NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Project Grants under the U.S. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Project Grants under the U.S. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2018-2005487

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Dates: Applications must be received by www.grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on March 12, 2018. Use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Please Note: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline.

Funding Opportunity Description: The objective of the Fiscal Year 2018 NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Grants solicitation is to provide federal financial and technical assistance to habitat restoration projects that both meet NOAA's mission to restore coastal habitats and support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) (https://www.glri.us/actionplan/pdfs/glri-action-plan-2.pdf) goal to protect and restore habitats to sustain healthy populations of native fish species in the eight U.S. Great Lakes states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota). NOAA delivers funding and technical expertise to restore Great Lakes coastal habitats. These habitats support valuable fisheries and important coastal resources, improve the quality of our water, provide recreational opportunities for the public's use and enjoyment, and increase the resilience of our coastal communities to the effects of changing climatic conditions. Proposals submitted under this solicitation will be primarily evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate they have strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that will lead to measurable impact on the project’s target species and their ecosystem in the long term.

The NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Project Grants Program will support planning and/or on-the-ground restoration activities. For the purposes of this competition, planning activities are feasibility, engineering and design activities.

Applications selected for funding through this solicitation will be implemented through

cooperative agreements. Funds will be administered by the NOAA Restoration Center. One year or multi-year awards up to three funding years will be considered, and additional releases of funds may be used to fund selected proposals through FY 20 without further competition. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $50,000 or more than $10 million over three years. Awards are dependent upon the amount of funds made available to NOAA for this purpose by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. NOAA anticipates approximately $10 million may be available over the next three years to maintain selected awards, dependent upon the level of funding made available through the Federal appropriations process. In the first year, approximately $3 million may be available to initiate up to approximately two to five projects consistent with the Program Objectives and Program Priorities in Section I of this announcement.

NOAA suggests applicants submit proposals within the following guidelines:

- Habitat restoration implementation proposals requesting between $250,000 and $3 million of federal funds, for projects that can be completed within 12-18 months. Typical awards for near-term project implementation are expected to range between $500,000 and $1 million.

- Planning only proposals requesting between $50,000 and $500,000 of federal funds, for projects that can be completed within 12-18 months. Typical awards for engineering and design only projects are expected to range between $75,000 and $250,000.

- Multi-year, multi-phase proposals covering engineering, design, and/or restoration implementation requesting between $500,000 and $10 million for a time frame of 18-48 months. Typical awards for multi-year projects are expected to range between $750,000 and $3,000,000.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The objective of the FY18 NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Grants solicitation is to provide federal financial and technical assistance to habitat restoration projects that both meet NOAA's mission to restore coastal habitats and support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) (https://www.glri.us/actionplan/pdfs/glri-action-plan-2.pdf) goal to protect and restore habitats to sustain healthy populations of native fish species in the eight U.S. Great Lakes states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota).

NOAA recognizes the need to fund early phases of restoration projects and that accomplishing habitat restoration is a multi-faceted effort involving feasibility studies, project design, engineering services, permitting, construction, legal considerations, oversight, pre- and post-removal monitoring, and education and outreach. Applicants may therefore apply for funding to support a combination of these activities; however, priority will be given to project proposals that feature on-the-ground restoration activities. Habitat restoration engineering and design project proposals should provide information on the project's likelihood to move forward to implementation and the significance of the ecological benefits that would be ultimately achieved as they relate to the program priorities described below.

B. Program Priorities

NOAA seeks to support projects that will result in on-the-ground restoration of degraded or altered Great Lakes coastal habitat to promote the recovery and sustainability of native fish species, recognizing that restoration projects yield multiple benefits for wildlife and local communities.

Priority will be given to habitat restoration proposals that fulfill the following NOAA and GLRI goals:

- Creating functional habitats for native fish species migration, reproduction, growth, and seasonal refuge, including improvements for fish passage, wetlands and nearshore habitats;

- Restoration of sites outside of Areas of Concern (AOC) including delisted AOCs and AOCs in recovery with all management actions complete; and

- Ensuring the long term protection of the restored site through partner-supported acquisition of land or a conservation easement at the restored site, or land with an ecological relationship to the restored site (e.g., land in proximity or within the same watershed).

