

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

This Funding Announcement is not a request for applications. This announcement is to provide public notice of the Bureau of Reclamation's intention to fund the following project activities without full and open competition.

| ABSTRACT                                          |                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Funding Announcement</b>                       | R15AC00006                                                                                                           |
| <b>Project Title</b>                              | Youth Employment Initiative                                                                                          |
| <b>Recipient</b>                                  | National Fish and Wildlife Foundation                                                                                |
| <b>Principal Investigator / Program Manager</b>   | Jody Olson, Director Federal Relations<br>202-595-2481<br>Jody.olson@nfwf.org                                        |
| <b>Anticipated Federal Amount</b>                 | \$750,000.00                                                                                                         |
| <b>Cost Share</b>                                 | \$750,000.00                                                                                                         |
| <b>Total Anticipated Award Amount</b>             | \$1,500,000.00                                                                                                       |
| <b>New Award or Continuation?</b>                 | Continuation                                                                                                         |
| <b>Anticipated Period of Performance</b>          | December 31, 2019                                                                                                    |
| <b>Award Instrument</b>                           | Cooperative Agreement                                                                                                |
| <b>Statutory Authority</b>                        | Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1721-1730) and Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970 (16 U.S.C. §§ 1701-07) |
| <b>CFDA # and Title</b>                           | 15.546 Youth Conservation Program                                                                                    |
| <b>Single Source Justification Criteria Cited</b> | (2) Continuation<br>(4) Unique Qualifications                                                                        |
| <b>Reclamation Point of Contact</b>               | Shaun Wilken<br>303-445-3697<br>swilken@usbr.gov                                                                     |

## **OVERVIEW**

The movement of Americans to urban areas and more indoor sedentary recreational pursuits has significant implications for the health and well-being of our nation's children and the future management of our public lands. America's youth are developing a gap in their knowledge and appreciation of fish and wildlife and the need for natural resource conservation. This gap poses a serious threat to the future of wildlife conservation and forest management as youth, particularly those from urban areas and minority or disadvantaged youth, are not raised with a conservation ethic or exposed to career opportunities in natural resources and related sciences. Outreach and engagement with today's youth is necessary if we are to cultivate the next generation of wildlife professional and outdoor enthusiasts.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will partner with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to implement a Youth Employment Initiative tentatively titled: America's Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationist (Youth Initiative). The goal of the program is to support competitive grants that provide meaningful conservation employment opportunities to youth aged 16-25 focused on benefiting BOR lands or assisting BOR in accomplishing its mission.

In partnership with BOR and other funding participants, NFWF will manage a grant program that supports innovative youth employment opportunities in conservation. The focus of this effort will be to expose young people, particularly urban residents, to the natural world and the career opportunities that are available in conservation. The program will be modeled in part after the successful Federal Youth Conservation Corps and Public Lands Corps programs. It will have both work and environmental learning goals, and the participants will spend the majority of their time outdoors implementing conservation related projects.

The Youth Initiative will bring together federal agencies including BOR, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (FS) and private partners to fund employment opportunities and outdoor education programs for young people growing up without contact with the natural world. BOR funds will support youth employment opportunities on or directly benefiting BOR lands, BOR programs, or BOR operations. With increased exposure to outdoor experiences, young people will improve their mental and physical health, gain awareness and appreciation of natural and cultural resources, enhance learning and employment skills, develop an environmental ethic and build support for conservation. The Youth Initiative is not a small grants program. It is anticipated that grants will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 with the average grant size greater than \$50,000. Eligible grantees will include non-profits, states, local governments, and Tribes.

## **RECIPIENT INVOLVEMENT**

NFWF will match the funding provided by BOR for the Youth Initiative on a minimum 1:1 basis with non-federal funds. The non-federal funds will come from corporate and foundation partnerships developed by NFWF and from grantee matching funds. Funds will be awarded through a competitive grant program developed in partnership with BOR and the other funding participants. NFWF will coordinate the Request For Proposal development and launch and solicit

grant applications using its vast network, and the network of its partners. Upon receipt of proposals, NFWF will coordinate the agency review process and present the funding organizations with a recommended project award list. After final approval by the funders, NFWF will send out 30- day Congressional Notifications, develop grant agreements and work with the funders to organize a grant announcement event. NFWF will also manage all grant awards and submit programmatic and financial documentation to BOR in accordance with all federal reporting requirements.

