

WCS Climate Adaptation Fund

A re-grant program supported by the Doris
Duke Charitable Foundation



Why the Climate Adaptation Fund?

- Kickstart on-the-ground actions for adaptation
- Spread the [adaptation] gospel
- Catalyze a paradigm shift in the conservation community



Grants Program

- \$4,545,733 for 28 grants to date
- \$2.5 million available in 2014 (minimum \$50K to maximum \$250K per request)
- Applied, on-the-ground adaptation projects that serve as ambassadors
- What's new for 2014



We're interested in how to operationalize some of these concepts in our on-the-ground conservation and management activities

Changes for 2014: A) We are allowing each applicant organization to program up to \$25,000 of their grant request for communications efforts (the \$250,000 maximum request amount remains the same). In addition, we will allow or part to be passed through to another organization or consultant that specializes in outreach and strategic communications activities. B) Climate adaptation fund may waive or reduce its standard 1:1 match requirements for a select few projects that fit this criterion for innovation. If you would like to request a match waiver, please indicate so in your pre-proposal application.

WCS funds projects:

- Designed with climate adaptation as a core goal
- Conducting on-the-ground implementation
- Focused on ecosystem functionality rather than individual species
- With goals & actions grounded in climate science
- Designed for long-term conservation impact
- Creating the potential for landscape-scale impact
- That serve as a model and communicates learning to other practitioners



DESCRIBED IN MORE DETAIL IN THE 2014
APPLICANT GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



All of this is in the guidance document published on our web site
www.wcsnorthamerica.org

Designed with climate adaptation as a core goal / outcome

- Spell out the implications of climate change for current goals & actions → how the project is designed to address those impacts.
- Clearly “connect the dots” between climate change impacts, proposed actions, and long-term adaptation outcomes.



Probably the most critical aspect of the program is to support projects that are clearly designed with climate adaptation as a core goal / outcome. This means taking the time in your proposal narrative to indicate how climate change is expected to influence your goals and actions, and how your proposed project is designed to address those impacts. Basically, you need to connect the dots between the climate change science, your proposed actions, and the expected long-term adaptation-related outcomes.

Example: Forest habitat conservation

Vulnerabilities & Impacts

Warmer temperatures and decreased precipitation during the growing season = more frequent and severe drought stress.

Past forest management has favored tree species that prefer moist conditions, which will be negatively affected by drought leading to degraded forest habitat.



Proposed Actions

- Remove/thin tree species that prefer moist conditions.
- Increase the number of small canopy openings to improve light penetration to forest floor.
- Apply prescribed fire.



Adaptation Outcomes

Increased complexity and variability within the understory and canopy leads to increased recruitment of drought-tolerant oaks and herbaceous cover, allowing forests to provide suitable nesting and forage habitat for forest bird and mammal species as droughts increase.

As one example of what we mean to connect the dots, consider this hypothetical forest conservation example. Note that the impacts information is very specific about the climate changes that the project is addressing (the consequences of increased drought on forests that are dominated by trees that prefer moist conditions), and how it affects conservation goals (i.e., drought will degrade forest habitat conditions). The actions are applied conservation/management actions...but alone they do not tell the climate adaptation story. It is really the adaptation outcomes piece that ties together the climate change impact information with the actions to explain why taking those actions are expected to lead to conservation outcomes as climate changes – in this case the actions are intended to increase the dominance of drought-tolerant trees and understory species and therefore allow the forest to provide habitat even as drought increases.

Designed with climate adaptation as a core goal / outcome

Highlight what is different from what you were
doing before thinking about climate change

WHAT

WHY

WHERE

HOW MUCH

URGENCY/PRIORITY



One way to make it clear that your project is designed to achieve adaptation outcomes is to highlight what might be different from what you were doing before thinking about climate change. These can be minor or more notable ways the project may be different, and can include aspects of **WHAT** you are doing (e.g., different actions) or perhaps **WHY** you are taking those actions (e.g., to achieve somewhat modified conservation goals or outcomes, such as to not only benefit species that are present today, but also those species that may be present in the future). **WHERE** you are taking the actions may be strategic in light of climate change, **HOW MUCH** of an action is needed to buffer the effects of climate change may be different, or the **URGENCY/PRIORITY** assigned to an action may change when climate change is considered. This is not to say that every adaptation project needs to be doing something different – but if it is, then say so...and if it's not, then tell us why you decided that what you are doing is critical in light of climate change and helps to achieve goals as climate changes.

Conducting on-the-ground implementation



Research or Planning

- Monitoring towards evaluating action effectiveness is OK



The Climate Adaptation Fund seeks to primarily support on-the-ground implementation of adaptation actions. We will not support research or planning that helps to decide what actions to take or where to take them. All of that relevant planning needs to occur before the start of the grant (likely in Fall 2014). We understand that some aspects of project design occur through the project period, but the majority of the requested funding needs to go towards supporting applied conservation activities. Please consult with us on specific questions regarding what counts as “applied conservation actions” and possible planning issues related to your specific project. Also note that in 2013 we altered the Climate Adaptation Fund priorities such that we no longer support activities related to land acquisition/easement (although land stewardship on purchased lands or easements could be considered).

