

Endangered Species Program
Fiscal Year 2004 Private Stewardship Grant Program
Notice of Availability of Federal Assistance

Program Overview Information:

Federal Agency Name: Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Program.

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal year 2004 Private Stewardship Grants Program

Announcement Type: Initial announcement for the fiscal year 2004 request for proposals

Funding Opportunity Number: PSGP-04

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.632 Private Stewardship Grant Program

Dates: Proposals must be submitted to our Regional Offices within 60 days of this announcement. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals to their State Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) for review under Executive Order 12372 (if necessary) concurrent with their submission to our Regional Offices.

Additional Information:

In fiscal year 2003 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded approximately \$9.4 million to 113 projects in 43 states through the Private Stewardship Grant Program (PSGP). The PSGP provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in private, voluntary conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands within the United States.

Eligible projects include those by landowners and their partners who need technical and financial assistance to improve habitat or implement other activities on private lands. Under the PSGP, privately owned means land that is not owned by a governmental entity. The PSGP supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to planning or research activities, and we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements.

Private landowners, individually or as a group, are encouraged to submit project proposals for their properties. Additionally, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) working with private landowners on conservation efforts are also encouraged to submit project proposals provided they identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate landowner participation will occur.

A PSGP proposal must include at least 10 percent cost sharing (*i.e.*, at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project. The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds.

Information on the PSGP is also available from the Branch of State Grants, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203 or electronically at http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html or email: Privatestewardship@fws.gov.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The majority of endangered and threatened species depend, at least in part, upon privately owned lands for their survival. The help of landowners is essential for the conservation of these and other imperiled species. Fortunately, many private landowners want to help. Often, however, the costs associated with implementing conservation actions are greater than a landowner could undertake without financial assistance. The fiscal year 2004 Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-108), included funding to address this need. The Private Stewardship Grants Program (PSGP) provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in private, voluntary conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands within the United States.

We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), are soliciting project proposals for Federal assistance under the PSGP. This document describes how you can apply for funding under the PSGP and how we will determine which project proposals will be funded. In fiscal year 2003 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded approximately \$9.4 million to 113 projects in 43 states through the PSGP. For fiscal year 2004 approximately \$7 million is available for project funding.

Eligible projects include those by landowners and their partners who need technical and financial assistance to improve habitat or implement other activities on private lands. Under the PSGP, privately owned means land that is not owned by a governmental entity. The PSGP supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to planning or research activities, and we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements.

Private landowners, individually or as a group, are encouraged to submit project proposals for their properties. Additionally, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) working with private landowners on conservation efforts are also encouraged to submit project proposals provided they identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate landowner participation will occur.

The Service may be able to assist landowners in planning or implementing projects. Through multiple programs, we offer a variety of expertise to assist landowners in planning and implementing projects on private lands. Among others, the Service's Endangered Species program and the Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration program have worked hand-in-hand with a variety of partners on private lands. The Service's ability to assist landowners will depend upon the type of project proposed and an assessment of how the project fits into our existing workloads and priorities. Due to the limited time available for such assistance, it may be necessary to submit the project proposal for funding under a future PSGP Request for Proposals. For additional information on how the Service may be able to assist you,

contact the Program Contact in the appropriate Regional Office identified in Table 1. Information is also available from the Service's Internet site at www.fws.gov.

In addition, many other Federal, State, Territory, or Tribal agencies, as well as conservation organizations, work closely with landowners and may be able to assist with planning and implementing a project. Local governments, such as your county or city, may also have personnel that could assist you in developing a project proposal.

For general guidance on developing and writing grant proposals, see the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance's Internet site at <http://www.cfda.gov/public/cat-writing.htm>

A PSGP proposal must include at least 10 percent cost sharing (*i.e.*, at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds.

Interested individuals and groups prepare proposals that describe their project and its benefits for the target species. Proposals will compete at a Regional level for funding. We will establish targets for the amount of funding that will be available for grants within each of the Service's Regions. These targets will be based 50 percent on the number of acres of non-Federal land, as a representation of the amount of private land within each Region, and 50 percent on the number of listed, proposed, candidate, and a sample of the other at-risk species in each Region. The Service will award grants for actions and activities that protect and restore habitats that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands. Additionally, the Service, in cooperation with the grantees, must address Federal compliance issues, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act. For the projects that are selected to receive funding, we will provide additional guidance on compliance with these requirements. Please see Section III for minimum eligibility criteria and Section V for additional application review information, including proposal evaluation criteria.

