## Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs)

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: F20AS00031**

**Federal Program:** Department of the Interior, United States (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2, Division of Ecological Services

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 15.678

**Authorizing Legislation:** Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. §§661-666; Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.; Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. §2901 et seq.; Fish and Wildlife Act, 16 U.S.C. §742 et seq.; Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C §703 et seq.; Coastal Barrier Resources Act, 16 U.S.C. §3501 et seq.; Public Lands Corps Act - Public Lands Corps, 16 U.S.C. §§1721-1726; and Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, P.L. No:114-322, Sec. 5005.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** We are collecting this information in accordance with the authorizing legislation identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

**OMB Control Number:** 1018-0100 (Expiration Date: 7/31/2021)

### I. Program Description

This financial assistance opportunity is being issued under the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) Network: (http://www.cesu.psu.edu/materials/partners.htm). The CESU network provides research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners. The partners serve the biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

**Project Title:** Science Priorities - Assessing the impact of disturbance events on freshwater mussels in Central Texas Rivers

The purpose of this announcement is to provide federal funding for an original science project to be awarded as a cooperative agreement to the successful applicant.

The purpose of this announcement is to provide up to **$186,000** of federal funds in support and assistance to the successful applicant through a cooperative agreement. The goal of this project is to assess the impact of extreme hydrological changes such as dewatering and flooding on freshwater mussels. Freshwater mussels are particularly sensitive to drought events because they are relatively immobile and cannot easily escape from dewatered habitats. Direct effects of flooding events include scouring that results in the removal of mussel beds and loss of habitats, or stranding mussels in newly formed pools that later dry out. The intensity and frequency of such disturbance events are expected to increase with future climatic changes. An increase in groundwater pumping due to human population growth and intensification of agriculture can also further affect stream base flows during drought conditions. In order to assess the threats for mussels in Central Texas and to develop sound conservation plans, the impact of such disturbances on mussels needs to be investigated further. Note that “this project” complements a related but separate “SC CASC project” as described in more detail below.

This project, “Assessing the impact of disturbance events on freshwater mussels in Central Texas Rivers” will complement a separately awarded project entitled “Hydrometeorological and Hydroclimatological Whiplashes and Boomerangs in Central Texas: Impacts on Freshwater Mussels,” which is under consideration for funding by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) South Central Climate Science Adaptation Center (SC CASC). Importantly, the successful applicant will need to coordinate and collaborate with the recipient of the SC CASC project to link climate downscaling to species-specific mussel responses at the level of the stream reach through flow modeling. The successful applicant will demonstrate research expertise in hydrology (including environmental flows and instream flow modeling) and ecology (including population and community ecology of mussels), as well as experience within the study systems (Llano, San Saba, and possibly other rivers within the Colorado River basin of Texas).

This project, coupled with the SC CASC project, is a collaboration that will enable project-generated results and reports to be communicated to conservation partners and stakeholders (i.e., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, River Authorities, Water Districts, NGOs, local governments and private landowners, among others) working on protection of mussels and mussel habitats. While it is known that mussels can be washed out of suitable habitat during flooding or become stranded in habitat that later dries out, the extent to who which flooding affects mussel mortality, both directly and indirectly, has been studied less than drought-induced mortality. Rainfall “whiplash” events, when extreme drought is followed by extreme rainfall may be especially detrimental as mussels may survive drought in habitat that is later scoured by flood. Ecological responses could vary due to differences in substrate type, channel morphology, and access to floodplain. Because of the interconnectivity of climate, hydrology, and ecosystem functions, it is vital that scientists work together with stakeholders in the region to understand the processes that impact ecosystem resilience and adaptability in the face of changing precipitation regimes. Through analysis of rainfall and river data and instream flow models, combined with knowledge of mussel ecology, the project will provide stakeholders with a set of outlooks and information that can be used directly to inform decisions to be made for short-term use and long-term planning during times of large precipitation variability.

The goal of the SC CASC project is to use an integrated climate-hydrology-ecosystem approach to understand impacts to freshwater mussels resulting from precipitation variability. This will be addressed in the San Saba and Llano Rivers within the Colorado River basin of Central Texas to provide guidance to species conservation, and human systems adaptation, and habitat protection efforts. The focus of the SC CASC project will be on precipitation whiplash (i.e., dry-wet) and boomerang (i.e., dry-wet-dry) events. The objectives of the SC CASC project are twofold: 1) quantify and improve our understanding of precipitation variability (with a focus on whiplash events) across Central Texas in the future, and 2) assess the impact of whiplash events on the hydrology of Central Texas to inform conservation efforts for freshwater mussels. The SC CASC project will utilize information from physical climate and hydrology models to provide insights into the implications of changing precipitation variability on freshwater mussel species.

