



Pheasant Stamp Program FY16-17 Project Application Guidance Materials

Prepared by Scott Walter & Krista McGinley, WDNR Upland Wildlife Program
Revised February 2015

I. Overview of the Pheasant Stamp Program

Pheasant Stamp funds have been providing opportunities for ring-necked pheasant management in Wisconsin since 1993. In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes s. 20.370(1)(hr), *Pheasant Restoration*, 40% of the moneys received under s. 29.191(2), *Pheasant Hunting Stamp*, shall be applied to “**developing, managing, preserving, restoring, and maintaining the wild pheasant population in the state.**” The remaining 60% goes toward the management of the State Game Farm, which raises pheasants for release on public hunting grounds. All Pheasant Stamp project proposals received are evaluated based on merit and the best projects are selected for funding according to pre-established criteria and funding pools outlined in this document.

All non-profit conservation organizations and units of government are eligible to apply for Pheasant Stamp funds and will be equally and fairly evaluated. Habitat projects on both public and private lands are eligible for funding, but individual landowners are not eligible to receive funds directly. Projects that involve multiple DNR work-units, multiple partners, and/or leverage additional sources of funding will be given higher consideration during proposal review.

II. Dedicated Funding Pools and Allocations

To ensure broad availability of Pheasant Stamp revenue during the FY16-17 biennium, funds will be allocated to individual funding pools. Four internal WDNR funding pools will receive automatic allocations, according to Table 1, and project expenditures will be tracked using appropriate budget procedures so that adherence to established project priorities (below) can be verified. Non-DNR entities can apply for Pheasant Stamp funding via the Cooperator Pool. Proposals from cooperators will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria described below, and funds will be allocated, beginning with the highest-ranked proposal, until funds in this pool are exhausted. The WDNR Pheasant Advisory Committee reserves the right to award partial funding for cooperator projects; applicants should note on their application whether partial funding is acceptable and at what level.

Table 1: Funding pools and allocations for FY16-17 Pheasant Stamp funds.

Funding Pool	Allocation (% of total funds available)	Automatic/Competitive
Central Office Coordination of the Pheasant Management Program	7%	Automatic
Cooperator (non-DNR) Pool	6%	Competitive
DNR – Bureau of Wildlife Management	47%	Automatic
DNR – Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation	3%	Automatic
Farm Bill Biologist Program	37%	Automatic

^a Percentages will be converted to dollar values when revenue projections are received from the Bureau of Finance.

^b To be allocated among BWM Districts as follows: Northern District = 10%; Southern District = 40%; West-central District = 25%; Northeast District = 25%.

Proposals for relevant research projects or information/education endeavors that provide benefits to pheasant conservation efforts are welcome, as outlined in Section III below, and will be evaluated prior to allocation of funding to the above-listed pools. If any Research or Information/Education proposals receive funding, that funding will be provided proportionally from the five established funding pools, as indicated by the allocations in Table 1.

III. Eligibility Guidelines and Program Priorities

The following section details eligibility criteria and defines project priorities for the Pheasant Stamp program. All projects must follow eligibility guidelines and address listed project priorities, regardless of the funding pool being utilized. Project priorities are outlined in greater detail below.

Eligible Project Priorities, Categories, and Funding Caps for the Pheasant Stamp Program

*** See below for additional details ***

- Habitat development, management, restoration, and maintenance
- Information & Education
- Equipment (*not to exceed 15% of the total allotment within each funding pool; 1:1 match requirement*)
- Research & Monitoring

Ineligible Projects & Practices for the Pheasant Stamp Program

- Stand-alone invasive species management projects that have no clear link to wild pheasant populations (exception: prescribed fire).
- Funding permanent or full-time project positions except funds may be used to support the 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.
- Equipment not related to habitat management (e.g., digital cameras)
- Habitat projects within the Greater Prairie-chicken range (see map)
- Seed farms
- Stand-alone equipment repair project proposals

Habitat Development, Management, Restoration, and Maintenance

This category covers the management of existing habitat and the development of new habitat intended to benefit wild pheasant populations in Wisconsin. Funding should be directed to habitat enhancement efforts on lands that support wild pheasant populations, but areas that are stocked with DNR game farm pheasants are also eligible. While small-scale projects on individual properties will be considered for funding, landscape-scale projects that can affect regional wild pheasant populations by improving or creating nesting, brood-rearing, or wintering habitat are encouraged and will receive higher consideration during proposal review. In addition, only projects occurring within the Priority Pheasant Habitat Management Area (see map, below) are eligible for funding.

Projects that overlap with priorities and Conservation Opportunity Areas for grassland Species of Greatest Conservation Need found within Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan are also encouraged (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/actionplan.html>).

Examples of habitat practices that are eligible for funding are: grassland habitat development, management, and maintenance; projects intended to increase grassland patch size; biofuel harvest opportunities which may benefit wild pheasants; establishment of winter cover (emergent wetland vegetation, shrub plantings, shelterbelts); etc. Authors should describe how the project complements existing local pheasant habitat, and addresses perceived limiting factors. For example, winter cover that is created within a grassland complex will be more valuable to pheasants than the same cover created in the absence of surrounding nesting/brood-rearing habitat.

