

**THE GREAT NORTHERN
Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

FY2011 Funding Guidance

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Overview

Federal Agency Name: US Fish and Wildlife Service in support of the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative (Great Northern LCC).

Funding Opportunity Title: US FWS Great Northern LCC FY11 Funding Guidance

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Fish and Wildlife Coordination and Assistance Programs No.15.664

Dates: The deadline for submissions is March 2nd by COB 5pm MST. If you do not have the capability to submit electronically, please contact GNLCC Coordinator, Yvette Converse (Yvette_Converse@fws.gov) for information on how you may apply under this announcement.

Funding Opportunity Description: A total estimated amount of up to \$1,000,000 for 5-15 science, data, and information-oriented projects that support priorities of the Great Northern LCC may be awarded. Projects must address one or more of the 6 priority themes identified for FY11: Habitat Connectivity, Aquatic Integrity, Data Integration, Climate, Partnerships, and Outreach and Education (see Section I. for description of themes). 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: See Section IV for information on how to apply.

I. Funding Opportunity Description.

Under this FY11 Great Northern LCC Funding Guidance, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Mountain-Prairie Region (FWS R6) is requesting project proposals for landscape related science and information that address one or more of the following themes: Habitat Connectivity, Aquatic Integrity, Data Integration, Climate, Partnerships, and Outreach and Education (see below for description of themes or an attached RFP to meet a specific science or information need).

In support of the Great Northern LCC 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 R6 reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. Funding amounts among themes are not explicit; final amount awarded within each theme is at discretion of the GNLCC Steering Committee and FWS R6.

Applicants will be required to categorize each of their project submissions into one of the themes described below. Submissions will be evaluated within the applicable themes using the general criteria and relevance criteria. A project may apply to multiple themes.

Section V. identifies general and relevance criteria applicable to all submissions within the following thematic categories:

A. Habitat Connectivity

‘Habitat Connectivity’ refers to projects that provide critical science or information about or application of science on the extent to which terrestrial or aquatic species or populations can move among landscape elements in a mosaic of habitat types, and includes analyses related to spatial patterns of connectivity and fragmentation, as well as ecological functions of connectivity such as migrations over different periods (seasonal or longer) and genetic and demographic exchange.

B. Aquatic Integrity

‘Aquatic Integrity’ refers to projects that provide critical science and information about or application of science to aquatic ecosystem processes, functions and/or mechanisms which, when intact, promote, sustain and restore the ecological suite of organisms native to an aquatic system.

C. Data Integration

‘Data Integration’ refers to projects that include or incorporate the merging, synthesis, coordination, archiving or serving of relevant data for landscape-scale conservation analysis. These could include: 1) land cover and geo-spatial information; 2) ecological and wildlife or fisheries information; 3) biological and abiotic monitoring or baseline information; or 4) other relevant data sets with regional or large-landscape application. Data Integration includes efforts to share, integrate, coordinate or collectively analyze these data sets for common uses among conservation partners.

D. Climate

‘Climate’ refers to projects that provide critical science or information about climate conditions in an ecological context or that project how climate change may affect future ecological or landscape conditions within the Great Northern area. Particular interest is in 1) projects that apply downscaled climate change information to a vulnerability assessment of a priority ecological or landscape resource; and 2) projects that integrate long-term data collection of ecological effects of climate change.

E. Partnerships

‘Partnerships’ refers to projects that bring together existing or new partners for purposes of gathering, analyzing or applying landscape-level science and information necessary for landscape conservation efforts. This includes government and non-government organizations, tribal, Canadian, community-based or other partners who come together for a common purpose in developing, conducting and applying science and identifying information needs for landscape conservation. Of particular importance are efforts that promote quantitative approaches and consider implementation of adaptive management and strategic decision making.

F. Outreach and Education

‘Outreach and Education’ refers to projects that emphasize science and information exchange, technology transfer and/or education on landscape-scale science and information to user groups within the Great Northern conservation community.

