

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 7, WATER, WETLANDS, AND PESTICIDES DIVISION FY06 RFP**

Federal Agency Name: **US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7**  
Funding Opportunity Title: **Region 7 Wetland Program Development Grants**  
Announcement Type: **Request for Proposals**  
Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: **66.461**  
Solicitation number: **EPA-R7WWPD-06-003**  
Dates:  
Proposal due date **- May 18, 2006 (45 days from announcement) 5:00 p.m. CST (6:00 p.m. EST)(See Section IV for further information)**  
If selected, approximate application due date **- July 21, 2006 or three weeks from notification of successful proposal**

**SUMMARY**

**Notice of Request for Proposals for Projects to be Funded from the Wetland Program Development Grants - Regions Allocation** (CFDA 66.461 - Wetland Program Development Grants). - Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) provide eligible applicants an opportunity to conduct projects that promote 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. While WPDGs can continue to be used by recipients to build and refine any element of a comprehensive wetland program, proposals that address one or more of the national and regional priorities identified in Section One of the announcement may increase their chances of being selected for award (see Section V). States, Tribes, local government agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply under this announcement. Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFP. EPA Headquarters administers the national non-profit competition apart from the Regional local/state/tribe competitions and will issue a separate competitive announcement in the future. In order to be eligible for funds through this competition, Tribes must be federally recognized, although "Treatment as a State" status is not a requirement. Intertribal consortia that meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504 is eligible for direct funding. Intertribal consortia projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one State, Tribe, or local government. Universities that are agencies of State government are eligible to receive funds through this competition. Universities that are not chartered as a part of State government are not eligible for direct funding from EPA Regions. Universities must include documentation showing that they are chartered as a part of State government in their proposal. Projects must occur within the states of EPA Region 7 specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and/or Nebraska. In the case of inter-jurisdictional watershed projects, they must be primarily implemented in EPA Region 7. This document describes the grant selection and award process for eligible applicants interested in applying for WPDGs under the competitive process. Implementation of wetland protection programs is not an eligible activity under this announcement.

**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) for Regions, initiated in FY90, provide States, Tribes, local governments (S/T/LGs), interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia (hereafter referred to as applicants or recipients) 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.

The WPDG program is linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. EPA submitted the Agency's 2003-2008 Strategic Plan to Congress and OMB on September 30, 2003, as required under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. EPA's Strategic Plan is built around five goals, centered on the themes of air and global climate change, water, land, communities and ecosystems, and compliance and environmental stewardship. EPA's 2003 Strategic Plan serves as the Agency's road map and guides in establishing the annual goals each program is expected to meet. Finally, the plan provides a basis from which EPA's managers can focus on the highest priority environmental issues and ensure that taxpayer dollars are used effectively.

The overriding Strategic Goal that awards under the Wetland Program Development Grant program will support is:

Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain or restore the health of people, communities, and ecosystems using integrated and comprehensive approaches and partnerships

- ❖ Objective 4.3: Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain, and restore the health of natural habitats and ecosystems
  - Sub-objective 4.3.2: Increase Wetlands: *Working with partners, achieve a net increase of acres of wetlands with additional focus on biological and functional measures.*
    - Annually, beginning in FY 2004, work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and other partners to achieve no net loss of wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulatory program.
    - By 2006 and each year thereafter, work with COE and other partners to obtain no net loss in wetland function based on quantifying functions gained and lost through mitigation for authorized wetlands impacts

For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to: <http://www.epa.gov/ocfopage/plan/plan.htm>

All proposed projects must be linked to environmental results and demonstrate how they will contribute to the ultimate goals of healthy communities and ecosystems. Environmental results are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specific date. The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

For example, an expected output of awards under this announcement might be development of criteria for assessing the condition of "at-risk" wetlands, while the expected outcome might be an

increased understanding of wetland condition, leading to improved protection efforts. Another expected output could be development of a State wetlands tracking system, while the expected outcome would be an improved ability to document no net loss or a net gain of wetlands. Additional outputs and outcomes might include development of methods or criteria to judge the success of a mitigation site (output) while increasing the knowledge of obtaining “no net loss” in quality and quantity of wetlands in the 404 regulatory program (outcome); or develop pilot restoration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of a new restoration technique (output) in order to increase the quantity of wetlands (outcome).

As part of the narrative proposal, you will be required to describe how the project will result in the protection of wetland resources and link the outcomes to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. Further information is located in Section IV.C of this RFP.

While WPDGs can continue to be used by recipients to build and refine any element of a comprehensive wetland program, proposals that address one or more of the following national and regional priorities may increase their chances of being selected for award.

## **NATIONAL PRIORITIES**

### **A. STRENGTHENING STATE/TRIBAL COMPREHENSIVE WETLAND PROGRAMS**

This year’s WPDG Program encourages applicants to pursue projects that will develop one or more core elements of a comprehensive wetland program (listed below) in the context of the entire watershed. EPA has identified the following six core elements of a comprehensive wetland program: 1) Regulation; 2) Monitoring and Assessment; 3) Restoration; 4) Water Quality Standards; 5) Public – Private Partnerships; and 6) Coordination with other water programs. Further explanation of these core areas can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/fy02elements.html>. The WPDG program strives to develop programs that will incorporate each of these elements. However, a truly comprehensive wetland program is not a stand-alone entity and EPA also recognizes the need to take a holistic, integrated approach in developing these core areas. Wetlands are but one of many natural resources linked not only within the context of the ecosystem structure, but also in the arena of watershed management and protection.

