

Fiscal Year 2010
State Wildlife Grants Competitive Grant Program
Notice of Availability of Grants and Request for Applications

Program Overview Information

Federal Agency Name:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

Funding Opportunity Title:

State Wildlife Grants Competitive Grant Program

Announcement Type:

Announcement of availability of grants for fiscal year (FY) 2010 and request for applications

Please read this announcement carefully as application procedures have changed from last year's competitive cycle. Incomplete applications or applications that contain ineligible activities will not be evaluated for awards.

Funding Opportunity Number: DOI-FWS-WSFR-SWGCMP FY10

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.634

Dates: Hard copy applications are due to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Regional Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) Office by 4:00 PM local time on January 8, 2010. Electronic applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accepted up until 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time January 8, 2010. Nonetheless, electronic applications should be submitted through Grants.gov by January 6, 2010 to allow for any unforeseen technical complications. We will not consider applications received after the January 8, 2010.

We expect to make the announcement of awards in April 2010

Additional information:

Since 2001, the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program has awarded grants for "the development and implementation of programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat, including species that are not hunted or fished..." To participate in the SWG program and as directed by Congress, each State, Commonwealth, territory, and the District of Columbia (State) developed a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan or State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) for review and approval by the Service; all SWAPs were submitted to the Service in October 2005 and approved.

Each SWAP identifies species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) that occur in a State and the habitats needed to conserve them. In addition, the SWAPs provide detailed information on

issues affecting SGCN and their habitats, and conservation actions and strategies to address these issues.

Congress annually appropriates funds to the SWG program to support implementation of the SWAPs. The funds are apportioned by the Service to State fish and wildlife agencies through a formula based on population and geographic area.

More information about the SWG Program is on the web at:
<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/SWG.htm>.

Congress established the SWG Competitive Grant Program in 2008 through Public Law 110-161. This nationally competitive program serves to implement the SWAPs by promoting cooperative partnerships.

For FY2010, SWG Competitive Grant Program applications must address eligible issues identified in Service-approved SWAPs or emerging issues (such as climate change effects on SGCN) that are adequately documented and approved in the grant application and that propose to improve the status of SGCN or their habitats. Funds will be awarded to the highest-ranking cooperative conservation grant applications using the ranking evaluation criteria contained in this announcement. Priority will be given to multistate, cooperative conservation projects that demonstrate measurable performance results and outcomes.

Please read this announcement carefully prior to applying for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds. Applications that are incomplete or that contain ineligible activities will not be accepted. **We strongly encourage States to coordinate closely with Regional WSFR SWG Specialists in the development of applications to assure that applications are complete and eligible for funding.** Contact information is included in Section IV. Application and Submission Information, A. Address to Request and/or Submit Application Package.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The SWG Competitive Grant Program will award funds for the highest-ranking cooperative conservation projects that implement eligible actions or strategies identified in Service-approved SWAPs or projects that propose to address emerging issues (e.g., climate change effects on wildlife) documented and approved in the grant applications that propose to improve the status of SGCN or their habitats.

II. Award Information:

To date, Congress has not appropriated FY2010 funds for the SWG Competitive Grant Program; however, the WSFR anticipates that approximately \$5,000,000 will be made available based on the FY08 and FY09 Congressional appropriations. The minimum Federal award will be \$300,000 and the maximum Federal award will be \$1,000,000. SWG Competitive Grant Program applications that propose less than \$300,000 or more than \$1,000,000 in Federal funds will not be evaluated for awards.

Awards are expected to be announced in April 2010 subject to the availability of funds.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The 50 States, Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands; the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa; and the District of Columbia with Service-approved SWAPs are eligible to apply for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds.

B. Cost-Sharing or Matching

For the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the maximum Federal cost share for State Wildlife Grant competitive awards is 75 percent of total grant costs. The Service will waive the non-Federal matching requirement for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands up to \$200,000 (48 U.S.C. 1469a (d)).

The overall non-Federal cost share is a factor used in ranking proposals. Applicants are encouraged to provide more than the minimum (25%) required non-Federal cost share.

Cost sharing contributions from non-State partners must be documented with a signed letter of commitment from an authorized representative of the match provider. The letter of commitment must be included in the application package and must detail the amount of cost sharing funds or value of donated services, equipment, or materials identified in the letter.

NOTE: The State applicant is responsible for ensuring the full amount of non-Federal cost share listed on the Application for Federal Assistance Form SF 424 regardless of the source.

