

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Funding Opportunity

FY2026 Implementation of the Quagga and Zebra Mussel Action Plan (QZAP) in the Western United States

Funding Opportunity Number

F26AS00107

Table of Contents

BASIC INFORMATION.....	1
ELIGIBILITY	2
Cost Sharing Requirement	3
GET READY TO APPLY	3
Required System Registrations	3
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	3
Program Goals.....	3
Program Description	4
Legislative Authority	4
Type of Award	4
PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION	4
Application Content and Format.....	5
Application Documents.....	5
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES	7
Address to Request Application Package	7
Submission Dates and Times	7
Submission Instructions	7
APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	9
Eligibility Review	9
Merit Review.....	9
Review and Selection Process.....	10
Risk Review	11
AWARD NOTICES	11
POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION	12
Administration and National Policy Requirements	12
Reporting.....	12

BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: F26AS00107

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.608

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$1,950,000

Expected Number of Awards: 10

Award Ceiling: \$600,000

Award Floor: \$50,000

Cost Sharing Required?

No

Closing Date Explanation

Notice of Funding Opportunity will be open for 60 days. Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM., ET, on the listed application due date.

DO NOT submit applications through GRANTS.GOV. Applications will only be accepted and considered through grantsolutions.gov.

U.S. states and local governments may be required under [Executive Order 12372](#), [Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#) to submit their application to their State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for review. For more information, see the [Intergovernmental Review SPOC List](#).

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

Have Questions?

Technical or Administrative Questions:

Barak Shemai barak_shemai@fws.gov (505) 366-9565

Executive Summary

Quagga and Zebra Mussels are aquatic invasive species that are rapidly expanding their range in the Western United States. Popular recreational reservoirs on or connected to the lower Colorado River are one major source of invasive mussels, which are easily transported via trailered watercraft to areas that have not yet been invaded. This funding opportunity will fund projects in the listed principal areas towards the fulfillment of the top priorities in the Quagga/Zebra Mussel Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters (QZAP 2.0) and will be limited to states within the boundaries of the Western Regional Panel within the United States.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

Unrestricted (i.e., open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"

Additional Information on Eligibility

All legal entities are eligible to apply. While all legal entities are eligible to apply, project must be focused on Western waters (ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, TX, MT, WY, CO, NM, ID, UT, AZ, AK, WA, OR, NV, HI, CA).

Program will not fund land acquisition.

All projects will be reviewed using the described Merit Review Criteria. Please review these criteria to ensure proposals are appropriate for this announcement.

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](#).

This program may allow an applicant to apply while their SAM.gov registration is in progress, with prior approval. For more information, refer to the point of contact identified in the Basic Information section above.

GRANTSOLUTIONS

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

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- Quagga and Zebra Mussels are aquatic invasive species that are rapidly expanding their range in the Western United States. Popular recreational reservoirs on or connected to the lower Colorado River is one major source of invasive mussels, which are easily transported via trailered watercraft to areas that have not yet been invaded.

Efforts to address the risks and impacts of these invasive species are ongoing. They include development of QZAP, and funding by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

(Service) to address waters at highest risk for spreading invasive mussels. The intended goal and overarching outcome of this program is to provide a systematic and unified approach to prevent the spread of zebra and quagga mussels into and within the western United States in the future.

In fiscal year 2026 the Service plans to allocate approximately \$1,950,000 to projects that will reduce or minimize the threat of quagga and zebra mussels to Western U.S. waters. Funding is available for a limited number of projects that target the priorities listed below.

Program Description

Projects funded under this opportunity must meet at least one of the 2026 priorities listed below and at least one of the action items described in the updated Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters (see QZAP 2.0 in attached documents). Projects are limited to states within the boundaries of the Western Regional Panel within the United States (see map included in the QZAP 2.0).

The following list generally describes the 2026 priorities for projects and for the overall program. Additional details are described in the attached QZAP 2.0 document.

