

Federal Agency Name: US Environmental Protection Agency
Funding Opportunity Title: National Wetland Program Development Grants
Announcement Number: HQWPDGFY05
Announcement Type: Initial Request for Proposals
Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.462
Announcement Date: February 23, 2005
Submission Date: Must be postmarked by April 20, 2005.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland health. In pursuing these goals, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management.

The Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs), initiated in FY90, provide applicants an opportunity to carry out projects to develop and refine comprehensive wetland programs. The authority for the grant program is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), which restricts the use of these grant funds to improving wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

In this solicitation, EPA places new emphasis on projects that will demonstrate how the use of management, technical and information tools lead to a positive environmental outcome. Specifically, EPA seeks documentation of improvement in wetland quantity and quality in specific geographical areas, such as across an entire State or Tribal nation. Workplans must contain well-defined outputs and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes. The following outputs and outcomes are linked to the EPA's Strategic Plan (<http://www.epa.gov/ocfopage/plan/plan.htm>) and are options for grantees to consider including in their assistance agreement workplans:

- ▶ achieve no net loss and eventual net gain in the number of wetland acres by building capacities in the wetland monitoring, regulation, restoration, water quality standards, mitigation compliance, and partnership building;
- ▶ achieve no net loss in wetland function based on quantifying functions gained and lost through mitigation for authorized wetlands impacts;
- ▶ significantly improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation (cumulative).
- ▶ improve wetland condition as defined through the biological metrics and assessments; and
- ▶ state and tribal watershed-based wetlands and stream corridor demonstration projects.

Furthermore, emphasis through the competition process will be given to projects that address the four national wetland program priorities that EPA has identified: 1) strengthening State/Tribal comprehensive wetland programs; 2) developing a comprehensive wetland monitoring and assessment program; 3) improving the effectiveness of compensatory

mitigation; and 4) refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources. While WPDGs can continue to be used by recipients to build and refine any element of a comprehensive wetland program, applicants are encouraged to develop WPDG applications that address the four national wetland program priorities, described in more detail below.

A. STRENGTHENING STATE/TRIBAL COMPREHENSIVE WETLAND PROGRAMS

EPA recently issued guidance for a new wetland grant program called the *State/Tribal Environmental Outcome Wetland Demonstration Program (WDP) Grant Pilot*. The purpose of the WDP grant pilot is to fund grants for demonstration projects designed to determine the extent to which wetland program implementation (both regulatory and non-regulatory) achieve positive environmental outcomes – in particular, no net loss, net gain and protection of vulnerable wetlands. The WDP has been designed to determine regulatory or non-regulatory wetland program maturity and determine which wetland programs would demonstrate successful reporting of environmental outcomes. The first priority of the WPDG is to support State/Tribal efforts to develop mature comprehensive wetland programs. Therefore, EPA encourages WPDG applications that support development of program areas identified in Section V of the new WPD grant guidance. In summary, the regulatory program areas include: 1) State/Tribe wide comprehensive wetland regulatory (permit) program; 2) environmental review criteria comparable to 404(b)(1) guidelines; 3) compliance and enforcement program; 4) and annual reporting. The non-regulatory program areas include: 1) comprehensive strategy; 2) monitoring and assessment; 3) restoration and protection partnerships; and 4) outreach and education. Detailed information on the program areas is provided at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantpilot>.

B. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE WETLAND MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

This solicitation seeks proposals that support the development of a comprehensive S/T/LG wetland monitoring and assessment program. State and Tribal adoption of a wetland monitoring and assessment program is a primary goal of this solicitation (*i.e.*, projects that build S/T/LG capacity to determine the causes, effects, and extent of pollution to wetland resources and develop pollution prevention, reduction, and elimination strategies). More information related to wetland monitoring and assessment can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/pdf/monitor.pdf> and <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/pdf/devgrants.pdf>

EPA encourages the submission of proposals that will develop and demonstrate the use of wetland monitoring surveys to evaluate and report trends in wetland area and condition for specific watersheds and other local planning areas. These smaller scale projects should be conducted in such a manner that the data can be used for large scale assessments, such as a rotating basin design. Proposals should explain how resultant data from the demonstration project will contribute to coverage across a State or Tribal nation. Care should be given in project proposals to describe how acquired wetland monitoring and assessment information will be used to meet one or more of the following objectives:

