

APPLYING FOR A SECTION 6 GRANT – BEST PRACTICES

Kathryn Gaffney,
ICF

Michael Beck,
Endangered Habitats League



TOPICS

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- Appropriations: Process and History
- Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Funding
- Tips for a Successful Application
 - Getting Started
 - Interpreting the Notice of Funding Opportunity
 - Defining HCP Planning Tasks
- Additional Information

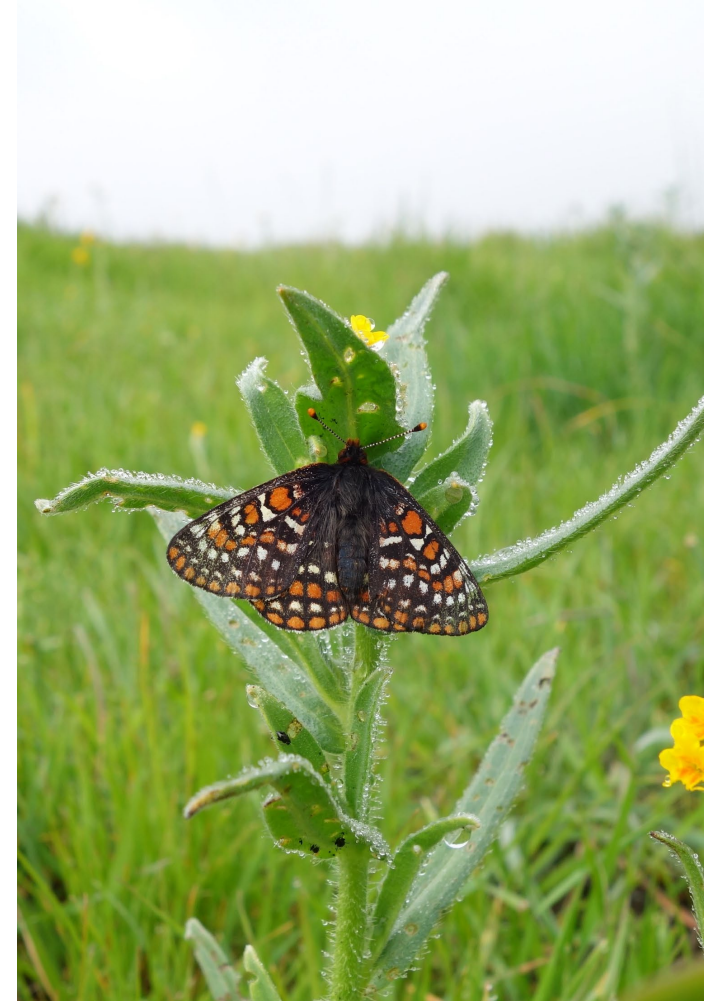


Photo: Kathryn Gaffney

SECTION 6 FUNDING: FAST FACTS

- **Official program name:** Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants
- **Common name:** Section 6 grants
- Authorized by the federal Endangered Species Act Section 6, *Cooperation With States*
- The program offers one traditional and three nontraditional opportunities:
 - Traditional Conservation Grants
 - Recovery Land Acquisition Grants
 - Conservation Planning Assistance Grants
 - Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Land Acquisition Grants
- A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is released approximately annually