Proposals will compete at a Regional level for funding. Within each Region, a diverse panel of representatives from State and Federal governments, conservation organizations, agriculture and development interests, and the science community will assess the applications and make funding recommendations to the Service. The Service's Regional Offices will invite and select the individuals to participate on the panels. The purpose of using the diverse panels is to obtain individual advice on project selection from an array of interests involved with conservation efforts on private lands. The Service will use the individual panel member recommendations in selecting projects, although geographic distribution of projects, the amount of funding requested for a project compared with the total amount of funding available, and other such factors may also be considered. Partial funding of one or more projects, when practicable, may be considered. After reviewing the individual panel member recommendations and the other

factors, the Service's Director will make funding selections, subject only to the final approval of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Awards will be announced through a national press release and a letter to the award recipient notifying them of the selection for an award. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. The final exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the prospective recipient and the Service's representatives. The prospective recipient will be asked to sign an agreement that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, the project design, the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits, and the reporting requirements, and that provides for Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress. In order to receive funding, prospective recipient will also need to provide assurances and certifications of compliance with other Federal requirements (for example see Standard Form 424-B and Department of the Interior form DI-2010 available at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf>). The recipient is reimbursed based on the cost-sharing formula in the Agreement. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of PSGP funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501) the Office of Management and Budget has approved, and assigned clearance number 1018-0118, to this information collection.

II. Award Information

In fiscal year 2003 the Service awarded approximately \$9.4 million to 113 projects in 43 states through the Private Stewardship Grant Program (PSGP). For fiscal year 2004 approximately \$7 million is available for project funding. The Service will make selections based upon those proposals submitted for consideration through this announcement. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for projects that would supplement existing projects. These proposals will compete along with applications for new awards.

The PSGP provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in private, voluntary conservation efforts that benefit species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands within the United States. Grant and/or cooperative agreements may be implemented. For cooperative agreements, the substantial involvement by the Service will be determined on a case by case basis. For additional information regarding cooperative agreements please contact your appropriate Regional Office coordinator as listed in Table 1 of Section IV.1.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Private landowners, individually or as a group, are encouraged to submit project proposals for their properties. Additionally, individuals or groups (for example land conservancies, community organizations, or conservation organizations) working with private landowners on conservation efforts are also encouraged to submit project proposals provided they identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate landowner participation will occur. In order to receive funding, projects will need to ensure that landowners are willing to allow the Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress when necessary.

State government agencies are not eligible to receive PSGP funding (including as a subrecipient). The Service has established a separate program specifically designed to facilitate State government partnerships with private landowners, the Landowner Incentive Program. State agencies are encouraged to assist landowners in developing PSGP project proposals, to provide cost share when feasible, or to participate in other ways on project implementation. However, State agencies are not eligible to apply for PSGP funding directly.

Other non-Federal governmental entities or affiliates, including Counties or other local governments or State-supported universities, are eligible to apply for PSGP funding in order to assist private landowners in planning and implementing a project. As with other groups that apply on behalf of the private landowners, they must identify specific private landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate on the project or provide other evidence in the project proposal to demonstrate that landowner participation will occur.

Please see Section IV.5 for additional funding restrictions.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

A project proposal must include at least 10 percent cost sharing (i.e., at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds. Applications submitted without at least a 10 percent cost sharing will not be considered eligible.

Please see Section IV.5 for additional funding restrictions.

3. Other

Eligible projects include those by landowners and their partners who need technical and financial

assistance to improve habitat or implement other activities on private lands for the benefit of endangered, threatened, proposed, candidate, or other at-risk species (plants and animals). Under the PSGP, privately owned means land that is not owned by a governmental entity.

For information on which species are endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidates, please visit the Service's Internet site at <http://endangered.fws.gov/wildlife.html>. For the purposes of the PSGP, an "at-risk species" is any species formally recognized as a species of conservation concern, such as species listed by a State or Territory. We recommend that you contact your State natural resources agency to determine which species are recognized as species of conservation concern (e.g., State listed as endangered, threatened, special concern, or other similar designations). If your State does not identify species of conservation concern or in addition to those species identified by the State, we will also consider any species or subspecies listed by NatureServe as "critically imperiled" (designated by rank "G1" or "T1"), "imperiled" (designated by rank "G2" or "T2"), or "vulnerable" (designated by rank "G3" or "T3") to be an at-risk species for the purposes of the PSGP. For information on NatureServe rankings, please visit their Internet site at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/>.

