

## Request for Proposals

### **Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Private Lands Assistance Program, Notice of the availability of Landowner Incentive Program Grants.**

The Delaware Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) Grant operates for the purpose of the enhancement, protection or restoration of habitats that benefit a federally and state listed, proposed or candidate species, or other at-risk species on private lands. These grants are funded through the National Landowner Incentive Program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance.

The Delaware Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) was completed in 2006, and identified habitat loss and fragmentation from current and projected rates of development as one of the greatest threats to Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). In response, the Division of Fish and Wildlife is proposing to work with private landowners to restore and/or enhance forest habitat, wetland habitat and early successional habitat. More specifically, funding will be used to protect, restore and/or enhance 5 of the 50 Key Wildlife Habitats identified in the Wildlife Action Plan (WAP). These habitats are: 1) Coastal Plain Upland Forests, 2) Coastal Plain Forested Floodplains and Riparian Swamps, 3) Coastal Plain Ponds, 4) Piedmont Stream Valley Wetlands, and 5) Early Successional Habitats (ESH). It is expected that 787 acres of habitat will be protected, restored and/or enhanced to benefit a minimum of 40 of the 179 (SGCN) associated with these habitat types.

The Delaware Private Lands Assistance Program is seeking proposals for Landowner Incentive Program projects. The proposals should describe actions that will be taken on the private landowner's property that will address the management, protection and restoration of habitats to benefit at least one Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) to obtain a list of Delaware's SGCN visit <http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/nhp/information/SpeciesNeed.shtml> or contact Shelley Tovell at (302)735-3600.

Landowners are required to fill out an application describing in detail potential restoration efforts. Division Biologists will rank applications based on ranking criteria identified in Attachment 1. Once proposals are ranked Division Biologists working with partner agencies will approve eligible projects. Only highest ranking individual projects will be funded.

**Key Wildlife Habitats and Eligible Conservation Practices:**

Landowners selected to participate will receive financial assistance in the form of cost-share for habitat management practices and/or rental payments for lost agricultural income. Financial assistance is provided to landowners based on the practice used.

**Early Successional Habitat Establishment (ESH) and Management**

Eligible lands include land adjacent (less than ½ mile away) to existing ESH identified in the WAP (Figure 1).

Qualifying landowners will receive 74% cost-share or a flat rate of \$296/acre to establish grass habitats. The flat rate will include all installation and materials costs, including renting a warm season grass drill, seed, lime, herbicide site preparation and a nurse crop. Qualifying landowners interested in scrub/shrub establishment will receive a flat rate of \$3.70/large seedling or a flat rate of \$0.74/small seedling. If enhancement activities occur on agricultural lands the landowner will receive a rental payment of \$146.52/acre/year for the loss of agricultural income. The rental payment will be made annually, in the fall of each year. In return the landowner will be required to manage their early successional habitat for a period of 5 years. Management may include spot-spraying and/or physical removal of invasive species, and burning/disking every 3-5 years to maintain habitats in an early successional stage.

**Reforestation/enhancement of Coastal Plain Forest Habitat and/or Coastal Plain Forested Floodplains and Riparian Swamps:**

Eligible lands include: those lands that connect two forest blocks, lands adjacent to an existing forest block, and/or lands that are adjacent to a stream/ditch. Lands eligible for enhancement practices will include existing Coastal Plain Forested Habitats and/or Coastal Plain Forested Floodplains and Riparian Swamps identified in the WAP (Figure 1).

Qualifying landowners for tree/shrub establishment will receive 74% cost-share, or a flat rate of \$296.00/acre to establish native hardwoods, softwoods and shrubs. The flat rate includes all installation and material costs, including site preparation, seedlings, and planting. If reforestation occurs on agricultural lands, the landowner will receive a rental payment of \$146.52/acre/year for the loss of agricultural income. The rental payment will be made annually, in the fall of each year. In return, the landowner will be required to manage their forest habitat for a period of 5 years. Management activities may include controlling invasive species and mowing. Mowing between rows may be necessary in the first two years, following planting, to promote tree/shrub establishment; mowing will be done after nesting season.

Qualifying landowners would be eligible to receive 74% cost-share or a flat rate of \$146.52/acre for selective thinning. This is particularly important in Delmarva fox squirrel zones where the desired outcome is older stands of trees with a clear understory and/or in areas where forest canopy is reducing the extent to which sunlight penetrates the ground floor limiting the growth of rare plant species. Thinned material will be left on the ground and/or stacked (brush pile) creating habitat for wildlife and in no way can this timber be sold for profit.

Qualifying landowners interested in invasive species control are eligible to receive 74% cost share or a flat rate ranging from \$55.50-\$1,110.00/acre depending on application method used.

**Restoration/Enhancement of Coastal Plain Seasonal Ponds and Piedmont Stream Valley Wetlands:**

Eligible lands include Coastal Plain Seasonal Ponds and Piedmont Stream Valley Wetlands identified in the WAP or restorable lands adjacent (less than ½ mile away) to these wetland types (Figure 1). Preference will be given to sites that are permanently protected and/or adjacent to protected lands.