C. Other

Although only designated State fish and wildlife agencies can apply for and receive grant funds under this program, cooperative conservation projects are encouraged. The scoring criteria include points for partnering with Tribes, Federal agencies other than the Service, other State agencies, local governments, non-governmental organizations, private landowners, and others.

IV. Application and Submission Instructions

A. Address to Request and/or Submit Application Package

Potential applicants can obtain application forms and other materials needed to apply for SWG Competitive Grant Program awards by contacting SWG Specialists at the Service's Regional Offices. Application forms are also available through the Grants.gov website and the WSFR toolkit at:

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/ToolkitFiles/toolkit.pdf>.

Regional WSFR Office contact information is listed below.

States, Commonwealths, the District of Columbia, and territories by U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Region	Regional Contact Information
American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Migratory Birds & State Programs WSFRP 911 NE 11 th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181 503-231-6758 nell_fuller@fws.gov
Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program P.O. Box 1306; 500 Gold Avenue, SW Albuquerque, NM 87103 505-248-7459 bob_anderson@fws.gov
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building 1 Federal Drive Fort Snelling, MN 55111 612-713-5129 mike_sweet@fws.gov
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 240 Atlanta, GA 30345 404-679-7310 christine_willis@fws.gov
Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035 413-253-8513 dee_blanton@fws.gov
Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 134 Union Blvd., P.O. Box 25486 Denver, Colorado 80225 303-236-8179 connie_young-dubovsky@fws.gov
Alaska	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 1011 East Tudor Road Anchorage, AK 99503 907-786-3472

	judy_jacobs@fws.gov
California and Nevada	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 2800 Cottage Way, W-1729 Sacramento, CA 95825 916-414-6182 jill_wright@fws.gov

B. Content and Form of Final Application

Applications submitted for the SWG Competitive Grant Program must include:

1. A full and complete Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424), signed by an authorized representative of the eligible agency.
2. Budget Information, i.e., estimated costs to attain the project objectives. Applicants should use either Standard Form 424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Projects or Standard Form 424C, Budget Information – Construction Projects. The various activities or components of each project should be identified in the budget narrative.
3. Statement of Assurances of compliance with applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Applicants should use either Standard Form 424B, Statement of Assurances – Non-construction Projects or Standard Form 424D, Statement of Assurances – Construction Projects.
4. A project narrative limited to no more than 20 pages (not including forms, budgets, or letters of commitment). It should include:
 - a. The need for the proposed project;
 - b. Discrete, quantifiable, or verifiable objectives to be accomplished during a specific time period;
 - c. Expected results or benefits from accomplishing the objectives;
 - d. The approach to be used in meeting the objectives, including specific procedures, schedules, key personnel, and cooperators;
 - e. Description of the activity in relation to compliance needs for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 7 of Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA);
 - f. A project location and map. The applicant should include two maps: a map of the State showing the general location of the project and a map of the project site(s). Other geographic aids, such as aerial photographs, may be attached. Maps and geographic aids will not be counted as part of the 20-page narrative limitation; and
 - g. Estimated costs to attain the project objectives. The various activities or components of each project in the application must be clearly identified and broken down by cost and by funding partner(s) in a budget narrative; this must include donated matching funds, services, equipment, or materials.

5. Signed letter(s) of commitment from an authorized representative of a partner(s) or cooperator(s). The letter(s) of commitment must detail the amount of matching funds or value of services, equipment, or materials identified in the letter(s). **The State applicant is responsible for ensuring the full amount of the non-Federal match as listed on the SF 424 regardless of the proposed third-party source.**

Note: **We strongly encourage States to coordinate closely with Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) Regional SWG specialists in the development and submission of applications to assure that applications are complete and eligible for funding. Applications that are incomplete or that contain ineligible activities will not be accepted.**

C. Format

1. Final applications should be on 8.5" X 11" paper, in no smaller than 12-point font with 1" margins. Application narratives must be numbered and limited to no more than 20 pages not including forms, budgets, letters of commitment, maps and geographic aids, and compliance documents.
2. Applications should be arranged starting with the Application for Assistance SF 424 followed by the SF 424 A, B, C, and D (as appropriate); the project narrative; compliance documents; and letters of financial or programmatic commitment by partners and cooperators. In accepting Federal funds, applicants must comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Evidence of compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and other applicable Federal laws will be required if the competitive application is selected for award and prior to its approval.

