

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Financial Assistance  
Notice of Funding Opportunity  
P17AS00174  
Request for Proposals**



**Everglades Ecosystem Restoration and Management**

Issued Date: March 21, 2017

Proposals Due Date: May 11, 2017

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# NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## Critical Ecosystem Studies Initiative

### Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

Federal Agency Name:	Department Of The Interior, National Park Service
Funding Opportunity Title:	Everglades Ecosystem Restoration and Management
Announcement Type:	Notice of Funding Opportunity - Request for Proposals
Funding Opportunity Number:	P17AS00174
Catalog Of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:	15.945
Dates:	Proposal Applications Due Date: May 11, 2017, 2359hrs, (EDT)
Eligible Applicants:	Principal Investigators from active CESU member institutions in any of five Regional CESU Networks: Gulf Coast, South Florida-Caribbean, Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast, Chesapeake Watershed, and North Atlantic Coast
Legislative Authority:	54 USC §101702(a): Cooperative Agreements, Transfer of Services Appropriated Funds 54 USC §101702(b): Cooperative Agreements, Cooperative Research and Training Programs 54 USC §100703: Cooperative Study Units
Recipient Cost Share:	None required, but proposals with cost share are acceptable
Federal Funding Amount:	\$20,000 to \$300,000 per year one award; multiyear total project award amounts will be dependent upon availability of future funds.
Estimated Number Of Agreements To Be Awarded:	5 to 10 individual awards are likely
Estimated Amount Of Funding Available For Award:	Up to \$1.5 million is estimated to be available for award.

## **Section II: Funding Opportunity Announcement Objectives and Goals**

### **A. Program Background Information**

The Greater Everglades Watershed has been a focus of regional scale restoration activities since the development of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, published as part of the Water Resources Development Act in 2000. After 16 years of programmatic and project planning, initial project implementation, and significant changes in operational strategies, the regional watershed restoration actions have demonstrated some success in restoring historical ecological conditions, but significant challenges remain. Concurrent with restoration progress, other drivers of change continue to impact the greater Everglades ecosystem, including climatic events, sea-level rise, and the introduction and expansion of invasive exotic species. Disturbance events continue to impact the regional watershed and appear to be triggering cascades of responses that are producing widespread, degrading impacts to large portions of the natural areas of the region.

For example, a 2015 drought likely was a factor driving an extensive seagrass die-off event in north-central and western Florida Bay since the summer of 2015. To date, turtle-grass die-off has occurred in an estimated 40,000 acres. This large-scale loss of productive habitat has significant and long-term ecological impacts on Florida Bay and likely has spurred the subsequent initiation of cyanobacteria blooms. These may trigger the further expansion of the turtle-grass die-off and more severe ecological impacts.

There has been widespread recognition of the risks posed by interacting stressors on the ecosystem and that these interactions vary over time and space. Documenting and understanding ecosystem change in response to managed and unmanaged drivers, communicating the nature and consequences of ecological change to a diverse group of stakeholders, and assembling strategies to support stewardship actions at large spatial scales are essential processes that will help us guide management actions and maintain the focus and momentum for successfully restoring the regional watershed and downstream coastal ecosystems.

The mission of the South Florida Natural Resource Center (SFNRC) is to conduct and communicate science for the preservation and restoration of the south Florida ecosystem, in service to the U. S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the National Park Service (NPS), with its mandate to preserve the parks' natural and cultural resources "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations". SFNRC specifically services Everglades, Dry Tortugas, and Biscayne National Parks, along with Big Cypress National Preserve. Everglades Restoration is a massive, cooperative effort of multiple Federal and Florida state agencies, universities, non-government organizations, and individuals to restore and sustain the greater Everglades ecosystem. Scientific analysis and communication, within a framework of adaptive management, plays a central role in this restoration effort.

