

**THE NORTH PACIFIC
Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

FY2011 Funding Guidance

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Overview

Federal Agency Name: US Fish and Wildlife Service in support of the North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NPLCC).

Funding Opportunity Title: US FWS NPLCC FY11 Funding Guidance

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Research Grants (Generic) No. 15.650

Dates: The deadline for submissions is **May 3, 2011** by COB 5pm PST.

If you do not have the capability to submit electronically, please contact North Pacific Interim Science Coordinator, Mary Mahaffy (Mary_Mahaffy@fws.gov, 360-753-7763) for information on how you may apply under this announcement.

Funding Opportunity Description: A total estimated amount of up to \$650,000 for 3-12 science, data, and information-oriented projects that will support the NPLCC may be awarded. Projects must address one or more of the five elements identified for FY11 (see Section I. for description of elements). Proposals may be solicited from a specific agency or organization with proprietary or jurisdictional rights or a Request for Proposals for a specific type of work will be released with this announcement. Unsolicited proposals may be submitted but will be reviewed through the criteria included in this guidance.

How to submit a proposal: Proposals should be submitted electronically to nplcc@fws.gov. Please convert your proposals to a PDF before submitting. See Section IV for information on how to apply.

I. Funding Opportunity Description.

Under this FY11 NPLCC Funding Guidance, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Region (FWS R1) is requesting project proposals for landscape related science and information. The NPLCC's Interim Planning Team developed a proposed mission statement and conservation goals. The Steering Committee will adopt a final mission statement and conservation goals after meeting in May 2011. The proposed mission statement is the following: The NPLCC promotes development, coordination and dissemination of science to inform landscape level conservation in the face of a changing climate and related stressors.

A Science Plan for the NPLCC is under development and more detailed analyses of priority information needs are being planned. At this time focal resources, ecosystem processes, species and/or habitats have not been established. We value projects that will provide foundational baseline information across the geographic extent of the NPLCC and will serve us in the future with our planning efforts and implementation of conservation goals. Projects that address science information needs for multiple entities are preferred.

The geographic area of the NPLCC includes a diversity of ecosystems; however, funding this year will be focused in coastal/marine, freshwater, forest ecosystems or cross-ecosystems. Projects must address one or more of the following five elements:

- Data integration processes that include or incorporate the coordination, recovery, compilation, synthesis, or archiving of relevant data for landscape-scale conservation analysis.
- Improve availability of, and analytical interfaces to, geospatial and baseline data fundamental to understanding climate change effects on habitats and ecosystems in the geographic area of the NPLCC.
- Identify projected future biodiversity hotspots and connectivity needs.
- Provide information fundamental to understanding climate change effects on species assemblages, habitats and ecosystems in the NPLCC that supports effective conservation delivery.
- Apply downscaled climate change model information to vulnerability assessments of priority ecological or landscape resources.

Priority will be given to projects that provide management oriented tools for strategic decision making or long-term planning. All projects must address one or more components of the following conservation goals proposed by the NPLCC Interim Planning Team:

- Identify opportunities for coordinated adaptation strategies for natural and cultural resource managers.
- Promote information sharing among partners by improving data management, integration, and dissemination.
- Identify priorities for applied science that informs conservation and adaptive management through collection and synthesis of existing data, identifying gaps, and promoting research.
- Advance science that informs and improves understanding of the relationship between climate change and ecosystem responses.

- Support increased awareness of the effects of climate change on natural and cultural resources by making LCC findings widely available.
- Better understand the impacts of climate change on all resource users, including those who rely on subsistence resources.

All project proposals should include an outreach/communication component describing how project findings and information will be distributed to non-scientific audiences.

In support of the NPLCC and consistent with Secretarial Order 3289, awards issued pursuant to the respective themes above will be expected to result in various products or outcomes. FWS R1 reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. Funding amounts among themes are not explicit; final amount awarded is at discretion of the NPLCC Steering Committee and FWS R1.

Applicants will be required to categorize each of their project submissions into one of the ecosystem categories identified above. Submissions will be evaluated within each ecosystem category using the general criteria and relevance criteria (see Section V).

II. Award Information

A total estimated amount of up to \$650,000 for 3 to 12 projects may be awarded under this announcement for supporting NPLCC partners and landscape conservation delivery within the NPLCC. The maximum amount that will be awarded to a project is \$100,000.

Until the NPLCC's Science Plan is completed, projects that require any commitments of future funds from the LCC will not be considered.