Also, Pheasant Stamp funds will not be allocated for habitat management or manipulation on Bird Hunting Preserves (Classes A & B). Private landowners who receive cost-share as part of a DNR- or NGO-funded Pheasant Stamp project will be required to enter a ten-year agreement with the Department stipulating that the property will not be licensed as a bird hunting preserve. This applies to all expenditures of Pheasant Stamp dollars. Violation will result in the recipient repaying the entire allocation.

Equipment (not to exceed 15% of the total allotment for FY16-17 in any established funding pool; 1:1 match requirement)

Equipment purchased, repaired, or maintained using Pheasant Stamp funds must be used at least 75% of the time for the management, development, or restoration of wild pheasant populations or their associated habitat. Applications requesting Pheasant Stamp funding for equipment purchase must demonstrate at least an equivalent (1:1) contribution of matching funds. Stand-alone equipment repair projects are not eligible for funding. The 15% cap on equipment purchase/maintenance/repair costs may be waived only by the Pheasant Advisory Committee provided the project authors, BWM District Wildlife Supervisors, or the NHC Field Operations Section Chief provide sufficient justification that the work is necessary to meet pheasant habitat restoration goals.

Cooperative and coordinated equipment purchase and use is strongly encouraged.

Information & Education

This category includes the sponsoring of workshops or seminars designed to promote the understanding and management of wild pheasants and their associated wildlife habitat components, as well as educational events, publications, outreach pamphlets, and projects related to all aspects of wild pheasant ecology and management. Cooperator project proposals for workshops, classes, conferences, etc. must include the total cost of the event and the fee charged for participants, if any. Possible I&E funding categories include:

- Private landowner workshops geared toward the management of wild pheasants and grasslands
- Partnerships that promote youth pheasant hunting and the development of hunting skills (Learn to Hunt or Mentored Hunt coordination, etc.)
- Educational events or displays promoting an understanding of pheasant ecology

Research

The following are examples of current pheasant-related research needs in the Upland Wildlife program:

- Impacts of terrestrial invasive species management on pheasant population demography on managed lands
- Impact of biofuel development on pheasant habitat and populations
- Development of a Pheasant Stamp habitat project evaluation process
- Development and testing of an improved statewide pheasant monitoring system
- Improving the delivery/effectiveness of private lands conservation programs for pheasants in Wisconsin DNR

Other research proposals on topics that are not listed here may be considered by the Pheasant Advisory Committee. Please contact Scott Walter, WDNR Upland Wildlife Ecologist, at either (608) 267-7861 or Scott.Walter@Wisconsin.gov prior to submitting a research proposal.

IV. General Pheasant Stamp Funding Procedures

Pheasant Stamp Project Requests: Cooperator (non-DNR) and Research Projects

For cooperators or those applying for Pheasant Stamp funding to support research, the first step in applying for Pheasant 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 Pheasant 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 the Assistant Upland Wildlife Ecologist at Krista.McGinley@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 the project.

Completed project application forms should be emailed to Krista at Krista.McGinley@Wisconsin.gov. Hard copies may also be mailed to the attention of Krista 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 send an email requesting a hard-copy version of the application. Projects will be reviewed, ranked, and recommended for funding by the internal staff of the Upland Wildlife Program as well as by the Pheasant Advisory 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 consideration.

Proposal Review: Cooperator (non-DNR), Research, and Information/Education Projects

Each Pheasant Stamp project proposal is subject to a two-step ranking and review process. During the first step, internal Upland Wildlife staff score the proposal based on objective criteria. During the second step, members of the Pheasant Advisory Committee score the proposal based on subjective criteria. Detailed evaluation criteria can be found at the end of this document, after the project application instructions. Project scores are combined and projects are ranked. Projects receiving higher scores will receive first consideration during selection of projects for funding. Applicants may be asked to come before the Committee to make a presentation about their project proposal, particularly for large-scale projects. The Pheasant Advisory Committee reserves the right to make partial funding awards.

The Pheasant Advisory Committee includes WDNR Wildlife, Natural Heritage Conservation, Forestry, Law Enforcement, and Science Services Bureau staff, plus representatives from Pheasants Forever, Wings Over Wisconsin, the Conservation Congress Wild Turkey and Upland Study Committee, The Nature Conservancy, and the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission.

Funded Stamp Projects

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

Funding for all approved Pheasant Stamp projects will be for the FY16-17 DNR budget cycle, beginning 1 July 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.

DNR Projects: Pheasant Stamp funds allocated to individual Bureau of Wildlife Management Districts and the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation will be assigned unique, individual budget codes, and funds will be made available by 1 July 2015. Tracking the use of funds and ensuring they are invested in accordance with the eligibility guidelines and project priorities documented herein is the responsibility of individual BWM District Wildlife Supervisors and the NHC Field Operations Section Chief. Clear annual reporting of expenditures that provides detail regarding projects and practices completed within the scope of established eligibility guidelines and priorities will be important. BWM District Wildlife Supervisors and the NHC Field Operations Section Chief are required to have projects approved by their District BWM or NHC Pheasant Advisory Committee member prior to engaging in project activities or expending funds. Committee members may choose to solicit input from the full Committee regarding proposed projects which do not clearly conform to eligibility guidelines or project priorities as established in this document.