To further the provision of scientific information and tools needed to promote restoration success, DOI funds the Critical Ecosystem Studies Initiative (CESI), enabling the support of

projects that generate knowledge needed by Federal land managers and Everglades restoration leaders to make informed science-based decisions for ecosystem restoration in South Florida. Since first authorized in 1997 by DOI, CESI has supported projects for ecological and environmental monitoring and research, long-term monitoring, restoration project assessment, hydrologic and ecological model development and application, and natural resource management. Management of the CESI program is headquartered at the Everglades National Park (ENP). Information about the CESI program can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/ever/naturescience/cesi.htm>.

SFNRC is soliciting proposals to address high priority research questions and needs for information synthesis and modeling that serve restoration planning and assessment (identified below). Effectively addressing these questions will help resource managers promote the restoration and sustainability of the Everglades and mitigate or avoid ecological degradation that is caused by un-managed drivers and disturbance events in the future.

The primary value of the proposed projects will be determined by how these projects will further Everglades ecosystem restoration and sustainability, either by influencing the design and implementation of the regional scale restoration program, or by influencing other important natural resource management systems such as fire management or habitat/wildlife management programs. Applicants should recognize that there are a range of legal/policy frameworks that proposals must reasonably comply with during the time period of their proposed project execution. Guidelines regarding research permitting and compliance within ENP, including designated Wilderness, can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/scienceresearch.htm> and <https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/nature/wilderness101.htm>. Guidelines regarding research activities in Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge can be found at [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/ARM\\_Loxahatchee/visit/permits.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/ARM_Loxahatchee/visit/permits.html). Access and guidance information for other Everglades areas, managed by other agencies (e.g. South Florida Water Management District) or private lands, should be obtained from respective authorities.

Six general topics of interest and associated key issues and questions that may be addressed via this Financial Opportunity Announcement include:

1. Everglades restoration actions and effects along ENP boundaries (Tamiami Trail and eastern boundary)
2. Estuaries and coastal wetlands of the Everglades watershed
3. Invasive exotic species
4. Biodiversity and rare, threatened and endangered species
5. Cultural Resources
6. Ecosystem services and human ecology

Specific elements of each of these topics are describe below. These descriptions are provided as a guide to help identify issues and questions to be addressed in submitted proposals. Proposals may address multiple independent or interactive topics. Geographic areas of proposed study may include ENP or other areas of the greater Everglades ecosystem.

1. Everglades restoration actions and effects along ENP boundaries (Tamiami Trail and eastern boundary). Ongoing water management changes are altering exchanges of water, nutrients, and other materials across ENP boundaries, as well as in upstream, compartmentalized portions of the remnant Everglades. We seek proposals to increase our understanding and ability to forecast effects of changing water management and wetland hydrologic conditions on nutrient loading; the transport, fate, and effects of new and existing (“legacy”) nutrients; wetland community and ecosystem change; and the effectiveness of managing seepage from ENP into adjacent developed areas. Specific topics of interest include the following.
  - a. How to use combinations of water and fire management to accelerate habitat restoration in areas with a history of nutrient enrichment and water drainage.
  - b. Active restoration of tree islands in areas experiencing hydrologic restoration.
  - c. Analysis of the effects of alternative restoration strategies for remnant canals (e.g., filling, partial filling, plugging), potentially including considerations of current and future canal effects on wetland biogeochemistry, biotic mobility and food webs, and exotic species invasions.
  - d. Synthesis of available information on the differential sensitivity of Everglades habitats and areas to nutrient enrichment, with considerations of biogeochemistry, ecological responses, and regulatory frameworks.
  - e. Research and assess the ecological risk to Everglades native butterflies from widespread use of mosquito control agents and their potential impact on these non-target organisms and ecological restoration.
  - f. Development and documentation of open source ecosystem/landscape models that resource managers can use for synthesis and forecasting of operational responses.
  - g. Enhancement of existing ecological models that are frequently used (e.g., <http://cloudacus.com/simglades/applications.php>).
2. Estuaries and coastal wetlands of the Everglades. We seek proposals to improve understanding and forecasting coastal ecosystem status and dynamics and the effects of upstream water management (including restoration actions), fire management, sea-level rise, and climate change. Key questions and issues regard Florida Bay’s recent seagrass mass-mortality and phytoplankton (cyanobacteria) blooms, coastal wetland responses to an expanding zone of salinization, storm event effects, current and future water management effects, and indirect and interactive effects of fire management. This encompasses assessing salinity change and associated biogeochemical and ecological effects on soils and plant communities, including invasive exotic species. Specific topics of interest include the following issues and questions.
  - a. Seagrass mass-mortality events, considering the influence of freshwater flow and other factors on seagrass habitat recovery and sustainability. This includes understanding physical and biogeochemical mechanisms influencing mortality events and recovery (e.g., salinity, dissolved oxygen, sulfide, nutrients, light) and spatial and temporal (e.g. with climatic variability) patterns of habitat vulnerability.
  - b. The timing, distribution, intensity and duration of estuarine cyanobacteria and microalgae blooms in relation to the dynamics of seagrass communities (especially mass-mortality and associated detrital decomposition), freshwater inflow, nutrients from internal and external sources, grazing, and climatic disturbance.

