

## **RMEF Project Advisory Committee (PAC) “Operating” Summary (November 2010)**

This summary provides background on PAC, current information on how to submit proposals for funding, completing the associated Collection Agreement (CA) for approved project proposals, reminders/tips related to the process and contact information for additional assistance.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Each state that has wild free-ranging elk managed under a state wildlife agency elk plan has a PAC with biologists from a variety of organizations and agencies including the state wildlife agency, the Forest Service (FS), the BLM, a university wildlife professor, RMEF State Chair (volunteer leader), and is chaired by the RMEF Regional Director. Each committee solicits project proposals across the state. Proposed projects are reviewed and ranked in terms of their overall benefit to elk and elk habitat. For more than 25 years, the elk habitat enhancement, wildlife management and research project accomplishments in partnership with RMEF on the National Forests and Grasslands, have been funded through matching agency, other partners and RMEF PAC funds.

State PACs meet once (or twice) a year to review project proposals. Each state PAC then recommends a list of projects to the RMEF National Project Review Committee for final approval.

### **PROJECT PROPOSALS:**

- Projects proposed for funding from PAC must focus on direct benefits to elk or elk habitat. Benefits to other wildlife in occupied elk habitat and leveraging funds from multiple partners to accomplish habitat enhancement are also important.
- To obtain RMEF’s form for project submittals (and instructions on how to fill out the form) contact Tom Toman, Christine Hastings or Sandy Kratville (see page 2).
- The most current form must be used for project proposals.
- Project proposal due dates vary by state as the PAC meetings may be scheduled throughout the year. FS proposals are to be submitted to the FS PAC representative by the deadline date set by the FS PAC member. The FS representative then forwards all agency proposals to the RMEF Regional Director at least 30 days prior to the PAC meeting. FS representatives on each state PAC are posted on the FS website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/elk.html>
- Two weeks prior to PAC meeting, the RMEF Regional Director will distribute all PAC proposals to the committee members allowing them time to review the projects prior to the meeting. If any questions arise regarding proposals, PAC members can contact the FS project coordinator, in advance of the meeting, to clarify any details regarding project proposals.
- RMEF will notify successful FS project coordinators within 45 days after a PAC meeting that their project has been approved for funding via an award letter. Due to limited funding available through the PAC, some projects may receive less than full-funding.
- In most years, there are more project requests for PAC funding than there are funds available. FS PAC representatives will notify FS project coordinators about submitted proposals that were **NOT** funded. If a project is not recommended by the PAC, the

PAC will advise the FS PAC representative of the short-comings of the proposal and make recommendations for improvement. FS PAC representatives will then share these points with the FS project coordinator. Projects can be updated with additional and/or clarifying information and resubmitted for future consideration.

- Tips/Recommendations for successful proposals:
  - Any FS employee may submit project proposals but **must** coordinate with a FS biologist before submitting the proposal to the PAC.
  - Project proposals **must** also be coordinated with state wildlife biologist(s) prior to submitting the project proposal to the PAC to ensure proposals are consistent with state agency elk plans and FS direction.
  - The benefits of the proposal to elk or elk habitat must be clearly described.
  - Effective use of RMEF funding will enhance chances of project selection and approval (Overhead/administrative costs will be not be funded by RMEF).
  - Projects must show at least a 1:1 (RMEF: Agency/Partners) funding “match.”
  - **RMEF funding for approved projects is available for 2 years from the date of the Award Letter to the FS project coordinator.** Requests for extensions cannot be approved by RMEF.
  - RMEF encourages multi-year project planning. For projects addressing part of a long-term landscape-level treatment, a description should be included that clearly shows how the current project fits into the overall landscape treatment. [Example: This project is part of a 5-year, 10,000 acre treatment to improve elk habitat. This portion of the overall project will treat 1,000 acres of winter range through prescribed burning.]

#### COLLECTION AGREEMENTS:

- The FS requires a Collection Agreement (CA) to implement projects receiving funding from RMEF (To get a copy of the CA template: go to <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/grants/Templates.php>; ‘Collection Agreements’).
- There are a number of individuals (project coordinator, grants and agreements and ASC) that contribute to the CA before the project can begin. All should complete their part of the process as soon as possible to ensure that RMEF funds are spent within 2 years of the award letter. (NOTE: RMEF funds are **only** available for 2 years after the award letter date. If it takes 6 months after receiving the award letter to get the agreement signed, the FS project coordinator only has 1 ½ years left to use RMEF project funds.)
- ASC requires 60 days to process all invoices. This means that the FS project coordinator **MUST** ensure RMEF is billed for any project-related work a minimum of 60 days prior to the deadline date in the award letter. **THIS IS IMPORTANT.** If the FS project coordinator does not meet the ASC deadline, and ASC does not bill RMEF prior to the end of the Award Date, RMEF cannot pay the invoice and the costs will then be the responsibility of the FS.
- RMEF requires a Project Completion Report (including photos) within 60 days of completion for each project funded.

#### FOR ASSISTANCE WITH PAC PROJECTS - PLEASE CONTACT:

Tom Toman, Director of Conservation, RMEF: 406.523.3443; [tom@rmef.org](mailto:tom@rmef.org)

Christine Hastings, Information Manager, RMEF: 406.523.4541; [Christine@rmef.org](mailto:Christine@rmef.org)

Sandy Kratville, RMEF/USFS Liaison: 406.370.2831 (cell); [spkratville@fs.fed.us](mailto:spkratville@fs.fed.us)