U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services

Coastal Program - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.662

Notice of Funding Availability and Application Instructions

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

The Coastal Program is a voluntary, incentive-based program that provides technical and financial assistance to coastal communities and landowners to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on public and private lands. The Coastal Program is not a conventional grants program, in that it does not solicit projects through a request for proposals. Instead project work plans are developed strategically, in coordination with partners, and with substantial involvement from Service field staff. Projects must advance our mission, promote biological diversity, and be based upon sound scientific biological principles. The Coastal Program – Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding is available to coastal areas within the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes basin which includes parts of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.

II. Award Information

Projects funded under the Coastal Program – Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will typically range in size from $40,000 - $150,000. We anticipate approximately $450,000 in funding and approximately 10 awards in fiscal year 2015. The period of performance for the majority of projects funded under this program is two years, starting on the date the award is signed by the USFWS. This program uses cooperative agreements as the primary assistance instrument. Service biologists will be substantially involved in developing and implementing projects with partners. This substantial involvement could include helping plan and implement specific project activities, completing permitting and other environmental compliance, working with contractors and partners in implementing on-the-ground actions, and coordinating and facilitating meetings.

III. <u>Basic Eligibility Requirements</u>

Eligible Applicants:

Eligible applicants include state, county, city or township governments, special district governments, independent school districts, public and State controlled institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, Native American tribal governments and organizations, nonprofit organizations, individuals, for profit organizations, and small businesses. U.S. non-profit, non-governmental organizations must provide a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.

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 2of 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.

A. DUNS Registration

Request a DUNS number online at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. U.S.-based entities may also request a DUNS number by telephone by calling the Dun & Bradstreet Government Customer Response Center, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 8 PM CST at the following numbers:

U.S. and U.S Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711
Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1)
For Hearing Impaired Customers Only call: 1-877-807-1679 (TTY Line)

Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

B. Entity Registration in SAM

Register in SAM online at http://www.sam.gov/. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

C. Excluded Entities

Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching:

Cost share or matching funds are not required, although we strive to achieve a 1:1 cost share on selected projects. Cost sharing includes cash, in-kind contributions, salary costs, equipment use, non-program grant funds and materials. Other cost sharing or matching contributions may also be eligible and will be determined by the Service biologist involved in the project. The cost share or matching fund component of the project will be captured and tracked as part of the project's cooperative agreement.

IV. Application Requirements

To be considered for funding under this funding opportunity, an application must contain:

A. A completed, signed and dated Application for Federal Assistance form. The SF-424 form is available online at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15. Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the "Federal" funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the "Federal" funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the "Other" box.

B. 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, beneficiaries, and expected outcomes consistent with this funding opportunity. 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 and/or disseminating project results.

C. Project Narrative

In no more than six (6) pages text and two (2) pages maps/photos, please provide the following information (Use 12-point font, standard margins and spacing. You may delete *italicized* text):

1. **Project Location**:
   a. *County:*
   b. *Identify the sub-watershed, stream, and/or habitat where the project will occur. Include river mile and/or road mile where appropriate.*
   c. *List the Township, Range, Section, and Quarter Sections containing the project location. Example: T45N, R5W, S15, SE 1/4.*
   d. *Map showing project location*

2. **What is the <u>main focus</u> of the project**?
   ___ Aquatic/Riparian Restoration Activities
   ___ Wetland/Estuarine Restoration Activities
   ___ **Outreach and Education Activities**

3. **Degradation/Ranking**: *Identify and describe all of the major factors limiting the healthy function of the watershed/habitat. Specifically identify where and how your proposed project fits into the supporting documentation (Endangered/Threatened Species Recovery Plan, Species Action Plan, Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, Watershed Restoration Plan, or other similar types of documents). Describe how your proposed project addresses the causes of degradation rather than the symptoms, or how your project addresses species recovery needs or other species conservation needs. If the document(s) prioritizes actions, then identify the ranking for the proposed project.*

4. **Fish Passage Barriers**: *Are there any complete or partial fish barriers down-stream of the project location? How far away is the closest upstream barrier? Identify if they are natural or manmade. Give the Length (miles) and area (acres) of potential <u>fish bearing</u> water upstream of the project.*

5. **Project Objectives and Benefits**: *Identify the project's objectives and benefits. The objective(s) should describe what you are going to do. The benefit(s) should be quantifiable; that is, you can measure or count the amount of habitat and/or species benefited, or the result of your project (examples: Remove 4 culverts and open fish passage to 3.7 miles of stream habitat. Propagate 1,500 endangered plants from seed and re-establish 1,000 of these plants to Site A. Install 8 signs, distribute 2 newsletters, and conduct 1 workshop.) 2. 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). State the anticipated outcomes and/or benefits of the project.

