# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS - Ecological Services

https://fws.gov/program/candidate-conservation

F23AS00126 FY23 Candidate Species Conservation Fund
Fiscal Year: 2023
F23AS00126

Due Date for Applications: **09/30/2023**

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## A. Program Description

### A1. Authority

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022—Administrative Provisions (Pub. L. 117-103 [H.R. 2471—305]), Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. §1531 et. seq., Candidate Species Conservation Fund

### A2. Assistance Listing Number

15.660

### A3. Background, Purpose and Program Requirements

**I. Program Description**
The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to provide a means by which the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take appropriate steps to achieve the purposes of treaties and conventions set forth in the ESA. Section 2(a)(5) of the ESA authorizes the use of Federal financial assistance to encourage the states and other interested parties to develop and maintain conservation programs to safeguard the Nation's heritage in fish, wildlife and plants for the benefit of all citizens.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Ecological Services Program provides Federal financial assistance on a competitive basis to states, landowners, educators, non-profit organizations, researchers and other potential partners to secure information about candidate and other at-risk species to avert listing of species pursuant to the ESA, and to help conserve the ecosystems upon which these species depend.

**II. Program Objective** The principal objective of this Candidate Species Conservation funding opportunity is to accomplish conservation tasks for high priority candidate species (based on our annual Candidate Species Assessments) or other at-risk species in the United States, such that identified threats to the species may be reduced or eliminated.

These efforts are based on cooperative relationships with states, non-governmental organizations, private landowners and those interested in habitat restoration or undertaking candidate and at-risk species research, surveys and monitoring, or educational outreach efforts.

**III. Program Priorities** This opportunity will help to support the Administration's priorities of Build Back Better framework, integrate climate change mitigation, and advance racial justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as supports America the Beautiful initiative.

Projects should show a clear conservation benefit that will help prevent listing of a candidate or

at-risk species, remove identified threats and improve status, or contribute information on the species' response to changes in the environment. Priority will be given to proposals that (1) enhance partnerships with states, non-governmental organizations, private landowners, Federal agencies, and others, and (2) leverage our resources and authorities with those of our partners.

Priority will be given to projects that aid in improving the conservation status of a species so as to preclude the need to list. These projects could include, but are not limited to, activities that will secure scientific information about candidate or at-risk species and their habitat, implement restoration actions that will lead to removing threats to the species, or help prevent extinction of a species. This opportunity addresses the Presidential priority articulated in *Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* by supporting biodiversity efforts.

Species eligible for this funding opportunity include both candidate and at-risk species. A full list of candidate species is available through the Service's ECOS website: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/candidate-species. Candidate species with a Listing Priority Number of 1-6 are especially important to focus on. Projects must include the purpose of conserving species that are candidates for ESA listing status (50 CFR 424.15), included in the Service National Listing work plan, or otherwise identified as priority at-risk species.
At-risk species are those that have a reasonable potential to be considered for listing. Listing of at-risk species can be found on the National listing workplan, state endangered species list, and/or have a state heritage rank of G1 or G2, as a few examples. The Service has prioritized at-risk species in their national listing work plan by assigning a priority number. The at-risk species with a priority number of 3 or 4 are especially important to work on – see https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what- we-do/listing-workplan.html for a list of species on the work plan, and see https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/listing-workplan-prioritization.html for a description of the prioritization methodology.

Funds may be provided via cooperative agreements or project grants. Land acquisition or easement purchase is not allowed under this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Projects for NMFS-managed species are not included in this funding opportunity.

### A4. Funding Opportunity Goals

While candidate species receive no protection under the Endangered Species Act, one of our main goals is to encourage actions that will eliminate the need to list these species in the future. Toward that end, we provide technical assistance and leverage funding to support conservation of candidate and other at-risk species.