The SC CASC project includes the following lines of scientific inquiry:
**Key Question 1**: How often do precipitation whiplashes and boomerangs occur in the Colorado watershed? To what extent will the frequency and intensity of precipitation whiplash and boomerang events change in the future? *Hypothesis: Whiplash and boomerang events occur every wet season but less often (1-2 times/decade) at year-to-year timescales. Precipitation variability will increase in the future, leading to more frequent and intense whiplashes and boomerangs. Ecosystems have lower capacity to adapt to whiplashes and boomerangs as opposed to sustained events such as drought.*
**Key Question 2:** How does the San Saba River respond to wet events that occur rapidly after drought events and vice versa? *Hypothesis: Wet events following drought (or whiplash events) have the largest impact on instream flows in comparison to when they occur following or during an average flow period.*
**Key Question 3:** How do precipitation whiplashes affect survival, health and demographic performance of mussels in different parts of the San Saba and Llano River? *Hypothesis: The lower parts of the tributaries will be less vulnerable to disturbance events (both drought and flooding) compared to the upper sections.*

The CASC project is expected to produce knowledge of precipitation whiplash and boomerang events in the past, present, and future and how these events impact rivers, mussels and human systems in Central Texas. A focus on precipitation whiplashes and boomerangs is designed to enhance the potential for adaptability and resilience, and reduce vulnerability, to these changes. This project will complement the SC CASC project, and will further investigate changes in stream flow through instream flow modeling and mussel species-specific and human system responses to hydrological whiplashes and boomerangs, and resulting changes in flow regime, in the Colorado River basin of Texas.

The maximum award anticipated for this project and agreement is up to **$186,000** with up to $90,000 in FY2019 funds and up to $96,000 in FY2020 funds being awarded.

The purposes of this agreement further the Department of the Interior's Secretarial Priorities for Financial Assistance (Attachment B) including: 1.) *Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt* by **utilizing science** to identify best practices to manage land and **water resources** and adapt to changes in the environment [the deliverables from this agreement will inform possible new approaches to managing freshwater mussel populations and their host fishes, as well as the waterways they inhabit] ; 3.) *Restoring trust with local communities* by expanding the lines of communication with Governors, state natural resource offices, Fish and Wildlife offices, **water authorities**, county commissioners, Tribes, and local communities [the deliverables from this agreement will build trust with State partners by ensuring listing decisions are based on sound science and will facilitate collaborative conservation with our partners including various River Authorities, municipalities, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department]; 7.) *Striking a regulatory balance* by ensuring that Endangered Species Act decisions are based on **strong science and thorough analysis** [the deliverables from this agreement will be used to inform ongoing Species Status Assessments for three species of freshwater mussels in Texas and guide management actions in future Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances]; and, 8.) *Modernizing our infrastructure* by removing impediments to infrastructure development and **facilitate private sector efforts to construct infrastructure** projects serving American needs [deliverables from this agreement will be used to inform future Candidate

Conservation Agreements with Assurances possibly resulting in increased regulatory predictability and flexibility]. This agreement also furthers Other Key Initiative #3, Creating jobs in the American economy, as the expected recipient employs temporary and permanent employees that will be at least partially supported by funds resulting from this agreement.

**II. Federal Award Information**

The period of performance and budget for this award will be for five years, ending in fiscal year 2024. The project is to be funded at up to $186,000. The one award is expected to be made over two years, up to $90,000 with FY2019 funds and up to $96,000 with FY2020 funds. The anticipated start date is February 1, 2020.

The type of assistance instrument that may be awarded, if the application is successful, is a cooperative agreement award. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will be substantially involved in the project funded under this funding opportunity. In particular, the Service will be responsible for the following:

- Work with the recipient in the development of strategies and actions to meet goals and objectives of this agreement.
- Provide technical support and assist with data gathering, analysis, interpretation, public outreach, reporting, and publications.
- Provide previously collected data for management and analysis;
- Participate and collaborate jointly with the recipient in carrying out the scope of work;
- Review and approve stages of work;
- Prior to award, review and approve proposed modifications or sub-awards; and
- Immediately halt an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met.

**III. Eligibility Information**

**A. Eligible Applicants**

Eligible Applicants: Restricted. Public and state controlled institutions of higher education with current membership in one or more Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units (CESUs). Applicants are required to submit documentation to support this requirement.

Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 for more information. Exemptions: The SAM registration requirement does not apply to individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, state, local or Tribal government, academia or other type of organization.

Federal Award may not be made to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements additionally if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Service is ready to make the award, the Service may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

## B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required.

## C. Other Eligibility Criteria

The successful applicant must be a member of Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units (CESUs). The applicant is required to submit documentation to support this requirement.

**Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration:** This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name) or any entity with an exception approved by the Service under 2 CFR 25.110(d). All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and then register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application. Federal award recipients must continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). See the "Submission Requirements" section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration. The Service may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Service is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

**Prohibition on Issuing Awards to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements:** Domestic (U.S.) non-Federal entities requiring their employees or contractors to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements that prohibit, or otherwise restrict, such employees or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information are not eligible to compete for or receive a Federal award. See Pub. L. 113-235, Title VII, Division E, Section 743 for more information.

**Excluded Parties:** The Service conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The Service cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

# IV. Application Requirements

## A. Requesting Paper Application Package

Send a written request to:
Chris Harper
Ecological Services, Habitat Restoration
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78758

## B. Application Form and Content Requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

### 1. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), must complete the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance-Individual form. All other applicants must complete the standard SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, and signed and dated. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the "Federal" funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the "Other" box, and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the "Budget Narrative" section below).

### 2. SF 424, Assurances

Applicants must submit the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form. Complete either the SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs or the SF-424D, Assurances for Construction Programs, as applicable to your project. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. The SF-424 Assurances forms include a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing the required SF-424 Assurances form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law.

### 3. Project Narrative

**Project Summary**

Briefly summarize the project, in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project. Goal(s), objectives, specific project activities, anticipated outputs and outcomes can also be included in this section.

**Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is necessary (significance/value) and include supporting information. Summarize previous or on-going efforts (of you/your organization, and other organizations or individuals) that are relevant to the proposed work. Explain the successes or failures of past efforts and how your proposed project builds on them. If you have received funding previously (from the Service or any other entity) for this specific project work or site, provide a summary of the funding, associated activities and products/outcomes.

**Project Goals and Objectives:** State the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the program/project. State the objectives of the project. Objectives are the specific outcomes to be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s). The project objectives must be specific, measurable, and realistic (attainable within the project's proposed project period).

**Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:** List the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated objectives. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the project objectives and reach the project goal(s). The proposed project activities narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the activities and the proposed project costs. For projects being conducted within the United States, the narrative must provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For projects being conducted on the high seas, the narrative should provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with Section 7 of Endangered Species Act. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity. Provide a timetable indicating roughly when activities or project milestones are to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts within the body of the project narrative (<u>do not include as separate attachments</u>). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.

**Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement:** As applicable, describe how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in conducting project activities, disseminating project results and/or incorporating your results/products into their activities.

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** Detail the monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. Building on the stated project objectives, which must be specific and measurable, identify what you will measure (i.e., quantitative/quantifiable indicators) and how you will measure. Reference the stated project timetable (i.e., process indicators) and budget information (i.e., input indicators). Identify the products/services to be delivered and how/to whom they will be delivered (i.e., output indictors). Detail the expected direct effect(s) of the project on beneficiaries (i.e., outcome indicators). Describe how project participants and beneficiaries will participate in monitoring and evaluation activities. Describe how findings will be fed back into decision making and project activities throughout the project period.

**Description of Entities Undertaking the Project**: Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis. If eligibility for funding is based in whole or in part on the qualifications of key personnel, provide for each key person a brief (<u>**1-2 pages**</u>) but descriptive overview of their education, experience and other skills that make them qualified to carry out the proposed project. To prevent unnecessary transmission of Personally Identifiable Information, ***do not include Social Security numbers, the names of family members, or any other personal or sensitive information including marital status, religion or physical characteristics on the description of key personnel qualifications.***

**Sustainability:** As applicable, describe which project activities will continue beyond the proposed project period, who will continue the work or act on the results achieved, and how and at what level you expect these future activities will be funded.

**Literature Cited:** As applicable.

**Map of Project Area**: Map should clearly delineate the project area and be large enough to be legible. Label any sites referenced in the project narrative or if not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.