The PSGP supports on-the-ground conservation actions as opposed to planning or research activities. Examples of the types of projects that may be funded include managing nonnative competitors, reintroducing imperiled species, implementing measures to minimize risk from disease, restoring streams that support imperiled species, erecting fencing to exclude animals from sensitive habitats, or planting native vegetation to restore a rare plant community. This is not an exhaustive list of the various projects that may be funded under the PSGP. We recognize that there is a multitude of ways to benefit imperiled species conservation on private lands. While we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements, we are not excluding any other approach from consideration so long as it can demonstrate tangible on-the-ground benefits to the imperiled species in question and meets the other eligibility criteria established for the PSGP.

The following criteria must be satisfied for a proposal to be considered for funding:

- (1) The project must involve voluntary conservation efforts on behalf of private landowners within the United States (i.e., U.S. States and Territories). As a voluntary program, we will not grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act, including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).
- (2) The project must be on land that is privately owned and not already committed to conservation management. That is, the projects we seek to support should not be existing preserves owned by conservation organizations.

(3) The project must benefit species listed as endangered or threatened under the Act by the Service, species proposed or designated as candidates for listing by the Service, or other at-risk species that are native to the United States. We will not award grants to fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements. However, habitat improvements over and above any existing requirements for lands covered under current easements or other such conservation tools would be considered eligible for funding.

(4) The proposal must include at least 10 percent cost sharing (i.e., at least 10 percent of total project cost) on the part of the landowner or other non-Federal partners involved in the project (the cost-share may be an in-kind contribution, including equipment, materials, operations, and maintenance costs). The cost share must come from sources other than the PSGP or other Federal funds.

(5) The proposal must either identify at least some of the specific landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate in the private conservation efforts (not all participating landowners need to be identified at the time of the proposal submission) or provide other information to demonstrate that the project, if funded, would have full landowner participation.

(6) The proposal must include a reasonably detailed budget indicating how the funding will be used and how each partner is contributing. The proposal must also indicate the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between you and an authorized representative of the U.S. Government and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse you for time that you expend or costs that you incur in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations you may have with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share. We will also not consider fees or profits as allowable costs in your application. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs you incur, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project objectives during the life of the project. The costs proposed to be funded through the PSGP may not exceed 90 percent of the total costs.

(7) The proposal must include quantifiable measures that can be used to evaluate the project's success. These quantifiable measures must be specific, clear, and provide demonstrable benefits to the target species such as increased habitat quantity or quality. The project proposal should specify in detail how the habitat quantity or quality will be improved (e.g., acres, species, etc.) and the anticipated use of that habitat by the target species (e.g., numbers, duration, etc.). For example, a proposal might specify the number of acres restored by planting specific native plants and the number of breeding pairs of the target species that are anticipated to use the restored habitat. Proposed methods of monitoring, evaluating, and reporting these measures in comparison to an initial baseline should also be included in the proposal.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages may be obtained by accessing our Internet site:

http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html or you may contact the appropriate Regional Office program coordinator listed in Table 1 below.

Service Region	States or Territory where the project will occur	Where to send your PSGP project proposal	Regional PSGP Contact and Phone Number
Region 1	Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Eastside Federal Complex 911 N.E. 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181	Heather Hollis (503/231-6241)
Region 1	California and Nevada	Office Manager U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Building, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606 Sacramento, CA 95825-1846	Michael Fris (916/414-6464)
Region 2	Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 4012 Albuquerque, NM 87102	Mike McCollum (817/277-1100)

Region 3	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building One Federal Drive Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056	Peter Fasbender (612/713-5343)
Region 4	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200 Atlanta, GA 30345	Mike Gantt (919/856-4627)
Region 5	Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035-9589	Diane Lynch (413/253-8628)
Region 6	Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service P.O. Box 25486 Denver Federal Center Denver, CO 80225-0486	Pat Mehlhop (303/236-7400 ext. 225)

Region 7	Alaska	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199	Michael Roy (907/786-3925)
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2. Content and Form of Application

You must follow the instructions in this document in order to apply for financial assistance under the PSGP. For a description of the information that must be included in a project proposal, please follow the format outlined below. Your project proposal should not be bound in any manner and must be printed on one side only. You must submit one signed original and two signed copies of your project proposal (including supporting information). We will not accept facsimile project proposals. Your unbound (a binder clip is allowed) project proposal must be received by the appropriate Regional Office listed in Table 1 by March 8, 2004. We encourage you to contact the Regional program coordinator listed in Table 1 prior to submitting a project proposal should you have questions regarding what information must be submitted with the project proposal. An incomplete proposal will not be considered for funding.