D. Submission Dates and Times:

- 1) Hard copy applications are due to the Service Regional WSFR Office by 4:00 PM local time on January 8, 2010 (see address above in *IV. Application and Submission Information, A. Address to Request and/or Submit Application Package*) or
- 2) Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accepted until 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time, January 8, 2010. Nonetheless, electronic applications should be submitted through Grants.gov by January 6, 2010 to allow for any unforeseen technical complications.

We will not consider applications received after January 8, 2010.

E. Intergovernmental Review

The SWG Competitive Grant Program is not subject to EO 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

F. Funding Restrictions

The SWG Competitive Grant Program will only award funds for projects that implement eligible actions or strategies identified in Service-approved SWAPs or projects that propose to address

emerging issues (e.g., climate change effects on wildlife) documented and approved in the grant application that propose to improve the status of SGCN or their habitats.

The SWG Competitive Grant Program is funded through annual appropriations by Congress. There is no assurance that it will be authorized in subsequent years.

V. Application Review Information

A. Scoring Criteria

I. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY CRITERIA

This set of criteria assesses the ability or readiness of the applicant(s) and partner(s) to accomplish the proposed work. The grant application must demonstrate that the State(s) can complete the proposed actions that are likely to succeed in improving the status of SGCN or their habitats (19 points total).

1. Grant application describes how the applicant will coordinate all aspects of work including use of common procedures, data sharing, monitoring, and reporting with partners (0-3 points).

2. Grant application identifies dedicated staff or contractors readily available to implement work (0-3 points).

- a. Emerging issue that is unplanned, unfunded, and unstaffed (0 points); or
- b. Emerging issue for which applicant or partners have qualified staff to address (1 point); or
- c. Previously planned actions with qualified staff, but inadequately funded (2 points); or
- d. Continuing or increased level of existing effort (3 points).

3. Grant application describes specific Federal compliance issues which need to be addressed and what the State has done to address them to date (0-3 points).

4. Grant application describes how Federal compliance requirements can be addressed in a reasonable time and provides an estimated timeline (0-3 points).

- a. Compliance documentation effort is expected to be extensive (1 point);
- b. Compliance documentation effort is expected to be moderate (2 points); or
- c. Compliance documentation effort is expected to be limited (3 points).

5. Non-Federal Match

a. Overall: For the total amount of match identified in the Budget and the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), the application identifies the percentage of non-Federal match (0-4 points total).

- i. Non-Federal match is 25 % (0% for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (0 points); or

- ii. Non-Federal match is > 25 to 30 % (>0 to 5 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (1 point); or
- iii. Non-Federal match is > 30 to 40 % (>5 to 15 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (2 points); or
- iv. Non-Federal match is > 40% (>15 % for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) (4 points).

b. Source: At least 30% of the non-Federal match comes from one or more partners and the match is well documented through a commitment letter describing the nature (i.e., cash, waived cost, and/or in-kind), the source, and the value of the match. Partners are defined here as all participating agencies, tribes, businesses, organizations, and persons other than the State fish and wildlife agency that submits the SWG Competitive Grant Program application (3 points).

II. TECHNICAL RANKING CRITERIA

This set of criteria assesses the grant application on its direct and immediate benefit to the SGCN, their habitats, and the overall technical merit of the proposed work. The grant application must provide a clear description of how the proposed actions will implement the applicant's SWAP(s). The ranking criteria listed below are organized by sections of the grant application (71 points total).

NEED – This section describes the reason or unique opportunity for completing the proposed actions (28 points total).

1. Grant application clearly describes the need(s) identified in each participating State's SWAP (reference relationship to SWAP, such as page numbers or section) or the need(s) is documented as an emerging issue in the grant application to address a critical or unanticipated need such as a wildlife health/disease or climate change issue (0-3 points).

- a. The need is not clearly linked to any participating State's SWAP or to a documented emerging issue (0 points); or
- b. The need is clearly described, but not clearly linked to the SWAP for each participating State or to a documented emerging issue (1-2 points); or
- c. The need is clearly described and linked to the SWAP for each participating State or to a documented emerging issue (3 points).

2. Grant application implements priority conservation actions identified in the SWAPs by each partner State or that address the emerging issue documented by each State partner. For this criterion, a State partner is one that is actively conducting work to complete the objectives of the grant application (3 points per State, maximum of 15 points).

3. Grant application directly targets improving the status of SGCN as described in each State partner's SWAP (0-5 points).

