applicant. Grant agreements are not considered executed until signed by both the authorized representative of the recipient and CDFW. Work performed prior to the start date of an agreement will not be reimbursed. Successful applicants will be responsible for carrying out the terms of the contract, and invoicing CDFW for payments.

Proposal Template

Appendix A: 2025/2026 Golden Eagle Conservation Project Statement and Budget Worksheet

For questions regarding this PSN, please contact Brenda Blinn, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor) at 707-339-0334 or Brenda.Blinn@wildlife.ca.gov.