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration:

- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; and

- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, 16 U.S.C. 1891a.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

One-year or multi-year awards up to three funding years will be considered, and additional releases of funds may be used to fund selected proposals through FY 20 without further competition, at the discretion of NOAA. NOAA anticipates that up to $10 million may be available for Great Lakes habitat restoration over the next three years to maintain selected awards from this solicitation, dependent upon the level of funding made available through appropriations. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $50,000 or more than $10 million over three years. In the first year, approximately $3 million may be available to initiate up to approximately two to five projects consistent with the Program Objectives and Program Priorities in Section I of this announcement.

NOAA suggests applicants submit proposals within the following guidelines:

- Habitat restoration implementation proposals requesting between $250,000 and $3 million of federal funds, for projects that can be completed within 12-18 months. Typical awards for near-term project implementation are expected to range between $500,000 and $1 million.

- Planning only proposals requesting between $50,000 and $500,000 of federal funds, for projects that can be completed within 12-18 months. Typical awards for engineering and design only projects are expected to range between $75,000 and $250,000.

- Multi-year, multi-phase proposals covering engineering, design, and/or restoration implementation requesting between $500,000 and $10 million for a time frame of 18-48 months. Typical awards for multi-year projects are expected to range between $750,000 and $3,000,000.

Funds will be administered by the NOAA Restoration Center. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Pre-award negotiations may also include the distribution of funds across multiple years. Any funds provided to successful applicants for out-year funding requests will be determined by progress towards stated milestones and availability of funding at the discretion of the NOAA Restoration Center and the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD).

Once funds are awarded in FY18, recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. NOAA expects, but is not obligated, to provide additional funding to multi-year awards in subsequent years. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for application preparation costs if programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for habitat restoration, the merit and ranking of the applications, and the amount of funds made available through the Federal appropriations process in FY18 and subsequent fiscal years. This FFO is being released prior to final appropriations due to award process timeframes. While the FY 2018 President's budget proposed $0 for this program, final Congressional and subsequent action has not been determined. Applicants are not guaranteed any level of funding.

B. Project/Award Period

NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for 36 months, but may award a project where the period of performance is as little as 12 months or extends up to 48 months. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2018.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.24, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to,

collaboration on the scope of work, providing assistance with technical aspects of the habitat restoration project, review and comment on design plans, review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.324, and tracking the progress towards the successful completion of the project.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profits, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants may be located anywhere but must propose work within the Great Lakes basin and within one of the eight U.S. Great Lakes states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota).

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no statutory matching requirement for this funding. NOAA typically leverages its federal funding with matching contributions from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors to implement coastal and marine habitat restoration. To this end, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate partnerships and some portion of non-federal match (suggested at 1:1) with NOAA funds requested to implement the proposed project. Applications with less than 1:1 match will not be disqualified, however, applicants should note that cost sharing is an element considered in Evaluation Criterion #4 "Project Costs" (Section V.A.4.). Although federal funding will not be provided for the acquisition of land or conservation easements, nor are acquisition expenses eligible non-federal match, proposals that include land or conservation easement acquisition as leverage will be more competitive, as described in the program priorities.

Federal sources cannot be considered for matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage and collaboration. Match to NOAA funds can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include third party in-kind goods and services and volunteer labor. Refer to 2 C.F.R. 200.306 for cost sharing or matching policies. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from non-federal partners, as long as such contributions are not used to match any other federal funds (except as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.306), are available within the project period stated in the application, and otherwise meet the requirements of 2 C.F.R. 200.306. Applicants with approved indirect cost

rates planning to provide cost sharing may find it convenient to propose a portion or all of their indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to Section IV.F. "Funding Restrictions" for information on indirect costs.

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by NOAA's Grants Management Division, unless amended based on extenuating circumstances. NOAA is under no obligation to amend the matching contributions once agreed to by the recipient. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the overall number of volunteers and third party in-kind participation hours devoted to habitat restoration projects. Letters of commitment for any secured resources that will be used as match for an award under this solicitation should be submitted as an attachment to the application (see Section IV.B).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Projects must be within the U.S. Great Lakes basin (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota). Projects outside of U.S. Great Lakes basin will not be considered and will be disqualified. Section III.A presents information distinguishing eligible versus ineligible organization types.

NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $50,000 or more than $10 million over three years (see Section II.A for funding levels recommended to provide a consistent review with other anticipated projects).

Proposals addressing only water quality improvement measures are not eligible. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, elimination of combined sewer outfalls, replacement of failing septic systems, and implementation of farm waste management plans. Projects seeking funds only for invasive species removal and management will also not be considered under this solicitation. However, NOAA may fund invasive species removal as a component of an overall habitat restoration project proposal.

Applicants should also note that the following activities will not be considered: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state or federal law; (2) activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state or local law; and (3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

Applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late

applications will not be considered for funding. Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov is contained in Section IV.G. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than five business days following the closing date will not be accepted. All applications MUST contain ALL required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink (SF-424, SF-424b, CD-511). Failure to submit signed forms shall result in disqualification from this competition. Project design plans may be submitted on CD, DVD, or USB drive, if a proposal is submitted in hard copy. The full proposal must arrive in one package, either through Grants.gov or hard copy.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should apply through the www.Grants.gov website. A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

--Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)

--Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: SF-424A (prior to award, an SF-424A for each year of funding will be required)

--Assurances for Non-construction Programs: SF-424B

--Certification Regarding Lobbying: CD-511

--Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, NOAA recommends the following as part of a complete application package (Page limits assume a 12 point font and 1 inch margins):

--Project summary (described below, 2 page limit);

--Project narrative (described below, 15 page limit);

--A data management plan (described below, 2 page limit);

--A detailed budget justification (described below, 6 page limit);

--Project design plans (e.g., schematic drawings, not feasibility studies or watershed plans)

--Other relevant supporting materials (15 page limit) such as:

--An index of supporting materials that are included;

--Letters of support from the appropriate State agency (or agencies) ensuring awareness and appropriateness of project (i.e., addresses a state priority and is feasible from a permitting and environmental compliance perspective);

-- If a project is proposing fish passage, include appropriate documentation demonstrating consultation with and support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Sea Lamprey Control Program;

--A site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map or aerial photo with site location(s) highlighted;

--Brief curriculum vitae or resume for up to three (3) key personnel (maximum of 1 page per person) and any examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the project team;

--Long-term management plan;

--Conservation easement or property deed(s);

--A letter documenting private owner or public land manager support of the project proposed for the owned site(s) (including those from adjoining landowners and those documenting financial and in-kind support); and

--monitoring plans.

Applications submitted through the www.Grants.gov website should include a maximum of four files (PDF files only) in addition to the Federal application forms: 1) summary, narrative, and data management plan (not to exceed 19 pages total, as outlined above); 2) budget justification (not to exceed 6 pages); 3) project designs; and 4) other relevant supporting materials - all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as maps, curriculum vitae, and support letters (not to exceed 15 pages).

1. Project Summary (2 page limit):

--Applicant Organization

--Project Title

--Site Location: nearest town or watershed, and geographic coordinates

--Brief Project Description/Executive Summary: briefly describe the significance of the specific tasks to be accomplished with requested funds, and proposed techniques that will be used to implement and monitor the restoration.

--Coastal Habitats to Benefit from the Project: habitat(s), organism(s) currently using the project area or expected to benefit in the future.

--Project Performance Measures and Outcomes: measurement of contribution to achieve GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress (https://www.glri.us/actionplan/pdfs/glri-action-plan-2.pdf), as relevant, such as number of miles of Great Lakes tributaries reopened; number of miles of Great Lakes shoreline and riparian corridors protected, restored and enhanced; number of acres of Great Lakes coastal wetlands protected, restored and enhanced; and number of acres of other habitats in the Great Lakes basin protected, restored and enhanced.

--Project Timeline: restoration implementation start date, if applicable (not proposed award start date)

--Permits and Approvals: identify and list all consultations, permits, and regulatory approvals necessary for the proposed project(s) and their status (e.g., not applied for, pending, and secured). This may not be applicable for design-only proposals.

--Land Owner: name and address (if privately owned) or public agency contact

--Total NOAA Funding Requested (by year)

--Total Non-Federal Match Secured and Anticipated

--Overall Project Cost (including any leveraged funds beyond proposed match and NOAA funding request).

