

Dated: July 29, 2015
Modified: August 6, 2015 and September 17, 2015

U.S. EPA GREAT LAKES NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
2015 Request for Applications

Federal Agency Name: Environmental Protection Agency
Funding Opportunity Title: See Categories Below
Announcement Type: Request for Applications
Funding Opportunity Number: See Categories Below
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.469

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This Request for Applications (RFA) solicits applications from eligible entities for grants and/or cooperative agreements to be awarded pursuant to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan II (<http://greatlakesrestoration.us/actionplan/pdfs/glri-action-plan-2.pdf>). This RFA is EPA's major competitive grant funding opportunity under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative ("GLRI" or "Initiative") for FY 2015 and is one of several funding opportunities available through federal agencies under the GLRI. Applications are requested for projects within the five categories listed below, each of which has a separate Funding Opportunity Number (FON) and is separately posted on www.grants.gov. Applicants must apply for the specific funding opportunity they are interested in. The five categories and associated FONs are:

- Invasive Species Prevention (EPA-R5-GL2015-ISP)
- Invasive Species Control (EPA-R5-GL2015-ISC)
- Urban Watershed Management Implementation (EPA-R5-GL2015-UWM)
- Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation (EPA-R5-GL2015-AWM)
- Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project (EPA-R5-GL2015-MNP)

Funding/Awards: Approximately \$13.9 million may be awarded in total as grants and/or cooperative agreements under this RFA for up to about 40 projects in the five categories listed above, contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations. However, EPA expressly reserves the right to make no awards under a particular category or to adjust the number of awards originally anticipated under a specific category. Proposed projects must be limited to the project duration identified for the respective categories. Awards may be fully or incrementally funded. All incrementally funded awards will be subject to the availability of funding, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. Applicants may submit applications under each funding opportunity number listed above and multiple applications per funding opportunity number, provided that each application is for a different project and is submitted separately under the appropriate FON, and each application cannot address more than one category.

Authorization for GLRI funding is contained in applicable appropriations acts, including the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2015, Public Law 113-235. EPA has authority to award grants and cooperative agreements for planning, research, monitoring, outreach and implementation projects in furtherance of the GLRI and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Nonfederal governmental entities, including state agencies, interstate agencies, federally recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations, local governments, institutions of higher learning (*i.e.*, colleges and universities), and non-profit organizations as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200 are eligible to apply for funding under this RFA. Individuals, foreign organizations and governments, nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying, and “for-profit” organizations are not eligible.

Important Dates:

- Thursday, August 13, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. Central Daylight Time/ 11:00 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time – A webinar will be held to discuss the RFA. See Section IV for further information.
- Monday, September 28, 2015 –Applications must be submitted to EPA through <http://www.grants.gov> by 10:59 p.m. Central Daylight Time / 11:59 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time. See Section IV for further submission information.
- October 2015 (tentative) – EPA will begin notifying finalists.
- December 2015 (tentative) – EPA will begin making official awards.

Other Application Information: For your convenience, an RFA web page has been created at <http://www2.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-2015-request-applications> where you will find information relating to the RFA process as well as a link to frequently asked questions (FAQs). We encourage all applicants to sign up for our mailing list and register with us at <http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/maillist>. Further submittal information is described in Section IV.

**U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
2015 Request for Applications**

CONTENTS

I. Application Information	4
A. Invasive Species Prevention.....	7
B. Invasive Species Control.....	8
C. Urban Watershed Management Implementation.....	10
D. Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation.....	13
E. Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project.....	15
II. Award Information.....	18
III. Eligibility Information	20
IV. Application and Submission Information.....	24
V. Application Review and Selection Process, including Criteria	41
VI. Award Administration	46
VII. Agency Contacts.....	50
VIII. Other Information	50
Appendix I – Budget Sample.....	I-1
Appendix II – Easement Pilot Initiative Guidelines	II-1

U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative 2015 Request for Applications

I. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Background, Authority, and Funded Activities:

The President, Congress, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in conjunction with other federal departments and agencies, have made restoring the Great Lakes a national priority. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (“GLRI” or “Initiative”) builds on the prior efforts of federal, state, and local agencies; Indian tribes; businesses; public interest groups; interested citizens; and others to develop a collaborative and comprehensive approach to restoring the Great Lakes. Information about the Initiative can be found at <http://greatlakesrestoration.us/>.

This RFA is expected to result in the award of grants and/or cooperative agreements, as appropriate (hereafter collectively referred to as “grants”), to help implement the GLRI. Authorization for GLRI funding is contained in applicable appropriations acts, including the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2015, Public Law 113-235.

EPA has authority to award grants for planning, research, monitoring, outreach and implementation projects in furtherance of the GLRI and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA). (The statutory authority to take action to implement the U.S. responsibilities under GLWQA is contained in Section 118(c) of the Clean Water Act. The principal goal of GLWQA is the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem.) Funded activities must advance protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem in support of: (i) the GLRI Action Plan II (see <http://glri.us/actionplan/pdfs/glri-action-plan-2.pdf>) and (ii) EPA’s Strategic Plan.¹ For projects with international aspects, the above statutes are supplemented, as appropriate, by the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 102(2)(F).

This RFA solicits applications from eligible entities for grants to be awarded pursuant to the statutory authorities referenced above and the GLRI Action Plan II. Up to approximately \$13.9 million in total may be awarded under this RFA for about 40 projects in the five subject areas described below contingent on the quality of applications received, funding availability and other applicable considerations. Applications are requested for projects within the five categories specified in this RFA.

The anticipated award amounts and the relative allocations for categories of activities are approximations that are subject to change based upon a number of considerations including, but not limited to, EPA’s determination that different amounts or allocations would better advance

¹ See EPA’s Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014-2018; Goal 2: *Protecting Americas Waters*; Objective 2: *Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems (Protect, restore, and sustain the quality of rivers, lakes, streams, streams, and wetlands on a watershed basis, and sustainably manage and protect coastal and ocean resources and ecosystems)*. The Plan is available at: <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem, funding availability, and other applicable considerations. However, EPA will not consider applications that request EPA funding amounts above the EPA specified maximum individual project amounts identified in Section I for each category. Applications above these amounts will be rejected.

All projects will be evaluated as described in Section V which also highlights factors that may result in more favorable evaluations, including:

- immediacy and timeliness of project implementation (“**shovel ready**”);
- use of a **civilian conservation corps model** for project implementation; and
- use of **experiential learning opportunities** for grades six through twelve.

EPA is also particularly interested in projects that promote environmental justice by helping to address disproportionate environmental impacts on communities (see Section V.A.4) and/or those where the applicant will engage and work with community-based organizations (as defined in this RFA) and other appropriate parties to address the concerns of local communities. (See Section V.A.4.)

Minority Academic Institutions:

Eligible applicants, as defined in Section III, including Minority Academic Institutions (MAIs) as described below, are strongly encouraged to apply for funding under this competition. For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MAIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1061). A list of these schools can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/>;
2. Tribal Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1059(c)). A list of these schools can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-colleges-and-universities/>;
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec.1101a(a)(5)). There is no list of HSIs. HSIs are institutions of higher education that, at the time of application submittal, have an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application for this grant; and
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1059g(a)(2)]. There is no list of AANAPISIs. AANAPISIs are institutions of higher education that, at the time of application submittal, have an enrollment of undergraduate students that is not less than 10 % students who are Asian American or Native American Pacific Islander.

Multiple Applications:

Applicants may submit applications under each funding opportunity number listed above, and multiple applications per funding opportunity number, provided that each application is for a different project and is submitted separately under the appropriate FON. Each application must

be for only one category or FON and each application cannot address more than one category. Categories of eligible activities are described in Section I.

Subawardees and/or Contractors:

If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s), including individual consultants, in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section III regarding "Coalitions" and to the "Contracts and Subawards" provisions at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm (incorporated by reference in Section IV.J).

RFA Terms:

For purposes of this RFA:

1. The term "**climate change**" refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time, including major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, that occur over several decades or longer. Climate changes in the Great Lakes can include increased air and water temperatures, increased storm intensity, and changes in the timing of precipitation. Such changes impact the Great Lakes in many ways, such as increased runoff and erosion, changes in species ranges, and changes in lake stratification and water quality. The long-term results of many GLRI projects may be affected by the degree to which applicants incorporate into their project design an understanding of how the impacts of climate change may influence their project results. Applicants are encouraged to consider their projects' vulnerabilities to climate change impacts and how to address those vulnerabilities. For more information on the human health and environmental effects of climate change, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/>. For more information on climate change adaptation, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/effects/adaptation.html>.

2. The term "**community-based organization**" means a non-governmental organization that has demonstrated effectiveness as a representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and that helps members of that community or segment obtain environmental, educational, or other social services. A community-based organization must be a nonprofit or not for profit corporation in good standing under state or tribal law with authority to enter into binding legal agreements. Such organizations may include, for example, those representing communities with environmental justice concerns. (Environmental justice concerns generally relate to issues that have resulted in some communities being more adversely, disproportionately, and/or historically impacted by environmental issues and problems than other communities because of location, poverty, income levels, etc.) The community-based organization need not be tax-exempt under the Internal Revenue Code but may use documentation of tax-exempt status to demonstrate that it is a nonprofit. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying are not eligible to receive grants or subgrants under this RFA. (See Section V.A.4.)

3. The term “**output**” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and 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 over the term of the grant funding period. As an example, an output for a *Phragmites* removal project would be the removal of *Phragmites* from a specific number of acres.

4. The term “**outcome**” means the result, effect or consequence that will be achieved by carrying out an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within a grant funding period. As an example, an outcome for a *Phragmites* removal project would be a diversified, more natural ecosystem that sustains a wide variety of native species.

Categories of Funding Opportunities:

Applications are requested for the categories of activities described below, each of which has a different FON. There are five separate FONs for which applicants can apply, and each one is separately posted on Grants.gov. Applicants must apply under the FON they are interested in, and each application must address only one category. If an application addresses more than one category it will be rejected. However, applicants may submit applications under each funding opportunity number described above, and multiple applications per funding opportunity number provided that each application is for a different project and is submitted separately under the appropriate FON.

Category I.A. - Invasive Species Prevention

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-GL2015-ISP

Funding Opportunity Title: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - 2015 Request for Applications – Invasive Species Prevention

Background: The Great Lakes remain vulnerable to the introduction of new invasive species. A number of pathways, such as ballast water from commercial shipping, are being addressed through regional and national programs. However, innovative approaches are still needed to reduce the risk from a variety of pathways including, but not limited to, movement through canals and waterways; accidental contamination of nursery, water garden, and live bait products; uninformed use of invasive species in landscaping and water gardens; and internet sales of invasive species.

Request for Applications: EPA expects to provide approximately \$2.5 million for approximately 5 to 8 projects in amounts up to a maximum of \$500,000 that block pathways of invasive species introductions into the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Projects submitted in this category must implement activities that actively reduce the risk of introduction of invasive species, as opposed to projects that perform basic research or “proof of concept” testing of prevention methodologies/technologies.

Information to Include: Applicants should include the following information in their application: the relevant pathway(s) of introduction that the project addresses; the prevention activities to be implemented; the estimated impact of those prevention activities on the pathway(s); and the methods that will be used to determine the actual impact on the pathway(s). Note also the provisions of Section IV.C.2.b.i regarding a statement of whether any permits or approvals will be required.

Potential for Higher Score: This category is intended to support innovative approaches to preventing introductions of invasive species and to support the establishment of new prevention programs in the Great Lakes basin. During the evaluation process described in Section V for projects in this category, any of the following elements in a proposal may be more favorably considered under the evaluation criteria for “Project Summary and Approach”:

- The implementation of innovative prevention activities that have not previously received GLRI funding.
- The implementation of prevention activities in locations that have not been subjected to GLRI-funded invasive species prevention projects.

