***wsfDisclaimer:*** *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.*

**OH - Statewide Land Acquisitions for Wildlife Oriented Recreation**

**Ohio Department of Natural Resources**

**7/1/2022 – 6/30/2025**

**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 to secure sufficient public wildlife acreage to meet the demand for wildlife-oriented recreation in Ohio. There is a need to increase access and opportunity to wildlife-oriented recreation in Ohio. Hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife viewing are popular pastimes for Ohioans. Many of these activities occur on public wildlife areas. The demand for places to pursue wildlife-dependent recreation increases annually as Ohio’s population grows and land is developed. A 2021 survey conducted by Grace State University revealed that Ohio ranked 47th in the United States in the amount of public lands available for recreation per capita. 95% of land in Ohio is privately owned and therefore inaccessible to the public. The deficit in public wildlife areas in Ohio results in overcrowded conditions and conflicts among user groups. It will become increasingly more difficult for the Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODW) to provide safe and enjoyable wildlife recreation experiences unless more land is secured for public use in Ohio.

It is the intent of the Division of Wildlife (DOW) to acquire 8,000 acres in Ohio to increase access and opportunity to wildlife dependent recreation for species dependent on forestland, wetland, and grassland habitat. Acquisitions will use Wildlife Restoration (WR) funds and the required non- federal match. The DOW will obligate funds through a WR land acquisition grant to enable the DOW to acquire tracts of real property as they become available from willing sellers. The DOW has established focus areas in the state where acquisitions will be within reasonable driving distance from Ohio’s population centers. As parcels become available within the established focus areas the DOW will initiate acquisition procedures. A key strategy will be to acquire in-holdings at existing wildlife areas.

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

*Single Audit Reporting Statement*: The state of Ohio 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 Ohio’s 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 19.00%. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is on file in the Region 3 Office.

**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.

**Need**

*There is a need to increase access and opportunity to wildlife-oriented recreation in Ohio.* Hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife viewing are popular pastimes for Ohioans. Many of these activities occur on public wildlife areas. The demand for places to pursue wildlife-dependent recreation increases annually as Ohio’s population grows and land is developed. A 2021 survey conducted by Grace State University revealed that Ohio ranked 47th in the United States in the amount of public lands available for recreation per capita. 95% of land in Ohio is privately owned and therefore inaccessible to the public. The deficit in public wildlife areas in Ohio results in overcrowded conditions and conflicts among user groups. It will become increasingly more difficult for the Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODW) to provide safe and enjoyable wildlife recreation experiences unless more land is secured for public use in Ohio.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this grant is to secure sufficient public wildlife acreage to meet the demand for wildlife-oriented recreation in Ohio.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this grant are to:

1. Acquire real property interest in 8,000 acres by June 30, 2025.
	* TRACS Strategy: Real Property Acquisition
		+ TRACS Objective: Acquire real property interest in acres
			- TRACS Activity Tag 1: Land acquisition (# of acres)

**Approach**

It is the intent of the Division of Wildlife (DOW) to acquire 8,000 acres in Ohio to increase access and opportunity to wildlife dependent recreation for species dependent on forestland, wetland, and grassland habitat. Acquisitions will use Wildlife Restoration (WR) funds and the required non- federal match. The DOW will obligate funds through a WR land acquisition grant to enable the DOW to acquire tracts of real property as they become available from willing sellers. The DOW has established focus areas in the state where acquisitions will be within reasonable driving distance from Ohio’s population centers. As parcels become available within the established focus areas the DOW will initiate acquisition procedures. A key strategy will be to acquire in-holdings at existing wildlife areas.

Acquisition priority will be given to tracts of land with a 250-acre minimum within the established focus areas. Acquisitions will be through fee title, conservation easements, cooperative agreements, leases, or contracts. The DOW will follow state acquisition procedures and the federal acquisition procedures described in 49 CFR Part 24 of the ‘Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition for Federal and Federally-Assisted Programs’.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Real Estate and Land Management (REALM) will facilitate real property appraisals and review appraisals using USPAP or UASFLA standards as each acquisition dictates. REALM will procure the services of state certified general appraisers who have the established federal credentials. An appraisal will be submitted to the USFWS, Federal grants specialist for approval prior to closing on properties. REALM will facilitate boundary surveys, title searches and recording of deeds.

At the time of settlement, a Notice of Federal Participation will be recorded on deeds or other legal recording documents. The appraisal, deed, title-vesting certificate, statement of just compensation, and land summary statement will be submitted with annual performance reports after the transaction is completed. Staff will add the newly acquired lands to the DOW Lands Inventory Database and TRACS.

The project leader will perform an Ohio Environmental Assessment Review (OEAR) so that the proper NEPA, SHPO and Section 7 recommendation can be made. Results of the OEAR will be forwarded to the USFWS grant administrator for concurrence.

Grants will be amended when a parcel of land is proposed for acquisition. These amendments will include the need for the purchase, the purposes for which the parcel will be used and all planned activities, the public benefits to be realized and expected costs for the entire project. The amendment will include maps identifying property boundaries and a physical description of the land.

**Results and Benefits Expected**

* Reduction in conflicts among user groups due to human population pressures.
* Increased access and opportunity to grassland, wetland, and forest game recreation.
* Improved safety conditions on Ohio’s public wildlife areas.
* Enjoyable wildlife oriented recreational experiences that exceed expectations

**Budget Narrative**

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

Federal Share: **$600,000** (75%)

State Share: **$200,000** (25%). The State Share shall be provided by non-federal funds from the state wildlife diversity fund.

**Total cost:** **$800,000**

[*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 Category** | **Cost** |
| Administrative & Legal Expenses | $45,000 |
| Land, Structures, ROW, Appraisals, etc. | $745,000 |
| Relocation Expenses & Payments | $0 |
| Architectural & Engineering Fees | $0 |
| Other Architectural & Engineering Fees | $0 |
| Project Inspection Fees | $10,000 |
| Site Work | $0 |
| Demolition & Removal | $0 |
| Construction | $0 |
| Equipment | $0 |
| Miscellaneous | $0 |
| Subtotal | $800,000 |
| Contingencies | $0 |
| Subtotal | $800,000 |
| Program Income | $0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$800,000** |

Administrative & Legal Expenses - budget estimate for potential administrative or legal fees that may arise during the land acquisition process of this project.

Land, Structures, ROW, Appraisals, etc. - budget estimate for costs associated with title opinion, appraisals, appraisal reviews, closing costs, deed preparation, and title insurance.

Project Inspection Fees - budget estimate for costs associated with site inspection (environmental inspections, etc.) fees prior to closing.

*In-Kind Match*: No in-kind match will be utilized for this grant.

*Pre-Award Costs*: $12,000 for appraisals, surveys, title and legal costs.

*Program Income:* None anticipated.

**Equipment Narrative**

Not applicable.

**Useful Life**

If the acquisition will be via a lease or other temporary ownership agreement the term of the agreement will be recorded in the amended project.

**Multipurpose Grant**

Not applicable.

**Relationship with Other Grants**

Not applicable.

**Timeline**

Period of performance is July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2025.

* July 2022 - September 2022: Focus area boundaries established.
* September 2022 - November 2022: Desirable parcels identified.
* December 2022 - June 2025; Acquire real property parcels within focus areas as they become available from willing sellers.

**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.

As individual parcels are identified for acquisition, the compliance process for NEPA, Sec 7 of the ESA and NHPA will be required for each individual parcel to be acquired through this project.

*[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.]*