

## FLORIDA'S STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS PROGRAM

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF FLORIDA'S STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS CYCLE

May 30, 2017

**TO:** Conservation Partners

**FROM:** Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

**SUBJECT:** Florida's State Wildlife Grants Cycle Notice

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative is pleased to invite you to submit applications for Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program. Applications are due by **12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time July 14, 2017**. Applications should be prepared in accordance with Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Guidelines and instructions in this document. Applicants will be notified about selected projects by **February 1, 2018**. Selected projects will start no earlier than **July 1, 2018**.

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative is seeking applications for the following projects.

- **Project:** Distribution of breeding sites and robust estimation of abundances at important breeding sites for white-crowned pigeons throughout their Florida range (\$90,000 available. See below for details.)
- **Project:** Protecting the Connected Florida Landscape: Wildlife Corridors as a Climate Adaptation Strategy (\$75,000 available. See below for details.)

These projects are being developed to address the data gaps goal and climate adaptation objective of Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan. Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative has identified the project need and objectives. Applicants are asked to submit project proposals that detail the approach best suited to meet the stated objectives.

To be considered, applicants must submit a completed State Wildlife Grant application form, fully developed scope of work, budget, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA; or acceptable alternative, see Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Guidelines), and match commitment letter(s) that specifically relate to the needs and objectives of these projects.

Should you have any questions regarding the grant cycle or application requirements, please contact Andrea Alden, the State Wildlife Grants Coordinator, at [Andrea.Alden@MyFWC.com](mailto:Andrea.Alden@MyFWC.com) or Robyn McDole, the Assistant State Wildlife Grants Coordinator, at [Robyn.McDole@MyFWC.com](mailto:Robyn.McDole@MyFWC.com).

cc: Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative Standing Team

## Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Application Process

### Introduction

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative is a program designed to create a strategic approach for conserving all of Florida's wildlife, including fish and invertebrates, with the aim of averting future declines and keeping common species common. The three main components of the Initiative are: 1) Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan, a strategy for managing all wildlife in Florida; 2) partnership development, through which resources are pooled to address wildlife conservation across the state of Florida; and 3) Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program, to support partnership building and Wildlife Action Plan implementation by providing funding opportunities. For more information, please visit [Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative](#).

The U.S. Congress appropriated over \$62 million for the State Wildlife Grants Program nationwide in federal fiscal year 2017. The funds are distributed to the states based on a formula that includes land area and population. No state may receive more than five percent or less than one percent of the available funds.

### The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Role

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is the designated state agency that receives and manages State Wildlife Grants Program funds. Funds are to be used in accordance with Congressional intent and [Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Guidelines](#).

### Submittal Guidelines

In order to be considered, applications must address one of the two projects detailed in this document and must be prepared in accordance with the [Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Guidelines](#).

Applications should be submitted electronically in Microsoft Office Word, Excel or Adobe to Andrea Alden AND Robyn McDole, the State Wildlife Grants Coordinators, at [Andrea.Alden@MyFWC.com](mailto:Andrea.Alden@MyFWC.com) and [Robyn.McDole@MyFWC.com](mailto:Robyn.McDole@MyFWC.com) by **12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time July 14, 2017**. Applications also must be copied to the authorizing official from the applicant's organization via carbon copy in the email application submission.

These five documents comprise an application:

- State Wildlife Grant Application Form available at <http://www.myfwc.com/conservation/special-initiatives/fwli/grant/apply/>
- Scope of Work, to include a public description, introduction, project objectives, methods and schedule; biographical sketches for the Principal Investigator and other key project personnel; budget narrative; and appendices, if needed.
- Budget, to include three spreadsheets, available at <http://www.myfwc.com/conservation/special-initiatives/fwli/grant/apply/>
- copy of the agency or entity's NICRA
- match commitment letter(s)

Please use the following naming convention for electronic files, using the last name of the Principal Investigator:

- Application Form: Lastname\_Application.doc, Lastname\_Application.docx or Lastname\_Application.pdf
- Scope of Work: Lastname\_Scope.doc, Lastname\_Scope.docx or Lastname\_Scope.pdf

- Budget sheet: Lastname\_Budget.xls or Lastname\_Budget.xlsx
- NICRA: Lastname\_NICRA.pdf
- Match Commitment Letter(s): Lastname\_MatchLetter.pdf

## Criteria

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative has identified the relevance, need, and objectives of the following two projects. Applicants are requested to develop the best approach to achieve the objectives of the project. Additional detail about each project is available following the frequently asked questions.

