***Disclaimer:*** *This project statement is meant to be used as a training aid. While some of the information provided in the project statement is based upon factual data, the entire project statement is not meant to represent an actual project statement drafted by the state agency.*

**AR - Statewide Habitat Management and Public Access**

**Arkansas Game and Fish Commission**

**7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023**

**GRANT PROPOSAL**

*[Additional grant information to include in TRACS: SAP/PO FBMS # if available, Recipient Grant ID if available, Grant Recipient Contact(s), Federal Grant Specialist Contact(s), Grant Programs(s)]*

**Public Description** *(sections from the need, purpose, expected results and benefits, and/or approach may be useful to include)*

The purpose of this grant is for the conservation of wildlife species and their associated habitats for maintaining viable populations and public enjoyment and use. There is a need to maintain viable populations of wild birds and mammal species in order to provide wildlife dependent outdoor recreation opportunities and sustainable wildlife populations in Arkansas. Maintaining adequate habitat to support forest, upland, and wetland dependent wildlife species is of great importance to those who hunt, trap, view, study and photograph wildlife throughout the State. Over 458,000 individuals spend nearly 11 million days pursuing wildlife dependent recreation in Arkansas annually. Wildlife habitat in Arkansas is becoming more fragmented from changes in urban and agricultural land use as the state’s population increases. Habitat and cropland loss from urban sprawl occurs at an average rate of 12,500 acres/year. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission manages 62 state-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMA’s) encompassing 2,863,294 acres and the WMAs are important resources where wildlife populations can be effectively managed and available for recreational and economic benefit. Arkansas’ ability to sustain viable populations of wildlife species for wildlife dependent recreation will be significantly compromised unless habitat is managed, maintained, and restored.

*Conflict of Interest Statement*: Not Applicable. (There are no known conflicts of interest)

*Single Audit Reporting Statement*: The State of Arkansas was required to submit a Statewide Single Audit report for its most recently closed fiscal year and that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website. The report is filed under the State of Arkansas’ EIN (99-9999999).

*Indirect Cost Statement*: We are (1) a U.S. state government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of 20.35%. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached.

**PROJECT STATEMENT**

*[Additional project statement information to include in TRACS: Project Statement Title (if unique), does this include Marine Federal waters, Project Statement Single Point of Contact, Principal Investigator (research objectives only).]*

**Geographic Location**

Statewide - See include table for specific activities by location.

**Need**

There is a need to maintain viable populations of wild birds and mammal species in order to provide wildlife dependent outdoor recreation opportunities and sustainable wildlife populations in Arkansas. Maintaining adequate habitat to support forest, upland, and wetland dependent wildlife species is of great importance to those who hunt, trap, view, study and photograph wildlife throughout the State. Over 458,000 individuals spend nearly 11 million days pursuing wildlife dependent recreation in Arkansas annually. Wildlife habitat in Arkansas is becoming more fragmented from changes in urban and agricultural land use as the state’s population increases. Habitat and cropland loss from urban sprawl occurs at an average rate of 12,500 acres/year. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission manages 62 state-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMA’s) encompassing 2,863,294 acres and the WMAs are important resources where wildlife populations can be effectively managed and available for recreational and economic benefit. Arkansas’ ability to sustain viable populations of wildlife species for wildlife dependent recreation will be significantly compromised unless habitat is managed, maintained, and restored.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this grant is for the conservation of wildlife species and their associated habitats for maintaining viable populations and public enjoyment and use.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this grant are to:

1. Directly manage 162,746 acres by June 30, 2023.
   * TRACS Strategy: Direct Habitat and Species Management
     + TRACS Objective: Directly restore, enhance, create, or manage acres
       - TRACS Activity Tag 1: Prescribed fire (# of acres)
         * Target Species: see list of targeted species [*not attached*]
         * Target Habitat Types (acres by habitat type will be required in the performance report): Temperate & Boreal Forest & Woodland, Temperate & Boreal Grassland & Shrubland, Shrub & Herb Wetland
       - TRACS Activity Tag 1: Planting/seeding (# of acres)
         * Target Species: see list of targeted species [*not attached*]
         * Target Habitat Types (acres by habitat type will be required in the performance report): Temperate & Boreal Forest & Woodland, Temperate & Boreal Grassland & Shrubland, Shrub & Herb Wetland
       - TRACS Activity Tag 1: Other vegetation management practices (# of acres)
         * Target Species: see list of targeted species [*not attached*]
         * Target Habitat Types (acres by habitat type will be required in the performance report): Temperate & Boreal Forest & Woodland, Temperate & Boreal Grassland & Shrubland, Shrub & Herb Wetland
       - TRACS Activity Tag 1: Forest stand management (# of acres)
         * Target Species: see list of targeted species [*not attached*]
         * Target Habitat Types (acres by habitat type will be required in the performance report): Temperate & Boreal Forest & Woodland, Temperate & Boreal Grassland & Shrubland, Shrub & Herb Wetland
       - TRACS Activity Tag 1: Wetland creation/management (# of acres)
         * Target Species: see list of targeted species [*not attached*]
         * Target Habitat Types (acres by habitat type will be required in the performance report): Temperate & Boreal Forest & Woodland, Temperate & Boreal Grassland & Shrubland, Shrub & Herb Wetland

