

STATE: MONTANA
GRANT TITLE: Comprehensive Strategy Implementation & Administration
GRANT NUMBER: T - _____

PROJECT STATEMENT

I. Need

Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CFWCS) is an assessment of Montana's fish, wildlife and associated habitats. It describes those Montana species and habitats in greatest need of conservation, and prioritizes those species populations and habitats that we must enhance or prevent from declining further in order to maintain Montana's rich fish and wildlife heritage. It is anticipated that work to be accomplished under the CFWCS will help prevent future listings under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The highest priority action areas identified in the CFWCS share two common conservation concerns: 1) energy development, and 2) habitat fragmentation due to urbanization and residential development. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) recognizes that these two statewide concerns can best be addressed through programmatic means, implementing the agency's Energy Strategy along with many of the concepts identified in the recently published "Linking Conservation and Land Use Planning: Using the State Wildlife Action Plans to Protect Wildlife From Urbanization" Report (Defenders of Wildlife 2007 – *Appendix D*). In order to facilitate these efforts, along with other key aspects of CFWCS implementation, additional personal service resources are needed to coordinate project work on a statewide scale.

II. Objective

To provide adequate staffing resources necessary to administer key components of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Comprehensive Fish & Wildlife Conservation Strategy over the initial 5-year implementation period.

III. Expected Results and Benefits

The CFWCS directs FWP's efforts to a number of areas around Montana that offer some of the greatest opportunities for conservation of a large suite of priority species and their habitats. In consideration of the limited State and Federal funding available for statewide implementation of the CFWCS, FWP has narrowed the total number of focus areas, community types, species, and inventory needs identified in the CFCWS down to a more practical subset of priority projects. These projects, identified in CFCWS Action Plan (*Appendix C*), are where our primary efforts will be focused over the next five years.

By assigning administrative oversight of our CFWCS implementation projects to specific, qualified staff in the Headquarters office, FWP expects to ensure a consistent approach to projects statewide, while minimizing the need for oversight at the regional level (the agency

includes 7 regional field offices and 4 area offices located across the state, in addition to FWP Headquarters in Helena). CFWCS Administrative staff will report directly to the Director's office, and will be directly accountable for progress of the CFWCS Action Plan over the initial 5-year implementation period.

IV. Approach

The approach for this grant directly addresses key action items identified throughout the approved CFWCS. Specifically, energy development is listed as a key conservation concern for the Terrestrial Conservation Focus Areas (Pages 10-24), the Plains Grassland, and Shrub Grassland ecotypes described on pages 28-39. It is also discussed as a factor for Community Types of greatest Conservation Need (Pages 42-54). As with all "destination" states, human population growth and associated urban development is creating the single biggest challenge to protecting all plant and wildlife communities in Montana. This concern is identified throughout the CFWCS, for all Focus Areas and Ecotypes (pages 10-39).

Implementation of the Energy Development and Land Use Planning components of the CFWCS will be achieved using a team consisting of:

1. An Administrative Coordinator who will oversee both energy and urban/residential development, as well as overall CFWCS implementation efforts statewide.
2. A Land Use Planner who will focus their technical assistance and planning efforts in areas of Montana where the preponderance of urban/residential growth is occurring.

The anticipated duties for each of the three positions are as follows:

Administrative Coordinator

- Oversee implementation of the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy by staff in Fisheries, Wildlife and Communication and Education Divisions,
- Coordinate FWP's implementation with the actions of other agencies and NGO's at the local, regional and national level,
- Lead and coordinate FWP's response to energy and urban/residential development and its impacts to fish, wildlife and recreation in Montana,
- Represent FWP in the national discussion related to energy, urban/residential development impact, and global climate change, and
- Assist the agency in establishing permanent and significant funding for SWG.

Land Use Planner

- Identify priority habitats, and work with local biologists to design a connected network of lands in crucial need of conservation,
- Develop maps and other tools that identify where ecological conservation needs and population growth intersect,

- Create regional Conservation Plans that prescribe process for FWP to provide meaningful technical assistance,
- Work with local planners, officials, and others with influence over the development processes in areas with high ecological value that are also at high risk for development,
- Work with FWP biologists and our partners in strategic areas to coordinate their input and activities, and
- Develop guides for local decision makers, planners, and developers that outline the features needed in order for development to occur in a fish and wildlife friendly manner.

