Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act
FY 2015 Request for Project Proposals

1) Funding Opportunity Description

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requests interested entities to submit restoration, research and Regional project proposals for the restoration of Great Lakes fish and wildlife resources, as authorized under the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (16 USC 941c). This request is being presented by the USFWS through the U.S. Government's Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA # 15.608) and via the U.S. Government's internet portal for federal funding opportunities at Grants.gov.

The purpose of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (GLFWRA) is to provide assistance to States, Indian Tribes, and other interested entities to encourage cooperative conservation, restoration and management of the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats in the Great Lakes Basin.

Regional projects are authorized activities of the USFWS related to fish and wildlife resource protection, restoration, maintenance, and enhancement impacting the resources of multiple States or Indian Tribes with fish and wildlife management authority in the Great Lakes Basin. The USFWS will be responsible for accomplishing Regional projects on behalf of the State and/or Tribal agencies submitting the Regional project proposal.

All proposals should focus on the restoration of fish and/or wildlife resources and their habitats in the Great Lakes Basin and should be consistent with the goals of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2006 and the recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's "Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes." Proposals should also be consistent with one or more of the following:

a. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan II;
b. The goals of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;
c. The Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act as reauthorized by the National Invasive Species Act;
d. The recommendations from the Great Lakes Fishery Resources Restoration Study of 1995;
e. The fish community objectives identified by the lake committees and the Council of Lake Committees;
f. The Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries;
g. The Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries; and
h. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and
i. Addresses research and/or monitoring priorities of the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture 2007 Implementation Plan;
j. Additional step down plans that further specify the implementation of the goals and objectives of the above plans at the state, tribal, watershed or local level.

Proposals submitted are reviewed and recommended for funding to the USFWS by the GLFWRA Proposal Review Committee (PRC). Since 1998 the Act has provided $20.9 million dollars in federal funding to 138 research and restoration and projects, combined with required

matching funds equates to $31.6 million worth of benefits to Great Lakes fish, and wildlife resources. More than 110 organizations have contributed nearly $10.7 million in matching non-federal partner support.

2) Award Information

Supported in part by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a total of approximately $2.0 million is projected to be available to support projects this fiscal year. Available funding and project awards are subject to final Congressional appropriations for Fiscal Year 2015.

Up to 33% of the total Congressional appropriation to the GLFWRA is eligible to fund Regional projects.

Successful restoration and research projects have ranged from $2,300 to $2,000,000 with the average project at $117,345. Number of grants awarded this fiscal year is expected to range between 5 and 10.

Accepted restoration and research proposals will be awarded funding for the duration of the project via a cooperative or grant agreement between the recipient and the USFWS. Funding will be made available once the award letter has been received. Continuation of projects funded in previous fiscal years is eligible but will be considered and reviewed as a new project.

3) Eligibility Information

A) Eligible Applicants

Restoration and Research Proposals

States, Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments, and Native American Treaty Organizations within the Great Lakes Basin are eligible. Local governments, non-governmental organizations, universities, and conservation organizations (either within or outside of the basin) may receive funding if sponsored by an institution listed above. Proof of sponsorship is not required at the pre-proposal stage, but is required during the development of full proposals to receive funding.

Regional Projects

Proposals for Regional projects must be submitted by a State Director and/or Tribal Chair (or a joint submission from the supervisors of the agency's fish and wildlife programs on behalf of the Director or Tribal Chair). Regional projects should impact multiple States and/or Tribes and consequently must include the signature or other written documentation of all State Directors and Tribal Chairs who support the project (or joint signatures or letter of support from the supervisors of the agency's fish and wildlife programs on behalf of the State Director or Tribal Chair).

B) Cost Sharing

Restoration and Research Proposals

All proposals **require a 25% non-federal match**. Not less than 25% of the total cost of implementing a proposal shall be paid in cash or in-kind contributions by non-Federal sources. **The value of land in easement or fee title is not eligible as match.**

The required match is 25% of the **total project costs** (funding request + non-federal match). For example, if the request for federal funding is for $50,000, the minimum required non-federal match is $16,666.66, and the total project costs would be $66,666.66. ($50,000 / 0.75 = $66,666.66 - $50,000.00 = $16,666.66).