### ***Integrating Wetlands into Watershed Planning***

Individual resources are best protected in the context of the entire watershed so that time and money are invested in the most effective manner. There is a natural overlap that exists between the components of a watershed. Program development, even if it focuses on wetlands, must embrace this overlap while planning and building a comprehensive program. In 1996, EPA defined the watershed approach as a “coordinating framework for environmental management that focuses public and private and not-for-profit sector efforts to address the highest priority problems at the watershed level rather than at the individual waterbody or discharger level.” Wetland protection and restoration can and should be included as a key component in the development of successful watershed plans.

### ***Wetlands Role in Flood Protection***

Another area in which we are inviting proposals is for projects that conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies related to the restoration, protection and/or enhancement of wetlands that act as buffers for flood waters in coastal (including Great Lakes) and riverine systems. Hurricane Katrina has focused attention on the value of coastal wetlands to storm protection along the Gulf Coast. More generally, wetlands along the Mississippi and other rivers help prevent or reduce the magnitude of flooding. The buffering capacity of wetlands, associated headwaters, and riparian

systems makes their protection, restoration, and management critical to the whole watershed, for such things as flood mitigation and sustaining the overall health of the watershed. This aspect of wetlands could be incorporated into plans for the watershed and facilitate the coordination of several state, federal and local partners working within the watershed. Funds received through the Wetland Program Development Grant competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program, fund the purchase of land or conservation easements, or implement non-demonstration restoration projects.

#### B. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Wetland monitoring continues to be a program priority, with an overall goal of building the capacity of States/Tribes to report on the quality and quantity of the nation's wetlands. Monitoring and assessment of a State/Tribe's wetlands are considered to be one of the elements of a State Monitoring and Assessment Program as described in "Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program" (EPA 841-B-03-003) <http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/elements/>.

EPA encourages the submission of proposals that develop States/Tribes strategies to strengthen State and Tribal adoption of a wetland monitoring and assessment program (*i.e.*, projects that build State/Tribal/Local Government capacity to determine the causes, effects, and extent of pollution to wetland resources and develop pollution prevention, reduction, and elimination strategies). Further description of aspects of a State/Tribal wetland monitoring and assessment program are described in "Elements of a State/Tribe Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program" found in draft on [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/). Additional information related to wetland monitoring and assessment can be found at [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/monitor.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/monitor.pdf) and [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf).

EPA also 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 larger scale assessments such as in a rotating basin design. Proposals should explain how resultant data from the demonstration project will contribute to coverage across a State or Tribal nation.

When preparing proposals, care should be given to ensure that any data collected 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.

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 those websites were funded by Wetland Program Development Grants.

#### **Wetland Mapping**

In addition, EPA is emphasizing the need to focus on filling gaps in wetland mapping and data collection to facilitate the development of the six core elements of a comprehensive wetland

program. Historically, wetland assessment efforts have been impeded by the lack of up-to-date wetland inventory maps and the lack of a common set of indicators and metrics to ensure reporting consistency among the States/Tribes and ensure an accurate national accounting of wetland gains and losses. Accurate and up-to-date wetland spatial information is necessary to quantitatively measure gains in wetlands; develop monitoring and assessment programs; develop efficient and effective regulatory/mitigation/enforcement programs; assist in the siting of wetland mitigation using a watershed approach; and develop State, county and watershed -wide restoration plans. Accurate spatial data will also help to incorporate wetlands into State and local level watershed planning efforts.

Many states, tribes, and EPA regions have identified the Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory as the best base map for monitoring wetland gains and losses. States/Tribes/Local governments can take advantage of the NWI mapping update process by proposing projects that identify areas for NWI updates. EPA may also support projects that map wetland areas at a larger scale than the NWI, assign attributes for types of wetlands to locational data, and develops tools that facilitate the above efforts.

Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. When mapping activities are carried out as part of developing an applicants wetland program, for planning purposes or as part of a demonstration project, a description of how mapping or inventory projects will develop or improve the eligible applicant's wetland protection programs must be included in the grant application (suggest including this description in Project Goals and Objectives section of the application) for these types of projects in order to be considered for funding under this grant program.

### C. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPENSATORY MITIGATION

State/Tribal/Local Governments 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, Wetland Program Development Grants can be used by States/Tribes and Local governments 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 and local comprehensive planning activity;
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 of Engineers, 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 State/Tribal/Local Government 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). Examples of projects previously funded include: identifying and prioritizing compensatory mitigation sites, development and/or refinement of mitigation site performance standards, studies to monitor mitigation site condition and functions, and training to calculate long-term stewardship endowments for mitigation sites.