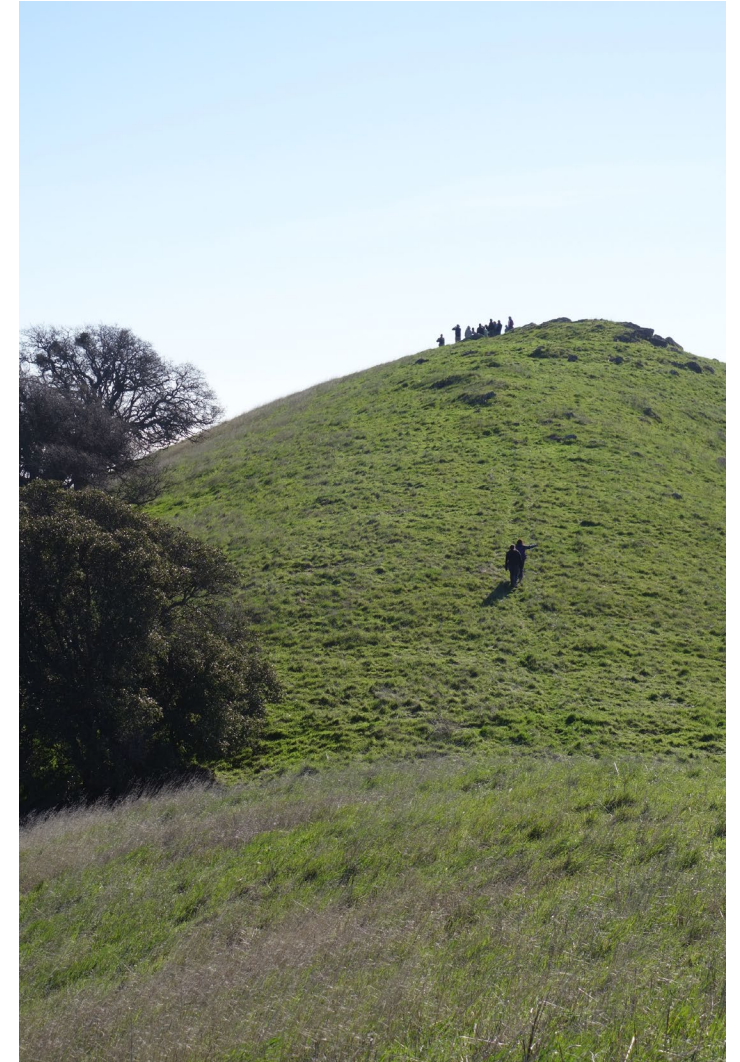


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SECTION 6 GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- The grant is issued to States or Territories
- ALL grants require:
 - A minimum non-Federal match of 25 percent of the estimated program costs, or
 - 10 percent when two or more States implement a joint project
 - Territories may not have a match requirement (but check the NOFO!)
- Traditional Conservation Grants
 - Provides funding to States and Territories to implement conservation projects for federally listed, candidate, and at-risk species
 - Funded activities include habitat restoration, species surveys, public education, captive propagation and reintroduction, nesting surveys, genetic studies, and development of management plans
- Recovery Land Acquisition Grants (Nontraditional)
 - Provides funding to States and Territories for the acquisition of habitat for federally endangered and threatened species in support of Service-approved draft and approved recovery plans

SECTION 6 GRANT OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

- Conservation Planning Assistance Grants (Nontraditional)
 - Provides funds for States and Territories to develop, renew, or amend an HCP or conservation benefit agreement
 - Eligible activities include document preparation, public outreach, baseline surveys, habitat assessments, environmental compliance, and pre-permit tasks
- HCP Land Acquisition Grants (Nontraditional)
 - Provides funding to States and Territories to acquire land associated with approved HCPs
 - Funds can not be used to meet mitigation requirements; instead, they support land acquisition that complements mitigation