The project proposal is a narrative description of your project and one required Federal form. The ultimate size of the proposal will depend on its complexity, but we request that you attempt to minimize the size of the narrative description of the proposal. Additionally, only information that is pertinent to the proposal should be included (e.g. it is not necessary to include the resumes' of project personnel). Each page should be no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches. You will need to submit an original proposal and two copies; neither the original nor the copies should be permanently bound. This complete application package with detailed instructions and supplementary information can be found at our Internet site:
http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html

The project proposal should also indicate whether partial funding of the project is practicable, and, if so, what specific portion(s) of the project could be implemented with what level of funding. A project proposal that is a part of a longer-term initiative will be considered; however, the proposed project's objectives, benefits, and tasks must stand on their own, as there are no assurances that additional funding would be awarded in subsequent years for associated or complementary projects.

The Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Office of Management and Budget have established requirements concerning Federal financial assistance. This includes established principles for determining which costs are allowable or eligible based on the type of applicant (see Table 3 in section VI.2 below). Your project proposal must comply with these requirements.

The narrative description of your project proposal should specifically address each of the eligibility criteria and each of the ranking factors. We recommend the following format for the project narrative–

(1) Title Page. You should list on the Title Page a project title, objectives, duration, summary of costs (amounts of PSGP funding needed and cost sharing), and contact information (name, address and phone number).

(2) Project Description. The project proposal must identify which species will benefit, how they will benefit from the project, and describe the project's significance to each target species (goals and objectives for the project). We also encourage applicants to describe how the location of the project and its role in the landscape affect the conservation of the target species. The proposal must either identify at least some of the specific landowners who have confirmed their intent to participate in the private conservation efforts or provide other information to demonstrate that the project, if funded, would have full landowner participation. Explain why you need government financial assistance for the proposed work. List all other sources of funding you have or are seeking for the project. List any existing Federal, State, Tribal, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect.

(3) Project statement of work. The statement of work is an action plan of activities you will conduct during the period of the project. You must prepare a detailed narrative; fully describing the work you will perform to achieve the project goals and objectives. The narrative should respond to the following questions:

- (a) What is the project design? What specific work, activities, and procedures will you undertake?
- (b) Who will be responsible for carrying out the various activities? Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Identify the person(s) responsible for the project and other project participants.
- (c) What are the project milestones? Each project should first clearly describe the base-line conditions as they exist prior to project implementation. List milestones, describing the specific activities and associated time lines to conduct the scope of work. Describe the time lines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2), rather than by specific dates.
- (d) Specify the criteria and procedures that you will use to evaluate the relative success or failure of a project in achieving its objectives.
- (e) For what amount of time will you commit to maintain the habitat improvements or other benefits from the project? Describe the steps you will take to ensure that the benefits of the project continue throughout this time period.

(4) Project Budget. You must submit a reasonably detailed budget for the project. The budget should indicate the breakdown of costs proposed to be funded through the PSGP and other costs, through both cash and in-kind contributions. To support your project's budget, also describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of the cost sharing derived from in-kind contributions.

(5) Supporting Documentation. You should include any relevant documents and additional information (maps, background documents) that will help us to understand the project and the problem/opportunity you seek to address.

Federal Assistance Forms: Applicants *must* provide an Application for Federal Assistance, OMB form number SF424. This form is available from <http://www.fedforms.gov> or <http://www.gsa.gov/forms/>, at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf> or from the Regional PSGP coordinator. Applications without this completed form will not be considered.

Data Universal Numbering System Number: On June 27, 2003, The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a *Federal Register* notice (68 FR 38402) that announced final policy issuance on the use of a universal identifier by grant applicants. The policy requires applicants applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003 to acquire a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. It is the responsibility of the organization seeking Federal funds to obtain a DUNS, as necessary. Grant and cooperative agreement applicants (excluding individuals) for Fiscal Year 2004 need to ensure they have a DUNS number. Therefore, private individual landowners submitting proposals for consideration DO NOT need to acquire a DUNS number, however, organizations representing private landowners MUST acquire a DUNS number to be submitted with the proposal. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at www.dnb.com.

