Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program 2019

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: F19AS00091

Federal Program: Department of the Interior, United States (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.662

Authorizing Legislation: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. §§661-666; Fish and Wildlife Act, 16 U.S.C. §2901 et seq; and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act, 16 U.S.C. §§3771-3774.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: We are collecting this information in accordance with the authorizing legislation identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

OMB Control Number: 1018-0100 (Expiration Date: 7/31/2021)

I. Program Description

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative targets the most significant environmental problems in the Great Lakes ecosystem by funding and implementing federal projects that address these problems. One objective is to protect, restore and enhance habitats to help sustain healthy populations of native species. Using appropriations from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program anticipates funding wetland (both coastal and interior) and associated upland habitat restoration and enhancement projects for conservation of native Great Lakes fish and wildlife populations, particularly migratory birds and, as appropriate, federally-listed species. Restoration projects will be completed on privately owned (non-federal/non-state) lands and must be within the Great Lakes watershed. Emphasis will be placed on, but not limited to, completing projects within the watersheds of Great Lakes Areas of Concern and in coastal zones.

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program is a voluntary, incentive-based program that provides direct technical assistance and financial assistance in the form of cooperative agreements to private landowners to restore and conserve fish and wildlife habitat for the benefit of federal trust resources. The PFW Program is delivered through field staff active in all eight Great Lakes States with the goal of benefiting the Great Lakes ecosystem by improving habitat for wildlife that reside there and improving water quality. Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program staff coordinate with project partners, stakeholders and other Service programs to identify geographic focus areas and develop habitat conservation priorities within these focus areas. Geographic focus areas define where the program directs resources to conserve habitat for federal trust species. Project work plans are developed

strategically, in coordination with partners, and with substantial involvement from Service field staff. The program has been in existence since 1987 and has over 30 years of successful delivery. Project selection will seek to align or support the Secretary's priorities. The program also advances the Department of the Interior's mission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission, and PFW's mission, promotes biological diversity, and is based upon sound scientific biological principles. Program strategic plans inform the types of projects funded under this opportunity.

Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from the PFW Program are requested to consult with the Regional PFW Program office BEFORE developing or submitting an application (see Section VIII. Agency Contacts at the end of this announcement).

Project selection will seek to align or support the Secretary's priorities, these can be found at Department of the Interior financial assistance priorities. Program funding will enhance the missions of DOI, FWS, and PFW.

3. **Restoring trust with local communities:** The PFW program has local field biologists across all 8 Great Lakes states stationed and living in the communities they serve which enhances trust and allows sustainable relationship building. Projects which support and build trust with local communities will receive high prioritization.

4. **Ensuring sovereignty means something:** Many PFW projects support tribal operations and PFW staff will continue to recognize opportunities to enhance those relationships.

7. **Striking a Regulatory Balance:** Many PFW projects specifically target listed or at-risk species and may contribute to de-listing or down-listing, reducing the regulatory burden on the public.

8. **Modernizing our infrastructure:** The PFW program will assist with modernizing fish passage structures to allow safe travel by aquatic resources and at the same time, allow for structural stability by designing units to avoid flood damage. Additionally, wetland levees, water control structures, and fencing projects are a few examples of modernizing infrastructure to support American conservation.

II. Federal Award Information

Overall award obligations and individual project amounts vary greatly. Generally, individual projects are less than $25,000 and higher amounts may be requested, but may not be awarded without appropriate justification and approval. Approval may be delegated from Headquarters to the PFW Regional Coordinators to comply with PFW Manual Chapter Policy 640 FW 1. The period of performance for the majority of projects funded under this program is one to three years, starting on the date the award is signed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service but may extend to a maximum of five years. Projects must be designed accordingly. Past and present recipients of awards under this program are eligible, but must submit new projects to compete for funding each year. This program uses cooperative agreements as the primary assistance instrument. Projects are developed strategically, in coordination with partners, and with substantial involvement from our field staff. Substantial involvement will be defined by the Service's project officer and have clear definitions of what the Service responsibilities consist of. The PFW Program reports its awards, post-obligation, to the Department of Interior through a process called reportable concurrence.

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement
Expected Number of Awards: Up to 20
Estimated Total Program Funding: $550,000
Estimated Award Ceiling: $100,000
Estimated Award floor: $1.00

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

To receive funding, PFW projects must be implemented on private lands and must benefit the Great Lakes ecosystem. IN GENERAL, the term private lands is any property not state or federally owned. Private lands include, but are not limited to; tribal, Hawaiian homeland, city, municipality, non-governmental, and private fee-title properties. 501(c)(3) applicants should be prepared to prove status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service and tribal applicants may be required to provide an authorizing tribal resolution.

