

Southeast Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Fund 2019 Request for Proposals (RFP) - Guidelines

RFP opens April 1, 2019 and closes at 5:00 pm on May 31, 2019.

Please review these guidelines and the supporting attachments. For additional information about the Southeast Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Fund, please visit: <http://seidahomitigationfund.com/>.

I. BACKGROUND

As part of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) approval for the Rasmussen Valley phosphate mine, the fertilizer company Itafos Conda LLC, provided nearly \$1.2 million to form the Southeast Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Fund (the "Fund"). The Fund was established to offset predicted residual impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat resulting from the Rasmussen Valley mining operation.

The Fund is managed by an independent, non-profit organization, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust (SSLT), which convenes a group of natural resource, land management, and Tribal trustees, known as the Habitat Improvement Team (HIT), which includes the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (SBT), US Forest Service (USFS), US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), BLM, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), and the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). The HIT will select, fund, implement, and assess the effectiveness of approved projects.

II. PURPOSE OF THE FUND

The purpose of the Fund is to mitigate impacts to wildlife caused by the Rasmussen Valley phosphate mine. Mitigation funds may be used to protect, conserve, and/or enhance wildlife habitat in the project area (**Attachment 1**), with emphasis on projects in the vicinity of the Rasmussen Valley Mine (HIT bylaws).

The Fund is designed to provide an incentive-based and voluntary partnership opportunity which supports programmatic objectives of HIT agencies through strategic selection of habitat mitigation projects.

III. PROJECT SELECTION

Proposals are reviewed and scored by the Habitat Improvement Team (HIT) through a standardized process (**Attachment 2**) to evaluate:

- Location of the project in proximity to the Rasmussen Valley mine;
- Funding leverage;
- Habitat enhancement benefits;
- Habitat protection qualities;
- Likelihood of project success;
- Landscape connectivity;
- Lifespan of benefits to wildlife;
- Project monitoring;
- Project feasibility; and,
- Project compatibility with the goals and objectives of each evaluating agency.

IV. PROJECT FUNDING

Funding for the 2019 cycle is up to \$1,188,000. The Mitigation Fund may be used to purchase conservation easements and for habitat restoration and enhancement including design, materials, construction and management for projects that benefit wildlife and wildlife habitat. If the Proposal involves a conservation easement, the holder of the conservation easement must be qualified to hold conservations easements under federal and state law.

V. TO APPLY

A government entity, tribal nation, non-government organization, corporation/partnership, private landowner or their designee may submit a Proposal.

To apply:

1. The project must be located within the Project Area (**Attachment 1**).
2. Applicants must complete the Proposal Form and submit proposals by 5:00 pm on May 31, 2019 to be considered in the current funding cycle.
3. Applicants must submit Proposals in electronic format only. The preferred method to submit applications is email and PDF format is preferred.
4. Please include the title of your Proposal followed by 'Mitigation Fund Application' in the subject line and email Proposals to: [matt@sagebrushlandtrust\(dot\)org](mailto:matt@sagebrushlandtrust(dot)org). If you have any questions about the application process or you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours, please contact Matt Lucia at (208) 241-4662.

Hand delivered or mailed Proposals will also be accepted and should be in the form of a CD, USB jump-drive, or other standard media. Please do not send a paper copy or a fax of the Proposal. The CD, USB jump-drive, or other standard media should be clearly labeled with the title of your Proposal followed by 'Mitigation Fund Application'.

Proposals sent via US Mail, FedEx, or other reputable delivery service:

Attn: Matt Lucia
Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
P.O. Box 1404
Pocatello, ID 83204.

Hand-deliver Proposals to:

Matt Lucia
Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
109 N. Arthur Ave., Suite 300
Pocatello, ID 83204

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Proposals will be accepted between April 1st and May 31st. Proposals must be submitted in electronic format only.

The HIT recognizes that maintaining wildlife-compatible agriculture on the landscape is an important benefit that can be realized through appropriately crafted project designs, conservation easements, agreements, management plans, and monitoring protocols. If the project is located on private property, the landowner(s) must sign the Proposal. By signing and submitting the Proposal, landowner(s) acknowledge the Proposal is made willingly by the lawful owner(s) in order to be considered for funding awards.

It is important for the HIT and other funding partners to provide accurate information to the public regarding the Mitigation Fund and efforts to conserve and enhance wildlife habitat. Applicants should be aware that project information and applications will be used by the HIT for internal planning and public information purposes. A summary of each Proposal will be posted on the mitigation fund website, but will not include any personal information of private landowners.

Any request for significant modifications or changes to a Proposal after the Proposal deadline (5:00 pm on May 31st) will not be considered.

The HIT may answer questions and provide guidance during the application process, but will not provide legal advice to applicants. Please direct questions to Matt Lucia at (208) 241-4662.