## B. Federal Award Information

### B1. Total Funding

**Estimated Total Funding**
$500,000

## B2. Expected Award Amount

**Maximum Award**
$500,000
**Minimum Award**
$1,000

## B3. Expected Award Funding and Anticipated Dates

**Expected Award Funding**
**Expected Award Date**
February 28, 2023
Amounts vary by region.

## B4. Number of Awards

**Expected Number of Awards**
Number of awards vary by region.

## B5. Type of Award

**Funding Instrument Type**
G - Grant
CA - Cooperative Agreement
Selection of “Cooperative Agreements” will require entry of a substantial involvement statement. If you are awarding cooperative agreements, you must also insert a description of the substantial involvement the Service expects to have in the performance of the agreement, or reference where the potential applicant can find that information elsewhere in this document. Here is suggested text to use to begin the substantial involvement statement: “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will be substantially involved in projects under this funding opportunity. In particular, the Service will be responsible for the following: [insert list the specific project-related activities to be performed by Service staff].” If the program may also award procurement contracts related to this announcement, you must state that and provide any available details on contract procedures and/or announcement(s) here.]

Under a cooperative agreement, there is a participatory relationship between the Service and the recipient during the award, with shared performance responsibilities. Examples of activities qualifying as substantial Service involvement include:

- Participate and collaborate jointly with the recipient in carrying out the scope of work, including training recipient personnel or detailing Federal personnel to work on the project effort.
- Review and approve one stage of work before the next stage can begin.
- Help select project staff

- Reserve the right to end activity if detailed performance specifications are not met immediately.

Limit recipient discretion with respect to the scope of work, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operations, and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance under the award. Substantial Service involvement does not include

- awarding funds,
- assigning a project officer,
- reviewing and approving reports,
- processing payments, monitoring to ensure the project is completed on time or performing any other routine administrative or monitoring activities.

## C. Eligibility Information

### C1. Eligible Applicants

**Eligible Applicants**

00 – State governments
01 – County governments
02 – City or township governments
04 – Special district governments
05 – Independent school districts
06 – Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
07 – Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
08 – Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
11 – Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
12 – Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
13 – Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
20 – Private institutions of higher education
21 – Individuals
22 – For profit organization other than small businesses
23 – Small businesses
25 – Others (see text field entitled “Additional Information on Eligibility” for clarification)
99 – Unrestricted (i.e. open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in the text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"

**Additional Information on Eligibility**

Applicants are expected to have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the biology of the involved candidate or at-risk species and its ecosystem, including preferably having worked with the species in the field.

### C2. Cost Sharing or Matching

**Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement**

No

**Percentage of Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement**
Cost sharing in not required. Projects should show how they enhance partnerships with states, non-profit organizations, private landowners, and others, and leverage our resources and authorities with those of our partners.

## C3. Other

**Foreign Entities or Projects:**

**State Sponsors of Terrorism:** This program will not fund projects in countries determined by the U.S. Department of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism and therefore are subject to sanctions restricting receipt of U.S. foreign assistance and other financial transactions.

**Office of Foreign Assets Control Sanctions:** This program will not fund projects in countries subject to comprehensive sanction programs administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Control without proper licenses.

**In-Country Licenses, Permits, or Approvals:** Entities conducting activities outside the U.S. are responsible for coordinating with appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities as necessary to obtain all required licenses, permits, or approvals before undertaking project activities. The Service does not assume responsibility for recipient compliance with the laws, regulations, policies, or procedures of the foreign country in which they are conducting work.

**Excluded Parties:**
The DOI conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The DOI cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

# D. Application and Submission Information

## D1. Address to Request Application Package

See contact information in Section G1 for the appropriate Regional Office address.

**Program Website Link**
https://fws.gov/program/candidate-conservation

## D2. Content and Form of Application Submission

**SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance**

All applicants must submit the Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This form is available with the announcement on Grants.gov and in GrantSolutions. The form must be complete and signed by an Authorized Representative. For all applicants except individuals and commercial entities, the Authorized Representative's signature on a standard application form

submitted to the Service represents their certification that the entity's financial management system meets 2 CFR §200.302 financial management requirements. The non-Federal entity's financial management system must be sufficient to:

1. Permit the preparation of required reports;
2. Trace funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that the entity has used such funds per Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the Federal award;
3. Provide for the requirements in 2 CFR §200.302(b); and
4. Comply with §200.334 Retention requirements for records, §200.335 Requests for transfer of records, §200.336 Methods for collection, transmission, and storage of information, and §200.337 Access to records.

If this application requests more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature on or submission of the SF-424 form in GrantSolutions also represents their certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.