3. Submission Dates and Times

Grant project proposal must be received by the appropriate Regional Office program coordinator listed in Table 1 by March 8, 2004. The proposals must be received at the appropriate office by 5:00 pm in that time zone. Proposals not received by this date and time will not be reviewed nor considered as eligible for the competition. To confirm the receipt of your proposal you must contact the appropriate individual listed in Table 1.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants should contact the Service's Regional Office program coordinator (see Table 1) and/or the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. A complete list of the names and addresses for the SPOCs may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

5. Funding Restrictions

The project must involve voluntary conservation efforts on behalf of private landowners within the United States (i.e., U.S. States and Territories). As a voluntary program, we will not grant funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Act, including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other local, State, or Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for local, State, or Federal permits).

The proposal must include a reasonably detailed budget indicating how the funding will be used and how each partner is contributing. The proposal must also indicate the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between you and an authorized representative of the U.S. Government and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse you for time that you expend or costs that you incur in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations you may have with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share. We will also not consider fees or profits as allowable costs in your application. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs you incur, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project objectives during the life of the project. The costs proposed to be funded through the PSGP may not exceed 90 percent of the total costs. Additionally, we will not fund the acquisition of real property either through fee title or easements.

The final exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the prospective recipient and the Service's representatives. The prospective recipient will be asked to sign an agreement that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, the project design, the time commitment for maintaining the project's benefits, and the reporting requirements, and that provides for Service access to the project area in order to check on its progress. In order to receive funding, prospective recipient will also need to provide assurances and certifications of compliance with other Federal requirements (for example see Standard Form 424-B and Department of the Interior form DI-2010 available at <http://training.fws.gov/fedaid/toolkit/toolkit.pdf>). The recipient is reimbursed based on the cost-sharing formula in the Agreement. An applicant should not initiate your project in expectation of PSGP funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

6. Other Submission Requirements

At this time, the Service will only be accepting hard copy submission of proposals. We will not accept facsimile project proposals, nor electronic submission of proposals. As previously noted, the project proposal is a narrative description of your project and one required Federal form. The ultimate size of the proposal will depend on its complexity, but we request that you attempt to minimize the size of the narrative description of the proposal. Each page should be no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches. You will need to submit an original proposal and two copies; neither the

original nor the copies should be permanently bound (a binder clip is allowed). Applications must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Office as indicated in Table 1.

V. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

Members of a diverse panel will individually score each proposal based on a set of ranking factors, which include (1) the number of endangered or threatened species, species proposed or candidates for such listing, and at-risk species that will benefit from the project; (2) the importance of the project to the conservation of those species, including the duration of the benefits, the magnitude of the benefits, and the urgency of the project; and (3) other proposal merits, such as whether the project complements other conservation projects in the area, the project's unique qualities, feasibility of the project, or any other appropriate justifications, including particular strengths in the above categories (e.g., extraordinary benefits).

Due to the wide variety of project proposals that will likely be submitted, the scoring system must provide a relatively high degree of flexibility. Therefore, a scoring system that is relatively simple, but allows project proposals to be evaluated qualitatively as well as quantitatively is desired. The three ranking factors will be scored as described in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Project Proposal Scoring Guidelines (10 points maximum):		
Ranking Factor:	Project Proposal Assessment:	Number of Points:
(1) The number of federally listed, proposed, candidate, or at-risk species that will directly benefit from the project.	5 or fewer species	1
	6 or more species	2
(2) The importance of the project to the conservation of the target species, including the duration of the benefits, the magnitude of the benefits, and the urgency of the project.	Qualitative	1 - 5
(3) Other Proposal Merits. Whether the project complements other projects in the area, the project's unique qualities, feasibility of the project, or any other appropriate justifications, including particular strengths in the above categories (<u>e.g.</u> , extraordinary benefits).	Qualitative	0 - 3

An applicant's proposed cost sharing level may also be considered in the "other proposal merits"

category. That is, additional cost sharing above the required minimum of 10 percent may earn a given proposal additional consideration in this category.