6. **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 (do not include as separate attachments). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.*

7. **Anticipated Products/Outputs:** *Describe any expected project products/outputs (examples include: management plans, brochures, posters, training manuals, number of people trained, workshops held, hours of training provided, patrols conducted). Once identified, describe the intended impact of the products/outputs on the target resource. Detail if/how products will be distributed to resource managers, researchers and other interested parties. Detail any applicability of the project methods/activities/outcomes to other projects.*

Quantify all accomplishments expected from your project in the following table.

Accomplishment	Unit	Value
Wetland restored or enhanced	acres	
Upland restored or enhanced	acres	
Stream/shoreline restored or enhanced	miles	
Riparian restored or enhanced	miles	
Fish passage barriers removed	#	
Wetland re-opened to fish passage	acres	
Stream/shoreline re-opened to fish passage	miles	
Outreach/education activities	#	
Habitat assessment or other activities		

8. **Species Present:** *Write in all species or stocks that will benefit or be affected by your project (reference Species List). Indicate whether the project effect on the species is direct (on-site) or indirect (in the project vicinity).*

Species/Stock	Direct?	Indirect?	Status* and Comments

Federal status: endangered (E), threatened (T), candidate (C), species of concern (SOC), or trust species (TR).

9. **Climate Change:** *Please describe whether your project benefits species/habitats in light of the expected effects of climate change*

10. **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.*

11. **Project Description**: *Describe what you are planning to do. Is it part of a multi-year project? If so, explain what year(s) the funding you seek will cover, and how other years of the project will be funded. Photos of the project area are encouraged.*

12. **Partners**: *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.*

13. **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. This is the person commonly referred to as the Project Officer or Project Manager. If eligibility for funding is based in whole or in part on the qualifications of key personnel, provide brief (1-2 pages) curricula vitae for key personnel, identifying their qualifications to meet the project objectives.* **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.**

14. **Monitoring**: D*escribe any monitoring plan (implementation, effectiveness) associated with this project.*

15. Outreach: D*escribe any outreach or education efforts associated with this project (may include: public workshops, tours, signs, newsletters, scientific journal articles, scientific conference presentations, educational forums, etc.).*

16. Budget: *List the anticipated amount of*:

a. Direct Costs Requested:
b. Administrative costs requested *List the dollar amount and the percentage of (a)*:
c. Total Funds requested *(add a + b)*:
d. Cost share. *List the dollar amount and percentage of (e)*:
e. Total project cost *(add c + d)*:

D. Budget Form

Complete the **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A)** or **Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF 424C) form**. Use the SF 424A if your project does not include construction and the SF 424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. The budget forms are available online at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15.

When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and subawards are subject to the cost principles in the following Federal regulations, as applicable to the recipient organization type:

- 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
- 45 CFR Part 74, Appendix E, Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development Under Grants and Contracts with Hospitals
- 48 CFR 1, Subpart 31.2, Contracts with Commercial Organizations

Links to the full text of these Federal cost principles are available on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/grants/.

Federally Funded Equipment: Applicants cannot attribute equipment paid for by the U.S. Federal Government under another award as matching or in-kind contributions. Do not include this type of equipment in your budget! Instead, provide a separate list of any equipment paid for by the U.S. Federal Government that will be used for the project, including the name of the Federal agency that paid for the equipment.

Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding on the budget form. For example, enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

E. Budget Justification

In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF 424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal Cost Principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost.

Required Indirect Cost Statement: All applicants except individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate must include in the budget justification narrative one of the following statements and attach to their application all required documentation as detailed in the following table:

Circumstance:	Statement to include in budget narrative:	Other document(s) to attach:
• No indirect cost rate • Charges all costs directly	**Indirect Cost Statement:** Our organization does not have an indirect cost rate and will charge all costs directly.	None.
• Is not an individual • Has an indirect cost rate • Has an approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with their Federal cognizant agency covering part/all of the proposed project period	**Indirect Cost Statement:** We have an approved NICRA covering part/all of the proposed project period. A copy of that NICRA is attached.	Copy of approved NICRA.
• Is not an individual • Has an indirect cost rate • Has established a NICRA in the past, but do not have an approved rate covering part/all of the proposed project period • May or may not have recently submitted a	**Indirect Cost Statement:** Our indirect cost rate is [insert a description of the rate]. We have established a NICRA in the past but it expired. [Insert one of the following statements: "We submitted a new NICRA proposal to our cognizant agency on [insert date]." OR "In the event an award is made we will submit a NICRA proposal to our cognizant agency immediately and no later than 90 calendar days after the award is made". We understand that: • Although the Service may approve a	Copy of most recently expired NICRA and, when applicable, a copy of any NICRA proposal submitted to the cognizant agency that is currently pending approval.