Non-DNR Projects: **Funding for non-DNR Pheasant 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 individual. 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 outlined 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 Upland Wildlife Ecologist, Krista McGinley, at Krista.McGinley@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 of Pheasant Stamp funding must be acknowledged in any reports, publications, and presentations and be shown for habitat work and equipment acquisitions using available "Your Pheasant Stamp Dollars at Work" signs and/or stickers (provided upon request).

Project Accomplishment Reporting

A project accomplishment report is **required** for all funded projects at the end of each fiscal year in which funding was used. Accomplishment reports are due to the Bureau of Wildlife Management by **September 30th** each year. Project managers, BWM District Wildlife Supervisors, and the NHC Field Operations Section Chief are encouraged to complete and submit these reports as soon as each fiscal year's work is complete. Accomplishment reports are vital to the Pheasant Stamp program, since staff use the information to show hunters, partner groups, and other constituents what types of projects are being approved and how the funds are being spent.

Please note that failure to submit accomplishment reports will result in future funding ineligibility. Overdue accomplishment reports will need to be approved by DNR Upland Wildlife staff.

V. Stamp Application Instructions for Cooperator, Research, and Information/Education Projects

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

General Information: Before filling out the application, please thoroughly review all 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 Upland Wildlife staff for assistance.

Section 3b, Project Origin & Acreage: New this year, we will be tracking the DNR District in which the proposed work will take place. The Bureau of Wildlife Management divides its operations into four districts, rather than the five regions other bureaus may utilize. 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. Indicate the status of any wild pheasants within the proposed project area. Finally, indicate whether the project area is open or closed to pheasant 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 pheasants or their associated habitat type. 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 Pheasant Stamp projects:

Below is a list of helpful resources on Wisconsin Species of Greatest Conservation Need, WAP Conservation Opportunity Areas, DNR Land Legacy Reports, and more:

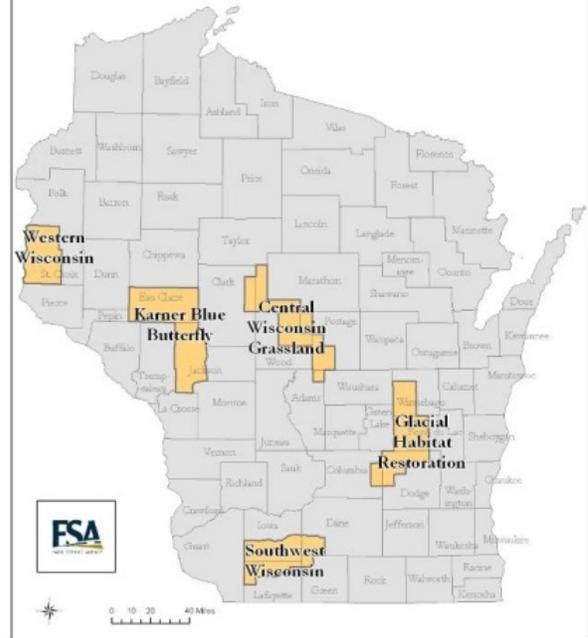
- Pheasant Habitat Management Priority Area
- Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) Conservation Opportunity Areas (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/actionplan.html>)
- Species of Greatest Conservation Need (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/profiles.asp>)

- DNR Land Legacy Reports (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/landlegacy/>)
- USDA SAFE Project Boundaries

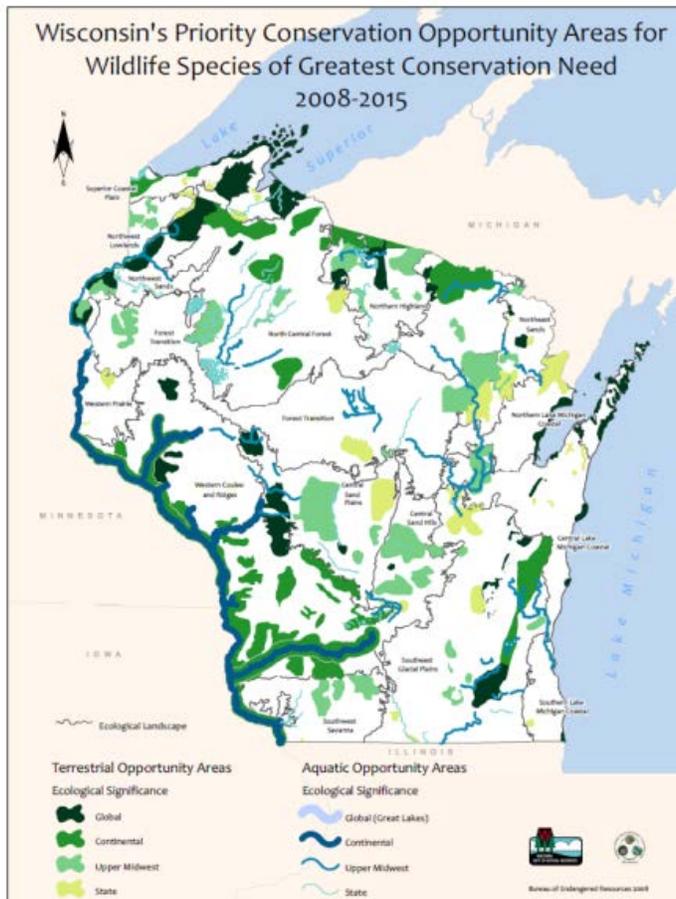
Priority Pheasant Habitat Management Area (light shading) and Ineligible Greater Prairie Chicken Management Area (dark shading)