Under these themes, up to \$1,000,000 could be awarded for 5 to 15 projects.

Projects of Particular Interest. We are particularly interested in the following projects:

1. Wildlife, Forestry or land- or conservation-based Decision Support System or Decision Support Tool development.
2. Priority science that supports effective conservation delivery by land management agencies or organizations.
3. Priority science to support landscape conservation delivery from broad-based landscape-scale partnerships.
4. Foundational information or data integration process or tools that support 1, 2 and 3.
5. Science, information, monitoring/evaluation efforts that support an outcome-based adaptive management approach to landscape-level conservation delivery.
6. Quantitative approaches to setting objectives and obtaining information for landscape planning.
7. Projects evaluating management actions or changing climate or landscape conditions based on established fish and wildlife population/ habitat/or ecological integrity objectives. Alternatively, projects could work to scientifically delineate such objectives.

II. Award Information

A total estimated amount of up to \$1,000,000 for 5 to 15 projects may be awarded under this announcement for supporting GNLCC partners and landscape conservation delivery within the GNLCC.

Anticipated Start and End Dates. Most projects selected for funding will begin in summer or fall 2011; however, if an applicant is selected and immediately submits all required forms, it is possible that a project could begin as early as spring 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 GNLCC project tracking, deliverables and timelines during proposal development.

Partial Funding. US FWS R6 reserves the right to offer partial funding to submissions by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of the proposed project. If US FWS R6 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. Other federal agencies are public agencies or institutions, they are eligible to submit.

Eligible Activities. Assistance is available for science and information projects informing or directly affecting landscape conservation delivery in the GNLCC. To be eligible for funding consideration, projects must address one or more of the following themes: Habitat Connectivity, Aquatic Integrity, Data Integration, Climate, Partnerships, and Outreach and Education (see Section I. for description of themes)

Note that each project may be for an unlimited total amount but must have a budget period of one year or less during which time, funding should be obligated. Project submissions having a longer budget period may be rejected for consideration unless acceptable justification is provided.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance identifies this assistance as: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Fish and Wildlife Coordination and Assistance Programs No.15.664

Ineligible Activities. Under this announcement, US FWS R6 will not fund: "construction grant" projects; species-specific 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 weighted 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 submission in light of the criteria (general and relevance)
3. Complete and submit your project to contacts by deadline.

Examples from Previous Years. When developing project submissions, you may look at submissions of successful projects from previous years, available at: <www.nrmssc.usgs.gov/gnlcc>.

Note, however, that this funding guidance is new in FY11; therefore all aspects of these requirements may not have been addressed in these prior submissions.

Format. Please convert your proposals to PDF prior to submission. Please use the project template below (Section VIII page 13) and complete the template with the appropriate information requested. Your project should be about 5 pages long.

Submission. Electronic submissions are preferable. Please email to: Yvette_Converse@fws.gov or email for mailing address.

If you do not have the capability to submit electronically, please contact Yvette Converse at (406-600-5142 / Yvette_Converse@fws.gov) announcement.

Deadline. Submissions are due by March 2nd by COB 5pm MST. GNLCC 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 R6 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 also be sent directly to Yvette_Converse@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. Criteria are weighted as noted.

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

The General Criteria are:

A. Rationale/Relevance/Bias for Action: Potential, whether direct or indirect, to effect conservation delivery within the Great Northern 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. Programmatic 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 of 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 R6 may consider information from other sources. If an applicant does not have any past performance and/or reporting history (items "1" and "2" above) it will receive a neutral (not included) evaluation for those elements of programmatic capability.

E. Partnerships: Sponsorship by existing landscape partnerships operating within the Great Northern 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 Great Northern area, on cross-jurisdictional, trans-boundary or pilots that have potential to affect the former.

G. Education/Outreach: Effectiveness of education/outreach and plans to disseminate project results.

H. Measuring Progress. Effectiveness and sufficiency of the applicant’s plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving environmental outputs and outcomes.