2. Project Narrative (15 pages):

The project narrative should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. In general, the narrative should describe how the proposed habitat restoration components will lead to measurable impact on the project's target species and their ecosystem in the long term and address the priorities listed in Section I.B.

More specifically, the narrative should:

- describe the extent to which the proposed project aligns with the stated Program Priorities (Section I.B);

- succinctly describe the historic condition of the restoration site(s) and the habitat-based issue/concern that is the primary focus of the proposal;

- describe any processes that have resulted in degradation of the habitat and how these processes have been abated to allow for successful restoration;

- identify one or more fish species targeted by the proposed habitat restoration and their historic and current status or population estimates; and

- define the project's context within the ecosystem and how project planning and design incorporates an ecosystem-based approach.

Additionally, detailed, technical information about the proposed restoration activities and site(s) should be included in the project narrative. For each restoration site, applicants should clearly identify the project phase(s) proposed (e.g. feasibility study, design, construction) and detail the implementation plan and proposed restoration techniques. If multiple

restoration sites are included within one proposal, the habitat issue or target species should be linked across all proposed sites to achieve the overall proposal's stated goal. Proposals that include multiple restoration sites should fully describe the proposed restoration activity at each site within the project narrative section. If page limits are restrictive, focus the application on the technical aspects of the proposed actions and on those actions with highest priority funding needs. If you cannot describe all aspects of a multi-year or multi-phase project within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

For applicants proposing design activities, a detailed scope of services or tasks should be included in the proposal. The description should include a schedule for a project initiation meeting, submission of a feasibility report and periodic design reviews (e.g., 30%, 95% and final review). Applicants should describe the overall habitat restoration goals of the design activities, and how support for the proposed activity would catalyze subsequent on-the-ground restoration to help sustain healthy populations of native fish species.

For applicants proposing on-the-ground restoration, project design plans, specifications, scope of work for services, and engineering opinions of cost or cost estimates (if available) should be included in the proposal. Project design plans should be included in the application in order for reviewers to comprehensively assess the technical merit of the proposed restoration action(s).

Proposals requesting funding for restoration implementation/construction activities should include a discrete monitoring plan and applicants should be willing to work with NOAA to adjust the monitoring plan, if necessary, to ensure that the proposed parameters are adequate and meaningful. All monitoring plans should propose sufficient, cost-effective implementation monitoring. Implementation monitoring assesses whether the restoration action was carried out as designed and provides a basic level of effectiveness. Implementation monitoring plans should: 1) include parameters that evaluate short-term structural changes at the project site(s) (e.g. as-built surveys), but may also include basic measures of effectiveness (e.g. presence/absence of target species); 2) propose pre-implementation data collection, when applicable; 3) include parameters with quantitative or clearly defined targets; and 4) include parameters with targets that can be evaluated within approximately one year post-implementation. Guidance on implementation monitoring for selected restoration types is available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants. NOAA will also consider proposals that include more in-depth, longer-term monitoring that addresses ecological effectiveness or restoration technique effectiveness of the Restoration Center’s primary restoration methods including removal of in-stream migration barriers for migratory fish and

hydrologic reconnection of wetlands. NOAA may choose to provide additional funds to an award or increase the award period for successful applicants whose awards are identified as suitable for effectiveness monitoring.

To protect the federal investment, the narrative should describe future management, beyond the award period, including mechanisms to protect, maintain, or sustain the restoration site(s) so the effects of the funded project(s) can benefit the target species and their habitat into the future. Proposed habitat restoration action(s) that are sustainable and provide lasting benefits for the species targeted by the project and its habitat are preferred, as considered in Evaluation Criteria #1 “Importance and Applicability” (Section V.A.1).

