

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Determination for Issuing a Single Source Financial Assistance Award

Instructions: In accordance with Service policy 516 FW 6, *Issuing Discretionary Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards without Competition*, complete this form to document the justification for issuing a single source grant or cooperative agreement award. This form must be signed by both a program representative and the employee with signature authority for the award to be issued (see 516 FW 3, *Signature Authority for Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards*). The completed and signed form must be maintained in the official award file.

Recipient Name: American Conservation Experience

Project Title: Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR Invasive Tree Removal

Program Contact: Kimberly Wahl, 956-784-7580

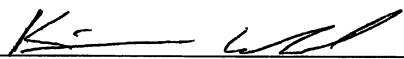
Select all criteria that apply (from 505 DM 2):

☐	(1) Unsolicited Proposal: The proposed award is the result of an unsolicited application that represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach that is not the subject of a current or planned award, but is found to be advantageous to program objectives.
☐	(2) Continuation. The activity to be funded is necessary for the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of, an activity we are funding and holding a competition would have a significant adverse effect on continuing or completing the activity.
☐	(3) Legislative Intent. The language in the applicable authorizing legislation or legislative history clearly indicates the intent of Congress to restrict the award to a particular recipient or purpose.
☒	(4) Unique Qualifications. The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based on a variety of demonstrable factors such as location, property ownership; voluntary support capacity; cost-sharing ability, if applicable, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications.
☐	(5) Emergencies. Because of a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety, there is not enough time to follow adequate competitive procedures.

Explain below why competition for this award is not practical. As applicable, summarize the program legislative history, unique capabilities of the proposed recipient, and any cost-sharing contribution offered by the proposed recipient. Be brief and specific:

Invasive tree removal is one of the many ongoing habitat restoration projects necessary to protect habitat for migratory birds, neotropical birds, and terrestrial wildlife on the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which follows nearly 275 river miles to create a wildlife corridor along the Rio Grande. Many acres on the banks of the Rio Grande are infested with invasive trees, primarily saltcedar. Removal of these species are to be conducted in areas with existing rehabilitation plans which outline restoration treatments that include preserving existing vegetation for wildlife habitat. Individual removal of trees by cutting and treating each stem is time consuming but must be completed properly to ensure protection of surrounding vegetation and effectiveness of treatments. The American Conservation Experience (ACE) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to coordinating and training young adult conservation volunteers and emerging professional interns to undertake practical environmental projects on public lands. ACE has proven to be a valuable asset for battling invasive species on refuges in the southwest. Trained ACE crews working on invasive species control projects are highly effective while also representing a highly cost efficient method of conducting restoration work on refuges. Furthermore, ACE crews are trained and self-sufficient, equipped with tools and other equipment to conduct the project from start to finish without intensive Service staff involvement. Utilizing ACE crews generates a substantial benefit to the Service due to the relative costs of their service, quality of work, and flexibility to address the Service's needs at the Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR.

I have determined that this project meets the requirements for a single source award and recommend that it be awarded to the recipient named above.

 6-24-15

Program Representative Sign and Date

Kimberly Wahl

Printed Name of Program Representative

I, as the Service employee with signature authority for this award under 516 FW 3, have reviewed this program recommendation and find that it meets the requirements for a single source award.

MICHELLE WILLCOX

Digitally signed by MICHELLE WILLCOX
DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=Department of the Interior, ou=U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, cn=MICHELLE WILLCOX
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Date: 2015.06.30 09:12:28 -0600

Authorized Signator Sign and Date

Michelle L. Willcox

Printed Name of Signator