Restoration and research pre-proposals without a 25% non-federal match will not be considered.

Regional Projects

Regional projects selected shall be exempt from cost sharing or partner match if the USFWS Midwest Region Director determines that the authorization for the project does not require a non-federal cost-share.

C) Timeliness

Any proposals received after the submission deadline (see below) will not be considered.

4) Application Submission Information

A) Application Process Overview

Two-page **restoration and research project pre-proposals** are submitted to the USFWS. Pre-proposals are reviewed and ranked by the PRC. Successful applicants of **restoration and research proposals** will be invited to submit full proposals based on the review and merit of their pre-proposal.

Regional project proposals will be submitted to the USFWS using the Regional project Application Template and will be reviewed by PRC. Successful applicants will be notified if their project proposal was selected for funding. The USFWS will then work with the applicant to complete a work plan to accomplish the project.

B) Obtaining Application Materials

The request for **restoration and research project pre-proposal**, and **Regional project proposal** forms can be downloaded at the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act internet site.

Content and Form of Application

Restoration and Research Pre-proposals

Restoration and research pre-proposals are limited to **two pages** and must include the following information: management implication or application, project title; project applicant(s); costs; project dates; rationale; relevancy, objectives; methods; deliverables/products and a **one page only** curriculum vitae or resume for each applicant involved in the project.

Full Proposals

Restoration and Research Proposals

Those applicants invited to submit full proposals will be required to submit the same information as included in the pre-proposals with more detail that may include providing a response to comments/suggestions from the PRC that will be provided via email. The following information must be included in detail: management implication or application, rationale; objectives; methods; deliverables; schedule for completion; past and current funding support; references; information on how each of the eight review criteria are addressed; one page resume or curriculum vitae for each person involved in the project; source of the non-federal match and budget sheet(s); and funding requested budget sheet(s) including direct and indirect costs;

For **restoration and research projects** approved for funding, applicants will be required to provide further information as required by the USFWS to achieve compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 USC 4321-4347), Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531-1544), or other requirements as referenced in part 6(b) below.

Regional Projects

Final USFWS work plans for Regional projects recommended for funding by the PRC will be developed among the applicants submitting the project and the USFWS.

C) Submission Date and Requirements

Restoration and research pre-proposals and Regional project proposals are due on **Monday December 15, 2014 by 8:00 PM EST**. An email will be sent to confirm receipt of all the proposals. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.

An electronic copy of the restoration and research pre-proposal and Regional project proposal (**in Microsoft Word format**) must be submitted to the USFWS via email to Rick_Westerhof@fws.gov.

D) Intergovernmental Review

This program is excluded from coverage under E.O. 12372.

E) Funding Guidelines and Restrictions

The Proposal Review Committee has established the following guidelines and restrictions for funding provided through the Act.

- Not less than 25% of the total cost of implementing a proposal shall be paid in cash or in-kind contributions by non-Federal sources.
- **The value of land in easement or fee title is not eligible as match.**
- **Grant funds cannot be used to purchase land or easements. However, the costs associated with preparing for the purchase of land or easements directly tied to the project are eligible.**
- Construction and engineering costs are allowed for restoration projects that directly benefit fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes Basin.
- Equipment purchases are allowable for those items necessary to meet the stated project objectives but are subject to 43 CFR 12.72 and/or 43 CFR 12.934.
- **The PRC recommends applicants limit indirect costs to 5% in order to put as much funding as possible into actual research or on the ground habitat restoration.**
- **Indirect Cost – You will need to do the one of the following related to indirect costs. Either Provide 1) A copy of your current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), or 2). A written statement signed by the official having the authority to negotiate indirect cost rates for the recipient organization notifying us that they will assess a reduced indirect cost rate. This statement must also specify to which project(s) the reduced rate will apply, or 3). A memo indicating recipient organization does not have a NICRA.**
- Funding is not available for salaries of permanent or tenured staff.
- The development of management plans is not eligible for funding; however, gathering important information for the development of management plans and implementing actions listed in management plans are eligible for funding.
- Travel funding to attend and present results at conferences is limited to $1,000 per person, up to a maximum of $2,000 per award.
- All funded projects are required to document compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Pursuant to this, successful applicants must complete a series of environmental checks and/or documents to ensure compliance. Depending on the scope and scale of the project this may be as simple as a NEPA checklist or as complex as the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. GLFWRA funds cannot be used to complete on the ground work until NEPA compliance has been documented.
- Grant funds may be used for project activities that occur after the receipt of the full proposal (March 16, 2015), however, costs will NOT be reimbursed if the proposal is not approved for funding. Project activities that occur before the receipt of the full proposal (March 16, 2015) are ineligible as a grant activity and will not be reimbursed with grant funds.
- Successful applicants will be expected to provide performance and financial reporting in accordance with the due dates described in the agreement with the USFWS. Failure to meet these due dates can result in suspension of the ability to withdraw funds, termination of the award, withholding of other federal awards, and will be noted for future GLFWRA funding decisions.