SECTION 6 APPROPRIATIONS: PROCESS AND HISTORY

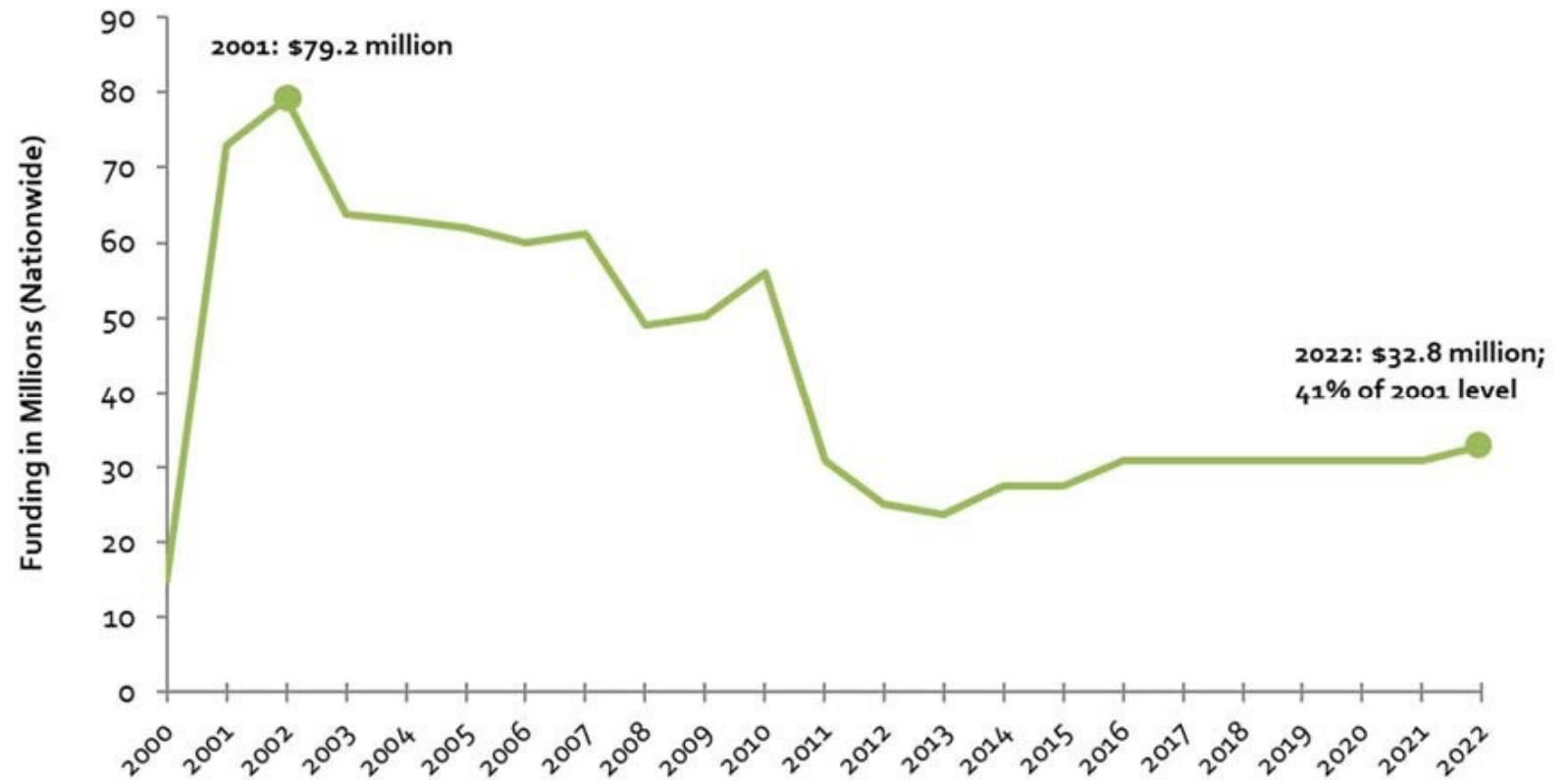
- Section 6 funding is appropriated through an annual Administration request and House and Senate Appropriations Committee negotiation
- Funding is included in the annual federal budget, generally approved in early October
- The **Great American Outdoors Act** of 2020 provided automatic, permanent, funding of \$900 million per year for the Land and Water Conservation Fund to support public land acquisition, including under the two Section 6 land acquisition grant programs
- For FY-2025, the Department of the Interior requested \$40 million for the Section 6 program, the same level as requested in FY-2024