Qualifying landowners for wetland restoration will receive 74% cost-share, or a flat rate of \$2,220.00/acre to restore shallow water wetland habitat greater than ¾ of an acre in size. If the area to be restored is smaller than ¾ of an acre in size, the landowner will receive 74% cost-share, or a flat rate of \$1,665.00. The cost-share or flat rate includes costs for constructing and planting the wetland pool, berm and a 35-foot buffer. If restoration occurs on agricultural lands the landowner will receive a rental payment of \$146.52/acre/year for the loss of agricultural income. The rental payment will be made annually, in the fall of each year. In return, the landowner will be required to manage their wetland habitat for a period of 5 years. This may include invasive species control and woody vegetation control.

Qualifying landowners for enhancement activities will receive 74% cost-share or a flat rate of \$555.00/wetland for re-vegetating the wetland, and/or upland buffer, where deemed necessary by Private Lands Biologists. In addition, qualifying landowners for enhancement activities, such as

invasive species control, are eligible to receive 74% cost share or a flat rate of \$55.50-\$1,110.00/acre depending on the application method used.

Landowners will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Division. This agreement will identify the length of the contract (5 years), management or restoration actions that will be implemented, and penalties imposed for breach of contract. The landowner will have one year from the date of the signed contract to complete the proposed work either by hiring a contractor or completing the work themselves. Payments will be made only after Division Biologists have ensured proposed practice have been completed to Division specifications. Division Biologists will maintain long-term evaluations of all projects to ensure success and landowner compliance. For practices/agreements involving agricultural lands, landowners will be required to show proof of compliance annually to Division Biologists through photo documentation in order to receive their annual rental payment. In addition, Division Biologists will randomly select a proportion of these restored sites to inspect annually to ensure compliance. Any breach of contract will require a refund of money paid according to the legal terms of each agreement. Records of all contracts will be will be filed in the State's Federal Aid/Budget office with copies maintained by the private lands coordinator for long-term evaluation and compliance. Finally, landowners must agree to allow Division staff to complete biological monitoring prior to restoration and after restoration has been completed.

**A. Entities That May Apply for Funding Under the Program**

- a. Individuals, non-profit organizations and corporations with a documented long-term lease on private property (minimum of 5 years remaining on lease agreement).

**B. Procedure to Apply for Grant Funds:**

- a. Applicants shall submit an application (found at <http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/dplap/services/LIP%20APPLICATION.pdf>)
- b. Applicants may request that a hard copy of the application and the Request for Proposal (RFP) guidelines be mailed to them by calling (302) 735-3600 between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.
- c. The Division must be in receipt of (1) hard copy and/or electric copy of the proposal by December 8, 2008, 4:00p.m., E.S.T. to be considered for 2009 funding. The delivery address is:

Private Lands Assistance Program  
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Landowner Incentive Program  
6180 Hay Point Landing Road  
Smyrna, DE 19977

Electronic version should be sent to [Shelley.Tovell@state.de.us](mailto:Shelley.Tovell@state.de.us)

**C. Grant Processing Schedule**

December 8, 2008 – Proposals Due to the Division  
December 19, 2008 – Final Funding Decisions

**D. Date by Which Applicants Shall be Notified of Approval or Disapproval:**

Applicants shall receive notice of approval or disapproval of a LIP Grant By January 7, 2009.

FIGURE 1: Key Wildlife Habitats



Attachment 1.

**CRITERIA LIP TIER 2**

	<b>POINTS</b>
<b>Expected to benefit an endangered, threatened or candidate species under the federal Endangered Species Act.</b>	
Yes	10
No	0
<b>Expected to benefit to state listed species.</b>	
Yes	10
No	0
<b>The number of species of greatest conservation need positively impacted.</b>	
None	0
1-2 species will be positively impacted	10
3-5 species will be positively impacted (based on utilization of habitat type)	20
>5 species will be positively impacted (based on documented use at project site)	30
<b>Proposed Habitat Restoration</b>	
<b>Early Successional Habitat</b>	
0-5 acres	1
6-10 acres	5
>10 acres	10
<b>Reforestation/Enhancement</b>	
0-5 acres	1
6-10 acres	5
>10 acres	10
<b>Wetland Restoration/Enhancement</b>	
0-5 acres	1
6-10 acres	5
>10 acres	10
<b>Forest Habitat Protected</b>	
>100 acres	10
>200 acres	20
<b>Expected Benefit to Key Wildlife Habitat</b>	
Yes	10
No	0
<b>Proposed Project to Benefit a Habitat of Conservation Concern</b>	
yes	10
no	0

**CRITERIA LIP TIER 2 CONTINUED**

	<b>POINTS</b>
<b>Proposed project adjacent to or within 1 mile of protected lands (state, federal lands, non-governmental, farmland preservation, forest legacy areas)</b>	
yes	5
no	0
<b>Overall importance of project (likelihood of success, short- vs long-term benefits, cost/benefit)</b>	
Sliding Scale 0 = not important, 15 = very important	
<b>Landowner Commitment</b>	
5 years	1
10 years	2
15 years	3
<b>Amount of non-federal matching funds (&gt;25%)</b>	
25%	1
26-40%	2
41-55%	3
>55%	5
<b>Project compliments other conservation efforts in the region?</b>	
0 = no contribution to other conservation efforts	
10 = contributes to other conservation efforts	
<b>Suitability for funding through other programs?</b>	
other funding available	0
other funding likely	3
other funding unlikely	6
no other funding available	10
<b>Does the project proposal include preferred management practices?</b>	
Yes	5
No	0
<b>Total</b>	
(total maximum points 183)	
<b>Recommended for Funding</b>	
y/n	