NFWF will be required to report to the Department quarterly regarding the number of youth hired through partnerships. Reports shall include the following information:

- Project Site Location
- Project Name (if relevant)
- Numbers of Youth Hired: youth must work a minimum of 80 hours and receive some compensation (pay or stipend, they may not be unpaid volunteers) to be counted as a youth hire.
- Dates of Employment e.g. July and August 2010
- Age Range of Youth Employed e.g. 18 – 22 yrs old (youth crews must be 25 or younger)
- Demographic information for the group e.g. 49% female, 51% male; 25% Latino, 50% African-American, 10% Asian Pacific Islander, 15% Caucasian

### **RECLAMATION INVOLVEMENT**

Substantial involvement on the part Reclamation is anticipated for the successful completion of the objectives to be funded by this award. In particular, Reclamation will be responsible for the following:

Reclamation will take an active and substantial role as a cooperating partner to NFWF in the Youth Initiative. To support the Youth Initiative, Reclamation will provide input, guidance, and final approval on the Youth Initiative Request for Proposals (RFP) including providing the description of eligible projects and evaluation criteria for the Request for Proposals as well as working with potential applicants to review proposed projects and provide letters of support. Reclamation will also evaluate and rank proposals with a Reclamation nexus and approve a list of final projects to receive Reclamation funding. Finally, as many projects will take place on Reclamation lands or in support of Reclamation programs, Reclamation will be involved in the implementation of the projects selected through the RFP process.

## SINGLE-SOURCE JUSTIFICATION

### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SINGLE SOURCE POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Department of the Interior Policy (505 DM 2) requires a written justification which explains why competition is not practicable for each single-source award. The justification must address one or more of the following criteria as well as discussion of the program legislative history, unique capabilities of the proposed recipient, and cost-sharing contribution offered by the proposed recipient, as applicable.

In order for an assistance award to be made without competition, the award must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Unsolicited Proposal – The proposed award is the result of an unsolicited assistance application which represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach which is not the subject of a current or planned contract or assistance award, but which is deemed advantageous to the program objectives;
- (2) Continuation – The activity to be funded is necessary to the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of an activity presently being funded, and for which competition would have a significant adverse effect on the continuity or completion of the activity;
- (3) Legislative intent – The language in the applicable authorizing legislation or legislative history clearly indicates Congress' intent to restrict the award to a particular recipient of purpose;
- (4) Unique Qualifications – The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based upon a variety of demonstrable factors such as location, property ownership, voluntary support capacity, cost-sharing ability if applicable, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications;
- (5) Emergencies – Program/award where there is insufficient time available (due to a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety) for adequate competitive procedures to be followed.

Reclamation did not solicit full and open competition for this award based the following criteria:

## **Single Source Justification Description:**

### **(2) Continuation**

NFWF's program, "Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists" brings together public and private partners to support those organizations that are developing innovative conservation job opportunities for youth on public lands. These job opportunities, in turn, expose young people, particularly urban, tribal and minority youth, to the natural world and career opportunities available in conservation.

The grants are part of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) effort to provide meaningful employment opportunities to young Americans to protect, restore, and enhance our nation's great outdoors. Project work funded through this program is restricted to habitat and species restoration projects that directly benefit Bureau of Reclamation lands, programs or mission.

In 2013 and again in 2014, Reclamation entered into a cooperative agreement to participate in NFWF's "Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists" initiative to fund grants for youth corps to perform important conservation work.

In 2013, 8 projects were awarded. Reclamation funding was leveraged at a ratio of more than 2:1 with matching contributions raised by the grantees and private dollars for project implementation.

In 2014, 11 projects were awarded. The projects leveraged matching contributions of over \$1.5 million. In addition, Reclamation's investment has been made to go farther as a result of co-funding provided by BLM, FWS, and private funds to help support the projects.

In 2014, NFWF contributed 132 youth employment opportunities towards Reclamation's youth hiring goals. The youth hires include at-risk youth and underserved urban and rural minority youth.

### **(4) Unique Qualifications**

NFWF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit established by the Congress in 1984 through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act, 16 U.S.C. 3701 et seq. NFWF is directed to undertake activities that further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources for present and future generations. Reclamation and NFWF have a long history of partnership on conservation projects directly benefiting Reclamation's mission. NFWF specializes in leveraging federal funds and coordinating on-the-ground conservation implementation.

This Youth Initiative will bring together federal agencies including Reclamation, BLM, FS and private partners to fund employment opportunities and outdoor education programs for young people growing up without contact with the natural world. NFWF is uniquely qualified to implement this program given its wide network of nonfederal partners, understanding of conservation challenges in the West. Reclamation funds will support youth employment opportunities on or directly benefiting Reclamation lands or Reclamation operations. With increased exposure to outdoor experiences, young people will improve their mental and physical

health, gain awareness and appreciation of natural and cultural resources, enhance learning and employment skills, develop an environmental ethic and build support for conservation.

This continuation will allow NFWF and Reclamation to continue to work on placing youths in the field and completing partnership projects that were begun in FY 2013.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1721-1730) and Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970 (16 U.S.C. §§ 1701-07)

United States Code, Title 16, Chapter 37, Section 1723:

### **1723. Public Lands Corps program**

*(c) Qualified youth or conservation corps*

#### **(1) In general**

The Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with any qualified youth or conservation corps to perform appropriate conservation projects referred to in subsection (d) of this section.

*(d) Projects to be carried out*

#### **(1) In general**

The Secretary may utilize the Corps or any qualified youth or conservation corps to carry out appropriate conservation projects which the Secretary is authorized to carry out under other authority of law on public lands.