2008 Approved SAFE Projects (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement)



Wisconsin's Priority Conservation Opportunity Areas for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need 2008-2015



FY16-17

Pheasant Stamp Program

Cooperator, Research, and Information/Education Project

Ranking & Review Criteria

Prepared by Scott Walter & Krista McGinley, WDNR Upland Wildlife Program

Revised February 2015

The following two-step criteria are an important aspect of determining which Pheasant Stamp projects are funded, and as a result, applicants should closely review the following project evaluation process to ensure that their proposals clearly address all applicable criteria. In addition, applications will be evaluated to ensure that the expected benefits to wild pheasants are reasonable, and that the project is likely to succeed based on the project objectives, methods, budget, work plan, and monitoring plan, as well as the capacity of the grantee.

A. Internal Upland Wildlife Evaluation – total of 40 points possible (mark the appropriate scores)

#1: Does the proposed project clearly state or describe a benefit to wild pheasants? This could be a direct benefit in the case of HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals, or a secondary benefit brought about by helping to educate others about conservation, improving scientific knowledge, or increasing local or landscape-scale conservation initiatives in the case of INFORMATION, EDUCATION & RESEARCH proposals.

Yes = 10 points No = 0 points)

#2: Is the proposed project within an existing Habitat Restoration Area or similar focus area, such as the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, USDA SAFE project area, or Conservation Opportunity Area (see map and links, above)?

Yes = 10 points No = 0 points)

#3: Will the proposed project potentially benefit Species of Greatest Conservation Need or other at-risk species, in addition to the direct benefit to wild pheasants? If so, how many species?

≥ 5 species = 6 points 3-5 species = 4 points
 1-2 species = 2 points 0 species = 0 points

#4: For INFORMATION, EDUCATION & RESEARCH proposals only: Does the proposal address a need identified in the Project Eligibility & Writing Guidance document?

Yes = 8 points No = 0 points)

#5: For HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals only: What is the current level of land protection? For example, is the land under permanent protection or some form of short-term land use agreement?

Permanent protection = 2 points
 Short-term land-use agreement = 1 point
 No protection = 0 points

- #6: For HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals only: Is the project area open to hunting of wild pheasants?
- Open to hunting = 2 points
 - Open to hunting with some restrictions = 1 point
 - Closed to hunting = 0 points
- #7: For HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals only: What is the status of wild pheasants within the proposed project area?
- Land supports only wild pheasants = 2 points
 - Land supports both wild and stocked pheasants = 1 point
 - Land supports only stocked pheasants = 0 points
- #8: How many other partners or organizations are participating in or contributing to the proposed project?
- >3 = 2 points
 - 1-3 = 1 point
 - 0 = 0 points
- #9: Does the proposed project leverage other secure funding sources (i.e. Federal Farm Bill, NGOs, landowner contribution, in-kind, etc.)? If so, by what percentage of the total project cost?
- >25% = 4 points
 - <25% = 2 points
 - No match = 0 points
- #10a: For HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals only: What is the total cost per acre (to be calculated using Stamp funds only)?
- <\$300/acre = 2 points
 - \$300-500/acre = 1 point
 - \$500/acre = 0 points

Total Internal Score = ___ / 40 possible

B. Wild Pheasant Management Committee Evaluation – total of 40 points possible (circle the appropriate scores)

- #1: Overall benefit to the population of wild pheasants in Wisconsin (i.e. the proposed project work will benefit wild pheasants; the objectives are achievable, etc.):
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- #2: Proposal is clear and easy to understand, provides enough detail to adequately evaluate project based on ranking criteria, and demonstrates clearly defined objectives, achievable timeline and goals, and measures of success:
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

#3: Long-term benefits of the proposed project exist (i.e., the goals and / or results are sustainable beyond the funded Stamp period, the project proposal demonstrates the applicant's ability to sustain the project objectives based on past success or dedication to success, etc.). For HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals, will the project add habitat perceived to be limiting to the local pheasant population?:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#4: Is the provision of stamp dollars vital to the completion of the project? Is the timing of the project particularly critical? More points shall be given to a project that has high potential to directly impact or lead to direct positive impacts on wild pheasant populations at both the project and landscape scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

#5: For INFORMATION & EDUCATION proposals: does the project provide for a measure or evaluation of success, such as attendance or response from the public? For RESEARCH proposals: does the project provide for analysis and interpretation of results relating directly to the project objectives? For HABITAT & EQUIPMENT proposals: does the project have evaluation and monitoring goals which apply directly to the project objectives and wild pheasants, and does it provide a verifiable, objective measure of project success?:

