



The Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) North America Program is pleased to announce a new round of grantmaking through its Climate Adaptation Fund - a program to support projects that demonstrate effective interventions for wildlife adaptation to climate change. The Climate Adaptation Fund is made possible by a generous gift from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Interested organizations should carefully review the information outlined in this Request for Proposals (RFP) and the accompanying Applicant Guidance Document for instructions.

## The Climate Adaptation Fund 2015 Grants Program A Request for Proposals

### I. Program Overview

With funding managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the [WCS Climate Adaptation Fund](#) will provide up to \$2 million in competitive grants in 2015. Grants will be one to two years in length. Awards will be made to non-profit conservation organizations for applied, on-the-ground projects focused on implementing priority conservation actions for climate adaptation at a landscape scale.

**Eligibility:** This program provides grants to U.S.-based non-profit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status. Grants can be awarded for projects only within the 50 U.S. states and six U.S. territories. The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to make grants to for-profit corporations, individuals, universities, public agencies, municipalities or other types of government entities. Public agencies, tribal governments and universities may partner on proposals submitted by an eligible non-profit conservation organization or work as paid contractors on funded projects. We encourage and expect that many project proposals will emerge from collaborations between the applicant organization and any number of partners from academia, public agencies, and other non-profit organizations.

**To apply:** Submit a completed WCS Pre-proposal Application Form to Darren Long at [dlong@wcs.org](mailto:dlong@wcs.org) no later than 5:00 PM MDT on Friday, April 10, 2015.

### II. Funding Priorities

The program seeks to support actions that anticipate and respond to potential climate change impacts and maximize long-term conservation success. To achieve these ends, the program prioritizes projects that manage for dynamic ecological processes, landscape functionality, and species assemblages, rather than those aimed at maintaining historical conditions or individual species. Applicants must articulate how climate adaptation science informs the proposed conservation actions and specify the sources of science and analyses upon which their adaptation project is based.

The Climate Adaptation Fund is focused on a narrow range of wildlife conservation projects: 1) those projects conducting applied, on-the-ground management for climate change adaptation and; 2) projects that are able to achieve tangible outcomes over a two-year time frame. We acknowledge that there are a number of other types of important adaptation projects underway for wildlife, including research and planning efforts, but emphasize that this grant program aims to fill a specific niche, as described below.

**The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund will support projects that demonstrate land and water management techniques to assist wildlife adaptation to climate change at a landscape level, for example:**

- Projects that demonstrate applied management responses for wildlife adaptation in terrestrial, freshwater, or estuarine systems, including efforts to implement active measures to enhance resilience of climate-impacted habitats or facilitate their transition to a new functional ecological state.
- Pilot projects to exhibit successful on-the-ground actions for climate adaptation that can be replicated across a landscape.
- Projects to enhance or sustain the adaptive capacity of ecosystems, landscape functionality, and critical biological processes in the face of climate change.
- Projects that restore and sustain core habitat or create connectivity for fish and wildlife based on explicit adaptation goals.
- Projects that implement innovative or novel conservation activities in response to existing or expected climate-driven changes.

**Prioritizing communications:** The Climate Adaptation Fund is increasingly prioritizing the need for strong communications around both the challenges and successes of on-the-ground adaptation projects around the country. In this emergent field, there is great opportunity to amplify and scale up the adoption of climate adaptation activities across landscapes. We believe that other conservation practitioners and the ecosystems they work to protect will benefit from the knowledge gained from your work. For this reason, WCS also prioritizes and evaluates projects based on their potential to communicate project results to others who might learn from and replicate similar adaptation actions. To support these efforts, we allow each applicant organization to program up to \$25,000 of their grant request for communications. In addition, we will allow all or part of that \$25,000 to be passed through to a partner organization that specializes in outreach and strategic communications activities.

We strongly recommend that all applicants review the [Applicant Guidance Document](#) for detailed information on programmatic priorities and guidelines for writing a competitive proposal.

**Restrictions on Use of Funds:** The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to support the following types of activities: assisted migration of species, land acquisition and conservation easements (both capital and non-capital costs), building construction, offshore marine conservation, political lobbying, organizational capacity building (e.g., fundraising costs, staff training, etc.), captive breeding, zoo exhibits, or lethal eradication of wildlife. Proposals that are primarily focused on conducting scientific research, data collection or planning will not be considered. However, the collection of data as part of an inventory, monitoring, or evaluative assessment of adaptive management efforts can be included in a proposal if those activities represent a small component of a larger, applied conservation project. See Section IV below for additional details on matching funds requirements and other program rules.

### III. Application

**How do I apply?** [Download and complete the Pre-proposal Application Form](#). The form must be submitted to Darren Long at [dlong@wcs.org](mailto:dlong@wcs.org) no later than 5:00 PM MDT on Friday, April 10, 2015.

