

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) – Office of Trust Services Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Ecosystem Restoration (ER) Bison Project Funding, Criteria, and Application Process

Summary

The Bison Project will serve a variety of purposes that are designed to revegetate Tribal lands while upholding the best of Tribal bison herd expansion interests, including a focus on ecosystem restoration through bison conservation. The Bison Project will foster practices that are traditional and culturally attentive to the historical coevolved relationship with bison to support the Tribe's own self-determined well-being. Furthermore, the projects will focus on grasslands revegetation efforts through Bison to foster the intent of national revegetation efforts and the Department of the Interior Secretary's Order 3410, the purpose of which is to restore wild and healthy populations of American bison and the prairie grassland ecosystem through collaboration among the Department's Bureaus and partners such as other Federal agencies, states, Tribes, and landowners using the best available science and Indigenous Knowledge.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligibility is limited to Federally recognized Indian Tribal Governments and authorized Tribal organizations. Federally recognized Tribes are eligible as listed in the current Federal Register, Notice of Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is the official listing of all Federally recognized Tribes in the U.S. pursuant to Section 104 under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-454; 108 Stat. 4791-4792). The most recent Notice was published in the Federal Register, 89, FR 944 (January 8, 2024). Authorized Tribal organizations, as defined at 25 U.S.C. 5304(l) are also eligible to apply.

Proposal Eligibility

- Proposals must provide the contact information for the Tribal project manager overseeing the proposed Bison Project.
- The proposal budget cannot include Tribal indirect rate. Tribal indirect costs (contract support cost) come from a separate account and should be requested at the time you develop the budget with BIA Awarding Officials (if selected for funding).
- Awarded projects will require biannual reporting to share and demonstrate success on project implementation. Rangeland vegetation monitoring data with photo points to report level of utilization, rangeland health, condition/trend, and forage productivity will be included in the fall annual reporting process to demonstrate native revegetation or improved native vegetation through bison herd management and project success.

Project Eligibility

Successful applications will focus on revegetation or improved vegetation of denuded Tribal landscapes through bison conservation and expansion and improved management of existing

herds on Tribal trust lands, individual Indian allotment lands, or in areas managed by Tribes through treaties or agreements.

The Bison Project will focus native revegetation or improved native vegetation efforts with bison conservation and expansion and improved management of existing herds on Tribal trust resources and describe the role of Tribal bison on native revegetation or improved vegetation on Tribal landscapes and altered Tribal environmental conditions. This funding can cover bison as indicator keystone species on agricultural pasture, grassland, and rangeland settings.

Funding is available for the implementation of bison specific management practices and would assist recipients in the following, or similar, areas:

- Implementing management or other established protocols
- Purchase and installation of fencing, equipment, or other infrastructure
- Transportation of bison
- Bison management activities, rangeland vegetation monitoring to assess level of grazing utilization and/or rangeland condition/trend/production to monitor native revegetation or improved vegetation and benefit to other Tribal natural resources.
- Personnel that provide for the administration and function of Tribal bison program and project commitment
- Genetic considerations to achieve healthy and plentiful large populations of bison on Indian Lands to reduce adverse herd fluctuations for ecological and cultural renewal.
- Bison health and disease prevention and control
- Ecosystem restoration adaptive management – How the Bison project implementation will demonstrate revegetation or improved vegetation through herd management, increase scientific and indigenous knowledges, and recognize the importance of natural variability in contributing to native vegetation.
- Participating in local/regional/national forums related to native vegetation efforts on Tribal lands through bison conservation.
- Educational efforts related to native revegetation or improved vegetation with bison conservation management for project staff members implementing the Bison project.
- Fostering co-management or co-stewardship partnerships for land and animal conservation and wildlife management protocols

To maximize impact, awards will be funded at a minimum \$100,000 to maximum of \$500,000 each.

Ranking Criteria

All projects should focus on ecosystem restoration enabled through bison herd expansion on Tribal rangelands, pastures and grassland conservation management scales that address productive collective impacts on Tribal ecological, cultural, and historic use within Tribal natural resources.