Because climate change is anticipated to have significant effects on the Great Lakes, project goals and strategies should also be designed to be viable despite climate change and its potential impacts. Projects should demonstrate that the risks of the potential climate change effects on longevity and intended outcome(s) have been considered, and that project planning and implementation have been adapted to projected vulnerability and risk of climate change. Applications should describe whether project planning and implementation build upon local, State, Tribal, regional, national, and international partners’ climate change expertise, experiences, and resiliency and/or adaptation plans in a cost-effective and efficient manner. Examples of vulnerabilities that may need to be addressed in project design include: is the project area expected to remain suitable for the species/ habitats of interest; if replanting is to be done, will the species/cultivars used be appropriate for future as well as current conditions; or do engineering designs account for plausible changes in temperature, precipitation (type, intensity, and timing), water level, flooding, ice cover, and sedimentation as a result of climate change.

The project narrative should include a timeline with key milestones identified and detail how the project(s) will be completed within the specified time period. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured), as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section VI.B). For projects with NEPA documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (CE, EA, or EIS), lead Federal agency, contact information for the lead agency person, and where public copies of the document are available. Furthermore, multi-year proposals should include a timeline with annual/interim milestones that correspond to funding increments. As described in Section II.A, NOAA will consider progress towards identified milestones when making funding decisions for multi-year awards in subsequent years.

If the project area has been or will be protected through conservation easement or acquisition, please describe the uses that are allowed and how long the property(s) will be protected. If a property other than project area has been or will be protected, please describe the land's ecological relationship to project site. To demonstrate that the project area, or land with an ecological relationship to the site, has been or will be acquired or protected, a title, deed, easement, purchase and sale agreement, or other document indicating past or future sale or conservation restriction should be submitted as a supporting document.

Detailed information to be included is described by project type below:

- Hydrologic reconnection: projects may include berm breaching, culvert removal/replacement to allow natural flooding of wetlands, complete removal of levees and dikes or other impediments to historic/natural flow or hydrology, floodplain reconnection, or creation/restoration of off-channel habitats. In particular, applicants proposing to install structures such as fish passage devices or water control structures as a component of the project should include discussion of an operation and management plan that specifies the entity responsible for the operation and maintenance of the structure(s) and how they will be operated and maintained throughout the life of the structure(s) to ensure lasting habitat benefits. Applicants proposing new or modified water control structures should also describe measures that will be put in place to prevent filling of the flood storage area upstream.

- Fish passage: fish passage projects include, but are not limited to, fish ladders, by-pass channels, nature-like fishways, dam removals, and culvert removal and replacement with bottomless arch culverts or bridges. Fish passage project applications should describe the significance of the project to migratory fish populations and historical fish runs in the river, identify the river length that will be restored, the distance to the next upstream blockage, any downstream blockages or seasonal impediments to fish passage, state how the project will meet fish passage guidelines for the area, and identify and provide documentation of support for the project from the landowner/dam owner. Applications should highlight any synergies with other fish passage efforts in the watershed, including fish passage improvements at hydropower dams. Fish passage projects proposing to install fish passage devices or movable control structures should submit a summary management plan that specifies the entity responsible for the operation and maintenance of the structure(s) and how they will be operated and maintained throughout the life of the structure(s) to ensure lasting habitat benefits. All types of fish passage projects should address any issues and potential control strategies regarding aquatic invasive species (e.g., sea lamprey). If a project is proposing fish passage, include appropriate documentation demonstrating consultation with and support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sea Lamprey Control Program.

- Native Great Lakes fish habitat: activities that contribute to the return of degraded or altered estuarine, coastal, and freshwater, native Great Lakes fish habitats to functioning habitats including removing fill and debris, removing hardened structures, stabilizing the shoreline with natural materials and vegetation, installing nearshore rock reefs, and restoring spawning beds. Project applications should describe the significance of the fish habitat in the area including desired function (e.g., shallow water nursery habitat). Applications should provide documentation of support for the project from the landowner and highlight any synergies with other fish habitat efforts in the watershed.

3. Data Management Plan (2 pages)
Applications submitted in response to this solicitation should include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages, as described in section VI.B. Please refer to the following resources:

• NOAA's Data and Publication Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts is available at: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php.

• The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the examples provided by NOAA at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants

Final Data Management Plans may be developed in coordination with NOAA as part of NOAA's substantial involvement, as described in Section II.C. Data management and sharing is required for ALL environmental data collected under the award, not only pre- and post-restoration monitoring.

