

**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service &
Bureau of Land Management
Sagebrush Science Initiative
Request for Proposals**

This request for proposals (RFP) is for research and technical assistance projects that will facilitate the integration of social science and associated data into sagebrush conservation. This RFP is the result of collaborations among the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and United States Geological Survey (USGS). The Sagebrush Science Initiative (SSI; http://www.wafwa.org/initiatives/sagebrush_ecosystem_initiative/) is a collaborative effort coordinated by WAFWA to identify and prioritize science needed for conservation of sagebrush dependent species and fund and/or obtain funding for the highest priority needs. Project results will be included in a Sagebrush Conservation Strategy, and are expected to inform collaborative, inter-organizational efforts to sustainably manage sagebrush systems and obligate species. WAFWA has previously released two RFPs, and subsequently funded nine proposals, for biological science to inform management of sagebrush dependent species. This RFP **is restricted to funding science support for a better understanding and integration of human dimensions, and associated science, into sagebrush conservation management and policy decision making.**

Research proposals should identify how deliverables inform SSI's goal of collaborative management of public and private sagebrush rangelands so that they continue to provide a full range of ecosystem services and other products in the future. The Sagebrush Science Initiative believes the need at this point is to demonstrate how social science can be applied to enhance decision-making by managers associated with sagebrush conservation. The terms decision-making and managers are used in a general sense pertaining to allocation of limited resources towards sagebrush conservation.

Inclusion of social-ecological system framing of the project is encouraged. Research approaches which enhance the understanding of vulnerability and adaptive capacity of the social-ecological system in which sagebrush conservation is nested are desired. Given the large and diverse set of social, economic, and ecological aspects of sagebrush conservation across very large landscapes, proposals that use social science tools and approaches to identify and prioritize social science needs to inform future research will also be considered (see number 4 below).

Specifically, the Sagebrush Science Initiative seeks proposals to accomplish one or more of the following:

1. Apply and explore the integration of social science in the sagebrush conservation decision making context or process. Another way to consider this solicitation is a

holistic participatory framework where a social science needs assessment is conducted.

2. Address a combination of sagebrush conservation topics and settings (geographic locations) that represent opportunities to enhance decision making with the application of social science. The scope and scale of targeted issues and settings should be determined by the research design and may range from national level policy to local management decisions (if local scale approaches employed can be scaled up to larger scales). Proposals that have the potential to influence on-the-ground decisions by connecting to, and informing or enhancing current planning or management decision processes will be viewed favorably.
3. Employ stakeholder outreach and engagement processes to integrate human dimensions into decision making — to build a better understanding of how individuals and communities within/dependent on these social-ecological systems are impacted positively or negatively by sagebrush conservation management prescriptions. Stakeholder engagement processes may also be used to identify and characterize human dimensions of key management issues, or potentially used to design conceptual models of the social-ecological system and decision making setting.
4. Provide relevant information to allow the future pursuit of social science projects, or the application of existing data, that will maximize the efficiency and/or effectiveness of resource management and policy decisions. Final products are expected to provide a framework for comparing and contrasting potential science applications to allow future stakeholders in sagebrush conservation to make informed, judicious choices concerning the application of social science research and data.

An opportunity to discuss concepts for proposals with members of the Review Committee will be afforded to project proponents prior to the submission deadline. This is a good opportunity to refine proposals to make them more competitive and perhaps to find collaborative partners. In many cases the addition of collaborative partners may be needed to achieve the extent of projects the SSI hopes to fund. Project proponents are encouraged, but not required to participate. Format for this pre-proposal discussion will be either a webinar or conference call at a date and time negotiated with investigators. If interested in participating please submit a 1-page concept proposal that summarizes key aspects of the proposal to Tom Remington by November 1st, 2017.

Proposals will be evaluated generally on the extent to which they contribute meaningfully to conservation of sagebrush and sagebrush dependent species and the development and/or successful implementation of a Sagebrush Conservation Strategy. Proposals will be evaluated on scientific merit and quality of proposed research; management significance; coordination and engagement with stakeholders and resource managers; study team qualifications; and budget and work plans. Projects satisfying the following criteria will be prioritized above those that do not:

- Projects with a larger scale of impact
- Projects with cost-share (not required, but will affect scoring)

- Projects conducted in coordination with wildlife or land management agencies, entities or individuals (because science is more likely to be implemented)

This funding is intended to support relatively short-term projects (those that can be completed by 30 September 2019). We are not capping maximum budgets, but keep in mind we have been awarded approximately \$200,000 in science funding for grants and we expect to make 2 or more awards.

To be accepted for consideration, all submitted proposals must address all elements described in the attached Proposal Template. Proposal narratives will be accepted only in WORD or PDF format and budget details will be accepted in WORD, EXCEL or PDF format. Project funding can be applied to salaries and overhead.

