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102 E Crex Ave. Grantsburg, WI 54840

Ms. Rachel Dawson

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

1133 15 th Street NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20025

Dear Ms. Dawson,

The Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society (WSGS) is a non-profit organization that promotes enhancing, protecting and managing the Sharp-tailed Grouse population of Wisconsin and the unique early successional barrens habitat upon which it depends. Similar components are found in the goals of the grant proposal of the “Wisconsin Young Forest and Barrens Landscape Partnership” that is being lead by the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources (WDNR) and applied for under the America The Beautiful Challenge 2022 Request for Proposals (Easygrants #77517).

Diverse barrens habitat and young forests are necessary for the conservation of a variety of plant and wildlife communities, are more resilient to short term environmental change and also have more potential for use from a societal perspective. This proposal aims to target and provide funding support for landscape level management actions that will promote young forests and diverse oak/pine barrens habitat to benefit wildlife, increase connectivity and engage partners in shared stewardship of these critical resources. Receipt of the requested funding will provide for active, purposeful management actions beneficial to those resources on state, county, industrial and tribal lands thereby maintaining and increasing connectivity between globally imperiled barrens communities as well as increasing abundance and diversity of young forest types. Funds will also be used to communicate the purpose and relevancy of this work, thus enhancing community engagement.

Project efforts will be focused in priority areas identified by a mutidisciplinary team of WDNR staff and partners to manage for both young forests and barrens communities. Work will occur predominantly within the ceded territory of Wis. and incorporate both state and tribal conservation priorities.

The WSGS fully supports the proposal and the coalition of the WDNR and other



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conservation partners that will lead this effort. In addition WSGS is committed to provide \$10,000.00 to be used as matching funds over the 4 years of the proposed grant period (2023 – 2026) or \$2500/year. Of this amount, \$6400 will be used as cash funds to pay for barrens focused habitat work within the defined project area or educational efforts with a barrens or sharp-tailed grouse emphasis as defined in the grant proposal. The other \$3600 will be contributed as in-kind matching volunteer efforts with the focus being part of conducting WI spring sharp-tailed grouse breeding surveys as requested by WDNR Wildlife Management over the four years of the grant period. That funding amount is reflected for 3 surveys with 3 surveyors traveling 480 miles/year @\$0.625/mile = \$300 X 4 years = \$1200. Additionally, those 3 surveyors each running 3 surveys totalling 30 hours/year X \$20/hr = \$600/ yr., X 4 years = \$2400 over the period. The basis for the matching funding is WSGS membership fees and donations which exceed the annual commitment and are not being used for other federal grant matching or cost-sharing purposes.

The WSGS has been an active proponent in sharp-tailed grouse and barrens habitat management, development and maintenance efforts for over 30 years in the designated NW Barrens project grant application area. It is the reason we were organized and why we continue to exist. Benefits accrued to wildlife and plant communities in the NW Barrens as a part of the America the Beautiful Challenge Grant will have a very positive reflection on an ecosystem that is considered to be globally rare in area of the state that needs the focused attention. The Barrens wildland communities, and the people who appreciate this special place certainly stand to benefit.

Sincerely in Conservation,

Ken Jonas  
President  
Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society