4. Budget Justification (6 pages):

The budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the award, with a detailed narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal (if applicable) shares. The object classes should match those found in the SF-424A. If requesting funds for a multi-year proposal, award costs should be broken into annual/interim funding requests up to three years in duration, based on logical milestones in the implementation plan. For instance, a proposal request might include a request for a project's design costs in year one, estimated construction costs needed in year two, and estimated post-project monitoring costs in year three. Another example would be a project that requests construction costs for discrete sites in each year of a multi-year award. One, two, or three-year project proposals will be accepted.

If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included. If the proposed project includes a monitoring component, the applicant should provide an estimate of all monitoring-related costs within the proposed budget.

Additional budget development guidance, including a budget narrative template, is available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants#restoration-budget-guidance The NOAA Restoration Center and Grants Management Division staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The narrative budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget form. An SF-424A for each year of requested funding will be required prior to award, but not as part of the initial application.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/ . Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=2dae4a7dcd5848a6364bb94d2d7786dd&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2subtitleA.tpl.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on March 12, 2018. See sections III.C and IV.G. for more details.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of

Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, contact the official listed in Section VII. of this announcement for referral information.

F. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable in this program, however pre-award costs may be considered and discussed during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (generally via NOAA Grants Online on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2018.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Lamar Revis, Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, at lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose all or part of indirect costs as cost sharing.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to create an online application workspace and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems accessing the online workspace contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov, as registration with SAM and DUNS are required, as described in Section IV.C.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic

acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the NOAA Restoration Center to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission.

PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants should allow themselves sufficient time to submit their application to Grants.gov in advance of the deadline to ensure applications have been submitted successfully, as waivers of the submission deadline will not be granted. Late applications will not be accepted.
If an applicant is unable to use the preferred submission method (Grants.gov) or is unsure about the success of their submission to Grants.gov, a signed hard copy application must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on March 12, 2018, the deadline under "Submission Dates and Times" in Section IV.D and sent to: NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries, 1315 East West Highway, Rm. 14853, Silver Spring, MD 20910. ATTN: NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Project Grants under the U.S. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Mandatory requirements regarding signatures and the format of hard copy applications are described in Section III.C. NOAA must receive the time-documented paper copies within five business days. Contact an official listed in Section VII. to notify NOAA the application is forthcoming.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive. Engineering and design project proposals should address the evaluation criteria below to the best of their ability including anticipated outcomes once restoration work is complete.

1. Importance and Applicability (38 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA and GLRI goals in the Great Lakes. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Program Priorities: How well the project links to the program priorities including creation of functional habitat for native Great Lakes fish, restoration of sites outside of AOCs, and protection of restored habitat in perpetuity (see Section I.B). (10 points)

- Alignment with GLRI Action Plan II Habitat and Species Focus Area objectives: The degree to which the project addresses GLRI Action Plan II goals related to protecting, restoring and enhancing habitats to help sustain healthy populations of native fish species (i.e., measurement of contribution to achieve GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress, such as number of miles of Great Lakes tributaries reopened; number of miles of Great Lakes shoreline and riparian corridors protected, restored and enhanced; number of acres of Great Lakes coastal wetlands protected, restored and enhanced; and number of acres of other habitats in the Great Lakes basin protected, restored and enhanced). (5 points).

-Issue Identification: To what extent does the proposal describe the habitat issue limiting recovery or sustainability of the species targeted by the restoration project, the state of the species' habitat/populations within the watershed/affected area, and proposed restoration actions that will have an impact on the target species. (5 points)

-Sustainability: The degree to which the project will be protected in the long term, through self-sustaining restoration techniques and a long-term management plan (if needed). (5 points)

-Tangible Results: The extent to which the project is expected to deliver specific, tangible results and feature on-the-ground restoration activities. For planning projects, include information on the likelihood, once implemented, to deliver tangible results. (5 points)

-Demonstrated Priority: The extent to which the project is a priority as identified in restoration and/or resilience planning goals, publicly vetted plans, or other documents including letter(s) of support from a relevant state agency or agencies (e.g., Great Lakes Biodiversity Conservation Strategies, Lakewide Action Management Plans, Fisheries Management Plans, etc.) (4 points)