1 2 3 4

Overall Project Score = ____ / 80 possible



Wild Turkey Stamp Program FY16-17 Project Application Guidance Materials

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Revised February 2015

I. Overview of the Wild Turkey Stamp Program

Wild Turkey Stamp funds have been providing opportunities for wild turkey management in Wisconsin since 1996. In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes s. 20.370(1)(ht), *Wild Turkey Restoration*, all moneys received under s. 29.164(a), *Wild Turkey Hunting Stamps*, shall be applied to “**developing, managing, preserving, restoring, and maintaining the wild turkey population in the state.**” Specific priorities for the Wild Turkey Stamp program were defined as part of the Wisconsin Wild Turkey Management Plan revision process and approved by the WDNR Turkey Advisory Committee and Wildlife Policy Team. Priorities are designed to maximize benefits for wild turkeys, turkey management, and turkey hunters across the state, and vary geographically given differences in habitat quality and hunter access. Allocation of funds for FY16-17 will reflect these priorities, which are described in detail below.

All non-profit conservation organizations and units of government are eligible to apply for Wild Turkey Stamp funding and will be equally and fairly evaluated. Habitat projects on both public and private lands are eligible for funding, but individual landowners are not eligible to receive funds directly. Please note that lands that are closed to all turkey hunting are not eligible to receive Wild Turkey Stamp funds, and applications for projects taking place on such lands will not be evaluated.

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

II. Wild Turkey Stamp Funding Priorities and Project Eligibility

Ineligible Projects for the Wild Turkey Stamp Program:

- Stand-alone invasive species management projects that have no clear link to wild turkey populations
- Food plots for wild turkeys
- Funding permanent or full-time project positions except funds may be used to support the 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.
- Non-habitat management-related equipment (e.g., digital cameras)
- Stand-alone equipment repair project proposals
- Projects on land closed to all turkey hunting (projects on private land are acceptable as long as some level of turkey hunting is allowed)

Wild Turkey Stamp Program – Eligible Project Priorities and Funding Pools

The following details eligibility information and project priorities for the use of Wild Turkey Stamp revenues. First priority shall be given to those projects outlined as annually-funded projects, and funds for these projects will be allocated automatically at the funding levels given. Other priorities for the Turkey Stamp program vary geographically and/or topically, and funds will be allocated via a competitive application process within four

established funding pools: 1) Habitat Development and Management in Heavily-Forested Areas of Northern and Central Wisconsin, 2) Habitat Development and Management in Southern Wisconsin, 3) Information and Education, and 4) Research and Monitoring. Applications should clearly indicate which of these priorities their project addresses, and will compete only for funds allocated within that specific funding pool. If the availability of funds within any of the four funding pools exceeds that allocated to approved projects, remaining funds will be allocated to other pools according to given percentages. Annually funded projects and eligibility requirements for competitive projects within each category are described in greater detail below.

Cooperator (non-DNR) Proposals

The successful restoration and management of wild turkeys in Wisconsin has benefitted greatly from the cooperative efforts of numerous federal, state, and county government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Staff from these organizations continue to provide lasting benefits for wild turkeys and turkey hunting in the state via focused habitat management, hunter recruitment, outreach and education, research, and hunter access efforts, and Wild Turkey Stamp funds have been instrumental in supporting this work. For the FY16-17 biennium, \$100,000 will be dedicated to funding cooperator (non-DNR) projects. Cooperator proposals must address one of the Wild Turkey Stamp project priorities described below (habitat development and management in heavily forested areas of northern and central Wisconsin, habitat development and management in southern Wisconsin, information and education, or research and monitoring), and will compete for this dedicated pool of funding only with other Cooperator proposals. Cooperator proposals that do not receive funding from this dedicated pool will automatically compete for funds within the pool established for the project priority category that describes their project.

Projected Wild Turkey Stamp revenue will be allocated among project priorities as follows:

Project	Allocation (% of total funds available)	Automatic/Competitive
Cooperator (non-DNR) Projects	\$100,000	Automatic
Statewide Coordination of the Wild Turkey Management Program	15%*	Automatic
Hunter Access to Private Lands (VPA-HIP Program)	2%*	Automatic
Habitat Development and Management in Heavily-forested Areas of Northern and Central Wisconsin	25%*	Competitive
Habitat Development and Management in Southern Wisconsin	40%*	Competitive
Information & Education	8%*	Competitive
Research & Monitoring	10%*	Competitive

* Percentages reflect allocation of funds remaining after initial annual allocation of \$100,000 to cooperator (non-DNR) projects

Annually Funded Projects

- Statewide Coordination of the Wild Turkey Program
 - o Amount: 15% of projected FY16-17 Wild Turkey Stamp revenue

- Limited-term Employee support: duties include management-related activities such as coordination of the Wild Turkey Stamp program, publication development, wildlife stamp art contest coordination, the development and updates of various factsheets and publications, summarizing harvest and other population information, and other duties as needed.
 - Statewide turkey registration: includes costs associated with the maintenance of phone-in and internet registration systems.
 - Statewide turkey hunter survey: includes the annual turkey hunter surveys coordinated by DNR Science Services. Survey results assist in establishing harvest permit levels and provide important information regarding turkey hunter behavior and opinions regarding turkey season frameworks.
- Hunter Access to Private Lands
- Amount: 2% of projected FY16-17 Wild Turkey Stamp revenue
 - Expanding access to private land serves to increase hunter opportunity, maintains a high-quality hunting experience by minimizing interference and conflict among hunters in the field, and may improve hunter recruitment and retention. These funds will provide support for existing Wisconsin DNR private lands access efforts (currently, the Voluntary Public Access – Habitat Incentive Program) in order to expand opportunities for turkey hunters in the state.

Wild Turkey Stamp Program – Project Priorities

Habitat Development and Management in Heavily-Forested Areas of Northern and Central Wisconsin

The abundance of turkeys in Wisconsin varies at the landscape scale, in response to local land use and the dispersion of general cover types. Specifically, abundance is greatest in areas with between 30% and 70% forest cover (with remaining areas being open cover types such as cropland or grass). While much of southern Wisconsin falls within this range, forest covers >70% of the landscape across broad areas of northern and central Wisconsin (shaded area, Figure 1). The lack of brood-rearing cover and winter food availability are therefore believed to limit the distribution and abundance of wild turkeys in this landscape. Wild Turkey Stamp funds will address these limiting factors directly by supporting the maintenance of forest openings and trails, restoration and maintenance of grassland and barrens habitats, and establishment of wildlife shrubs. For barrens projects, only areas within ½-mile of a block of mature forest cover at least 5 acres in size are eligible for funding. Authors will therefore need to estimate the proportion of the barrens management project (e.g., prescribed burn) that fits this criterion, and use this estimate to prorate their funding request.

Project authors should consider how current and recent timber harvesting activities may provide cost-effective opportunities to manage or enhance openings created by these activities (e.g., skid trails, log landings) to provide improved habitat for turkeys. The goal should be to restore or maintain herbaceous cover in openings or on trails to provide nesting and brood-rearing habitat for turkeys. Seeding, discing, interseeding, burning, mowing, and herbicide application are all approved practices. Seed mixes used on trails, in openings, or for grassland establishment should be appropriate to the site, but should include at least a 50% forb component in order to facilitate insect production for poults. Funds may also be used to support planting shrubs in openings or along trails. The species of shrub planted should be native, appropriate to the site, and should typically retain fruits or catkins into late winter (examples: American highbush cranberry, American hazelnut, winterberry) to ensure these foods are available when the ground is snow-covered.

Equipment purchases or repairs are eligible for funding within the Northern Habitat pool, but allotments will not exceed 15% of the total funds available within this pool. Equipment purchased or repaired must directly support the habitat work described above.

The agricultural landscape of southern Wisconsin contains a fairly even dispersion of open and forested habitats that provides abundant food resources as well as an interwoven fabric of nesting, brood-rearing, and roosting habitat. This landscape is hence capable of supporting abundant turkey populations. Although, as a generalist species, turkeys can utilize many different forest and grassland/agricultural habitats throughout their life cycle, focused investment of Wild Turkey Stamp funds toward specific habitat goals in this landscape will maximize resulting benefits for turkeys. Eligible projects in southern Wisconsin (stippled area, Figure 1) will seek to 1) regenerate oak forests, 2) restore or enhance oak savannas, or 3) restore or enhance grassland communities available as nesting and brood-rearing habitat for wild turkeys (within ½-mile from a forest or savannah patch at least 5 acres in size).

Oak regeneration: Mast production by oak trees provides a seasonally valuable food source for wild turkeys and other wildlife. Acorns can comprise over half of the turkey diet during the autumn months, and may continue to provide high-energy food during the critical winter months in the absence of significant snow cover. While oak/hickory forests are common across southern Wisconsin, regeneration of oaks is often poor, largely due to the lack of appropriate disturbance regimes. Many landowners also employ silvicultural practices that favor succession to a more mesic Northern Hardwoods forest community. Long-term, this trend could increase the structural and compositional homogeneity of forests in southern Wisconsin, lead to lower species diversity in the plant and animal communities, and impact granivorous wildlife species such as the wild turkey. The application of appropriate silvicultural techniques can improve oak regeneration within stands and help ensure the maintenance of this important forest community on our landscape.

The successional replacement of oak forests with later-successional communities is a landscape-level issue with implications for wild turkeys and other forest wildlife species. Stimulating oak regeneration and management on public and private lands across southern Wisconsin therefore provides the best opportunity to benefit turkeys and increase diversity of the forest community. While stand-alone oak habitat projects on public or private land will be considered for funding, priority will be given to those projects that utilize Wild Turkey Stamp funds to promote landscape-level adoption of oak silviculture. Projects that seek to directly apply oak management across significant acreage and/or on multiple sites, or that promote oak management through partnership building, cost-sharing for practices that benefit oak communities, networking, outreach, educational efforts, or social research aimed at identifying receptive landowners or improving marketing and communication strategies that promote oak silviculture on private lands will receive greater consideration than projects focused at smaller scales.

