

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Funding Opportunity

F25AS00317 Crane Creek Lacustrary Restoration

Funding Opportunity Number

F25AS00317

Table of Contents

BASIC INFORMATION.....	1
ELIGIBILITY	3
Cost Sharing Requirement	3
GET READY TO APPLY	4
Required System Registrations	4
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	4
Program Goals.....	4
Program Description	5
Legislative Authority	6
Type of Award	6
PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION	6
Application Content and Format.....	6
Application Documents.....	6
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES	9
Address to Request Application Package	9
Submission Dates and Times	9
Submission Instructions	9
APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	10
Eligibility Review	10
Merit Review.....	11
Review and Selection Process.....	14
Risk Review	14
AWARD NOTICES	15
POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION	15
Administration and National Policy Requirements	15
Reporting.....	15

BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: F25AS00317

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.662

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$1,500,000

Expected Number of Awards: 1

Award Ceiling: \$1,500,000

Award Floor: \$1

Cost Sharing Required?

No

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM, ET, on the listed application due date.

OMB Control Number: [1018-0100](#)

Have Questions?

For questions, contact Amber Bellamy at amber_bellamy@fws.gov.

Executive Summary

The Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (ONWR) seeks to restore approximately 55 acres of wetlands in the lacustrine area of Crane Creek within ONWR. A total of \$1,500,000 is available to conduct site assessments, engineering, design, permitting, and implementation including but not limited to site surveys, drawings, plans, permits, labor, materials, equipment, plantings, invasive species control, etc. Depending on estimated project costs determined during engineering and design, the project acreage will be adjusted to maximize the benefits to the Crane Creek lacustrine area. The long-term maintenance of this site will be the responsibility of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The goal of the Crane Creek Lacustrine Wetland Restoration project is to demonstrate that fish and benthic habitat and populations can be improved in the many drowned river-mouths within the Maumee Area of Concern (AOC). This project will utilize restoration techniques such as submerged barrier bars/shoals and rock/earthen islands with fallen/dead tree installation. These features will allow water to move in and out of the site with seiche and river flows, creating fish and benthic habitat that benefit the natural aquatic environment which in turn will improve the water quality in Lake Erie for the citizens who utilize this resource.

The Crane Creek Lacustrine Wetland Restoration project was conceived by a Team of regionally active habitat restoration experts, based upon their knowledge from other sites around the Great Lakes basin. This Team included restoration implementers and regulatory representatives from USFWS, US Geological Survey (USGS), Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Great Lakes Commission, Ducks Unlimited, Toledo Metroparks, Partners for Clean Streams, and several consulting firms. This project will be modeled after similar projects in the area including the Penn 7 Wetland Restoration project and the Maumee River Islands projects, as well as other successful projects in the Muskegon River and Detroit River AOCs.

The Crane Creek – Frontal Lake Erie Hydrologic Unit (HU) contains Crane Creek, which flows northeast from near Dowling (Ohio), and is subsequently joined by Henry Creek, Little Crane Creek, Ayers Creek, and other unnamed tributaries before flowing through the ONWR into Lake Erie. The lower 5.9 miles of Crane Creek is a lake-influenced, lacustrine zone. The portion of Crane Creek within the ONWR includes over 300 acres of wetlands and is within the

lacustrine zone, and as such, lake seiche effects push Lake Erie water both upstream and downstream within the ONWR. The proposed project is located between 1.5 and 2.5 miles upstream from the confluence of Crane Creek with Lake Erie. Almost 75% of the Crane Creek HU is in agricultural production and only 3% is considered impervious surface. Most of the upland areas in this HU are actively farmed, and small channelized ditches carry tile drainage and other agricultural runoff into the larger tributaries and Crane Creek proper.