- c. Food web dynamics, especially for fish assemblages, in relation to the changing habitats (seagrass, mangrove, hard-bottom) and conditions (e.g., salinity), as driven by internal food web dynamics, watershed management, climatic events, and sea-level rise.
  - d. Comparison of the structure, function, and dynamics of mangrove islands in Florida Bay to coastal mangrove forests and Everglades tree islands.
  - e. Exploration of remote sensing technology (e.g., LiDAR) applications to quantify changing coastal spatial patterns, including: coastline morphology, coastal elevation, soil characteristics, and estuarine/wetland plant community structure and biomass (seagrass beds, mangrove dominated forest, coastal prairie, and marshes that may include invasive exotic species). Combining multiple remote sensing approaches to enhance information quality is desirable.
  - f. Definition of factors that influence the resilience of coastal habitats based on their physical and biological features. How will different coastal habitats respond to regional drivers and sea-level rise? Which of these habitats may need to be considered a priority for protection? How can Everglades Restoration best increase coastal resilience?
  - g. Understanding the direct and indirect effects of applying fire management targeted at invasive exotic species in coastal prairies. A concern is how fire patterns potentially interact with sea-level rise and salt-water intrusion to cause rapid (decadal or less) shifts in coastal habitats.
3. Invasive exotic species. Many of the key issues identified below are components of Invasive Exotic Species Strategic Action Framework for the Everglades (<https://evergladesrestoration.gov/content/ies/>) and the NPS Integrated Pest Management process (<http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/brmd/ipm/process.cfm>). Improving any component of these processes or enhancing their implementation are priorities. We especially seek proposals that inform and support the Department of Interior's effort to quantify and understand the dynamics and effects of invasive exotic species and improve methods for Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) and information addressing the following issues and questions.
- a. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the influence of invasive species on the trajectory of Everglades restoration. What types of invasive species most strongly impact restoration success?
  - b. How are non-native plants and animals being introduced into the natural areas? Are there spatially explicit invasion corridors? How can we more effectively monitor areas/corridors of invasion and detect new introductions?
  - c. What are the best methods for detecting exotic plant species in the sub-canopy of remote locations, particularly before an area has been extensively occupied?
  - d. What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing and developing methods for detecting exotic fish?
  - e. What are the gaps in control techniques that are available to resource managers for high priority species, functional types, or organism groups? Identify novel approaches to exotic species control and compare these to traditional methods in terms of cost, effectiveness, and collateral effects on nearby native species.