When completing the SF-424 Application form, enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in Box 18a, Estimated Federal Funding. Include any other Federal sources of funding in Box 18e. Estimated Other Funding and identify any such sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below). For individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), do NOT include your Social Security Number on this or any other document to be submitted with your application! When completing the SF-424 Application form, individuals must enter in Box 8b. Employee/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN) the substitute number "444-44-4444." Individuals may register in SAM.gov but are not required to have a SAM.gov registration. For individuals without a SAM.gov registration enter in Box 8c. the substitute Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) "KA5HQCLKUVW1".

**Project Abstract Summary (OMB Number 4040-0019)**
Applicants must complete and submit the Project Abstract Summary form. The Project Abstract Summary form must provide a brief award description. The description must be in plain language that the public can understand without viewing the full application proposal. It should include a brief, simple description of the project purpose, activities to be performed, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiaries, and subrecipient activities, if known at the time of submission.

Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive, or proprietary information in the award description as this is available to the public. Use only English characters, numbers, punctuation, and standard symbols. Use of non-English, non-standard characters (also referred to as special or extended ASCII characters) will result in the award description failing to be reported correctly to USASpending.gov. Award descriptions are limited to 4,000 characters or less. Applicants should check the length of the award description and proofread for proper grammar and spelling.

For applicants applying through Grants.gov: Applicants must download and complete the Grants.gov "Project Abstract Summary" form from the full text announcement. To submit the Grants.gov "Project Abstract Summary" form with the application, applicants must add the form as an attachment to the Grants.gov "Attachments" form that is included in the application package.

For applicants applying through GrantSolutions-Grants Management Module (GS-GMM): Applicants must enter the information in the Project Abstract Summary screen. Do not upload a document in place of entering the information directly into GS-GMM Project Abstract Screen.

**Project Narrative**

- Project title
- Description of entity(ies) undertaking the project
- Statement of need that addresses: the specific concern, problem, or issue to be addressed or opportunity to be leveraged; the consequences of not addressing the need; and how the proposed project aligns with the Service program's goals
- Project objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, and any milestones that must be reached to achieve objectives
- Activities, including detailing for each who is carrying out the activity, what is involved, how will it be carried out (method), and when and where the activity will be carried out
- Timeline of when significant project events or milestones are anticipated
- Sufficient information to support environmental compliance review requirements. Note: while the environmental compliance laws are primarily applicable to projects carried out in the U.S., projects carried out on the high seas are subject to compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and projects outside the U.S. on any property on the UNESCO World Heritage List or the in-country equivalent of the U.S. National Register of Historic Places are subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Information on key project personnel, including details on their expertise, skill, or significance to the project
- Project location details and supporting documentation such as maps, GIS data, or geopolitical data, as applicable.

Programs may also require the following, as applicable:

- Description of stakeholder coordination or involvement
- Expected deliverables
- Project monitoring and evaluation plan, including description of assessment tools
- Anticipated future funding needs

Any other program- or project-specific narrative requirements.

**SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs**

Applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A Budget Information form for Non-Construction Programs or Projects. All required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov or in GrantSolutions. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 200. Applicants must show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In "Section A – Budget Summary" on the SF-424A form enter the funding requested from this Federal program in the first row. Identify any other Federal funding sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below). In the SF-424A "Contractual" category total, do not combine estimated subawards and contractual costs. Use the "Contractual" category to reflect estimated contractual costs only. Enter estimated subaward

costs in the SF-424A "Other" category. Provide a separate description and total estimated costs for both contractual and subaward costs in the required Budget Narrative (see below).

**Budget Narrative**

Applicants must include a budget narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. In your budget narrative, describe how the SF-424 Budget Information, "Object Class Category" totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, generally describe how estimates were determined by identifying what type of staff will support the project and how much time they will contribute to the project (in hours or workdays). Describe any proposed items of cost that require prior approval under the Federal award cost principles, including any anticipated subawarding, transferring, or contracting out of any work under the award. Provide a separate description and total estimated costs for both contractual and subaward costs. If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project. For in-kind contributions, identify the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See 2 CFR §200.306 for more information. Please note the prohibitions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment in 2 CFR 200.216. The Department of the Interior's Unmanned Aircraft web page provides a list of approved unmanned aircraft and related equipment and software.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.112, applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

a. *Applicability*.
    1. This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.
    2. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by sub recipients, the conflict of interest provisions in 2 CFR§200.318 apply.

b. *Notification*.
    1. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass- through entity in accordance with 2 CFR §200.112.
    2. Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by sub recipients.

c. *Restrictions on lobbying*. Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must

provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 43 CFR §18 and 31 USC §1352.

d. *Review procedures*. The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict of interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR §200.339, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR §180).

**Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

All U.S. states, local governments, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non- profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System, in accordance with 2 CFR 200 subpart F. U.S. state, local government, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non- profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

**Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Applicants requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in 43CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If this application requests more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

**Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than $100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

**Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or

funded projects, including in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel". If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regard to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with "We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing."

## D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

**Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration:**

This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register as a financial assistance recipient in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). Entities already registered in SAM.gov should review their registration to confirm that they are registered as a financial assistance recipient, which requires completion of the SAM.gov "Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations". See the "Submission Requirements" section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration.

Applicants can register on the SAM.gov website. The "Help" tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov "Register with SAM" page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity's IRS information. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

## D4. Submission Dates and Times

**Due Date for Applications**

09/30/2023

**Application Due Date Explanation**

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

## D5. Intergovernmental Review

An intergovernmental review may be required for applications submissions from a U.S. state or local government prior to submission. Applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the state's process under Executive Order 12372. The State Single Point of Contact list is available on the OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website.

## D6. Funding Restrictions

### Indirect Costs: Individuals

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization they may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, you must not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

### Indirect Costs: Organizations

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior (DOI) is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center (IBC) will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the IBC by phone 916-930-3803 or using the IBC Email Submission Form. See the IBC Website for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients may not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

### Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted by Organization:

**U.S. state or local government entities receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding** must include the following statement in their application and attach a copy of their most recently negotiated rate agreement:

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Our current indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. Attached is a copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement/certification.

**U.S. state or local government entities receiving $35 million or less in direct Federal funding** must include the applicable statement from this list:

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving $35 million or less in direct Federal funding. We prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and documentation per 2 CFR 200, Appendix VII. Our current indirect cost rate is [insert

rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award].

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving $35 million or less in direct Federal funding. We have not prepared an indirect cost rate proposal and documentation per 2 CFR §200, Appendix VII and elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until we choose to establish a rate per 2 CFR §200. We understand we must notify the Service in writing if we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.

**All other organizations** must include the applicable statement from this list and any related documentation in their application. Please note, an organization with a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may not elect to charge the 10% de minimis rate of Modified Total Direct Costs during the period covered by their current negotiated rate.

- We are an organization with a current negotiated indirect cost rate. In the event we receive an award, we will charge indirect costs per our current negotiated rate agreement. Attached is a copy of our current rate agreement.
- We are an organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate that has expired. Attached is copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that has never negotiated an indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate. In the event an award is made, we elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until such time as we negotiate a different rate with our cognizant agency. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if during the award period we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs to the award. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.
- We are an organization submitting a [insert either “Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program” or “Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network”] project proposal, which has an indirect cost rate cap of [insert rate; CRU is currently 15%; CESU is currently 17.5%]. In the event we receive an award, we understand that if we have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate agreement we must charge

the capped indirect cost rate to the same base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand we must request prior approval from the awarding program to use the 2 CFR 200.1 Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base instead of our approved base and that we must submit such requests with our application, including a calculation showing how use of the MTDC base results in an overall reduction in the total indirect costs recovered. If we do not have current negotiated (including provisional) rate, we understand we must charge the capped indirect cost rate against Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. If we have never negotiated a rate, we understand we must use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC.

- We are an organization that will charge all costs directly.