The impairment of this reach is driven by siltation and high total phosphorus levels because of channelization and runoff from agricultural areas. The lacustrine portion of this HU, is impaired for all 3 biological Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs), especially the benthos at only 41% of the BUI restoration target. Based on Ohio's current BUI restoration targets, unless these sites can be improved to over 50% of their targets, the whole HU could remain impaired for benthic community health. Ohio is investigating changing the methods used to measure BUI 6: Degradation of Benthos, but the site is clearly impaired. The fish populations and habitat scores are 86% and 81%, respectively. The lacustrine metric data shows low numbers of total species, a predominance of pollution-tolerant species, heavy siltation, and extensive embeddedness.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

State governments

County governments

City or township governments

Special district governments

Independent school districts

Public and State controlled institutions of higher education

Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)

Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities

Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)

Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

Private institutions of higher education

For profit organization other than small businesses

Small businesses

Additional Information on Eligibility

The Program reserves the right to reject projects that do not align with stated goals/objectives and program priorities. This funding opportunity will not fund land acquisition.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

No

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

GRANTSOLUTIONS

This program accepts applications through GrantSolutions.gov. You must register with GrantSolutions. See [Submission Instructions](#).

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is one of 15 federal agencies that collaborates with the Environmental Protection Agency to address the most significant environmental concerns in the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). This funding opportunity will address GLRI Focus Area 1- Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern (AOCs), specifically Objective 1.1 to remediate, restore, and delist AOCs. This project has been selected as a management action necessary to remove Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) and contribute toward delisting of the Maumee AOC. Progress toward the removal of the biological BUIs (3a- degradation of fish populations, 6- degradation of benthos, and 14a- loss of fish habitat) in the Maumee AOC will be achieved through restoration of fish and benthic habitat in the lacustrine portion of Crane Creek. Almost 75 percent of the Crane Creek Hydrologic Unit (HU) is in agricultural production and only 3 percent is considered impervious surface. Most of the upland areas in this HU are actively farmed, and small channelized ditches carry tile drainage and other agricultural runoff into the larger tributaries and Crane Creek proper. Impairment is

driven by siltation and high total phosphorus levels as a result of channelization and runoff from agricultural areas.

Work will occur at and in coordination with staff at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (ONWR), who will be responsible for long term maintenance of the Crane Creek Lacustrary Restoration Project (the Project). The Service seeks design-build proposals for the Project. The Project should utilize various in-water habitat restoration techniques including but not limited to submerged barrier bars/shoals and rock/earthen islands with fallen/dead tree installation. These features will allow water to move in and out of the site with seiche and river flows, creating fish and benthic habitat, as well as allow for the settling of sediment and nutrients, all of which benefit the natural aquatic environment and improve the water quality in Lake Erie for the citizens who utilize this resource.

The Service seeks an applicant with ecological habitat restoration experience in coastal/lacustrary areas of larger river systems, specifically in the Lake Erie (Maumee River) watershed. Applicants should have the understanding necessary and be prepared to identify, select, and manage contractors to implement each step of a complex large river system restoration process including, but not limited to, the completion of site assessments/surveys/models, development of engineered drawings/plans, procurement of specialized services/equipment, application/receipt of all necessary permits, and oversight of the on the ground implementation work. Applicants should identify a contractor that can complete the engineering/design and implementation of the project to ensure time and cost efficiencies. Applicants should also expect to coordinate regularly with the Service and other project partners to provide updates and work collaboratively on developing plans for implementation.

Program Description

This funding opportunity is to implement a management action already approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of making progress toward removing three biological Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs; Degradation of Fish Populations, Degradation of Benthos, and Loss of Fish Habitat) in the Maumee Area of Concern (AOCs). Removal of BUIs and eventual delisting of AOCs is an important component of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), as it has accelerated the cleanup of legacy contamination across the Great Lakes. Cleanup and habitat restoration in the Great Lakes has resulted in economic gains through supporting fisheries and coastal resources, new real estate and commercial development, tourism with water-based recreational activities, and improved quality of life for the American people. Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge is located in the Maumee AOC and has been critical for ensuring management actions implemented contribute toward BUI removal progress. Funding from the AOC program has facilitated the protection of wetlands, reconnection of coastal wetlands to Lake Erie, fish passage between water bodies, and invasive plant management, which have led to improved water quality and fish and wildlife habitat at the Refuge and in Lake Erie. The Refuge maintains a balanced conservation approach through passive management, ensuring that both wildlife and humans benefit and is globally recognized for its valuable waterfowl and migratory bird habitats. The Refuge hosts approximately 400,000 visitors a year and the location of GLRI funded projects at the Refuge, including the Crane Creek Lacustrary Restoration, directly benefits the public by increasing recreational opportunities (e.g., birding) and supporting the local economy through tourism.

Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at [2 C.F.R. Part 200](#). All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned. Foreign travel and pre-award costs are not allowed.

Certified Local Governments are encouraged to prioritize projects in support of the celebration of America's 250th birthday (American250). This may include, but is not limited to, preservation planning, interpretation, public engagement, and rehabilitation projects that recognize and honor the nation's founding, history, and cultural heritage.

Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects

This program has Federal funding for infrastructure projects. Buy America preferences apply to Federal awards for infrastructure projects in the United States. Reference [2 CFR Part 184 - Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Project](#) for further guidance.

Buy America preferences apply to Federal awards for infrastructure projects in the United States. Reference [2 CFR Part 184 - Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Project](#) for further guidance.

Legislative Authority

Federal Water Pollution Control Act—Great Lakes (33 U.S.C. §1268)

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through G (Grant).

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

Pre-Application Requirements

Prior to applying, applicants should review presidential actions found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/> and DOI Secretary's Orders found at: <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order>. By applying in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the applicant certifies awareness and compliance with all currently effective and applicable executive orders and secretary's orders, including but not limited to the Executive Order titled Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the Executive Order and Secretary's order titled Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their proposed activities are consistent with the intent and requirements of these directives.

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects
SF-424C: Budget Information – Construction Programs	Required for construction projects
SF-429 (Cover Page & Attachment B), Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish Real Property Note: The SF-429 forms are only available in the Grants.gov Forms Repository . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required if requesting to acquire, improve, or furnish real property.
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries, Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Current and Pending (Other) Support Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Biographical Sketch Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.

Project Narrative

- Overview information:
 - project title,

- location details,
- description of entity(ies) undertaking the project,
- Information on key project personnel, including details on their expertise, skill, or significance to the project.
- needs statement,
- description of how project meets the program goals and objectives,
- activities,
- timeline,
- description of stakeholder coordination or involvement
- Approach for identifying contractor for assessment/evaluation, design, permitting, and implementation:
 - Objectives
 - Methods for performance monitoring, evaluation and other reporting
 - Expected outcomes and timeline/delivery schedule
 - Expected deliverables beyond required financial and performance reporting
- Other: Plan for addressing necessary environmental compliance and providing appropriate documentation to the Program

Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- Negotiated Rate: State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

Other Required Information

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

Only electronic applications are accepted at this time.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 01/23/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM, ET, on the listed application due date.

Submission Instructions

Apply Through GrantSolutions

To apply through [GrantSolutions](#), follow these steps:

1. **Register your organization.** Send an e-mail to help@grantsolutions.gov with:
 - Subject: New Organization Request
 - Entity name (organization or individual applying as a natural person)
 - Entity type
 - SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals)
 - Employer Identification Number (individuals, do not include your SSN)
 - Address
 - Contact details (First and last name, e-mail, phone)This information should be the same as entered on the entity's SAM.gov profile.
2. **Assign system user roles.** Follow the [GrantSolutions "Recipient user" registration instructions](#). Submit a separate Recipient User Account Request form for each official to be assigned a system role. At minimum, the Authorizing Official (ADO) and Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD) must be assigned.
3. **Log in.** GrantSolutions requires users to log in through Login.gov. Each user must create a [Login.gov](#) account. For instructions, see the [GrantSolutions Training Resources web page](#).

4. **Find and apply to this Funding Opportunity.** After logging in, click on either the “Begin an application” link (first time applicants) or the “Funding Opportunity” link to go to the “Competing Announcements-Application Kits” list screen. Search the list for this Funding Opportunity’s title and number. Click on the associated “Apply” link. Follow the prompts from there. Required applications forms are provided with the Funding Opportunity in GrantSolutions unless otherwise indicated on the Required Forms table above.
5. For detailed instructions, see the [GrantSolutions Training Resources web page](#).
6. **Need help?** Find help topics and contact information on the [GrantSolutions Contact Us page](#).