- **Project:** Distribution of breeding sites and robust estimation of abundances at important breeding sites for white-crowned pigeons throughout their Florida range
- **Project:** Protecting the Connected Florida Landscape: Wildlife Corridors as a Climate Adaptation Strategy

All habitats and Species of Greatest Conservation Need that will be studied in the project must be listed, threats that are addressed should be explicitly stated, and references with page numbers should be made to [Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan 2012](#).

Applicants are required to match thirty-five percent of the total project cost and to meet the project objectives within the allotted funds. Match must come from non-federal sources, and can include salaries and wages, indirect costs, volunteers, equipment, materials and supplies. Strong applications will include documentation of match support in the application package. Resources requested for funding must be necessary, reasonable and allowable to meet the project's objectives.

The Principal Investigator and other key project personnel are expected to have the capacity to successfully complete the project.

Strong applications will greatly encourage involvement from partners, such as federal, state and local government agencies; corporations; non-profit organizations; conservation organizations; sporting organizations; and private landowners. Please identify all partners and how they are involved with the project.

Projects are expected to begin no earlier than July 1, 2018 and end no later than June 30, 2021.

## Evaluation

In general, applications will be evaluated based on how well the project criteria are addressed, on the applicant's qualifications, on the technical merit of the proposed approach, on the appropriate use of funds, and verifiable deliverables. Example evaluation forms will also be available from [Florida's State Wildlife Grants](#).

## Schedule

<b>May 30, 2017:</b>	Grant cycle opens
<b>Noon on July 14, 2017:</b>	Grant cycle closes
<b>February 1, 2018:</b>	Announcement of recommended applications
<b>No earlier than July 1, 2018:</b>	Projects begin

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who may apply?

State agencies, local government entities, educational facilities, organizations and individuals can apply. Applications may be submitted from other states and countries as long as the proposed projects involve or are germane to populations of wildlife that inhabit Florida.

### What is the minimum and maximum amount of money I can request in my application?

Each project has a maximum amount of money that can be requested to meet each project's needs. Applicants can request less money, but they must still achieve all project objectives.

### Which projects are eligible?

Projects must meet the criteria specified in the Notice for the 2017 General Grant Cycle.

### Can Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program fund projects associated with wildlife education or wildlife law enforcement activities?

No, unless the law enforcement or education component is a minor or incidental activity – less than ten percent of total project costs – that is considered critical to the success of a project, directly contributes to the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats with the greatest conservation need, and is consistent with the development or implementation of Florida's Wildlife Action Plan.

### Can Florida State Wildlife Grants be used for projects associated with wildlife recreation?

No.

### Are matching funds required?

Yes. A non-federal match requirement assures local ownership and leverages funds to support added conservation. For the 2017 General Cycle, applicants must provide a non-federal match of at least thirty-five percent of the total project costs. To calculate the total project cost, divide the federal request by 0.65. For example, an application requesting \$100,000 in federal funds must provide \$53,846 of secure match for a total project cost equaling \$153,846 ( $\$153,846 = \$100,000 / 0.65$ ).

### If I am awarded a grant, do I get all the money right away?

No. You will be reimbursed on an invoice schedule for the money spent on achieving the project objectives. For more information, see the [Program Guidelines](#). Actual costs will be checked at the end of your project. If you have not expended the total amount of funds requested, the last invoice payment will be reduced appropriately.

### What are the reporting requirements if I am awarded a grant?

Typically, no more than three progress reports and one annual report will be required during each fiscal year. Grantees will be provided a copy of the Report Guidelines as guidance for the preparation of progress, annual and final reports.

### What are the scoring criteria for submitted applications?

Submitted applications are evaluated on a variety of criteria, including relevance to Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan, partner involvement, and sound methods and approaches. To see example evaluation forms, visit [Florida's State Wildlife Grants](#).

**Project Criteria: Distribution of breeding sites and robust estimation of abundances at important breeding sites for white-crowned pigeons throughout their Florida range**

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative has identified the relevance, need, objectives, and expected benefits for the following project. Applicants are asked to develop an approach that is best suited to achieve these objectives. To be considered, applicants must submit a completed State Wildlife Grants application form, fully developed scope of work, budget, NICRA, and match commitment letter(s) that specifically relate to the needs and objectives of this project. All documents should be prepared in accordance with the [Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Guidelines](#).

**Partnerships**

Applicants may identify partnerships in accordance with project needs however, representatives from the FWC, Key Deer National Wildlife Refuges, Biscayne Bay and Everglades National Park are recommended to ensure project objectives can be met.

