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## WCS Climate Adaptation Fund 2022 Grants Program: A Request for Proposals

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The Wildlife Conservation Society is pleased to announce a new round of grantmaking through its Climate Adaptation Fund. This program supports projects that advance learning and scale effective climate adaptation interventions to help wildlife, ecosystems and the people who value and depend on them. The Climate Adaptation Fund is made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

### I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

With funding managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the [WCS Climate Adaptation Fund](#) will provide up to \$2.5 million in competitive grants in 2022. Awards will be made to non-profit conservation organizations applying for one of two grant categories:

1. **Adaptation Implementation** projects that apply innovative approaches to conservation actions designed to help wildlife and ecosystems adapt to climate change. These projects must include a monitoring plan to inform adaptive management decisions and evaluate progress towards project outcomes. These grants will be up to \$300,000 over

3 years.

2. **Adaptation Mainstreaming** projects that work to facilitate the conditions necessary to increase the uptake of an adaptation approach with known benefits. These grants will be up to \$100,000 over 2 years.

**ELIGIBILITY:** This program provides grants to U.S.-based non-profit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status. Grants can be awarded for projects only within the 50 U.S. states, Commonwealths, and territories. The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to make grants to for-profit corporations, individuals, universities, public agencies, municipalities, or other types of government entities. Public agencies, Tribal governments\*, and universities may partner on proposals submitted by an eligible non-profit conservation organization or work as paid contractors on funded projects. We encourage proposals to forge collaborations between the applicant organization and any number of partners from academia, public agencies, Tribal government agencies, and other non-profit organizations.

*\*Tribal governments are not classified as 501(c)(3) organizations by the IRS and therefore grants to these government entities are prohibited by the DDCF's Governing Documents, this program's funder. 501(c)(3) organizations that are partnered with Tribal governments are encouraged to apply. If you are a member of a Tribal government agency and have questions about this, please contact us.*

**TO APPLY:** Submit a Pre-proposal using our online application form no later than 7:00 PM Eastern Time / 5:00 PM Central Time / 4:00 PM Pacific Time on Friday, April 8, 2022. Create a new account for your organization if you have not applied previously.

## II. FUNDING PRIORITIES

**Adaptation Implementation projects** must take an innovative approach to implementing conservation actions designed to anticipate and respond to projected or observed climate change impacts to maximize the long-term success of their conservation work. We define innovation broadly, including but not limited to: introducing new techniques, tools, concepts or partnerships that increase climate adaptation benefits. Supported projects aim to sustain dynamic ecological processes, landscape functionality, and species assemblages, as opposed to single-species or historical conditions that may not be possible to maintain in a changing climate. Implementation projects must include a monitoring plan to inform adaptive management decisions and evaluate progress towards project outcomes. See the Applicant Guide for a non-exhaustive list of examples of innovation, guidance on monitoring and evaluation, and information about WCS-funded, third-party coaching to help eligible applicants meet the

monitoring and evaluation requirements.

**Adaptation Mainstreaming projects** must be designed to increase the uptake of a demonstrated adaptation approach. Adaptation approaches previously funded by a Climate Adaptation Fund implementation grant are eligible to apply for a mainstreaming grant; also eligible are adaptation approaches and organizations that have not been previously supported by a grant from the Fund. This grant category is intended to support projects that will address social, political, regulatory, economic, market or other factors that are barriers or opportunities for increasing the adoption of an adaptation approach. Mainstreaming projects should enable others to replicate the focal adaptation approach; these grants are not intended for applicant organizations to directly replicate their own on-the-ground work at larger scales.

All applicants should review the [Applicant Guide](#) for detailed information on grant requirements and guidelines for writing a competitive proposal.

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS:** The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund is unable to support the following types of activities through its grants: land acquisition and conservation easements (both capital and non-capital costs), building construction, political lobbying, fundraising costs, staff training, captive breeding, zoo exhibits, direct cash payments to private individuals, lethal eradication of animals, carbon offset project design, stand-alone tool development, or stand-alone monitoring efforts. Research and planning activities to decide what actions to take or where to take them are not supported. Proposed projects are expected to have completed all of the planning necessary to execute the proposed project.