Eligible projects will be ranked according to the following criteria **(100 Points Total)**:

- 1) How the project will demonstrate revegetation or improved vegetation through bison herd management. **(20 points)**
- 2) The scale of the bison presence's benefits on ecosystem restoration, including native species and other Tribal natural resources. **(15 points)**
- 3) How the project will help increase herd size – towards an ideal herd size of 400 or more for optimal genetic diversity. **(15 points)**
- 4) The scope of a proposal's support for the conservation and improvement of the management of Tribal bison. **(10 points)**
- 5) The extent to which the herd management is treating bison as wildlife, not livestock, including minimal handling. **(10 points)**
- 6) How the project enhances the spiritual and cultural beliefs and practices of the Tribal community. **(10 points)**
- 7) The integration of Indigenous Knowledge, also known as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, into project implementation. **(10 points)**
- 8) The extent to which the applicant is leveraging funding through volunteers, matched funds, Tribal contributions, in-kind contributions, non-government organizations (NGOs), consortiums, Tribal policies, climate adaptation plans, economic development plans, agricultural plans, land management plans, etc. **(5 points)**
- 9) The extent to which the proposal demonstrates an awareness and ability to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including Tribal and federal permitting requirements (e.g., Tribal environmental code, NEPA, ESA). **(5 points)**

This funding source is non-recurring 1 year funding. Thus, the goals of any proposed project should not rely on future funding. Awarded projects will require biannual reporting to share and demonstrate success on project implementation.

How to Apply

Submit your proposal to the regional office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs that services your area. **Email proposals to your regional office (contact info below) within 30 calendar days of the announcement date.**

BIA Region	Point of Contact	Email Address and Phone Number	Mailing Address
Great Plains	Diane Mann-Klager, Natural Resource Officer	diane.mann-klager@bia.gov (605) 252-6763	BIA Great Plains Region Division of Natural Resources, MC 301 115 4th Ave. SE, Suite 400 Aberdeen, SD 57401
Southern Plains	David Anderson, Environmental Scientist	david.anderson@bia.gov (405) 247-1532	BIA Southern Plains Region P.O. Box 368 Anadarko, OK 73005

Eastern	Jerry Page, Natural Resource Officer	jerry.page@bia.gov (615) 917-0969	BIA Eastern Region 545 Marriott Dr. Suite 700 Nashville TN 37214
Midwest	Patricia Olby, Deputy Regional Director Trust Services	patricia.olby@bia.gov (612) 725-4503	BIA Midwest Region 5600 W. American Blvd, Suite 500 Bloomington, MN 55437
Eastern Oklahoma	Justin Morgan, Soil Conservationist	justin.morgan@bia.gov (918) 781-4653	BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region 3100 W. Peak Blvd. Muskogee, OK 74401
Rocky Mountain	David Hopkins, Rangeland Management Specialist	david.hopkins@bia.gov (406) 247-7926	BIA Rocky Mountain Region Division of Natural Resources 2021 4th Ave. North Billings, MT 59101
Navajo	Peter Lefebvre, Rangeland Management Specialist	peter.lefebvre@bia.gov (406) 231-5879	BIA Navajo Region 301 W. Hill St., PO Box 1060 Gallup, NM 87305
Southwest	Novik Begay, Rangeland Management Specialist	novik.begay@bia.gov (505) 563-3552	BIA Southwest Region 1001 Indian School Road, NW Albuquerque, NM 87104
Western	Kenneth Gishi, Rangeland Management Specialist	kenneth.gishi@bia.gov (480) 744-5568	BIA Western Region 2600 N. Central Ave, 4th Floor Mailroom, Phoenix, AZ 85004
Pacific	Douglas Garcia, Water Right Specialist	douglas.garcia@bia.gov (916) 978-6052	BIA Pacific Region 2800 Cottage Way Sacramento, CA 95825
Northwest	Robert Compton, Rangeland Management Specialist	robert.compton@bia.gov (602) 379-6789	BIA Northwest Region 911 NE 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232
Alaska	Joshua Neuffer, Natural Resources Manager	joshua.neuffer@bia.gov (907) 419-1295	BIA Alaska Region P.O. Box 21647 Juneau, AK 99802

The proposal should clearly address the ranking criteria listed above and be limited to six pages maximum (not including letters of support/contributions, as applicable).

Please submit a proposal in the following format:

- I. **Introduction/Background** – Name of applicant, project name, project location, Tribal project manager contact information, and a brief background and description of the issue to be addressed with the proposal. This section should conclude with a brief statement summarizing your request. Email proposals to your BIA Regional Office (contact information below) within 30 calendar days of the announcement date.
- II. **Criteria** – How your request meets the ranking criteria.
- III. **Budget** – Provide a detailed line-item expenditure budget, with narrative breakdown. Do not include contract support cost (indirect cost). Awards are planned at \$100,000 - \$500,000 for each project awarded and should be written to add up to or near the specified amount (excluding any matching, NGO, or other funding).