Conservation Grant Project Pre-Proposal Guidelines

Organization may submit project proposals until May 1st that fulfill the goals of the Birding Classic and are within the following guidelines. These proposals will be reviewed and, if approved, will become part of a pre-approved list of projects eligible to receive Conservation Grants.

Proposed activities may include projects on public or private lands that provide some level of public access.

Projects should do one or more of the following:

- Benefit bird populations
- Protect or enhance areas important to birds
- Improve or enhance access for birders and wildlife watchers while protecting habitat for birds (e.g., creating a boardwalk, photography blind, or designated viewing area at a birding site can keep visitors restricted to certain areas allowing restored or native habitat to remain intact in other areas)
- Enhance or interpret the public's experience in nature to increase conservation awareness (e.g., interpretive signage can increase the public's understanding and knowledge of native wildlife, the dangers of invasive species, etc. allowing them to connect in a more meaningful way and have a better awareness of conservation issues and native species).

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SITES CONSIDERED FOR CONSERVATION GRANT PROPOSALS:

- Sites should be natural areas or have good restoration potential.
- There is no minimum or maximum size, but boundaries must be clearly definable and large enough to encompass birds' needs, such as areas for feeding, roosting, nesting, etc.
- Areas may be protected as a preserve, refuge, sanctuary, or with a conservation easement, and the area should be managed as native wildlife habitat.
- All types of land ownership will be considered, but private land can only be included if the owner agrees to a habitat management plan or the property is under a conservation easement and public access is allowed.

ALL PROPOSED PROJECTS MUST:

- Spend awarded funds within 18 months of receipt of funds and provide a short written report with digital photos showing project fulfillment at project completion to the Birding Classic staff.
- Indicate on the pre-proposal the Great Texas Wildlife Trail region (see map) in which the project occurs
- Be in long term or permanent conservation status
- Not include general overhead, funding salaries, or purchase of capital equipment (up to 50% of grant funds can be used for contract specialty services such as operating heavy machinery, herbicide application, professional landscaping services, etc.)
- Include an avian monitoring component or other related measurement to show conservation success. Examples of monitoring options include but are not limited to the following:
  - Bird census or bird banding (see www.gcbo.org/default.aspx/MenuItemID/202/MenuGroup/Research.htm for a description of census protocols for area search and banding stations from the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory)
  - Seasonal bird surveys and list submission to eBird
  - Conservation outreach data collected (increased sustainable visitor access, improved visitor understanding of conservation issues, visitor counts, etc.)
- Incorporate one or more of the following categories:
  - **Acquisition** of high priority habitats (see the Texas Conservation Action Plan's Priority Habitat list for your region) or areas of importance to large concentrations of breeding, migrating or wintering birds, or important avian sites that include:
    - Breeding sites for endangered species or high priority birds
    - Migrant stopover sites or staging areas for migrating birds
    - Hawk watch sites for migrating raptors
    - Sites with colonial-nesting birds
    - Sites with extensive populations of wintering waterfowl, grassland birds, and other species
    - Sites that include priority species from the Texas Conservation Action Plan and/or benefit state or federal threatened and endangered species or species of concern
    - Sites included on the American Bird Conservancy's Globally Important Bird Areas or National Audubon Society's Important Bird Areas (search by state for Texas)
  - **Restoration** of high priority habitats (see the Texas Conservation Action Plan's Priority Habitat list for your region)
  - **Enhancement** projects for wildlife viewing that allow some level of public access (Allowed for $5,000 and $1,000 project categories only; examples include boardwalks, viewing towers, blinds, site interpretation, etc.)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Seek matching funds. We are interested in projects that leverage grant dollars to accomplish more for conservation.
- Project work may commence as soon as written notification is received from TPWD Nature Tourism Manager, Shelly Plante, that you may begin work. Expect written notification in early summer each year post-Birding Classic.
- All grants will be paid in a single initial project payment, and project managers must provide a written report detailing project completion, success of project goals, and digital photos to TPWD Birding Classic staff within 18 months from date of funding.
- Organizations MAY NOT apply for future grant funding through the Birding Classic until all required post-project documentation is submitted to the Birding Classic staff. This consideration refers only to projects that have already met the 18-month deadline since their initial payment was received.

Your proposal may list several grant amount categories for a single project, indicating specifically how additional funds would change the scope of the project to increase your likelihood of being chosen.

Conservation Grant Amounts: Will be determined by total amount of funding raised through team registration fees and sponsorship donations with the goal of awarding grants in one or more of the following amounts:

- $20,000 (acquisition or restoration only)
- $10,000 (acquisition or restoration only)
- $5,000
- $1,000

Project Proposals Due: May 1st each year by 9:00 a.m. to
shelly.plante@tpwd.texas.gov or
Shelly Plante, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744

Call Shelly Plante at (512) 389-4500 with additional project proposal questions.

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