**Statement(s) Regarding Single Audit Reporting**: As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. All U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants must provide a statement regarding if your organization was/was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted

4. **SF-424, Budget Information**
   Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form. Complete either the SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs or the SF-424C, Budget Information for Construction Programs, as applicable to your project. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles as detailed in the Service's "Financial Assistance Award Terms and Conditions". Please note: Show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In the "Budget Summary" section, use the first row for funding requested from this Federal program. Use subsequent row(s) for other Federal funding. Enter each Federal program's CFDA number(s) in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number(s) for this Federal program appears on the first page of this Funding Opportunity.

5. **Budget Narrative**
   Describe and justify requested budget items and costs. Detail how the SF-424 Budget Information, Object Class Category totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, include the baseline salary figures and the estimates of time. Describe any item of cost that requires prior approval under the Federal cost principles. See 2 CFR 200.407 "Prior written approval (prior approval)" for more information. If equipment purchased previously with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source.

6. **Indirect Costs: Individuals**
   Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget and skip the next section.

7. **Indirect Costs: Organizations**
   The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White

House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the Interior Business Center by phone 916-930-3803 or using the IBC Email Submission Form. See the IBC Website for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to use amounts budgeted for direct costs to satisfy cost-share or match requirements or to cover unallowable indirect costs. Recipients shall not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

**Required Indirect Cost Statement**

All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application to the Service, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:

☐ A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.

☐ A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than $35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.

☐ A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: "Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made." *or* "Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement."]

☐ A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in [2 CFR 200.68]. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

**8. Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter that might place the recipient, including their employees and subrecipients, in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest include direct or indirect financial interests; close personal relationships; positions of trust in outside organizations; consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization; and decision-making authority related to the proposed project. Conflicts of interest are those circumstances real or perceived that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, or the applicant's employees or subrecipients, in matters pertaining to the proposed project. Applicants may not solicit, obtain, or use non-public information that may be of competitive interest to the entity, including information regarding the funding opportunity, evaluation, award, or administration of an award to the entity. Applicants must notify the Service in writing in their application if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal program receiving this application or who otherwise may be involved in the review and selection of their proposal. The term employee means any individual to be engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award application. Applicants may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role for the proposed project, whose participation puts them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the U.S. Office of Government Ethic's website at https://oge.gov/ for more information on these restrictions. The Service will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the proposed project and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the Service may work with the applicant determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the rejection or disqualification of the application.

**9. Single Audit Reporting Statement**

All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

**10. Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Applicants requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If this application requests more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

**11. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than $100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

12. **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**
    Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "*There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel*". If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with "*We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing.*"

13. **APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

    ☐ **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance or Application for Federal Assistance-Individual**

    ☐ **SF-424B or D, Assurances**

    ☐ **Project Narrative**

    ☐ **SF-424A or C, Budget Information**

    ☐ **Budget Narrative**

    ☐ **Indirect Cost Statement and related documentation (when applicable)**

    ☐ **Conflict of Interest Disclosure (when applicable)**

    ☐ **Single Audit Reporting Statement (when applicable)**

    ☐ **SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (when applicable)**

    ☐ **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

    Failure to provide complete information may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

## V. Submission Requirements

### A. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration

These requirements do not apply to any individual applying for funds as a private citizen or any entity with an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d). All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and provide that number in the application; complete SAM.gov registration before submitting an application; and continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times when the entity has an active Federal award or application under consideration. **There is NO COST to register with Dun & Bradstreet or SAM.gov**. There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with Dun & Bradstreet and SAM.gov; **please be aware you can register and request help for free**.

1. **Obtain a DUNS Number**
   Request a DUNS Number through the Dun & Bradstreet website. The official website address is http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. For technical difficulties, send an email to the D&B SAM Help Desk. Please ensure that you are able to receive emails from SAMHelp@dnb.com. The Grants.gov "Obtain a DUNS Number" webpage also provides detailed instructions. Once assigned a DUNS number, your organization must maintain up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet. Applicants must enter their DUNS number in the "Organizational DUNS" field on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form.

2. **Register with SAM**
   Register on the SAM.gov website. The official website address is http://www.sam.gov. The "Help" tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov Register with SAM" webpage also provides detailed instructions. You can also contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been to the entity's DUNS or IRS information. Foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

## B. Submission Dates and Times

**Submission Deadline**: Monday, January 13, 2020 by 4:00 PM MT.

## C. Funding Restrictions

We will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

## D. Submission Instructions

This program requires applicants to submit their applications online through Grants.gov. Follow these steps to apply through Grants.gov.

1. **Register with Grants.gov**
   Applicants must first register an account with Grants.gov and complete all steps of the registration process before they can apply through Grants.gov. Grants.gov registration requires the entity to create an account, create an account profile, and establish authorized profile roles, including the applicant's authorized representative. Registration can take three to five business days or longer, if you do not complete the required steps in a timely manner.