Eligibility: Projects must implement activities that actively reduce the risk of introduction of invasive species. Eligible projects and activities include:

- Demonstration of innovative barriers on canals and waterways that prevent new introductions of invasive species while allowing the movement of water and native species.
- Development and use of practices that prevent invasive species contamination of landscaping, water garden, and live bait products.
- Development and use of tools that inform consumers in the Great Lakes states of alternatives to the use of invasive species in landscaping and water gardens.
- Disposal and “take back” programs that prevent the release of pets, aquarium species, and/or live bait.
- Implementation of other prevention methodologies/technologies which have already passed the “proof of concept” stage of testing.

Ineligible projects and activities, include:

- Projects which consist solely of outreach to recreational users of the Great Lakes and their watersheds. (Note: funding can support outreach as a component of a project that implements eligible prevention activities.)
- Projects related to ballast water management or technology development. Under this grant offering, EPA is not requesting and will not consider applications principally pertaining to ballast water management or technology development. Any questions regarding such projects should be directed to the DOT/MARAD and the Great Ships Initiative (see <http://www.greatshipsinitiative.org/>).
- Projects principally pertaining to Bighead (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), Silver (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*), Black (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*), and/or Grass (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) Asian Carp species. Under this grant offering, EPA is not requesting and will not consider applications principally pertaining to these four species.

Any questions regarding projects for these species should be directed to Michael Russ (GLRI-RFA@epa.gov) who can help identify the appropriate federal contact person.

- Basic research projects which characterize pathway risks but do not include the active implementation of prevention activities.
- Use of methodologies/technologies which have not passed the “proof of concept” stage of testing.
- Projects at sites having no or low likelihood of benefitting the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Outputs from the projects in this category should include one or more of the following and must link to the GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress or goals and objectives:

- Pathways through which aquatic invasive species can be introduced to the Great lakes ecosystem are blocked.
- Technology and methods that prevent the introduction of invasive species.

Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve the following outcome:

- New introductions of invasive species are prevented.

Category I.B. – Invasive Species Control

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-GL2015-ISC

Funding Opportunity Title: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - 2015 Request for Applications – Invasive Species Control

Background: Progress toward restoring the Great Lakes has been significantly undermined by the effects of non-native invasive species. However, many invasive species can be controlled to reduce their impacts on the Great Lakes ecosystem. There is an ongoing need for enhancing the capacity for managing invasive species in the Great. Funding for on-the-ground and in-the-water control projects can greatly assist ecological restoration and help create long-term stewardship programs. Applicants are responsible for the maintenance of these significantly improved project sites after the initial funding period has ended.

Request for Applications: EPA expects to provide approximately \$5,200,000 for approximately 8 to 12 projects in amounts up to a maximum of \$650,000 that control invasive species and initiate long-term stewardship of project sites.

Projects submitted in this category must implement on-the-ground and/or in-the-water invasive species control actions and result in acres of invasive species controlled, rather than perform basic research or “proof of concept” testing of control methodologies/technologies. Up to 20% of the federal share of the project budget may be used to retreat areas that were previously treated by GLRI-funded projects.

Information to Include: Applicants should include the following information in their application: identification of the project site; the ecological significance of the project site; the

control activities to be implemented; the total acres on which control activities will occur; the expected short and long-term ecological benefits of the proposed control effort; the methods used to assess the effectiveness of control activities; and the commitments in place to maintain the project site after the funding period has ended. Applicants should provide a map that delineates the overall project site and identifies the specific areas where control work will be implemented. Applications that include the retreatment of acres that were previously treated using GLRI funding should clearly identify the percent of the budget that will be used for retreatment. Projects that control invasive strains of Phragmites should consider the control and management information provided by the Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative (<http://greatlakesphragmites.net/>). Note also the provisions of Section IV.C.2.b.i regarding a statement of whether any permits or approvals will be required.

Potential for Higher Score: The GLRI Action Plan II established the goal of creating species-specific “collaboratives” that will refine control and management techniques for an invasive species and serve as a resource center for land owners, government agencies, researchers, and other stakeholders. During the evaluation process described in Section V for projects addressing this category, any of the following elements in a proposal may be more favorably considered under the evaluation criteria for “Project Summary and Approach”:

- The use of an adaptive management approach that tests variations of an established treatment technique and quantifies performance.
- The use of an adaptive management approach that tests a single established treatment technique in different project sites and determines causal factors for the resulting ecosystem response.
- The development of a website which compiles scientific information on the management of an invasive species.
- The development of a multi-organization collaboration which will develop best management practices for an invasive species.

Eligibility: Projects submitted in this category must implement on-the-ground and/or in-the-water invasive species control actions and result in acres of invasive species controlled. Eligible projects and activities include:

- Control of aquatic, coastal, and terrestrial invasive species at specific project sites.
- The use of mobile teams to detect small populations of established species and implement control activities over a large geographic area. Note: if the work is expected to mostly involve the control of established species, it should be submitted to this category rather than the “Invasive Species Prevention” category. It is acceptable for these mobile teams to detect and respond to previously-unestablished species, if such species are encountered during project implementation.
- The use of barriers that protect tributaries from established invasive species. Note: if the work is expected to mostly prevent new introductions of invasive species to the Great Lakes, it should be submitted to the “Invasive Species Prevention” category.
- Projects that use less than or equal to 20% of the federal share of the budget to repeat control activities on acres that have previously received GLRI-funded treatments.

Ineligible projects and activities include:

- Projects that use more than 20% of the federal share of the budget to repeat control activities on acres that have previously received GLRI-funded treatments.
- Projects related to ballast water management or technology development. Under this grant offering, EPA is not requesting and will not consider applications principally pertaining to ballast water management or technology development. Any questions regarding such projects should be directed to the DOT/MARAD and the Great Ships Initiative (see <http://www.greatshipsinitiative.org/>).
- Projects principally pertaining to Bighead (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), Silver (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*), Black (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*), and/or Grass (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) Asian Carp species. Under this grant offering, EPA is not requesting and will not consider applications principally pertaining to these four species. Any questions regarding projects for these species should be directed to Michael Russ (GLRI-RFA@epa.gov) who can help identify the appropriate federal contact person.
- Basic research projects that study or develop control methodologies/technologies but which do not include the active implementation of on-the-ground or in-the-water control activities.
- Use of methodologies/technologies which have not passed the “proof of concept” stage of testing.
- Projects at sites that are not likely to benefit the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Outputs from the projects in this category should include the following and must link to the GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress or goals and objectives:

- Acres of invasive species are controlled in aquatic or terrestrial habitat.
- Miles of tributaries that are protected by barriers from established invasive species.

Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve the following outcome:

- Established invasive species are controlled.

Category I.C. Urban Watershed Management Implementation

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-GL2015-UWM

Funding Opportunity Title: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - 2015 Request for Applications – Urban Watershed Management Implementation

Background: Nearshore water quality has increasingly become degraded, as evidenced by excessive nutrients; harmful algal blooms; mats of *Cladophora* on beaches; avian botulism; and beach closings. Causes of these problems include excessive nutrient loadings from both point and nonpoint sources, bacteria and other pathogens, development and shoreline hardening, agricultural practices, failing septic systems, improper grey-water discharge, increased frequency and intensity of storm events due to climate change, and invasive species. Nonpoint sources are now the primary contributors of many pollutants to the Great Lakes and their tributaries. Implementation of best management practices addressing those sources can have multiple benefits, including simultaneous reductions in runoff of soils, nutrients, pesticides, and other nonpoint source pollutants.

Request for Applications: EPA expects to provide approximately \$2,700,000 for approximately 6 to 10 projects to reduce nonpoint source pollution from urban areas to the Great Lakes. The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this category is \$500,000. For the purposes of this announcement, an eligible urban watershed is defined as including urban and downtown areas, city neighborhoods, suburban municipalities, and exurban communities and unincorporated areas characterized by encroaching urban sprawl where the urban land use has a documented impact on water quality. Proposed project locations must be located within the same HUC12 subwatershed where the documented water quality problem occurs.

Projects submitted in this category must address an urban nonpoint source problem. Proposals are limited to projects implementing an urban component(s) of existing watershed-based plans that are consistent with the components outlined in EPA's Nine Elements Guidance. Such plans are designed to address documented nonpoint source-related water quality problems and to help prevent future nonpoint source water quality-related problems. The plans are based upon sound science and evaluation techniques; have measurable outcomes; are developed with stakeholder/public involvement; and leverage additional resources. See the following links for approved Nine-Element Watershed Management Plans or information about the plans:

- Illinois: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/watershed/reports/biannual-319/> (See the table starting on page 11 of the March 2015 report.)
- Indiana: <http://www.in.gov/idem/nps/3180.htm>
- Michigan: http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3682_3714---,00.html (Follow the NPS Approved and Pending Watershed Plans link.)
- Minnesota: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/surface-water/watershed-approach/watershed-management-plans.html> and <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/watersheds/watershed-overview-map.html>
- New York: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/94150.html> and <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/73971.html>
- Ohio: http://www.epa.ohio.gov/Portals/35/nps/319docs/FFY14_Annual_Report.pdf (navigate to page 86)
- Pennsylvania: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=554271&mode=2>
- Wisconsin: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/nonpoint/9keyelementplans.html>

Information to Include: Applicants should include in their application, an estimate of the number of gallons of runoff that will be captured/retained in a typical year using EPA's National Stormwater Calculator and provide the specific data used to calculate the gallons of runoff (e.g. Location, Soil Type, Soil Drainage, Topography, Precipitation, Evaporation, Climate Change, Land Cover, impervious/pervious cover). Applicants should also plan to estimate the impact of the implementation of the project through a Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Load (STEPL), which employs algorithms to calculate the load reductions that would result from implementation of various urban best management practices, as part of their final report.

Applicants should provide a map that delineates the project boundaries within the selected watershed and identifies the urban areas where work will be implemented. Proposals should demonstrate that consideration has been given to the effects that the increased frequency and intensity of storm events due to climate change may have on the long-term success of the proposed project. Note also the provisions of Section IV.C.2.b.i regarding a statement of whether any permits or approvals will be required.

Potential for Higher Score: During the evaluation process described in Section V for projects addressing this category, proposals that include the following elements may be more favorably considered under the evaluation criteria for “Project Summary and Approach”:

- Water quality impairments have been identified and the causes for those impairments have been clearly established as being from an urban source;
- Solutions to addressing the impairments have been identified;
- Broadly-supported implementation activities have been designed; and
- The project demonstrates that significant measurable improvements in water quality will be achieved.

Eligibility: Projects must address an urban nonpoint source problem. To be eligible in this category, applications must demonstrate that the project will:

- Accelerate watershed restoration in one or more watersheds of the Great Lakes basin;
- Implement urban best management practices and management measures contained in state- approved Nine-Element Watershed Management Plans, TMDL implementation plans, or in other watershed management plans that are consistent with the components outlined in Section 2.6 of EPA’s Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters (http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/handbook_index.cfm);
- Identify specific components of such a plan that would be implemented within the project period; and
- Estimate the expected environmental result for management measures installed and/or contracted for the project period.

Ineligible projects and activities include:

- A project that includes, or is contingent on, development of a watershed management plan or significant portions of that plan.
- Monitoring activities; GLRI-funded watershed projects will be incorporated into the applicable state's ongoing nonpoint source monitoring efforts.

Outputs from the projects in this category should include one or more of the following and must link to the GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress or goals and objectives:

- Reduction in nutrient and/or sediment inputs (source reduction and/or loadings) to Great Lakes tributaries and nearshore waters.
- Reduction in concentrations of soluble reactive phosphorus in major Great Lakes tributaries during critical spring and summer storm events.
- Projected volume of untreated urban runoff captured or treated.
- Delisting of Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impairments in the Great Lakes.
- Increase in the Urban Management Measures and Best Management Practices installed in the Great Lakes Basin.

Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Loadings of sediments, nutrients, and pollutants into Great Lakes Tributaries are reduced.
- Nearshore Great Lakes aquatic resources are protected/enhanced/restored.
- Trophic status and/or biotic integrity in the Great Lakes or their tributaries are improved.

Category I.D. Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-GL2015-AWM

Funding Opportunity Title: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - 2015 Request for Applications – Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation

Background: Nearshore water quality has become degraded, as evidenced by excessive nutrients; harmful algal blooms; mats of *Cladophora* on beaches; avian botulism; and beach closings. Causes of these problems include excessive nutrient loadings from both point and nonpoint sources, bacteria and other pathogens, development and shoreline hardening, agricultural practices, failing septic systems, improper grey-water discharge, increased frequency and intensity of storm events due to climate change, and invasive species. Nonpoint sources are now the primary contributors of nutrients and sediments to the Great Lakes and their tributaries. Implementation of best management practices addressing those sources can have multiple benefits, including decreasing surface runoff with simultaneous reductions in runoff of soils, nutrients, pesticides, and other nonpoint source pollutants.

Request for Applications: EPA expects to provide approximately \$3,000,000 for approximately 6 to 8 projects to reduce nonpoint source pollution to the Great Lakes. The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this category is \$500,000.

Projects submitted in this category must be projects implementing agricultural best management practices or management measures from watershed-based plans that are consistent with the components outlined in EPA's Nine Elements Guidance. Such plans are designed to address documented nonpoint source-related water quality problems and to help prevent future agricultural nonpoint source water quality-related problems. The plans are based upon sound science and evaluation techniques; have measurable outcomes; are developed with stakeholder/public involvement; and leverage additional resources. See the following links for approved Nine-Element Watershed Management Plans or information about the plans:

- Illinois: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/watershed/reports/biannual-319/> (See the table starting on page 11 of the March 2015 report.)
- Indiana: <http://www.in.gov/idem/nps/3180.htm>
- Michigan: http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3682_3714---,00.html
(Follow the NPS Approved and Pending Watershed Plans link.)
- Minnesota: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/surface->

[water/watershed-approach/watershed-management-plans.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/watersheds/watershed-overview-map.html) and <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/watersheds/watershed-overview-map.html>

- New York: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/94150.html> and <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/73971.html>
- Ohio: http://www.epa.ohio.gov/Portals/35/nps/319docs/FFY14_Annual_Report.pdf (navigate to page 86)
- Pennsylvania: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=554271&mode=2>
- Wisconsin: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/nonpoint/9keyelementplans.html>

Information to include: Applicants should provide a map that delineates the project boundaries within the selected watershed and identifies the critical agricultural areas where work will be implemented. Proposals should demonstrate that consideration has been given to the effects that the increased frequency and intensity of storm events due to climate change may have on the long-term success of the proposed project. Note also the provisions of Section IV.C.2.b.i regarding a statement of whether any permits or approvals will be required. Applicants should plan to estimate the impact of the implementation of the project through a Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Load (STEPL), which employs algorithms to calculate the load reductions that would result from implementation of various agricultural best management practices.

Potential for higher score: During the evaluation process described in Section V for projects addressing this category, proposals that include the following elements may be more favorably considered under the evaluation criteria for “Project Summary and Approach”:

- Water quality impairments have been identified and the causes for those impairments have been clearly established as being from an agricultural source;
- Solutions to addressing the impairments have been identified;
- Broadly-supported implementation activities have been designed; and
- The project demonstrates that significant measurable improvements in water quality will be achieved.

Eligibility: Projects must address an agricultural nonpoint source problem. To be eligible in this category, applications must demonstrate that the project will:

- Accelerate watershed restoration in one or more watersheds of the Great Lakes basin;
- Implement agricultural best management practices and management measures contained in state- approved Nine-Element Watershed Management Plans, TMDL implementation plans, or in other watershed management plans that are consistent with the components outlined in Section 2.6 of EPA’s Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters (http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/handbook_index.cfm);
- Identify specific components of such a plan that would be implemented within the project period; and
- Estimate the expected environmental results for management measures installed and/or contracted for the project period.

Ineligible projects and activities. See Section III for projects and activities ineligible under the RFA. The following projects and activities are ineligible under this category:

- A project that includes, or is contingent on, development of a watershed management plan or significant portions of that plan.
- Monitoring activities; GLRI-funded watershed projects will be incorporated into the applicable state's ongoing nonpoint source monitoring efforts.

Outputs from the projects in this category should include one or more of the following and must link to the GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress or goals and objectives:

- Reduced rates of soil erosion and reduced loadings of sediments, nutrients, and pollutants into Great Lakes tributaries.
- Reduction in concentrations of soluble reactive phosphorus in major Great Lakes tributaries during critical spring and summer storm events.
- Reduction in volume of runoff.
- Delisting of Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impairments in the Great Lakes.
- Increase in the percentage of agricultural lands in the Great Lakes ecosystem comprehensively managed to reduce nutrient export utilizing a CORE 4 approach promoting soil health.
- Increase in the Management Measures and Best Management Practices installed in the Great Lakes basin.

Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Soil erosion and the loading of sediments, nutrients, and pollutants into Great Lakes Tributaries are reduced.
- Nearshore Great Lakes aquatic resources are protected/enhanced/restored.
- Trophic status and/or biotic integrity in the Great Lakes or their tributaries are improved.

Category I.E. Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-GL2015-MNP

Funding Opportunity Title: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - 2015 Request for Applications – Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project

Background: The western basin of Lake Erie continues to show signs of severe stress from nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms. The primary source of these nutrients is the Maumee River watershed. This pilot initiative seeks to increase the longevity and cost-effectiveness of nutrient discharge reduction measures in the Maumee River watershed by investing in permanent land conservation easements² and other measures that support long-term nutrient reduction.

² “Easement” means a conservation easement on qualified land that is designed to conserving water quality or quantity and prohibits the sale of mineral rights of the qualified land

Healthy riparian areas in the Maumee River watershed benefit water quality in many ways. They capture nutrients and other pollutants that otherwise may flow into area waterways and Lake Erie; reduce flow rates by slowing down and intercepting rainfall runoff; trap sediments; provide stream bank stability; and maintain cooler stream temperatures. Many riparian areas within the Maumee River watershed have been dramatically altered, drained, diked and channelized to support crop production, resulting in a loss of the water quality benefits that healthy riparian areas provide.

Permanently restoring riparian areas and permanently retiring marginal cropland will lead to sustainable reductions in nutrient loadings to the Maumee River and Lake Erie. Just as state and federal programs provide financial assistance for the preservation of farmland and parklands, this pilot initiative is intended to provide funding and technical assistance which will permanently restore marginal cropland and riparian areas to a natural state.

Request for Applications: EPA expects to provide approximately \$1,000,000 for up to 2 projects in this category. The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this category is \$500,000. Federal funding is limited to the purchase of the easement; applicant's costs (legal review, title work, property surveys, etc) to perfect permanent easements for water quality are considered in-kind contributions.

This pilot initiative is intended to generate applications for easement-based projects that combine the capabilities and tools of governmental entities and nongovernmental organizations working in concert as partners. Specifically, EPA seeks applications that will provide for the establishment of permanent conservation easements on riparian land or marginal cropland within the following subwatersheds of the Maumee River watershed: 1) Upper Maumee River basin (8 Digit HUC: 04100005); 2) St. Joseph River Watershed (8-digit HUC: 04100003); and 3) St. Mary's River Watershed (8-digit HUC: 04100004). These subwatersheds were identified based on the potential to generate phosphorus loadings under the existing management and were selected as the highest priority for this funding initiative. Future similar funding opportunities could be expanded to include other subwatersheds.

Within these subwatersheds, this initiative intends to target easement acquisition and land protection on, in order of priority, cropland that is: 1) active (*i.e.*, farmed 3 of the last 5 years), 2) of marginal value along drainage ditches, and 3) located in areas where the Soil Hydrologic Group is either "C" or "D". Pursuant to this initiative, established easements must be held in perpetuity by a Qualified Easement Holder³ such as a land conservancy organization, local governments and/or local soil and water conservation districts.

EPA, in cooperation with key federal agencies including U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE),

³ "Qualified Easement Holder" means a holder that is: a state agency or municipality; or an organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as an organization described by Section 501(c)(3) of that code and that is organized for the purpose of preserving agriculture, open space, or natural resources and has the ability to hold the easement in perpetuity. Nonprofit organizations must be accredited by the Land Trust Alliance to serve as a Qualified Easement Holder.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS), has identified targeted areas that are eligible for project support under this RFA. The following resources may be helpful in developing your proposals:

- Great Lakes Observing System - Maumee River Nutrient Tracker (http://www.limno.com/testing/Maumee_River_Nutrient_Tracker.html)
- USGS SPARROW Model (<http://wim.usgs.gov/sparrowMRB3/sparrowMRB3mapper.html#>)
- NRCS – Assessment of Effects of Conservation Practices on Cultivated Cropland in the Great Lakes Region (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/nra/ceap/pub/?cid=stelprdb1045403>)
- USACE Great Lakes Tributary Model (<http://projects.glc.org/tributary/helpdesk.pdf>)

Information to Include: Applicants may wish to describe phased components of projects, including specific funding associated with each phase. For effective review, easement applications from applicants should provide:

- List of any partners with contact information
- Identification of the Qualified Easement Holder and mechanism for the Qualified Easement Holder gaining possession of the property (if not the applicant). Transfer of the easement to a Qualified Easement Holder is expected to occur within the project period. Sale of the easement to the Qualified Easement holder after the project period is prohibited, and sale of the easement during the project period is covered under the program income requirements outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.307.
- Description of the intended action(s) that clearly includes:
 - Scope of work [with specific statement of goal/objective(s)] to convert the existing land use to trees and shrubs and native grasses.
 - Description of the property involved and identity of landowner(s)⁴ if available
 - Procedural approach, including expected easement provisions
 - Nature and extent of leveraged support applied by partners (cash and in-kind) to cover non-direct easement cost payment such as surveying, title search, etc.
- Statement of the water quality benefits, including estimated quantifiable pollutant load reductions, Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index scores, etc.) and any demonstration values of the project.
- Statement of stewardship and pre- and post-project monitoring.

Potential for Higher Score: During the evaluation process described in Section V for projects addressing this category, proposals that include the following elements may be more favorably considered under the evaluation criteria for “Project Summary and Approach”:

- Projects that can show substantial progress by June 2016 and that can be completed as early in the funding period as possible;
- Partnerships and collaboration among multiple governmental and nongovernmental entities;
- Projects that demonstrate wildlife habitat benefits.

⁴ “Landowner” means the entity or person(s) indicating the intent to sell easement rights.

Eligibility: Projects providing conservation easements in the following subwatersheds of the Maumee River are eligible: 1) Upper Maumee River basin (8 Digit HUC: 04100005); 2) St. Joseph River Watershed (8-digit HUC: 04100003); and 3) St. Mary's River Watershed (8-digit HUC: 04100004). Easements must also protect land in perpetuity. Projects are also expected to follow the conservation easement guidelines in Appendix II.

Ineligible projects and activities include:

- Work outside of the designated subwatersheds of the Upper Maumee River basin, defined as: (1) Upper Maumee River basin (8 Digit HUC: 04100005); (2) St. Joseph River Watershed (8-digit HUC: 04100003); and (3) St. Mary's River Watershed (8-digit HUC: 04100004);
- Purchasing property in fee simple (outright purchase);
- Placing property under a trust or preserve;
- Easements for a set period of time rather than permanent protection;
- Monitoring water quality and/or land use; and
- Database development.

