

Aquatic Invasive Species Research Grants

Fiscal Years 2024–2025 Request for Proposals

Deadline for TPWD receipt of proposals: May 31, 2023

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) announces a Request for Proposals (RFP) for state fiscal years 2024–2025 for aquatic invasive species research. Research grants that span one or two years may be awarded. Awards will begin no earlier than September 1, 2023 with all grants terminating no later than the end of fiscal year 2025 (August 31, 2025). It is recommended that proposal budgets not exceed approximately \$50,000 per year; cost-effectiveness will be considered in proposal review to ensure best use of available funding. A 25% match is required, and indirect cost rates may be voluntarily reduced to use unrecovered indirect costs as match. Approximately \$120,000 in funding per year total is expected to be available for this grant program, although funding may be augmented from other sources if available. Funds for this grant are administered by TPWD under Statewide Aquatic Vegetation and Invasive Species Management (state funds). Prior to proposal submittal, investigators should contact the TPWD Senior Scientist for Aquatic Invasive Species (monica.mcgarrrity@tpwd.texas.gov) or other TPWD biologist(s) with expertise in the study area to discuss and refine potential proposals. Announcements of project selection for funding are anticipated by the beginning of August 2023.

Eligibility of Prospective Applicants

Applicants (Principal Investigator; PI) must demonstrate a proven track record of publications or previous work (e.g., unpublished project reports) in an applicable field. Please address this in your submission by providing a statement of qualifications, following the project statement guidelines, to conduct the project and a curriculum vitae for each PI.

TPWD will only issue contracts to the following entities:

- Institutions of Higher Education, such as colleges or universities (private or public; see "Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965" Sec. 61.003).
- Non-profit organizations [501 (c) (3)].
- Federal, State, Local (County, City) offices, (see "Professional Services Procurement Act" Sec. 2254.002).

It is imperative that your agency/institution possess knowledge of State of Texas purchasing rules and have the administrative expertise and infrastructure to be able to manage state contracts.

Project Funding Priorities

Proposal objectives should not duplicate previous research and the proposal must clearly demonstrate that this is a novel project that fills a research gap. Projects should adequately address one or more of the following priority research topics; whether a proposal addresses a priority topic well will be considered in

scoring proposals. Whether a top priority species is addressed will also be considered in scoring proposals; however, proposals on other non-priority species will be considered. Projects addressing priority research topics are also encouraged and whether a project fully addresses a priority research project will be considered in project selection.

Priority Topics:

- Enhancing methods for management of aquatic invasive species, including pesticide effectiveness and targeted removals or novel control methods and rapid response and eradication
- Limiting factors for growth and survival of problematic aquatic invasive species, with a focus on implications for invasions in Texas
- Enhancing methods for early detection of aquatic invasive species
- Ecology and population dynamics of problematic aquatic invasive species in Texas, with a focus on factors affecting invasion success or management implications
- Identification of geographic areas and/or habitats most at risk of invasion and impacts in Texas

Priority Species:

- Zebra and Quagga Mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha* and *D. bugensis*)
- Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)
- Suckermouth armored catfishes (*Pterigoplichthys* and *Hypostomus* spp.)
- Other problematic aquatic invasive plants in Texas (e.g., water hyacinth, hydrilla)
- Giant reed (*Arundo donax*)

Priority Research Projects:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of various herbicides for wintertime treatments of giant salvinia
- Evaluation of new technologies (e.g., YY males, gene drives) for enhancing management of aquatic invasive species (e.g., Loricariid suckermouth armored catfishes), including evaluation/modeling of the potential of these technologies, further development of these technologies for use in Texas, and field management trials (e.g., Loricariid catfishes in Central Texas rivers, South Texas resacas)
- Evaluation of the distribution and impacts of non-native crayfish (e.g., Australian Redclaw Crayfish) on native species and habitats in Texas

Proposal Submission

The deadline for receipt of proposals is May 31, 2023. Each proposal package must contain the following items: (1) the Project Statement as described in the Project Statement Guidelines, (2) a Budget Spreadsheet, (3) a curriculum vitae for each PI, and (4) letters of support from any non-TPWD collaborators. Attachments should be emailed to Monica.McGarrity@tpwd.texas.gov using Microsoft Word or PDF format, and Microsoft a signed PDF for the Budget Spreadsheet; a single proposal package PDF is preferred. Please note that email attachments exceeding 35 MB need to be delivered in separate emails to overcome file size limitations and .zip files may be rejected by our email server.

When constructing the proposal package, please also adhere to the following in addition to the project statement guidelines and budget spreadsheet instructions:

Project timeline

Projects must be completed by August 31, 2025. An anticipated timeline for completion of key tasks, including submission of biannual and final reports, must be included in the proposal (see Project Statement Guidelines).

Funding limits

It is recommended that proposal budgets not exceed approximately \$50,000 per year. Approximately \$120,000 in funding per year total is expected to be available for this grant program, although funding may be augmented from other sources if available.

Match requirements

- Cost-split is 75:25 (state share: applicant match). Therefore, of the Total Project Cost, at least 25% must be dedicated to Match (in-kind allowed).
- Volunteer labor provided as match must be reasonable and requires documentation of fair market value.
- Unrecovered indirect costs (Facilities and Administration; F&A) may be used as match. TPWD follows the current Colleges and Universities Rate Agreement for indirect cost; but see also indirect costs section below.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are no longer capped at 15%, although this rate is recommended. TPWD has a statutory and fiduciary responsibility to maximize cost-effectiveness of grant dollars. One important measure of cost effectiveness is the quantity or quality of tangible products proposed to be generated from funded projects. Applicants may voluntarily reduce their reimbursable indirect (F&A) rates to dedicate more funds to their project goals. Unrecovered indirect costs may be used to meet match requirements.

Project Selection

Proposal evaluation is based upon: (1) scientific rigor (sampling effort, methodology, PI expertise, etc.); (2) how well it addresses priority research topics/species; (3) feasibility, and (4) cost-effectiveness. Additional consideration may be given to proposals that address a specific priority research project listed above.

Approximate proposal review timeline

- **June 7, 2023:** TPWD distributes eligible proposals for review by a selection panel, to include TPWD staff and other funding partners, as applicable. Based on an objective and systematic review process the review panel generates a rank order list of proposals and meets to identify project(s) for funding.
- **August 1, 2023 (approximately):** TPWD notifies all applicants of review outcome. State contracts will not be generated for awardee(s) until after September 1, 2023 (i.e., beginning of

fiscal year 2022) and may require several months to execute; pre-award clauses allowing spending as of September 1, 2023 will be included in all contracts, with costs prior to contract execution incurred at the PI's risk. The successful applicant will be asked to sign an agreement (i.e., state contract) that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, honoring the objective and approach from the project statement provided by the applicant, and details regarding invoicing, reporting, deliverables, and other obligations.

Proposal submission contact information:

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