



The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is pleased to announce a new round of grantmaking through its Climate Adaptation Fund - a program to support projects that implement effective interventions for wildlife adaptation to climate change. The Climate Adaptation Fund is made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Interested applicants should carefully review the information outlined in this Request for Proposals (RFP) and the accompanying [Applicant Guidance Document](#) for instructions.

The Climate Adaptation Fund 2019 Grants Program A Request for Proposals

I. Program Overview

With funding managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the [WCS Climate Adaptation Fund](#) will provide up to \$2.5 million in competitive grants in 2019. Grants will be one to two years in length. Awards will be made to non-profit conservation organizations for applied, on-the-ground projects focused on implementing priority conservation actions in order to adapt to climate change at a landscape scale.

New this year: In addition to seeking innovative projects that support the ability of wildlife and ecosystems to adapt to a changing climate, the Climate Adaptation Fund is specifically inviting applications for projects that provide additional co-benefits, in particular those that reduce greenhouse gas emissions through methods like carbon sequestration (i.e., joint mitigation and adaptation, or JMA, projects). We are also encouraging projects that include a compelling plan to amplify adaptation outcomes through strategic communications, and that propose novel adaptation approaches or take relatively more common adaptation approaches to new geographies or a larger geographic scale. See details on these topics below in Section II (Funding Priorities).

Eligibility: This program provides grants to U.S.-based non-profit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status. Grants can be awarded for projects only within the 50 U.S. states and U.S. territories. The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to make grants to for-profit corporations, individuals, universities, public agencies, municipalities or other types of government entities. Public agencies, tribal governments and universities may partner on proposals submitted by an eligible

non-profit conservation organization or work as paid contractors on funded projects. We encourage and expect that many project proposals will emerge from collaborations between the applicant organization and any number of partners from academia, public agencies, and other non-profit organizations.

To apply: Submit a completed WCS Pre-proposal Application using our [online application form](#) no later than **5:00 PM Eastern Time on Friday, April 5, 2019**. Create a new account for your organization if you have not applied to the Climate Adaptation Fund online before.

II. Funding Priorities

The Climate Adaptation Fund seeks projects focused on achieving wildlife and ecosystem conservation outcomes in the face of a changing climate by supporting actions that anticipate and respond to potential climate change impacts and maximize long-term conservation success. To achieve these ends, the program prioritizes projects that manage for dynamic ecological processes, landscape functionality, and species assemblages, rather than those aimed at maintaining individual species or historical conditions that may not be possible in an altered climate. Applicants must specify the sources of science and analyses that provide the basis for their adaptation project, and articulate how that climate adaptation science informs the proposed conservation goals and actions. The program also prioritizes projects that use strategic communications activities to amplify their conservation and adaptation impact.

The Climate Adaptation Fund is focused on a narrow range of conservation projects that are conducting applied, on-the-ground management for climate change adaptation, and that are able to achieve tangible outcomes over a two-year time frame. We acknowledge that there are other types of important adaptation projects underway for wildlife and ecosystems, including research and planning efforts, but we emphasize that this grant program aims to fill a specific niche, as described below and in the [Applicant Guidance Document](#). We do allow for a modest portion of grant funds to be used to support monitoring activities to track the effectiveness of conservation interventions, as long as these activities are part of a grant for an implementation project and not a stand-alone endeavor. While not required, we encourage applicants to consider how they will document their methods, collect data that evaluates the efficacy of their projects, and share their project details and results in peer-reviewed journals, grey literature reports, or other channels.

The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund will support projects that demonstrate land and water management techniques to assist wildlife and ecosystem adaptations to climate change, for example:

- Projects that demonstrate applied management responses for wildlife and ecosystem adaptation, including efforts to enhance the resilience of climate-impacted habitats or facilitate their transition to a different yet functional ecological state.
- Projects that enhance or sustain the adaptive capacity of ecosystems, landscape functionality, and critical biological processes in the face of climate change.

- Projects that restore and sustain core habitat or create connectivity for fish and wildlife in order to achieve explicit climate adaptation goals.
- Pilot projects that exhibit successful on-the-ground actions for climate adaptation that can be replicated across a landscape.
- Projects that implement innovative or novel conservation activities in response to existing or expected climate-driven changes.
- Projects that mitigate pressures on wildlife and ecosystems caused by current or potential human responses to the impacts of climate changes.
- Projects that help wildlife and ecosystems respond and adapt to climate changes while also providing co-benefits, including climate mitigation benefits.