1. Assessing the ecological consequences of a given regulatory action or group of actions;
2. Improving the evaluation and ranking of potential wetland sites for restoration or acquisition;
3. Developing design or performance standards for wetland restoration, including compensatory mitigation;
4. Evaluating the ecological effectiveness of wetland restoration projects, including compensatory mitigation, in a watershed context;
5. Evaluating the cumulative effect of wetland loss and restoration in terms of change in the condition of wetlands and other waterbodies within a watershed;
6. Gathering information to develop or refine water quality standards or related administrative code to bring added protection to wetlands, including geographically isolated wetlands;
7. Gathering information to develop management strategies to control the spread and adverse effects of non-indigenous, invasive wetland species; and/or
8. Gathering information to develop a science-based approach to evaluate market-based trading programs that involve wetland restoration for pollution and pollutant (e.g., nutrient) reduction.

Proposals to monitor and assess the quantity and condition of their wetlands and support the EPA's Program Activity Measure IV-WD-5 as specified in the Fiscal Year 2005 National Water Program Guidance should be given special consideration.

<http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/pams/index.htm#wetlands>

When preparing proposals, care should be given to ensure that any data collected under the grant or cooperative agreement is of a known and documented quality. For this reason, proposals also may include tasks that describe how an existing or developmental wetland assessment method used in the project will be refined as a project outcome.

To support a proposed project, applicants may also request funds to host technical training workshops, establish regional or State interagency wetland monitoring and assessment workgroups, develop volunteer monitoring programs, and improve wetland inventories (e.g., use of hydrogeomorphic (HGM) wetland classification system). Examples of case studies illustrating wetland monitoring and assessment methods can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg/case.html> and <http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/wetland/index.html>. Many of the case studies listed on the two websites were funded by WPDGs.

C IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPENSATORY MITIGATION

Applicants should consider projects that improve the capacity to ensure ecologically effective compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources under the Federal CWA Section 404/401 program or State/Tribal regulatory programs. For example, WPDGs can be used to develop mitigation performance standards. They also can be used to develop and verify assessment methods and/or tracking (reporting) systems that document:

1. the technical adequacy of compensatory mitigation project plans (e.g., plan review standards);
2. the ecological suitability of proposed compensatory mitigation project sites, taking into account a watershed context;
3. the compliance of mitigation projects at various stages of implementation including long-term mitigation site management (perpetual stewardship); and
4. the adequacy of compensatory mitigation for managing cumulative wetland impacts under the Federal CWA Section 404/401 program.

The National Wetlands Mitigation Action Plan, released in December 2002 by EPA and the U.S. Army Corps, describes seventeen action items that the Federal agencies will complete by 2006 in order to improve the ecological performance and results of compensatory mitigation. The tasks identified in the Plan convey the major areas of interest regarding mitigation that are being supported by the Federal agencies. Proposed projects that support such endeavors at the S/T/LG level are encouraged. A copy of the Plan and related documents can be found at <http://www.MitigationActionPlan.gov>.

Background information describing concepts and methods for improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation can be found in a National Academy of Science publication entitled "Compensating for Wetland Losses Under the Clean Water Act." The document can be found at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309074320/html/>.

Wetland program grant funds can only be used for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies to support (or to improve or develop) mitigation programs; they cannot be used for specific mitigation activities (e.g., implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs).

D. REFINING THE PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE WETLANDS AND AQUATIC RESOURCES

While all wetlands provide important ecological functions on a watershed and landscape scale, some are more vulnerable than others. For example, geographically isolated wetlands and other waters may be particularly at risk, and wetlands may be subject to impact from activities other than the discharge of dredged or fill material. Information regarding geographically isolated wetlands can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/guidance/SWANCC/index.html#studies>.