Anticipated Start and End Dates. Projects selected for funding will begin in summer or fall 2011. Applicants should plan for projects to be completed within 2 years of their start dates unless specifically stated and explain as to why a longer period of time is necessary to complete the work. Applicants should also consider the NPLCC project tracking, deliverables and timelines during proposal development.

Partial Funding. US FWS R1 reserves the right to offer partial funding to submissions by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of the proposed project. If US FWS R1 decides to partially fund the proposed project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposed project, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and the selection/evaluation process.

III. Eligibility and Matching

Applicant Eligibility. Federal, State, Tribal, Canadian, and other public or nonprofit private agencies, institutions, and organizations are eligible; "for-profit" organizations are not.

Eligible Activities. Assistance is available for science and information projects informing or directly affecting landscape conservation delivery in the NPLCC. To be eligible for funding consideration, projects must address one or more of the project elements identified in Section I in coastal/marine, freshwater, forest ecosystems or cross-ecosystems.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance identifies this assistance as: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Research Grants (Generic) No. 15.650

Ineligible Activities. Under this announcement, US FWS R1 will not fund: "construction grant" projects; single-species research (unless it supports a larger-scoped landscape approach to conservation delivery); land acquisition; or projects the principal purpose for which is general operating support.

Match. A match is not required, but cost-leveraging is one of the criteria in Section V which will be considered by reviewers during evaluations.

IV. Application and Submission

Getting Started.

1. Read and follow instructions.
2. Develop and edit your project proposal using the template provided below, in light of the criteria (general and relevance).
3. Complete and submit your project to contacts by deadline.

Format. Please submit your proposals in a PDF format. Use the project template below (Section VIII page 11). Your proposal should be no more than 4 pages long, not including budget, literature cited, and principal investigator(s)' curriculum vitae or resume. Minimum font size is 11 point, and minimum margins are ¾ inch. Proposals longer than 4 pages will not be considered for funding. Curriculum vitae or resumes should be no more than 2 pages long.

Submission. Electronic submissions are preferable. Please email proposals to: nplcc@fws.gov . If you do not have the capability to submit electronically, please contact Mary Mahaffy at 360-753-7763 / Mary_Mahaffy@fws.gov .

Deadline. Submissions are due by May 3rd by COB 5pm PST. The NPLCC Interim Science Coordinator will determine timeliness by reviewing the date and time of receipt. Absent compelling circumstances which justify the acceptance of a late submission and that do not affect the integrity of the competition, late submissions will not be reviewed or considered.

Funding Restrictions: See Eligibility - Ineligible Activities.

Confidentiality. Applicants may claim all or a portion of their project submission as confidential business information. Applicants must clearly mark submissions or portions thereof which they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, US FWS R1 is not responsible to maintain confidentiality. Note that data produced under a Federal award is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Multiple Project Submissions. If your organization submits more than one project **and** chooses to prioritize them, please identify an overall contact (including phone, e-mail, and address) and send a single, coordinated submittal. Prioritization information can be sent directly to nplcc@fws.gov.

V. Application Review Criteria. Projects will be evaluated based on (i) the General Criteria specified below and (ii) the Relevance Criteria identified below as it applies to themes to which the project relates.

General Criteria: These criteria are used for screening purposes to ensure all projects reflect a minimum standard as determined by the Scientific Advisory Team.

The General Criteria are:

A. Rationale/Relevance/Bias for Action: Potential, whether direct or indirect, to effect conservation delivery within the NPLCC area or to effect policymakers in a value-adding way or to result in practical activities which promise measurable outcomes to effect conservation delivery.

B. Scientific/Professional Merit: Soundness of technical approach, including design, objectives, and scientific viability of the project.

C. Value Added: Demonstration of techniques or approaches which build upon prior efforts in value-adding ways, rather than duplicating prior efforts.

D. Applicant Capability: The technical capability of the applicant to successfully carry out a project taking into account such factors as the applicant's (1) past performance in successfully completing projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project, (2) history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements and submitting acceptable final technical reports and applicable closeout documentation, (3) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project, and (4) staff expertise/ qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the project.

In addition to information provided by the applicant, in its submission, US FWS R1 may consider information from other sources. If an applicant does not have any past performance and/or reporting history (items "1" and "2" above) the proposal will receive a neutral (not included) evaluation for those elements of programmatic capability.

E. Partnerships: Sponsorship by existing landscape partnerships operating within the NPLCC geographic area particularly where a project has been identified as a high priority need by the partnership.