-Multiple Benefits: To what extent will the proposed project(s) increase ecosystem and community resiliency, and yield environmentally compatible socio-economic benefits, such as increased business opportunities, public community revitalization, recreational opportunities, reduced safety hazards, or reduced maintenance costs? (4 points)

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (28 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

-Project Timeline: To what extent does the proposal completely describe the restoration actions, the current status of the project (e.g., 60% design plans complete), permitting and environmental compliance status, key milestones throughout the course of the project(s), and a realistic time frame (within the 1-3 year award period) to reach those milestones? A complete project description should include all phases of the restoration from initial feasibility study through design, permitting, construction, performance monitoring, operation and/or maintenance. If the proposal is a feasibility study or design project only, to what extent does the proposal completely describe the feasibility or design actions, key milestones, and a realistic timeframe? (5 points)

-Project Feasibility and Methodology: The overall technical feasibility of the project from an ecological and engineering perspective, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe, uses appropriate methods, personnel, planning and implementation has been adapted to projected vulnerability and risk of climate change. This includes the likelihood that a project is able to achieve stated project goals and objectives. (6 points)

-Environmental Compliance: The extent to which the proposal provides sufficiently detailed project information so that NOAA's NEPA analysis can be completed and activities can begin soon after the start date. This includes demonstrated support from the appropriate State and/or Federal or agencies, indicating that the proposed project is feasible from a permitting and NEPA perspective. (5 points)

-Measurable Goals: To what extent will the project be able to report progress towards broad goals and measure near-term implementation success, including implementation (NOAA RC Tier 1) monitoring for applicable project types? Does the proposal also offer an opportunity for insightful ecological and technical effectiveness monitoring (NOAA RC Tier 2)? Further guidance is provided in “Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring” at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/monitoring-and-evaluation-restoration-projects. If the proposal is a feasibility study or design project only, this criterion will be evaluated on the proposal’s description of pre-restoration monitoring and data collection. (5 points)

-Landowner Support: The degree to which the landowner has provided assurance of support and dedication to protecting the project for its useful life (e.g., letter of support, conservation

easement, history of land stewardship, or significant financial investment). (6 points)

- Public Access to Data: Does the proposal include a Data Management Plan, including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible? (Note: Data management and sharing is required for ALL environmental data collected under the award, not only pre- and post-restoration monitoring.) (1 point)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (10 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed work. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

-Restoration and Conservation Background: The capacity/knowledge of the applicant and associated project personnel 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 that restore coastal habitats. Projects that require engineering decision making should highlight the qualifications and experience of the designer/engineer. Examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the implementation team are encouraged. (5 points)

-Management Capacity: The facilities/equipment and/or administrative resources and capabilities available to the applicant, or that will be secured to support and successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing the federal grant award. (5 points)

4. Project Costs (16 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

-Funding Priorities: Does the proposed budget direct the majority of funds, including funds for salaries, to implement the project (i.e. project development/feasibility, design, or implementation and monitoring), compared to the percentage used for general program support including administration? (4 points)

-Budget Detail: Whether the proposed budget is sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of federal and any non-federal shares by object class as listed on form SF-424A. Requests for equipment (any single piece of equipment costing $5,000 or more) will be evaluated on how strongly tied the equipment is to achieving on-the-ground habitat restoration and on the adequacy of lease versus buy comparisons in justifying the need for purchase. (5 points)

-Cost-benefit Comparison: The ability of the applicant to demonstrate that a significant benefit will be generated for 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 a full project budget and/or budget for each site or project phase. Multi-year or multi-phase award requests should also include annual/interim milestones that correspond to logical funding request increments. (4 points)

-Cost Sharing: To what extent will the applicant leverage the federal investment through non-federal matching contributions, including the amount of cash match available and amount of secured match to support the proposed restoration activities? NOAA desires cost sharing to leverage funding and further encourage partnership among government, industry, and academia (any applicant proposing at least 1:1 confirmed non-federal match would receive the full 3 points for this criterion). (3 points)

5. Outreach and Education (8 points)

NOAA assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Applications will be evaluated on the following:

-Information Dissemination: Public outreach as it relates to the proposed project, including plans to disseminate information on project goals, results, and project partners; sources of funding and other support provided, such as the involvement of project partners; and the potential for the proposed project to encourage future restoration and protection of coastal habitats or complement other local restoration or conservation activities. (4 points)