Outputs from the projects in this category should include one or more of the following and must link to the GLRI Action Plan II Measures of Progress or goals and objectives:

- Demonstrable, quantifiable nutrient reductions that will be counted toward meeting GLRI targets and Domestic Action Plan II commitments pursuant to Annex 4 of the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Nearshore Lake Erie aquatic habitats are protected/enhanced/restored.
- Trophic status and/or biotic integrity of streams within the Maumee River watershed or the western basin of Lake Erie are improved.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Amounts, Targets, and Number of Projects: Approximately \$13.9 million in EPA funding is expected to be awarded under this RFA for up to about 40 projects in the five categories/FONs described in Section I.⁵ The number of projects EPA will fund as a result of this RFA will be based on the quality of applications received, the availability of funding, and other applicable considerations. The anticipated total number and total amount of awards to be provided are estimates only (except as noted below), and are being provided solely for application preparation purposes. **Please note, however, that the specified maximum amount in Section I that will be awarded for an individual project in any category establishes a per-project limit for the EPA funding; applications seeking funding in excess of that amount will be rejected. In addition, an application for a multi-phase project will be treated as a request for the full amount for all phases. If that combined amount exceeds the specified maximum, the application will be rejected.**

⁵ If an applicant submits multiple proposals that are selected for award, one award may cover more than one proposed project if appropriate.

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded under each of the categories in Section I may differ from what is estimated for many reasons, including the number of meritorious applications received and funding availability. In addition, EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amount of awards under each category, or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the categories.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under any or all of the categories identified in this RFA or make fewer awards than anticipated.

Anticipated Project Start and End Dates: This Request for Applications instructs applicants to submit certifications and other documentation required for a full and complete funding package so that their projects could, if selected, proceed expeditiously. Applications for the respective categories must specify start and end dates for projects with the following durations:

- Invasive Species Prevention: 24 months
- Invasive Species Control: 24 months
- Urban Watershed Management Implementation: 36 months
- Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation: 36 months
- Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project: 24 months

Additional Awards: EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this RFA, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after (or at the time) original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

Award Funding: Awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, program priorities, and other applicable considerations.

Funding Type: Successful applicants will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient’s performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 and 2 C.F.R. § 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

Future Funding: Selection or award of funding under this RFA is not a guarantee of future funding.

Partial Funding: In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, 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 therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Applicant Eligibility (CFDA 66.469): Entities eligible to apply for grants include non-federal governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, and institutions. This includes state agencies; any agency or instrumentality of local government; interstate agencies; federally-recognized tribes and tribal organizations; colleges and universities; non-profit organizations; and other public or non-profit private agencies, institutions, and organizations. Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, located at 2 C.F.R. § 200.70, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible applicants. "For profit" organizations and individuals are not eligible applicants. Applicants must meet all eligibility criteria at the time of their submission.

Eligible Minority Academic Institutions, as described in Section I, are strongly encouraged to apply for funding under this competition.

Coalitions: Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subawardees of the recipient. Subawards and subgrants must be consistent with the definitions of those terms in 2 C.F.R. § 200.92. The recipient must administer the grant, will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 C.F.R. § 200.331(d), subrecipients or subgrantees are accountable to the recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for-profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards. For-profit organizations are eligible to receive contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319, as applicable. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. (Please see 2 C.F.R. § 1500.9, formerly at 40 C.F.R. § 30.27(b) or 31.36(j), as applicable.) For additional information, please review the following Federal Register: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-7867.pdf>.

Eligible Activities: Unless specifically excluded under this RFA, assistance is available to eligible applicants for planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation of the GLRI and GLWQA. Proposed projects must also either: (i) protect, enhance, and/or restore the Great Lakes, including projects impacting connecting waterways such as Lake St. Clair and the St. Lawrence River (at or upstream from the point at which the St. Lawrence River becomes the international boundary between Canada and the United States); or (ii) protect Great Lakes ecosystem health, including human health. Information about the GLRI can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/glri>. Applications for other activities will be rejected.

Ineligible Activities: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible activities, including those listed below and in Section I for a specific category, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible. The following are ineligible activities:

- Traditional water or wastewater infrastructure projects that are eligible for funding from: 1) a state water pollution control revolving fund established under title VI of the Clean Water Act; or 2) a state drinking water revolving loan fund established under Section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. Section 300j-12). However, the following types of projects are NOT excluded as ineligible activities by this clause: (i) “green infrastructure”⁶ projects that improve habitat and other ecosystem functions in the Great Lakes or (ii) environmentally innovative solutions⁷ to address difficult water quality protection challenges.
- Any activities/projects that are specifically required by a draft or final NPDES permit or by a consent decree.
- Basic research, meaning research for the purpose of expanding knowledge or general understanding. This differs from “applied” research for the purpose of implementing solutions for actual problems. If a practical use of the research in question is less than 10 years away, then that research will be deemed to be applied research; however, if a practical use of the research in question is reasonably expected to be 10 or more years away, then that research will be deemed to be basic research.
- Land acquisition other than acquisition of easements.
- Projects the principal purpose of which is general operating support.
- Projects, including management actions necessary for removing beneficial use impairments at Areas of Concern, that EPA determines will be funded by EPA through a non-competitive state, tribal, or local government grant.
- Projects principally pertaining to Bighead, Silver, Black, and/or Grass Asian Carp species. (Applications principally pertaining to other species of Asian carp may be eligible.)
- Projects related to ballast water technology development.

⁶ Green Infrastructure includes a wide array of practices at multiple scales that manage and treat stormwater and that maintain and restore natural hydrology by infiltrating, evapotranspiring and capturing and using stormwater. On a regional scale, green infrastructure is the preservation and restoration of natural landscape features, such as forests, floodplains and wetlands, coupled with policies such as infill and redevelopment that reduce overall imperviousness in a watershed. On the local scale, green infrastructure consists of site- and neighborhood-specific practices, such as bioretention, trees, green roofs, porous pavements and cisterns.

⁷ Environmentally innovative solutions are solutions incorporating new and/or innovative approaches to restoring or protecting water resources in a sustainable way. Applicants should describe as part of application materials how a proposed project element is environmentally innovative.

- Projects that are a repetition of Invasive Species Control activities previously-funded under GLRI where greater than 20% of the federal share of the budget is used for retreatment of previously-funded acreage.
- A project that includes, or is contingent on, development of a watershed management plan or significant portions of that plan.
- Projects principally pertaining to contaminated sediment remediation.

In addition, the respective categories in Section I of the RFA describe certain projects and activities that are ineligible for those categories (but could be eligible elsewhere).

Match or Cost-Share: There is no cost-sharing or matching requirement as a condition of eligibility under this RFA. However, see Section IV.C.2.b.iii and Section V for additional information regarding applicants who propose voluntary matches and additional funds/resources to support the project.

Although cost-sharing/matching is not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, pursuant to Section V of this RFA EPA will consider voluntary cost-sharing/matching and other leveraging as a part of the criterion for collaboration and plans.

Leveraging generally refers to situations where an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal (See Section IV of the RFA). A letter of support should also be included in the application package to document any proposed leveraging. Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted below.

Voluntary cost share is a form of leveraging. Voluntary cost sharing refers to situations where an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share must include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations (2 C.F.R. § 200.306).
- A voluntary cost share must be eligible and allowable.
- The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant.
- The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 C.F.R. § 200 as applicable.

Other leveraged funding/resources that are not identified as a voluntary cost share should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant workplan should include a statement indicating that the applicant expects to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. This form of leveraging may be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third party sources. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 C.F.R. § 200 as applicable.

Threshold Eligibility Criteria: These are requirements that if not met by the applicant by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications for eligible activities from eligible entities (see above definitions of **applicant eligibility**, **eligible activities**, and **ineligible activities**) that meet these criteria by the time of application submission will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this RFA. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified by e-mail within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this RFA or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is stated for the Narrative Proposal in Section IV, pages in excess of the limitation will not be reviewed.

b. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their proposal/application is timely submitted.

c. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Michael Russ (312-886-4013 / GLRI-RFA@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
2. Applicants may submit applications under each funding opportunity number described in Section I, and multiple applications per funding opportunity number provided that each application is for a different project and is submitted separately under the appropriate FON.

3. Each application must address one, and only one, category as described in Section I.
4. Applications must meet any additional eligibility requirements described in Section I that apply to the respective category. This includes information in the Eligibility section of each category description in Section I.
5. Applications seeking funding in excess of the specified maximum amount of federal funds that may be requested for an individual project in any category will be rejected. In addition, an application for a multi-phase project will be treated as a request for the full amount for all phases. If that combined amount exceeds the specified maximum, the application will be rejected.
6. Section II specifies maximum project period durations for each category that may be specified in applications. If the respective duration is exceeded, the application will be rejected.

Applicants should contact the applicable individuals listed in Section VII with any questions about the threshold eligibility requirements that may apply to a particular category.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures:

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under the applicable FON based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) *at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement* to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:

OGD Waivers

c/o Barbara Perkins

USEPA Headquarters

William Jefferson Clinton Building

1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.

Mail Code: 3903R

Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers

c/o Barbara Perkins
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51267
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

Funding Opportunity Number (FON)

Organization Name and DUNS

Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)

Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through www.Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2015, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2015). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2015 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2016, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2016.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

B. Submission Instructions:

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. 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. **Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more.** Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: **To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version.** For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number⁸ or CFDA 66.469 in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than 10:59 p.m. Central Daylight Time / 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Monday, September 28, 2015.

⁸ Use the Funding Opportunity for the category for which you wish to apply:

- Invasive Species Prevention (EPA-R5-GL2015-ISP)
- Invasive Species Control (EPA-R5-GL2015-ISC)
- Urban Watershed Management Implementation (EPA-R5-GL2015-UWM)
- Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation (EPA-R5-GL2015-AWM)
- Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project (EPA-R5-GL2015-MNP)

Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit. Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. **All documents must be submitted as PDF files.** For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Grants.gov Lobbying Form (6600-06)
5. EPA Key Contacts Form (5700-54)
6. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report
7. Narrative Proposal-Project Narrative Attachment Form
8. Other Attachments Form - Resumes or *curriculum vitae* of Principal Investigators and Critical Staff
9. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
10. Other Attachments Form - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
11. Other Attachments Form - Letters of support
12. Other Attachments Form - Meetings/Conferences/Workshops
13. Other Attachments Form - Plan for which there is no Internet link (URL)
14. Other Attachments Form - Scientific peer review
15. Other Attachments Form - Maps or charts.
16. Other Attachments Form – Environmental and Regulatory Compliance.

1. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance. Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

2. SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs. Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. (See instructions for document 10 below.)

3. SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

4. Grants.gov Lobbying Form – Certification Regarding Lobbying (6600-06). Complete the form. There are no attachments.

5. EPA Form 5700-54, Key Contacts Form. Complete the form. There are no attachments. If additional pages are needed, attach these additional pages to the electronic application package by using the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box. (See Application Preparation and Submission Instructions below for more details.)

6. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report. Complete the form.

7. Narrative Proposal. Includes the **Summary Information Page, Workplan, and Detailed Budget Narrative.** Prepare as described in **Section IV.D.** of the announcement. This is the only file that should be submitted using the Project Narrative Attachment form.

8. Other Attachments Form - Resumes or curriculum vitae of Principal Investigators and critical staff. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach a copy of the resume or curriculum vitae of principal investigators and critical staff for the proposed project. Such documentation should outline the education, work history, and knowledge/expertise of the individual that relate to managing the proposed project. Please include the word “resume” in the filename.

9. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable. This form is required if your organization is involved in lobbying. Complete the form if your organization is involved in lobbying activities.

10. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. Use if indirect costs are included in the project budget. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach a copy of your organization’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable. (See Application Preparation and Submission Instructions below for more details.) You must submit a copy of your organization’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed budget includes indirect costs. Please include the words “cost agreement” in the filename.

11. Other Attachments Form – Support Letters. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach any relevant letters from collaborators or other letters of support. A letter of support may also be required for voluntary cost share. Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project or what that organization supports, as applicable. Please include the words “letters of support” or “LOS” in the filename.