The Climate Adaptation Fund supports projects taking place in terrestrial, freshwater, or estuarine systems; the Fund only supports implementation work in marine environments if there is a direct benefit to terrestrial species, terrestrial ecosystems, or marine species that also rely heavily on terrestrial habitat (e.g., species that use terrestrial haul-out sites or nesting locations). We seek to support a mix of projects taking place in urban, rural, and wildland settings (see Section 8 in the [Applicant Guidance Document](#) for more details about our interest in supporting adaptation projects in urban ecosystems).

We strongly recommend that all applicants review the [Applicant Guidance Document](#) for detailed information on programmatic priorities and guidelines for writing a competitive proposal. **Below are a few special notes for 2019:**

Supporting co-benefits and specifically encouraging Joint Mitigation and Adaptation (JMA) projects:

While all of the projects supported by the Fund need to be designed to achieve adaptation outcomes for wildlife and ecosystems, we are interested in projects that provide additional benefits. These “co-benefits” could include the mitigation of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide. WCS views these Joint Mitigation and Adaptation (JMA) projects as an important pathway to help wildlife and ecosystems adapt to climate change while simultaneously providing emissions reductions through methods like carbon sequestration. Other co-benefits include outcomes that directly affect people, for example by positively impacting human health and welfare, safety, or livelihoods. Proposals are not required to provide co-benefits, but some of the available funding this year will be directed towards projects that conduct JMA approaches.

See section 9 of the accompanying [Applicant Guidance Document](#) for more details on the Fund’s interest in JMA approaches and resources for JMA projects.

Prioritizing communications that amplify adaptation outcomes: WCS seeks projects that include strategic communication plans to broaden the adoption of their on-the-ground adaptation actions. We define “amplify” as raising more funds to conduct similar work, generating attention and momentum around project goals, expanding the on-the-ground conservation impact by encouraging adoption by other practitioners, winning the support of key agencies, authorities, or constituencies, or catalyzing

supportive regulatory or policy change. To support these efforts, we allow each applicant to budget up to \$25,000 of the organization's grant request for strategic communications. In addition, we will allow all or part of that \$25,000 to be passed through to a partner organization that specializes in outreach and communications activities. (Note that the Climate Adaptation Fund does not support any type of lobbying activities.)

See the accompanying [Applicant Guidance Document](#) and [Strategic Communications Guide](#) for more detail on the Fund's interest in amplifying project impacts through strategic communication actions.

Encouraging portfolio diversity and geographic scale: WCS seeks to support a diverse portfolio of adaptation projects, characterized by novel actions and/or taking place in a wide range of geographies. For approaches we have funded extensively in the past (e.g., beaver reintroductions/beaver mimicry, living shoreline/oyster-reef restoration, and coldwater fisheries conservation), we encourage proposals only if they include efforts to bring those approaches to new geographies and/or increase the geographic scale of implementation.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Climate Adaptation Fund website [<https://www.wcsclimateadaptationfund.org>] to learn more about projects we have supported in past years, and contact Climate Adaptation Fund staff (see Page 9 for contact information) with questions about the ways that a proposed project might contribute diversity to the portfolio, add novel elements to projects that are well-represented in the portfolio, or address a larger geographic scale.

Restrictions on Use of Funds: The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to support the following types of activities: land acquisition and conservation easements (both capital and non-capital costs), building construction, political lobbying, organizational capacity building (e.g., fundraising costs, staff training, etc.), captive breeding, zoo exhibits, direct cash payments to private individuals, lethal eradication of wildlife, carbon offset project design, or tool development. Proposals that are primarily focused on conducting scientific research, data collection, or planning will not be considered. Proposed projects are expected to have completed all of the planning necessary for implementation. A minor amount of additional planning needed to identify the exact sites within the project location to place a specific intervention, or to finalize technical components of the project design may be considered; however, implementation work must begin before the third quarter of the second year to be considered. Contact WCS staff with questions on this issue. See Section IV below for additional details on matching funds requirements and other program rules.

Note that we no longer restrict the ability of applicants to use funds to support assisted migration projects. However, we expect all applicants to articulate a clear and compelling rationale for why they have chosen to implement their proposed adaptation actions with any type of project, and discuss how they plan on limiting any potential risks from particularly novel, innovative, or less-well-tested adaptation approaches, including assisted migration.

III. Application

How do I apply? Register your organization and complete the [Pre-proposal Application Form](#). The form must be submitted using our online application form no later than **5:00 PM ET on Friday, April 5, 2019**.