- a. 1 SGCN (1 point); or

- b. 2-5 SGCN (2 points); or
- c. 6-10 SGCN (3 points); or
- d. 11-15 SGCN (4 points); or
- e. More than 15 SGCN (5 points).

4. Grant application describes critical geographical location(s) to be improved for SGCN, why they are critical, and is a substantial effort to improve these areas (0-5 points).

- a. Critical for 1 SGCN (1 point); or
- b. Critical for 2-5 SGCN (2 points); or
- c. Critical for 6-10 SGCN (3 points); or
- d. Critical for 11-15 SGCN (4 points); or
- e. Critical for more than 15 SGCN (5 points).

OBJECTIVES – This section describes the accomplishments that will improve the status of SGCN or their habitats (5 points total).

1. Objectives are distinct, obtainable, and quantifiable or verifiable (for example, but not limited to the number of stream miles or the number of acres of wetlands or other types of habitat to be restored; the increase in available habitat for SGCN; or the percentage increase in a population of one or more SGCN) (0-5 points).

EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS – This section describes how the accomplishment of the objectives will benefit targeted SGCN or their habitats (10 points total).

1. Grant application describes the short-term benefits for SGCN or their habitats to be achieved within a ten-year period and it makes clear connections between the proposed conservation actions and expected benefits for species and their habitats (0-5 points).

2. Grant application describes the long-term benefits for SGCN or their habitats to be achieved beyond ten years and makes clear connections between the proposed conservation actions and expected benefits for species and their habitats (0-5 points).

APPROACH – This section describes how the State(s) will accomplish and monitor program objectives (28 points total).

1. Grant application describes the specific types of conservation projects/actions that the State and its partners will conduct and provides adequate detail to understand how the State and its partners will implement the project/actions (0-6 points).

- a. Methods/procedures used in conservation action (1-2 point); and
- b. Who will implement the practices (1 point); and
- c. Credentials and training of key project personnel (1 point); and
- d. Any local, State, or Federal permits needed to undertake the work (1 point); and
- e. Schedule of work (1 point).

2. Projects/actions involve at least one partner from any one of the following entities: another State agency; another State; Tribe; private landowner; nongovernmental organization; or Federal agency other than the Service; and at the level of involvement described below (0-4 points).

- a. Simple involvement by a partner in completing proposed actions (e.g., a letter of support, up to 5% of the total cost of the Application for Federal Assistance, or both provided) (1 point); or
- b. Partner engaged and committed to completing proposed actions (e.g., committing > 5% and up to 15% of the total cost of the Application for Federal Assistance with some staff provided) (2 points); or
- c. Partner engaged and substantively committed to completing proposed actions (e.g., committing >15% and up to 25% of the total cost of the Application for Federal Assistance with staff committed to the project/actions) (3 points); or
- d. Complex and dedicated role of a partner in completing proposed actions (e.g., committing > 25% or more of the total cost of the Application for Federal Assistance with staff committed to providing a primary role in completing project/actions) (4 points).

3. Projects/actions are accomplished, in part, on private lands. Points are awarded on the percentage of the total acres affected (0-5 points).

- a. Private land component up to 10 % of the total acreage affected (1 point); or
- b. Private land component > 10% and up to 20% of the total acreage affected (2 points); or
- c. Private land component > 20% and up to 30% of the total acreage affected (3 points); or
- d. Private land component > 30% and up to 40% of the total acreage affected (4 points); or
- e. Private land component > 40% of the total acreage affected (5 points).

4. Project actions are conducted on lands owned or managed by other State or local agencies, Federal agencies other than the Service, Tribes, or nongovernmental organizations (0 or 4 points).

- a. There are no project actions that take place on lands owned or managed by these entities (0 points).
- b. Project actions take place on lands owned or managed by one or more of these entities (4 points).

5. The grant application describes a monitoring plan that each participating State or partner will use to ensure SGCN and/or habitats are adequately monitored and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of conservation actions and provide for adaptive management (0-5 points).

One point for describing each of the following items clearly and in sufficient detail:

- a. Approach for establishing baseline conditions;
- b. Monitoring procedures and protocols described;
- c. Performance measures;
- d. Roles and responsibilities of each partner; and
- e. Timeframe for monitoring activities.

6. The grant application describes how performance reports will clearly document monitoring results and how they will be used for adaptive management for improving future efforts (0-4 points). Two points for each of the following:

- a. Discusses performance measures relative for monitoring progress toward meeting the objectives.
- b. Discusses a process that will be used to incorporate data into adaptive management decisions.