V. Proposed Funding

Budget Summary:

Personal Services (annual)

1.0 FTE Energy and Implementation Coordinator	\$65,393 (\$31.44 per hour w/benefits)
1.0 FTE Land Use Planner	\$43,768 (\$21.04 per hour w/benefits)
Annual Total:	\$109,161
Biennial Total:	\$218,322

Operations (both positions combined)

Travel	\$15,000/year
Office and Equipment	\$3,500/year
Communications	\$3,000/year
Other supplies and services	\$3,000/year
Annual Total:	\$24,500
Biennial Total:	\$49,000

Grand Total Direct Costs for 2 Years: \$267,322

Grant Amounts:

	Federal Share		Non-Federal Share*		Totals
Direct Costs:	133,661.00		133,661.00		267,322.00
Indirect @ 18.75%:	25,061.44		25,061.44		50,122.88
	158,722.44	50.00%	158,722.44	50.00%	317,444.88

**The non-federal share will be paid out of the agency's general license account.*

VI. Location

Statewide, although offices will be located at the Headquarters building in Helena.

VII. Schedule

USFWS grant approval	June 2007
Work period	July 07-June, 2009
Interim report due	September 2008
Grant close out and reporting	September 2009

VIII. Project Personnel

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Phone*</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
T.O. Smith	E&I Coordinator	444-3889	tosmith@mt.gov
Adam Brooks	FWP Fed. Aid Prog. Mgr.	444-3032	abrooks@mt.gov

* Area code 406

IX. Relation to Other Federal Projects

T-3 (CFCWS Development) – Personnel covered in this grant will be directly involved in the implementation of components included in the approved CFWCS.

Appendices

- A – Environmental Considerations
- B – NEPA Checklist
- C – FWP CFCWS Action Plan
- D – DOW Land Use Planning Document (Executive Summary)

APPENDIX A

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

An environmental assessment of activities covered in this project was deemed unnecessary under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) since the nature and scope of the activities fall within the guidelines for Categorical Exclusion as indicated in the Department of the Interior Manual, 516 DM2, Appendix 1, 1.7 – “Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations...”

The exceptions to categorical exclusion as listed in Department of Interior Manual 516, DM 2, Appendix 2, dated September 26, 1984, were considered, and it was determined that there are no conflicts and they do not preclude use of the categorical exclusion. A completed NEPA Compliance Checklist (FWS Form 3-2185 08/00) is attached as *Appendix B*.

In arriving at the decision for categorical exclusion, the following items were considered. Except where otherwise noted, determinations were made by Adam Brooks, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Federal Aid program Manager, Finance Division, Helena, Montana, phone 406-444-3032 (abrooks@mt.gov). None of these funds will be used for construction or groundbreaking work.

1. Floodplain Management, E.O. 11988

Administration and planning activities will not impact shorelines, riparian, or wetland vegetation nor affect any floodplains.

2. Protection of Wetlands, E.O. 11990

Administration and planning activities will not impact protection of wetlands.

3. Farmland Protection Policy Act, P.L. 97098

Administration and planning will not impact existing farmlands. No ground disturbance activities will take place through this grant.

4. Historical and Cultural Preservation (National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 16 U.S.C. 470)

USFWS approval of any project is an undertaking as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(y). However, in a July 20, 2000, letter from Mary Gessner, Chief, Division of Federal Aid in Denver, the USFWS determined that projects identified in the Federal Aid Handbook, Chapter 8, “Technical Assistance”, generally do not affect historic resources, and so consultation is not required unless the proposed action will result in land disturbance or modification of real property. Based on this guidance, and on the activities described in this grant proposal, FWP has determined that SHPO consultation is not required.

5. Endangered Species Act of 1973

Endangered, Threatened, Proposed, Candidate Species, and Proposed Critical Habitat (updated November 2005)

ENDANGERED (E) - Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

THREATENED (T) - Any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

CANDIDATE (C) - Those taxa for which the Service has sufficient information on biological status and threats to propose to list them as threatened or endangered. We encourage their consideration in environmental planning and partnerships; however, none of the substantive or procedural provisions of the Act apply to candidate species.