## D7. Other Submission Requirements

The Service uses the GrantSolutions system to manage financial assistance applications and awards. Applicants must register in and conduct any subsequent award business with the Service in GrantSolutions. To apply, your organization and organization officials must be established in GrantSolutions. To register your organization in GrantSolutions, send an email to help@grantsolutions.gov with the following information:

Subject: New Organization Request

- Organization/Individual Name
- Point of Contact first and last name, email, and phone number
- Organization Type
- SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals or Service-waived entities)
- Organization Employer Identification Number (Applicants that are INDIVIDUALS DO NOT include your social security number)
- Address

Organizational details should match those in the organization's SAM.gov registration. To establish organization official accounts and user role(s), complete a Recipient User Account Request Form for each official and email it to help@grantsolutions.gov. The GrantSolutions entity user roles are: Authorizing Official (ADO); Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD); Support Specialist (GSS); Financial Officer (FO); and Financial Support Staff (FSS). All roles can do the following: enter applications, amendments, and reports, view awards, and view and create notes. The ADO and the PI/PD roles can also submit applications, amendments, and reports. The FO role can also submit reports. At a minimum, registered organizations must assign someone to the ADO and PI/PD roles. For more information, see the GrantSolutions Recipient Training and FAQs web page. For GrantSolutions registration, submission, and other assistance contact their Customer Support by telephone at 1-866-577-0771 or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov.

## E. Application Review Information

## E1. Criteria

**Importance/ Relevance and Applicability of the Proposal to Program Objectives and Priorities**
**Maximum Points: 30**
This criterion addresses whether the proposed work addresses the **Program Objectives and Priorities** identified in Section A2 of this document.

If the proposal 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: 0-30 points
0 = no importance/relevance to the stated very limited potential to contribute to species conservation, no implementation of conservation actions
10 = moderately important/relevant, reasonably likely to make some meaningful contribution to species conservation by contributing information on the species redundancy, resiliency, or representation, or improves the species redundancy, resiliency, or representation
20 = extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to the conservation of a candidate or at-risk species.
30 = extremely important/relevant, extremely likely to make a significant contribution to the conservation of a candidate or at-risk species, or reduce the extinction risk.

**Technical/Scientific Merit**
**Maximum Points: 30**
For proposals addressing management and outreach, this criterion addresses whether the Methodology in the Project Narrative are appropriate for achieving the stated Project Objectives, whether the Methodology will result in successful execution of the project, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the time line specified. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient information is provided to evaluate the design of the project relative to the stated goals/objectives.

For proposals addressing research and monitoring, this criterion addresses whether the Methodology in the Project Narrative is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate for achieving the stated Project Objectives, and if the anticipated results can be achieved in the time line specified. Reviewers will consider the sufficiency of information to evaluate the project technically, and if such information is sufficient, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results, and if data collection is proposed, the inclusion of quality assurance considerations.

For all applications, reviewers will consider whether the proposal includes an effective mechanism for evaluating the project's success in meeting the stated goals and objectives, such as whether the Project Objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely). Reviewers will also evaluate whether application instructions contained in this document were followed and if all required elements were submitted.

Score: 0-30 points

0 = completely unsound and/or unlikely to meet the Project Objectives, application instructions were not followed.
15 = intermediately sound, and/or reasonably likely to meet the Project Objectives, application instructions generally followed.
30 = extremely sound and highly likely to meet the stated Project Objectives, application instructions followed thoroughly.

**Overall Qualification of Applicants**
**Maximum Points: 20**
This criterion addresses whether the applicant possesses the necessary expertise, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will consider previous related experience and qualifications of the project's PM or PI, Co-Manager(s), or Co-Investigator(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and cooperators. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which the applicant complied effectively with the application instructions in this NOFO.

Scoring: 0-20 points
0 = completely unqualified and/or lacking the resources or capacity to accomplish the project application instructions were not followed
10 = intermediate level of relevant expertise and experience and adequate resources and capacity to accomplish the project, application instructions were generally followed
20 = extremely qualified and experienced, has all necessary resources and demonstrated capacity to accomplish the project, application instructions followed thoroughly.

**Project Costs**
**Maximum Points: 20**
Reviewers will evaluate the budget to determine if it is sufficiently detailed, realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. The itemized costs and the overall budget must be adequately justified and appropriately allocated. Reviewers will consider whether sufficient detail was provided to evaluate how costs were estimated.

Scoring: 0-20 points
0 = unrealistic and lacking sufficient detail 10 = adequately detailed and realistic
20 = extremely detailed and realistic

**Emphasis to Leverage Funds/Cost Share Contributions**
**Maximum Points: 10**
Projects will be prioritized based on how they leverage funds, weight will be given to confirmed cost share contributions.