12. Other Attachments Form - Meetings/Conferences/Workshops. If you plan to host meetings, conferences or workshops please include information such as: Who is initiating the meeting? How will it be advertised? Whose logo will be on the agenda and materials? What is the percentage distribution of the persons attending (*i.e.*, percent federal government, tribal members, public participants, state, local)? Will you be preparing the proceedings or analysis and disseminate this information back to the appropriate community? Do you anticipate any program income being generated, including registration fees? Please include the word “meetings” in the filename.

13. Other Attachments Form – Plan. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach a copy of any applicable Plan for which there is no Internet link

(URL). See RFA **Section IV.2.b.iii** for additional information. Please include the word “plan” in the filename.

14. Other Attachments Form – Scientific Peer Review. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach any applicable scientific peer review of the project that has already been completed. Please include the words “peer review” in the filename.

15. Other Attachments Form – Maps or Charts. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach any applicable maps or charts. Please include the word “map” in the filename.

16. Other Attachments Form – Environmental and Regulatory Compliance. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach a document containing responses to the following questions. Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. If a question is not applicable to your project, please so indicate and explain why. Please include the word “compliance” in the filename.

a. Will your project have collateral adverse impacts to the surrounding environment (*i.e.* soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat, etc.)? If so, please explain the impacts and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts.

b. Endangered Species: Are you aware of any federally-listed endangered or threatened species or any designated critical habitat of such species in the project area? If so, describe whether your project may affect those listed species. In what way? Please include all possible effects.

c. Are there wetlands inside the project boundaries? If so, please estimate how many acres of wetlands there are, and describe any impact your project will have on the identified wetlands.

d. Historic Property: Are there any known “historic properties” located in your project area or is there a reason to believe there may be such properties in the proposed project area? If so, describe whether your project may affect those properties. In what way? Please include all possible effects. For purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act, a “historic property” is defined as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion on, the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). See 36 C.F.R. § 800.16(l). Generally, historic properties must be 50 years or older; however, this requirement may be waived for exceptional resources less than 50 years old (*e.g.* some Cold War-era assets). Note that properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register (traditional cultural properties). Note also that, among other things, section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations at 36 C.F.R. § 800 require delineation of the “area of potential effect,” which may be broader than the immediate project area. See 36 C.F.R. § 800.16(d). This may result in consideration of potential effects to nearby historic properties that may be directly or indirectly affected by your project even though they are located outside of the immediate project area.⁹

⁹ Applicants may contact their applicable State or Tribal Historic Preservation Office (SHPO or THPO) for help in this determination and reference the results of that contact in their answer to questions (d) and (e). In addition to

e. Archaeological Sites: Are there any known archaeological sites in the proposed project area or is there a reason to believe there may be archaeological sites in the proposed project area? If so, describe whether your project may affect those sites. In what way? Please include all possible effects. Archaeological sites are included in the definition of Historic Property under the NHPA and applicable implementing regulations.¹⁰

Documents 1 through 7 listed under Application Materials above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For documents 1 through 6, 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 will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document 7, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative proposal as described above and in Section IV.D. and save the documents to your computer as a PDF file. When you are ready to attach your proposal 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 (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 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.”

Documents 8 through 16 are submitted under the “Optional Documents” box, but *please note that these so-called “optional” documents must also be submitted as part of the application package, if applicable to your organization or the category to which you are submitting your application.* You must submit document 8 – Resumes or curriculum vitae of Principal Investigators and critical staff. You are only required to submit document 9 – SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities – if your organization is involved in lobbying activities. You are required to submit document 10 – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement – if you have included any indirect costs in your proposed budget. You are required to submit document 11 – Support Letters – if necessary to confirm non-applicant cost share; however it may also be submitted to demonstrate evidence of collaboration and support. Documents 13-15 are optional.

maintaining relevant cultural resources surveys, the SHPO or THPO maintains a list of cultural resource professionals who meet the Secretary of the Interior's professional standards.

¹⁰ See previous footnote.

Submit Document 16 for each category. To attach documents 8-16, use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box. After attaching the documents, please remember to highlight the “Other Attachments Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List” in order to move the documents to the box that says, “Optional Completed Documents for Submission.” Please submit each document from 8 through 16 as a separate file. Do not roll them all into one file.

Please note that applicants are limited to using the following characters in all attachment file names. Valid file names may only include the following UTF-9 characters:

A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore(_), hyphen (-), space, period. **If applicants use any other characters when naming their attachment files their applications will be rejected by grants.gov.**

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 – FY15 – Category – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY15 – Category – 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 – FY15 – Category– 2nd Submission.”

Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to 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 (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (*e.g.*, FY15), and the grant category (see table in the footnote below)¹¹. 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 or he/she may contact Michael Russ via email at: GLRI-RFA@epa.gov

Applications submitted through <http://www.grants.gov> will be time and date stamped electronically

¹¹

Category	Abbreviate for Application Filing Name
Invasive Species Prevention	ISP
Invasive Species Control	ISC
Urban Watershed Management Implementation	UWM
Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation	AWM
Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project	MNP

C. Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. ***Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.*** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays. A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission. Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to www.Grants.Gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to GLRI-RFA@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Michael Russ at 312-886-4013. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to www.Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call www.Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Michael Russ at 312-886-4013.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to GLRI-RFA@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to GLRI-RFA@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

D. Narrative Proposal:

Narrative Proposals (including the **Summary Information Page, Workplan, and Detailed Budget Narrative**) must be no more than **twenty** single-spaced pages in length and include the items below in the requested order. **Excess pages will not be reviewed.** Each Narrative Proposal must be formatted for 8½” x 11” paper and should use no smaller than an 11-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins. Do not use a “double column” (aka newspaper) format. Readability is of paramount importance. Do not include more than one application in any file. Please do not zip the file or use a zip extension for your file because it will not be accepted.

Do not include confidential business information in your application.

a. Summary Information Page (should not exceed one page):

- i. Funding Opportunity Number and Category.** Identify the Category from Section I to which the proposal relates by choosing one from among:
 - Invasive Species Prevention (EPA-R5-GL2015-ISP)
 - Invasive Species Control (EPA-R5-GL2015-ISC)
 - Urban Watershed Management Implementation (EPA-R5-GL2015-UWM)
 - Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation (EPA-R5-GL2015-AWM)
 - Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project (EPA-R5-GL2015-MNP)

Identify only one category per application submission.

- ii. Project Title.** Please limit to 60 characters, or EPA reserves the right to change the project title for its administrative convenience. Applicants who are submitting separate, complementary proposals may wish to use a proposal title with the same first words followed by a hyphen and a unique project title.

- iii. **Applicant Information.** Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, and e-mail address. *Do not include private information.*
- iv. **Type of Organization.** Specify, consistent with your SF 424, one of the following:
 - a) Local Government (includes County, Municipal, Inter-municipal organizations, Township, Special Purpose District and other entities defined as local governments at 2 C.F.R. § 200.64);
 - b) State Agency (includes Interstate);
 - c) Indian Tribe
 - d) College and University (includes private and state institutions);
 - e) Not for Profit/Non-profit
 - f) Other
- v. **Proposed Funding Request.** The total dollar amount requested from EPA- make sure it is within the limits specified for the applicable category/FON, or your application will be rejected.
- vi. **Project Duration.** Provide beginning and ending dates. See “Anticipated Start and End Dates” in Section II.
- vii. **Brief Project Description.** Summarize the proposed project in 100 words or less in a clear and succinct manner in PLAIN LANGUAGE, including expected outputs, outcomes and environmental benefits resulting from implementation of the project. Include environmental KEY TERMS that could be used as search terms (*e.g.*, water quality, toxins, mercury, *etc.*). Do not use acronyms. Should the proposal be selected and a grant awarded, this description may be posted to the EPA Web. EPA reserves the right to make unilateral changes to conform to posting requirements. See <http://greatlakesrestoration.us/projects/index.html> for examples.
- viii. **Project Location.** Specify a single, representative project location within the Great Lakes basin, including 8- or 12-digit HUC code (available from <http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/reg/04.html>) and latitude and longitude specifying decimal degrees (available from <http://apply.glnpo.net/map>). **Please identify a single, representative location within the Great Lakes basin even if the work will be done at multiple locations or by applicants who are located outside the Great Lakes basin. Please include the reason for the location you identify if that is not self-evident.**

b. Work Plan. The Work Plan for each proposed project must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III of this RFA (including the information for the applicable category/FON in Section I and the threshold

eligibility criteria in Section III) and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V. Each Work Plan should be organized in the order and with the headings and information requested below.

- i. Project Summary and Approach:** Describe with specificity the nature of the proposed project including what will be done, by whom, how, and when it will be accomplished. Outline the steps to be taken and the significant milestones to be achieved to complete the proposed project as well as the estimated dates of these achievements, including the submittal of the final report.

Include a statement of the project's relevance to the Great Lakes, particularly (1) the needs and priorities of the GLRI Action Plan II (<http://glri.us/actionplan/pdfs/glri-action-plan-2.pdf>), or (2) Great Lakes protection and restoration pursuant to Objective 2.2 (Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems) of the Fiscal Year 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan (<http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>). (It is sufficient for the purpose of clause (ii) to include a general statement of how the project will protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem without specifying a connection to the strategic measures for the Great Lakes that are included in the EPA Strategic Plan.)

State whether or not you expect to need to develop quality system documentation pursuant to RFA Section VI.C and explain why.

As applicable, use the terms "conservation corps" or "experiential learning" and describe how the project will:

- use a civilian conservation corps model for project implementation or
- use experiential learning opportunities for grades six through twelve consistent with the application review criteria in Section V.A.1.

State whether any permits or approvals will be required for the project and whether you anticipate the need to: a) meet any requirements under the Clean Water Act and/or b) conduct any procedures under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and/or section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Such requirements and procedures under the Clean Water Act, NHPA, and ESA shall be referred to as "Environmental and Regulatory Compliance." Note that section 106 of the NHPA and implementing regulations at 36 C.F.R. § 800 require certain consultations in connection with federally-funded activities that have the potential to affect (e.g., that include ground-disturbing activities) historic properties. Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA and implementing regulations at 50 C.F.R. § 402 require certain consultations in connection with federally-funded actions that may affect federally-listed threatened or endangered species or the designated critical habitat of such species. If procedures under either of these statutes are anticipated, also describe your plan

for how those requirements will be addressed. (See RFA Section VI.D for additional information.) Applicants should budget time and resources to comply with requirements pertaining to quality, permits, and approvals.

Submit the “Other Attachments Form – Environmental and Regulatory Compliance” as provided in the instructions for item 16 of Section IV.

If your proposed project is for a category that requires specific information described in Section I, include that information in this section.

- ii. Results – Outputs and Outcomes:** Specify the estimated quantitative and qualitative expected results (outputs and outcomes) of the proposed project including but not limited to those specifically identified in Section I for the applicable category, any other applicable measures of progress from page 5 of GLRI Action Plan II, and the approach and measurements that will be used to track and measure your progress towards achieving the applicable outputs and outcomes. Demonstrate how the project will achieve the desired results. Include affected pollutants, industry sectors, economic impacts, habitats, and/or species. Include an estimate of, *e.g.*, the amount of nutrients to be removed, acres managed or quantity of invasive species removed, *etc.* Describe the anticipated accuracy of that estimate, including applicable limitations. In addition, provide a timetable or schedule with target dates projected for major tasks, accomplishments and deliverables.
- iii. Collaboration and Plans:** Describe your approach for promoting and/or obtaining collaboration and support from the public and private sectors in performing the project. List the proposed groups that will be involved in the project and any related projects and studies, and what each of the groups’ roles will be in the project’s staffing, funding, design and implementation. Describe the type of collaboration/support proposed, how you will ensure that it will materialize during project performance, and what role it will play in the overall project. (Any letters demonstrating evidence of collaboration and support from the public or private sector should be attached as part of item 11 of the Application Materials listed in Section IV.) Describe how you will coordinate activities of the project with related or complementary projects and studies. IF YOU INTEND TO PROVIDE EPA FUNDS TO ANY COLLABORATING ORGANIZATION, PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW PROVISIONS ON “CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS” at:
http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm

If you do not plan on collaborating with other groups in project performance, demonstrate how you will be able to effectively perform and complete the project without such collaboration

If the project is part of any applicable plan for protection and restoration of an important Great Lakes place-based effort (*e.g.*, LAMPs, RAPs, state Great Lakes plans, TMDLs and watershed management plans) describe the purpose and effect of the project in such plan. (Such plans may cross over one or more categories of activities.) Provide an active Internet link (URL) for that plan or, if a URL is not available, attach the plan as part of item 13 of the Application Materials listed in Section IV.