### IV. Frequently Asked Questions

**Who is eligible to apply?** This program provides grants to U.S.-based non-profit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status. The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to make grants to internationally-based organizations, for-profit corporations, individuals, students, universities, public agencies, municipalities, other types of governments, or quasi-government agencies.

**What is the duration of funding for projects?** 12-24 months, beginning in December 2015.

**What is the range of funding that can be requested?** \$50,000 to \$250,000 per project.

**What are the evaluation criteria?** Pre-proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: a) the project fits within the scope of the funding priorities identified Section II above; b) the project meets the criteria listed in the Applicant Guidance Document; c) conservation outcomes are well-defined, impact-oriented, and attainable in a 12-24 month time period; d) the qualifications of the organization and individuals involved in the project; and e) availability and amount of matching funds.

**Are matching funds required?** Yes, the WCS Climate Adaptation Fund requires a minimum 1:1 match. Matching funds may be “in-kind”; i.e., a contribution of goods, staff time, or services rather than cash, but only to a maximum of 50% of requested funds from WCS. If matching funds have not yet been secured, please indicate a time frame and sources from which you anticipate securing other funding. While matching funds are not required to be in hand at time of applications, WCS will look favorably on a project that has already secured some or all of the required match at the time the full proposal is submitted. Previously expended funds are not eligible as a match.

**Are there any circumstances under which a 1:1 match is not required?** Yes. In a few select cases, WCS will waive or reduce the 1:1 match requirement for projects proposing innovative new ideas and methods for addressing adaptation problems. The Climate Adaptation Fund continues to seek novel and innovative projects with on-the-ground outcomes for adaptation. We also recognize that fundraising for some creative or un-tested methods can be difficult. For this reason, the Climate Adaptation Fund will waive or reduce its standard 1:1 match requirements for a select few projects that fit this criterion for innovation. If you believe you have such a project and would like to request a match waiver, please indicate so in your pre-proposal application. Those applicants should still include any sources of available match, even if less than 1:1, in their pre-proposal budget. We will consider each request on a case-by-case basis and notify applicants whether such a waiver has been approved. Please contact our staff directly if you have questions about matching requirements before submitting your pre-proposal application.

**What local, state and federal funds can be used as match?** We look favorably upon projects that apply funding from a variety of sources for the implementation of fish and wildlife conservation activities. Examples include, but are not limited to: the State Wildlife Grants program (SWG), other state wildlife, transportation, or environmental protection programs; federal incentive programs through the Farm Bill

(e.g., National Resource Conservation Service's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program), Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund, Department of Defense Buffer Program, National Marine Fisheries Service Species of Concern Program, Federal Highway Administration transportation mitigation funding, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' Multi-state Conservation Grants Program, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Keystone and Special Initiative Grants programs, and the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program.

**Can funds from mitigation or environmental damage awards be used as a match?** Yes, we are interested in supporting projects that use direct mitigation funds or payments of natural resource and environmental damage awards toward priority actions for wildlife adaptation, consistent with the program requirements for use of such funds (e.g., mitigation funds from highway projects or settlements reached at EPA Superfund sites). WCS grant funds may not be used for mitigation that is required under the law.

**What other types of funds can be used as a match?** Funds from private sources, corporate donors, foundations, and memberships may all count as match. Matching funds may be "in-kind"; i.e., a contribution of goods, staff time, or services rather than cash, but only to a maximum of 50% of requested funds from WCS. Funds previously expended on a project or donations of property will not be accepted as match. Funds received directly or indirectly from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation will not be accepted as a match. Please check with us if you have questions on the use of matching funds.

**Can organizations submit multiple pre-proposals for different projects?** Yes, but only one per state or territory. Organizations may submit only one proposal per state, but may be a partner on proposals from other applicant organizations.

**Can the same project or organization be funded again?** Organizations previously funded through this grants program or other Doris Duke Charitable Foundation grants may not apply for a renewal of an existing grant, but are eligible to apply for support for different projects than those previously funded.

**Can I reapply for the same project if my proposal was not funded in a previous year's grant cycle?** Yes, but be aware that some of the program's priorities, minimum requirements, and application processes have changed. Please read both this RFP and Applicant Guidance Document carefully for instructions.

**Will multi-state or regional level projects be considered?** Yes, we encourage applications for projects that address regional, landscape-scale needs for fish and wildlife conservation.

**Who will evaluate the proposals and make decisions on the grant awards?** The Wildlife Conservation Society is responsible for the evaluation of all proposals and final decisions on grant awards. A national advisory committee comprising representatives from nonprofit conservation organizations, private foundations, academia, and state and federal wildlife agencies assists WCS with the evaluation process.