Total Score Possible = 90

B. Review and Selection Process

Award selection is a three-step process: application acceptance, application ranking, and application selection.

- Application acceptance - The Regional WSFR Offices determines that applications are complete, substantial in character and design, and eligible for funding. If possible and if time allows, incomplete or ineligible applications will be returned to the applicant for revision and resubmission. Resubmission of returned applications is allowed until the identified application deadline (January 8, 2010). The Regional WSFR Offices will forward accepted applications to the WSFR Washington Office (WO).
- Application ranking – The WO will form a national review team to rank the proposals and provide award recommendations to the Assistant Director for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.
- Application selection - Funding awards will be subject to the final approval of the Service Director. The Service will notify all applicants of the selections.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The awards are expected to be announced in April 2010. Applicants will be notified by Regional WSFR offices of the process needed to complete the grant award.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

The Regional WSFR offices will notify successful applicants. The Service will also publish a press release announcing the awards.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Compliance with all applicable Federal laws, policies, and regulations, including environmental laws such as the ESA, NEPA, and NHPA must be addressed before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can approve an award.

3. Reporting

Reporting requirements, including general records retention and access requirements, are specified in 43 CFR 12.82. Recent updates (as of May 15, 2009) and additional details regarding requirements, guidance, consequences, etc. are available in the document Interim Guidance for Financial and Performance Reporting, located at:

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/subpages/toolkitfiles/intgdrpt.pdf>.

VII. Agency Contacts

The SWG Competitive Grant Program is administered by the Service through the WSFR. National level program information can be obtained by contacting:

Steve Jose
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
Mailstop WSFR-4020
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
703-358-2156
steve_jose@fws.gov

For project specific information, please contact your Regional WSFR Office (see “IV. Application and Submission Information; A. Address to Request Application Package”).

VIII. Other Information

The Federal government is not bound to financially support any selected project until a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorized representative has approved the award.

OMB Control Number 1018-0109 - PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:
The Paperwork Reduction Act requires us to tell you why we are collecting this information, how we will use it, and whether or not you have to respond. We will use the information that we collect to evaluate applications submitted to acquire funding for Clean Vessel Act Grant Program funds. Your response is required to receive funding. A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. We estimate that it will take an average of 50 hours to complete the application. The average estimated annual burden associated with writing and submitting required performance reports is 6 hours. You may send comments concerning the burden estimates or any aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS 222 ARLSQ, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203.

Attachment A provides additional information for the FY2010 SWG Competitive Grant Program.

Attachment A

Fiscal Year 2010 State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Competitive Grant Program Questions and Answers

Q1. Will grant applications from a single State be considered for funding?

- A. Yes, a single State fish and wildlife agency may apply for SWG Competitive Grant Program funds, provided they have one or more partners identified in the application. Partners may include another State agency, Tribes, Federal agencies other than the Service, organizations, businesses, or individuals (e.g., private landowners).

Q2. Is there a minimum or maximum Federal share for an application?

- A. The SWG Competitive Grant Program will promote cooperation among States and other partners to address the needs of SGCN and their habitats over a larger landscape. To encourage cooperative ventures, the minimum SWG Competitive Grant Program Federal cost share of grant applications is \$300,000 with a maximum SWG Competitive Grant Program Federal cost share up to \$1,000,000.

Q3. If Federal funds remain after awarding competitive grants, how will the Service make them available to the States?

- A. Remaining funds will be added to monies appropriated the following fiscal year, if applicable, and used in the next cycle of awards through this competitive program. If subsequent competitive program funds are not authorized, the Service will use the funds as approved by Congress.

Q4. Will the SWG Competitive Grant Program continue in future years?

- A. The SWG Competitive Grant Program is appropriated annually by Congress; there is no assurance that it will be authorized in subsequent years.

Q5. How long are funds available for obligation?

- A. Funds awarded to a selected grant must be obligated with an approved Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) within six months of the notice of selection. Unobligated funds and unused balances on awarded grants will revert to the Service and be added to available funds for the next cycle of awards through this competitive program. The funds will be used for other purposes approved by Congress if competitive program funds are not authorized for the subsequent fiscal year(s).

Q6. Is there a maximum grant period?

- A. Yes. The maximum period for grant applications is three years from the effective date of grant award obligation. If approved by the Regional Service Director or his designee, an extension may be approved through an amendment; however, the grant may be extended no more than an additional two years.