- f. How are the effectiveness of control techniques and collateral effects on native species affected by the spatial patterns and characteristics of native Everglades communities, combined with patterns of invasion? What options are available for mitigating or minimizing collateral effects?
  - g. Under what conditions are biological controls most effective? Are there thresholds for introducing biological controls beyond which no additional exotic species removal/reduction effect is accomplished? If a threshold exists, how is it influenced by the patchy occupancy pattern of an exotic species across a landscape?
4. Biodiversity and rare, threatened and endangered species. Both restoration and large-scale ecological threats, including climate change, sea-level rise, and invasive exotic species, can directly and indirectly influence biodiversity and the dynamics and fate of rare, threatened and endangered species. We will seek proposals to investigate the spatial patterning of rare species, and relationship of these patterns to historic, current and likely future dynamics of major Everglades habitats, such as tree islands, in sustaining biological diversity and rare species. Special topics and questions of interest include the following.
- a. The use of museum collection and data mining to assess historical patterns of native species across the landscape.
  - b. Identification and assessment of the role of critical habitats sustaining Everglades biodiversity, including tree islands and ecotones. What characteristics of such habitats promote biodiversity and the continued existence of rare species? How can Everglades restoration and other management actions best restore and sustain such habitats?
  - c. Novel remote sensing approaches for estimating/predicting patterns of biodiversity.
  - d. What are the independent and interactive influences of water and fire management practices on Everglades biodiversity and, in the context of Everglades restoration and adaptive management, what key information is needed to maximize the persistence of high diversity hot-spots? How do different combinations of fire characteristics (intensity, severity, seasonality, return frequency) differentially impact habitat and biodiversity patterns and sustainability across the Everglades landscape, considering spatial and temporal variability?
  - e. Can we map fire severity patterns at a fine scale and effectively assess the effects of a range of fire intensities on the health of the landscape?
  - f. Are there conditions/contexts where severe fires or aggressive interventions (e.g. plant removal coupled with fire application and flooding) may benefit the ecosystem?
  - g. How could an investigation of archaeological sites enhance our understanding of this historical ecological context of specific areas in the regional watershed? This is also applicable to the cultural resources category (#5).
5. Cultural resources. We will seek proposals focused on the value and influences of historical or current cultural practices on ecological structure and processes that define key aspects of the Everglades ecosystem. This includes analysis of the historic human use of tree islands and influence of this use on tree island ecological structure and function. Special topics and questions of interest include the following.

- a. Using ethnographic and geo-archaeological techniques to gain insight about the history of tree island development in the context of human and hydrologic influences. Connecting/comparing this historical context to existing conditions is desirable.
  - b. Perform a landscape scale investigation of the relationship between tree island size, location, and levels/types of historical use.
  - c. Investigate how different types of tree islands (i.e. permanently inundated vs. upland hardwood hammocks) are associated with distinct historical uses and how these uses interacted with intrinsic developmental pathways (e.g., forest succession, island expansion, subsidence, or increased elevation). How did historical uses affect the distinct developmental pathways that are characteristic of different types of tree islands?
  - d. Explore criteria and supporting rationale for identifying potential impacts of changing Everglades water levels and sea-level rise on cultural resources.
6. Ecosystem services and human ecology. We invite proposals focused on the analysis the interactions and dependencies between the conserved natural areas within the Everglades watershed and adjacent built communities, especially with considerations of water management, restoration, climate change and sea-level rise. This may include analyses of ecosystem services and their valuation. The following topics are of special interest.
- a. New and innovative ways to engage and share understanding with the human population of southern Florida, with an intention of promoting stewardship-based perspectives and mutually beneficial management actions.
  - b. Identifying methods and strategies for rapidly quantifying the economic impacts of cascading responses to disturbance events (such as seagrass die off and resulting algae blooms).
  - c. Quantifying the economic impacts of elevated groundwater levels, due to either restoration of historical flows in conserved areas, sea-level rise associated increases in coastal groundwater tables, or the interaction of these activities. Defining the spatial and temporal intensity of economic impacts is highly desirable.
  - d. How can we establish a network of institutions to facilitate an ongoing public dialogue? Ideally the dialogue could enable large numbers of people to assess, evaluate, and describe the manner in which the Everglades ecosystem contributes to their well-being and then define what actions can be taken by individuals, groups, or resource managers to enhance these contributions.
  - e. Develop (or assemble existing) information to map typical human land and water uses, economic values, crop types, pesticide use practices, and public perceptions of the environment. The goal is to assemble a concise and trusted source of information on patterns of social and economic activity, gather concerns that may exist, and use this base of information to explore potential solutions to the challenges that are identified.
  - f. Develop spatially explicit summaries identifying the value of ecosystem services that can be used as a complement to US census data. For example, synthesize historical information on boat ramp use, trailer surveys, and other sources of information describing the amount and type of recreational activity occurring across the watershed.