**Approach**

Habitat management and restoration projects and activities that will be conducted to accomplish project objectives include (see Table 1 for a list of activities by WMA):

Forest habitat management activities

* Annual maintenance of 662 miles of firebreaks in support of scheduled prescribed fire activities.
* Manipulation of vegetative communities on 8,628 acres of wildlife openings within the forest matrix to diversify habitat.
* Prescribing of herbicides, pre-commercial and commercial forest thinning, and the application of prescribed fire as wildlife stand improvement on 1,520 acres of forested habitat to promote and restore historical vegetative and forest structure.
* Reforestation (forest management, hard and soft mast production, etc) of selected sites which promotes the achievement of long-term management area habitat plans.

Upland habitat management activities

* Wildlife stand inventory of 21,041 acres to provide treatment guidance and follow-up by treatment audits to assess treatment effectiveness.
* Mowing, disking, fertilizing, liming and planting of 5,465 acres of food plots in planned mixtures of both warm season and cool season annuals and perennials to supplement native forage with small acreages of high quality cultivated forage.
* Chemical control of woody stems and the mechanical soil disturbance on 33,955 acres of old field habitat to provide early seral-stage vegetative communities.

Wetland habitat management activities

* Prescribed application of herbicides to control or eliminate noxious/invasive weed species, the timed application and removal of water to manipulate high quality moist-soil vegetative plant communities, the mechanical soil disturbance to enhance high quality moist-soil vegetative plant communities, and the periodic planting of cultivated crops on sites where natural moist-soil plants are lacking on 5,034 acres of moist soil units.
* Seasonal flooding, manipulation and dewatering of 107,482 acres of green-tree impoundments.
* Maintenance of 270 constructed water holes.

Administrative Activities

Conducting related project administration, coordination and planning (to include development of WMA master plans and annual work plans), evaluation, program development (to include training all agency personnel involved in the habitat management program through continuing education and workshops and symposia as well as through close coordination with multi-agency regional efforts) and all other associated eligible activities.

**Results and Benefits Expected**

To the Resource: This project will result in habitat improvements and reduced risk of declining species of wild birds and mammals on state lands and adjoining private lands. It will result in improved plant diversity and restoration of habitat communities.

To the User: Improved hunting and other wildlife dependent outdoor opportunities.

To the Economy: Increased revenues from shooting ranges and hunting and fishing trips.

To Society: Outreach opportunities including public presentations about restoration work, field trips for stakeholder groups, and several field days to share information with private landowners

**Budget Narrative**

Funding for this project shall be provided by the **Wildlife Restoration Grant program (5222 subprogram)**.

Federal Share: **$1,836,000** (75%)

State Share: **$612,000** (25%)

**Total cost:** **$2,448,000**

[*NOTE: Applicants may provide the budget information using the SF 424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs), SF 424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs), or using the applicant’s created budget displaying an equivalent or greater level of detail*.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Budget Class Category | Cost |
| Personnel (salaries) | $950,000 |
| Fringe Benefits | $252,700 |
| Travel | $18,000 |
| Equipment | $0 |
| Supplies | $540,650 |
| Contractual | $441,850 |
| Construction | $0 |
| Other | $0 |
| Total Direct Costs | $2,203,200 |
| Indirect Costs | $244,800 |
| TOTAL Direct/Indirect | $2,448,000 |
| Program Income (additive) | $450,000 |
| **Total** | **$2,898,000** |

Personnel - budget estimate comprised of staff (25-30) in the following classifications: (1) Regional Wildlife Coordinator; (2) Public Lands Wildlife Biologist; (3) Wildlife Foreman; (4) Wildlife Senior Technician; and (5) Wildlife Technician.

Fringe Benefits -consists of the required employer contribution of Social Security, Medicare, unemployment tax, retirement, and employee health insurance, and is estimated at 26.2% of salaries.

Travel - staff will attend in-state meetings related wildlife and habitat management issues/concerns. Staff may also attend regional/national meetings such as The Wildlife Society and Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (including the various committees and sections). Travel costs will include lodging, transportation, and per diem following state policies and procedures.