Scoring: 0-10 points
0 = applicant cost share is <10% of overall budget
5 = applicant cost share is between 10% - 30% of overall budget 10 = applicant cost share >30% of overall budget.

## E2. Review and Selection Process

Prior to award, the program will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the program may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the FWS may choose not to fund the selected project.

Prior to award, the program will conduct and document a review of the proposed budget to ensure figures are calculated correctly, proposed costs are clearly linked to the project narrative and seem necessary and reasonable, no obviously unallowable costs are included, costs requiring prior approval are identified and described, indirect cost are applied correctly, and any program match or cost share requirements are addressed.

The program may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Bureau is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the program will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in 2 CFR §200.206. Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), the Bureau is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System. The Bureau will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Bureau uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in 2 CFR §200.208 should be applied to the award.

To be considered for funding please refer to Section A Program Description above.

The Service may review the status of applicants' administration of other grants, including Single Audit submissions, past performance, financial strength and management capabilities, and procedures and methods for monitoring subrecipients or vendors. Applicants in poor standing may not be considered for funding. The Service may review all proposed activities for eligibility, including consistency with the objective and purposes of the ESA, the requirements outlined in this NOFO, substantiality in character and design. Activities not eligible will be removed from consideration. This includes activities that are not considered to achieve conservation.

## E3. CFR – Regulatory Information

See the Service's General Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

### E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Awards will be announced and obligated on a rolling basis throughout the fiscal year, based on Regional priorities and funding.

## F. Federal Award Administration Information

### F1. Federal Award Notices

Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail from GrantSolutions. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, and/or drawing down funds. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service and Department when required.

If an application is selected for an award, the appropriate Service Regional Office will notify the applicant of the selection and outline the process for finalizing the award, including any additional information that may be required from the applicant for the satisfactory completion of compliance review. Applicants may be required to revise the project scope and/or budget before a final Notice of Award can be issued. The Notice of Award is the authorizing document for a grant and will be received through GrantSolutions upon completion of all review requirements. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. The Notice of Award will include specific instructions on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. The Service may publish one or more media releases and post information about projects selected for funding on Service websites. These releases may be made in coordination with the Department of the Interior and may be made nationally and/or regionally.

### F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See the DOI Standard Terms and Conditions for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

See the Service's General Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards.

**Buy America Provision for Infrastructure: Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials.**

As required by Section 70914 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58), on or after May 14, 2022, none of the funds under a federal award that are part of a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure may be obligated for a project unless all the iron, steel,

manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver. Recipients conducting infrastructure projects under the award must include related requirements all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for infrastructure work or products under this program. For the full text term applicable to infrastructure and related waiver request standards and procedures, see the Service's General Award Terms and Conditions.

As required by Section 70914 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), P.L. 117-58, on or after May 14, 2022, none of the funds under a federal award that are part of a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver. The requirements of this section must be included in all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for work or products under this program.

**Data Availability**

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.315:

a. All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.
b. The Federal Government has the right to:
    1. Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and
    2. Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

## F3. Reporting

### Financial Reports

All recipients must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

### Non-Construction Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals was not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. **Final** reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim performance** reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

**Construction Performance Reports**

For construction awards, onsite technical inspections and certified percentage of completion data may be relied on to monitor progress for construction. Additional performance reports for construction activities may be required only when considered necessary. However, awards that include both construction and non-construction activities require performance reporting for the non-construction activities. See 2 CFR§200.329 for more information. The USFWS will describe all performance reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

**Significant Development Reports**

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

**Real Property Reports**

Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Bureau will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required standard form or data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award when applicable.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures**

Per 2 CFR §1402.112, non-Federal entities and their employees must take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by subrecipients, the provisions in 2 CFR §200.318 apply. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR §200.112. Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Service Project Officer identified in their notice of award in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that reported by subrecipients. The Service will examine each disclosure to determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, work with the applicant or recipient to develop an

appropriate resolution. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award.

**Other Mandatory Disclosures**

The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies for noncompliance described in 2 CFR §200.339, including suspension or debarment.

**Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance**

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds $10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200.