5) Application Review Information

A) Review Criteria

Restoration and research pre-proposals and Regional Project proposals and will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following eight criteria as described in Table 1:

Management Significance and Relevancy to the Act

Importance of Problem or Opportunity
Project Impact and Scale
Target Species/Habitats
Affects both Fish and Wildlife

Project Characteristics

Objective and Methods
Cost or Value
Likelihood of Success
Potential for Negative Impacts

All proposals should focus on the restoration of fish and/or wildlife resources and their habitats in the Great Lakes Basin and should be consistent with the goals of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2006 and the recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's "Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes." Proposals should also be consistent with one or more of the following:

a. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan II;
b. The goals of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;
c. The Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act as reauthorized by the National Invasive Species Act;
d. The recommendations from the Great Lakes Fishery Resources Restoration Study of 1995;
e. The fish community objectives identified by the lake committees and the Council of Lake Committees;
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g. The Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries; and
h. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan; and
i. Addresses research and/or monitoring priorities of the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture 2007 Implementation Plan;
j. Additional step down plans that further specify the implementation of the goals and objectives of the above plans at the state, tribal, watershed or local level.

B) Review and Selection Process

Restoration and Research Proposals

Pre-proposals are reviewed and ranked by the PRC. Successful applicants will be invited to submit full proposals based on the merit of the pre-proposal. Full proposals are subject to peer review and are reviewed and ranked by the PRC. The PRC recommends full proposals to be funded to the USFWS Midwest Region Director.

Regional Projects

The PRC will review Regional project proposals and make recommendations to the USFWS Midwest Region Director on how much of the annual appropriations should be allocated to Regional Projects and which projects should be developed into final USFWS work plans for funding.

6) Award Announcement and Administration Information

A) Award Notices

Depending on approval by the Midwest Region Director and available funding, successful restoration and research project applicants can anticipate receiving an official grant or cooperative agreement by **August or September 2015**. The agreement serves as the official notice of award to the applicant and provides important information on the details of the agreement and expectations of both the USFWS and recipient for the life of the agreement. The USFWS will begin implementing Regional projects as soon as the Midwest Region Director approves the PRC recommendations typically **January-February 2015.**

B) Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Recipients of Federal funds are required to comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations and guidelines. General information on grant requirements including cost principles, administrative requirements, and audit requirements can be found in the following Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars: for State and Local Governments: A-87, A-102, A-133; for Educational Institutions A-21, A-110, A-133; and for Non-Profit Organizations: A-122, A-110, A-133. These circulars are available on the OMB website.

Additional U.S. Department of the Interior guidance can be found in 43 CFR 12. Information on specific non-discrimination, environmental, and historic and cultural preservation compliance requirements can be found in the Federal Assistance Toolkit.

C) Reports/Deliverables/Products

All projects and activities are monitored for progress and compliance with the agreed upon scope of work. Successful applicants will work with the USFWS to submit project reporting, meet environmental compliance, and track the project's progress. The final report submitted will be subject to sponsor review and approval prior to project close-out.

