

Response: Service administrative costs will not be charged against the \$5 million allocation.

4. One comment suggested that the funds for FY02 and FY03 be combined into one proposal period. This same comment recommended that the Service allow for multiple-year projects.

Response: FY02 and FY03 funds will be combined and disbursed through one proposal period. A grant award can provide for multiple-year projects. Multiple-year projects still require annual performance and financial reports. The performance reports should be submitted to the Native American Liaison and the financial reports to the Federal Aid Office.

5. One respondent asked that the Service define the role of public opinion in ranking/selection of proposals.

Response: The Service will work to address public comments with the intent of enhancing the administration of the Tribal Wildlife Grants as Congress intended for the benefit of federally recognized tribes.

6. Two respondents suggested that the Service require postmarks on proposals showing the due date.

Response: Proposals postmarked, hand-delivered, or otherwise sent in by the due date will be accepted for the grant review process.

7. A comment suggested that the Service allow for proposals that combine TWG and the Tribal-Landowner Incentive Program (TLIP) and apply the same criteria to both TLIP and TWG.

Response: The Service must administer each grant as directed by Congress, and each program differs to some degree, thus limiting our ability to establish identical criteria.

8. Three comments advocated for future funding of the TWG program and one respondent advocated for increasing the amount of available funds in the TWG program.

Response: The President's budget request to Congress for FY04 includes \$5 million for TWG.

9. One respondent suggested that there should be no time limit on expenditure of funds, and a similar response advocated for allowance for rollover into the next fiscal year.

Response: After appropriation, TWG funds are available until expended. However, grant agreements will be

written to allow an appropriate amount of time to complete the project. Grant agreement periods are negotiable, and funds must be expended within 90 days following the end date of the grant agreement.

10. One respondent asked that an 8 week response period be invoked for the open Request For Proposals period (RFP).

Response: In order to address the need to expedite the selection and awarding of proposals, the Service has set the RFP period for the TWG program at 45 days. The Service feels that this period is sufficient for tribes to prepare proposals.

11. One respondent asked that the Service allocate funds as quickly as possible after awards are made.

Response: It is the Service's intent to accomplish this task, and a timeline will be provided in the Grant Application Kit.

Dated: May 2, 2003.

H. Craig Manson,

Assistant Secretary, Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

[FR Doc. 03-19121 Filed 7-25-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P