NONESSENTIAL EXPERIMENTAL POPULATION (XN) - A population of a listed species reintroduced into a specific area that receives more flexible management under the Act.

CRITICAL HABITAT (CH) - The specific areas within the geographic area occupied by a species, at the time it is listed, on which are found those physical or biological features 1) essential to conserve the species, 2) that may require special management considerations or protection, and 3) specific areas outside the geographic area occupied by the species at the time it is listed upon determination that such areas are essential to conserve the species.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	RANGE - MONTANA
Black-footed Ferret	<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	E/XN	Prairie dog complexes; Eastern Montana
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	T/XN	Forests; Western Montana
Whooping Crane	<i>Grus americana</i>	E	Wetlands; migrant statewide
Least Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	E	Yellowstone, Missouri River sandbars, beaches; Eastern Montana
Pallid Sturgeon	<i>Scaphirhynchus albus</i>	E	Bottom dwelling; Missouri, Yellowstone Rivers
White Sturgeon (Kootenai River population)	<i>Acipenser transmontanus</i>	E	Bottom dwelling; Kootenai River
Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>	T	Alpine/subalpine coniferous forest; Western Montana
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	T	Forested riparian; statewide
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	T	Missouri River sandbars, alkali beaches; northeastern Montana

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	RANGE - MONTANA
		CH	Alkali lakes in Sheridan County; riverine and reservoir shoreline in Garfield, McCone, Phillips, Richland, Roosevelt and Valley counties
Water Howellia	<i>Howellia aquatilis</i>	T	Wetlands; Swan Valley, Lake and Missoula Counties
Ute Ladies'-tresses	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	T	River meander wetlands; Jefferson, Madison, Beaverhead, Gallatin Counties
Bull trout (Columbia River basin and St. Mary - Belly River populations)	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	T Proposed CH	Clark Fork, Flathead, Kootenai, St. Mary and Belly river basins; cold water rivers & lakes Streams, lakes and reservoirs in the Clark Fork, Flathead and Kootenai river basins
Canada lynx (contiguous U.S. population)	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	T	Western Montana - montane spruce/fir forest
Spaldings Campion (or catchfly)	<i>Silene spaldingii</i>	T	Upper Flathead River and Fisher River drainages; Tobacco Valley - open grasslands with rough fescue or bluebunch wheatgrass
Arctic grayling (fluvial population)	<i>Thymallus arcticus</i>	C	Big Hole River and other tributaries to upper Missouri River
Warm spring zaitzevian riffle beetle	<i>Zaitzevia thermae</i>	C	Gallatin County - warm springs
Slender (or linearleaf) moonwort	<i>Botrychium lineare</i>	C	Glacier, Lake Counties - meadows in conifer forests
Yellow-billed cuckoo (western population)	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	C	Population west of the Continental Divide; riparian areas with cottonwoods and willows

This project involves administrative and technical assistance activities only, and so will not adversely affect any federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or their designated critical habitats. No construction or groundbreaking activities will occur in conjunction with this project. The project will not take place in any habitats occupied by least terns, pallid sturgeon, white sturgeon, Ute's Ladies'-tresses, mountain plover, warm spring zaitzevian riffle beetle, black-footed ferrets, and whooping cranes, as these species do not occur in the project area.

6. Environmental Justice, E.O. 11987

The proposed project will not have a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes.

7. State Clearinghouse, E.O. 12372

The proposed project was not submitted to the State Clearinghouse for a 30-day review because Montana has discontinued the requirement for State Clearinghouse review.

8. Assurances

The Department will comply with all applicable federal requirements. The Statement of Assurances has previously been submitted for this federal fiscal year.

9. Additional Environmental Considerations

Project work will not require preparation of a MEPA environmental assessment as grant activities fall under an excluded activity (data collection) described in the Administrative Rules of Montana, Section 12.2.430 (5)(d).

10. Exotic Organisms, E.O. 11987

This project involves administrative and technical assistance activities only, and so will not promote the introduction or spread of invasive species.

11. Animal Welfare Act of 1985

No animals will be captured or handled as part of this grant.