

ATTACHMENT 1

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM

RESEARCH AND SCIENCE PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) is administered by the Bureau of Land Management and consists of more than 27 million acres scattered throughout the western United States. NLCS units include National Monuments, National Conservation Areas and similar designations, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. The NLCS mission is to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes of exceptional cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations. More information on NLCS lands can be found on the NLCS website at <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs/>.

The NLCS Science program supports the NLCS mission by fostering a greater understanding of these exceptional places through scientific study. This program works to build natural, cultural, and social scientific knowledge of Public Land landscapes, increase the effectiveness of resource management strategies, foster cooperative conservation, and encourage public interest and ownership in the long-term conservation of America's landscapes.

The Science Program provides financial support for science projects that work to answer fundamental science questions within NLCS units and for the larger National System of Public Lands as a whole. Support is intended to provide start-up funds for scientific research that occurs within the NLCS that is hypothesis-driven and/or assists in management. The Science Program support projects that range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Most awards will be made for \$10,000 or less. However, exceptional proposals may be funded at a higher rate. Proposals for less than \$5,000 will be considered provided they articulate an achievable and well-defined outcome. NLCS anticipates making 20 to 30 awards in 2012.

General granting guidelines:

- Proposals must explicitly state how the projects contribute to at least one of two focus areas (below). Both of these focus areas include research that addresses specific, credible, and relevant questions within NLCS. Consideration will be given to proposals with direct applicability to support informed and effective decision-making, and preference will be given to projects that directly address NLCS research needs.
 - Understanding of Resources: Projects that contribute to understanding the status and trends of NLCS resources. Such projects could include baseline inventory, objective-driven monitoring, or investigations of natural or human processes that influence NLCS resources. For such projects, a linkage to the area's Resource Management Plan or to NLCS resources should be clearly established.
 - Basic or Applied Research: Scientific information from research projects within the NLCS will have direct relevance to the management of the unit, other BLM lands, or surrounding landscapes. This focus area will support projects that test, develop, or implement physical or social science directly applicable to NLCS management needs, or

that contribute to better understanding of NLCS resources. Projects in this category will clearly identify a research question.

- Project field work must take place on an NLCS unit. Applicants proposing larger projects spanning multiple land ownerships may apply for partial funding for the portion occurring on NLCS land. Projects of this type must provide matching funding for the other land ownership portion and demonstrate that the proposed research is relevant to the NLCS mission and values.
- Projects should be clear about how the funding will be used as well as how funds will support meeting a measurable land use plan implementation objective for the unit or focus on the objects/values for which the area was designated.
- Proposals must state the project's objective, methodology, and benefits. Proposals must also include a description of timeframe, budget, and deliverables (e.g. Data, maps, shapefiles, final peer reviewed reports, or outreach products).
- Proposals must articulate the roles and responsibilities of the proposal partner(s), including qualifications, relevant research/program of research, full contact details (including email) and affiliation. Successful proposals will be those in which the partner organization contributes labor; BLM labor is not supported except in the case that BLM resources are used to facilitate access for researchers to designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- One-year projects are preferable since multi-year funding cannot be guaranteed, but multi-year projects will be considered, as long as they are designed in phases that result in a discrete product at the end of one year, identified in the proposal.
- Proposals must provide a plan for sharing knowledge and should include a component of public involvement or education. At a minimum, applicants are expected to provide annual update reports and a final report, suitable for distribution to BLM staff, plus a brief synopsis suitable for a broad public audience.

Application procedure:

- Applicants must contact the NLCS field office in which their work will take place and solicit documentation of support.
 - At minimum, this documentation must confirm that an assistance agreement is in place, the project design is consistent with all applicable regulations and planning guidelines, and no additional impact analysis is required.
 - Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate field office as early as possible to discuss local science needs and potential research projects.
- Submissions will be made through BPS through State NLCS leads.
 - In BPS, Project Titles will begin with "NLCS/RS" so they can be readily retrieved from the system.

- BPS limits project descriptions to 2000 characters, therefore you are requested to put an abstract into that BPS field and attach a separate document to lay out specific details of your proposal, as needed.
- Documentation of support (i.e. an assistance agreement) must also be attached to the BPS submission.

Eligibility:

- Applications will only be accepted from qualified organizations possessing active assistance agreements with the Bureau of Land Management. Grants will not be awarded to individuals or for-profit organizations.
- Researchers with existing relationships and/or ongoing projects are encouraged to use this opportunity to apply for continued funding. For continued funding, projects for which annual reports have been received by the NLCS science coordinator will receive preference.

Evaluation criteria:

- State NLCS leads will consolidate and prioritize the requests with assistance from state leadership and submit them through BPS.
 - State project rankings along with national program priorities will be considered in project evaluation.
- Proposals will be peer-reviewed by an internal team in the Washington Office.
- Preference will be given to proposals that:
 - Include documentation illustrating strong field office support;
 - Promote collaborative conservation through projects that benefit multiple programs (including, but not limited to riparian, cultural, paleontology, plant conservation, wildlife, fisheries, recreation, range, forestry, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, national scenic and historic trails, capacity building for citizen science and partnerships);
 - Explicitly consider the landscape-level implications of the project. NLCS is seeking results that can be broadly applied across public lands;
 - Include success metrics and explicitly state the value of the information gained for increased understanding of NLCS values, and describe the strategy for monitoring and evaluating the project's results;
 - Include provisions for promoting public involvement, interpretation, and education in the natural or social sciences;
 - Include matching contributions (monetary or in-kind);
 - Provide photographs or success stories of on-going projects.
- Additional consideration will be given to projects with the potential to stimulate further research by generating foundational knowledge upon which future science can be based or with immediate potential for management application.

Application process and timeline:

Proposals will be submitted and ranked by the State NLCS leads through BPS.

- Research proposals due: November 10, 2011
- Proposals peer-reviewed and selected: January 27, 2012

Contact:

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