The PFW Program actively identifies potential projects throughout the federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). PFW Program staff work collaboratively with potential applicants to identify common habitat conservation priorities. We strongly suggest that all potential applicants work with the local PFW Program staff to ensure that their project meets the project selection criteria. Projects are considered for funding throughout the year, depending on the availability of funds.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required, although we strive to achieve a minimum 1:1 cost share on selected projects. Cost share may be monetary or in-kind contributions and will vary from project to project.

C. Other Eligibility Criteria

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration: This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name) or any entity with an exception approved by the Service under 2 CFR 25.110(d). All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and then register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application. Federal award recipients must continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). See the "Submission Requirements" section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration. The Service may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Service is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prohibition on Issuing Awards to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements: Domestic (U.S.) non-Federal entities requiring their employees or contractors to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements that prohibit, or otherwise restrict, such employees or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information are not eligible to compete for or receive a Federal award. See Pub. L. 113-235, Title VII, Division E, Section 743 for more information.

Excluded Parties: The Service conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The Service cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

IV. Application Requirements

A. Requesting Paper Application Package

Any potential applicant may request a paper application package from any of the Federal Awarding Agency Contacts at the end of this announcement in section VIII.

B. Application Form and Content Requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

1. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), must complete the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance-Individual form. All other applicants must complete the standard SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, and signed and dated. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the "Federal" funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the "Other" box, and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the "Budget Narrative" section below).

2. SF 424, Assurances

Applicants must submit the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form. Complete either the SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs or the SF-424D, Assurances for Construction Programs, as applicable to your project. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. The SF-424 Assurances forms include a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing the required SF-424 Assurances form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law.

3. Project Narrative and Summary

Briefly summarize the project, in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project, goal(s), objectives, specific project activities, beneficiaries, and expected outcomes consistent with this funding opportunity. As applicable, describe how you / your business / organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project on your land, and detail how they will be involved in conducting project activities and/or disseminating project results.

In no more than three (3) pages of text and two (2) pages maps/photos, please provide the following information:

a. Briefly describe the project, including the name, location, and habitat conservation goals.
b. Provide a list of the species or ecosystems that will benefit and describe how they will benefit.
c. Describe the conservation challenges, ecosystem stressors, and degradation factors.
d. Describe how the project will support or complement existing conservation plans.
e. Provide a timeline that describes how conservation actions and/or treatments are sequenced.
f. Describe the entities undertaking the project: Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis.
g. Describe the post-project monitoring and how the project will be maintained in the future

4. SF-424, Budget Information

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form. Complete either the SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs or the SF-424C, Budget Information for Construction Programs, as applicable to your project. All of the required application forms are available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles as detailed in the Service's "Financial Assistance Award Terms and Conditions". Please note: Show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In the "Budget Summary" section, use the first row for funding requested from this Federal program. Use subsequent row(s) for other Federal funding. Enter each Federal program's CFDA number(s) in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number(s) for this Federal program appears on the first page of this Funding Opportunity.

5. Budget Narrative

In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF 424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item of cost that requires prior approval under the Federal cost principles. See 2 CFR 200.407. If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment, including identifying the Federal funding source.

6. Indirect Costs: Individuals

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget and skip the next section.

7. Indirect Costs: Organizations

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the Interior Business Center by phone 916-930-3803 or using the IBC Email Submission Form. See the IBC Website for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to use amounts budgeted for direct costs to satisfy cost-share or match requirements or to cover unallowable indirect costs. Recipients shall not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Required Indirect Cost Statement

All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application to the Service, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:

☐ A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.

☐ A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than $35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.

☐ A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: "Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made." *or* "Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement."]

☐ A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant

agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68]. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.

☐ A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

8. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter that might place the recipient, including their employees and subrecipients, in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest include direct or indirect financial interests; close personal relationships; positions of trust in outside organizations; consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization; and decision-making authority related to the proposed project.

Conflicts of interest are those circumstances real or perceived that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, or the applicant's employees or subrecipients, in matters pertaining to the proposed project. Applicants must notify the Service in writing in their application if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal program receiving this application or who otherwise may be involved in the review and selection of their proposal. The term employee means any individual to be engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award application. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the rejection or disqualification of the application.

9. **Single Audit Reporting Statement**
   All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

10. **Certification Regarding Lobbying**
    Applicants requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If this application requests more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

11. **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**
    Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than $100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available on the "Packages" tab of this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

12. **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**
    Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "*There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel*".

