

Southeast Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Fund 2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) - Guidelines

RFP opens April 1, 2025 and closes at 5:00 pm on May 30, 2025

*Application can be found as a fillable PDF form at SEI Wildlife Mitigation Fund website
<https://seidahomitigationfund.com/>

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 Husky 1 North Dry Ridge phosphate mine, the fertilizer company Itafos Conda LLC, provided roughly \$700,000 to the Southeast Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Fund (the "Fund"). The Fund was established to offset predicted residual impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat resulting from this and previous 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 Husky 1 North Dry Ridge 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 Husky 1 North Dry Ridge 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 Husky 1 North Dry Ridge 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

Total funding available for the 2025 cycle is approximately \$890,000. 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 30, 2025 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: eric(at)sagebrushlandtrust(dot)org. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours or you have any questions about the application process, please contact Eric Pankau at (208) 240-6045.

Hand delivered or mailed Proposals will also be accepted and should be in the form of a USB jump-drive or other standard media. Please do not send a paper copy or a fax of the Proposal. The 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: Eric Pankau
Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
P.O. Box 1404
Pocatello, ID 83204.

Hand-deliver Proposals to:

Eric Pankau
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 30th. 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 30th) 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 Eric Pankau at (208) 240-6045.

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 are character limited, but should provide ample room for each required section.**

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.

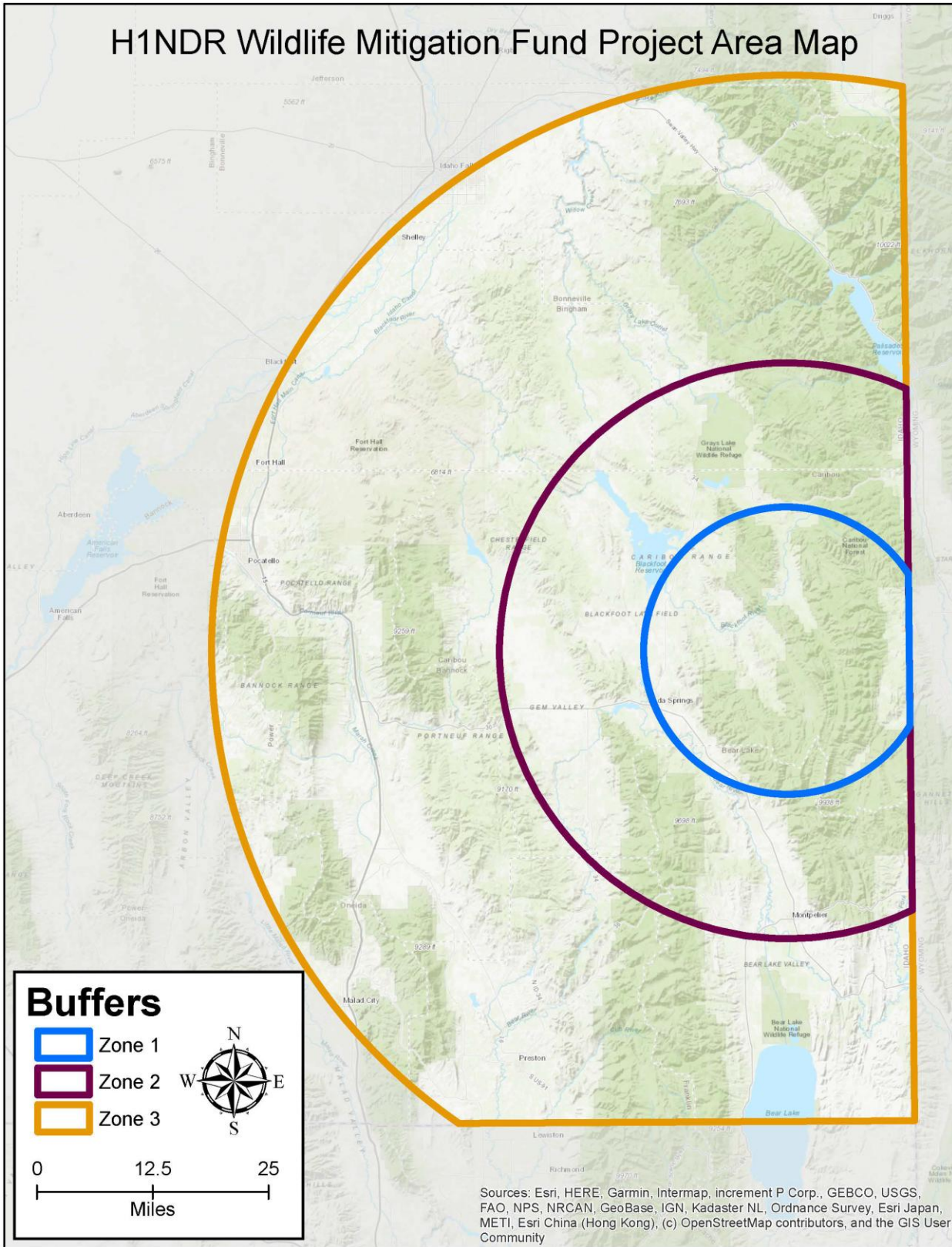
Proposals are awarded funding based on evaluations and decisions made by the Habitat Improvement Team (HIT). All applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals on **June 25th**, after the first round of evaluations. Applicants selected in the first round of evaluations will be invited to provide a presentation of their proposal on **Thursday, July 7th** to the HIT.

