United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

In Reply Refer To
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MAY 15 2014

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors
Assistant Director-Fish and Aquatic Conservation

From: Deputy Director

Subject: Funding for Projects under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) is a science-based, partnership-driven approach to implement Strategic Habitat Conservation for aquatic resources. In 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) adopted a new competitive, performance-based method to allocate project funds under the Action Plan. The new methodology was developed collaboratively by the Service's Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) Fisheries Management Team, in consultation with their Regional National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) Coordinators. Deputy Director Steve Guertin approved the new method on behalf of the Director on December 4, 2013.

Implementation of the new allocation methodology began in fiscal year (FY) 2014. Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) seeking Action Plan project funds were required to submit a Work Plan and Accomplishment Report (Report) to the Service for review and ranking. The FWS used information provided in the Report to determine the amount of project funding each FHP received. To be eligible to receive operational support, FHPs were required to complete Section 1 of the Report. To compete for performance-based funds, FHPs were required to complete Sections 2 and 3 of the Report. For reference, a copy of the Report instructions and a summary table of the criteria used to rank each FHP are provided in attachments 2 and 3. As prescribed by the new methodology, each FHP was assigned a performance level score based on their past performance and priority project information provided in their Report. The final FHP performance level scores correspond to a specific funding amount.

In 2014, the Service will provide $3,301,155 for cost-shared projects that address the priorities of FHPs organized under the Action Plan. The FY14 performance level scores and corresponding funding amounts for each FHP are listed in attachment 1. Allocated funds will support on-the-ground fish habitat conservation projects identified in each FHP's FY14 Report and help to meet the operational needs of the FHPs. Every effort should be made to obligate project funds in FY14 with the understanding that it may be

difficult due to the delay in allocations and contracting deadlines. In cases where this is not achieved, FY14 funds should be carried over into FY15 and obligated as soon as practicable to achieve project goals. Additionally, please ensure that all project accomplishments are reported in the Fisheries Information System – Accomplishments Module as required in the Service Manual at 717 FW 1.

If you have questions, please contact Mr. David Hoskins, the Service's Assistant Director – Fish and Aquatic Conservation, at 703-358-2250.

Attachments

Attachment 1 –FY14 National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Project Funding

Table 1. Number of Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) at each performance level (Level) and respective project funding amount for FY14

Performance Levels	Number of FHPs at each Level	Project Funding at each Level
Level 1	9 FHPs	$60,974
Level 2	6 FHPs	$182,920
Level 3	1 FHP	$304,869

Table 2. FY14 performance levels and the corresponding funding amount for each FHP

Lead FWS Region	Fish Habitat Partnership Name	Performance Level[1]	Funding Amount[2]
1	Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership	1	$135,974
	Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership	1	$135,974
2	Desert Fish Habitat Partnership	1	$135,974
3	Driftless Area Restoration Effort	1	$135,974
	Fishers and Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin	1	$135,974
	Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	N/A	$75,000
	Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership	N/A	$75,000
	Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership	3	$379,869
4	Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership	2	$257,920

[1] FHP performance levels are applicable to the 2014 federal fiscal year, only
[2] FHP funding amounts include $75,000 of operational support for each Fish Habitat Partnership

Attachment 1 –FY14 National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Project Funding

Lead FWS Region	Fish Habitat Partnership Name	Performance Level[1]	Funding Amount[2]
5	Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership	1	$135,974
	Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture	2	$257,920
6	Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership	1	$135,974
7	Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership	2	$257,920
	Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership	2	$257,920
	Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership	2	$257,920
8	California Fish Passage Forum	2	$257,920
	Western Native Trout Initiative	1	$135,974
HQ	Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership	1	$135,974

Total FY14 NFHAP Project Funding $3,301,155

Instructions for Fish Habitat Partnership Work Plan and Accomplishment Reports

Introduction

Each year, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will distribute project funds to Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) in support of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Project funds will be broken into two categories: 1) stable operational support and 2) competitive, performance-based funds to encourage strategic conservation delivery.

The FWS will use information provided in a Work Plan and Accomplishment Report (Report) to determine the amount of project funding an FHP will receive. To be eligible to receive stable operational support, FHPs must complete Section 1. To compete for performance-based funds, FHPs must complete Sections 2 and 3. The documents must be submitted to the respective Regional NFHP Coordinator by January of each year[1]. Regional NFHP Coordinators are listed in a table below.

Instructions

Section 1. Justification for Stable Operational Support (maximum 6 pages)

This section will provide an overview of all projects and activities over the previous three years and anticipated projects and activities over the next three years. The intent is to show the full context of FHP efforts 1) supported by FWS funds, and/or 2) supported by all other sources of funds and in-kind contributions. While intended to be comprehensive, Section 1 need not be highly detailed. It should concisely describe these projects and activities as well as how these projects and activities (both individually and collectively) have contributed, or are expected to contribute, to achieving FHP goals and leverage partner resources and capabilities. The document should be self-contained, without attachments, though links to web-accessible documents may be inserted.

Section 2. Accomplishment Report (3-year reporting period)

This section will provide a detailed description of all projects and activities of the FHP over the previous three years. The intent is to show the full context of FHP accomplishments that were: 1) supported by FWS funds, and/or 2) supported by all other sources of funds and in-kind contributions. It will include the following checklist, with narrative evidence justifying each response. Provide documentation if necessary, either in an attachment or via web links.