new NICRA proposal to cognizant agency. If not, will do so within the required timeframe, in the event an award is made	budget that includes an estimate of indirect costs based on our stated rate, that approval will be contingent on our establishing a NICRA. • Recipients without a NICRA are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. • Failure to establish a NICRA during the award period will make all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs under the award unallowable. • We will not be authorized to transfer any unallowable indirect costs to the amount budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements without the prior written approval of the Service. We may not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized by legislation.	
• Is not an individual • Has an indirect cost rate • Has never established a NICRA in the past • Will submit a NICRA proposal to cognizant agency within the required timeframe, in the event an award is made	**Indirect Cost Statement:** Our indirect cost rate is [insert a description of the rate]. We have never established a NICRA. In the event an award is made we will submit a NICRA proposal to our cognizant agency immediately and no later than 90 calendar days after the award is made. We understand that: • Although the Service may approve a budget that includes an estimate of indirect costs based on our stated rate, that approval will be contingent on our establishing a NICRA. • Recipients without a NICRA are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. • Failure to establish a NICRA during the award period will make all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs under the award unallowable. • We will not be authorized to transfer any unallowable indirect costs to the amount budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching	None at the time of application. In the event an award is made, recipient must submit a copy of their approved NICRA before charging indirect costs to the award.

	requirements without the prior written approval of the Service. We may not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized by legislation.	
• Is not an individual, state, local or Federally-recognized Indian tribal government • Has never established a NICRA in the past • Cannot charge all costs directly • Will not be able to meet the requirement to submit a NICRA proposal within 90 calendar days after award, in the event an award is made	**Indirect Cost Statement:** We have never established a NICRA in the past and will not be able to meet the requirement to submit a NICRA proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award, in the event an award is made. In the event an award is made we request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). We understand this rate will apply for the life of the award, including any future extensions for time, and that the rate cannot be changed even if we do establish a NICRA at any point during the award period. We understand that MTDC is defined as all salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and subawards and subcontracts up to the first $25,000 of each subaward or subcontract (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards and subcontracts under the award). We understand that MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of $25,000.	None.

Applicants who are individuals applying for 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.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service's **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/grants/.

Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior:
For organizations without a NICRA, you must have an open, active Federal award to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to your cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
2180 Harvard Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: 916-566-7111
Email: ics@nbc.gov
Internet address: http://www.aqd.nbc.gov/Services/ICS.aspx

F. **Statements Regarding A-133 Single Audit Reporting:** Following OMB Circular A-133 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a133/a133_revised_2007.pdf), all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $500,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit an A-133 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 an A-133 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 (http://harvester.census.gov/sac/). Include these statements at the end of the Project Narrative in a section titled "**A-133 Single Audit Reporting Statements**".

G. **Assurances**
Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available online at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)** if the project does not involve construction. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF 424D)** if the project does involve construction or land acquisition. Signing this form does not mean that all items on the form are applicable. The form contains language that states that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program.

H. **Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:**
Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the

statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this project AND the project budget exceeds $100,000, complete and submit the **SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.

Application Checklist

- ☐ **Project Summary, Narrative text and attachments**
- ☐ **Timetable**
- ☐ **Budget justification**
- ☐ **Description of key personnel qualifications**
- ☐ **SF 424 budget form**: A complete SF 424A or SF 424C Budget Information form
- ☐ **Evidence of non-profit status**: If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- ☐ **SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance**: A complete, signed and dated SF 424, SF 424-Mandatory, or SF 424- Individual form
- ☐ **A-133 Single Audit Reporting statement**: If a U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government, or non-profit organization, statements regarding applicability of and compliance with OMB Circular A-133 Single Audit Reporting requirements
- ☐ **Federally-funded equipment list**: If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment as described in section D above
- ☐ **NICRA**: When applicable, a copy of the organization's current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- ☐ **SF 424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF 424B or SF 424D Assurances form
- ☐ **SF LLL form:** If applicable, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form

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

V. Submission Instructions

This program is not a conventional grants program, in that it does not solicit projects through a request for proposals. Project ideas are discussed and developed year round. If you are interested in working with the Coastal Program –Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, please contact the Great Lakes Coastal Program coordinator at: christie_deloria@fws.gov or (906) 226-1240.

Intergovernmental Review: Before submitting an application, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the following website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/) to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." E.O. 12372 was issued to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each state to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your state's designated entity for more information on the process the state requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW

Each year, we receive more requests from cooperators for financial assistance than we can fund; therefore, we must use a priority system to make selections.