2. **Grants.gov Workspace Application**
   Grants.gov applicants apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace. To apply, the applicant will create, complete, and submit a Workspace application package for this Funding Opportunity directly on Grants.gov. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to allow time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission. When attaching files to the Grants.gov application, please do not assign file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. File names longer than 20 characters will prevent your

application received by Grants.gov from automatically downloading into the Service's financial assistance management system. Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that the transmission of the application to Grants.gov takes time. Grants.gov sends either an error message or a "successfully received" message by email to the applicant's authorized representative once the transmission is complete. Please do not end the transmission process before receiving that message.

**3. Proof of Timely Submission**

Grants.gov automatically generates an electronic date and time stamp in the system upon application receipt. Grants.gov sends an acknowledgement of receipt with the date and time stamp and a unique Grants.gov application tracking number to the authorized representative by email. This email from Grants.gov serves as your proof of timely submission.

## VI. Application Review Information

### A. Criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated with equal weight given to the following criteria: technical merit (appropriateness of approach), demonstrated past expertise, feasibility, the degree to which each proposed activity is addressed. Additionally, the project will be evaluated based on how well the project application supports the Department of Interior Priorities for Financial Assistance as detailed in Attachment A.

### B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals are reviewed for eligibility by the Agency Contact provided in Part VIII. Once the eligible project proposals are received, they will be evaluated via numeric scoring matrices of the aforementioned criteria by a panel of at least 3 subject matter experts with due consideration to avoid conflicts of interest. The Agency Contact provided in Part VIII makes the final selection, for each project.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Prior to award, the Service will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the Service may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the Service may choose not to fund the selected project.

The Service may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Service is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the Service will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in 2 CFR 200.205. Service programs document applicant risk evaluations using the Service's "Financial Assistance Recipient Risk Assessment" form. Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), the Service is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System. The Service will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Service uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in 2 CFR 200.207 should be applied the award.

## VII. Federal Award Administration

### A. Federal Award Notices

Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the Notice of Award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. Recipient acceptance of a Federal award from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with all terms and conditions applicable to the award. Recipients indicate their acceptance of the Federal award by starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means.

### B. Award Terms and Conditions

See the Service's "Financial Assistance Award Terms and Conditions" for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The "Department of the Interior (DOI) Award Provisions" attached to this Funding Opportunity also apply to Service awards (Attachment A).

### C. Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Service will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

## D. Reporting Requirements

The Service will include recipient-specific reporting requirements, including the required reports, reporting frequency, and report due dates in all Notices of Award, as applicable.

### 1. Financial Reports

All recipients must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. See Service policy 516 FW 1, Monitoring Financial and Performance Reporting for Financial Assistance for more information.

### 2. Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a final performance report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

See Service policy 516 FW 1, Monitoring Financial and Performance Reporting for Financial Assistance for more information.

### 3. Significant Developments Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

### 4. Real Property Reports

Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Service will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, as applicable.

### 5. Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Recipients must notify the Service immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the Service in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the U.S. Office of Government Ethics website at https://oge.gov/ for more information on these restrictions. The Service will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the Service will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

6. **Other Mandatory Disclosures**
The non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

### VIII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Chris Harper
Supervisory Biologist
Austin Ecological Services Field Office
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78758
512-490-0057 x245
chris_harper@fws.gov

**Attachment A: DOI Award Provisions**

**I. Conflicts of Interest**

(a) Applicability.

(1) This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.

(2) In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by subrecipients, the conflict of interest provisions in 2 CFR 200.318 apply.

(b) Requirements.

(1) Non-Federal entities must avoid prohibited conflicts of interest, including any significant financial interests that could cause a reasonable person to question the recipient's ability to provide impartial, technically sound, and objective performance under or with respect to a Federal financial assistance agreement.

(2) In addition to any other prohibitions that may apply with respect to conflicts of interest, no key official of an actual or proposed recipient or subrecipient, who is substantially involved in the proposal or project, may have been a former Federal employee who, within the last one (1) year, participated personally and substantially in the evaluation, award, or administration of an award with respect to that recipient or subrecipient or in development of the requirement leading to the funding announcement.

(3) No actual or prospective recipient or subrecipient may solicit, obtain, or use non-public information regarding the evaluation, award, or administration of an award to that recipient or subrecipient or the development of a Federal financial assistance opportunity that may be of competitive interest to that recipient or subrecipient.