-Community Involvement: 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 through inclusion in a public planning process? To what degree does the project(s) have community support as demonstrated by a diversity of partners and/or sponsorship (letters of support, confirmed contributions) from public and nonprofit organizations, citizen and watershed groups, industry, corporations and businesses, youth

conservation corps, students, landowners, academia, and local government, state, federal agencies , and/or members of Congress? (4 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will undergo an initial administrative screening to determine if they are eligible and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications are screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. D. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; and includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. NOAA does not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause the application to be rejected or receive a poor evaluation. However, if deficiencies are identified by NOAA or the applicant, the applicant may correct any deficiencies in their application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it.

Eligible applications will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this solicitation and the mission and goals of NOAA.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the Evaluation Criteria listed above. After the technical review, a panel may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official (SO) regarding which proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A. and I.B.).

The panel will be comprised of federal employees and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

If convened, the panel will be presented with the top-ranked applications, per the results of the technical review, technical review scores, and comments for each application. The panel will rate all top-ranked proposals on the following scale:

3- Excellent-- Application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B., and was highly responsive to Evaluation Criteria;

2-Good-- Application partially addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A. and I.B. and was strongly responsive to Evaluation Criteria; or

1-Fair-- Application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A. and I.B. and was moderately responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

This rating will be presented to the SO for funding consideration and will be the primary consideration of the SO in deciding which applications will be recommended to the NOAA GMD, pending the application of selection factors below.

C. Selection Factors

The SO anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

(1) Availability of funding;

(2) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or e) by project types;

(3) Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;

(4) Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;

(5) An applicant's prior award performance;

(6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and

(7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information

required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

In addition, the NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant’s management systems, an applicant’s history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities.

Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be addressed in a timely fashion in order to receive a new award.

Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA will attempt to notify highly-ranked applicants by June 30, 2018. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2018. Applicants that initiate award activities in anticipation of federal funding do so at their own risk, and are advised not to begin award-related work until a notice of award is received electronically from the NOAA GMD in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance management system.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each Great Lakes Habitat Restoration cooperative agreement award will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these restoration awards.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA’s Grants Online system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. It is available at http://go.usa.gov/SNMR. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS. Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer tohttp://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at http://www.ago.noaa.gov and at https://go.usa.gov/xRuaF.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

TAX AND FELONY CERTIFICATIONS. When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law. If a form is provided, an award may not be issued until it is returned and accepted by NOAA.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website:http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA,http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental

compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment. See also Section IV.B.

REVIEW OF RISK. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

DATA SHARING

1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from

funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal. See also Section IV.B.

INDIRECT COST RATE. An applicant with a current Federally-approved indirect cost rate that is proposing indirect costs in its budget should include a copy of the approved rate with its application. If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov. See Section IV.F.

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS. The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations.DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Progress reports shall use the NOAA Restoration Center's progress report narrative format and form approved by OMB under control number 0648 0472. This form will be provided to awardees by the NOAA Federal Program Officer. In addition, award recipients proposing multiple site locations may be required to complete individual reports for each site, or provide a project/site list including status and expenditures.

Narrative progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (Oct. 30 and April 30) covering April 1-September 30 and October 1-March 31, respectively. A comprehensive final report covering all activities during the award period is required and must be received by NOAA within 90 days after the end date of this award.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier sub awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub awards over $25,000. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing, a checklist to submit a complete application, and FAQs about this FFO can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grants-directory?sort_by=field_open_date_value&title=&application_status=All&grant_category%5B0%5D=1000004766&grant_category%5B1%5D=1000004766&grant_category%5B2%5D=1000004766. For further information contact Julie Sims at 734-741-2385 or by email and julie.sims@noaa.gov, Jessica Berrio at 301-427-8654 or by email Jessica.Berrio@noaa.gov, or Rina Studds at (301) 427-8651, or by e-mail at Rina.Studds@noaa.gov. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center staff before submitting an application to discuss whether their project ideas are within the scope of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's objectives and NOAA's mission and goals. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

As indicated in Sections II.A, IV.B.4 and IV.F, funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.