Photo: Michael Beck

SECTION 6 GRANT FUNDING, 2000–2022

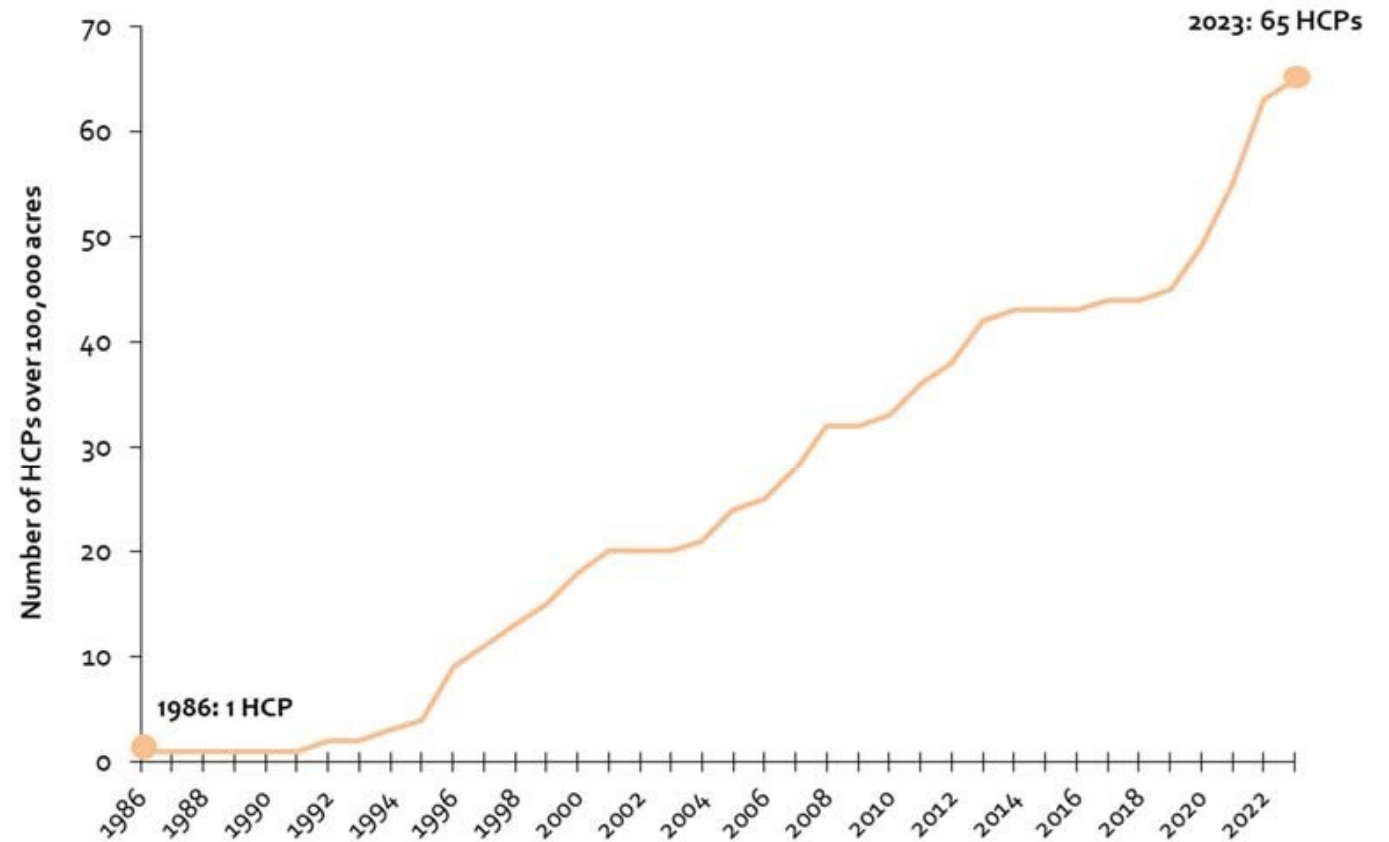
- The chart shows total (all four grant types) Section 6 grant funding nationwide
- \$54.17M was awarded for FY-2023
- \$48.4M was awarded for FY-2024



Source: USFWS Budget and Expenditure Data

APPROVED REGIONAL HCPS NATIONWIDE, 1986–2023

- The chart shows the number of approved regional (over 100,000 acres) HCPs, nationwide



Source: USFWS ECOS Database (statistics reflect HCPs larger than 100,000 acres)

GETTING STARTED

- **Don't wait!** for the NOFO to be released to start the process
- **Reach out!**
 - (1) To your State/Territory agency regulatory staff to seek guidance and support
 - (2) To your USFWS regulatory staff to seek support
- Once the NOFO is released, communicate quickly with your federal and State/Territory agency regulatory staff
- Each grant type has its own NOFO. Make sure you have the correct one
- **Read the entire NOFO** (including the Frequently Asked Questions.); it often changes year-to-year