1. Protecting western ecosystems through support and/or establishment of prevention programs for invasive mussels at identified high risk control points.
2. Limiting the spread of invasive mussels through containment by increasing compliance with federal, state, local and tribal laws;
3. Increasing the effectiveness of outreach and education efforts to help advance prevention efforts;
4. Building capacity to detect and respond to new invasive mussel infestations;
5. Conducting Research that benefits the priorities listed above, including (but not limited to) social science research to evaluate the effectiveness of invasive species prevention messaging, and research on non-target species

Project performance periods are limited to 18 months.

Recipients are encouraged to prioritize projects in support of the celebration of America's 250th birthday (America250). This may include, but is not limited to, projects that recognize and honor the nation's founding, history, and cultural heritage.

Legislative Authority

Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act—Regional coordination (16 U.S.C. §4723).

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through G (Grant), O (Other).

Federal agencies that are selected for award will be funded through an interagency agreement.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

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-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: • 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

Project Narrative

The following information must be included in a Project Narrative:

- Project title
- Description of entity(ies) undertaking the project
- Statement of need that addresses: the specific concern, problem, or issue to be addressed or opportunity to be leveraged; the consequences of not addressing the need; and how the proposed project aligns with the Service program's goals
- Project objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, and any milestones that must be reached to achieve objectives

- Activities, including detailing for each who is carrying out the activity, what is involved, how it will be carried out (method), and when and where the activity will be carried out
- Timeline of when significant project events or milestones are anticipated
- Sufficient information to support environmental compliance review requirements by the FWS (Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act).
- Information on key project personnel, including details on their expertise, skill, or significance to the project
- Project location details and supporting documentation such as maps, GIS data, or geopolitical data, as applicable.
- Description of stakeholder coordination or involvement
- Expected deliverables
- Project monitoring and evaluation plan, including description of assessment tools
- Anticipated future funding needs

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).

In your budget narrative, describe how the SF-424 Budget Information, "Object Class Category" totals were determined. Include a complete description of each cost category. For personnel salary costs, generally describe how estimates were determined by identifying what type of staff will support the project and how much time they will contribute to the project (in hours or workdays). Describe proposed items of cost that require prior approval under the federal award cost principles, including any anticipated subawarding or contracting out of any work under the award. If known at the time of application, include an estimated number of

subawards and the dollar amount anticipated for each subaward. Recipients may not earn, make, or keep any profit resulting from any financial assistance awards. These costs are not allowable and should not be included in any proposed costs.

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

Full applications will be accepted through [grantsolutions.gov](#) beginning on the opening date of this announcement. All required documents can be found at [grants.gov](#). For assistance with documents or other application related assistance, please contact:

Barak Shemai barak_shemai@fws.gov (505) 366-9565

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 10/24/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Notice of Funding Opportunity will be open for 60 days. Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM., ET, on the listed application due date.

DO NOT submit applications through GRANTS.GOV. Applications will only be accepted and considered through [grantsolutions.gov](#).

Submission Instructions

Simplified Application Procedures for Certain Applicants and Applications

Certain applicants may be eligible to apply following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) simplified application procedures. These procedures remove the requirement to register in and

apply through the Department of the Interior's grants management system. You may be eligible to follow our simplified application procedures if all the following apply:

Your proposal requests \$200,000 or less from the FWS and, in the event an award is made, would not be expected to exceed that amount over the life of the award from the FWS, AND

You are not requesting funds to purchase land or for construction-related activities except culvert replacements and dam removals, AND

Your proposed project can be completed within three years or less, AND

You are NOT a State, an Institution of Higher Education (except projects supporting Service-specific initiatives), or a large Nonprofit Organization (i.e., received more than \$10M from Department of the Interior bureaus and offices combined in the past three years)

If you and your project meet the above criteria and you do not want to register in and apply through the Department of the Interior's grants management system, do not follow the application instructions below. Instead, please contact us (see contact information below) to confirm your eligibility and request alternate application instructions. If you and your project do not meet the above criteria, follow our standard application instructions below.