Applicants should clearly communicate how their project will lead to improved oak management within the focus region. Landscape-level project proposals must provide a realistic assessment of how funding is expected to increase oak prevalence on project acres and/or increase adoption of specific oak management practices by target landowners. Site-specific habitat project proposals must describe current stand conditions and relate how funded management actions (e.g., Timber Stand Improvement, prescribed fire, thinning, scarification) would lead to increased importance of oak on the site. Reforestation (planting or direct seeding of oaks) projects are eligible for funding, but authors are encouraged to consider how reforestation efforts relate to other land management goals in the area. For example, projects that would restore forest cover in areas where grassland restoration and management are explicit goals (e.g., SAFE project areas) are not likely to receive funding.

Oak Savanna Management: Historically, wild turkeys were likely associated with the vast oak savanna ecosystem common to southern Wisconsin, and savannas still provide excellent habitat for turkeys. Healthy savanna communities include large oaks that provide excellent food and roosting habitat, and a native grassland understory

that provide winter food as well as nesting and brood-rearing habitat. Projects that seek to restore or enhance oak savannas through the targeted use of disturbance (e.g., chemical or mechanical control of exotic or invasive species, prescribed fire, thinning, prescribed grazing, native grassland establishment) are all eligible for funding. Control of exotic species should be part of an overall management program to restore and maintain savanna conditions; stand-alone exotic species control is not eligible.

Equipment purchases or repairs are eligible for funding within the Southern Oak pool, but allotments will not exceed 15% of the total funds available within this pool. Equipment purchased or repaired must directly relate to the oak management practices described in the proposal. Priority will be given projects that seek to manage, enhance, or restore native grass and forb species in the ground layer. Practices that only benefit existing non-native (e.g., cool-season grasses) vegetation are not eligible for funding.

Grassland Management: Wild turkeys frequently nest in idle grasslands, especially in fields with residual dead vegetation that has not been flattened by snow cover or, later in the nesting season, emerging new growth. Diverse native grasslands can also provide quality brood-rearing habitat and a source of winter food. To be of use to turkeys, however, grasslands need to exist within close proximity of night-time roost sites. Eligible projects will therefore seek to restore, enhance, or manage native grassland habitat within ½-mile of an existing patch of forest at least 5 acres in size that contains trees large enough to provide roosting habitat for wild turkeys. General grassland management practices (e.g., prescribed fire, mowing, disking, interseeding, herbicide treatment, seeding, chemical or mechanical brush control) are eligible for funding.

Equipment purchases or repairs are eligible for funding within the Southern Habitat pool, but allotments will not exceed 15% of the total funds available within this pool. Equipment purchased or repaired must directly support the habitat work described above.

Information & Education

This category includes the sponsoring of workshops or seminars designed to promote the understanding and management of wild turkeys and their associated wildlife habitat components, as well as educational events, publications, outreach pamphlets, and projects related to all aspects of wild turkey ecology and management. All project proposals for workshops, classes, conferences, etc. must include the total cost of the event and the fee charged for participants, if any.

Potential Information and Education funding categories:

- Private landowner workshops geared toward the management of wild turkeys and turkey habitat
- Efforts to promote recruitment and retention of hunters (examples include: coordination of Learn To Hunt events, development of curriculum and materials supporting coursework on social and cultural aspects of hunting, NWTJ Jakes events, Turkey Hunter Education Clinics). Priority will be given to projects that would educate and/or recruit individuals with no previous exposure to hunting (e.g., from urban areas or families with no hunting tradition, adults with no hunting experience).
- Educational events or displays promoting an understanding of wild turkey ecology
- Curriculum development or materials for teachers that broaden student exposure to wildlife ecology, wildlife management, wildlife habitat management, or the cultural/social/conservation values of consumptive wildlife use

Research and Monitoring

The following are examples of current wild turkey research needs in the Upland Wildlife program:

- Impact of harvest on turkey population dynamics
- Factors influencing turkey distribution in heavily-forested landscapes, especially during winter
- Factors influencing turkey distribution in areas with highly fragmented forests
- Defining and integrating density-dependence into turkey population modeling
- Evaluating hunter attitudes, ethics, and the factors that determine hunter satisfaction
- Impact of grassland habitats and wildlife openings on hen turkey demographics
- Development of a Wild Turkey Stamp habitat project evaluation process
- Risk assessment for disease impacts on Wisconsin's turkey population
- Monitoring techniques for turkey density or population size

Other research proposals on topics that are not listed here may be considered by the DNR Turkey Advisory Committee. Please contact Scott Walter, WDNR Upland Wildlife Ecologist, at either (608) 267-7861 or Scott.Walter@Wisconsin.gov prior to submitting a research proposal.

III. General Wild Turkey Stamp Funding Procedure

How to Submit Wild Turkey Stamp Project Requests

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

All project requests must be submitted using the DNR Wild Turkey 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 the Assistant Upland Wildlife Ecologist at Krista.McGinley@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 Krista at Krista.McGinley@Wisconsin.gov. Hard copies may also be mailed to the attention of Krista 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 send an email requesting a hard-copy version of the application. Projects will be reviewed, ranked, and recommended for funding by the WDNR Turkey Advisory 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 consideration.

