

Recovering America's Wildlife Act:

How States Qualify, Access, and Account for Funding

STEPS

EXAMPLE

1 State fish and wildlife agencies submit Wildlife Action Plans addressing the 8 required elements including the identification of species of greatest conservation need and the locations/condition of key habitats to state and federal Regional Review Teams and final approval is made by the USFWS director. The plans must be updated at least every 10 years. Once the agency has an approved plan, states can submit grant requests to the USFWS to obligate their portion of Recovering America's Wildlife Act funds to grants. \$1.4 billion is available nationally for states and tribes.

State with an \$11.2 million annual federal apportionment updates its 10-year Wildlife Action Plan that identifies several birds and butterflies that rely on dwindling grassland habitat as species of greatest conservation need. The plan outlines steps to restore these grasslands.

2 State agencies make detailed grant requests that will address species of greatest conservation need and approved conservation actions outlined in their Wildlife Action Plans to the USFWS Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program including an introduction, goals and objectives, expected results, benefits, and estimated budget. The USFWS determines that all work is eligible, substantial in design, uses appropriate means and measures, and costs are commensurate with benefits. All federal compliance requirements must also be met before projects are approved.

State submits a detailed request for a \$1 million grassland restoration project. If approved, the project will receive \$750,000 in reimbursement from the USFWS and the state will contribute a \$250,000 non-federal match. The remaining \$10.2 million can be used for additional grant requests.

3 Over the course of the year, states track the restoration actions and submit expenses to the USFWS for reimbursement. The states retain supporting financial documents like staff timesheets, contract invoices, and equipment purchases.

For the grassland restoration project, eligible expenses such as purchase of seeds and labor to remove invasive plants are reimbursed.

4 Each year, states produce interim financial and performance reports for each grant. At the end of the grant performance period, states submit a final financial and performance report for approval. Total grant costs, including federal funds expended and state match, must be documented in the financial report, and all federal funds drawn down prior to submitting the final report. Federal requirements are conditions of the grant award. If those conditions are not met then the USFWS will follow remedies for non-compliance, which may include repayment of grant funds.

When the final reports are received, the USFWS reviews and certifies the performance and financial management of the grant.

5 Each state is required to undergo an Interior Office of Inspector General audit every 6 years to ensure compliance with all federal regulations and procedures administered by the USFWS. All projects funded under Recovering America's Wildlife Act also would be subject to these Office of Inspector General audits.

6 An additional accountability measure in the current legislation is the requirement for each state, territory, and the District of Columbia to provide a 3-year implementation work plan and budget to the USFWS, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and the House Committee on Natural Resources. Performance of this approved plan must be reported on every 3 years.