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. Leveraging: Extent the applicant demonstrates (1) how they will coordinate the use of 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.

K. GNLCC Goal. Extent to which project is aligned with GNLCC Goal:

GOAL: Coordinate, facilitate, promote, and add value to large landscape conservation to build resource resilience in the face of climate change and other landscape-level stressors through the following (as defined below):

- Support Science Development
- Effect Coordination
- Inform conservation action
- Monitor and Evaluate
- Communicate and Educate

Support Science Development

Identify and facilitate the development, integration, and application of social and natural scientific information needed to inform water, land, fish, wildlife, and cultural heritage management decisions.

Effect Coordination

Support coordination and integration of conservation science and actions across ecosystems at the landscape scale, leveraging the capabilities of respective agencies/organizations/ partnerships, and provide real-time situational awareness of on-going conservation efforts.

Inform Conservation Action

Promote conservation actions at the unit and ecosystem level by providing scientific information and decision support tools and by informing conservation action that support resource resilience.

Monitor and Evaluate

Monitor landscape scale indicators, test scientific assumptions, and evaluate effectiveness of conservation actions to inform adaptive management decision making.

Communicate and Educate

Communicate relevant science information and GNLCC activities and opportunities to partners and users. Advocate for collaborative conservation and seek to leverage capabilities and support.

The **Relevance Criteria** include:

1) **Relevance to landscape drivers (e.g. climate, land-use, invasive species) (25%)**

Criteria. Does the project proposal:

- i) Adequately frame the project actions relative to improving our understanding of how species, 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) **Relevance of the project to focal resources, ecosystem processes, species and/or habitats in the GNLCC (15%)**

Criteria. Does the project proposal:

- i) Address or articulate resource, ecosystem processes, species or habitat relationships?
- ii) Articulate relationships with larger (i.e., continental, regional) conservation plans/goals/priorities?
- iii) Provide quantifiable measures of project performance on either resources, ecosystem processes, species (i.e., population) or habitat/landscape?

3) **Relevance to on-the-ground conservation delivery (25%)**

Criteria. Does the project proposal:

- i) Allow for more effective conservation delivery? How?
- ii) Provide information to address conservation actions? How?
- iii) Inform or prioritize conservation delivery actions or locales in the near future?
- iv) Provide information applicable to decision-making for a priority resource, resource condition, habitat, or species in a large portion of the LCC?

4) **Geographic scope of project (10%)**

Criteria. 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)? If so, have potential logistical and administrative constraints been addressed?

5) **Partner engagement (15%)**

Criteria. 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) Engage “new” partners?

6) **Ability to show success in FY2011-12 (10%)**

Criteria: 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

Review and Selection Process. Selection recommendations will be based on an evaluation of projects against the General Criteria and Relevance Criteria. Applicants that submit more than one project within a theme should provide a prioritization of its projects (see Section IV, Multiple Project Submissions). 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. GNLCC Staff will screen submissions upon receipt for eligibility, for conformance to the announcement provisions, and to make sure that proposed projects are aligned with the appropriate themes. As mentioned above, if the project is not aligned with the appropriate themes, and with the applicant's approval, the project will be evaluated under a different theme.
2. After an overview of all projects by the Advisory Team, at least three (and no more than 7) reviewers from the GNLCC Advisory Team will independently evaluate each project against both the general and relevance criteria. Any reviewer associated with a proposal will not be permitted to rank that proposal.
3. The reviewers' evaluation results will be made available to the GNLCC Steering Committee.
4. The GNLCC Coordinator or delegate will prepare a spreadsheet compiling the results of the individual evaluations.
5. The review team will develop a recommended list of projects for funding to present to the GNLCC Steering Committee. The list will include ranking and AT funding recommendation up to amount available.
6. In making the final recommendations, in addition to considering the evaluation of the proposed project against the general and relevance criteria, management may also consider the geographic distribution of projects and funds, selecting technically sound projects across the GNLCC area at both a geographic and institutional level to achieve a reasonable balance of funding by GNLCC, applicant type, and the project location or impact.
7. After the GNLCC Steering Committee selects projects for funding consideration, and US FWS R6 agrees to fund, all applicants will be notified of the projects that have been selected.
8. Applicants for the projects that have been selected will be asked to submit final proposals along with the SF-424 and attendant documentation for Federal assistance (Application Packages).
9. Final decisions will be based upon the completed final proposals and application packages.