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see Application Documents above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see 2 CFR 25.200 and 2 CFR 25.110) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer 2 CFR 25.205 for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise

excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

Merit Review

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Quality of proposal, technical/scientific merit
- Qualifications of applicants; demonstrated ability to understand and perform the project
- Project costs, cost-effectiveness, and cost sharing
- Timeliness
- Plan for stakeholder engagement and outreach

Quality of Proposal (Maximum Points: 40)

This criterion assesses whether the planned approach for implementing the restoration project is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and a clear description of how the project meets program goals and objectives. Reviewers will evaluate proposals based on the following:

(a) Project feasibility and methodology: what is the technical merit and feasibility of the proposed approach (e.g. has the applicant described similar successful projects, is the technique appropriate and proven, is the approach comprehensive?) (20 points)

0 – proposed approach is not feasible, safe, or technically sound; 10 – proposed approach is potentially feasible, safe, and technically sound, but lacks documentation to support the proposed methodology; 20 – proposed approach is feasible, safe, and technically sound, and substantial evidence is provided to support the proposed methodology for all proposed projects.

(b) Project Detail: To what extent does the proposal completely describe the planned restoration actions, process for securing appropriate permits for environmental compliance/how appropriate documentation will be provided to the Program, and if the applicant proposed a realistic time-frame and interim milestones. Complete project plan should briefly describe all relevant phases of the restoration from initial feasibility study through design, permitting, construction, project implementation monitoring, operation and/or maintenance. To what extent does the proposal explain the planned approach, or provide examples of other projects where the approach was successful? Has the applicant described how the project will provide lasting benefits of ecological significance and the warranty of the restoration project? (20 points)

0 – proposal provides negligible detail regarding restoration actions, project(s) status, and key milestones; 10 – proposal provides moderate detail regarding restoration actions, project(s) status, and key milestones; 20 – proposal provides extraordinary detail regarding restoration actions, project(s) status, and key milestones.

Qualification of Applicants (Maximum Points: 30)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

Reviewers will evaluate proposals based on the following:

(a) Restoration Project Management Background: Does the applicant have the capacity and knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing, and effectively managing and overseeing projects? Otherwise, does the applicant demonstrate an ability to collaborate with stakeholders and other partners? (15 points)

0 – proposal provides no documentation of experience in conducting the scope and scale of proposed work; 7.5 – proposal provides documentation of adequate capacity and knowledge to conduct the proposed work; 15 – proposal provides documentation of substantial capacity and expert knowledge to conduct the proposed work.

(b) Management Capacity: Does the applicant possess and describe the necessary experience, facilities, equipment, and administrative resources available to successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing a federal grant award? Does the proposal describe the applicant's ability and the plan for managing a significant number of projects simultaneously (as relevant), including financial and administrative management of sub-awards and timely submission of project-specific progress reports and deliverables? (15 points)

0 – proposal provides no description of experience or available resources to manage the award; 7.5 – proposal describes adequate experience and available resources to manage the award; 15 – proposal describes extensive experience with federal grants and demonstrates capacity for managing a significant number of simultaneous projects (as relevant).

Project costs, cost-effectiveness, and cost sharing (Maximum points: 10)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

Reviewers will evaluate proposals based on the following:

(a) Cost-benefit Comparison: Has the applicant demonstrated that a significant benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame? If funds are requested for partial support of a larger project or for a project with multiple sites or phases, the proposal should include the full project budget and/or a budget for each site or project phase to place the funding request in spatial and temporal context. (5 points)

0 – proposal does not provide a reasonable cost-benefit comparison; 2.5 – project is likely to be reasonably cost-effective for anticipated benefit; 5 – project is likely to be extraordinarily cost-effective for anticipated benefit.