**Relevance**

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative revised Florida's [State Wildlife Action Plan](#) in 2012 (Action Plan). Upon completion of the revised Action Plan, the FWC worked with partners to set new goals for implementing the plan from 2012-2018. The goals include a [data gaps goal](#) focused on acquiring information needed to conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). This project will address key information needs for the white-crowned pigeon (WCPI), a state Threatened SGCN that relies on two habitats (mangrove swamps & tropical hardwood hammock) considered to be in "poor and declining" condition in the Action Plan.

A successful applicant will address three key information needs from the [WCPI Species Action Plan](#) (SAP). First, it will validate a standardized monitoring protocol for the species (Action 10). Second, it will inventory breeding sites through the species' Florida breeding range (Action 8) and will provide a database of those sites, which will include the status of the colony, the number of nesting pairs, and perceived site-specific threats (Action 9). Current data on breeding sites is available for the lower Florida Keys and Biscayne Bay, but Florida Bay has not been surveyed since the early 1990s. This is a significant gap in knowledge of the species' status. The project will aggregate past monitoring data into a database to ensure a comprehensive understanding of past and current habitat use by breeding WCPIs. Additionally, the project will contribute to the understanding of core foraging areas in tropical hardwood hammocks. FWC is currently piloting survey protocols to identify core foraging areas to inform conservation measures and permitting guidelines, and distance to breeding locations is thought to be a potentially important predictor of whether a hammock patch is core WCPI foraging habitat.

**Need**

Current information on the WCPI breeding sites and site-specific abundance in Florida is available for the lower Florida Keys and Biscayne Bay but is missing from Florida Bay. This is a significant data gap that renders Levels 2 and 3 incomplete in the [Knowledge Table](#) for this species. This project will complete Level 2 and will use historic data coupled with new data to determine population trend (Level 3) where possible. The project will also centralize all known WCPI data to allow for future population trend analyses across the entire range of the species in Florida. Finally, this study is a necessary precursor to identifying whether particular breeding sites require management actions such as posting to reduce disturbance to nesting birds (Level 5), and for identifying core foraging habitat as described above.

**Objective**

The overall project objective is to describe the current distribution of WCPI breeding sites across its Florida range and to produce robust estimates of the abundance of WCPI at the most important breeding locations.

Suggested sub-objectives, or tasks, to reach the overall objective include:

1. Identify a recommended approach for monitoring WCPI breeding colonies by reevaluating Strong et al.'s (1994) approach to estimating WCPI abundances via flight-line surveys, which was based on a small sample of islands during a single year.
2. In collaboration with partners, identify breeding locations and estimate abundances at colonies that represent a substantial proportion of the overall population throughout the lower Keys, Florida Bay, and Biscayne Bay.
3. Create a comprehensive database of WCPI breeding locations, including both ongoing WCPI survey data and historical monitoring data collected from National Wildlife Refuges, NGOs (e.g., Audubon of Florida), and other partners.
4. Calculate population trends to the extent feasible by comparing current range extent and abundances to historical data.

### **Expected Benefits**

This study will improve understanding of the extent and relative abundance of breeding WCPIs across their range in Florida and help prioritize sites for management actions such as posting to reduce disturbance. It will allow scientists to assess population trends in some locations while setting a baseline for future range-wide assessments of population trends. Finally, it will aid in the identification of core foraging areas in tropical hardwood hammock so managers can implement informed conservation measures and permitting guidelines. It fully or partially addresses three knowledge levels (2, 3, 5) and three Actions (8, 9, 10) in the WCPI SAP.

### **Additional Project Considerations**

A competitive proposal is sought to achieve the objective described above. Assessment of the monitoring protocol should occur during July-August 2018 at a range of sites that are representative in size, location, and habitat characteristics based on current knowledge of such factors. Investigators will compare ground counts to flight-line estimates and reassess the regression-based approach to estimating population size recommended by Strong et al. (1994). Investigators will also assess whether methods that formally account for detectability provide a cost-efficient and/or statistically superior alternative to the recommended protocol. Scouting for historically important and previously unidentified breeding sites should also occur in 2018 to ensure that the largest colonies are known to surveyors prior to 2019. The survey of breeding sites is expected to occur in the 2019 breeding season, in cooperation with partners. Applicants should specify the proportion of the population they commit to surveying based on current knowledge. In addition to a final report, deliverables requested at the end of the project will also include a relational database (i.e. Access) or an ArcGIS geodatabase and data analysis.

### **Expected Project Period**

Projects cannot start prior to July 1, 2018 and cannot exceed three years. Justification should be offered in the scope of work if the time frame included in the approach differs from the suggested time period below.

Start Date: July 1, 2018

Suggested End Date: June 30, 2020

### **Expected Project Location**

Monroe & Miami-Dade counties. Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, and the lower Florida Keys (e.g., Everglades National Park, Biscayne Bay National Park, Great White Heron and Key Deer National Wildlife Refuges). Exact locations for study are to be identified by the applicant.