Applicants proposing to provide a voluntary cost-match or other form of leveraging to demonstrate support for the project should describe that in this section. They should describe how they will ensure it is provided during project performance and what role it will play in the overall project. A letter of support should also be included in the application package to document any proposed leveraging. Any additional funds/resources, including voluntary cost-matches and their source, must be identified in the application and, if applicable, on appropriate grant application forms. The additional funds or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the applicant proposes to provide a voluntary cost-match. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost-match, applicants must meet the matching commitment as a condition of receiving EPA funding. The recipient is legally-obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost-match that is included in the approved project budget because the grant agreement will include the voluntary cost-match. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary cost-match if the standards at 2 C.F.R. § 200.306 are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for voluntary cost-match. Other federal grants may not be used as voluntary cost-matches without specific statutory authority (*e.g.*, HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

Any voluntary cost-match should also be identified below in the Budget section (E). If subawards or subcontracts are involved, please also refer to the discussion of those topics at:

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

- iv. Community-Based Focus and Environmental Justice Impacts:** Demonstrate how the proposed project will address the needs and concerns of local communities, including any communities that have faced or are facing environmental justice¹² concerns, and other interested parties, groups, or populations that are, or have been, affected by the environmental and/or other issues (including any adverse environmental impacts that have disproportionately affected them) that the project is intended to address¹³. Demonstrate how the applicant will engage and work with community-based organizations (as defined in this RFA) and/or other appropriate parties to enhance project effectiveness

¹² See the first footnote in Section V.A.4 for a definition of environmental justice.

¹³ See the second footnote in Section V.A.4 for factors potentially indicating disproportionate impacts.

and/or efficiency, including the applicant's plans for making subawards, as necessary and appropriate (see Section IV.I) to community-based organizations to enhance project effectiveness and/or efficiency. Applicants, not EPA, will select their subawardees and the applicant must demonstrate in its proposal that the community-based organization(s) are willing to accept the subaward and have the capacity to effectively administer and perform the agreement. Selected applicants who propose to make subawards, including those to community-based groups, must follow proper procedures in making subawards and will be expected to make the subawards consistent with their application. The award will include a term and condition requiring the applicant to make the subawards consistent with their application.

- v. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:** Submit a list (of no more than 5) of federally-funded assistance agreements¹⁴ (including but not limited to previous GLRI awards from EPA or other federal sources) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that the applicant has previously performed and describe: (1) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements in accordance with the initial project schedule; (2) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not); and (3) whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. For all EPA grants listed, include the EPA Grant Number. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior federal agency grantors (*e.g.*, to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

Please Note: If you have previously received a GLRI award or awards, you should list the award(s) and provide the information described above. In addition, for EPA GLRI awards issued in 2010 to 2014 please provide an explanation of and documentation supporting your quarterly rate of expenditure on those prior GLRI projects up through the date of the applicant's submission under this solicitation.

If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). **Failure to indicate this may result in 0 points for these factors.**

¹⁴ Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements, but not federal or other contracts.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and your plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. This information should be supported by resumes or *curricula vitae* for key staff as defined in document 8 of Section IV.

- vi. **Education/Outreach.** Describe how project results will be disseminated to interested stakeholders; your demonstrated track record of outreach to citizens on environmental issues; and the potential of the project for transferability and applicability to other places in accordance with the application review criteria in Section V.A.6.

c. Detailed Budget Narrative: (Also see Appendix I, Budget Sample). Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. Use this section to provide a narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Applicants should use whole dollar amounts. If applicable, applicants should include costs for quality system documentation (*i.e.*, quality assurance project plans or quality management plans) and environmental and regulatory compliance (*e.g.*, costs for assisting EPA with compliance by conducting surveys and analysis to identify whether protected resources are in the project location and, if so, whether there will be any effects; costs associated with potential mitigation measures; *etc.*). Applicants that do not include such costs may have to fund these and other overlooked costs out of their own funds.

- i. **Management Fees:** The rules for including management fees and similar charges are at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.
- ii. **Expeditious Spending and Sufficient Progress in the use of GLRI Funds:** As part of the detailed budget narrative, applicants should explain their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. Include expenditure projections, with quarterly fiscal projections and milestones, for the life of the grant.

E. Other Attachments. The additional attachments listed in Section IV are not part of the Narrative Proposal and are not included in the 20 page limit; however, they may, as appropriate, be considered during evaluations. For additional information about each of these attachments, see the descriptions contained in Section IV.

F. Notification: Within two weeks after the due date, EPA intends to post a link to project information (including title and identification number) to: <http://www2.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-2015-request-applications>. ALL APPLICANTS SHOULD CHECK THIS POSTING TO VERIFY THAT THEIR SUBMISSIONS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN EPA'S DATABASE. See Section VII for contact information if you

do not receive a confirmation or if your project is not posted. All applicants will be contacted following selections to tell them whether or not they have been selected. Selection information will also be posted to a page linked to: <http://www2.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-2015-request-applications>.

G. Information provided to EPA. Before applying for an award, applicants should be aware that under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award, and any information provided to EPA, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

H. Communications. See: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm for general provisions regarding communications with applicants. Submit questions using the form available from <http://www2.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-2015-request-applications>. EPA will respond to questions received through September 14, 2015, but cannot guarantee that it will respond to questions received thereafter.

EPA will also host a webinar during which EPA will discuss this RFA and respond to questions. Since all questions may not be able to be asked and answered during the scheduled time for the call, questions should be submitted in advance using the form available from <http://www2.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-2015-request-applications>. The webinar will be broadcast live and is expected to be archived for future playback. Pre-registration will be required for the webinar.

Webinar Schedule:

Date: Thursday, August 13, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. Central Daylight Time/ 11:00 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time

Topic: EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Request for Applications

Further details, including a link for the Webinar, will be available from: <http://www2.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-2015-request-applications>.

I. Intergovernmental Review: Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372. This review is not required before submitting an application and not all states require such a review. A listing of State Point of Contacts (SPOC) may be viewed at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

J. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into RFA. Additional provisions that apply to this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, application assistance and communications,

management fees, contracts and subawards under grants, and duplicate funding can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this RFA to obtain the provisions.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. Application Review:

Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their Narrative Proposal, budget narrative, and application submission. Each submittal will be rated under a point system, with a total of 120 points possible. Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they address the criteria; the failure to provide applicable information in the application may affect the score assigned for a criterion.

- 1. Project Summary and Approach - 24 points:** Applicants will be evaluated based on their strategic and technical approaches for performing the project including the soundness and logic of these approaches. Results of any applicable scientific peer review submitted by the applicant may be considered as a part of the evaluation under this criterion.

Applicants for **all** categories may score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal one or more of the following elements:

- A clear, rather than a weak, connection to protection and restoration of the **Great Lakes themselves**.
- Consideration of any vulnerabilities of the desired results to **climate change** impacts and/or the integration of climate change adaptation measures into their project to minimize those vulnerabilities.
- Immediacy and timeliness in project implementation (“**shovel ready**”) and in attaining proposed and expected outputs and outcomes including protection, enhancement and restoration.
- Use of a **civilian conservation corps model** to implement the project.
- Use of **experiential learning opportunities** (*i.e.*, learning by doing) for grades six through twelve.

Applicants for the Invasive Species Prevention category may also score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the following elements:

- The implementation of innovative prevention activities that have not previously received GLRI funding.
- The implementation of prevention activities in locations that have not previously received GLRI funding.

Applicants for the Invasive Species Control category may also score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the following elements:

- The use of an adaptive management approach that tests variations of a treatment technique and quantifies performance.
- The use of an adaptive management approach that tests a single treatment technique in different project sites and determines causal factors for the resulting ecosystem response.

- The development of a website which compiles scientific information on the management of an invasive species.
- The development of a multi-organization collaboration which will develop best management practices for an invasive species.

Applicants for the Urban Watershed Management Implementation category may also score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the following elements:

- Water quality impairments have been identified and the causes for those impairments have been clearly established as being from an urban source;
- Solutions to addressing the impairments have been identified;
- Broadly-supported implementation activities have been designed; and
- The project demonstrates that significant measurable improvements in water quality will be achieved.

Applicants for the Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation category may also score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the following elements:

- Water quality impairments have been identified and the causes for those impairments have been clearly established as being from an agricultural source;
- Solutions to addressing the impairments have been identified;
- Broadly-supported implementation activities have been designed; and
- The project demonstrates that significant measurable improvements in water quality will be achieved.

Applicants for the Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project category may also score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the following elements:

- Projects that can show substantial progress by June 2016 and that can be completed as early in the funding period as possible;
- Partnerships and collaboration among multiple government and nongovernmental entities
- Easements that protect land in perpetuity;
- Projects that demonstrate wildlife habitat benefits.

2. Outputs and Outcomes – 24 points:

(a) Applicants will be evaluated based on their approach for demonstrating how they will achieve the expected and proposed project outputs and outcomes applicable to the category to which the application relates including but not limited to those identified in Section I for the applicable category. **(18 points)**

(b) Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for measuring and tracking their progress towards achieving the expected and proposed project outputs and outcomes including but not limited to those identified in Section I that apply to the applicable category to which the application relates. **(6 points)**

- 3. Collaboration and Plans (see Section IV.C.2.b.iii.) – 12 points:** Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate that they will work in partnership with appropriate partners to effectively and efficiently implement the proposed project and whether their project is coordinated with and/or complements other projects or activities being performed by the applicant or others that will result in a greater positive environmental impact from the applicant’s project. This includes evaluating the applicant’s plans for obtaining collaboration and support from the public and private sectors in performing the project in order to expand its impact, the scope of the partnership (including the diversity/variety and number of partners), the type of collaboration proposed, the likelihood that it will materialize during project performance, and what role it will play in the overall project. This also includes consideration of any voluntary cost-match or other form of leveraging to demonstrate support for the project. An example of a collaboration or partnership that would be considered under this criterion would be a proposal by an applicant (a single entity) to use GLRI funding to make subawards to one or more identified governmental or nonprofit subrecipients that would work collaboratively with the applicant to implement an overarching plan.

Applicants that do not plan on collaborating with other groups in project performance will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how they will be able to effectively perform and complete the project without such collaboration.

Applicants may score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the protection or restoration potential of the project as part of a comprehensive place-based plan including Lakewide Action and Management Plans; Remedial Action Plans; state Great Lakes plans; watershed plans, including those which impact Areas of Concern; and TMDLs.

