

Transcript from:
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Cooperative Weed Management Areas
Request for Applications Webinar
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Transcript from real-time captions follows:

I am Sheila Johnson. The Great Lakes watershed specialist. Overall DL RI grant program. I'm glad you could join the webinar today. We also have on with us Jason Stevens. The forest service Eastern region ecologist Greenland specialist, and invasive plants coordinator. Our main speaker today will be John Kyle. Before service Eastern region forest health specialist. He serves the role of use coordinator. As well as invasive plant coordinator. John will tell us a bit more about this year's cooperative weed management area and request for applications. Feel free to share questions into the chat during the top. We will be sure to have time for questions and answers at the end of the main presentation. Go ahead John. Thanks.

Thanks for the introduction Sheila. Thanks to Sherry for taking care of the technical issues we have today. I do want to thank Sheila. She is done a lot of work to get things to this point. Those of you who applied in the past know we are doubling up this time around. It's with work and effort on her part we are able to offer this again quickly. Many of you have been to some of the webinars before the [indiscernible] have been offered for five or six years. Those of you who attended the webinar before this one will be similar. We try to streamline and improve it with every iteration. Hopefully this is no exception. Let me see if I can get to the next slide. Two main parts today. We will be talking about the Great Lakes restoration initiative. The cooperative weed management background area and purpose. We will go through the actual request for applications through the remainder of the presentation. It may take about 30 minutes to get through. Whenever you see GRLI that is the acronym for the Great Lakes restoration initiative. We will have time at the end for questions. Those of you who are new to the initiative EPA provides funding partner agencies like off the Fish and Wildlife Service and others as well. To restore and protect and maintain the great lake ecosystem. Sometimes it's easier to partner with different groups who can do that work. Within the for service there are other program areas for GRLI. Is one for insect and disease management. There other ones to reduce pollution. Both nonpoint and at the point of runoff. There are other programs that work on wetland frustration. Those are three areas I will not talk about today. What I will talk about today is the CW a program area. This program is to promote invasive species management. Specifically plans through cooperative lead management agencies. Similar to other rounds of the applications. There's \$850,000 expected in this funding cycle. They range all the way up to \$50,000. I was talking about previous applications. You may think didn't we apply for this last winter? The answer is you may have. There are two cycles close together. Last fall there were some that were submitted in October. Results cannot December. This one runs from May to July of this year. There are a couple reasons for that. The GRLI is out of synchrony with the other GRLI program areas. It may cause issues. We decided we would get them all synced up. The spring 21 cycle is our attempt to catch up. It will not be in the fall and winter as it has been in the past. In order to be eligible for funding there are two main criteria that needs to be satisfied. One is the location of the work to be proposed. It could be done by cooperative lead management area or similar organizational. You can see this map. Anything within the blue lines. And includes all or a part of eight states. If you would like more specific instructions on what is and what is out you can refer to our webpage on that. Or the application information. There is different ways for you to find that information. To figure out exactly where it is. The organization that you are with can be based outside. All the work proposed had to be within it. It has to be within the United States. The second part of eligibility is for CW MA or similar. And you see CWMA as a representative term for groups. Other groups are similar. They are perfectly eligible for this. There is no prioritization of one group over the other. It is just a useful term to help us talk about it. Basically those are just organize partnerships with a variety of different groups. A lot include governmental folks. Many are all level from county and township. It also includes tribal governments as well. There could be a lot of other interested groups. Nongovernmental organizations. By following this category. Other things like that that have land management interest. Plus there are private individuals that may be interested. The criteria is that they have to manage invasive species. Particularly plants. They are in a relatively large sized area. Maybe even something bigger than that. This is a CWMA interactive map. You can get this at the Great Lakes commission. You can do a search on it. It's listed on the bottom. There is no test or registry for CWMA. One of the aspirations we have for this program is we attempt to do bigger things than just fun plant removal projects. We want to support groups and encourage groups like this at a grass roots level to