1. Habitat Assessment (choose one):
    - The FHP has coordinated and compiled scientific assessment information on fish habitats within its partnership area.

[1] For the initial (FY 2014) cycle, the submission deadline will be February 28, 2014.

- The FHP has identified, and has a plan to fill, data gaps necessary to refine and complete fish habitat assessments, and incorporates existing habitat assessments into the FHP's strategic plan.
- The FHP has filled data gaps and refined habitat assessments, including climate change considerations, for incorporation into the Science and Data Committee's national assessment.

2. FHP Priority Areas / Species:
   What percentage of projects initiated in the past three years were focused on FHP defined priority species or priority areas? (choose one)
   - At least 75%
   - At least 85%
   - At least 95%
   - Less than 75%

3. FWS Priority Species / Trust Species:
   What percentage of projects initiated in the past three years addressed habitat issues for FWS priority or trust resources? (choose one)
   - 25%
   - 50%
   - 75%
   - Less than 25%

4. Project Completion and Success:
   What percentage of projects, funded in whole or in part, with FWS NFHAP funds in the past three fiscal years have been completed consistent with the project design? (choose one)
   - 50%
   - 75%
   - 90%
   - Less than 50%

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:
   What percentage of projects initiated in the past three fiscal years included a monitoring and evaluation plan? (choose one)
   - 50%
   - 75%
   - 90%
   - Less than 50%

6. Leveraging of Project Funds:
   Over a three year period, the FHP leveraged FWS funding by a ratio of (choose one):
   - At least 1:1
   - At least 2:1
   - At least 3:1
   - No FWS funds were leveraged

Section 3. Work Plan – (1-year planning horizon)

This section consists of a prioritized list of new or ongoing habitat projects over the next year. FHP coordination and operational expenses should be written up as individual projects and included in this list. The following information must be provided for each prioritized project:

- Project title and number as recorded in the FWS Fisheries Operational Needs System (FONS)
- FWS funds requested, including direct and indirect cost as defined in the FWS policy manual (http://www.fws.gov/policy/717fw1.pdf)
- Anticipated partner contributions to the project (cash and in-kind) expressed in dollar value
- Which national conservation strategy, if any, of the National Fish Habitat Board is addressed by the project? The Board's priorities are accessible online at http://fishhabitat.org/content/nfhp-national-conservation-strategies
- Which objective, if any, of the Service's climate change strategy is addressed by the project? The strategy is accessible online at: http://www.fws.gov/home/climatechange/strategy.html.

FWS Regional NFHP Coordinators will work with the FHPs to identify FONS numbers, indirect costs, FWS priority species, and other information as needed. (See list of Regional NFHP Coordinators on the following page.)

In your narrative, specifically identify the following information and supporting evidence for each new or ongoing project:

1. Measurable goals and objectives that will address: 1) FHP priority species or priority area(s); or 2) habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources

2. Proposed conservation actions that will produce desired conservation outcomes and achieve project goals and objectives

Attachment 3

Summary Table of Criteria at each Performance Level

Criteria	Performance Levels		
	Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
Evaluating past performance			
Basic FHP Requirements	Coordinate and compile scientific assessment information on fish habitats within FHP boundaries	Identify and include plan to fill data gaps necessary to refine and complete fish habitat assessment; incorporate existing habitat assessments into FHP Strategic Plan	Fill data gaps, including climate change considerations, for incorporation into the NFHP Science and Data Committee's National Assessment
FHP Priority Areas / Species	75% of projects focus on FHP priority species or priority areas	85% of projects focus on FHP priority species or priority areas	95% of projects focus on FHP priority species or priority areas
FWS Priority Species / Trust Resources	25% of projects address habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources	50% of projects address habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources	75% of projects address habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources
Project Completion and Success	50% of projects funded by FWS during the prior three years have been completed consistent with the project design	75% of projects funded by FWS during the prior three years have been completed consistent with the project design	90% of projects funded by FWS during the prior three years have been completed consistent with the project design
Monitoring and Evaluation	50% of projects include a monitoring and evaluation plan	75% of projects include a monitoring and evaluation plan	90% of projects include a monitoring and evaluation plan
Leveraging of FWS NFHAP Project Funds	Leverage funding over a 3 year period of at least 1:1	Leverage funding over a 3 year period of at least 2:1	Leverage funding over a 3 year period of at least 3:1
Evaluating proposed projects			
Strategic Implementation	75% of proposed projects include measureable goals and objectives to address: 1) FHP priority species or priority areas; or 2) habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources	85% of proposed projects include measureable goals and objectives to address: 1) FHP priority species or priority areas; or 2) habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources	95% of proposed projects include measureable goals and objectives to address: 1) FHP priority species or priority areas; 2) or habitat issues for FWS priority species or trust resources
Conservation Actions and Project Outcomes	50% of proposed projects specify conservation actions that will produce desired conservation outcomes and achieve project goals and objectives	75% of proposed projects specify conservation actions that will produce desired conservation outcomes and achieve project goals and objectives	100% of proposed projects specify conservation actions that will produce desired conservation outcomes and achieve project goals and objectives