Priority Selection Criteria. Conservation activities and projects do not have to meet all of the selection criteria; however, field staff will give the highest funding priority status to proposed projects that meet more of the following criteria (sequence of listing does not imply order of preference):

A. **National Wildlife Refuge System.** Coastal Program staff will favor conservation activities and projects that are on National Wildlife Refuge lands, or on public or private lands near National Wildlife Refuge lands. Activities or projects that complement conservation practices on refuges or resolve problems on refuges that are caused by off-refuge land use practices will be given higher priority.

B. **Federal trust or other priority species.** Proposed conservation activities and projects must improve habitat for migratory bird species; interjurisdictional fish; endangered, threatened, or candidate species or species proposed for listing; other species of special concern (e.g., focal or surrogate species) and/or other declining species, as identified by the Service and/or in other strategic plans. Activities or projects that benefit multiple federal trust or other priority species will be given higher priority.

C. **Coastal resiliency.** The Coastal Program is committed to addressing the growing threats to coastal ecosystems from habitat degradation and climate change. Coastal Program staff will favor conservation activities and projects that incorporate ecosystem adaptation and help coastal ecosystems and communities better deal with the effects of sea-level rise and greenhouse gases.

D. **Expand priority habitats, reduce habitat fragmentation, establish conservation buffers, and provide wildlife movement corridors for federal trust and other priority species.** Coastal Program field staff will give preference to habitat improvement projects on or adjacent to protected land, including land owned or controlled by the National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, U.S. Department of Agriculture, other federal agencies, state agencies, or nongovernment entities.

E. **Regional strategic plans and priorities.** Coastal Program regional and field staff work with conservation partners to identify habitat conservation priorities, which are used to delineate geographic focus areas in our Regional strategic plans. The geographic focus areas represent an integration of shared habitat conservation priorities among the Service, and conservation partners and stakeholders. The Coastal Program will concentrate our technical and financial resources in these focus areas to conserve priority habitat.

Habitat improvement projects that meet region-specific priorities, and are located within geographic focus areas, as identified in our Regional strategic plans, will receive higher priority. However, field staff are not prohibited from implementing high-value habitat improvement projects outside of these geographic focus areas.

F. **Self-sustaining projects.** Priority will be given to habitat improvement projects that establish a self-sustaining system, which are not dependent on artificial structures. If such structures are necessary, for project success, they must be designed to blend with the natural landscape, and to minimize future operational and maintenance costs.

Review and Selection Process:
All potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the local Coastal Program staff prior to developing an application. Most Coastal Program projects are developed collaboratively with the landowner, Coastal Program local staff, and other conservation partners. Coastal Program staff are able to provide technical biological information and are knowledgeable about state-of-the-art techniques to restore, enhance, and protect fish and wildlife habitats for the benefit of federal trust species. If an applicant chooses to prepare an application independently, the application will be reviewed to determine if the potential project is consistent with the goals of the Coastal Program Strategic Plan, and if the potential project meets the Eligibility Requirements and Criteria as stated in the full announcement.

Coastal Program field staff are responsible for identifying and selecting habitat conservation projects, with concurrence from the field station Project Leader, or other appropriate authority. At a minimum, our conservation activities and projects must advance the mission of the Service and be based on sound ecological principles. Field staff also use the project selection criteria to identify projects that maximize benefits to federal trust species, and use program resources in the most effective and efficient manner.

Cost sharing is encouraged but not required. Cost sharing is the Coastal Program's strategy to leverage program funds with funds from other federal and non-federal partners to deliver habitat conservation cost effectively. All proposals should strive to secure a cost share ratio of one partner dollar for each Coastal Program dollar.

If other considerations are equal, priority for funding will be given to projects that have agreements longer in duration, involve greater partnership support and cost sharing, and have the greatest cost effectiveness.

VII. Award Administration

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.

Domestic Recipient Payments: Prior to award, the Service program office will contact you/your organization to either enroll in the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system or, if eligible, obtain approval from the Department of the Interior to be waived from using ASAP.

Domestic applicants subject to the SAM registration requirement (see Section III B.) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP must maintain current banking information in SAM. Domestic applicants exempt from the SAM registration requirement who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP will be required to submit their banking information directly to the Service program. However, ***do NOT submit any banking information to the Service until it is requested from you by the Service program!***

Transmittal of Sensitive Data: Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.

Award Terms and Conditions: Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. 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. The Federal regulations applicable to Service awards are available on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/grants/. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Recipient Reporting Requirements:
Interim financial reports and performance reports are required for awards with a period of performance of more than one year. Interim reports will be required no more frequently than quarterly, and no less frequently than annually.

A final financial report and a final performance report will be required and are due within 90 calendar days of the end date of the award. Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. The USFWS will specify the performance reporting frequency applicable to the award in the Notice of Award document.

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 following types of conditions become known:

- 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.
- 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.

The Service will specify in the notice of award document the reporting and reporting frequency applicable to the award.

VIII. Agency Contacts

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