#### **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>

State/Tribal/Local Governments 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 State/Tribal/Local Government 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, and/or support refinement of information regarding the function of these valuable resources are also encouraged. Funds received through the Wetland Program Development Grant competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program, or fund the purchase of land or conservation easements.

#### **REGIONAL PRIORITIES:**

The Region 7 priorities aim to build state, tribal, regional and local capacity through the development and refinement of their wetland programs. EPA Region 7 encourages projects that support and incorporate the watershed approach; increase knowledge of the association of amphibian and reptile species that depend on aquatic resources; study the economic value of wetlands and aquatic resources; and improve the understanding of isolated wetlands, and/or intermittent and ephemeral streams.

Most EPA Region 7 states and tribes are in the initial stages of developing a comprehensive wetlands program. The Region 7 priorities 1 through 4 emphasize plans which are the first phases of development of a comprehensive wetlands program. Priorities 5 through 9 emphasize protection of Regional threatened resources, information gaps, and planning efforts in the Region.

##### *1. Development of a Comprehensive Wetlands Protection Plan*

This is an overarching, comprehensive wetland plan that addresses all waters within the applicant's political boundary, i.e. the entire state or all lands of a tribe. To be effective this must include coordination between federal, state, and local organizations and agencies that have a role in wetland protection. A Region 7 comprehensive wetland plan must include one or more elements in National Priority B, must include all elements of Regional Priorities 3, 4, and may include any element(s) in Regional Priority 2.

2. *Development of a State or Tribal Comprehensive Regulatory Strategy and Implementation Plan*

This plan should address all waters within state/tribal boundaries and may be integrated with the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Program. The plan activities must be at least as stringent as that of the CWA Federal Section 404 Program. At a minimum the plan should include:

- a) a definition of wetlands;
- b) a refinement of wetland water quality standards;
- c) an evaluation of compensatory mitigation success;
- d) development of environmental review criteria (must be comparable to the CWA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines) and a plan for implementation of the criteria (refer to <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/regs/>);
- e) development of a compliance and enforcement program; and
- f) a strategy for implementation of the plan.

3. *Development of a Wetland Restoration and Protection Plan*

At a minimum the plan should include:

- a) goals for wetland restoration, creation, and/or protection by wetland type, quantities, and location;
- b) a tracking system to report wetland losses and gains on a watershed basis and by quantity, quality, wetland type, and location;
- c) an identification of potential sites for wetland restoration and protection;
- d) an identification and prioritization of existing wetlands in need of protection;
- e) an identification of potential wetland restoration and creation sites, and
- f) an implementation strategy for the plan.

4. *Development of a Wetland Outreach and Education Plan*

At a minimum the plan should include:

- a) methods to protect vulnerable wetlands (e.g. include volunteer activities or technical assistance);
- b) outreach and education to multiple target audiences (e.g. host trainings, hold meetings, distribute educational materials, etc.);
- c) an assessment of the outreach and education activities' effectiveness, and
- d) an implementation strategy for the plan.

5. *Assessment of Intermittent and/or Ephemeral Streams*

The assessment should include streams not currently monitored by the state or tribe, and the project should use protocols accepted by the state or tribe for streams. Assessment methodologies should address monitoring on a watershed basis. At a minimum the assessment should include one or more of the following:

- a) reference sites identification and development of a monitoring strategy for stream condition;
- b) a collection of data on nutrient/sediment loading;

- c) restoration, mitigation, and protection technique identification and/or development; and/or
  - d) the development of assessment criteria (other than water chemistry criteria).
6. *Development of a Stream Restoration and Protection Plan*  
The plan itself should be on a watershed basis and at a minimum should include the following:
- a) restoration and protection goals;
  - b) a tracking system for restoration and protection projects\efforts;
  - c) an evaluation of wetland impacts\threats within watersheds;
  - d) a prioritization for restoration and protection; and
  - e) an implementation strategy for the plan.
7. *Development of an Outreach and Education Plan for Ephemeral and Intermittent Streams on a Watershed Basis*  
This plan at a minimum should include the following:
- a) methods to protect ephemeral and intermittent streams (e.g. include volunteer activities or technical assistance);
  - b) outreach and education to multiple target audiences (e.g. host trainings, hold meetings, distribute educational materials, etc.);
  - c) an assessment of the outreach and education activities' effectiveness, and
  - d) an implementation strategy for the plan
8. *Assessment of Economic Value of Vulnerable Wetlands*  
To assess the economic value of vulnerable wetlands within EPA Region 7, such as fens, farmed depressions, forested wetland depressions, in-channel wetlands in headwater streams, freshwater depressional marshes, inland salt marshes or meadows, moss-lichen wetlands, oxbow lake wetlands, scrub-shrub wetlands, seeps, sinkhole wetlands, springs, forested or herbaceous vernal pools, wet meadows, and wet prairies. The assessment should be directed toward the economic benefits for reduction, prevention, or elimination of pollution, which may include dredging or filling of wetlands. Proposals must result in educational materials and activities to transfer the knowledge of the economic value of these vulnerable wetlands.
9. *Development of Innovative Wetland Restoration Demonstrations on a Watershed Basis*  
These demonstrations address water quality and reducing flooding impacts, surface and groundwater nitrate loading, water quantity issues, and/or wetland recharge of groundwater use. These demonstrations must meet the definition for demonstrations described in the RFP. Wetland restoration projects cannot include wetlands constructed for the purposes of treating wastewater or storm water.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