(c) Notification.

(1) Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR 200.112, Conflicts of lnterest.

(2) Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by subrecipients.

(d) Restrictions on Lobbying. Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under this grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 4 3 CFR Part 18 and 31 USC 13 52.

(e) Review Procedures. The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict of interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

(f) Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR Part 180).

**II. Data Availability**

(a) Applicability. The Department of the Interior is committed to basing its decisions on the best available science and providing the American people with enough information to thoughtfully and substantively evaluate the data, methodology, and analysis used by the Department to inform its decisions.

(b) Use of Data. The regulations at 2 CFR 200.315 apply to data produced under a Federal award, including the provision that the Federal Government has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under a Federal award as well as authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for Federal purposes.

(c) Availability of Data. The recipient shall make the data produced under this award and any subaward(s) available to the Government for public release, consistent with applicable law, to allow meaningful third party evaluation and reproduction of the following:

(1) The scientific data relied upon;

(2) The analysis relied upon; and

(3) The methodology, including models, used to gather and analyze data.

**Attachment B:**
**DOI Priorities for Financial Assistance**

The Secretary of the Interior's Top Ten Priorities

1. *Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt*
    a. Utilize science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment;
    b. Examine land use planning processes and land use designations that govern public use and access;
    c. Revise and streamline the environmental and regulatory review process while maintaining environmental standards.
    d. Review DOI water storage, transportation, and distribution systems to identify opportunities to resolve conflicts and expand capacity;
    e. Foster relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands;
    f. Identify and implement initiatives to expand access to DOI lands for hunting and fishing;
    g. Shift the balance towards providing greater public access to public lands over restrictions to access.
2. *Utilizing our natural resources*
    a. Ensure American Energy is available to meet our security and economic needs;
    b. Ensure access to mineral resources, especially the critical and rare earth minerals needed for scientific, technological, or military applications;
    c. Refocus timber programs to embrace the entire 'healthy forests' lifecycle;
    d. Manage competition for grazing resources.
3. *Restoring trust with local communities*
    a. Be a better neighbor with those closest to our resources by improving dialogue and relationships with persons and entities bordering our lands;
    b. Expand the lines of communication with Governors, state natural resource offices, Fish and Wildlife offices, water authorities, county commissioners, Tribes, and local communities.
4. *Ensuring sovereignty means something*
    a. Support tribal self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty;
    b. Solidify mutual interests between the U.S. and the freely associated states and territories.
5. *Generating additional revenues to support DOI & National interests*
    a. Ensure that the public receives the full market value for the natural resources produced on federal lands;
    b. Ensure that fees or costs levied for DOI services are reasonable and targeted to achieve cost recovery;
    c. Consider the impact of DOI decisions on economic development and job creation.
6. *Protecting our people and the border*
    a. Actively support efforts to secure our southern border;
    b. Ensure DOI law enforcement staffing addresses public safety risks anticipated on DOI land.
    c. Promote a "public service" demeanor within our law enforcement community.
7. *Striking a regulatory balance*

a. Reduce the administrative and regulatory burden imposed on U.S. industry and the public;
b. Ensure that Endangered Species Act decisions are based on strong science and thorough analysis.

8. *Modernizing our infrastructure*
    a. Support the White House Public/Private Partnership Initiative to modernize U.S. infrastructure;
    b. Remove impediments to infrastructure development and facilitate private sector efforts to construct infrastructure projects serving American needs;
    c. Prioritize DOI infrastructure needs to highlight:
        i. Construction of infrastructure;
        ii. Cyclical maintenance;
        iii. Deferred maintenance.
9. *Reorganizing for the next 100 years*
    a. Improve alignment and integration of the DOI organizational structure;
    b. Redistribute organizational resources (people and funding) to enhance mission achievement and improved public service;
    c. Improve organizational alignment with Executive Branch counterparts with major land management assets or influence.
10. *Achieving our goals and leading our team forward*
    a. Senior executives are expected to provide leadership in achieving goals of the President and the Secretary;
    b. The Management Team is expected to:
        i. Ensure cost-effective operations and quality service to the public
        ii. Facilitate organizational cooperation and conflict resolution;
        iii. Ensure the workplace environment is conducive to employee productivity and safety;
        iv. Hold individuals accountable for actions that violate DOI policies and requirements.

<u>Other Key Initiatives</u>

1. Employment of veterans
2. Supporting DOI infrastructure needs
3. Creating jobs in the American economy
4. Access to outdoor recreation opportunities