Please read each question carefully, follow instructions, and answer the questions *with detailed, specific, and accurate* information in the space provided. Inaccurate or incomplete answers may receive a zero (0) score. **Text boxes and lines will automatically expand, as needed, when you type in the space provided.**

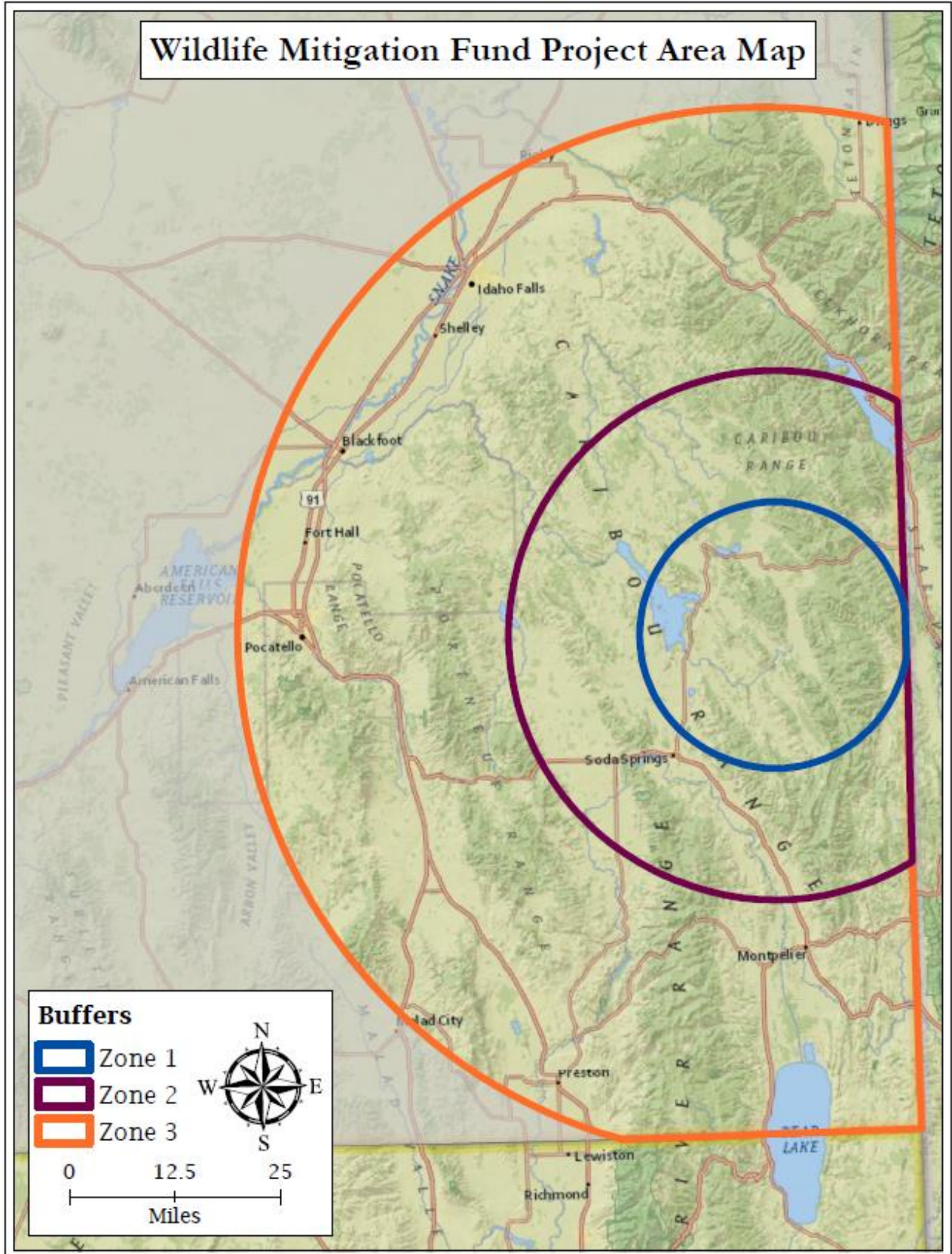
Applicants should articulate a clear vision of the desired future condition of the Project and its benefits to wildlife in the Proposal. Proposals must include details of follow-up monitoring and/or reporting included in their proposal. Project funding requires each recipient commit to submitting a “post-construction” report within two months of the project completion date affirming that they have completed the project. An outline of verification monitoring, photo-logging and reporting planned for the project must also be included. BLM and IDFG will compile an annual Habitat Performance Report which will summarize how well the funded project(s) have met project mandates.

Proposals are awarded funding based on evaluations and decisions made by the Habitat Improvement Team (HIT). All applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals on **June 28th**, after the first round of evaluations. Applicants selected in the first round of evaluations will be invited to provide a presentation of their proposal to the HIT and for the HIT to ask follow-up questions about the proposal. Please Note: presentations will be scheduled between 10:00 and 13:00 on Tuesday, **July 2nd** and will be held at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Regional Office in Pocatello, ID (1345 Barton Road). Please hold that date until you are notified of the status of your application.

Following the presentation meeting, the HIT will coordinate with applicants and schedule site visits during the week of **July 15-19**. Applicants or their designees are expected to lead the site tour.