F. Geographic Scope: Appropriateness of the project scope and its location with an emphasis in the NPLCC geographic area, on cross-jurisdictional, trans-boundary or pilots that have potential to affect the former. Consideration will be given, where appropriate, if the project is also funded in adjacent LCCs.

G. Deliverables and Outreach: Appropriateness of plans for dissemination of project results and deliverables.

H. Measuring Progress. Reasonableness and appropriateness of proposed timelines including project milestones and deliverables.

I. Appropriate Budget. Reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and with the expected benefits to be achieved.

J. Cost Leveraging: Extent the applicant demonstrates (1) how they will coordinate the use of North Pacific funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (2) that funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds, in-kind or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares.

Relevance Criteria include:

1) **Establish or contribute to landscape scale baseline information for key ecosystem components and/or services**

Does the project proposal:

- i) Adequately frame the project actions relative to improving our understanding of how species assemblages, habitats, and/or landscapes may respond to altered landscape conditions?
- ii) Articulate that project products will provide management/conservation information relative to altered conditions?

2) **Ecological or Ecosystem Response to System/Climate Change**

Does the project proposal:

- i) Improve understanding to help address sources of uncertainty about how species, ecosystems, habitats, and/or landscapes respond to projected change under alternative scenarios?

3) **Breadth of Understanding**

- i) Is the project integrative, for example addresses multi taxa or multi trophic levels; is cross-disciplinary; links physical, biological and/or (as appropriate) traditional ecological data; enables comprehensive understandings, considers several major climate system components

4) **Applicability to conservation and adaptation decisions**

Does the project proposal:

- i) Allow for more effective conservation delivery?
- ii) Provide information to address conservation actions?
- iii) Provide urgently needed information to address near-term management needs?
- iv) Provide information applicable to decision-making for conservation delivery in a large portion of the LCC?

5) **Geographic scope of project**

Does the project proposal:

- i) Include focal landscapes/habitats identified in continental or regional conservation plans or by partner groups/agencies? This will be important for effective delivery of any project product.
- ii) Share geographic boundaries with other LCCs or other administrative conservation boundaries (e.g., Joint Ventures, States, International)? If so, have potential logistical and administrative constraints been addressed?

- iii) Build on existing efforts?
- 6) **Partnerships/Leveraging**
Does the project proposal:
- i) Articulate project benefits for all partners and other programs that share trust resources and geographic boundaries?
 - ii) Engage, leverage or catalyze a broad existing partnership that may include federal, state, local, NGO, and private or corporate support (support = in-kind and/or monetary)?
 - iii) Build new collaborations?
- 7) **Timeliness and Urgency**
Does the project proposal:
- i) Address information that is urgently needed because of high risk or to avoid severe impact?
 - ii) Provide important information for setting up the NPLCC for long term success?
- 8) **Ability to show success in FY2011-12/Accessibility**
Does the project proposal:
- i) Ensure success in FY11-12 through a clearly articulated outcome and high confidence in completion and application to conservation goals?
 - ii) Ensure the products and information generated will be available and easy to use, designed for target audience access/understanding?

Review and Selection Process. Recommendations for funding will be based on an evaluation of projects against the General and Relevance Criteria. The selection process will not penalize the applicant for submitting more than one project within a theme.

Project proposals will be evaluated through the following review process:

1. Submissions will be screened by the North Pacific Interim Science Coordinator or Coordinator upon receipt for eligibility for conformance to the announcement provisions.
2. After an overview of all projects by the Science Advisory Team, projects will be divided into the four different ecosystem categories. A minimum of four reviewers from the Science Advisory Team (or their designees) will independently evaluate all projects in each of the ecosystem categories against both the general and relevance criteria. If a Science Advisory Team member (or their designees) submits a project proposal for consideration, they will not review any of the projects in the ecosystem category where their proposal was submitted.
3. The Science Advisory Team will present a list of projects recommended for funding and the compiled list of individual evaluations to the NPLCC Steering Committee. The list will include ranking and Advisory Team funding recommendations up to the amount available.
4. The final funding recommendations may take account of other factors in addition to the General and Relevance criteria. These factors may include, for example, selecting technically sound projects across the NPLCC area at both a geographic and institutional level to achieve a reasonable balance of funding by cost, applicant type, and or the project location or impact.
5. After the NPLCC Steering Committee selects projects for funding consideration, and US FWS R1 agrees to fund, all applicants will be notified of the projects that have been selected.