Proposals must include the following:

- Principal Investigator(s), Affiliation, Address, and contact information
- Identification of which of the 6 topics listed above are addressed in the proposal. It is acceptable for a project to address more than one topic.
- Project Description must include a summary, introduction with rationale, timeline, methods, expected collections/samples design and scope, proposed analysis, timeline and expected deliverables, essential personnel, and an estimated budget with a justification.

Proposals will be due by May 11, 2017. The SFNRC will review proposals and contact Principle Investigators following completion of the review and selection of proposals expected to be funded.

## **B. Program Objectives**

- The primary objective of the CESI program is to further greater Everglades ecosystem restoration by supporting monitoring, research, assessment and modeling that increases our understanding of the greater Everglades ecosystem and informs restoration planning, implementation, and associated resource management.
- Studies supported by CESI must be relevant to restoration, coherent with decision-making timeframes, and utilize scientifically-sound and cost-effective methods and approaches.
- CESI projects are intended to complement other agencies' research endeavors by filling in gaps in our current understanding of restoration science.

## **C. Term of the Agreement**

Proposals funded via this FOA will be executed as CESU Task Agreements. Agreement terms for funded projects will range between one and five years, and likely from one to three years, depending on the negotiated project scope. Agreements will not be effective until fully executed with the signature from the NPS Awarding Officer. Continuation of agreements through their expected duration, after the initially funded period (typically one year), will be dependent upon the availability of future funds and agreements can be terminated earlier in accordance with 2 CFR, Part 200, Sections 200.338 and 200.339.

## **Section III: Application and Submission Information**

### **A. Contents and Form of Application Submission**

The applicant must submit application documents in accordance with the requirements described in this Funding Opportunity Announcement, including instructions below. The Principal Investigator's institution must be an active member of one of the eastern Regional CESU networks listed in Section I. Co-principal investigators and proposed partners from other institutions that are not members of these CESU networks may be included on the proposal if funded via subcontracts or agreements between the investigators' institutions. Such arrangements among investigators should be described in the proposed budget.

All documents should be submitted in an electronic format (e.g. pdf, docx, xlsx) readable on Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Office Suite. Do not include any proprietary or personally identifiable information (described below).

- Project Narrative – Proposal Submission Format

The proposal must include a narrative description that should specifically address each of the review criteria (see Section IV). The proposal text must be no longer than 10 pages, no smaller than font size 11, and have 1-inch margins. The 10-page limit includes all text, and scientifically relevant figures and tables. Reference citations, professional resumes, and budget tables and justification may be on additional pages.

- Complete Application Package should include:

Project Narrative with these subsections:

- Summary
- Introduction and Rationale
- Design and Methods
- Data Analysis
- Products
- Timeline

Detailed Budget and Justification, including a separate budget for each proposed year and a cumulative budget for the project duration. Note that the expected range of potential awards from available funds is expected to be \$20,000 to \$300,000 per award. Proposals for multi-year projects are welcome, but continuation of funding is dependent upon the availability of future funds.

Professional resumes of Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigators

Principal Investigator contact information

### **B. Submission from Applicants**

If selected for award, NPS reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to:

- Other budget information
- Name and phone number of the Designated Responsible Employee for complying with national policies prohibiting discrimination (See 10 CFR 1040.5)

## **C. Submission Dates and Times**

### **Submittals:**

- Applicants are held responsible for their complete proposals being submitted to the National Park Service. Applications must be received by May 11, 2017, 11:59 P.M. (EDT). Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed. You are encouraged to submit your application well before the deadline. The SFNRC will acknowledge receipt of a proposal, generally within one business day of this receipt.