If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with "*We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing.*"

13. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance or Application for Federal Assistance-Individual**
- ☐ **SF-424B or D, Assurances**
- ☐ **Project Narrative and Summary**
- ☐ **SF-424A or C, Budget Information**
- ☐ **Budget Narrative**
- ☐ **Indirect Cost Statement and related documentation (when applicable)**
- ☐ **Conflict of Interest Disclosure (when applicable)**
- ☐ **Single Audit Reporting Statement (when applicable)**
- ☐ **SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (when applicable)**
- ☐ **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**
- ☐ **Evidence of non-profit status: If a non-profit organization submits, a copy of Internal Revenue Service status should be made available.**

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

V. Submission Requirements

A. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration

These requirements do not apply to any individual applying for funds as a private citizen or any entity with an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d). All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and provide that number in the application; complete SAM.gov registration before submitting an application; and continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times when the entity has an active Federal award or application under consideration. **There is NO COST to register with Dun & Bradstreet or SAM.gov**. There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with Dun & Bradstreet and SAM.gov; **please be aware you can register and request help for free**.

1. Obtain a DUNS Number

Request a DUNS Number through the Dun & Bradstreet website. The official website address is http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. For technical difficulties, send an email to the D&B SAM Help Desk. Please ensure that you are able to receive emails from SAMHelp@dnb.com. The

Grants.gov "Obtain a DUNS Number" webpage also provides detailed instructions. Once assigned a DUNS number, your organization must maintain up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet. Applicants must enter their DUNS number in the "Organizational DUNS" field on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form.

2. **Register with SAM**
   Register on the SAM.gov website. The official website address is http://www.sam.gov. The "Help" tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov Register with SAM" webpage also provides detailed instructions. You can also contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been to the entity's DUNS or IRS information. Foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

B. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted between October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019. All applications must be received no later than 1800 hours Central Standard Time September 20, 2019.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Prior to application submission, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website and view the "State Point of Contact (SPOC) List" to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." States not on the list do not participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located within a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency. If your state is on the list, contact the designated entity for more information on the state's prior review requirements for Federal assistance applications.

D. Funding Restrictions

The Federal Awarding Agency Contacts at the end of this announcement in section VIII will be able to provide guidance on any potential funding restrictions, which may vary greatly.

E. Submission Instructions

Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from the PFW Program are requested to consult with the Regional PFW Program office BEFORE developing or submitting an application (See VIII. Agency Contacts).

This program encourages applicants to submit their applications online through Grants.gov. Follow these steps to apply through Grants.gov.

1. **Register with Grants.gov**
   Applicants must first register an account with Grants.gov and complete all steps of the registration process before they can apply through Grants.gov. Grants.gov registration requires the entity to create an account, create an account profile, and establish authorized profile roles,

including the applicant's authorized representative. Registration can take three to five business days or longer, if you do not complete the required steps in a timely manner.

2. **Grants.gov Workspace Application**
   Grants.gov applicants apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace. To apply, the applicant will create, complete, and submit a Workspace application package for this Funding Opportunity directly on Grants.gov. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to allow time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission. When attaching files to the Grants.gov application, please do not assign file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. File names longer than 20 characters will prevent your application received by Grants.gov from automatically downloading into the Service's financial assistance management system. Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that the transmission of the application to Grants.gov takes time. Grants.gov sends either an error message or a "successfully received" message by email to the applicant's authorized representative once the transmission is complete. Please do not end the transmission process before receiving that message.

3. **Proof of Timely Submission**
   Grants.gov automatically generates an electronic date and time stamp in the system upon application receipt. Grants.gov sends an acknowledgement of receipt with the date and time stamp and a unique Grants.gov application tracking number to the authorized representative by email. This email from Grants.gov serves as your proof of timely submission.

VI. Application Review Information

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

A. Criteria

To be considered for funding, applicants should first coordinate with PFW program staff. Projects are developed in collaboration with and substantial involvement from PFW field biologists.

Project selection will seek to align or support the Secretary's priorities and enhance the missions of DOI, FWS, and PFW. Conservation activities and projects do not have to meet all of the selection criteria; however, field staff will give the highest funding priority status to proposed projects that meet more of the following criteria.

Specific to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Service through the PFW Program seeks cost-effective habitat improvement projects that contribute toward the habitat and species objectives identified in the FY15-19 GLRI Action Plan and one or more PFW Program strategic plan goals, including benefit to federal trust species (e.g. migratory birds, federally-listed threatened or endangered species, or inter-jurisdictional Great Lakes fish species) or other species of conservation concern to the Service. Habitat projects improving coastal wetlands or benefitting Great Lakes Areas of Concern will be looked upon more favorably. Secondary water quality benefits are also desired.