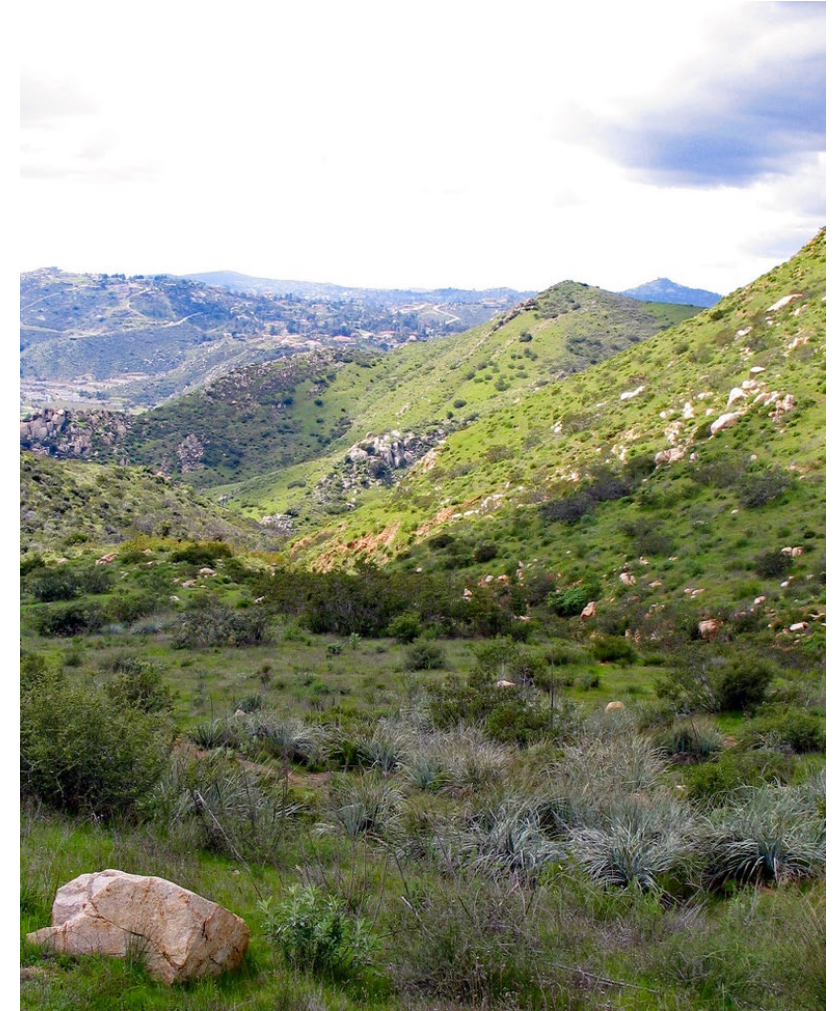


Photo: Michael Beck

INTERPRETING THE NOFO

- Section 6 grant funding cannot be used on federal land
- The timeline for implementing the grant is three (3) years as listed in the Notice of Award
- Applications are scored based on NOFO requirements
- Match is calculated based on the total value of the application, not the value of funding requested from USFWS.
 - Example: a funding request of \$1M from USFWS requires a minimum match of \$333,333.34, such that the total value of the application is \$1,333,333.34 and the match contribution of the total value is 25%
 - $\$333,333.34 / \$1,333,333.34 = 25\%$
 - Extra points may be awarded for 26% match or greater



Photo: Michael Beck

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

- Apply!
- Respond to the NOFO requirements to be sure the application can receive maximum points
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish within the three (3) year timeline
- Do not rely on the ability to amend your grant agreement for time or for substance
- Communicate successful projects with your House and Senate congressional representatives!



Photo: Michael Beck

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

- Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund at:
<https://www.fws.gov/program/cooperative-endangered-species-conservation-fund/what-we-do>
- Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants: Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act at:
<https://www.fws.gov/media/cooperative-endangered-species-conservation-fund-grants-section-6-endangered-species-act>



ALSO, PLEASE RE-VISIT:

- The National HCP Coalition's website:
<https://www.nhcpcoalition.org/>
 - Annual conference
 - HCP success stories
 - HCP Frequently Asked Questions
 - Reports and white papers
- Mentor Program
<https://www.nhcpcoalition.org/coalition/mentor-program/>

THANK YOU

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