### **Where to Submit:**

- Applications must be submitted by the due date via email to these three addresses:  
[David\\_Rudnick@NPS.gov](mailto:David_Rudnick@NPS.gov)  
[Tonya\\_Howington@NPS.gov](mailto:Tonya_Howington@NPS.gov)  
[Emmett\\_Johnson@NPS.gov](mailto:Emmett_Johnson@NPS.gov)

If an application package exceeds 20MB, please contact one of the above regarding alternative delivery options.

## **Section IV: Application Review Information**

### **A. Review Criteria**

- NPS will evaluate and consider only those applications that explicitly address each of the merit review criterion.
- Each applicant is required to provide a detailed narrative of the following criteria elements. It is **HIGHLY** recommended that the Project Narrative have sections labeled as follows:

<b>Criterion 1</b>	
<b>Relevance and potential impact</b>	
<b>Weight 30%</b>	
The proposed work addresses an important problem	Are the results likely to further Everglades ecosystem restoration and sustainability?

<b>Criterion 2</b>	
<b>Qualifications of the applicants</b>	
<b>Weight 20%</b>	
Evidence of experience, training, facilities and resources	Does the evidence of experience presented in the proposal indicate whether the proposing group is likely to successfully implement the proposed work and deliver proposed products?

<b>Criterion 3</b>	
<b>Cost</b>	
<b>Weight 10%</b>	
Evaluation of benefit of the project versus expected cost	Is the project cost justified, reasonable, and appropriate for the proposed work?

<b>Criterion 4</b>	
<b>Scientific Merit</b>	
<b>Weight 35%</b>	
Evaluation of potential to advance knowledge relevant to one or more of the specified topic areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originality and innovation of questions, concepts, approaches, and analysis</li> <li>• Clear and sound goals, objectives and rationale</li> <li>• Approach is technically sound, with appropriate design, methods, and analyses</li> </ul>

<b>Criterion 5</b>	
<b>Site-Specific Feasibility</b>	
<b>Weight 5%</b>	
Evaluation of appropriateness of proposed methods	Are the methods of the study compatible with NPS policies or other agencies' land management policies, while at the appropriate location and scale to provide meaningful results?

## B. Review and Selection Process

### 1. Merit Review

10	Superior	(100 % of weighted average)
8	Very Good	(80 % of weighted average)
6	Good	(60 % of weighted average)
4	Marginal	(40 % of weighted average)
2	Poor	(20 % of weighted average)
0	Not Acceptable	(No score)

Rating	Descriptive Statement
10	Superior: Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates that the proposed project will meet or exceed the Government's performance requirements, and demonstrates no weaknesses or deficiencies.
8	Very Good: Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates a high likelihood of meeting the Government's requirements, and demonstrates only a few minor weaknesses or deficiencies.
6	Good: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability and likelihood to meet the Government's performance requirements. The Application contains some weaknesses or deficiencies that mostly have minor effects.
4	Marginal: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the Government's performance requirements. The Application contains significant weaknesses or deficiencies, as well as minor weaknesses and deficiencies.
2	Poor: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion, but does not fully and convincingly demonstrate the likelihood of successfully meeting the Government's requirements. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strength presented.
0	Not Acceptable: Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the Government's requirements.

### 2. Discussions and Award

The Government may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to: (1) only a portion of the proposal is selected for award; (2) the Government needs additional information to determine that the recipient is capable of complying with the requirements of DOI Financial Assistance Regulations and/or (3) special terms and conditions are required. Failure to resolve satisfactorily the issues identified by the Government will preclude award to the applicant.

## **Section V: Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Instrument Information**

Following selection of successful proposals, a designated Agreements Technical Representative (ATR) from the SFNRC will work with the Principal Investigator(s) to develop a Task Agreement derived from the proposal. This will include a statement of work, budget, and specification of an expected period of performance. This Agreement may include modifications of the proposal's specifications, negotiated and agreed to by the ATR and Principal Investigator(s). As for all CESU Task Agreements, it will include identification of substantial NPS involvement in the project.

