

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Refuge System, Red Rock Lakes NWR, Lima, MT**

Migratory Bird Monitoring, Assessment and Conservation
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.655

Notice of Funding Availability and Application Instructions

I. Single Source Information

This is a Notice of Intent to award a Single Source Cooperative agreement to Dr. Bok Sowell to create a habitat management plan for grazing on National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs).

The tasks to be performed under this agreement are as follows: Red Rock Lakes NWR will collaborate with Dr. Bok Sowell, Montana State University, to address key uncertainties in the existing grazing management plan for Red Rock Lakes NWR and other NWR's. We will create a habitat management plan for grazing on NWR's that used fine and coarse filter monitoring approaches. Specific deliverables will include a habitat management plan and monitoring plan for grazing on National Wildlife Refuges, along with results summarized in a scientific peer review publication no later than fall of 2015.

This Single Source Award is being awarded in accordance with Department of the Interior Policy 505 DM 2.14 B 4 Unique Qualifications, which allows for award without competition to an applicant. This recipient and project meet this criterion since Dr. Sowell obtained a PhD in Range Sciences from New Mexico State University in 1989. Dr. Sowell is current a Professor in Range Science at Montana State University since 1995.

II. Award Information

This award is intended to be executed under a Cooperative Agreement through the Department of Animal and Range Sciences at Montana State University – Bozeman, which requires substantial involvement by the USFWS. The USFWS will have substantial involvement in the performance of this agreement through the following:

1. The USFWS and cooperator will jointly develop the habitat management plan. USFWS personnel will teleconference with cooperator regularly to keep the project on schedule and to ensure that the cooperator has all required information and materials and that the project meets the needs of the USFWS.
2. The resultant habitat management plan will be jointly designed by the USFWS and cooperator, and the USFWS will implement the final Habitat Management Plan.
3. The USFWS project manager will coordinate with cooperator to ensure due consideration and planning is directed toward ensuring that data and information products ultimately generated by the protocol are properly validated and archived. The USFWS will review and provide comments on draft deliverables.

This program uses grant agreements as the primary assistance instrument.

The design, implementation and subsequent monitoring of management actions are an essential part of habitat and wildlife management on National Wildlife Refuges (NWR).

Managers rely on data from monitoring to make difficult and sometimes controversial decisions. To assess wildlife populations on NWR's, managers have historically relied on habitat-based data. These data are assumed to covary with wildlife populations; a concept referred to as the coarse-filter monitoring (CFM) approach. CFM does not rely on direct sampling of wildlife, but rather it assumes that effective habitat management will increase wildlife population size. The CFM approach is logistically simpler (plants are sedentary), provides more precise data (low observer error on plant measurements), and costs less than direct sampling of wildlife response to management. It is, however, a great 'leap of faith' to assume that management mediated habitat changes will increase wildlife populations. An alternative, complementary method for monitoring is the fine-filter monitoring (FFM) approach. FFM directly assesses focal wildlife populations, including the monitoring of wildlife state variables (e.g. species abundance, density, survival, birth rate, or occupancy). Limitations to FFM include increased resource commitment, and higher variability in direct wildlife monitoring data. Coarse- filter monitoring approaches have historically worked, but with increasing management expectations by the public, CFM falls short (at least for NWR's) at understanding habitat mediated wildlife response. Therefore, the combination of the two approaches, CFM and FFM, in Habitat Management Plans for NWR's, will be of greater value to managers for achieving wildlife-based population objectives.

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new awards. A cooperative agreement will be awarded. The Service will be substantially involved with the research. This will include overseeing field data collection, data management, analysis, and production of the final report in the format of a university thesis by a graduate research assistant.

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$99,000

Expected Number of Awards: 4

Award Ceiling: \$99,000

Award Floor: \$30,000

Due to the limited funds available, preference is given to proposals requesting less than \$50,000.00 USD. Higher amounts may be requested with appropriate justification. The period of performance for the majority of projects funded under this program is one year, starting on the date the award is signed by the USFWS. Project proposals must be designed accordingly. Past and present recipients of awards under this program are eligible, but must submit new proposals to compete for funding each year. This program uses grant agreements as the primary assistance instrument.

III. Basic Eligibility Requirements

IV. Cost Sharing or Matching:

- V.** Cost sharing is not required. However, applicants should be aware of the requirement for and expectations of substantial involvement by the USFWS.

VI. Agency Contacts

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