Proposal Review

After initial screening to ensure eligibility criteria are met, members of the Turkey Advisory Committee score the proposal based on detailed evaluation criteria found at the end of this document. Project scores are combined and projects are ranked within established funding pools. Projects receiving higher scores will receive first consideration during selection of projects for final funding. Applicants may be asked to appear before the

Committee to make a presentation about their project proposal, particularly for large-scale projects. The Turkey Advisory Committee reserves the right to make partial funding awards.

The Wild Turkey Management Committee includes DNR Wildlife, Endangered Resources, Forestry, Law Enforcement, and Science Services Bureau staff, plus representatives from the Wisconsin State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Conservation Congress Turkey Committee, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, UW-Madison, Wings Over Wisconsin, the U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Fort McCoy.

Funded Stamp Projects

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

Funding for all approved Wild Turkey Stamp projects will be for the FY16-17 DNR budget cycle, beginning 1 July 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.

DNR Projects: Funded projects will be assigned unique, individual budget codes, and funds will be made available by 1 July 2015. Tracking the use of funds is the responsibility of the stamp project manager.

Non-DNR Projects: **Funding for non-DNR Wild Turkey 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 individual. 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 outlined 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 Upland Wildlife Ecologist, Krista McGinley, at Krista.McGinley@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 of Wild Turkey Stamp funding must be acknowledged in any reports, publications, and presentations and be shown for habitat work and equipment acquisitions using available “Your Turkey Stamp Dollars at Work” signs and/or stickers (provided upon request).

Project Accomplishment Reporting

A project accomplishment report is **required** for all funded projects at the end of each fiscal year in which funding was used. Accomplishment reports are due to the Bureau of Wildlife Management by **September 30th** each year. Project managers, BWM District Wildlife Supervisors, and the NHC Field Operations Section Chief are encouraged to complete and submit these reports as soon as each fiscal year’s work is complete. Accomplishment reports are vital to the Wild Turkey Stamp program, since staff use the information to show hunters, partner groups, and other constituents what types of projects are being approved and how the funds are being spent.

Please note that failure to submit accomplishment reports will result in future funding ineligibility. Overdue accomplishment reports will need to be approved by DNR Upland Wildlife staff.

IV. Stamp Application Instructions for FY16-17

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

General Information: Before filling out the application, please thoroughly review all 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. Make sure you select a project type appropriate to the program(s) from which you are requesting funds. A more thorough description of each project type can be found in Section II of this document. If you are unable to determine what your project's best fit is, please contact WDNR Upland Wildlife 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 the proposed project area's proximity to a block of mature forest or savannah greater than 5 acres in size. Finally, indicate whether the project area is open or closed to turkey 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 turkeys 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.

Wild Turkey Stamp Program

FY16-17 Stamp Project Ranking & Review Criteria

Prepared by Scott Walter & Krista McGinley, WDNR Upland Wildlife Program
Revised February 2015

The following assessment components will be used to evaluate proposals and determine which Wild Turkey Stamp projects receive funding within each competitive funding pool. Applicants should closely review these assessment components to ensure that their proposals clearly address all applicable criteria. In addition, applications will be evaluated to ensure that the expected benefits to wild turkeys are reasonable, and that the project is likely to succeed based on the project objectives, methods, budget, work plan, and monitoring plan, as well as the capacity of the grantee.

A. Turkey Advisory Committee evaluation – total of 55 points possible (circle the appropriate scores)

#1: Proposal is clear and easy to understand and provides enough detail to adequately evaluate project based on ranking criteria:

1 2 3 4 5

#2: Proposal demonstrates clearly defined objectives, appropriate methodologies, and achievable timeline and goals given applicant resources:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#3: Long-term benefits of the proposed project exist (i.e., the goals and / or results are sustainable beyond the funded Stamp period, the project proposal demonstrates the applicant's ability to sustain the project objectives based on past success or dedication to success, etc.):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#4: How broadly will potential habitat improvements, education, or knowledge gained from the proposed project benefit turkeys and/or turkey hunters? More points shall be given to a project that has high potential to lead to direct and broad positive impacts for wild turkeys and/or turkey hunters:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#5: Is the project cost-effective? More points shall be given to projects within each category that deliver greater benefit per Wild Turkey Stamp dollar spent. Projects shall also receive points based on the level of matching contributions secured from partner groups:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#6: Would the project take place on land open to turkey hunting?

- Full access to turkey hunting with no restrictions = 5 points
- Limited/partial access to turkey hunting = 2 points

Closed to turkey hunting = Ineligible

#7: For INFORMATION & EDUCATION proposals: does the project provide for a measure or evaluation of success, such as attendance or response from the public? For RESEARCH proposals: does the project provide for analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of results relating directly to the project objectives? For NORTHERN WISCONSIN HABITAT and SOUTHERN WISCONSIN HABITAT proposals: does the project have evaluation and monitoring goals which apply directly to the project objectives, and does it provide a verifiable, objective measure of project success?

1 2 3 4 5

Overall Project Score = ____ / 55 possible



Waterfowl Stamp Program FY16-17 Project Application Guidance Materials

Prepared by WDNR Bureau of Wildlife Management
Revised February 2015

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.