Proposals should be submitted to the WAFWA Sagebrush Science Coordinator, Dr. Tom Remington (remingtontom@msn.com), electronically when completed, **but no later than November 30, 2017**. Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by the Sagebrush Science Initiative Review Team, a group of scientists and managers familiar with sagebrush conservation from Federal and State agencies as well as Universities. Final selection of project awards will be made by December 29, 2017.

If you should have any questions, please contact Tom Remington at remingtontom@msn.com or at 970-221-3310.

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PROPOSAL FORMAT

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: We encourage collaborative development of proposals among LCCs, State and Provincial Wildlife Management Agencies, Universities, quasi-governmental organizations such as Western Governors' Association, and Non-Governmental organizations. Letters or other expressions of support from State, Provincial and Federal Management Agencies are also encouraged and recommended.

Electronically submit the proposal to Dr. Tom Remington, WAFWA Sagebrush Science Initiative Project Coordinator, at remingtontom@msn.com as soon as complete but no later than 5 p.m. MDT on November 30, 2017.

Proposals may not exceed 7 pages (6 page maximum for proposal, 1 page for budget breakout, no appendices beyond page limit), must be in 10 point or larger font, with margins of half-inch or larger. Complete proposal must not exceed 5 mb in size so that they can be readily shared electronically among reviewers. If maps or other illustrations exceed this limit please include links to URLs where they can be retrieved. Proposals must contain the following elements:

- 1. TITLE:** Provide a brief descriptive title for the project.
- 2. PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR:** Provide the name, title, mailing address, telephone, fax, and e-mail of the principal investigator or in the case of multiple principal investigators, the name of the contact person.
- 3. PARTNERSHIPS AND ROLES:** Provide the names, titles, mailing addresses, telephones faxes, email addresses, and the specific roles of each partner that will be involved in this project through added expertise, funding, in-kind contributions, etc. Itemize and identify contributions in the budget section of the proposal by partner. Indicate if partners are supportive but otherwise not directly involved in conduct of the project.
- 4. TYPE OF SUPPORT REQUESTED:** Identify whether this proposal is a request for research support, management support and/or extant data integration/interrogation. There may be aspects of all three in a proposal, please indicate if this is the case.

Research is a systematic investigation designed to test a hypothesis, address specific questions, represent a descriptive inventory, status survey, or model development; permit accurate conclusions to be drawn; and thereby to develop or contribute to the base of knowledge. Research is usually described in a formal protocol that sets forth an objective and a set of procedures designed to reach that objective.

Management Support is the process of scientists working in close cooperation with land and resource managers and other scientists to interpret, implement, and evaluate research results, technical information, findings, techniques, recommendations and/or provide special equipment and assist with its operation.

Extant Data Integration/Interrogation is the acquisition of extant data sets from one or more sources and the analysis and/or reformatting or rescaling of data for delivery and use by the LC MAP platform, along with the appropriate and standard-compliant metadata to adequately describe the delivered data sets.

5. **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:** Clearly describe the social science issue being addressed, the exact management problem and how the proposed project will address this need? If relevant, describe the geographic area(s) or scope of inference.
6. **OBJECTIVES:** Clearly describe the goals and objectives and how they will address the management problem. Objective statements are specifications of the primary products or results to be derived from research. They should be directly and obviously linked to management needs described in the Problem Statement. Objectives drive the development of methods, particularly sampling plans, identification of data to be collected, determination of sample sizes, and methods of data analysis.
7. **METHODS AND STUDY AREA:** Clearly describe methodologies and how they will achieve the stated objectives. Methods must detail the means by which each of the objectives will be achieved. Provide sufficient detail so that the likelihood of achieving each of the objectives can be fully evaluated. Include a description of the proposed study area(s).
8. **PROJECT DURATION:** Provide the start date and completion date (the completion date is when deliverables are provided to WAFWA).
9. **PRIORITY:** State how project and deliverables satisfy one or more of the research, management, and/or social science data needs described above, and how the project deliverables will support the development or implementation of a Sagebrush Conservation Strategy as described in the Request for Proposals.
10. **PRODUCTS AND SCHEDULE:** Products resulting from the proposed research or other project should be clearly defined, and a delivery date specified. Vague terms such as 'final report' as a product are not adequate since such terms leave a great deal of latitude in both format and content, sometimes resulting in a less than desired report. Electronic products streamline product dissemination as well as enable incorporation of products into web portals. A communication plan for dissemination of results and project outcomes meaningful and functional for managers and stakeholders should be described.
11. **BUDGET:** Provide, in a separate .xls file, realistic costs and itemize in the following budget categories: (1) Operating Expenses; (2) Supplies & Equipment; (3) Salaries and fringe benefits, (4) Travel, and (5) Overhead.

- Salaries for technical support, temporary and/or contract employees are eligible for funding.
- If a project involves researchers with different overhead rates, please apply the appropriate rates to each portion.
- Itemize partner contributions in the budget breakout.
- Include details on matching funds and in-kind contributions as indicators of partner commitments and indication of the leverage the project brings.