- 4. Community-Based Focus and Environmental Justice Impacts - 12 points:** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which their proposal demonstrates how the proposed project will address the needs and concerns of local communities, including any communities that have faced or are facing environmental justice¹⁵ concerns, and other interested parties, groups, or populations that are, or have been,

¹⁵ EPA defines “environmental justice” as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair Treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate burden of environmental harms and risks, including those resulting from the negative environmental consequences of industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or programs and policies.

affected by the environmental and/or other issues (including any adverse environmental impacts that have disproportionately affected them) that the project is intended to address¹⁶. This includes evaluating the quality and extent to which the applicant demonstrates: 1) how it will engage and work with community-based organizations and other appropriate parties to enhance the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the project; and/or 2) the applicant's plans for making subawards, as necessary and appropriate (see Section IV.I) to incorporated community-based organizations to enhance project effectiveness and/or efficiency. Applicants, not EPA, will select their subawardees and the applicant must demonstrate in its proposal that the community-based organization(s) are willing to accept the subaward and have the capacity to effectively administer and perform the agreement. Selected applicants who propose to make subawards, including awards to community-based organizations, must follow proper procedures in making subawards and will be expected to make the subawards consistent with their proposal. The award will include a term and condition requiring the applicant to make the subawards consistent with their proposal.

5. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance – 24 points. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account:

- a. the organization's past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in accordance with the response to Section IV.D.b.v of the RFA **(9 points)**;
- b. the organization's history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.D.b.v of the RFA including: 1) whether they submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and; 2) the extent to which they adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and in the event such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported on and explained the lack of progress **(3 points)**;
- c. the organization's experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving project objectives **(3 points)**, and

Meaningful Involvement means that: (1) potentially affected community members have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health; (2) the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; (3) the concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process; and (4) the decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected. In the Agency's implementation of environmental justice, EPA has expanded the concept of fair treatment to include not only the consideration of how burdens are distributed across all populations, but also how benefits are distributed.

¹⁶ Factors potentially indicating disproportionate impacts include: differential proximity and exposure to environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as genetic predisposition, age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or poor nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as language barriers, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (*e.g.*, schools), or lack of access to transportation.

- d. staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain qualified staff and resources on a timely basis) to successfully achieve project goals (**9 points**).

In evaluating applicants under items (a) and (b) of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (*e.g.*, to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, this should be indicated in the Narrative Proposal and the applicant will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (a neutral score is one half of the points available for the item). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, it may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

NOTE: Points may be reduced from an applicant's score under item a, above, if it has previously been awarded GLRI funds and such funds, or a significant portion of them, have not been expended expeditiously as of the date of the applicant's submission without adequate explanation. Applicants must provide an explanation if they have failed to expeditiously expend previously awarded GLRI funds or a significant portion thereof.

NOTE: Points may be reduced from an applicant's score if the applicant, without adequate explanation, has not demonstrated an ability to timely comply with current American National Standard Specifications and Guidelines for Quality Systems for Environmental Data Collection and Environmental Technology Programs, ANSI/ASQC E4-1994.

- 6. Education/Outreach – 6 points:** Applicants will be evaluated based on the effectiveness of their education/outreach plans to disseminate project results to interested stakeholders including, but not limited to, whether the applicant has a demonstrated track record of outreach to inform citizens on environmental issues and the potential of the project for transferability and applicability to other places.
- 7. Budget – 18 points:** Applications will be evaluated based on the reasonableness, necessity and allowability¹⁷ (of costs) of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and for the expected benefits to be achieved. Applicants will also be evaluated on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

An applicant's budget and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal funds (*e.g.*, any voluntary cost-share/match if applicable). Applicants must precisely describe in their budget narrative how they will account for any voluntary cost-share/match or other non-EPA funds and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

¹⁷ As determined in accordance with Grants Management Circulars on Cost Principles issued by the Office of Management (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_circulars).

B. Selection Process:

1. Evaluation:

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above. Eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria above by review panels composed of federal agency staff. There will be separate review panels for evaluating eligible applications submitted under each category described in Section I. Review panels will rank the applications based on the criteria above and develop preliminary funding recommendations for presentation to the selection official(s). Each category/FON will have its own ranking list and funding recommendations. Information pertaining to proposed recommendations may be shared with appropriate governmental departments or agencies before selections are made in order to determine whether potential selections (a) are expected to be funded by another funding department or agency under GLRI or any other known funding source or (b) could be affected by permitting or regulatory issues.

Final funding decisions for each FON/category will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations and may also consider the following factors: any duplicate funding issues or permitting or regulatory issues as discussed above; the amount of the organization's unliquidated obligations on previous GLRI grants; program priorities; funding availability; appropriate balances of geographic and jurisdictional distribution of projects (*e.g.*, appropriate geographic distribution can include balancing projects among LAMPs to address each of their priorities); and organizational diversity in terms of applicant type selected to receive awards (*e.g.*, local government, state agency, Indian Tribe, college and university, or other not for profit entity) in order to help ensure a broad representation of entity types receiving awards to promote program effectiveness.

Any final selections made out of rank order must be documented and justified based on the factors listed above. Once selections have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA approving official.

2. Conflict of Interest:

All reviewers will be required to sign a disclosure of conflict of interest statement and will be removed from the review of applications where an actual or potential conflict of interest (that cannot be mitigated) exists. The selection official(s) will also sign a conflict of interest statement.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. Award Notices and Status: Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status, as follows:

EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicants will be made via email or postal mail to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application.

EPA anticipates that notification to *finalists* will be made via email to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. The notification will advise them that their proposed project has been evaluated and forwarded to the EPA approving official for further consideration and possible award. This notification, which advises finalists that their proposed project has been forwarded to the approving official, **is not and should not be considered as** an authorization to begin performance. Applicants are cautioned that only the EPA award official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice signed by the EPA award official is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. The applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms, which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification to finalists and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement: The successful applicants will be required to adhere to federal grants requirements, particularly those found in applicable OMB circulars on Cost Principles (A-21, A-87, or A-122), Administrative Requirements (A-102 or 110), and Audit Requirements (A-133) available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>. This includes government-wide requirements pertaining to accounting standards, lobbying, minority or woman business enterprise, publication, meetings, construction, and disposition of property. EPA regulations governing assistance programs and recipients are codified in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.

C. Quality System Documentation: Quality system documentation (*i.e.*, quality assurance project plans or quality management plans) is required for grants involving the use or collection of environmental data. EPA must have this documentation within 90 days of award and it must be approved **before grantees commence activities associated with the use or collection of environmental data**. Applicants should budget time and resources for developing quality system documentation. **Applicants that do not do so may have to fund the quality system documentation and any necessary project changes out of their own funds.** A significant percentage of EPA's previously awarded GLRI grants required quality system documentation. For specific guidance on GLNPO's quality requirements please see <http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/quality/index.html>.

D. Environmental and Regulatory Compliance. Awards must comply with applicable Federal, State, and local environmental, historic, cultural, and archaeological resource protection

laws, regulations, and executive orders. These may include, but are not limited to: (i) sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which requires consideration of impacts to historic properties and consultation with relevant entities such as the appropriate State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Office (SHPO and/or THPO) or other designated Tribal representatives and (ii) sections 7 and 9 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which prohibit certain impacts on federally-listed threatened or endangered species and their designated critical habitats and may require consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service. An award recipient may not begin any ground disturbing activities (including grading, clearing, and other preliminary activities) on a project prior to the completion (by the recipient, EPA, and/or others) of applicable environmental and regulatory compliance requirements. Please keep in mind that NHPA and ESA compliance may take up to six months or more, depending on the project type and location, the affected environmental and historic, cultural, and archaeological resources, and any listed species considerations. The grantee will assist EPA in meeting NHPA and ESA compliance requirements that may be applicable to the grant award. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

E. Reporting Requirements: Applicants selected for funding shall provide narrative technical progress reports addressing financial and work progress. Special conditions requiring quarterly and semi-annual financial and progress reporting and a detailed final technical report, will be added to awards. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

PLEASE NOTE: If selected, applicants may be asked to revise their anticipated fiscal expenditure projections on a quarterly basis in order to monitor the progress of the awarded project. These projections should be submitted as a part of the fiscal and technical reporting.

F. Other Programmatic Requirements: Additional applicable programmatic terms and conditions will be included in grant agreements, including provisions for: signage for on-the-ground projects, and EPA pre-approval of subcontracting and of conference participation. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

G. Negotiating Fair Share Objectives/Goals and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Annual Reporting: The requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 33 apply to all assistance agreements awarded under this RFA (see: <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov> - Participation by disadvantaged business enterprises in United States Environmental Protection Agency Programs). Applicants who do not already have negotiated DBE goals in place will be required to negotiate DBE fair share objectives/goals with the Region 5 DBE Coordinator. The recipient will be required to submit proposed DBE objectives/goals based on an availability analysis, or disparity study, of qualified DBE in their relevant geographic buying market for construction, services, supplies and equipment. In addition, recipients will be required to submit annual DBE Reports to the DBE Coordinator.

Whenever procuring construction, equipment, services and supplies under an EPA financial assistance agreement, the recipient of GLRI funds must undertake good faith efforts to, and ensure that subrecipients, loan recipients, and prime contractors undertake good faith efforts to:

(1) Ensure that DBEs are made aware of contracting opportunities to the fullest extent practicable through outreach and recruitment activities. For tribal, state and local government recipients, this will include placing DBEs on solicitation lists and soliciting them whenever they are potential sources.

(2) Make information on forthcoming opportunities available to DBEs and arrange time frames for contracts and establish delivery schedules, where the requirements permit, in a way that encourages and facilitates participation by DBEs in the competitive process. This includes, whenever possible, posting solicitations for bids or proposals for a minimum of 30 calendar days before the bid or proposal closing date.

(3) Consider in the contracting process whether firms competing for large contracts could subcontract with DBEs. For tribal, state and local government recipients, this will include dividing total requirements when economically feasible into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by DBEs in the competitive process.

(4) Encourage contracting with a consortium of DBEs when a contract is too large for one of these firms to handle individually.

(5) Use the services and assistance of the SBA and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce.

(6) If the prime contractor awards subcontracts, require the prime contractor to take the steps in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this section.

Records documenting compliance with the required good faith efforts shall be retained.

H. Non-profit Administrative Capability and Mandatory Training: For general provisions, see: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

In addition, EPA requires nonprofit recipients to take a course designed to help them understand assistance agreement regulations, the application process, management of their assistance agreements and the close-out process. Completion of this class is mandatory for all non-profit award recipients. Certification will be good for 3 years. See Mandatory Grant's Management Training for Non-Profit Applicants and Recipients, available from: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/>.

J. Issuance of Awards: EPA reserves the right to negotiate appropriate changes in project terms and amounts (*i.e.*, changes that do not affect the integrity of the competition or materially change the application) consistent with EPA Order 5700.5A1 and other applicable policies, before making final decisions and awards. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards. Applicants may be asked to include greater detail and specificity for their work plans before final awards are issued. Applicants may also be requested to satisfy data quality or peer review requirements before or shortly after the awarding of grants.

K. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into RFA. Additional provisions that apply to this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, including but not limited to those related to human subjects, data access and information release, nonprofit administrative capability, subaward and executive compensation reporting, SAM and DUNS requirements, unliquidated obligations, website references, tax liabilities and felony convictions, unfair competitive advantage, exchange network, disputes, copyrights, restrictions on use of federal funds, and competency of organizations generating environmental measurement data, can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this RFA to obtain the provisions.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

General RFA Contacts: (For administrative, eligibility, and other general RFA questions):

- Michael Russ, 312-886-4013 / GLRI-RFA@epa.gov

Technical Contacts:

- Invasive Species Prevention: Jamie Schardt, 312-353-5085 / Schardt.james@epa.gov
- Invasive Species Control: Jamie Schardt, 312-353-5085 / Schardt.james@epa.gov
- Urban Watershed Management Implementation: Jacqueline Adams, 312-353-7203 / Adams.Jacqueline@epa.gov
- Agricultural Watershed Management Implementation: Jacqueline Adams, 312-353-7203 / Adams.Jacqueline@epa.gov
- Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project: Thomas Davenport, 312-886-0209 / Davenport.Thomas@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Funding for state and tribal capacity and for LAMP and RAP implementation is being negotiated separately with states, Indian tribes, and/or local governments. Organizations interested in funding for remediation of contaminated sediments should contact tuchman.marc@epa.gov.