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.

All project proposals must address priorities described in the Quagga Zebra Action Plan 2.0.

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

A panel of Federal Biologist/AIS Specialists will review the proposals and select proposals for funding. This panel will consist of current or acting regional aquatic invasive species coordinators and/or biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Branch of Invasive Species. Outside experts, with no conflicts of interest, may be solicited to review specific proposals as needed. Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors will sign and return to the program office point of contact the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form. Project proposals will be evaluated in 2 basic steps. The first step will evaluate technical acceptability the second step will rank the remaining proposals using a point-based merit review. The process is detailed below.

Step 1: Technical Acceptability

The first step in the merit review process will be to conduct an adjectival rating of each proposal for technical acceptability. If a proposal receives one unacceptable (U) rating, that proposal will be removed from award consideration. Listed below are the two criteria that will be used in the adjectival rating process.

1. Proposal clearly meets at least one of the 2026 priorities addressed in the Program Description section of this NOFO
2. Proposal clearly addresses at least one of the action items described in the updated Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters

Step 2: Point-Based Merit Review

Each proposal that is found to be technically acceptable will be evaluated with a point-based review using predetermined criteria.

This review will use the criteria listed below to objectively determine the overall integrity and value of the project, in dealing with Quagga and Zebra Mussel invasions in waters of the Western United States. Project proposals will be ranked on a point scale from 0 to 90. Proposals should specifically and clearly address each of the applicable criteria listed below within the project narrative, they can be listed in subheading or described within the body of the narrative. Provide enough detail so that reviewers may assign appropriate points and subsequent ranking. The highest-ranking proposals will receive award priority. Proposals will be awarded sequentially and limited by available funds. Each merit review criteria listed below has a maximum potential score of 10.

- Is the proposed project listed as a priority action item, in the QZAP 2.0?
- Does the proposal clearly identify the applicants' technical experience, project objectives and goals, detailed project timeline, deliverables, and criteria for success?
- What is the geographic scope of the project both direct and indirect?
- Does the proposed containment or prevention project focus on areas that have high numbers of local or visiting watercraft?
- Does the proposed project complement other existing efforts and campaigns?
- Does the proposal provide a clear budget and cost justification for activities identified in the scope?
- Does the project incorporate significant leveraging of resources (e.g., cross-programmatic collaboration, external partner contributions, volunteers?)
- Does the proposed project include partnerships (i.e. agencies, NGO, private marinas)?
- Does the proposed project include a significant public outreach component that is in line with ongoing and/or approved outreach campaigns?

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.

Final funding decisions will be made by the Southwest Region's Assistant Regional Director for Fish and Aquatic Conservation in consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Branch of Invasive Species.

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.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the applicant will be assessed for their level of risk per [2 CFR 200.206](#). This assessment includes the applicant's financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past award performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential for challenges. If an award will be made, special conditions may be applied to the award corresponding to the assessed risk. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000), a review of the applicant's eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records will also be performed per [2 CFR 200.206](#).

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: 11/02/2026

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.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 11/02/2026

Anticipated Project End Date: 11/01/2027

Grant performance periods should not exceed 18 months. All applicants will be notified of the award status at the conclusion of the merit-review process. This notification is not an authorization to begin project performance, successful applicants will receive an automated email notification from GrantSolutions stating their grant has been awarded and released. They can then log into GrantSolutions to review their Notice of Award letter.

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) and 2 CFR 170 requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation, and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts and consortiums equal to or over \$30,000 to SAM.gov.

Other Information

Project Performance Period must not exceed 18 months.

Quagga & Zebra Mussel Action Plan 2.0: <https://westernregionalpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/QZAP-2.0-Final.pdf>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368873875> Identifying research in support of the management and control of dreissenid mussels in the western United States