Supplies - budget estimate includes general office/lab supplies, field attire, tools, electrical items, herbicide, herbicide application items, and prescribed fire supplies/items.

Contractual - budget estimate includes contractual agreements with third party commercial timber harvesters to meet habitat and species management goals/objectives.

Indirect Costs - The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission’s approved NICRA is 20.35% applied to the base of salary and fringe. A copy of the NICRA is on file in the Region 4 Office.

*In-Kind Match*: **$0**

*Pre-Award Costs*: **$0** No pre-award costs are requested for this grant.

*Program Income:* This grant will generate an estimated $450,000 in program income through the sale of timber harvested on WMAs. Approval is requested to use the additive method for application of this program income. Program income will be applied solely towards the cost of habitat management, maintenance, and restoration activities as described herein.

**Equipment Narrative**

Not applicable.

**Useful Life**

Not applicable.

**Multipurpose Grant**

Not applicable.

**Relationship with Other Grants**

This grant will continue work conducted under the WMA Maintenance, Operations and Habitat Management grant AR-W-F13AF01229 (W-64-45).

**Timeline**

March – September: Planting/seeding native upland and wetland vegetation and implement prescribed grassland burns

March – June: Timber cutting and timber stand improvements

Year-round: Invasive plant control and other vegetative control activities; provide assistance to landowners

**General (this is not a field in TRACS)**

NOTE: 50 CFR 80.82 (c) requires that a project statement must include information pertaining to 13 data elements. Element 13 (General) requires that information be included in the project statement that (a) shows that the proposed activities are eligible for funding and substantial in character and design and (b) enables the Service to comply with applicable requirements under NEPA, ESA, and NHPA, and other laws, regulations, and policies.

Please see the attached NEPA, ESA, and NHPA documentation for additional information.

*[Please note: Documents with PII (personally identifiable information) or compliance documents (such as NEPA, Section 7, NHPA) must NOT be uploaded into TRACS. These documents should be submitted with your project statement(s) as part of your formal grant application in GrantSolutions.]*

Table 1. List of Activities by Wildlife Management Area

Note: The table is for demonstration purposes only and is not a complete list of all activities on the 64 managed WMAs funded by the grant.

Spring =sp, Summer=su, Fall=fa, Winter = wi, Year Round = yr

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WMA | Firebreak  Maintenance | Prescribed  Fire | Food  Plots | Mow / Disking | Fertilize | Lime |
| Big Bend | su 11 miles | sp 400 acres | sp 500 acres | sp/fa 500 acres | sp/fa 500 acres | sp/fa 500 acres |
| Little Bend | su 10 miles |  | sp 400 acres | sp/fa 400 acres | sp/fa 400 acres | sp/fa 400 acres |
| Dove | su 5 miles | sp 250 acres | sp 850 acres | sp/fa 850 acres | sp/fa 850 acres | sp/fa 850 acres |
| Hilltop | su 8 miles | sp 500 acres |  |  |  |  |
| Big Swamp | su 4 miles |  | sp 750 acres | sp/fa 750 acres | sp/fa 750 acres | sp/fa 750 acres |
| Flatwoods | su 12 miles | sp 1100 acres |  |  |  |  |
| River Bend | su 9 miles |  | sp 950 acres | sp/fa 950 acres | sp/fa 950 acres | sp/fa 950 acres |
| Elk Branch | su 11 miles | sp 400 acres | sp 500 acres | sp/fa 500 acres | sp/fa 500 acres | sp/fa 500 acres |

Table 1 (cont). List of Activities by Wildlife Management Area

Note: The table is for demonstration purposes only and is not a complete list of all activities on the 64 managed WMAs funded by the grant.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WMA | Planting | Herbicide  Application | Forest  Thinning | Mow / Disking | Season Flood / Dewater | Water Hole  Mgt |
| Big Bend | sp 500 acres | su 500 acres | wi 400 acres | sp/su 500 acres |  | 15 sites |
| Little Bend | sp 400 acres | su 400 acres |  | sp/su 400 acres |  | 10 sites |
| Dove | sp 850 acres |  | wi 550 acres | sp/su 850 acres |  | 14 sites |
| Hilltop |  |  | wi 700 acres |  |  | 7 sites |
| Big Swamp | sp 500 acres | su 750 acres |  | sp/su 500 acres | wi 8000 acres |  |
| Flatwoods |  |  | wi 1200 |  |  | 12 sites |
| River Bend | sp 950 acres |  |  | sp/su 950 acres | wi 4000 acres |  |
| Elk Branch | sp 500 acres | su 500 acres |  | sp/su 500 acres | wi 1500 acres |  |