The Task Agreement will be a Project that is awarded by issuance under an existing CESU Master Cooperative Agreement, with funding subject to the availability of funds during the first and subsequent years of the project.

An Agreement issued by the NPS and signed by the NPS Awarding Officer obligates NPS funds. Notification of a successful proposal does not constitute authority to incur costs. Costs incurred **prior** to receipt of a signed task **will not** be reimbursed.

Once the Task Agreement, derived from a successful proposal, has been signed by the NPS Awarding Officer, the recipient may incur costs as specified in the approved budget submittal.

### **B. Funding Restrictions**

#### **Funding:**

All funding is contingent upon the availability of funding.

#### **Cost Principles:**

Costs must be allowable in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles referenced in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles.

#### **Pre-award Costs:**

Must comply with 2 CFR Part 200.458 and requires prior approval from the Awarding Officer.

### **C. Award Notices**

After an applicant's proposal is selected for award, the applicant will receive a notification letter from the Awarding Officer. This letter will detail the next steps in the awarding process. Once all clearances and reviews have been conducted, a Task Agreement written under the respective CESU Master cooperative agreement will be sent

for signature. Work cannot begin before the recipient receives a fully executed copy of the cooperative agreement which contains the signature of the Awarding Official.

**Notice of Selection:**

NPS will notify the applicant selected for full proposal submission by May 26, 2017. This notice of selection is **not** an authorization to begin performance. (Pre-award expenses will not be reimbursed).

Organizations whose applications have not been selected will be advised as promptly as possible. This notice will summarize why the application was not selected.

**D. Administrative Requirements**

All field sampling or experimentation in Everglades National Park done under Task Agreements that are derived from this FOA shall require ENP research permits. This may include considerations of transportation to a field site and activities at the site. See [https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/nature/sfnrc\\_permits.htm](https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/nature/sfnrc_permits.htm). The administrative requirements of other agencies may be associated with field work conducted in other areas of the Everglades and it will be the responsibility of the Principal Investigator(s) to comply with those requirements.

All data and metadata produced via Task Agreements that are derived from this FOA, as well as the ownership and publication rights associated with these data, shall conform to NPS and SFNRC guidelines described in EVER Policy 5281-53; see <http://www.nps.gov/ever/naturescience/researchdatareporting.htm>.

**Section VI: Other Information**

**A. Modification or Changes to the Announcement**

Notices of any modifications to this announcement will be disseminated through the CESU network.

**B. Government Right to Reject or Negotiate**

NPS reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all applications received in response to this announcement and to select any application, in whole or in part, as a basis for negotiation and/or award.

**C. Notice of Right to Conduct a Review of Financial Capability**

NPS reserves the right to conduct an independent third party review of financial capability for applicants that are selected for negotiation of award (including personal credit information of principal(s) of a small business if there is insufficient information to determine financial capability of the organization).

#### **D. Notice of Potential Disclosure under Freedom of Information Act**

Applicants should be advised that identifying information regarding all applicants, including applicant names and/or points of contact, may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, whether or not such applicants are selected for negotiation of award.

#### **E. Personally Identifiable Information**

In responding to this Announcement, Applicants must ensure that Protected Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is not included in the following documents: Project Abstract, Project Narrative, Professional Resumes, Budget or Budget Justification. These documents will be used by the Merit Review Committee in the review process to evaluate each application. PII is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as:

Any information about an individual maintained by an agency, including but not limited to, education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, biometric records, etc., including any other personal information that is linked or linkable to an individual. This definition of PII can be further defined as: (1) Public PII and (2) Protected PII.

**Public PII:**

PII found in public sources such as telephone books, public websites, business cards, university listing, etc. Public PII includes first and last name, address, work telephone number, email address, home telephone number, and general education credentials.

**Protected PII:**

PII that requires enhanced protection. This information includes data that if compromised could cause harm to an individual such as identity theft.