Please Note: *presentations must be prepared using technology that can be shared via video conference (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, etc.). The specific time and location will be determined at a later date. 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 28th-Aug. 1st**. 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).

Southeast Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Fund-Project Scoring Matrix - 2025

Name: _____		score
Org: _____		
Maximum points available: 175		
1)	Proximity to the Husky 1/ North Dry Ridge Mine Project (20 points) 0 points Project located outside the Project Area 10 points Project located within 100 km: Project Area-Zone 3 15 points Project located within 50 km: Project Area-Zone 2 20 points Project located within 25 km: Project Area-Zone 1	
2)	Matching partnership funds (% of project funded from other sources) (20 points) 0 points No financial and/or in-kind support 5 points Financial and/or in-kind support is 1-25% of project costs 10 points Financial and/or in-kind support is 26-50% of project costs 15 points Financial and/or in-kind support is 51-75% of project costs 20 points Financial and/or in-kind support exceeds 75% of project costs	
3)	Habitat Enhancement (20 points) 0 points No habitat restoration, enhancement or protection proposed 5 points Project includes habitat protection only 10 points Project focus on wetland and riparian restoration and enhancement 15 points Project focus on sagebrush steppe restoration and enhancement 20 points Project focus on aspen restoration and enhancement	
4)	Urgency: Habitat Protection from development (20 points) 0 points Project does not protect land, or land is already protected from development & habitat conversion 5 points Project protects land possibly threatened by development or habitat conversion within 30 years 10 points Project protects land moderately threatened by development or habitat conversion within 20 years 15 points Project protects land likely threatened by development or habitat conversion within 10 years 20 points Project protects land imminently threatened by development or habitat conversion within 5 years	
5)	Track record of project success (10 points) 0 points Proponent does not demonstrate successful completion of similar projects in last 10 years 5 points Proponent has demonstrated successful completion of 1-2 similar projects in last 10 years 10 points Proponent has demonstrated successful completion of 3+ similar projects in last 10 years	
6)	Project promotes landscape-scale connectivity (20 points) 0 points Isolated project without landscape-scale components, connectivity or complementary projects 5 points Project supports limited wildlife use 10 points Project connects to protected lands (public land or private land held in conservation easements) 15 points Project directly connects to 1-2 existing project(s) <u>or</u> is surrounded by protected lands 20 points Project directly connects to 3+ existing projects <u>or</u> is in a migration corridor	
7)	Lifespan (durability) of expected benefits (20 points) 0 points Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife are minimal 5 points Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife are expected to last 2-5 years 10 points Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife are expected to last 6-25 years 20 points Lifetime of project benefits to wildlife will last >25 years	
8)	Monitoring (15 points) 0 points No monitoring included as part of the project proposal 5 points Project proponent includes some monitoring as part of the project proposal 15 points Project proponent includes robust monitoring program with acceptable metrics	
9)	Wildlife benefit versus cost (10 points) 0 points Project cost exceeds benefits 5 points Project benefits about equal to cost 10 points Project benefits high relative to cost	
10)	Stakeholder preference (20 points) 0-20 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	
Total		0

Attachment 3. Timeline.

2025 RFP Timeline

DATE	ACTIVITY
Sept. 17, 2024	Fall HIT Planning Meeting
Jan. 21, 2025	HIT Internal kickoff meeting
March 4, 2025	Check in (review changes from kickoff meeting)
March 4 th , 2025	RFP Q&A meeting. Stakeholders and general public invited. Check in and review changes from kickoff meeting.
April 1, 2025	RFP opens (open from April 1-May 30)
May 30, 2025	RFP Closes
June 5, 2025	Project Proposals will be available to HIT online
June 24, 2025	First round (tier 1) of HIT scoring & evaluations: Time & location TBD.
June 25, 2025	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 the week of July 7th. Presentations must be prepared in a way that can be shared via video conference.
*July 14-18, 2025	Presentations from applicants to HIT and follow-up questions: Time & location TBD
*July 28-Aug. 1, 2025	Project site visits. Time TBD
Aug. 5, 2025	Final (tier 2) HIT scoring & evaluations
Aug. 8, 2025	Applicants will be notified of the status of their application. Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement with instructions for reporting and project completion.
Sept. 1, 2025	Funds for selected projects distributed.

*Presentations and site visits will be held during the above time blocks. Specific dates will be announced after tier 1 evaluations have been completed. A HIT representative will contact applicants to coordinate specific times and dates for these events. Applicants (or representative) must be present for both events to be considered for project funding.