**Is it appropriate to contact members of the advisory committee?** It is not appropriate to contact advisory committee members to advocate for your proposal. All questions on the grants program, eligibility, funding priorities, and application process should be directed to the Wildlife Conservation Society. See WCS staff contact information on page 6 below.

**What is the source of funding for the WCS Climate Adaptation Fund?** A grant to WCS from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

**Will pre-proposals that fall outside the funding priorities or geographies be considered?** No, proposals are restricted to those priorities outlined in this RFP and Applicant Guidance Document. The Fund cannot support conservation projects outside of the 50 states and six U.S. territories. If funding is being sought as part of a multi-national project, WCS funding can only be used for that part of the project within the 50 states and six U.S. territories. Solely international projects or organizations based outside of the United States are not eligible to apply.

**How does the grant proposal process work?** WCS utilizes a two-step evaluation process: 1) an open call for pre-proposals, and 2) a larger full proposal invited from a select number of pre-proposal applicants.

**When will pre-proposal applicants be notified if they have been selected to submit a full proposal?** We anticipate notifying all applicants of their pre-proposal's status within eight weeks of submission. Those invited to submit full proposals will be notified at that time, as well.

**When will award decisions be made?** Grant awards will be announced no later than December 2015.

**If my project is funded, what requirements will I need to meet?** All successful applicants are required to submit a brief progress report every six months (only two of these are written reports, with the interim 6-month reports conducted by phone) and a comprehensive final report at the end of the project. WCS will also require documentation of a secured 1:1 match and a communications plan for the project by February 2016. Grantees are occasionally asked to participate in surveys, evaluation activities, communications efforts, and learning opportunities.

**How can I get more information on this process?** The WCS North America website (<http://www.wcsnorthamerica.org/ClimateAdaptationFund>) provides more information on the grant program, including a list of previously funded projects. If you have further questions, please contact WCS Climate Adaptation Fund program staff (see contact information on page 6 below).

**What is the Wildlife Conservation Society?** The Wildlife Conservation Society, founded in 1895, has the clear mission to save wildlife and wild places across the globe. Our story began in the early 1900's when we successfully helped the American bison recover on the Western Plains. Today, we protect many of the world's iconic creatures here and abroad, including gorillas in the Congo, tigers in India, wolverines in the Yellowstone Rockies, and ocean giants in our world's amazing seascapes. Since our founding, we have forged the power of our global conservation work and the management of our five parks in New York City to create the world's most comprehensive conservation organization. We currently manage about 500 conservation projects in more than 60 countries; and educate millions of visitors at our five living institutions in New York City on important issues affecting our planet. Our parks include: the Bronx Zoo, New York Aquarium, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo and Queens Zoo. With a commitment to protect 25 percent of the world's biodiversity, we address four of the biggest issues facing wildlife and wild places: climate change; natural resource exploitation; the connection between wildlife health and human health; and the sustainable development of human livelihoods. While taking on these issues, we manage more than 200 million acres of protected lands around the world, with more than 200 scientists on staff. The WCS parks in New York City welcome 4 million visitors each year, and help the city to educate millions of schoolchildren in science and conservation issues. Our history, dating back to ensuring the survival of the American bison, inspires our work each day. We hope our work in turn inspires millions to take action to protect the natural resources that are so important to all life on our fragile Earth.

#### IV. Instructions and Application for Submission of Pre-proposals

Please read these instructions carefully, as well as all of the guidelines provided above.

Pre-proposals must be submitted as email attachments in PDF format to [dlong@wcs.org](mailto:dlong@wcs.org) no later than **April 10, 2015 at 5:00 PM** MDT. Grant applicants will be notified by email that their application has been received.

The pre-proposal is limited to a total of five pages:

- Page 1 is a single cover page with contact information and references
- Pages 2-4 are three pages of detail about the proposed project, including a budget
- Page 5 is a single page outlining the qualifications of the individuals and organizations involved in the project.

Requirements:

**Please use the document titled, WCS Climate Adaptation Fund Pre-Proposal Application Form to submit your application.** The document is available for download from our website at <http://www.wcsnorthamerica.org/ClimateAdaptationFund>

Please include the name of the applicant organization in the file name. Font size should be 11 point or larger and margins should be at least 1 inch on all sides.

Please keep the question numbers and question text intact within the main “Proposal” section application on pages 2-4. If you need extra space, you may delete the accompanying text in italics.

Proposals submitted by regular mail or in any other electronic format than specified above will not be considered. **Please do not send letters of support, appendices, brochures, or other supplementary information with your pre-proposal.** In order to conserve paper resources, please do not mail a hard copy of your pre-proposal application.

#### Contacts:

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