Applicants wishing to develop comprehensive wetland protection programs to protect such vulnerable waters from a variety of potential impacts are encouraged to do so, and are also encouraged to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals. Efforts can include, but are not limited to, information dissemination, data exchange, studying S/T/LG regulatory improvement opportunities, and surveying opportunities for land acquisition, conservation easements, and tax incentive provisions. Research, investigation, and studies which support the inclusion of vulnerable wetlands in

comprehensive wetland and watershed restoration and protection programs are also encouraged. Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to implement a wetlands program or purchase land or conservation easements.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Headquarters intends to award an estimated \$500,000 of WPDG funds through a competitive process to eligible applicants through assistance agreements. Funding decisions for the competition are made by EPA Headquarters Office and are based on the quality of the proposals received and adherence to the selection criteria. EPA typically receives requests for funding far in excess of available funds. Therefore, EPA cannot provide grant funds to all applicants and reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete activities or phases of proposed proposals and to fund successful proposals at lower amounts depending on the availability of EPA funds, applicant access to other sources of funds, quality of applicant proposals, and needs of the S/T/LGs. If EPA decides to partially fund proposals, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants and or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and evaluation/selection process.

The number of applicants that will be requested to submit a complete application and the number of applications recommended for award depend on the quality of the proposals received and the relative amount of funding requests. The quality of the proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria and selection process noted below. Total funding available for award depends each year on the National Wetlands Program's yearly fiscal appropriation. The terms of the cooperative agreement will be determined at time of award. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR COMPETITIVE PROCESS

In order to provide greater assistance to S/T/LGs, non-profit, non-governmental organizations that undertake activities to advance wetland programs on a national basis are eligible. Activities must help S/T/LGs develop and refine wetland programs. For example, projects and tasks can involve advancing science or collecting and disseminating information through publications and other appropriate means, such as training, on how various wetland programs across the nation protect, manage and restore their wetland resources and about initiatives to improve S/T/LG wetland programs.

Interstate agencies and Intertribal consortia are eligible for HQ funding. The term "interstate agency" is defined in CWA Section 502 as "an agency of two or more States established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more States, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504. Interstate agency and intertribal consortia projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one State, Tribe, or local government.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The applicant must provide a minimum of 25% of the total cost of the work plan in accordance with 40 CFR 31.24, 35.385, and 35.615. To determine if the minimum match is met, EPA will use the following formula:

$$\text{amount (\$) of federal funds requested from EPA} = \frac{\text{minimum match (\$)}}{3}$$

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For example, if the applicant requests \$75,000 of federal funds for the three-year project period, it must be able to provide \$25,000 in matching funds or services. A reduced match may be available for Tribal grantees that place the WPDG grant funds in a Performance Partnership Grant. (See regulations at 40 CFR 536(c)). Please contact your EPA Headquarters contact person listed in Section VII if you have any questions about calculating the match requirement. Applicants can provide a larger share of the project's cost whenever possible (i.e., in excess of the required 25% of total project costs).

Award recipients can meet the match requirement with contributions from entities other than themselves. However, other Federal money cannot be used as the match for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing the award of the other Federal funds. Matching funds are considered grant funds. They must be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the assistance agreement work plan. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (i.e., prohibition of land acquisition with grant funds) also apply to the matching funds.

C. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

A Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) is a multi-program grant made to a State, Tribe, interstate agency, or intertribal consortium from funds appropriated for many of EPA's environmental program grants. PPGs are voluntary and provide recipients the option to combine funds from two or more environmental program grants into one or more PPGs. PPGs can provide administrative and/or programmatic flexibility.

Funds for a WPDG may be included in a PPG. Under this competition, Interstate proposals must first be selected under the competitive grant process and, in accordance with 40 CFR 35.138, the work plan commitments that would have been included in the WPDG work plan must be included in the PPG work plan. Similarly, Intertribal proposals must first be selected under this competitive grant process, and in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. For further information, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and local government Agencies at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A and Tribes at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. The rules are also available on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-TOX/2001/January/Day-09/t218.pdf> (State) and at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001/January/Day-16/g219.pdf> (Tribal).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. REQUEST FOR APPLICATION PACKAGES

The Headquarters Office will conduct the competitive process for awarding national

WPDG grants. Headquarters will accept proposal submissions only for projects from eligible applicants. Interested applicants should review information on the WPDG at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>. Applicants can also receive a copy of the current competitive announcement by calling the EPA HQ Coordinator. Interested applicants should review information on the WPDG at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>.