Funding decisions for the awards expected to be made under this competition will be made by EPA Region 7 and will be based on the evaluation of proposals against the criteria in this announcement and funding availability. Because EPA typically receives requests for funding far in excess of available funds, EPA cannot provide grant funds to all applicants. Historically, awards for projects typically range between \$25,000 and \$250,000, but can be larger. There is no specified upper or lower limit to the dollar award, aside from the Region's WPDG funding allotment. EPA Region 7 has approximately \$1,000,000 available funding for awards under this announcement.



When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project work plans and budget. EPA Region 7 sees its role as providing tools, technical assistance and other support. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for projects selected may include: close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements; approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); review and comment on content of publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

EPA Region 7 reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and without further competition, if additional funding becomes available after the original awards are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than four months after the original selection decisions.

Activities should be of a relatively short time frame, 1 to 3 years, and with well defined outputs and outcomes. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement.

EPA reserves the right to partially fund awards under this announcement by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an award, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

#### **A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

States, Tribes, local government agencies, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply. Past recipients of WPDGs include but are not limited to: wetland regulatory agencies, water quality agencies, planning offices, wild and scenic rivers agencies, departments of transportation, fish and wildlife or natural resources agencies, agriculture departments, forestry agencies, coastal zone management agencies, park and recreation agencies, non-point source or storm water agencies, city or county, and other State/Tribal/Local Government agencies that conduct wetland-related activities.

Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFP. EPA Headquarters administers the national non-profit competition apart from the Regional local/state/tribe competitions and will issue a separate competitive announcement in the future.

Projects must be performed within one or more of the states of EPA Region 7 specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and/or Nebraska. In the case of inter-jurisdictional watershed projects, they must be primarily implemented in EPA Region 7.

In order to be eligible for funds through this competition, Tribes must be federally recognized, although "Treatment as a State" status is not a requirement. Intertribal consortia that meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504 are eligible for direct funding. (**NOTE:** You can reference CFR Title 40 online at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/cfr40.htm>.) Intertribal consortia projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one State, Tribe, or local government.

Universities that are agencies of State government are eligible to receive funds through this competition. Universities that are not chartered as a part of State government are not eligible for direct funding from EPA Regions. Universities must include documentation showing that they are chartered as a part of State government in their proposal.

#### B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

**Non-federal matching funds of at least 25% of the total project cost of the project are required in accordance with 40 CFR 31.24, 35.385, and 35.615.** The match must be for an allowable cost and may be provided by the applicant or an eligible partner organization or institution. The match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions and other non-cash support. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. If the match is provided by a partner organization, the applicant is still responsible for proper accountability and documentation. All grant funds are subject to Federal audit. The minimum match is determined by dividing the amount of requested federal funds from EPA by three. EPA will use the following formula:

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

For example, if the applicant requests \$100,000 of federal funds for the three-year project period, the applicant must be able to provide \$33,400 in matching funds or services. Which would result in the total project cost of \$133,400. 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 Regional grant contact person listed in Section VII of this RFP if you have any question about calculating match. 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). **If an applicant can not meet the 25% match by the time of award they will not be eligible to receive funding.** Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority.

#### C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**In order to be** eligible for funding consideration under this announcement, applicants must meet all of the following criteria. Failure to meet all of the following criteria will result in the disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration:

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III A of this announcement.
2. Except as stated below, proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal or parts of the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Proposals must be received by the EPA or through grants.gov on or before the submission closing date published in Section IV of this announcement; proposals received after the published closing date will be returned to the sender without further consideration.
3. Proposals must be limited to activities that improve 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. Demonstrations must involve

new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

4. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding.

#### D. 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. Local governments are not eligible for PPGs. Funds for a Wetland Program Development Grant may be included in a PPG. Under this competition, State 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 Wetland Program Development Grant work plan must be included in the PPG work plan. Similarly, Tribal proposals must first be selected under this competitive grant process and in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. States and Tribes may not use Wetland Program Development Grant funds for implementation of a wetlands program. 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/Day-09/t218.htm> (State) and at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001January/Day-16/g219.htm> (Tribal).

### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

#### A. REQUEST FOR APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and 424A, are available at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm) and by mail upon request by calling the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5320.

Appendix A is a Checklist Tool for some of the required information to be submitted under this RFP. The checklist is only a tool to check that the applicant has included some of the required information in their proposal. This is not the entire list of required information needed in the proposal.

#### B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The applicant has the option to submit their proposal in *one* of two ways: 1) Submitting the proposal electronically through the Grants.gov website; **or** 2) To the Regional submission address listed below (via email or hardcopy).

##### **Region 7 Submission Address**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7  
WWPD/WPIB  
Attention: Wetland Program Development Grant Proposal  
901 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
[R7watersheds@epa.gov](mailto:R7watersheds@epa.gov)

## **1. Grants.gov Submission**

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Started,” and then “For AORS” (Authorized Organization Representative) on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

At <http://www.grants.gov>, you will find step-by-step instructions which will help you to apply under this announcement.

To begin the application process for this announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab at the top of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package ([https://apply.grants.gov/forms\\_apps\\_idx.html](https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html)). You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-R7WWPD-06-003**, in the space provided. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button “How To Apply” at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the top of the page and then go to EPA opportunities).

Proposals submitted through grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

### **How to submit your proposal through grants.gov:**

Applicants are required to submit three documents to apply electronically through grants.gov: the proposal narrative, SF 424, and SF-424A. All three documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For the Proposal Narrative portion, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word, PDF or WordPerfect file. When you are ready to attach your proposal narrative to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your proposal narrative (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename,” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For the SF 424 and SF-424A, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page,

click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action moves the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – Region 7 – FY06 – WPDG – 1<sup>st</sup> Submission” or “Applicant Name – Region 7 – FY06 WPDG – back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2<sup>nd</sup> submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – Region 7 – FY06 WPDG – 2nd Submission.” Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, your AOR should enter your organization’s name (abbreviated where possible), EPA Region 7, the fiscal year (e.g., FY06), and the grant category (e.g., Wetlands Protection). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) or contact Mandy Whitsitt at 913-551-7311 or [whitsitt.mandy@epa.gov](mailto:whitsitt.mandy@epa.gov).

If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/CustomerSupport>.

## **2. Submission to Regional Contact By Hard Copy or E-Mail**

For applicants that choose not to submit proposals via grants.gov, proposals (prepared as described below) can be submitted to the Regional Office by email or hardcopy. All hardcopy submissions should be submitted double-sided and must be accompanied by an electronic copy on digital media, for example a CD-ROM or a 3.5” disk, IBM compatible.

Proposals submitted to the Regional Office by email should be sent as an attachment in the main body of the email to the EPA Region 7 contact listed above or to the submission address listed in Section VII. The narrative proposal should be consolidated into a single file and readable in PDF, MS Word or Word Perfect WP6/7/8 for Windows. E-mailed submissions must include “**FY06 WPDG Proposal**” and the submitting **agency’s name** in the subject of the email.

Proposals submitted to the Regional office by hardcopy will be considered if received by EPA through courier, hand-delivered, U.S. Postal Service, or by express delivery service by the time and date specified below in Section D. Proposals must be **received in the EPA Region 7 office by the time and date specified below in Section IV.D**, regardless of the hard copy delivery method. EPA will not accept faxed submissions. In addition, five extra copies of any color pages (i.e. graphs, maps, images, etc.) that are included in the proposal must be submitted with your

mailed hardcopy proposal. The accompanying electronic submission must be either on a CD-ROM or a 3.5" disk, IBM compatible and readable in PDF, MS Word or Word Perfect WP6/7/8 for Windows with the narrative proposal consolidated into a single file.

### C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

All proposal packages, regardless of how submitted, must include the following documents:

1. Proposal Narrative including the following parts:
  - a. Statement regarding whether this proposal is a continuation of a previously funded project. If the proposal is a continuation, please provide the assistance number and status of the current grant/cooperative agreement (One page or less).
  - b. Statement of Work, including the contents as described below. (***no more than 7 pages***).
2. Signed Standard Forms 424 and 424A. For Standard Form 424, use budget amounts for the entire project in Section 15; this includes all years of the project. For Standard Form 424A, use budget amounts for the entire project in Sections A, B, C and D including both Federal and non-Federal match.

Proposal narratives must be typewritten, double-spaced and in 12 point or larger print using an 8.5 x 11 inch paper with minimum 1 inch horizontal and vertical margins. ***The Statement of Work section must be limited to no more than seven typewritten pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper)***. Pages should be numbered for ease of reading. Hardcopy submissions should be submitted double-sided.

#### Statement of Work Outline

Statements of Work must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

Statement of Work **must** include the following as applicable:

1. Cover Page (Not counted in 7 page limit) including
  - a. Project Title,
  - b. Name of Applicant,
  - c. All Project Contacts,
  - d. E-mail Address and/ or Phone Number,
  - e. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs), and
  - f. Total project cost and dollars requested.
2. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less);
3. Project description containing:
  - a. Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern (need for the project);
  - b. Project Goals and Objectives (describe a plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outcomes and outputs which would include the following elements);
    - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the Objective of the Program/project and provide a link to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4 (See Section I of this announcement) for each objective;
    - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the workplan activities

- and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I of this announcement);
- iii. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcome) - List what environmental improvements will be accomplished as a result of this program/project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of work plan commitments and outputs. Describe your approach for tracking progress toward achieving the outcome(s) of the project (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I of this announcement);
  - iv. Established Baseline for Measurement - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the program/project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e., current condition, new condition).
- c. Project Tasks (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals);
  - d. Schedule (describe when you expect to complete significant steps and milestones); and
  - e. Describe how the project will address:
    - i. One or more of the national and/or regional priorities identified in Section I of this announcement (The applicant should identify which national and/or regional priorities they are addressing and if they are addressing Regional Priorities #1-7 the applicant must describe how they will address each of the priority specific plan elements described in Section I for that priority that they are addressing);
    - ii. State, local, and/or other stakeholder participation (partnerships); and/or
    - iii. Opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding. Describe (i) how the applicant will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority;
    - iv. A brief description of how QA/QC issues will be addressed if the applicant expects to collect data and information;
    - v. A brief description of measures the applicant will put in place to control, prevent, and/or avoid the spread of invasive species for projects that include unique demonstration restoration or enhancement projects/tasks or where applicable.
  - f. Brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (annotated resumes are preferred but not necessary and will not be included in the page limit).
  - g. Brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
  - h. Brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to other S/T/LGs or other agencies within the S/T/LG and the public. Proposals

should explain how information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to coverage across a State or Tribal nation.

4. A budget and estimated funding amounts for each work plan component/task. (This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual.”) Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required match in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period.
5. Information addressing (a) the applicant’s past performance in managing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years (no more than three such projects) and (b) how the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under assistance agreements performed within the last 5 years (no more than three such agreements) or their three most recently performed assistance agreements. For each such agreement, applicants should briefly describe the assistance agreement and how progress/technical reports or other documentation generated under the agreement adequately demonstrated their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the agreement, and if such progress was not achieved, describes whether the documentation satisfactorily explained why not.

Note: For a and b above, if the applicant has prior EPA assistance agreement experience the proposal should discuss the prior EPA grants first; if the applicant does not have prior EPA assistance agreement experience then they should submit information on projects funded by other Federal agencies; if you have not previously received Federal funds, you may provide a history of applicable past performance with private funding, or funding awarded by state, tribal or local governments (applicants who have not managed projects with outside financing may provide information regarding relevant projects funded in-house, along with contact information for the person(s) familiar with the project(s). Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement.

6. Any support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project. (Not counted in page limit).

The applicant should provide in its Statement of Work any additional information to the extent not addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

#### D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES - REQUIRED

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy or e-mail must be **received** in the EPA Region 7 office on or before **5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), May 18, 2006**; proposals submitted electronically through grants.gov must be received by grants.gov on or before 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), May 18, 2006. Late proposals will not be reviewed.

#### E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

If selected for award applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” Applicants should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more



information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

**F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION:**

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

**V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**A. SELECTION CRITERIA**

All eligible proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weights. Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion are addressed.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1) National Priorities<br/>(10 points)</p> | <p>Extent to which the proposed project supports one or more of the National Priorities identified in Section I of the announcement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Strengthening State/Tribal Comprehensive Wetland Programs</li> <li>B. Developing a Comprehensive Monitoring and Assessment Program</li> <li>C. Improving the Effectiveness of Compensatory Mitigation</li> <li>D. Refining the Protection of Vulnerable Wetlands and Aquatic Resources</li> </ul> <p><i>Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly the priority or priorities are addressed in the work plan.</i></p>  |
| <p>2) Regional Priorities<br/>(10 points)</p> | <p>Extent to which the proposed project supports one or more of the Regional Priorities identified in Section I of the announcement. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how many of the regional priorities identified in Section One of the announcement are addressed by the proposed project, and how well they are addressed.</p> <p>Region 7 Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(2 points) 1. Development of a Comprehensive Wetlands Protection Plan</li> <li>(1 point) 2. Development of a State or Tribal Comprehensive Regulatory Strategy and Implementation Plan</li> <li>(1 point) 3. Development of a Wetland Restoration and Protection Plan</li> <li>(1 point) 4. Development of a Wetland Outreach and Education Plan</li> <li>(1 point) 5. Assessment of Intermittent and/or Ephemeral Streams</li> <li>(1 point) 6. Development of a Stream Restoration and Protection Plan</li> <li>(1 point) 7. Development of an Outreach and Education Plan for Ephemeral and Intermittent Streams on a Watershed Basis</li> <li>(1 point) 8. Assessment of Economic Value of Vulnerable Wetlands</li> <li>(1 point) 9. Development of Innovative Wetland Restoration Demonstrations on a Watershed Basis</li> </ul> <p><i>Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly the priority or</i></p> |

|  | <i>priorities are addressed in the work plan.</i>   |
|--|---|
| 2) Environmental Results (40 points)                                 | <p>A. Extent to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results (i.e., will the project result in the protection of wetland resources) and what are the anticipated outputs and outcomes and are the outcomes linked to EPA’s Strategic Plan? (30 pts)</p> <p>B. Extent to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in Section I of this announcement). (10 pts)</p>   |
| 3) Specific Workplan Elements (25 points)                            | <p>Each of these sub-criterion will be scored based on the extent, and how well, the proposal demonstrates the following:</p> <p>A. A schedule or time-line of activities for the project; (5 pts)</p> <p>B. A budget and estimated funding amounts for each work plan component/task. Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required match in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs; (5 pts)</p> <p>C. 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; (5 pts)</p> <p>D. A description of roles and responsibilities of the recipient and major partners in carrying out the workplan commitments. (5 pts)</p> <p>E. A description of how you will transfer the Results and/or Methods to other S/T/LGs or other agencies within the S/T/LG. Proposals should explain how information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to coverage across a State or Tribal nation. (5 pts)</p> |
| 4) Project Utilizes Leveraging (Funding and Partnerships) (4 points) | <p>A. Funding (2 pts)<br/>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority.</p> <p>B. Partnerships (2 pts)<br/>Extent to which the applicant provides evidence of intent to partner with others (esp. within the S/T/LG) and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with outreach activities.</p>   |
| 5.) Programmatic Capability/Past Performance                         | <p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicants:</p> <p>A. Past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and</p>  |

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| <p>(Technical Experience)/<br/>Qualifications and<br/>Experience of the<br/>Applicant<br/>(11 points)</p> | <p>relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years (no more than 3 such projects); (3 points)</p> <p>B. Past performance in documenting and/or reporting (e.g., by filing timely progress/final technical reports; or by otherwise demonstrating how you adequately documented and reported) on the applicants progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (e.g., results) under assistance agreements performed within the last 5 years (no more than three grants) or their three most recently performed assistance agreements and if progress was not being made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not. (5 points).</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under A and B above, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants who have no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (for item 1 above 1.5 points, and for item 2 above 2.5 points).</p> <p>C. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (3 points)</p> |
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**B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

All timely submitted proposals will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review the proposals (that pass the threshold eligibility review) based on the evaluation criteria listed above and assign scores to each proposal.

Based on the review of proposals against the criteria above, the panel will develop a list of the most highly rated proposals to submit to the Selection Official. Final funding decisions will then be made, by the Selection Official, from among the most highly rated proposals based on the following factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects (this includes type of project and type of applicant i.e. state/tribe/or local government); and
3. Cost of project

**C. SELECTION OFFICIAL**

Final selection of proposals will be made by the Region 7 Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division Director. Those chosen by the Selection Official will then be asked to submit a complete application for funding.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. AWARD NOTICES**

Applicant(s) will be notified of recommendation for funding by email once decisions have been made. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance. Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10) that will be due approximately three weeks after being notified. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

Applicants that are not invited to submit a complete application will be notified by mail or email.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. All **final** work plans must include the information required in 40 CFR § 35.107 and 35.507.

An approvable workplan is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the grant;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of 40 CFR; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted at the following website addresses [http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7\\_grant\\_opportunities.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm) and at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/> at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications.

### **B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

The general award and administration process for all Wetland Program Development Grants 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”).

### **DISPUTE PROCESS**

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://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Robert Bukaty at 913-551-7846.

## STATUTORY AUTHORITY and APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Wetland Program Development projects are authorized under the Clean Water Act, Section 104 (b)(3). These projects are subject to EPA's General Grant Regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 "Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations"; 40 CFR Part 31 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"; and 40 CFR Part 35 "State and Local Assistance".

## FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- Award recipients may award contracts in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36, and subgrants in accordance with 40 CFR 31.37. The State, Tribe, or local agency, must not simply pass through funding to an organization that is not eligible to receive funding directly.
- While contractual efforts can be a part of these grants, each Wetland Program Development Grant 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 or proposal. 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 State/Tribal/Local Government agency, interstate agency, or intertribal consortia, these entities must be clearly indicated in the proposal.
- Funds cannot be used for land acquisition or purchase of easements. However, they 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.
- Funds cannot be used for specific mitigation activities (e.g., implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs).
- This competitive grant program cannot fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted but is contingent on justification of need in the work plan.
- Grant funds cannot be used to pay for travel by Federal agency staff.
- Under the competition, each proposed project must be able to be completed within the project period and with the initial award of funds. Recipients should not anticipate additional funding beyond the initial award of funds for a specific project. Eligible applicants should request the entire amount of money needed to complete the project in the original grant application.
- Grant funds cannot be used to fund an honorarium under this competition.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 ([www.invasivespecies.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.gov)), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to insure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.

- Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

#### DUNS NUMBER

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application 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.

#### COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

#### C. REPORTING

Wetland Program Development Grants are 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.

### **VII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

#### **Region 7 Contacts:**

#### **SUBMISSION ADDRESS**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7  
WWPD/WPIB  
Attention: Wetland Program Development Grant Proposal  
901 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
[R7watersheds@epa.gov](mailto:R7watersheds@epa.gov)

#### **WPDG PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Mandy Whitsitt  
Grant Coordinator  
913.551.7311, Telephone  
913.551.9311, Fax  
[Whitsitt.mandy@epa.gov](mailto:Whitsitt.mandy@epa.gov)

## **GRANT ADVOCATE**

Robert Bukaty  
Region 7 Grants Competition Advocate  
913.551.7846, Telephone  
913.551.9846, Fax  
[Bukaty.robert@epa.gov](mailto:Bukaty.robert@epa.gov)

## **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**

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

Quality Assurance /Quality Control requirements 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 in determining 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. Contact the Regional Office WPDG Program Contact (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 (short for 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. ANNUAL WETLANDS MEETING/TRAINING

EPA encourages State /Tribal /Local Governments to include travel plans for 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 meetings or wetland monitoring workshops). Applicants should account for travel plans and costs in the work plans and the project budget. EPA's Wetlands Program does not anticipate providing travel for State, Tribal or local government staff to attend meetings other than through this grant program.

### C. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final work plan.

**APPENDIX A – CHECKLIST TOOL**  
**WETLANDS PROPOSAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST**

**SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Proposals submitted to the Regional office (see Section VII) by hardcopy will be considered if received by EPA through courier, hand-delivered, U.S. Postal Service, or express delivery service on or before **5:00 p.m. CST, May 18, 2006**. Proposal submitted to grants.gov or by email to the region will be considered if received on or before 6:00 p.m. EST, May 18, 2006.

**SUBMISSION ADDRESS**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7  
WWPD/WPIB  
Attention: Wetland Program Development Grant Proposal  
901 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
[R7watersheds@epa.gov](mailto:R7watersheds@epa.gov)

**PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

All proposal packages, regardless of how submitted, must include the following documents:

1. Proposal Narrative with the following parts:
  - a. Statement regarding whether this proposal is a continuation of a previously funded project. If the proposal is a continuation, please provide the assistance number and status of the current grant/cooperative agreement (One page or less).
  - b. Statement of Work, including the contents as described below. (**7 pages or less**).
2. Signed Standard Forms 424 and 424A. For Standard Form 424, use budget amounts for the entire project in Section 15; this includes all years of the project. For Standard Form 424A, use budget amounts for the entire project in Sections A, B, C and D including both Federal and non-Federal match.

Proposal narratives must be typewritten, double-spaced and in 12 point or larger print using an 8.5 x 11 inch paper with minimum 1 inch horizontal and vertical margins. ***The Statement of Work section must be limited to no more than seven typewritten pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper)***. Pages should be numbered for ease of reading. Hardcopy submissions should be submitted double-sided.

**STATEMENT OF WORK** (Statements of Work must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.)

- ✓ Cover Page (Not included in 7 page count) including:
  - Project Title,
  - Name of Applicant,
  - All Project Contacts,
  - E-mail Address and/ or Phone Number,
  - Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs), and
  - Total project cost and dollars requested.
- ✓ Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less);
- ✓ Project description containing:
  - Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern (need for the project);



- Project Goals and Objectives (describe a plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outcomes and outputs which would include the following elements);
  - Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the Objective of the Program/project and provide a Link to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4 (See Section I of this announcement) for each objective;
  - Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the workplan activities and a approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I of this announcement);
  - Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcome) - List what environmental improvements will be accomplished as a result of this program/project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of work plan commitments and outputs. Describe your approach for tracking progress toward achieving the outcome(s) of the project (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I of this announcement);
  - Established Baseline for Measurement - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the program/project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e., current condition, new condition).
- Project Tasks (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals);
- Schedule (describe when you expect to complete significant steps and milestones); and
- Describe how the project will address:
  - One or more of the national and/or regional priorities identified in Section I of this announcement (The applicant should identify which national and/or regional priorities they are addressing and if they are addressing Regional Priorities #1-7 the applicant must describe how they will address each of the priority specific plan elements described in Section I for that priority that they are addressing);
  - State, local, and/or other stakeholder participation (partnerships); and/or
  - Opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding. Describe (i) how the applicant will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority;
  - A brief description of how QA/QC issues will be addressed if the applicant expects to collect data and information;
  - A brief description of measures the applicant will put in place to control, prevent, and/or avoid the spread of invasive species for projects that include unique demonstration restoration or enhancement projects/tasks or where applicable.
- Brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications

(annotated resumes are preferred but not necessary and will not be included in the page limit).

- Brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
  - Brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to other S/T/LGs or other agencies within the S/T/LG and the public. Proposals should explain how information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to coverage across a State or Tribal nation.
- ✓ A budget and estimated funding amounts for each work plan component/task. (This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in SF 424A such as "other" and "contractual.") Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required match in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period.
- ✓ Information addressing (a) the applicant's past performance in managing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years (no more than three such projects) and (b) how the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under assistance agreements performed within the last 5 years (no more than three such agreements) or their three most recently performed assistance agreements. For each such agreement, applicants should briefly describe the assistance agreement and how progress/technical reports or other documentation generated under the agreement adequately demonstrated their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the agreement, and if such progress was not achieved, describe whether the documentation satisfactorily explained why not.

Note: For a and b above, if the applicant has prior EPA assistance agreement experience the proposal should discuss the prior EPA grants first; if the applicant does not have prior EPA assistance agreement experience then they should submit information on projects funded by other Federal agencies; if you have not previously received Federal funds, you may provide a history of applicable past performance with private funding, or funding awarded by state, tribal or local governments (applicants who have not managed projects with outside financing may provide information regarding relevant projects funded in-house, along with contact information for the person(s) familiar with the project(s). Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement.

- ✓ Any support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project. (Not counted in page limit).

The applicant should provide in its Statement of Work any additional information to the extent not addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.