In addition, projects will be reviewed from a landscape-level context, and how they contribute to meeting broader wildlife habitat goals beyond a landowner's property boundaries. Projects that contribute to meeting goals of other Service plans and programs or other priority actions/conservation strategies as identified in other formal conservation plans or initiatives will be looked upon more favorably. Other factors considered may include: applying biologically sound and cost effective techniques based on state-of-the-art methodologies; leveraging non-federal funding partners; promoting habitat conservation and stewardship on private lands; encouraging voluntary public participation in on-the-ground conservation efforts; broadening public understanding of fish and wildlife, habitat functions, and restoration techniques; and cost factors including appropriateness and accuracy of proposed project expenditures. Other criteria are listed in the PFW Program policy. Project selection will be limited, in part, by availability of program funds.

B. Review and Selection Process

Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from the PFW Program are requested to consult with the Regional PFW Program office BEFORE developing or submitting an application (See VIII. Agency Contacts).

Most PFW Program projects are developed collaboratively with the landowner, PFW Program local staff, and other conservation partners. PFW Program biologists are able to provide technical biological information and are knowledgeable about state-of-the-art techniques to restore, enhance, and protect fish and wildlife habitats for the benefit of federal trust species. If an applicant chooses to prepare an application independently, the application will be reviewed to determine if the potential project is consistent with the Department of the Interior Secretary's priorities, FWS Priorities, goals of the PFW Program Strategic Plan, and if the potential project meets the Eligibility Requirements and Criteria as stated in the full announcement.

PFW Program field staff are responsible for identifying and selecting habitat conservation projects, with concurrence from the field station Project Leader, or other appropriate authority. Field staff also use the project selection criteria to identify projects that maximize benefits to federal trust species, and use program resources in the most effective and efficient manner.
Cost sharing is encouraged but not required. Cost sharing is the PFW Program's strategy to leverage program funds with funds from other federal and non-federal partners to deliver habitat conservation cost effectively. All proposals should strive to secure a cost share ratio of one partner dollar for each PFW Program dollar. If other considerations are equal, priority for funding will be given to projects that have agreements longer in duration, involve greater partnership support and cost sharing, and have the greatest cost effectiveness.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Prior to award, the Service will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the Service may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the Service may choose not to fund the selected project.

The Service may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Service is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the Service will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in 2 CFR 200.205. Service programs document applicant risk evaluations using the Service's "Financial Assistance Recipient Risk Assessment" form. Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), the Service is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System. The Service will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Service uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in 2 CFR 200.207 should be applied the award.

VII. Federal Award Administration

A. Federal Award Notices

Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 60 days of the final review decision.

Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the Notice of Award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. Recipient acceptance of a Federal award from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with all terms and conditions applicable to the award. Recipients indicate their acceptance of the Federal award by starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means.

B. Award Terms and Conditions

See the Service's "Financial Assistance Award Terms and Conditions" for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Service's Standard Award Terms and Conditions are available on the Internet at

https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

C. Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Service will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

D. Reporting Requirements

The Service will include recipient-specific reporting requirements, including the required reports, reporting frequency, and report due dates in all Notices of Award, as applicable.

1. Financial Reports

All recipients must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. See Service policy 516 FW 1, Monitoring Financial and Performance Reporting for Financial Assistance for more information.

2. Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** performance report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. See Service policy 516 FW 1, Monitoring Financial and Performance Reporting for Financial Assistance for more information.

3. Significant Developments Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives

sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

4. **Real Property Reports**
   Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Service will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, as applicable.

5. **Conflict of Interest Disclosures**
   Recipients must notify the Service immediately in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter that might place the recipient, including their employees and subrecipients, in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest include direct or indirect financial interests; close personal relationships; positions of trust in outside organizations; consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization; and decision-making authority related to the award. Conflicts of interest are those circumstances real or perceived that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the recipient or the recipients's employees or subrecipients in matters pertaining to the award. Recipients must notify the Service in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

6. **Other Mandatory Disclosures**
   The non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

VIII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

If you have a potential project that meets the VI. APPLICATION REVIEW criteria, we request that you consult with the Midwest Regional PFW Program office below BEFORE developing or submitting an application. The Midwest Regional PFW Program can be reached at sergio_pierluissi@fws.gov or 612-713-5475

Or, visit our website to find the nearest **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program office**: http://www.fws.gov/partners/contactUs.html