



The Climate Adaptation Fund 2011 Grants Program A Request for Proposals

The Wildlife Conservation Society's North America Program is pleased to announce the first round of grantmaking through its Climate Adaptation Fund - a program to support projects that demonstrate effective interventions for wildlife adaptation to climate change. Interested organizations should carefully review the guidelines outlined in this Request for Proposals (RFP) and submit the required pre-proposal application form to Darren Long at dlong@wcs.org no later than 5:00 PM MST on Friday, April 29, 2011.

I. Program Overview

With funding provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the [WCS Climate Adaptation Fund](#) will provide up to \$2 million in competitive grants in 2011. Grants will be 1-2 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 governments. 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.

Use of Funds: The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund will not support the following types of activities: assisted migration, capital costs for fee title acquisitions or conservation easements, building construction, 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 or data collection will not be considered. However, the collection of data as part of an inventory, monitoring, planning, or vulnerability assessment to support adaptive management efforts can be included in a proposal if those activities represent a small component of a larger, applied conservation project. See Section III below for additional details on matching funds requirements and other program rules.

II. Funding Priorities

The program seeks to support actions that anticipate and respond to potential climate change impacts and maximize long-term conservation goals. Preference will be given to projects protecting areas of high biological value and designated as a high priority in a strategic habitat conservation plan. The program also seeks to support projects that manage for dynamic ecological processes, landscape functionality, and species assemblages, rather than those aimed at maintaining historic conditions or individual species. Applicants must articulate how climate adaptation science informs the proposed conservation actions and specify the source of science and/or analysis upon which their adaptation project is based.

The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund will support the following types of projects:

1. Projects that demonstrate land management techniques to be implemented at a landscape scale to assist wildlife adaptation to climate change

- Projects that demonstrate applied management responses for wildlife adaptation in terrestrial, riverine, 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 interventions 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.

2. Projects to create new protected areas, expand core habitat areas, or alter land use designations to secure large expanses of intact habitat

- Projects to execute private land acquisition strategies (i.e., securing fee title or conservation easements) designed to maintain or improve ecosystem resilience to climate change. Funds cannot be used for capital costs, but can support costs such as staff time and landowner outreach activities.
- Projects to place public or private lands into new conservation status as allowed under state or federal law.
- Projects to change land use designations or land management protocols to enhance or sustain the adaptive capacity of ecosystems, landscape functionality, and critical biological processes in the face of climate change.

3. Projects that assure connectivity for fish and wildlife among core habitat areas

- Projects to create new conservation areas or land use designations for connectivity protection (consistent with the methods described above for protecting core habitat areas) within the context of climate adaptation.
- Projects to restore, sustain, or create connectivity for fish and wildlife based on available adaptation science.

4. Projects that protect keystone species vulnerable to the impacts of climate change

- Projects that target conservation of climate-sensitive keystone species within a landscape. Applicants must demonstrate why a particular species of focus is critical to protecting the broader ecosystem or why its preservation is necessary to prevent any trophic cascade or broader species loss. The program defines a *keystone species* as a species whose loss may have far-reaching and disproportionate consequences for the structure, composition, or functioning of the ecosystems in which it lives.

Other program priorities

Preference will be given to projects that: a) provide proof of concept for innovative wildlife conservation practices that may serve as models for future projects, i.e., on-the-ground demonstration of effective interventions for wildlife adaptation to climate change; b) implement landscape-scale, regional or multi-state conservation objectives, as defined by a strategic habitat conservation plan; and c) demonstrate strong working partnerships with public agencies or other stakeholders necessary for achieving stated conservation outcomes.

See Sections III and IV below for further detail on program eligibility, landscape-scale strategic habitat conservation plans, minimum program requirements, allowed sources of match funding, geographic focus, evaluation criteria, application procedures, and other important program information.

III. Guidelines/Minimum Requirements/Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply? Please see the instructions that begins on page 6 below and [download the pre-proposal application form](#).

What is the deadline for submission of pre-proposals? Pre-proposals are due no later than 5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time on Friday, April 29, 2011.

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 October 2011.

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

Are matching funds required? Yes, the WCS Climate Adaptation Fund requires a minimum 1:1 match with a maximum of 50% of match funding from in-kind sources. If matching funds have not yet been secured, please indicate a time frame and sources from which you anticipate securing other funding. Previously expended funds are not eligible as a match.

What is a landscape-scale strategic habitat conservation plan? This program defines a landscape-scale strategic habitat conservation plan as a scientifically rigorous, spatially explicit planning effort that identifies high-priority fish and wildlife habitat to be conserved across a large, functional landscape. These plans are frameworks developed and/or adopted by multiple public and private partners to meet wildlife conservation needs across a large landscape. Many such conservation plans exist; e.g., Two Countries One Forest, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, USFWS habitat conservation plans, State Wildlife Action Plans, Fish Habitat Action Plans as developed by the NFHAP Fish Habitat Partnerships, and Joint Venture implementation plans. The plans should be accepted by both public and private entities as a guidance document for protecting wildlife and its habitat in any given geography. The plans should identify goals for wildlife and habitat protection and prioritize actions for implementation based on climate change considerations. The Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC's), being developed through a partnership of federal, state, non-profit, and tribal organizations, will be producing landscape-scale conservation plans and targets. Projects that link adaptation actions with LCC priorities are encouraged.

What local, state and federal funds can be used as match? We look favorably upon projects that apply funding from innovative sources for the implementation of fish and wildlife conservation activities. Examples include, but are not limited to: county bond referendum dollars for land conservation (though WCS funding can not be used directly for land acquisition capital); 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 Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Cooperative Conservation Partnership

Initiative), Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund, Department of Defense Buffer Program, funds available through the federal stimulus package, 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.

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 to do 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 use of matching funds.

What types of capital costs are ineligible for support? Expenses associated with the acquisition of interests in land (e.g., fee title or conservation easement), including, but not limited to, purchase money, document recording fees, transfer taxes, real estate taxes, environmental assessments, clean-up or remediation costs, property carrying costs, closing costs, land surveys, appraiser fees, and attorney fees.

Can organizations submit multiple pre-proposals for different projects? Yes, but only one per state or territory. Non-profit conservation 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 many of the program's priorities, minimum requirements, and application processes have changed. Please read this RFP 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 comprised of representatives from conservation organizations, private foundations, academia, and state and federal wildlife agencies will assist WCS with the evaluation process.

Is it appropriate to contact members of the advisory committee? It is not appropriate to contact 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 topics outlined in this RFP and 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 for funding.

How does the grant proposal process work? WCS is using 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.

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 in this RFP; b) wildlife conservation outcomes are well-defined, impact-oriented, and attainable in a 12-24 month time period; c) the qualifications of the organization and individuals involved in the project; and d) availability and amount of matching funds.

When will award decisions be made? Grant awards will be announced in October 2011.

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 and a comprehensive final report at the end of the project. Grantees will be required to post their project information on the Conservation Registry (www.conservationregistry.org) and create a two-page fact sheet about their project for use in communications materials. Grantees are occasionally asked to participate in surveys, evaluation activities, and other 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 Officer Darren Long at (406) 556-7203 or email dlong@wcs.org.

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 no later than **April 29, 2011 at 5:00 PM** Mountain Standard Time. 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.doc](http://www.wcsnorthamerica.org/ClimateAdaptationFund) 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:

Darren Long
Program Officer
Wildlife Conservation Society
tel 406.556.7203
dlong@wcs.org

Kathryn Socie
Program Associate
Wildlife Conservation Society
tel 406.522.9333 ext. 114
ksocie@wcs.org