

Fiscal Year 2010 Request for Proposals for White-nose Syndrome Research

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is pleased to announce the availability of new funding for projects related directly to the investigation and management of white-nose syndrome (WNS), a fungal disease that has caused the death of over one million cave-hibernating bats in eastern North America. For information on WNS and details of currently funded projects, please see: http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html

Before submitting a proposal for WNS funds, please carefully review all the information and instructions in this request for proposals (RFP).

BACKGROUND

Evidence of the continued spread of WNS has been documented this winter (2009/2010), and the number of affected hibernacula continues to grow. As of April 19, there are at least 115 bat hibernacula known to either be affected by WNS, or to present evidence of the fungus *Geomyces destructans*, in New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Missouri, and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Surveys in affected areas continue to reveal population declines associated with the disease, and there is no indication that affected populations will stabilize in the immediate future. The Service has targeted up to \$2 million in FY 2010 from Congressionally earmarked and internally awarded WNS funds to investigate critical gaps in our understanding of WNS that hinder our ability to manage the disease. The Service developed the list of priorities presented below in collaboration with Federal and state agency partners and with input from others associated with the WNS investigation.

AWARD INFORMATION

We anticipate that up to \$2 million will be available for high priority research projects through this RFP process. We expect to announce awards in July, 2010.

FY2010 PRIORITIES

Through this request, we intend to fund research that addresses the following 3 avenues of investigation (not in any particular order). The questions below are intended as a guide, but are not considered to be comprehensive:

- 1. The timing and dynamics of *G. destructans* transmission:**
 - When and where are bats transmitting/contacting the fungus?
 - Does fungal growth/occurrence vary within hibernacula and why?
- 2. The persistence of *G. destructans* on bats or in the environment:**
 - Do viable conidia/spores remain on/in bats into the summer?
 - How long can the fungus remain viable under various environmental conditions?
- 3. Susceptibility of bat species, including migrating and European bats:**
 - Are there differences by species in susceptibility to infection by *G. destructans*, and what is the nature (innate, environmental, etc.) of any such differences?
 - Are there differences by species in the response (physiological/behavioral) to infection by *G. destructans* that impact their susceptibility to WNS (mortality)?

We anticipate making project **selections by late July**, and the earliest start date for funded projects is likely **September 1, 2010**.

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Projects must be completed by **September 30, 2012**.

Prior to submitting a proposal, the applicant must coordinate the project with appropriate state natural resource agencies. The application must identify any state support required to conduct field work, collect data, or interpret results. Affirmation of state support must be provided on the cover page (see Format below).

Each funded applicant must procure all necessary Federal, state, and local permits and landowner permissions for the project,

Each funded applicant must obtain a Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number for the project and register at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

A proposal must **not exceed 13 pages** in length, including cover page, executive summary, figures and tables, an itemized budget, and supplemental information on Principle Investigator qualifications, matching or existing funds, etc. (see guidance on format below).

A proposal must address the following elements:

- 1) How the project directly addresses a priority, or priorities, identified above.
- 2) The objectives and anticipated products of the project.
- 3) The application of anticipated results and direct implications for disease management.
- 4) The relation, if any, of the project to existing research efforts.
- 5) The timeline of all project activities.
- 6) The budget, broken down by objective and year, including outside funding.
- 7) The amount and source of any matching funds (matching funds are not required) and any partner contributions.
- 8) Implications to the WNS investigation if this project is not funded in FY 2010.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must include the following sections:

- 1) **Cover Page:** One page containing the project title, principle investigator(s) and respective affiliations/contact information, the total amount of the request and the total amount of the project (if different), the duration of the project (1 or 2 yr), and a statement affirming that all PIs and key collaborators are aware of the project and agree to the terms of the proposal.
- 2) **Executive Summary:** A one page summary of the proposed project that outlines objectives, strengths, implications for management, and the total budget (broken down by year, if applicable). The summary should be suitable for public release on the USFWS website.
- 3) **Project Description:** A clear statement of the work being proposed that addresses elements 1-8 detailed above.

- 4) **PI Qualifications:** A statement detailing the qualifications of Principle Investigators, partner organizations, and key collaborators.

Proposals must be accompanied by all required forms (SF 424, SF 424A, SF 424B - see <http://www.grants.gov>). Proposals written with a font smaller than 12 pt. will not be accepted.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

A panel of Service and other Federal and State agency representatives will review the proposals and make a recommendation to the Service for a decision on proposals to be funded. Outside experts will be solicited to review specific proposals as needed. Submitters are welcomed to provide a list of reviewers who are especially qualified to review a proposal, or to identify individuals who they would prefer not to have review their project. This is optional.

Project rank will be based upon how closely the project meets the FY 2010 priorities addressed in this RFP, the timeliness of the proposed work, the likelihood of successfully achieving the anticipated results, the significance of the contribution of the project to the WNS investigation, and cost in relation to benefits. While not a requirement, the use of matching funds and partnerships to augment project resources is encouraged, and will be considered in the ranking process. Minimization of overhead and other indirect costs is also encouraged, and will be considered in the ranking process. All applicants will be notified of the final disposition of their proposals. Funded applicants will be required to provide quarterly reports that may be made available to the public.

DEADLINE AND AWARD DETAILS

Closing date: 4 June, 2010. Proposals must be submitted by **17:00, EDT, on 4 June** to be considered in the initial round of review. Proposals submitted after 4 June may be considered if funding is available after the initial round.

Estimated number of awards: 5

Estimated total program funding: \$2,000,000

Award ceiling: \$750,000

Award floor: \$50,000