IV. Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible to apply? This program provides grants to U.S.-based non-profit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status. Non-profit conservation organizations without a 501(c)(3) status may apply through another 501(c)(3) conservation organization as a fiscal sponsor. The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to make grants to internationally-based organizations, for-profit corporations, individuals, students, universities, public agencies, municipalities, other types of governments, quasi-government agencies, or through fiscal sponsors to governmental organizations.

What is the duration of funding for projects? 12-24 months, beginning in December 2019. Note, WCS does not look favorably on requests for no-cost extensions and only approves them under extreme circumstances with thorough documentation of the enhanced adaptation outcomes an extension would enable. Approvals are rare and not guaranteed. WCS will not consider no-cost extensions more than two months beyond the original grant period.

What is the range of funding that can be requested? \$50,000 to \$250,000 per project.

What are the evaluation criteria? Pre-proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: a) the project fits within the scope of the funding priorities identified in Section II above; b) the project meets the criteria listed in the Applicant Guidance Document; c) conservation outcomes are well-defined, oriented towards long-term adaptation goals, and attainable in a 12-24 month time period; d) well-defined communications efforts aimed at catalyzing others to replicate similar projects across a landscape; e) the qualifications of the organization and individuals involved in the project; and f) availability and amount of matching funds. Proposals that are dependent on receipt of permits to complete deliverables will score more favorably if the implementation timeline provides evidence that the permits will be received early in the process, and that implementation work will begin before the third quarter of the second year.

What are the parameters for the Climate Adaptation Fund's consideration of adaptation projects in urban areas? Please refer to Section 8 in the [Applicant Guidance Document](#) that accompanies this RFP for more detailed information on our programmatic initiative for wildlife adaptation in and around urban areas.

Are matching funds required? Yes, the WCS Climate Adaptation Fund requires a minimum 1:1 match. Matching funds may be "in-kind"; i.e., a contribution of goods, staff time, or services rather than cash,

but only to a maximum of 50% of requested funds from WCS. If matching funds have not yet been secured, please indicate a time frame and sources from which you anticipate securing other funding. While matching funds are not required to be in hand at the time of applications, WCS will favor projects that have already secured some or all of the required match at the time the full proposal is submitted. Previously expended funds are not eligible as a match.

Are there any circumstances under which a 1:1 match is not required? Yes. In a few select cases, WCS will waive or reduce the 1:1 match requirement for projects proposing innovative new ideas and methods for addressing adaptation problems. The Climate Adaptation Fund continues to seek novel and innovative projects with on-the-ground outcomes for adaptation. We also recognize that fundraising for some creative or untested methods can be difficult. If you believe you have such a project and would like to request a match waiver, please indicate so in your pre-proposal application. Those applicants should still include any sources of available match, even if less than 1:1, in their pre-proposal budget. We will consider each request on a case-by-case basis and notify applicants whether such a waiver has been approved. Please contact our staff directly if you have questions about matching requirements before submitting your pre-proposal application.

What local, state and federal funds can be used as match? We look favorably upon projects that apply funding from a variety of sources for the implementation of fish and wildlife conservation activities. Examples include, but are not limited to: the State Wildlife Grants program (SWG), other state wildlife, transportation, or environmental protection programs; federal incentive programs through the Farm Bill (e.g., National Resource Conservation Service's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program), Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund, Department of Defense Buffer Program, National Marine Fisheries Service Species of Concern Program, Federal Highway Administration transportation mitigation funding, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' Multistate Conservation Grants Program, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Keystone and Special Initiative Grants programs, and the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program.

Can funds from mitigation or environmental damage awards be used as a match? Yes, we are interested in supporting projects that use direct mitigation funds or payments of natural resource and environmental damage awards toward priority actions for wildlife adaptation, consistent with the program requirements for use of such funds (e.g., mitigation funds from highway projects or settlements reached at EPA Superfund sites). WCS grant funds may not be used for mitigation that is required under the law.

What other types of funds can be used as a match? Funds from private sources, corporate donors, foundations, and memberships may all count as match. Matching funds may be "in-kind"; i.e., a contribution of goods, staff time, or services rather than cash, but only to a maximum of 50% of requested funds from WCS. Funds previously expended on a project or donations of property will not be accepted as match. Funds received directly or indirectly from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation will

not be accepted as a match. Please check with us if you have questions on the use of matching funds.

Can organizations submit multiple pre-proposals for different projects? Yes, but only one per state or territory. Organizations may submit only one proposal per state, but may be a partner on proposals from other applicant organizations.