Schedule.

Conference Call(s) for Public Questions*	Feb 9&17, 2011
Deadline for Submissions	March 2, 2011
Reviews	Mar - Apr, 2011
Applicants Notified	May 1-15, 2011
Application Packages due	June 1, 2011
Final Awards	July 15, 2011

* GNLCC proposes to host 2 public conference calls during which applicants can ask any questions about the Funding Guidance. You will need the following information to participate in the call:

Date: **February 9, 2011 and February 17, 2011**
 Time: **2pm MST/1pm PST**
 Call Leader: **GNLCC Coordinators**
 US/Canada Dial-In Number: **866-795-8047**
 Conference Code: **6972717#**

Further details about this call will be available on the GNLCC web site:
www.nrmssc.usgs.gov/gnlcc

VI. Proposal and Award Administration

Proposal Solicitation: Based on the GNLCC Governance Charter (December 2010), science products and information needs can be developed and acquired by either of the following means:

1. Support for Existing Partnership Products and Information – If a partnership is supporting the identified project, this process can be used. This process will allow the GNLCC to support and network the work of existing landscape partnerships. This consists of querying existing partnerships for specific projects that meet established criteria for the GNLCC. This process may be more desirable in the early years of the GNLCC as a means to leverage existing efforts.

2. Request for Proposal – If the identified project is not currently supported by existing partnerships, the RFP process can be used to procure competitive and effective proposals for a specific science product or information need. The GNLCC may wish to put more emphasis on an RFP process. The RFP process must include:

- a. Development of an RFP with a clearly stated science product or information need from the Annual Workplan (*or Themes as identified herein*)
- b. Widespread circulation of the RFP within and outside the GNLCC
- c. Peer-review of all proposals that are received (using review template and process)
- d. Selection committee should be established at time of RFP development

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 Strategy. This ensures an accountable, iterative mechanism for funding and will ensure use and application of science products and information gained towards the collective GNLCC understanding of landscape conservation as we work together to achieve resource resilience through GNLCC partners respective or joint adaptation strategies.

All GNLCC 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: (i) one week for E-Mail submissions or (ii) two weeks for regular mail. Shortly after the deadline, we will post project information (including Applicant, Title, and identification number) at:
<www.nrmssc.usgs.gov/gnlcc> .

Contact Yvette_Converse@fws.gov if you do not receive a confirmation or if your project is not posted. GNLCC Coordinator will contact all Applicants to tell them whether or not they will be asked to submit Application Packages.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

General Contact:

Yvette Converse, GNLCC Coordinator

Yvette_Converse@fws.gov

406-600-5142

Or

Tom Olliff, GNLCC Coordinator

Tom_Olliff@nps.gov

406-994-7920

VIII. Project Template

GREAT NORTHERN LCC PROJECT TEMPLATE (Please limit to 5 pages)

Project Title:

Project Coordinator (contact information):

Project PI(s) (who is doing the work; contact information):

Partners (name, affiliation, location):

Project Summary (3 sentence target):

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 Great Northern landscape?
- 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 science product or direct management application?
- What is the geographic scope?
- Is the need identified in other conservation, management, or other plans?

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)?

Deliverables: List the final product(s), including the final report, which will result from this project and delivery date(s).

Schedule: Provide a time line with dates and tasks. 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, etc). Describe in-kind or matching funds for the project if applicable. Describe outyear estimated budget if multi-year project.