(b) Budget Detail: Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of costs by providing a budget (following SF-424C cost classification) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications? Does the budget clearly outline the USFWS funding request and other funding sources, noting whether the other funding sources are non-federal or federal, match or leverage? Multi-year or multi-phase award requests should include annual/interim milestones that correspond to logical funding request increments. (3 points)

0 – proposal does not provide a realistic budget; 1.5 – proposal provides an adequately detailed budget with realistic cost estimates; 3 – proposal provides an extraordinarily detailed budget with realistic cost estimates.

(c) Cost-sharing and Leveraging Funds. To what extent will the applicant complement USFWS's investment with other funding sources, including formal, non-federal matching contributions and/or informal leverage? Confirmed matching and/or leveraged funding sources should be documented in the Supplemental Materials. Note whether the other funding sources are non-federal or federal, and whether the funds are secured or pending. (2 points)

0 – budget does not include any formal, non-federal matching contributions or informal, leveraged funds; 2 – budget includes formal, non-federal matching contributions and/or informal, leveraged funds (e.g., forgoing indirect or personnel costs).

Timeliness (Maximum points: 10)

Reviewers will evaluate the project timetable and supporting documentation submitted at time of application to assess project readiness. Timetables should clearly demonstrate how the scope of work is highly likely to be accomplished within a reasonable time frame as well as any due diligence completed to date. Reviewers will also consider the past performance of applicants and subrecipients, if applicable.

0- Applicant cannot provide documentation on past performance related to ability to meet deadlines; 5- Applicant can provide documentation on past performance and ability to meet deadlines; 10- Applicant can provide documentation on past performance and ability to meet deadlines and can commit to completing work by the anticipated project end date (if technically feasible).

Plan for stakeholder engagement and outreach (Maximum points: 10)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Focus Area 1 Goals, the Maumee Area of Concern, and the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Reviewers will evaluate proposal based on the following:

(a) Stakeholder Engagement and Support: Does the proposed project(s) include a wide base of stakeholder and community support that demonstrates the restoration effort has been put forward by common agreement, preferably through inclusion in a public planning process? Has or will the applicant engage with a broad range of groups, either directly or in collaboration with a local partner, to engage a variety of organizations such as community associations, business/agricultural groups, adjacent landowners, state and local governments, and/or members of Congress? (5 points)

0 – proposal does not demonstrate community support or common agreement; 2.5 – proposal demonstrates adequate community support; 5 – proposal demonstrates extraordinary community support through multiple partners, with evidence of common agreement through a public planning process.

(b) Community Outreach: Does the proposal include an outreach strategy to disseminate information about restoration goals and results to a broad audience? The strategy may include, but is not limited to: informal education and mentoring for conservation corps, interns, or early career professionals in relevant science and policy careers; opportunities for press visits; or other outreach that encourages support for restoration and environmental stewardship. (5 points)

0 – proposal does not include an outreach strategy as it pertains to dissemination of information about project goals and results; 5 – proposal includes an outreach strategy as it pertains to

dissemination of information about project goals and results.

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination); and (5) the proposed project is in compliance with all applicable executive and secretary orders, including the President's executive order on Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the executive order and Secretary order on Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered nonresponsive and eliminated from further review.

Service staff and other members of the project team are responsible for review and evaluation of applications. Reviewers will use the selection criteria to identify the application that demonstrates applicants have appropriate qualifications, have the technical expertise to implement both engineering/design and build phases of the project, is the most cost effective, and cost sharing. Successful applicants will be required to work collaboratively with the project team throughout the engineering/design and build phases.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the program assesses the risk posed by the applicant per [2 CFR 200.206](#). If an award will be made, the program may apply special conditions corresponding to the risk assessed. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the program reviews eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records per [2 CFR 200.206\(a\)](#). The program also assesses financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential challenges.

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 02/03/2026

Anticipated Project End Date: 11/01/2027

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

See the [FWS General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for national policy requirements for FWS awards. Special terms and conditions will be detailed in award notices.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the

award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).

- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over \$30,000 to the [FFATA Subaward Reporting System \(FSRS\)](#).

Other Information