The Fund supports implementation work taking place in marine environments *only* if there is a direct benefit to species that utilize inland terrestrial or aquatic habitats (e.g., species that use terrestrial haul-out sites or nesting locations).

We permit the use of funds to support assisted migration projects. However, please note that we expect all applicants to discuss how they plan on limiting any potential risks from particularly novel or less-well-tested adaptation approaches, including assisted migration.

### III. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

**How do I apply?** Register your organization and complete the [Pre-proposal Application Form](#). The form must be submitted using our online application portal no later than **7:00 PM ET / 6:00 PM CT / 4:00 PT on Friday, April 8, 2022**.

**Who is eligible to apply?** Lead applicants must be U.S.-based non-profit conservation organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status. Non-profit conservation organizations without a 501(c)(3) status may apply through another 501(c)(3) conservation organization as a fiscal sponsor. Public agencies or governmental organizations may not apply through a fiscal sponsor but may be partners on a project. If funding is being sought as part of a multinational project, WCS funding can only be used for that part of the project within the 50 states, U.S. Commonwealths, and territories. Solely international projects or organizations based outside of the United States are not eligible to apply.

### **What is the duration of funding for projects?**

- Implementation Adaptation projects: 2-3 years.
- Mainstreaming Adaptation projects: 1-2 years.

Grant start dates will be in December 2022. WCS will not consider no-cost extensions, except in extreme circumstances (e.g., a Global Pandemic).

### **What is the range of funding that can be requested?**

- Adaptation Implementation projects: \$50,000 to \$300,000 per project, over 3 years.
  - Up to \$50,000 of which can be used to support monitoring costs.
- Adaptation Mainstreaming projects: \$50,000 to \$100,000 per project, over 2 years.

**What are the evaluation criteria?** Reference the [Applicant Guide](#) for information on grant requirements and guidelines for writing a competitive proposal.

**Are matching funds required?** The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund requires a 1:1 match for the WCS request amount. Match funding is an important component of the Climate Adaptation Fund's investment in adaptation. Match funds are required to expand the physical scale of important adaptation work and to motivate more funders to support adaptation and climate-informed conservation at this critical time. See information on match waivers below. Matching funds may be "in-kind"; i.e., a contribution of goods, staff time, or services rather than cash, but only up to a maximum of 50% of the funds requested from WCS. Matching funds are not required at the time of application. Details on matching fund sources and amounts will be required only if invited to submit a Full Proposal. Proof of match funds raised will be due at the time of award at the end of the calendar year.

**Are there any circumstances under which a 1:1 match is not required?** Yes. In select cases, WCS will waive or reduce the 1:1 match requirement for projects proposing innovative and new methods for addressing adaptation challenges, for monitoring costs that cannot be matched, for organizations with an annual organizational budget below \$2.5M, and for BIPOC-

led organizations. Please indicate if you would like a full or partial match waiver to be in your pre-proposal application. Those applicants should still include any sources of available match, even if less than 1:1, in their pre-proposal budget. We will consider each request on a case-by-case basis and notify applicants whether such a waiver has been approved.

**What sources of funds can be used as matching funds?** State wildlife, transportation, or environmental protection programs; Federal incentive programs through the Farm Bill or other USDA programs, Department of Interior, Department of Defense, or other Federal recovery or reward programs, including stimulus bills. Direct mitigation funds or payments of natural resource and environmental damage awards toward priority actions for wildlife adaptation may be used as a source of match funds. WCS grant funds may not be used for mitigation that is required under the law. Funds from private sources, corporate donors, foundations, and memberships may all count as matching funds.

**What counts as “in-kind” matching funds?** A contribution of goods, staff time, or services rather than cash. In-kind sources of match are non-fungible. In-kind matching funds are limited to a maximum of 50% of requested funds from WCS. Funds previously expended on a project or donations of property will not be accepted as matching funds. Funds received directly or indirectly from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation will not be accepted as a source of match funds.

**What counts as cash matching funds?** Funds secured through a contract, grant, award or direct donation of cash via a check or wire transfer. Cash sources are funds that can be applied to any project cost with flexibility i.e. fungible, unlike salary time or equipment for example.

**Can organizations submit multiple pre-proposals for different projects?** Yes, but only one per state, Commonwealth, or territory. Organizations can apply to both grant categories but can only be awarded one grant per grant cycle. Organizations may submit only one proposal per state, but may be a partner on proposals from other applicant organizations.

**Can the same project or organization receive funding again?** Previously funded organizations are eligible to apply for an Adaptation Implementation grant if the proposed work is different from what was funded in the past. However, previously funded organizations are eligible to apply for an Adaptation Mainstreaming grant whether or not their proposed work is different from what was previously funded.

**Can I re-apply for the same project if my proposal was not funded in a previous year’s grant cycle?** Yes, but be aware that some of the program’s priorities, minimum requirements, and application processes can change year-to-year.

**Will multi-state or regional level projects be considered?** Yes, we encourage applications for projects that address regional, landscape-scale needs for fish and wildlife conservation.

**Who will evaluate the proposals and make decisions on the grant awards?**

The Wildlife Conservation Society is responsible for the evaluation of all proposals and final decisions on grant awards. An external, national advisory committee comprising representatives from nonprofit conservation organizations, private foundations, academia, and State and Federal wildlife agencies assists WCS with the evaluation process.

**What is the source of funding for the WCS Climate Adaptation Fund?** A grant to WCS from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

**How does the grant proposal process work?** WCS utilizes a two-step evaluation process: 1) an open call for pre-proposals, and 2) a full proposal invited from a select number of pre-proposal applicants.

**When will pre-proposal applicants be notified if they have been selected to submit a full proposal?** We anticipate notifying all applicants of their pre-proposal's status eight to ten weeks after the submission deadline.

**When will award decisions be made?** By December 2022.

**If my project is funded, what requirements will I need to meet?** All successful applicants are required to provide WCS with a progress update every six months. Half of the pre-scheduled progress updates are verbal report-outs over the phone and the other half are written progress reports. WCS requires documentation of a secured 1:1 match for the project to release the first payment. Grantees are occasionally invited to participate in surveys, evaluation activities, communications efforts, and invited to peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and learning opportunities.

**How can I get more information on this process?** [The WCS Climate Adaptation Fund website](#) provides more information on the grant program, including a list of previously funded projects. If you have further questions, please contact WCS Climate Adaptation Fund program staff (see contact information below).

**What is the Wildlife Conservation Society?** The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS),

founded in 1895, saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. Our story began in the early 1900's when we successfully helped the American bison recover on the Western Plains. Today, we protect many of the world's iconic creatures here and abroad, including gorillas in the Congo, tigers in India, wolverines in the Yellowstone Rockies, and ocean giants in our world's amazing seascapes. Since our founding, we have forged the power of our global conservation work and the management of our five parks in New York City to create the world's most comprehensive conservation organization. We currently manage about 500 conservation projects in more than 60 countries in 16 global priority regions. With a commitment to protect 50 percent of the world's biodiversity, we manage 200 million acres of protected lands around the world, with more than 200 scientists on staff. The WCS parks in New York City inspire 4 million visitors each year, and help the city to educate millions of schoolchildren in science and conservation issues at our five living institutions in New York City on important issues affecting our planet. Our parks include: the Bronx Zoo, New York Aquarium, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo and Queens Zoo.

#### **IV. Instructions and Application for Submission of Pre-proposals**

Please read these instructions carefully, as well as all of the guidelines provided above.

Pre-proposals must be submitted no later than **April 8, 2022 at 7:00 PM Eastern Time / 6:00 PM Central Time / 4:00 PM Pacific Time**. Grant applicants will be notified by email that their application has been received.

Please use our [online application system](#) to register your organization and create a user account and submit your pre-proposal.

If you have applied before, do not create a new account for your organization.

Proposals submitted by regular mail or in any other electronic format than specified above will not be considered.

#### **Contacts for the Climate Adaptation Fund:**

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