Applicants do not need to submit EPA grant application forms when responding to the HQ solicitation. All applicants will be notified by the HQ Office on whether or not the applicant has been selected for funding. The notification is not an authorization to begin performance. The Grant Award document signed by the appropriate grant official in the EPA HQ Office is the authorizing document. Applicants selected for funding must submit a final workplan and grant application forms. Application forms are available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/index.htm> and by mail upon request to the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5305. Completed applications should be submitted to HQ Agency Contact at the address provided in Section VII.

B. CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

As provided in 40 CFR 35.107 and 35.507, for States, Tribes, local governments, interstate and intertribal agencies, work plans must include:

- (1) A summary of key objectives, outcomes, and final products;
- (2) A detailed description of project tasks, an explanation of environmental results of the project and how the project will contribute to developing or improving the wetland program;
- (3) Address the selection criteria specified in Section V
- (4) A strategy for transferring the knowledge or techniques gained through this effort to other areas and a description of how the results can be adapted to other areas;
- (5) A project monitoring and evaluation component including performance evaluation measures and reporting schedule;
- (6) A time-line or period of performance estimating activities from the start of the grant. Qualify if some work is seasonal or tied to a specific date;
- (7) A budget and estimated funding amounts for each work plan component - the budget should correspond to the SF424 Grant Application form budget categories. Budgets must include all items in the total project costs, not just those for the Federal Share. Remember to include the required match to the budget;
- (8) A description of roles and responsibilities of the recipient and any major partners in carrying out the work plan commitments;
- (9) Contact information for the Program Manager, Grant Project Lead Manager, and Account Manager who will be responsible for the project;
- (10) Grant applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705- 5711 or by visiting <http://www.dnb.com>.

C. PAGE LIMITATIONS AND FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

In order for proposals to be considered, proposals must not exceed five (5) single-sided pages (8.5 x 11 inches), using 11-pitch font or larger. Proposals that do not meet these limitations and requirements will be eliminated from the competition.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

To submit a proposal, applicants may submit either electronic or hard copy proposals. Electronic submissions must be emailed to wetlands.grants@epa.gov. Hard copy submissions must be sent by FedEx or courier and must be sent to: Donna An; Wetlands Division; EPA West; 1301 Constitution Avenue., NW; Room 6105; Washington, DC 20004. Do not fax or hand-deliver proposals.

Proposals must be postmarked by April 20, 2005. Failure to meet the deadline will result in the proposal being eliminated from the competition.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

Applicants requested to submit a full application may be required to comply with Intergovernmental Review Requirements (40 CFR part 29).

F. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Based on policy, regulation, and on experience gained from previous years we offer the following comments/restrictions on funding eligibility.

- Under the WPDG competitive process, funds cannot be used for land acquisition or purchase of easements. However, it may support the coordination or acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and study efforts directed at identifying areas for acquisition, which would help address water pollution problems including wetlands protection and restoration.
- This competitive grant program cannot fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- While contractual efforts can be a part of these grants, each WPDG recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the grant. EPA recommends that recipients use no more than 50% of the grant funds to contract with non-governmental entities. However, if the applicant wants to exceed this limit, the applicant may submit a written justification for greater involvement by non-governmental contractors as part of the grant application package. EPA will evaluate the need for greater contractual participation and may approve the request if there is adequate justification to exceed the 50% limit. If the contractual work is being done by another S/T/LG agency, interstate agency, or intertribal consortia, these entities should be clearly indicated in the grant application.
- Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is not eligible for funding under this competition. A description of how mapping or inventory projects will directly develop or improve the eligible applicant's wetland protection programs must be included in the grant application for these types of projects to be considered

- for funding under this grant program.
- Grant funds cannot be used to fund an honorarium under this competition.
- Any field work or research-type activities are limited to activities that have a direct, demonstrated link to program development or refinement included in the application.
- Purchase/lease of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program.
- Grant funds cannot be used to pay for travel by Federal agency staff.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

For the national competitive WPDG funding, proposals will be evaluated using the following general categories of criteria (250 points total):