6. Applicants for the projects that have been selected will be asked to submit final proposals along with the documentation for Federal assistance (Section VI. Application Packages).
7. Final decisions will be based upon the completed final proposals and Application Packages.

Schedule.

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|---|------------------|
| Deadline for Submissions | May 3, 2011 |
| Reviews | May 4 - 12, 2011 |
| Applicants Notified | May 31, 2011 |
| Application Packages due | |
| Interagency agreements and \$100,000 awards. | June 10, 2011 |
| Other awards <\$100,000 | June 22, 2011 |

VI. Proposal and Award Administration

Award Notices: Applicants with projects selected for funding will be notified by email or telephone, and asked to complete the application process by providing completed documentation for Federal assistance (Application Packages)

Application Packages: Selected applicants will be required to submit the following documents to complete the application for funding:

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – Mandatory)
- SF-424A (Budget information, non-construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances, non-construction programs)

Deliverables:

The following process ensures that funded projects are completed, deliverables produced, and findings are timely, responsive and applicable to the original needs identified. Results will also be used to revise and update the NPLCC Science Plan. This ensures an accountable, iterative mechanism for funding and will ensure use and application of science products and information gained towards the collective NPLCC understanding of large-scale conservation as we work together to achieve resource resilience through NPLCC partners’ respective or joint adaptation strategies.

All NPLCC endorsed projects are expected to include interim reports on a scheduled determined during contracting and a final report submitted within 6 months of project completion (unless otherwise arranged). Deliverables should include:

- Executive Summary
- Project explanation or Study Design
- Methods or Application
- Recommendations for use, application or next steps

Notification: We will confirm submission receipt within one week from the application deadline. Shortly after the deadline, we will post project information (including Applicant, Title, and identification number) at <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/Climatechange/nplcc/index.cfm>

Contact Mary_Mahaffy@fws.gov if you do not receive a confirmation or if your project is not posted. The NPLCC Interim Science Coordinator will contact all applicants to tell them whether or not they will be asked to submit Application Packages.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

Mike Carrier, NPLCC Coordinator

Michael_Carrier@fws.gov

503-231-6172

Or

Mary Mahaffy, NPLCC Interim Science Coordinator

Mary_Mahaffy@fws.gov

360-753-7763

VIII. PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE (Please limit to 4 pages - not including budget, curriculum vitae for each principal investigator, or literature cited)

Project Category (*select one*): **Coastal/Marine, Freshwater, Forest Ecosystems or Cross-Ecosystems**

Project Title:

Project Leader or Principal Investigator responsible for completion of project (*Name, organization, email address, phone number*):

Cooperators/Partners (*name, affiliation, email address, phone*) **and anticipated project contributions:**

Project Summary (3 sentences target):

Project Proposal:

Background and Need:

While it may be useful to include a brief amount of background information in this section, be sure to clearly address the following:

- What is the need within the North Pacific landscape?
- Is the need identified in other conservation, management, or other plans?
- What landscape-level issue is this work related to and how (e.g. climate, habitat fragmentation)
- Why is it important?
- What science products will be provided, problem addressed, or what information or other needs will your project provide?
- What is the direct management application, if any?

Objective: What will you accomplish? Define how this project will contribute to provision of one or more of the following elements to support LCC objectives and functions:

- Decision support tools/systems or science applications for focused resource conservation
- Tracking or evaluation of resource management efforts
- Testing assumptions of model projections
- Inventory of resource conditions or trends

Methods: How will the objectives be attained? What work activities or tasks will be done? Include specific procedures, methodologies, or protocols. Will there be any key cooperators, and what will their role be (identify any in-kind support provided)?

Geographic Extent: (*Describe the geographic area for both sampling and ability to extrapolate information*)

Timeline of Schedules, Products and Outcomes: Provide a time line with dates and tasks. Identify products and outcomes. Include key project work items and dates for events such as start-up, interim milestones, presentations, deliverables, submittal of final report, and project completion. Identify if project is multiple year and projected outyear schedule.

Budget (please include in a separate file from the body of the proposal): Provide a detailed breakdown of costs (Salaries, contracts, travel, publication costs, equipment, services, overhead, etc). Describe in-kind or matching funds for the project if applicable. Describe outyear estimated budget if multi-year project.

Disclaimer regarding Data Sharing: Briefly describe any known restrictions on sharing of the data expected to be generated by this project.