Ecological function rather than single species



We are looking to support projects that address broader ecosystem and ecological functions, rather than projects focused on single species (although we do love wolverines! We just won't support projects that are designed to influence adaptation outcomes for single species).

Goals & actions grounded in best-available climate science

- E.g., modeling, empirical data, expert opinion (or a combination).
- As relevant to the project area as possible.
- Specific climate change effects being addressed by the project.
- Also consider how climate may affect human land use and behaviors.



We are looking at the climate science that is being used to support the design of projects – does it appear to be the best available science (could be modeling, empirical data, expert opinion, or a combination)? Is it relevant to the project area (as opposed to continental-scale information, for example)? Is it clear what specific climate change effects are being addressed? We encourage everyone to not only think about the direct effects of climate changes on species and ecosystems, but to also consider how changes in climate might influence human land use and behaviors in a way that could trickle down to affect conservation concerns. For example, a project could be designed to address the potential westward expansion of corn cultivation as the climate becomes more favorable to corn production in areas that currently harbor native grasslands. Or a project might address how human land use patterns in a region may change as sea level rises and coastal communities relocate further inland.

Long-term conservation impact

- Not focused on the most vulnerable systems (an uphill battle).
- Doesn't require perpetual investment in actions to achieve desired goals.



These points are hard to be black-and-white about, but in general, we are less likely to invest in projects that are focused on the most vulnerable species or ecosystems in cases where those vulnerabilities are unlikely to be mitigated (e.g., uphill battles that we may have little chance of “winning”). Or resisting changes that may not be avoidable in the near- or long-term, without clear justification of why you think those changes can be resisted or avoided...or that “buying time” in the near-term is a worthwhile strategy towards a longer-term outcome. We also are hesitant to support projects that require perpetual investment in certain conservation actions in order to achieve desired goals. We encourage people to contact us with specific questions about their projects to see if there concerns related to this or other aspects of what we are looking for.

Landscape-scale impact

- Actions that occur on sizeable areas.
- Actions at one site that are part of a larger landscape plan/vision/network.
- Demonstration of actions that can be replicated in other locations *with actions related to scaling up.*



We are looking to support projects that help to achieve adaptation outcomes and a landscape scale. This could mean projects that take actions on sizeable areas, although it can also include projects that are supporting actions being taken at one site that is part of a larger landscape plan/vision or network of other implementation sites. Or it can be a project that is demonstrating adaptation actions at one site with the aim of trying to eventually replicate or expand the adoption of those actions in other locations. In this last case, we would like to see project activities that help to enable that replication or expanded adoption.

Serves as a model & communicates learning

- Sharing lessons, successes and challenges.
- Scaling up and expanding adoption of adaptation practices.
- Expect that projects will include activities and outcomes along these lines.



Lastly, we want to emphasize the point Darren raised in the early slides about our increasing emphasis on communications and outreach. These efforts should be designed to help share lessons (both successes and challenges) with the local or even broader conservation community, and/or scale up and expand the adoption of adaptation practices. Therefore we expect to see project that includes these kinds of activities and outcomes, in addition to the implementation of on-the-ground adaptation actions.

2014 Grant Program Timeline

- Pre-proposals due March 14
- Invitation to submit full proposal in May
- Full proposals due mid-June
- Decisions made in early Fall



2014 Application Details

- Three page limit on narrative including figures and maps (citations can be added as an appendix)
- No support letters necessary
- New for 2014 – communications funds, 1:1 match waiver
- New outcomes table



The main narrative portion of the pre-proposal is limited to a total of three pages. Figures and maps can be included in your pre-proposal, but must fit within the 3-page limit. We encourage applicants to cite the sources of the climate science that they used to design their projects, and those citations can be added at the end of your pre-proposal and are not part of the 3-page limit.

New for 2014 Application

Project Narrative Question #3: Outcomes

Deliverables under the term of this grant [maximum 2 years]	Expected near-term conservation outcomes [3-10 years]	Expected long-term adaptation goal [10-50 years]
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore 525 acres of degraded former rangeland in an area upslope from current native bird habitat by 2015. • Reforest the area with 20,000 native tree and understory plants by 2014. • Conduct grass suppression and scraping in restored area to reduce invasion by non-native plants as trees get established throughout the project period. 	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ecologically functioning forest on 525 acres of formerly degraded land that is upslope from current native bird habitat, and links existing habitat to protected forest areas further upslope. • 525 acres of suitable nesting and forage habitat created for 16 native birds and 4 native mammals. 	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of upslope habitat and a linkage to higher elevation forests provides a refuge for bird and mammal species that are expected to lose lower elevation forested habitat as the climate becomes too warm and arid to support suitable tree species.
<p>** NOTE: Can include activities and outcomes related to outreach/scaling up activities, along with ecological/conservation outcomes.</p>		

The outcomes table is designed to help you tell your clear adaptation-related story – how the project is designed to achieve adaptation outcomes. Also please include deliverables and outcomes related to any communications work included in your project. Let us know if it is not clear what we are asking for in the table, or if you have questions relating to your specific project.

Thank you

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