Q7. What are the cost-sharing percentages for this competitive program?

- A. The Federal share for SWG Competitive Grant Program grants may not exceed 75 percent of the total grant cost. Matching requirements are waived for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands up to \$200,000 (48 U.S.C. 1469a. (d)). The non-Federal share may not include Federal funds or Federal in-kind match unless specifically allowed by law.

Q8. What constitutes an emerging issue?

- A. An emerging issue is an issue that was not identified in an approved SWAP, it must address a critical need or unanticipated opportunity, e.g., shifts in species range that may be related to climate change. For additional guidance, see the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service “Guidance for Wildlife Action Plans (Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy) Review and Revisions”, dated July 12, 2007. This guidance may be found at:

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/subpages/toolkitfiles/swg2007.pdf>

Note: Incorporation of an emerging issue into a SWAP is also subject to the requirements contained in the July 12, 2007 guidance.

Q9. For multistate grant proposals, should one State be the project lead?

- A. Yes. One State should be the lead in submitting the grant application and coordinating most aspects of the grant application including: writing a single project narrative; coordinating work; coordinating monitoring; and writing a performance report that summarizes overall results with specific data from all participating States. Each participating State must submit an Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) to obligate its portion of awarded funds. In addition, each State must prepare and submit individual financial status and performance reports for its portion of the overall project.

Q10. What activities are eligible for funding under this program?

- A. 1) Conservation actions such as research, surveys, species and habitat management, land acquisition, facilities development, and monitoring.
- 2) Development of habitat mapping, data management systems, and monitoring protocols.
- 3) Education and law enforcement activities, but only when each comprises a minor portion of a grant project objective, is critical to project success, and specifically addresses a threat or issue identified within the SWAP. “Minor” is considered no more than 10 percent of an individual project cost.

Q11. What are the compliance requirements for activities funded under this program?

- A. States must comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations as a condition of acceptance of Federal funds. In addition to the authorizing legislation, compliance requirements for the SWG Competitive Grant Program include 43 CFR Part 12, 2 CFR 225, OMB Circulars (A-87, A-102, and A-133), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and other applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Applicants must provide assurance that they will comply with applicable provisions. [Appendix 2, 522 FW 1](#) of the Service Manual provides an assurance checklist for construction grants (SF 424D) and for nonconstruction grants (SF 424B) that States may use to develop a grant application (Service Manual [522 FW 1.3B and C](#) and [523 FW 1](#)).

Q12. Are there additional formatting criteria?

- A. Formatting criteria are included in the “Request for Application.” There are no additional requirements unless an applicant applies via Grants.gov. Those formatting requirements can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/>.

Q13. Where should an applicant submit SWG Competitive Grant Program applications?

- A. Applicants must submit applications to the appropriate Regional WSFR Office or to Grants.gov. Regional office addresses may be found in Section IV. A of the Request for Applications.

Q14. Who recommends grant applications for funding and who announces the upcoming awards?

- A. The Service Director will approve applications for awards. The Service will notify applicants of the selections.

Q15. Once an application is selected for funding, what additional documents must the applicant submit and to whom?

- A. The Service, in cooperation with grantees, must address Federal compliance issues such as the ESA, NEPA, and NHPA prior to approving the application and obligating awarded grant funds. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) Regional Staff can assist grantees in explaining the procedures and documentation necessary for meeting Federal requirements prior to approval of the Application for Federal Assistance to obligate funds.

Q16. What must be done during the grant period if a change in objectives or approach is needed?

- A. This is a competitive program. Therefore, each grant application is judged to be complete with all costs needed to accomplish the objectives of the application. The Service will have discretion, however, to determine if proposed changes can be accepted if the original objectives will be met and the resulting benefits will be equivalent to those previously described. Otherwise, no changes to costs, objectives, benefits, or approach will be allowed.

If the State(s) cannot complete the grant as approved, the grant will be terminated; all remaining unexpended funds will revert to the Service; the State must submit a final report within 90 days of the termination date. The Service may require that the State(s) repay all expended funds if the final financial status report and the final performance report indicate that no substantive accomplishments were made. In addition, the Service will not accept applications from the grantee to participate in the next two award cycles following the termination date.

Q17. Who has the authority to terminate a grant?

- A. Grants may be terminated by the Service Director or by mutual agreement between the State Director and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Regional Chief. A termination decision by the Service Director is not subject to appeal.