Can the same project or organization be funded again? Organizations previously funded through this grants program or other Doris Duke Charitable Foundation grants may not apply for a renewal of an existing grant, but are eligible to apply for support for different projects than those previously funded.

Can I re-apply for the same project if my proposal was not funded in a previous year's grant cycle? Yes, but be aware that some of the program's priorities, minimum requirements, and application processes have changed. Please read both this RFP and Applicant Guidance Document carefully for instructions.

Will multi-state or regional level projects be considered? Yes, we encourage applications for projects that address regional, landscape-scale needs for fish and wildlife conservation.

Who will evaluate the proposals and make decisions on the grant awards? The Wildlife Conservation Society is responsible for the evaluation of all proposals and final decisions on grant awards. A national advisory committee comprising representatives from nonprofit conservation organizations, private foundations, academia, and state and federal wildlife agencies assists WCS with the evaluation process.

Is it appropriate to contact members of the advisory committee? It is not appropriate to contact advisory committee members to advocate for your proposal. All questions on the grants program, eligibility, funding priorities, and application process should be directed to the Wildlife Conservation Society. See WCS staff contact information on page 9 below.

What is the source of funding for the WCS Climate Adaptation Fund? A grant to WCS from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Will pre-proposals that fall outside the funding priorities or geographies be considered? No, proposals are restricted to those priorities outlined in this RFP and [Applicant Guidance Document](#). The Fund cannot support conservation projects outside of the 50 states and U.S. territories. If funding is being sought as part of a multinational project, WCS funding can only be used for that part of the project within the 50 states and U.S. territories. Solely international projects or organizations based outside of the United States are not eligible to apply.

How does the grant proposal process work? WCS utilizes a two-step evaluation process: 1) an open call for pre-proposals, and 2) a larger full proposal invited from a select number of pre-proposal applicants.

When will pre-proposal applicants be notified if they have been selected to submit a full proposal? We

anticipate notifying all applicants of their pre-proposal's status within eight weeks of the submission deadline. Those invited to submit full proposals will be notified at that time, as well.

When will award decisions be made? Grant awards will be announced no later than December 2019.

If my project is funded, what requirements will I need to meet? All successful applicants are required to provide WCS with a progress update every six months. Two of these updates are written reports - at the end of year 1 there is a written progress report and at the end of year 2 there is a comprehensive final report. The other two interim 6-month reports are conducted by phone. WCS will also require documentation of a secured 1:1 match for the project by early 2020. Grantees are occasionally asked to participate in surveys, evaluation activities, communications efforts, and learning opportunities.

How can I get more information on this process? [The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund website](#) provides more information on the grant program, including a list of previously funded projects. If you have further questions, please contact WCS Climate Adaptation Fund program staff (see contact information on page 9 below).

What is the Wildlife Conservation Society? The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), founded in 1895, saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. Our story began in the early 1900's when we successfully helped the American bison recover on the Western Plains. Today, we protect many of the world's iconic creatures here and abroad, including gorillas in the Congo, tigers in India, wolverines in the Yellowstone Rockies, and ocean giants in our world's amazing seascapes. Since our founding, we have forged the power of our global conservation work and the management of our five parks in New York City to create the world's most comprehensive conservation organization. We currently manage about 500 conservation projects in more than 60 countries in 16 global priority regions. With a commitment to protect 50 percent of the world's biodiversity, we manage 200 million acres of protected lands around the world, with more than 200 scientists on staff. The WCS parks in New York City inspire 4 million visitors each year, and help the city to educate millions of schoolchildren in science and conservation issues at our five living institutions in New York City on important issues affecting our planet. Our parks include: the Bronx Zoo, New York Aquarium, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo and Queens Zoo.

IV. Instructions and Application for Submission of Pre-proposals

Please read these instructions carefully, as well as all of the guidelines provided above.

Requirements:

Pre-proposals must be submitted no later than **April 5, 2019 at 5:00 PM Eastern Time**. Grant applicants will be notified by email that their application has been received.

Please use our convenient online application system to submit your proposal.

The application can be accessed by creating a user account and registering your organization here: [Register your organization and complete the Pre-proposal Application Form.](#)

Proposals submitted by regular mail or in any other electronic format than specified above will not be considered. **Please do not send letters of support, conservation plans, annual reports, brochures, or other supplementary information with your pre-proposal.** In order to conserve paper resources, please do not mail a hard copy of your pre-proposal application.

Contacts for the Climate Adaptation Fund:

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