Final award decisions are made by the Habitat Improvement Team (HIT) after a thorough review of the application and site visit. Applicants will be notified of the HIT’s final decisions and projects will be selected for funding by early August. An award letter and grant agreement will be sent to successful applicants immediately following the HIT’s final decisions. Funds will be made available after receipt of the signed grant agreement. See **Attachment 3** for a schedule of the Proposal review process and approval dates.

Attachment 1. Project Area Map



Attachment 2. Project Scoring Matrix (maximum score 175 points).

1)	Proximity to the Rasmussen Valley Mine Project (20 points)	
	Project located outside the Project Area.....	0 points
	Project located within 100 km: Project Area-Zone 3.....	10 points
	Project located within 50 km: Project Area-Zone 2.....	15 points
	Project located within 25 km: Project Area-Zone 1.....	20 points
2)	Matching partnership funds (% of project funded from other sources) (20 points)	
	No financial and/or in-kind support.....	0 points
	Financial and/or in-kind support is 1-25% of project costs.....	5 points
	Financial and/or in-kind support is 26-50% of project costs.....	10 points
	Financial and/or in-kind support is 51-75% of project costs.....	15 points
	Financial and/or in-kind support exceeds 75% of project costs.....	20 points
3)	Habitat Enhancement (20 points)	
	No habitat restoration, enhancement or protection proposed.....	0 points
	Project includes habitat protection only.....	5 points
	Project focus on wetland and riparian restoration and enhancement.....	10 points
	Project focus on sagebrush steppe restoration and enhancement.....	15 points
	Project focus on aspen restoration and enhancement.....	20 points
4)	Urgency: Habitat Protection from development (20 points)	
	Project does not protect land; or land is already protected from development & habitat conversion.....	0 points
	Project protects land possibly threatened by development or habitat conversion within 30 years.....	5 points
	Project protects land moderately threatened by development or habitat conversion within 20 years.....	10 points
	Project protects land likely threatened by development or habitat conversion within 10 years.....	15 points
	Project protects land imminently threatened by development or habitat conversion within 5 years.....	20 points
5)	Track record of project success (10 points)	
	Proponent does not demonstrate successful completion of similar projects in last 10 years.....	0 points
	Proponent has demonstrated successful completion of 1-2 similar projects in last 10 years.....	5 points
	Proponent has demonstrated successful completion of 3+ similar projects in last 10 years.....	10 points
6)	Project promotes landscape-scale connectivity (20 points)	
	Isolated project without landscape-scale components, connectivity or complementary projects.....	0 points
	Project supports limited wildlife use.....	5 points
	Project connects to protected lands (public land or private land held in conservation easements).....	10 points
	Project directly connects to 1-2 existing project(s) or is surrounded by protected lands.....	15 points
	Project directly connects to 3+ existing projects or is in a migration corridor.....	20 points
7)	Lifespan (durability) of expected benefits (20 points)	
	Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife are minimal.....	0 points
	Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife are expected to last 2-5 years.....	5 points
	Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife are expected to last 6-25 years.....	10 points
	Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife will last >25 years.....	20 points
8)	Monitoring (15 points)	
	No monitoring included as part of the project proposal.....	0 points
	Project proponent includes some monitoring as part of the project proposal.....	5 points
	Project proponent includes robust monitoring program with acceptable metrics.....	15 points
9)	Wildlife benefit versus cost (10 points)	
	Project cost exceeds benefits.....	0 points
	Project benefits about equal to cost.....	5 points
	Project benefits high relative to cost.....	10 points
10)	Stakeholder preference (20 points)	
	Provide a score between 1-20 reflecting your preference for this project and its ability to meet the goals of the stakeholder group you represent	0-20 points
	Total	0

Attachment 3. Timeline.

2019 HIT Timeline

DATE	ACTIVITY
March 8	HIT meeting: <i>1-4pm @ IDFG (1345 Barton Rd., Pocatello).</i>
March 8	Assign scheduled tasks and approve process schedule to be included in press release.
March 29	Press release goes out in coordination with Sarah Wheeler (BLM).
March 29	HIT website goes live.
April 1	RFP release and application period opens.
May 1	HIT Open House: <i>4-8pm at IDFG (1345 Barton Rd., Pocatello).</i>
May 31	Deadline for submitting RFP applications.
June 07	Distribute RFP applications to HIT members for scoring with matrix. Post summary of all applications on website.
June 27	First round of HIT scoring & evaluations.
June 28	Applicants will be notified of the status of their application. Applicants that remain in consideration will be invited to give a presentation to the HIT on July 02.
July 02	Presentations from applicants to HIT and follow-up questions: <i>10:00-1:00 @ IDFG (1345 Barton Rd., Pocatello).</i>
July15-19	Site visits. <i>Time & locations TBD.</i>
By early Aug.	HIT meeting to select project(s) for funding awards. <i>Time & location TBD.</i>
By early Aug.	Applicants will be notified of the status of their application. Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement with instructions for reporting and project completion.