2. Review and Selection Process

Proposals will compete at a Regional level for funding. Within each Region, a diverse panel of representatives from State and Federal government, conservation organizations, agriculture and development interests, and the science community will assess the applications and make funding recommendations to the Service. The Service's Regional Offices will invite and select the individuals to participate on the panels. The purpose of using the diverse panels is to obtain individual advice on project selection from an array of interests involved with conservation efforts on private lands. The Service will use the individual panel member recommendations in selecting projects, although geographic distribution of projects, the amount of funding requested for a project compared with the total amount of funding available, and other such factors may also be considered. Partial funding of one or more projects, when practicable, may be considered. After reviewing the individual panel member recommendations and the other factors, the Service's Director will make funding selections, subject only to the final approval of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The Service anticipates making award announcements for the fiscal year 2004 competition in the Spring of 2004.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

Awards will be announced through a national press release and a letter to the award recipient notifying them of the selection for an award. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. An applicant should not initiate a project in expectation of PSGP funding, nor should they purchase materials or begin work until such time as they receive the final grant award document signed by an authorized Service official.

Information regarding projects selected for funding will be made available in the national press release. Those individuals or groups that wish to have this information withheld from the public, including the name of the applicant and location of the project MUST clearly state this within the proposal. Upon request the Service will withhold such information to the maximum extent of the law. However, applicants should be aware that applications submitted to the Service for consideration in the PSGP are a matter of public record, and such information is subject to the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA).

Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified via telephone, facsimile, electronic mail, or via a letter delivered through the postal mail.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Listed in the table below are the administrative requirements that will apply to your project if funded through the PSGP. The documents listed below establish principles for determining which costs are allowable or eligible (“cost principles”) and describe other requirements that apply to receiving PSGP funding. These requirements apply to recipients and subrecipients of PSGP funding. In some cases, the requirements vary depending upon the type of organization receiving the funding or that is a subrecipient of the funding. Each of these documents can be found at our Internet site: http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html. For projects that are selected for funding, we will also offer additional technical assistance to facilitate the prospective recipients’ understanding of the financial requirements.

On June 27, 2003, The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a *Federal Register* notice (68 FR 38402) that announced final policy issuance on the use of a universal identifier by grant applicants. The policy requires applicants applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003 to acquire a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. It is the responsibility of the organization seeking Federal funds to obtain a DUNS, as necessary. Grant and cooperative agreement applicants (excluding individuals) for Fiscal Year 2004 need to ensure they have a DUNS number. Therefore, private individual landowners submitting proposals for consideration DO NOT need to acquire a DUNS number, however, organizations representing private landowners MUST acquire a DUNS number to be submitted with the proposal. Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at www.dnb.com.

Table 3. Administrative Requirements for PSGP Funding Awards	
Category:	Specific Requirements:
Individuals, private firms, and other non-profits excluded from coverage under OMB Circular No. A-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 31.2 * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * 48 CFR 31 (Contracts with Commercial Organizations)
Non-Profit Organizations covered under OMB Circular No. A-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs) * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * OMB Circular No. A-110 (Administrative Requirements for Grants) * OMB Circular No. A-122 (Cost Principles) * OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)

Educational Institutions (even if part of a State or local government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs) * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * OMB Circular No. A-21 (Cost Principles) * OMB Circular No. A-110 (Administrative Requirements for Grants) * OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)
States, local governments, and Indian Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 CFR 12 (Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs) * 43 CFR 18 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) * OMB Circular No. A-87 (Cost Principles) * OMB Circular No. A-102 (Grants and Cooperative Agreements) * OMB Circular No. A-133 (Audits)

This funding opportunity is also subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs.” Applicants should contact the Service’s Regional Office program coordinator (see Table1) and/or the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. A complete list of the names and addresses for the SPOCs may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

3. Reporting

Grant recipients may be required to complete one or more of the following financial forms:

- SF - 269/269A, Financial Status Report;
- SF - 270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement;
- SF - 271, Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement for Construction Programs; and
- SF - 272, Federal Cash Transactions Report.

Financial and performance reports are due upon project completion if performance is less than one year, and annually, and upon completion if the period of performance is greater than one year.

Recipients will also be responsible for adhering to OMB Circular A-133, regarding single audit requirements.

Applicants are advised to work with the Regional Office program contacts in Table 1 to determine if any additional reporting requirements must be met based on individual applicant status following the administrative requirements as outlined in Table 3.

Delinquent submittal or non-submittal of reports will be construed by the Service as a failure by the grantee to accomplish objectives and may be grounds for withholding payments; suspending or terminating the award; and barring the recipient from receiving future awards from the Service until the delinquent reports are received.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please refer to Table 1 for a list of Regional Office program contacts. Information on the PSGP is also available from the Branch of State Grants, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203 or electronically at http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship.html or email: Privatestewardship@fws.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Please note that the Federal Government is not obligated to make any awards as a result of this announcement, and only official Service grant officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds.