



Waterfowl Stamp Program FY16-17 Project Application Guidance Materials

Prepared by WDNR Bureau of Wildlife Management
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I. History of the Waterfowl Stamp

Waterfowl Stamp funds have been providing opportunities for waterfowl and wetland habitat management in Wisconsin since 1978. In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes s. 29.191(1)(b), *Use of Money from Fees*, 67% of the moneys received under s. 29.191(1), *Waterfowl Hunting Stamp*, shall be applied to “**developing, managing, preserving, restoring, and maintaining wetland habitat and for producing waterfowl and ecologically related species of wildlife.**” The remaining 33% is applied to “the development of waterfowl propagation areas within Canada which will provide waterfowl for this state and the Mississippi flyway.” Money for the development of waterfowl propagation areas shall be provided only to nonprofit organizations. All Waterfowl Stamp project proposals received are evaluated based on merit and the best projects are selected for funding according to pre-established criteria outlined in the following document.

All non-profit conservation organizations and units of government are eligible to apply for Waterfowl Stamp funds and will be equally and fairly evaluated. Habitat projects on public and private lands are eligible for funding, but individual landowners are not eligible to receive funds directly. Proposals that benefit wetland habitats and produce waterfowl and other ecologically-related species are eligible for funding consideration.

Matching funds, though strongly encouraged, are not required. However, regional or landscape-scale projects that involve multiple DNR work-units, multiple partners, and/or leverage additional sources of funding will be given higher consideration during proposal review.

Additional Waterfowl Stamp Objectives:

- To effectively and efficiently restore and manage habitat for waterfowl and ecological related species.
- To promote recognition of the Waterfowl Stamp, waterfowl management, and other wetland wildlife management needs.

II. General Waterfowl Stamp Funding Procedure

How to Submit Waterfowl Stamp Project Requests:

The first step in applying for Waterfowl Stamp funds is to make sure your proposed project meets all eligibility requirements. See Section III for more information on project types and eligibility.

All project requests must be submitted using the DNR Waterfowl Stamp Project Application Form, available from the Bureau of Wildlife Management in electronic or paper format. The application form differs between the three stamp programs, so if you plan on submitting requests for more than one program, make sure to use the correct application form. You must email Eddie Shea, Assistant Wetland Habitat Specialist, at Eddie.Shea@Wisconsin.gov in order to request a copy of the form. Complete detail on the project application form is critical to the fair evaluation of each project.

Completed project application forms should be returned to Eddie at Eddie.Shea@Wisconsin.gov. Hard copies may also be mailed to the attention of Eddie at the following address: Bureau of Wildlife Management (WM/6), P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. Please note that the default application form is optimized for electronic completion; if you would like to fill out an application by hand, please request a hard-copy version of the application. Projects will be reviewed, ranked, and recommended for funding by the Migratory Game Bird Committee and must receive final approval from the Wildlife Policy Team. **Project requests must be received by April 10th, 2015, in order to be eligible for funding consideration.**

Proposal Review

Please note that the Waterfowl Stamp Program does not use a quantitative formula to evaluate and rank project proposals. Project selection criteria can be found at the end of this document, after the project application instructions.

The Migratory Game Bird Committee reserves the right to make partial funding awards.

The Migratory Game Bird Committee includes DNR Wildlife Management, Law Enforcement, Science Services, Natural Heritage Conservation, and Customer Service Bureau staff, plus representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA – Wildlife Services, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, Ducks Unlimited, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Conservation Congress, Hunters Rights Coalition, and Green Bay Duck Hunters.

Funded Stamp Projects

All applicants will be notified of their funding status in June 2015. Applicants with approved projects will work with Wetland Program staff to finalize details of the project.

Funding for all approved Waterfowl Stamp projects will be for the FY16-17 DNR budget cycle, beginning July 1 2015 and ending 30 June 2017. Allotments will be awarded on an annual basis, to be used between the following time frames: Year 1 = 1 July 2015 through 30 June 2016 and Year 2 = 1 July 2016 through 30 June 2017.

Applicants receiving funding should begin project work in the fiscal year in which it was awarded, and make an attempt to complete the project as soon as feasibly possible. Project funding may be extended into the next fiscal year upon approval of the DNR Wetland Habitat Specialist. If further time is needed (i.e. a third fiscal year), approval must be granted by the Migratory Game Bird Committee and the WDNR Wildlife Policy Team.

DNR Projects: Funded projects will be assigned unique budget codes. Tracking the balance and appropriate use of the funds is the responsibility of the stamp project manager. Funded projects shall be entered into the DNR work-planning system, located in the Land Management System.

Non-DNR Projects: Funding for non-DNR Waterfowl Stamp projects is awarded via reimbursement for approved work activities. Before funding can be awarded to agencies and organizations outside of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, each party must agree to complete a cooperative agreement or MOU with the DNR. The cooperative agreement is signed by both the Department and the recipient organization or agency. It outlines the approved project proposal, active project period, budget, and reporting requirements. Cooperative agreements will be sent to the successful applicant along with information on the financial management of the approved project and procedures for requesting changes or reimbursement of project expenditures.

The following is the procedure for receipt of payment, as outline in the cooperative agreement signed by both parties: “WDNR shall provide payment to the Sponsor upon completion of the following to satisfaction of WDNR: (a) payment request has been made by the Sponsor along with a report detailing expenditures and accomplishments, (b) the Sponsor has provided WDNR with copies of invoices, bills, canceled checks and other documents which document the costs of and expenditures of the project, (c) verification by WDNR that project has been satisfactorily completed, and (d) evidence of contractor payment has been received if applicable. The Sponsor shall forfeit or repay funds where costs and expenditures have not been documented.”

Habitat restoration or enhancement practices that take place on private land require that the landowner(s) sign an agreement ensuring that the habitat (e.g., grassland, wetland) will remain in place for at least 10 years following practice installation. Electronic copies of the required conservation agreement can be requested from Assistant Wetland Habitat Specialist, Eddie Shea, at Eddie.Shea@Wisconsin.gov. The agreement must be signed by the landowner(s) and returned before stamp funds will be disbursed to cover project expenses. If the habitat practice would already be protected under an existing agreement or contract with another agency or organization for a period of at least 10 years following practice installation, a copy of that agreement or contract can be submitted instead.

All successful applicants: the receipt and expenditure of Waterfowl Stamp funding must be acknowledged in any reports, publications, and presentations.

Project Accomplishment Reporting

Applicants receiving funding for wetland restoration, enhancement and maintenance work are required to submit requested information for inclusion in the DNR wetland tracking database as soon as the project is finished and all payments have been made for associated project costs. Please note that failure to submit any wetland tracking information will result in future funding ineligibility. To access the wetland tracking form, or for questions regarding the form, please contact the Assistant Wetland Habitat Specialist at Eddie.Shea@Wisconsin.gov.

III. Eligibility Guidelines

Waterfowl Stamp Program – Eligible Project Priorities & Categories

*** See below for additional details ***

High priority will be given to projects that involve, in no particular order:

- Restoration or Enhancement of Wetland Hydrology (e.g. tile breaks, ditch plugs, ditch fills, scrapes, low-head berm creation, installation of water control structures or pumps)
- Major Maintenance (e.g. wetland infrastructure renovation or replacement)
- Intensive Management of Wetlands (e.g. invasive species control, conversion of vegetation communities, beaver control)
- Restoration of Nesting Habitat (e.g. restoration or establishment of prairie habitat for nesting dabbling ducks, removal of fencerows and associated woody vegetation to create larger blocks of contiguous grassland habitat)

Note: Nesting habitat proposals that make a clear connection with quality brooding wetlands are more likely to receive funding.

Other Waterfowl Stamp project types that are generally of a lower funding priority, but may still be eligible for funding, include administrative support, wetland development (i.e. creation of flowages, or creation of a wetland where one historically did not exist), land acquisitions, research, routine wetland maintenance, and wetland management equipment. There will be a funding priority for wetland projects that focus on waterfowl production habitat as their highest value, but there will also be an emphasis given to those projects with migration habitat values.

Ineligible Projects & Practices for the Waterfowl Stamp Program:

- Funding permanent or full-time project positions, *except* funds may be used to support a Farm Bill Biologist partnership. Funds may also be used to cover the salary of short-term/temporary field positions to cover their time spent on the project.
- Wood duck boxes
- Equipment not related to habitat management (e.g., digital cameras)
- Stand-alone equipment repair project proposals

IV. Stamp Application Instructions for FY16-17

*** Application deadline is April 10th, 2015 ***

General Information: Before filling out the application, please thoroughly review the information provided in this document, including the following instructions. Please fill out the attached application completely. This information will be used to evaluate your project proposal. Include any additional documents, such as aerial photographs or maps. Please be succinct when describing and justifying your project. The form is designed so that applicants can only enter information in certain fields; these fields will automatically expand as you enter text.

Section 1, Project Title & Summary: Provide a project title that is accurate and concise, using no more than 10 words. Provide the total cost of the project and include a breakdown of requested and contributed funds. Be sure to provide the total anticipated cost-share contribution, including both secured and unsecured funds. You may be asked to provide proof of secured match dollars.

Section 2, Applicant Information: Be sure to fill in every field in this section. It is important to include a mailing address, phone number (with area code), and email address so that you can be contacted if additional information is needed. If a person other than the applicant is to be the project lead and contact for project coordination and correspondence, please include their information.

Section 3a, Project Type: Select the ONE project type that best fits your project. A more thorough description of each project type can be found in Section III of this document. If you are unable to determine what your project's best fit is, please contact WDNR Wetlands Management staff for assistance.

Section 3b, Project Area Location & Acreage: List all of the counties in which you plan to utilize Stamp dollars if your project is funded. If any State Wildlife, Fishery, or Natural Areas or State Parks will be affected by the work you do, please note them in the space provided. Provide the project acreage (the acreage that will be actively managed or developed); if you do not know the exact acreage amount, please estimate. If the project area is part of a larger property, please list that property's acreage. Also, indicate whether the project is impacting private land and/or public land and provide the associated acreage. Note: acreage requirements may not apply for Information & Education and Research proposals. Finally, provide the legal description of the proposed project site in Township-Range-Section format, if applicable.