7) Agency Contact

Mr. Rick Westerhof
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
6644 Turner Road
Elmira, Michigan 49730
Email: Rick_Westerhof@fws.gov
Phone: 231-584-3553
Fax: 231-584-2462

Table 1. Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act Review Criteria

Management Significance and Relevancy to the Act				Project Characteristics			
Important Problem or Opportunity	**Project Impact and Scale**	**Target Species/Habitats**	**Affects both Fish & Wildlife**	**Objectives and Methods**	**Cost/Value**	**Likelihood of Success**	**Potential for Negative Impacts**
Project directly addresses a specific management objective or task identified in a State, Tribal, or Federal management plan OR addresses a critically important emerging need as recognized by State, Tribal, or Federal Agencies.	Project will result in large ecological benefits with broad regional/multistate or basin-wide implications.	Project focuses on a Federal or State threatened or endangered species OR project focuses on rare occurring habitat or habitat critical to the life cycle/function of a species.	Project provides clear benefits to both fish AND wildlife communities.	Proposed objectives are appropriate to address the problem; methods are unique, innovative, and advance the state of knowledge in this area.	Project costs provide exceptional value for proposed work. (For habitat projects, unit costs are below target level.)	Proposed timeline is easily attainable and appropriate, applicants are very well qualified for proposed project and there are no anticipated impediments (e.g. permits, etc.) to implementation.	There are no foreseeable negative impacts (e.g. invasive species issues, disease, contaminants, etc.) from this project.
Project addresses a goal or general action(s) (i.e. a stated goal is to implement a type of action, without specific plans for specific projects) identified in a State, Tribal, or Federal management plan.	Project will result in large ecological benefits with local (not larger than a single lake or state) scale implications only.	Project focuses on a native species targeted for rehabilitation or a species of economic importance OR project focuses on habitat supporting the life cycle/function of a species.	Project provides clear benefits to either fish OR wildlife communities.	Proposed objectives are appropriate to address the problem; methods are consistent with known standards and techniques.	Project costs provide very good value for proposed work. (For habitat projects, unit costs are below target level.)	Proposed timeline is acceptable, applicants are qualified for proposed project, and there are no apparent impediments (e.g. permits, etc.) to implementation.	The project clearly and adequately addresses all potential negative impacts (e.g. invasive species issues, contaminants, disease, etc.).
Project addresses the vision or a broad, far reaching action(s) (i.e. a stated goal is to restore a species or to restore watershed health) identified in a State, Tribal, or Federal management plan.	Project will result in small-medium ecological benefits with broad regional/multistate or basin-wide implications.	Project focuses on a native species not targeted by a specific rehabilitation plan or of economic importance OR project focuses on important (but not critical) habitat.	Project provides clear benefits to specific fish AND wildlife populations	Proposed objectives are appropriate to address the problem; however, the methods need minor improvement to be consistent with known standards and techniques.	Project costs provide appropriate value for proposed work. (For habitat projects, unit costs are at target level.)	Proposed timeline is reasonable, but there is a serious impediment (e.g. qualification of applicants, permits, etc.) to implementation.	The project vaguely or not adequately addresses potential negative impacts (e.g. invasive species issues, contaminants, disease, etc.).
Project does not address an action(s) identified in a State, Tribal, or Federal management plan but has some value to resource managers.	Project will result in small-medium ecological benefits with local (not larger than a single lake or state) scale implications only.	Project focuses on a non-native species or of economic importance OR project focuses on abundant, less important habitat.	Project provides clear benefits to specific fish OR wildlife populations	Proposed objectives are appropriate to address the problem; however, the methods are inconsistent with known standards and techniques.	Project costs are more costly than average for proposed work. (For habitat projects, unit costs are above target level.)	There are at least two barriers (e.g., time, qualification of applicants, permits, etc.) to implementation.	The project does not address potential negative impacts (e.g. invasive species issues, contaminants, disease, etc.).
Project does not link to management plans or to any needs of resource managers.	Project will result in minimal ecological benefits at any spatial level.	Project has no linkages to particular species or habitats of importance to resource managers.	Project has dubious value to any fish or wildlife species.	Proposed objectives and methods are inappropriate to address the problem and are inconsistent with known standards and techniques.	Project costs are excessive and not appropriate for proposed work. (For habitat projects, unit costs are well above target level.)	Proposed timeline is not reasonable and there are one or more probable barriers (e.g. qualification of applicants, permits, etc.) to implementation.	Potential negative impacts (e.g. invasive species issues, contaminants, disease, etc.) clearly outweigh any positive benefits from this project.