**Target Species**

White-crowned pigeon (WCPI; *Patagioenas leucocephala*)

**Cost**

Available federal funds: \$ 90,000

Available FWC match: \$ 10,000 As FWC is recommended as a partner for the project, match will be available in the form of staff time/salaries and supplies. The match amount is an estimate based on expected project needs and availability is dependent upon FWC resources. Applicants should contact appropriate FWC staff (Andrew Cox and Craig Faulhaber) during proposal development to discuss this FWC match opportunity.

Applicant-supplied match: \$ 40,000 (minimum)

**Total cost:** \$ 140,000

## **Project Criteria: Protecting the Connected Florida Landscape: Wildlife Corridors as a Climate Adaptation Strategy**

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative has identified the relevance, need, objectives, and expected benefits for the following project. Applicants are asked to develop an approach that is best suited to achieve these objectives. To be considered, applicants must submit a completed State Wildlife Grants application form, fully developed scope of work, budget, NICRA, and match commitment letter(s) that specifically relate to the needs and objectives of this project. All documents should be prepared in accordance with the [Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program Guidelines](#).

### **Partnerships**

Applicants may identify partnerships in accordance with project needs.

### **Relevance**

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative revised Florida's [State Wildlife Action Plan](#) in 2012 (Action Plan). Upon completion of the revised Action Plan, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission worked with partners to set new goals for implementing the plan from 2012-2018. The goals include a [climate adaptation objective](#) under the Action Plan, Monitoring and Adaptation goal that is focused on addressing comprehensive adaptation planning and incorporating these strategies into the Action Plan in response to the threat of climate change to SGCN and their habitats.

A recurring need, identified in both the 2008 "Florida's Wildlife: On the Front Line of Climate Change" summit and the 2012 Action Plan, is to preserve the connected Florida landscape. Florida's unique topography, consisting of extensive coastline, open water, and many highly developed areas, presents a significant challenge for species threatened by climate change. Many of the state's most significant climate-related conservation challenges stem from SGCN occupying habitat surrounded by incompatible land uses or barriers to migration, most commonly open water or developed land. These species may not be able to easily migrate in changing habitat and climate conditions. As such, identifying and establishing corridors among patches of suitable habitat is crucial in promoting connectivity in the landscape and conserving dynamic systems, habitats, and species under climate change.

### **Need**

Protecting corridors and landscape connectivity is an essential conservation strategy for maintaining biodiversity under climate change. The need for resilient, fluid ecological systems that can adapt to a changing climate, including the ability of species to migrate to new suitable habitat will become increasingly important as climate change accelerates. This is a particularly critical need in Florida, where a large number of SGCN are restricted to relatively small patches of habitat, surrounded by coastline predicted to experience increasing sea level rise and/or other barriers to migration such as open water or human development.

### **Objective**

A small-scale wildlife corridor should be created or restored to benefit one or a number of SGCN at particular risk of facing migration barriers due to climate change.

The location of the project is flexible based on needs of the identified target species, current land uses and barriers, and expected impacts of climate change. Ideally, post-implementation monitoring would be included in the project.

### **Expected Benefits**

This project will benefit one or more SGCN by establishing or improving corridors and habitat connectivity in a location experiencing or predicted to experience increasing habitat loss and degradation due to climate change.

**Additional Project Considerations**

The specific approach and methodology used is to be identified by the applicant and will depend on target species selected, location, and related migration barriers and habitat requirements. However, the project should generally include assessment and implementation of the corridor. Preference will be given to projects that also include post-implementation monitoring. The type of corridor may include but is not limited to:

- A small scale roadway underpass or tunnel
- Improving roadside vegetation linking patches of habitat
- Restoring stepping stone habitat patches between larger green spaces
- Restoring wetland or shoreline habitats as a pathway for aquatic species or migratory birds or to provide a corridor for terrestrial species along a body of water

**Expected Project Period**

Projects cannot start prior to July 1, 2018 and cannot exceed three years. Justification should be offered in the scope of work if the time frame included in the approach differs from the suggested time period below.

Start Date: July 1, 2018

Suggested End Date: June 30, 2021

**Expected Project Location**

Exact location for study is to be identified by the applicant, but must be within the state of Florida.

**Area of Interest or Target Species**

Florida marine, terrestrial or freshwater SCGN (see Florida's [State Wildlife Action Plan](#)) that are threatened by increasing habitat fragmentation and migration barriers due to climate change.

**Cost**

Available federal funds: \$ 75,000

Applicant-supplied match: \$ 40,385 (minimum)

**Total cost: \$ 115,385**