1. Potential Environmental Results (50 points total)
 - A. Demonstrate potential environmental results, i.e., will it result in the protection of wetland resources and what are the anticipated results? (20 points)
 - B. Demonstrate that there is a need for the project that will help a S/T/LG develop a wetland program; explain whether the project fits into an existing S/T/LG wetland program or adds a component to the program (20 points);
 - C. Propose how project effectiveness will be analyzed and measured (10 points)
2. Program Area Priorities - Priority in the selection process will be given to projects which: 1) strengthen state/tribal comprehensive wetland programs, 2) develop a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program; 3) improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation; and/or 4) refine the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources. (50 points)
3. Broad EPA Goals - Demonstrate how the project supports broad agency wetland goals (*e.g.*, *Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) Goals, EPA Strategic Plan* (<http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/documents/wetlands-sip.pdf> and <http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/pams/index.htm#wetlands>), or *Core Elements of a Comprehensive Wetland Program* (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/fy02elements.html>) and describe the linkage between the work intended to be accomplished under the assistance agreement and EPA's Strategic Plan/GPRA Goals Architecture. (50 points)
4. Transferability - describe how you will transfer the Results and/or Methods to S/T/LGs. (40 points)
5. Clarity of Work Plan - Proposals should be clear and detailed. (20 points total)
 - A. Identify the purpose of the project and how it addresses one or more of the three priorities; explain how the state, tribal, local wetland programs will benefit from the project (10 points);
 - B. Provide clear and sufficient detail on the tasks, level of effort and the project activities; identify specific deliverables; explain who will conduct the project (5 points);

- C. Identify target audiences and needs of audience; explain recruitment plans to attract an audience; establish a strategy, realistic goals and objectives, for an effectively reaching the audience (5 points);
- 6. Commitment of Applicant - Describe the involvement and commitment of the applicant to the project and the financial and personnel contribution and involvement of partners (20 points).
- 7. Organization's Experience - Describe the expertise/qualifications and knowledge, resources, and facilities of the organization and its staff, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goal of the project (10 points).
- 8. Past Performance - Describe past performance on federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project, e.g., completion, meeting reporting requirements, submitting final technical reports, and reporting outcomes. (10 points)

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Grant applications are reviewed by the appropriate HQ Office and, if approved, the grant is awarded by the Grants Administration Division. As competitive awards, HQ will review applications, proposals or submissions in accordance with the terms, conditions and criteria in the solicitation or announcement of the competitive funding opportunity. Competitions will be conducted in accordance with EPA policy for competing assistance agreements.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION FOR COMPETITIVE PROCESS

A. AWARD NOTICES

All applicants will be notified by the Headquarters office on whether or not the applicant has been selected for funding. The notification is not an authorization to begin performance. A notice signed by the Grants Administration Division is the authorizing document to the applicant to begin performance.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for all WPDGs is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A ("Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies") and Subpart B ("Environmental Program Grants for Tribes").

C. REPORTING

WPDGs are currently covered under the following EPA grant regulations 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments) and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (States, interstate agencies and local governments) and Subpart B (Tribes and intertribal consortia). These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements, including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 31.40, 31.41, 35.115, and 35.515). In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with

recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule must require the recipient to report at least annually.

D. DISPUTE PROCEDURES

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Donna An at 202-566-1384 or an.donna@epa.gov.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Donna An

Mailing Address:

US EPA Wetlands Division
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (4502T)
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

US EPA Wetlands Division
EPA West
1301 Constitution Ave., NW
Room 6105
Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 566-1384

Email: an.donna@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) and STORET

QA/QC and peer review are applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants determine whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. If the applicant has an EPA-

approved quality assurance project plan and it covers the project in the application, then they need only reference the plan in their application. Contact the Regional Office Wetland Grant Coordinator (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

Additionally, recipients of grants for wetland monitoring projects will be encouraged to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (STOrage and RETrieval) database. STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

EPA regulations require public participation in various Clean Water Act programs including grants (40 CFR Part 25). Each applicant for EPA financial assistance shall include tasks for public participation in their project's work plan submitted in the grant application (40 CFR 25.11). The project work plan should reflect how public participation will be provided for, assisted, and accomplished.

C. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of the application as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications or portions of applications they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant normally required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2).

D. ANNUAL WETLANDS MEETING/TRAINING

EPA encourages applicants to include travel plans for S/T/LG wetland personnel to attend at least one national wetland meeting in support of the project or for training each year (e.g., National EPA, State, Tribal, Local wetland meeting or wetland monitoring workshops). Applicants should account for travel plans and costs in the work plans and the project budget.