

Apex Conservation Grant

Goni Iskali – Apex Clean Energy, Inc.

November 1, 2023



Apex Conservation Grant Introduction

With a core value of Sustainability, Apex created the Apex Conservation Grant (ACG) program to ensure that our renewable energy projects further benefit local communities by enhancing local ecosystems and habitats

Projects commercialized by Apex Clean Energy, Inc. will contribute a sum of money, proportional to the size of the project up to \$1,000/MW, or more if appropriate on a case-by-case basis:

- to support local or regional wildlife conservation
- to conduct reforestation and flora restoration; and
- other environmental conservation initiatives in or near project communities

The Fine Print:

- Applicant must be a registered 501(c)3 organization or other qualified not-for-profit in good standing with the IRS.
- Applicant must match ACG on at least 1:1 basis.
- Applicant must be able to give grantor confidence that they will be able to implement an ACG project at any time within a 1-to-4-year period.
- Must be on the ground conservation and not research, although research and education can be part of monitoring.
- Grant awarded when project reaches construction and/or commercial operation.
- ACG is not related to mitigation for permitting of projects.

Up to Bat First: The Lincoln Land Wind Project in Illinois (302 MW)



Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Refuge Map



- The first ACG in 2021 focused on habitat conservation of migratory tree-roosting bat species (e.g., hoary bat, silver-haired bat, and eastern red bat).
- Apex partnered with **Ducks Unlimited** for a restoration project at the Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge.
- The Project will restore 324-acres of flood prone agricultural fields to seasonal wetlands; and support timber stand improvements on 20 acres of existing Illinois River islands.
- The \$302,000 grant was leveraged into a 4:1 match, resulting in an on the ground conservation project totaling \$1.4 million!
- DU is further leveraging the grant as match to a new \$3M NAWCA federal grant proposal to conserve ~6,000 acres of floodplain forest and wetlands in the Mississippi River Valley.

Other ACG Projects Awarded in 2021

Ford County Wind Project in Illinois (120 MW)

- \$120,000 grant focused on managing and restoring grassland bird habitat. Two separate grantees were awarded portions of the grant:
- **Prairie Land Conservancy** for the Wigwam Hollow Bird Sanctuary Grassland Expansion and Forest Restoration; and
- **Grand Prairie Friends** for the purchase and protection of a tallgrass prairie remnant within the Prospect Cemetery.

Mulligan Solar Project in Illinois (70 MW)

- \$70,000 grant focused on establishing and enhancing up to 70 acres of grassland and loess hill prairie habitat awarded to **The Conservation Fund**. This project is also a partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and US Fish and Wildlife Service.



ACG Projects Awarded in 2022

Great Pathfinder Wind Project in Iowa (225 MW)

- \$225,000 grant focused on habitat restoration for the federally endangered Topeka Shiner. Apex partnered with **The Nature Conservancy** and **Practical Farmers of Iowa** to restore critical oxbow and wetland habitat for this species.

Jayhawk Wind Project in Kansas (198 MW)

- \$198,000 grant focused on riparian habitat restoration. **Ducks Unlimited** acquired property along the Neosho River in Labette County, Kansas, to increase protection and restoration of wildlife habitat, as well as increase opportunities for public recreation.

Young Wind (500 MW) and El Sauz Wind (300 MW) Projects in Texas

- \$800,000 grant focused on bat conservation and awarded grants to three separate entities:
 - **Ducks Unlimited** will restore up to 400 acres of playas (critical emergent wetland habitat) in the Texas Pan Handle.
 - **The Conservation Fund** will perpetually preserve 450 acres of old growth bottomland forest in northeast Texas, that will be added to the Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge and connected to ~20,000 ac of other preserved lands.
 - **Bat Conservation International** will aim to protect a critical bat roost in Huntsville by restoring an existing roost or relocating almost 1 million Mexican free-tailed bats from the historic building in the Walls Unit.

Featured Project: Huntsville Walls Unit Bat Roost Protection



Summary of Conservation Grants Awarded to Date

Apex Project	Grant Winner	Apex Grant	Matching Funds	Restored/Preserved Acres
Lincoln Land Wind	Ducks Unlimited	\$302,000	\$1,091,040	344
Ford County Wind	Prairie Land Conservancy	\$78,000	\$84,728	189
	Grand Prairie Friends	\$42,000	\$86,000	5
Mulligan Solar	The Conservation Fund	\$70,000	\$108,000	70
Great Pathfinder Wind	Practical Farmers of Iowa	\$55,000	\$66,954	4 oxbows (no acreage)
	The Nature Conservancy	\$170,000	\$170,000	14 oxbows (no acreage)
Jayhawk Wind	Ducks Unlimited	\$198,000	\$457,000	190
El Sauz/Young Wind	Bat Conservation International	\$200,000	\$200,000	0 (not a habitat project but structure protection/restoration)
	Ducks Unlimited	\$150,000	\$395,000	Up to 400
	The Conservation Fund	\$450,000	\$1,331,630	450
Total		1.7 million	~4 million	Up to 1,648 acres

ACG Projects to Be Awarded in 2023

Big Elm (200 MW) and Angelo Solar (195 MW) Projects in Texas

- This combined \$395,000 grant focused on local wildlife and habitat conservation, with a preferred focus on bat habitat conservation.

Downeast Wind Project in Maine (126 MW)

- \$126,000 grant focused on restoring and enhancing habitat for the federally endangered Atlantic salmon.

Timbermill Wind Project in North Carolina (189 MW)

- \$189,000 grant will focus on local wildlife and habitat conservation in the northeastern North Carolina.

Initiating planning on 2024 Projects! Please visit our website to inquire and provide your contact info for future consideration, or to learn more about any of the conservation projects mentioned!

<https://www.apexcleanenergy.com/conservation>

Research as Mitigation

- Representative of the wind industry has been coordination with USFWS for the past year to streamline incidental take permitting for wind-energy HCPs. One of the asks was to allow “research as mitigation” as an option.
- Asst. Director Frazer sent a director’s memo to Regional Directors on July 27, 2023. The purpose of the two-page memo is “to establish that funding research is an acceptable mitigation option for wind power Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) that cover bat species affected by white-nose syndrome.”
- “Research related to the cause, effects, and remediation of white-nose syndrome on affected bat species, or to technology that can reduce the effects of wind power projects on white-nose syndrome impacted bats, present such circumstances.”
- Details on additional guidance and how/how this will be implemented are yet to be released.
- Exciting opportunities for thinking outside the box that can provide a significant conservation benefit to bats!



Thank you!!

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Conservation Grant Website:
<https://www.apexcleanenergy.com/conservation>