

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 (DELIP) 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 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 (to obtain a list of Delaware's species of greatest conservation need visit <http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/nhp/information/SpeciesNeed.shtml> or contact Shelley Tovell-DiBona at 302-653-2880 ext. 123).

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.

Technical and financial assistance will be provided to those landowners selected to participate in the program based on the practice used. Landowners will receive financial assistance in the form of rental payments for lost agricultural income, and/or cost share for habitat management practices. Eligible practices include early successional habitat management, reforestation, wetland restoration and enhancement, invasive species and woody vegetation control and selective thinning.

Early Successional Habitat

A flat rate of \$300/acre will be provided to landowners interested in establishing early successional habitat, primarily warm season grasses. This flat rate includes all installation and material costs including site prep, herbicide (2 applications), lime, seed and the rental of a warm season grass drill. In addition the landowner will receive a rental payment 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 or 10 years. This may include spot spraying and/or physical removal of invasive species, mowing (outside nesting season only (specific dates will be provided in a habitat management plan)) may be necessary to encourage growth after the first year, and disking may be used/necessary every 3-5 years to maintain early successional stage.

Reforestation

A flat rate of \$337.50/acre will be provided to establish native hardwoods, softwoods and shrub establishment. The flat rate includes all installation and material costs including seedlings and planting. If plantings are established on agricultural lands the landowner will receive a rental payment 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 the reforestation area for a period of 5 or 10 years. This may include invasive species control specifically control of Canada thistle, red maple and/or sweet gum and mowing where necessary after nesting season.

Wetlands

A flat rate of \$2,250.00/acre will be provided to landowners interested in establishing a shallow water wetland greater than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre and 35 foot buffer. The flat rate includes costs for construction and planting in the pool area, berm and 35-foot buffer. In addition the landowner will receive a rental payment 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 or 10 years. This may include invasive species control and disking every three-five years to maintain early successional stage if that is the desired outcome for the wetland.

Wetland Enhancement

Seventy-five percent cost-share (not to exceed \$300/acre) will also be provided for wetland enhancement. This may include re-vegetating the wetland and/or buffer where deemed necessary as determined by Private Lands Biologists.

Selective Thinning

A flat rate of \$150/acre is available for selective thinning as it relates directly to improving wildlife habitat and not timber stand improvement. 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.

Invasive Species and Woody Vegetation Control

Funding is also available for invasive species control as it relates directly to improving wildlife habitat for species of greatest conservation need. A flat rate of \$120/acre will be provided for ground application of an approved aquatic herbicide within a wetland, and \$60/acre if aerial application is required. For invasive species control on upland habitat a flat rate of \$56.25/acre will be provided. A flat rate of \$1,125.00/acre is available to control woody vegetation primarily using the stump/cut method where the tree is cut and herbicide is

applied to the stump. If mechanized equipment is used for invasive species control a flat rate of \$337.50 may be provided. These rates are in lieu of previous listed flat rates. If the landowner does not want to accept the flat rate, s/he can contract directly for the work to be done and DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife will reimburse the landowner up to 75% of the actual cost of the practice after receiving a copy of the invoice from the contractor.

Landowners will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Division. This agreement will identify the length of the contract (5 or 10 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. DELIP and 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 rate. 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 DELIP 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. Private Landowners
- b. Individuals, non-profit organizations and corporations with a documented long-term lease on private property (minimum of 5 years remaining on lease agreement).

B. Qualifications Needed by an Applicant to be Considered for Funding

- a. Ability to implement project as outlined in management agreement.
- b. The property must have a score of 40 points or above in the ranking process.
- c. The willingness to sign a project agreement and management plan with the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife.

C. Procedure to Apply for Grant Funds:

- a. Applicants shall submit an application (found at www.dnrec.state.de/dplap/information/DELIP.shtml).
- b. Applicants may request that a hard copy of the application and The Request for Proposal guidelines be mailed to them by calling (302) 653-2880 between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. RFP and application may be downloaded from the Divisions web site at www.dnrec.state.de/dplap/information/DELIP.shtml.

- c. The Division must be in receipt of (1) hard copy and/or electric copy of the proposal by March 30, 2006 5:00p.m., E.S.T. to be considered for FY 2006. The delivery address is:

Private Lands Assistance Program
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife
Landowner Incentive Program
4876 Hay Point Landing Road
Smyrna, DE 19977

Electronic version should be sent to Shelley.Tovell@state.de.us

D. Grant Processing Schedule

March 30, 2006 – Proposals Due to the Division

April 6, 2006 – Final Funding Decisions

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

Applicants shall receive notice of approval or disapproval of a LIP Grant By April 6, 2006.

Attachment #1

CRITERIA LIP TIER 2

| | POINTS |
|--|---------------|
| Expected to benefit an endangered, threatened or candidate species under the federal Endangered Species Act. | |
| yes | 10 |
| no | 0 |
| Expected to benefit a state listed species. | |
| yes | 10 |
| no | 0 |
| The number of species of greatest conservation need positively impacted. | |
| 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 |
| Proposed Habitat Restoration | |
| Early Successional Habitat | |
| 0-5 acres | 1 |
| 6-10 acres | 5 |
| >10 acres | 10 |
| Reforestation | |
| 0-5 acres | 1 |
| 6-10 acres | 5 |
| >10 acres | 10 |
| Wetland Restoration/Enhancement | |
| 0-5 acres | 1 |
| 6-10 acres | 5 |
| >10 acres | 10 |
| Bog Turtle Habitat | 10 |
| Proposed Project within Priority Focus Area | |
| yes | 5 |
| no | 0 |
| Proposed project adjacent to or within 1 mile of protected lands (state, federal, farmland preservation, forest legacy areas) | |
| yes | 5 |
| no | 0 |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----|
| Proposed project provides a corridor connecting adjacent habitats | | |
| | yes | 5 |
| | no | 0 |
| Are there immediate threats to the site/species? | | |
| Sliding Scale 0 = no threat, 10 = immediate threat (e.g., timber harvest in future) | | |
| Overall importance of project (likelihood of success, short- vs long-term benefits, cost/benefit) | | |
| Sliding Scale 0 = not important, 15 = very important | | |
| Landowner Commitment | | |
| | 5 years | 1 |
| | 10 years | 2 |
| Amount of non-federal matching funds (>25%) | | |
| | 25% | 1 |
| | 26-40% | 2 |
| | 41-55% | 3 |
| | >55% | 5 |
| Project compliments other conservation efforts in the region? | | |
| 0 = no contribution to other conservation efforts 10 = contributes to other conservation efforts | | |
| Suitability for funding through other programs? | | |
| | other funding available | 0 |
| | other funding likely | 3 |
| | other funding unlikely | 6 |
| | no other funding available | 10 |
| Does the project proposal include preferred management practices? | | |
| | Yes | 5 |
| | No | 0 |
| Total | | |
| (total maximum points 162) | | |
| Recommended for Funding | | |
| | | y/n |