Section 3c, Description of Project Site: This background information provides reviewers with a better context by which to rank each project. Please describe the habitat type and current land use of the project area, as well as that of adjacent areas (within a few miles). Note any activities that currently occur in the project area. Next, select the option(s) which most closely applies to the legal status or level of protection of the project area.

Section 3d, Proximity to Established Focus Areas, Project Boundaries, and Conservation Opportunity Areas: Indicate whether the project area is part of an existing designated project boundary and indicate the project(s). Examples of designated project boundaries include DNR Habitat Restoration Areas (e.g. GHRA, WPHRA), USDA SAFE Project Areas, and Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan and Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Indicate whether the project will impact any Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and list up to ten such species. Finally, indicate whether the project area is open or closed to waterfowl hunting.

Section 4, Project Description, Goals, and Objectives: Describe in some detail what the planned accomplishments of the project will be. What exactly is planned and how will it be accomplished? If you are purchasing equipment,

where possible, please list the vendor as well as the options that are available for the intended purchase. Also indicate whether the equipment will be rented or loaned to private citizens and what type of control or rental processes will be involved. Next, identify the project goals and objectives by identifying the expected outcome of the project. Justify the need for the project to be funded, why it is being undertaken, what problem(s) the project will address, and how it will benefit waterfowl or their associated habitat types. Lastly, indicate if the project has any special considerations such as human safety, or if you wish to recognize unique partnerships.

Section 5, Project Timeline: Briefly describe the work schedule for the project, what is going to be done, and when it is anticipated to be completed.

Section 6, Evaluation & Monitoring: This information is collected to indicate a project's likelihood of success. Describe any planned follow-up or future required maintenance that will be conducted following project completion, or how the project will fit into larger established project area goals. Also describe if and how the project's success will be monitored and evaluated following project completion.

Section 7, Budget: All costs associated with the project should be described here, including details on cost-shared efforts. Keep in mind that projects leveraging a higher percentage of cost-share will be given higher consideration. The project budget should show reviewers how funds will be allocated and spent for each part of the project. Enter the projected itemized costs for each category, divided accordingly into (1) requested Stamp funds, (2) estimated cost-share contribution from applicant organization or individual, and (3) projected in-kind contributions from other partners or sources. NOTE: most projects will not have costs in all categories. For example, LTE (limited-term employment) costs should list the anticipated number of hours, the cost per hour, and associated fringe or benefits. *Please keep in mind that permanent staff time is not eligible for funding using Stamp dollars, and may not be used or considered as matching or cost-shared dollars (this includes DNR SEG-funded positions).* New this year, we ask that you calculate the cost per acre for just the requested stamp funds as well as including anticipated cost-share contributions. Organizations and partners may donate labor or work with volunteer time; the value of donated labor is \$12 / hour.

Contributing Partners & Amounts: indicate the other sources of funding that you have secured for the project, *not including* requests from other stamp programs. If you have sources that you expect will provide funding, but you have no commitment at this point, list the source and indicate that it is unsecured.

Partial Funding: be sure to indicate whether you are willing to accept a portion of the money requested and what portion you will accept. Willingness to accept a portion of the money may get you something rather than nothing when budgets are tight. Be sure to indicate how the project goals and objectives, as well as any anticipated match dollars, will change if partial funding is awarded.

Additional Information, Maps, and Links for Waterfowl Stamp projects

Below is a list of helpful resources for use when filling out a Waterfowl Stamp Project Proposal:

- The Wisconsin Plan of the Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture (March 1992) (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/documents/wiplan.pdf>)
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture Implementation Plan (<http://www.uppermissgreatlakesjv.org/docs/JV2007All-BirdPlanFinal2-11-08.pdf>)
- Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) Conservation Opportunity Areas (http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/documents/WAP_Implementation.pdf)
- Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/landlegacy/>)

- Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/profiles.asp>)

V. FY14-15 Waterfowl Stamp Program Project Ranking & Review Criteria

The Waterfowl Stamp Program does not make use of a quantitative formula in order to evaluate and rank project proposals. Instead, the evaluators make use of primary and secondary project selection criteria as listed below. Applicants are not required to provide data for the following project selection criteria.

A. Primary Project Selection Criteria

- Location: preferred project locations include Priority I Focus Areas identified in the Wisconsin Plan of the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture. Projects in other locations may be considered for review if they are highly valuable based on other criteria. See the following link for maps and descriptions of Focus Areas and priority townships:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/documents/wiplan.pdf>
- Cost-effectiveness
- Expected production per acre
- Long-term maintenance needs

B. Secondary Project Selection Criteria

- Matching/leveraging funds
- Hunter use
- Protection of previous investments
- Ecological value
- Honoring commitments
- Longevity
- Long-term management agreements
- Net functional wetland gains
- Human safety
- Potential impacts on non-target properties
- Partnerships
- Multi-species benefits: especially note focal species identified in the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture Implementation Plan. Additionally, note Species of Greatest Conservation Need contained within Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan.