

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 7 FY07 RFP

Federal Agency Name: **US Environmental Protection Agency, Regions**

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-07-001

Dates: March 20, 2007 – May 3, 2007

Proposal due date – May 3, 2007 (45 days from announcement) 5:00 p.m. CST (6:00 p.m. EST)(See Section IV for further information)

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 (Regulation (Enhancing Wetland Protection) and/or Monitoring and Assessment) and/or regional priorities may increase their chances of being selected for award (see Section V). States, Tribes, local government agencies, interstate 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 expects to 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 are 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. Universities must include documentation in their proposal demonstrating that they are chartered as a part of State government. Projects must occur within the states of EPA Region 7 specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and 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 this announcement. 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 condition. 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 FY 1990, 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 statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to improving wetland programs by the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and it is encouraged that 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 considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program, or fund the purchase of land or conservation easements. Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding.

The WPDG program is linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. 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 2006 - 2011 Strategic Plan serves as the Agency's road map and guides in establishing the annual goals each program is expected to meet. The plan also 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 supports 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: Restore and Protect Ecosystems-- Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems
 - Sub-objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands: By 2011, working with partners, achieve a net increase in wetlands acres with additional focus on assessment of wetland condition.
 - By 2011, working with partners, achieve a net increase of 100,000 acres of wetlands per year with additional focus on biological and functional measures and assessment of wetland condition.
 - By 2011, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, states, and tribes, achieve "no net loss" of wetlands each year under the Clean Water Act Section 404 regulatory program, beginning in 2007.

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 include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting ecosystems. Environmental results are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of outputs and outcomes. Expected environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to 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 specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Environmental outcomes are the 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, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. For instance, there is great need to improve the knowledge and decision-making ability, with respect to environmental issues, of local and State officials who are in the position of creating laws, ordinances, permits, etc. In this context, certain efforts designed to improve decision-making and behavioral changes can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the grantee can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create environmental institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment. In such instances, outcomes are not measured typically by environmental or water quality indicators, but rather by the institutional indicators that lead to the adoption and application of laws and regulations and the active management of programs necessary to provide environmental protection.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. 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) which could lead to increased understanding of how to ensure "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 anticipated outputs and outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Further information is located in Section IV.C of this RFP.

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.

While WPDGs can continue to be used by recipients to build and refine any element of a comprehensive wetland program, proposals are strongly encouraged that address one or both of the two national priorities identified below – regulation (enhancing wetland protection) and/or monitoring and assessment – or that address regional priorities.

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 meeting or wetland monitoring workshops). Applicants should account for travel plans and costs in the workplans and the project budget

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

A. REGULATION (ENHANCING WETLANDS PROTECTION)

States/Tribes/local governments may choose from a number of different paths in their development of wetlands protection measures. The EPA recognizes that the development of a regulatory program can begin with either non-regulatory or regulatory activities. However, any non-regulatory activity under this priority should be connected to building or strengthening wetland protection / regulation. For example, community outreach and communication activity is needed to help generate public support for the adoption of wetland regulatory programs by State/Tribes/local government. For example development of a wetlands mitigation tracking system could precede the development of a regulatory program.

State/Tribe/local government regulatory programs are generally organized around one or a mixture of the following four approaches: the use of Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Certification process, the development of statewide programmatic general permits, the assumption of CWA Section 404 program by states, and the promulgation of wetland/aquatic resource protection ordinances or laws. Any aspect of these approaches can be strengthened if a state/tribe/local government has already developed wetlands regulations or a wetlands program. Strategies can be developed or re-evaluated to determine the best approach(s) or steps needed to develop or enhance wetlands protection / regulations. Policies and procedures may need to be developed to guide decisions and reporting systems may need to be devised to track program effectiveness.

While any project that helps build effective wetlands protection through regulation is encouraged under this priority, additional information is provided below on two approaches to wetlands protection/regulation – improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation and refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources. EPA is providing more detail on the types of projects of interest in these two areas.

Improving the Effectiveness of Compensatory Mitigation

Projects that improve S/L/T 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 either by entities that have assumed the CWA 404 program, have a similar permit system, or are permitted by the Federal agencies, are encouraged. For example, WPDGs can be used to help or inform development of 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.

On March 27, 2006, EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) announced proposed revisions to regulations governing compensatory mitigation for authorized impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. These revisions are designed to improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation at replacing lost aquatic resource functions and area, expand public participation in compensatory mitigation decision-making, and increase the efficiency and predictability of the process of proposing compensatory mitigation projects. These primary themes of the proposed rulemaking 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 proposed rule and related documents can be found at:

<http://www.epa.gov/wetlandsmitigation/>

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, 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). Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program, or fund the purchase of land or conservation easements.

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.

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 these waters 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 build or strengthen comprehensive wetland protection programs to protect such vulnerable waters from a variety of potential impacts are encouraged to do so. EPA also encourages applicants to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals and to reflect on the contribution by wetlands to the broader aquatic ecosystem. 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 WPDG competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program, or fund the purchase of land or conservation easements.

B. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Wetland monitoring continues to be a program priority, with an overall goal of building the capacity of States/Tribes to report on the condition and quantity of their wetlands. EPA encourages the submission of proposals that develop strategies to strengthen State and Tribal adoption of a wetland monitoring and assessment program (*i.e.*, projects that build State/Tribal/Local Government (S/T/LGs) capacity to determine the causes, effects, and extent of pollution to wetland resources). Further description of the building blocks for a State/Tribal wetland monitoring and assessment program can be found in “Elements of a State/Tribe Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program” at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/. This document recommends ten basic elements of a wetlands monitoring program, and serves as a tool to help determine whether a wetlands monitoring program meets the requirements of CWA 106(e)(1). Proposals that are designed to refine state and tribal wetland monitoring programs should address the building blocks described in the “Elements” document.

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. Surveys can be conducted to help document the significance of especially vulnerable aquatic resources, including headwater streams and geographically isolated wetlands. Surveys also can be conducted to evaluate the cumulative effectiveness of wetland restoration projects and programs. These smaller scale demonstrations 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 a broader understanding of wetland resources across a State or Tribal nation. Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program.

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.neiwpcc.org/Index.htm?NEBAWWG.htm~mainFrame>. Many of the case studies listed on those websites were funded by Wetland Program Development Grants. A number of common program development steps can be seen in those case studies. Many successful programs begin with the development of a reference wetland network in a selected watershed or region. Sampling information then is used to develop and test wetland monitoring methods. Those methods, in turn, are used to implement assessment projects that generate the information needed to manage and report aquatic resource condition in the selected watershed. Additional information related to wetland monitoring and assessment can be found at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/monitor.pdf and www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf.

Proposals also may include tasks that describe how an existing or developmental wetland assessment method used in the project will be refined. Examples of how states have developed and tested methods can be found at: www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/wetlands/WetlandEcologySection-Reports.html and www.cramwetlands.org.

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).

Wetland Mapping

EPA is emphasizing the need to fill gaps in wetland mapping and data collection to facilitate the development of wetland assessment programs and the other 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. 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory (NWI) as the best existing base map for monitoring wetland gains and losses. EPA supports projects that enable mapping of wetland areas at a more refined scale than the NWI such as: at 1:12,000 resolution, assign attributes for types of wetlands to locational data, and develop tools that facilitate the above efforts. A "National Wetland Mapping Standard" is being developed by a workgroup of the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC). This will provide a national standard for wetland mapping, and wetlands mapped using the standard can be uploaded to the NWI data base to refine the existing NWI data. Eligible applicants can take advantage of the development of this data standard by forming "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to help co-fund state wide mapping efforts that would otherwise be too costly for any one group to undertake. By forming these coalitions soon, Wetland Mapping Coalitions could be in position to use the mapping standard when it goes final in the summer of 2007. These coalitions are most effectively structured to address both mapping and monitoring issues concurrently and thus should be developed in close collaboration with any existing or planned interagency monitoring workgroup. More information about the FGDC wetland mapping standard can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/nwi/fgdcwet.html>.

Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Projects will be eligible for funding when mapping activities are carried out as part of helping or informing development of a wetland program, for planning purposes, or as part of a demonstration project.

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 coordinate among state entities to build capacity to protect water resources; support and incorporate the watershed approach; increase our knowledge about wetlands; 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 first Region 7 priority emphasizes plans, which are the first phase of development of a comprehensive wetlands program. The second priority emphasizes protection of Regional threatened resources, information gaps, and planning efforts in the Region. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement; please see Section IIIC of the RFP. Projects must occur within the states of Region 7, specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.

1. **Development of a Comprehensive Wetlands Program.** This priority is intended to develop plans to aid in protecting wetlands and water resources through the development of one or more of the plans listed below. This can include the updating of an existing Wetlands Protection Plan. See <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/fy02elements.html> for additional information on the Core Elements of Comprehensive State and Tribal Wetlands Programs.
 - a. Development of a Comprehensive Wetlands Protection Plan
 - b. Development of a Wetlands Monitoring Plan. For information in addition to the site above, see the Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program at http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/pdf/Wetland_Elements_Final.pdf
 - c. Development of a State or Tribal Comprehensive Regulatory Strategy and Implementation Plan
 - d. Development of a Wetland Restoration and Protection Plan
 - e. Development of a Wetland Outreach and Education Plan

As part of the development of one or more of the plans listed above, individual pieces of the plan may also be completed as long as new knowledge is gained (e.g., a wetland inventory for any of the plans listed; development of outreach materials for any plan; or assessment of wetlands as part of a monitoring or comprehensive plan).

2. **Development of Information that Aids in Protecting Aquatic Resources.** This priority is intended to develop information that will aid a state, tribe, or local government to be better able to protect their aquatic resources due to a lack of existing information. Proposed projects may support one or more categories below:
 - a. **Assessment of Intermittent and/or Ephemeral Streams** not currently monitored by a state or tribe that includes reference site identification, and may include one or more of the following: i) develop a monitoring strategy for stream physical, chemical, and biological, conditions such as flow, macroinvertebrates, nutrients, sediment loading, vegetation, fish, amphibians, and reptiles; ii) identify and/or develop a restoration, mitigation, and protection technique; and/or iii) develop biological assessment criteria.
 - b. **Development of a Stream Restoration and Protection Plan** that includes three or more of the following: i) restoration and protection goals; ii) a tracking system for restoration and protection projects efforts; iii) an evaluation of wetland impacts threats within watersheds; iv) a prioritization for restoration and protection; and/or v) an implementation strategy for the plan.
 - c. **Development of an Outreach and Education Plan for Ephemeral and Intermittent Streams on a Watershed Basis** that includes three or more of the following: i) methods to protect ephemeral and intermittent streams (e.g., include volunteer activities or technical assistance); ii) outreach and education to multiple target audiences (e.g., host trainings, hold meetings, distribute educational materials, etc.); iii) an assessment of the outreach and education activities' effectiveness; and/or iv) an implementation strategy for the plan.
 - d. **Assessment of Vulnerable Wetlands** that includes one or more of the following:
 - i) **An Assessment of the Economic Value of Vulnerable Wetlands** within EPA Region 7 that is directed at the economic benefits for reduction, prevention, or elimination of pollution, which may include dredging or filling

of wetlands. Wetlands of particular concern include: 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. Proposals must result in educational materials and activities to transfer the knowledge of the economic value of these vulnerable wetlands.

- ii) **An Assessment of the Hydrologic Conditions of Vulnerable Wetlands to Determine the Duration and Frequency of Inundation and Soil Saturation.** Any of the wetlands listed above that may not be inundated or saturated for a period of 14 or more consecutive days can be included in such a study.
 - iii) **An Assessment of the Hydrologic Conditions of Vulnerable Wetlands and How They Interact with Groundwater Recharge and or Public Drinking Water Sources.** Any of the wetlands listed above can be included in such a study.
- e. **Development of Innovative Wetland Restoration Demonstrations on a Watershed Basis** that include strategic restoration by addressing three or more of the following issues: water quality improvement; flood impact reduction; surface and groundwater nitrate loading; water quantity issues; and/or wetland recharge of groundwater. Demonstrations must meet the definition for demonstrations described in the RFP, and cannot include wetlands constructed for the purposes of treating wastewater or stormwater.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

EPA expects approximately \$1,000,000 to be available under this announcement to fund approximately 3 to 6 grants or cooperative agreements. EPA anticipates that typical awards for the selected projects will range from \$25,000 to \$300,000, depending on the amount requested, the project topic area, and the overall size and need for the project. 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.

When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. EPA Region 7 anticipates 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, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

It is anticipated that the grants and cooperative agreements awarded under this announcement will have one to three -year project periods. The project period for grants and cooperative agreements under this announcement should be no more than three years. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity to 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 expects to 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, Nebraska to be eligible to apply for funding. In the case of inter-jurisdictional watershed projects, they must be primarily implemented in EPA Region 7. Applicants need not be located within the boundaries of the EPA regional office to be eligible to apply for funding

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>.)

Universities that are agencies of a 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. Universities must include documentation demonstrating that they are chartered as a part of State government in their proposal. Documentation may include such things as: state/tribal constitution, university charter, or case law that has confirmed the university as a state agency.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Non-federal matching funds of at least 25% of the total project cost (total federal share and match) 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 total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$100,000 the applicant 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. Performance Partnership Grants (PPG) enable Tribes to combine funds from more than one environmental program grant into a single grant with a single budget. If the Tribe includes their WPDG competitive grant as a part of an approved PPG, the match requirement may be reduced to 5 percent of the allowable cost of the work plan budget for the first 2 years in which the Tribe receives a PPG; after 2 years, the match may be increased up to 10 percent of the work plan budget (as determined by the Regional Administrator). (See regulations at 40 CFR Part 35.536(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

These are requirements which if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

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, 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.
4. Funds received through this competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program, or fund the purchase of land or conservation easements. Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition.
 5. 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 workplan commitments that would have been included in the Wetland Program Development Grant workplan must be included in the PPG workplan. 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/January/Day-09/t218.htm> (State) and at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001/January/Day-16/g219.htm> (Tribal).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. REQUEST FOR APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at 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.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in **one** of two ways: 1) electronically through the Grants.gov website **or** 2) via hard copy and CD by commercial delivery service, hand delivery, U.S. Postal Service, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII. EPA will not accept faxed submissions. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C below, regardless of mode of submission.

1. Grants.gov Submission

Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically through the Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download a proposal or application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required proposal or application package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency. Pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the application package.

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal package 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 Registered" 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 Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this grant program, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab on the left of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package and instructions for applying under this announcement using Grants.gov (https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html). You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-R7WWPD-07-001**, or the CFDA number, in the space provided. Then complete and submit the application package as indicated. 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 left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Application/proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. Complete instructions on applying through Grants.gov are provided in the attached Appendix.

2. Submission to Regional Contact by Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD)

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package described in Section IV.C below, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by commercial delivery service, courier service, U.S. Postal Service, or hand delivered. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: FY07 WPDG Proposal** (see Section VII for the address). The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). Letters of support, pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

EPA will not accept faxed submissions.

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly.

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

1. A Proposal Narrative that must be typewritten and must include a Workplan and Budget as described below.

NOTE: The Proposal Narrative must be limited to no more than 15 consecutively numbered 8.5x11-inch pages, standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper). While these are the minimum type size requirements, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. Additional pages beyond the 15 page limit will not be considered.

2. and 3. Signed Standard Forms 424 (SF 424) and 424A (SF 424A). SF 424 and SF 424A forms can be found at the EPA website at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and the [grants.gov](https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html) website at https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html.

Proposal Narrative:

Workplan

The Workplan must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

1. Cover Page including
 - a. Project Title,
 - b. Name of Applicant,
 - c. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
 - d. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs), and
 - e. 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 project outcomes and outputs (See Section I) which would include the following elements);
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the Objective of the Program/project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4, Sub-objective 4.3 (See Section I of this announcement);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the workplan activities and your approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I of this announcement);
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcome) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to 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 workplan commitments and outputs. Describe your approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (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).
 - 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 and how these activities fit into developing a comprehensive wetland program. (The applicant should identify which priorities they are addressing.);
 - ii. State, local, and/or other stakeholder participation (partnerships);
 - iii. Opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding. Describe: (a) 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 (b) 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 match or cost share. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority;
 - iv. QA/QC issues if the applicant expects to collect data and information; and
 - v. The 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. Provide a 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 are not included in the page limit).
 - g. Provide a 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. Provide a 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 inform other projects or situations across a State or Tribal nation.
4. A budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in Form 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, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. 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 3 years (no more

than 3 such projects and preferably EPA projects) and (b) how the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements performed within the last 3 years (no more than three such agreements and preferably EPA agreements). For each such agreement covered by (b) above, 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. If the applicant has no prior past performance experience at all, that should be stated in the proposal.

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

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its workplan any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy must be **received** in the appropriate Regional office (See Section 7) by May 3, 2007 at **5:00 p.m. CST (6:00 p.m. EST)** proposals submitted electronically through grants.gov must be received by grants.gov by May 3, 2007 at **5:00 p.m. CST (6:00 p.m. EST)**. Late proposals will not be reviewed.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant 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 can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

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 proposals or portions of

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, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, 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 is addressed.

<p>1) National Priorities (10 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposed project addresses one or more of the National Priorities (Regulation (Enhancing Wetland Protection) and/or Monitoring and Assessment) identified in Section I of the announcement.</p> <p><i>Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly the priority or priorities are addressed in the workplan.</i></p>
<p>2) Regional Priorities (10 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposed project supports one or more of the Regional Priorities identified in Section I of the announcement.</p> <p><i>Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly the priority or priorities are addressed in the workplan.</i></p>
<p>3) Environmental Results (40 points)</p>	<p>A. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results (i.e., will the project result in the protection of wetland resources), describes the anticipated outputs and outcomes, and provides the linkage to EPA’s Strategic Plan? (30 pts)</p> <p>B. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs (examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in Section I of this announcement). (10 pts)</p>
<p>4) Specific Workplan Elements (25 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following:</p> <p>A. A schedule or time-line of activities for the project. (5 pts)</p> <p>B. The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required match in the budget. Describe cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs both federal and non-federal components. (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 the applicant 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</p>

	<p>project or pilot will contribute to inform other projects or situations across a State or Tribal nation. (5 pts)</p>
<p>5) Project Utilizes Leveraging (Funding and Partnerships) (4 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Leveraging Funds (2 pts) 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 how 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. B. Partnerships (2 pts) How and with whom the applicant intends to partner with (esp. within the S/T/LG) and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with outreach activities.
<p>6.) Programmatic Capability/Past Performance (Technical Experience)/ Qualifications and experience of the applicant (11 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years (3 points) 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 your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (e.g., results) under federally or non-federally funded assistance agreements performed within the last 3 years and if progress was not being made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not. (5 points). 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>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 A above 1.5 points, and for item B above 2.5 points).</p>

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the submission deadline 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 evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A 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 scored proposals to submit to the Selection Official. Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the evaluation conducted by the review panel and may also take into account factors such as:

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. Availability of funds

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status via email. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. All **final** workplans 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 assistance agreement;
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 (for cooperative agreements only) 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/region7/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 (www.grants.gov will also contain information on any modifications to the announcement).

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 30 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for 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, Subpart A (“Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies”) and Subpart B (“Environmental Program Grants for Tribes”). These regulations can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epacfr40/chapt-I.info/chi-toc.htm>.

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 Chester Stovall at 913-551-7549.

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 30.44 and 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.
- 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 workplan.
- 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 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.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.

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REPORTING

Wetland Program Development Grants are covered under the following EPA grant regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 (Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 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.

GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

Grants awarded under this announcement may involve Geospatial Information. Geospatial data generally means information that identifies, depicts, or describes the geographic locations, boundaries, or characteristics of inhabitants and natural or constructed features on the Earth. This includes such information derived from, among other sources, socio-demographic analysis,

economic analysis, land information records and land use information processing, statistical analysis, survey and observational methodologies, environmental analysis, critical infrastructure protection, satellites, remote sensing, airborne imagery collection, mapping, engineering, construction, global positioning systems, and surveying technologies and activities. It also includes individual point or site-specific data that are referenced to a location on the Earth and digital aerial imagery of the Earth.

This information may be derived from, among other things, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), remote sensing, mapping, charting, and surveying technologies, or statistical data. For purposes of EPA grants, this refers to geographically based information or data or the tools, applications or hardware that allow one to collect, manage, analyze, store, or distribute data in a geographic manner.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Note to Applicants: EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal / application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via email and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **April 25, 2007** and written responses will be posted on EPA Region 7's website at: http://www.epa.gov/region7/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm. In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications.

Mandy Whitsitt, Watershed Planning and Implementation Branch
EPA Region 7; 901 North 5th Street; Kansas City, KS 66101
Phone: 913-551-7311; EMAIL: whitsitt.mandy@epa.gov

States Covered: **Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.**

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 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 (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 meeting or wetland monitoring workshops). Applicants should account for travel plans and costs in the workplans and the project budget.

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 workplan.

APPENDIX:

How to submit your proposal through Grants.gov:

At <http://www.grants.gov>, you will find step-by-step instructions which will help you to apply under this announcement. Proposals submitted through grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

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 Registered” 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 Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab at the left side of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package (https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html). You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-R7WWPD-07-001**, 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 left side of the page and then go to “Search Opportunities” and use the “Browse by Agency” feature to find EPA opportunities).

Applicants are required to submit three documents to apply electronically through Grants.gov: the proposal narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement; the SF 424; and the 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 # – FY07 – Environmental Quality – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – Region # – FY07 Environmental Quality – back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – Region # – FY07 Environmental Quality – 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), the appropriate region, the fiscal year (*e.g.*, FY07), and the grant category (*e.g.*, Environmental Quality). 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 <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>, and at the same time should notify **Mandy Whitsitt**. If you have any technical difficulties at any time during this process, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>