GLNPO will send an e-mail announcement of these and any of its funding opportunities to all who register at <http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/maillist>.

Appendix I Budget Sample

Budget Detail

This section of the work plan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A, and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

If the project budget includes any voluntary cost share, the Budget Detail portion of the narrative proposal must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the cost-share and how the cost-share funding will be used. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost-share, applicants must meet their sharing commitment as a legal condition of receiving EPA funding. If the proposed cost-share is to be provided by a third-party, a letter of commitment is required. Any form of cost-share included in the Budget Detail must also be included on the SF 424 and SF 424A. Please see Sections III and Section IV.C.2.B.iii of this RFA for more detailed information on cost-share.

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan. Use only whole dollar amounts.

Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period. This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (generally, paid employees of the applicant organization). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the “Other” category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans.

Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State and international (include specific international locations), number of travelers, and

other costs for each type of travel. Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (*e.g.*, inspections) or related to proposed project activities (*e.g.*, attendance at meetings). Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the “Other” category.

☐ **Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts. These types of proposed costs should be included in the “Other” category. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.33. The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.

☐ **Supplies - “Supplies” means all tangible personal property other than “equipment”.** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (*e.g.*, laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.

☐ **Contractual - Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual/consultant services are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or noncompetitive), if known.

☐ **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance, rental/lease of equipment or supplies, equipment service or maintenance contracts, printing or photocopying, rebates, and subaward costs. Subawards (*e.g.*, subgrants) are a distinct type of cost in this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work and a description of the types of activities to be supported.

☐ **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project, and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or

projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional), or must have submitted a proposal to the cognizant federal or state agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

- o Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
- o Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
- o Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
- o Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment
(Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

Example Budget Table

	EPA Funding	Cost-Share
Personnel		
(1) Project Manager @ \$40/hr x 10 hrs/week x 52 wks		\$20,800
(5) Project Staff @ \$30/hr x 40 hrs/week x 40 wks	\$244,000	
TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$244,000	\$20,800
Fringe Benefits		
20% of Salary and Wages	20%(\$244,000)	20%(20,800)
- Retirement, Health Benefits, FICA, SUI	\$48,800	\$4,160
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	\$48,800	\$4,160
Travel		
In State travel for Project Manager and staff: 500 mi/mo @ \$0.55/mi x 12 mos.	\$3,300	
Out of State (IL, WI, IA) Travel for Project Staff: 20 trips per month x \$2,500 per trip	\$600,000	
SOLEC Meeting (Toronto, Canada) Travel for Project Manager: 2 trips/year x \$3,500 each	\$7,000	
TOTAL TRAVEL	\$610,300	
Equipment		
Transducer, coupling, and software package	\$25,700	
Electrofishing boom shocker (2 x \$7,500each)	\$15,000	
1 Project Vehicle	\$25,000	
1 Project Boat	\$15,000	
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	81,100	
Supplies		
Office and related supplies to support training	\$400	
Office computer and printer	\$2,500	
TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$2,900	
Contractual		
ABC Support Services Contract	\$100,000	
XYZ Land & Water Conservation	\$66,400	

TOTAL CONTRACTUAL	\$166,400	
Other		
Travel for 3 representatives to attend workshop training – 100 trips x \$1,000 each	\$100,000	
Travel for 4 representatives to attend workshop training – 200 trips x \$2,000 each	\$400,000	
TOTAL OTHER	\$500,000	
Indirect Charges		
Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 10% (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs; as negotiated)	\$26,480	
TOTAL INDIRECT	\$26,480	
TOTAL FUNDING	\$1,679,580	\$24,960
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$1,704,540	

** Any voluntary cost-share funds, while not required under this RFA, must also be included on the SF-424A as detailed in Section IV.C.2.B.iii of this RFA. Federal funds are not allowed to be used for cost share; please identify the source of the cost share in your budget narrative.

Expeditious Spending and Sufficient Progress in the use of GLRI Funds: Include an explanation of how, if the applicant is awarded a grant, they will ensure that the funding will be used expeditiously.

Appendix II

Maumee River Watershed Nutrient Prevention Pilot Project Conservation Easement Guidelines

The most traditional tool for conserving private land, a “conservation easement” (also known as a conservation restriction) is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Landowners continue to own and use their land, and they can also sell it or pass it on to heirs.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) uses Permanent Conservation Easements to selectively protect land providing water quality benefits. Protecting land forms such as wetlands and riparian buffers from development or conversion maintains current water quality benefits and protects against future water quality degradation caused by loss of water quality benefits and nonpoint source (NPS) pollution from the site.

A. FACTORS IN SELECTING EASEMENTS FOR FUNDING:

The strongest grant proposals for easements:

- 1) Include a map of existing conservation areas and priority areas based on water quality (watershed scale).
- 2) Demonstrate the method used to prioritize and select parcels was based primarily on water quality protection *not primarily on other non-water quality factors such as wildlife, endangered species or farmland protection.*
- 3) Have a clear tie to a water quality recommendation or goal in the watershed plan.
- 4) Provide a description and general map of the selected properties (individual site scale – satellite photo from a source such as Mapquest or Google Maps with proposed easement boundaries overlaid is suggested)..
- 5) Provide letters of commitment from landowners of intended properties
- 6) Include a list of secondary properties that will be pursued if the primary parcels fall through.

B. AFTER A CONTRACT WITH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IS SIGNED:

- 1) **Getting a parcel approved for grant: (Pre-site visit information)**
 - a. Parcel must be included on a HUC/watershed scale map.
 - b. Submit on-site conditions via maps, aerial photos, confirmation of priority and if applicable: the priority wetland functions that are being protected
 - c. Submit a map that shows the boundaries and how much of the parcel is to be covered by the easement
 - d. Schedule a site visit with the EPA Staff. *This site visit is a requirement to ensure the parcel meets the program water quality goals and there are no on-site or adjacent issues of concern.*

2) **After a parcel is approved:**

- a. Baseline Assessment: Conduct a baseline assessment
- b. Determine value of easement
- c. Complete a property survey
- d. Determine the mineral rights and lease options on the property
- e. Conduct a title search and purchase title insurance
- f. Prepare and submit a draft easement
- g. Complete the easement transaction

B2a. Baseline Assessment

The GLRI Program endorses the Land Trust protocols for Baseline documentation.

It must contain:

- Name of the property owner, site location (lat/long and/or township, range section).
- Very detailed site description information including existing structures, flora and fauna and “improvements” (i.e. structures, roads, etc.) on the property at the time the easement was being secured.
- Photographs of key features and structures.
- Places for the landowner and conservancy to sign, verifying that the parties agree with the baseline report.
- The baseline may also contain a survey or a survey may also exist as a separate document
- Information on the watershed and why an easement on this property would help protect water quality.

B2b. Determining value of easement

This is achieved through an appraisal or equivalent. (i.e process for CREP easements)

Appraisals

- Must be conducted by a licensed appraiser according to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP)
- Should be conducted by an appraiser experienced in conducting similar types of appraisals (for example; large acreage parcels, easements, railroad corridors, “Yellow Book”, lakefront, minerals, or timber)
- Can be done on the landowner’s entire property or on just the portion that is going to be eased. If only a portion of the property is covered under the easement, the grantee should discuss with the PA to determine the appropriate approach for the property. For example, if the easement is only to be a small portion of a large property, it probably won’t make sense to appraise the entire property.

The appraisal report must contain:

- Name of the property owner, site location

- A statement that they are done per Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) by a licensed appraiser (FYI: donated easements must use IRS appraisal standards to receive tax benefits)
- How the value of the conservation easement was determined. This may include one or several ways to calculate the easement value.
- A basis for the value of the easement is required for all properties.
- The final determination of the easement value: show the “before” and “after” appraisal. This value is the difference between the full value of the land at its highest and most probable use, and the full value of the land at its highest and most probable use after the easement is placed on it.

B2c. Surveys

A survey needs to be conducted to define the boundaries of the easement and to show that the boundary is such that water quality is being protected.

The survey needs to:

- Be conducted by qualified surveyors
- Clearly show what clearly show the boundaries of the property

B2d. Title Search and Title Insurance

Conduct a title search to determine:

- Whether the seller has a saleable interest in the property.
- Whether there are any restrictions or allowances pertaining to the use of the land (real covenants, easements, or other servitudes)
- Whether any liens exist on the property which need to be paid off at closing (mortgages, back taxes, etc.)
- Mineral rights ownership and lease options.
- Purchase Title insurance.

B2e. Mineral Rights Options

The GLRI program goal is to restore and protect the surface water and prefers that there isn't any surface development for oil and gas extraction. However, there may be parcels that the property owner has already signed leases.

- Options for if there is a full surface development lease
 - Try to get the lease subordinated to the easement
 - Try for a development envelope
 - Ask that once a lease has expired that no new surface development leases will be signed.

B2f. Draft Easement

The draft easement will include:

- Name of the property owner, site location

- A description of the development rights that are being purchased and those that will remain with the landowner.
- The specific restrictions put on the property.
- Language that clearly limits uses to protect water quality.
- Oil/Gas Mineral Rights: A clause requiring the landowner(s) to repair any damage to the surface area of the easement caused from the extraction of oil/gas or minerals.
- A clause that requires notification of the EPA if the easement is to be terminated or extinguished or intention to transfer the easement to another entity of like mind (e.g. another conservancy).
 - Ideally, the above will be addressed via a clause similar to the CREP model easement which states: “THE TERMS HEREOF shall be deemed to run with the land and be binding on all successors and assigns of both the Grantor and the Grantee. Any termination, amendment or revision to this Easement shall be agreed to in writing by the parties, and approved by the GLNPO Director or his/her delegate. If the Grantee is no longer capable of holding this Easement, the Grantee shall transfer or assign the rights herein to any entity allowed to hold a conservation easement under State law.

B2g: Complete easement transaction

C. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR GLRI GRANTS CONTAINING EASEMENTS:

Note: All documentation requirements apply to grant-funded and match-funded (i.e. full price, bargain sale and donated) easements.

1) Documentation Required Prior to Closing on an Easement

- a. Draft baseline.
- b. Survey
- c. Draft easement.
- d. Appraisal report/summary or equivalent. The amount of grant funds paid or match earned needs to be based on the appraisal or equivalent. The appraisal submitted must be the one the final easement was based on.

2) Documentation Required After Closing on the Easement

- a. Title Search/Title Insurance (an invoice is sufficient)
- b. Final Signed Baseline:
- c. Recorded Easement: must have signatures and notation from county register of deeds with date.
- d. Ownership transfer documentation if applicable (e.g. a landowner land swap)
- e. Buyer/Seller statements: signed by both parties
- f. Best Management Practice Form

D. STATUS REPORTING OPTIONS FOR EASEMENTS.

1) **Cash Available: If the grantee/land conservation organization has the cash available to go to closing:**

If the land conservancy/grantee has enough money to secure their own easement, the request for reimbursement can be done in a regular status report or interim status report. The status report is NOT treated as an advance; rather, it is paid like any other status report. *Interim Status Report:* An interim report with all documentation can be submitted if the percentage threshold is reached as identified in Section IV of the boilerplate.

The documentation needs to include:

- The final signed baseline.
- Appraisal report or equivalent.
- Proof of title search and insurance.
- Final signed and recorded easement.

2) **Cash Not Available: If the grantee/land conservation organization does not have the cash available to go to closing**

If the grantee/land protection organization does not have the cash upfront to take to a closing the payment for the easement it is considered an advance. Submitting an advance request can be done either in a regular or interim status report.

The documentation needs to include:

- The draft baseline.
- Appraisal report or equivalent.
- Draft Easement
- An approximate closing date

❖ *The final baseline and recorded easement need to be submitted as soon as they are available or at the latest with the subsequent status report.*