## G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

### G1. Program Technical Contact

For **programmatic technical assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:
Patrick McKenney

Telephone:
719-651-7961

Email:

fws_es_grants@fws.gov

### G2. Program Administration

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:
Patrick McKenney

Telephone:
719-651-7961

Email:
fws_es_grants@fws.gov

## G3. Application System Technical Support

**For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages, contact:**
Grants.gov Customer Support
Numeric Input Field: 1-800-518-4726
Support@grants.gov

**For GrantSolutions technical registration, submission, and other assistance contact:**
GrantSolutions Customer Support
1-866-577-0771
Help@grantsolutions.gov

## H. Other Information

**Payments**
Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

**Regional Contact Information for programmatic technical assistance and program administration assistance see table below:**

| States or Territory where the project will occur | Regional Office Address | Regional Candidate Conservation Contact, Phone Number, and Email |
|---|---|---|
| Hawaii, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the Pacific Trust Territories | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>911 N.E. 11th Avenue<br>Portland, OR 97232-4181 | Hawaii State and Territory Contact:<br>Lasha-Lynn Salbosa<br>(808) 490-5451<br>lasha-lynn_salbosa@fws.gov |
| Idaho | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>911 N.E. 11th Avenue | Idaho State Contact:<br>Greg Burak<br>(208) 378-5654<br>greg_burak@fws.gov |

| States or Territory where the project will occur | Regional Office Address | Regional Candidate Conservation Contact, Phone Number, and Email |
|---|---|---|
| | Portland, OR 97232-4181 | |
| Oregon | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>911 N.E. 11th Avenue<br>Portland, OR 97232-4181 | Oregon State Contact:<br>Jennifer Siani<br>(503) 231-6915<br>jennifer_siani@fws.gov |
| Washington | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>911 N.E. 11th Avenue<br>Portland, OR 97232-4181 | Washington State Contact:<br>Rose Agbalog<br>(564) 200-2124<br>rose_agbalog@fws.gov |
| Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 6018<br>Albuquerque, NM 87102 | Vanessa Burge (505) 248-5420<br>vanessa_burge@fws.gov |
| Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>Ecological Services<br>5600 American Blvd. West<br>Suite 990<br>Bloomington, | Laura Ragan<br>(612)-713-5157<br>laura_ragan@fws.gov |

| States or Territory where the project will occur | Regional Office Address | Regional Candidate Conservation Contact, Phone Number, and Email |
|---|---|---|
| | Minnesota<br>55437-1458 | |
| Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 400<br>Atlanta, GA 30345 | Carrie Straight<br>(404) 679-7226<br>carrie_straight@fws.gov |
| Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>300 Westgate Center Drive<br>Hadley, MA 01035-9589 | Abby Gelb<br>(413) 253-8212<br>abby_gelb@fws.gov |
| Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>134 Union Blvd., Suite 645<br>Lakewood, CO 80228 | Craig Hansen<br>(303) 236-4749<br>craig_hansen@fws.gov |
| Alaska | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>1011 East Tudor Road,<br>Anchorage, AK 99503-6199 | Erin Knoll<br>(907)-786-3488<br>erin_knoll@fws.gov |

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|---|---|---|
| California and Nevada | Regional Director<br>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606<br>Sacramento, CA 95825-1846 | Karen "Kitti" Jensen<br>(916)-414-6557<br>karen_jensen@fws.gov |

**PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:**

**OMB Control Number: 1018-0100**
Per the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA; 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) collects information in accordance with program authorizing legislation to conduct a review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Privacy Act Statement:** This information collection is authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5701 et seq. The information provided will be used to administer all Service financial assistance programs and activities including to: (1) determine eligibility under the authorizing legislation and applicable program regulations; (2) determine allowability of major cost items under the Cost Principles at 2 CFR 200; (3) select those projects that will provide the highest return on the Federal investment; and (4) assist in compliance with laws, as applicable, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. This information may be shared in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the routine uses listed in INTERIOR/DOI-89, Grants and Cooperative Agreements: FBMS - 73 FR 43775 (July 28, 2008). Furnishing this information is voluntary; however, failure to provide all requested information may prevent the Service from awarding funds.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual times for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. Direct comments regarding the burden estimates or any other aspect of the specific forms to the Service Information Clearance Officer, USFWS, U.S. Department of the Interior, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PRB (JAO/3W), Falls Church, VA 22041-3803, or by email to Info_Coll@fws.gov.