work together. We want project funding. There is nothing wrong with that. It's not the best fit for this program. Sometimes it is difficult for us to differentiate. I will talk about that a little bit. The adjustments we have made to the application material this year is that each applicant is required to list the CWMA or CWMA's that are involved in the proposal for the application. About 10 years ago the Midwest network put out a book called the CWMA cookbook. They have some characteristics of what CWMA's half. This is the thing we have is a guiding principle. As we determine whether applications are put in by CWMA. This is right out of their publication. They operate within a defined geographic area. The goal is to do cooperative and coordinated work that goes across boundaries. It made it difficult for us to work out management with adjacent landowners. Some of the other characteristics is they have a long-term commitment. Typically there is a formal agreement with different partners that are participating. They have a comprehensive plan often. About the management of invasive species. Some are dedicated for the management a particular plant species or habitats. That's fine. Finally they will have a steering committee with that as well. Moving on, let's talk about how to apply. Applications have had to go through grants.gov. We do that for a couple reasons. It actually makes the application process easier. A lot of information that is needed for the awarding of a grant through our grant shop is put in. In your application. We don't have to go back and request that. There can be a lot of delays with that. The information is loaded and there. There is supplemental information you can find on our for service Eastern region website. I assume your bookmarks will still work. Maybe they want. Some of the lakes into the chat box to the side. The website is reorganized. Basically you can find it from getting to our website and looking under the region nine grants and agreements in the CWMA webpage. This is what the webpage looks like. It looks a lot different. You can see a lot of different highlights in here. Down at the bottom you can see the link to the CWMA page. If you keep going this is what you will see. This is a lot of background information on the request for applications. This information is in the request for applications and the instructions document. One of the interesting things is in the upper right you can see the quick links. There are a number of things that may be helpful to you. As you go through your application. If it's been a while since you lifted the GRLI action plan three. If you are thinking about how your work links with your state force action plan, which the state has. There are links to that as well and interesting things you can check. As you scroll down this page there are a couple of things that are important in terms of deadlines. The first arrow, July eighth. That is when these applications must be submitted through grants.gov to the for service. They have to be in by 6:00 p.m. that evening. Hopefully about two months later we will have gone to the applications and reviewed them and ranked them. Hopefully in September sometime we will be able to notify all applicants of the status of the application. Scrolling further down this page you can see the first arrow goes to grants.gov. If you need a link to get there you can click on their right there. There is a grant opportunity number that is circled there. You can put that in the search box and link to the application and grants.gov. There is a couple other things as you scroll down. Two arrows on the left. The top one is the request for application instructions. I will talk about that in the next slide. We will get back to that after a little bit. There is the project narrative form. This is part of the application where you put in exactly what you will do. We will talk about that at greater length in a little bit. The final thing that is on this is some of the additional resources for applicants. If you want to see some of the titles of the projects that were funded in the last couple years there are a couple links there. There is guidance for matching funds. There is guidance on there and what is appropriate and what is not and tips on the calculation of that. This is the request for application instructions. This is a good place to start. To get a good review or a good sense of what is going on. I would say many other website screenshots you have seen so far and will see later today or right out of this. This is my point. Project narrative form. It has, it covers evaluation criteria and match timelines. It has other dependencies as well. Including areas that are suitable locations for the work to be done. This year we have a new appendix. For grants.gov application submission and receipt procedures. We put it in in case that is helpful to different groups. As they are doing their applications. Let's move on to grants.gov. This is what you see as soon as you start. There are a number of places you can go from there. You will need to register. There's a governmental website that prepares things for contract into the works with the federal government. If you don't have those you can still get them in time before the application is done. It's typically a couple to a few weeks. You may check your Sam registration. Those have an expiration date on them. That comes up with other grants we have in the for service. It might be worth a check to make sure everything is up-to-date. Once you have those you can register and grants.gov. I mentioned the floor. I mentioned a number you can put in. An opportunity number. You can see it down here on the bottom. You can put in a couple search boxes. You can see our opportunity at the top of their. You can see there are other GRLI opportunities at the moment. You might investigate some of those. If you were to click on the opportunity number in the table of grants of opportunities that you can see their this is what you would get. This is a direct link with all the information to the grant that we have. You can see it is correct based on the-of the upper left. USD forest service GRLI CWM a spring of 2021. Below that circle you can see four different tabs. Each of those tabs

has information within additional information. You can find out a number of different things in their. When you are ready and convinced this is what you want to do you can click on that apply button. One of the things I will ask you to do is to create a work space. The workspace is basically like a desktop. You need to register first and then you can set this up. It is a desktop. So you are other people can work on parts of the application. You can download them to your own computer and work on them and upload them again. You can all work together in that one. This changed a couple years ago. If you need help there is surprisingly informative videos on YouTube. On how to get through this and in some other procedures. What you need in order to have a full and complete application is listed here. This is in the instruction. The required forms you need to apply our on the top list under the top arrow. There are other forms that are certifying that you can actually get a grant from the federal government. The other thing that is required as an attachment, I will come back and talk about that later. There other forms that may or may not be applicable to you. That is the second arrow you see there. If those apply fill them out. If they do not you do not need to. Back to the narrative form for a moment. That's the one at the bottom. I will talk about that in a moment. I will talk about the attachments form. This is basically a screenshot of what it is. If you have other things you wish to upload this is where you do it. If you have other things like that you think are relevant to your application you should put them in here. Some applicants in the past have found parts of our applications have been short on space. For example they will think they needed a more illustrative budget table. Maybe there wasn't enough information for follow-up treatments. They would take a portion out of their best management practice that they have for their CWMA input in the treatment specifics and follow-ups and things like that. If it's directly relevant to this application you should feel free to use this to put it in. Periodically we have applications that have entire manuals and them. They push the application to more than 200 pages. A lot of it is not directly relevant to those of us who are reviewing the proposal or the applications. Feel free to use this. Put in what you think is relevant. One thing that my give you more space, some groups will have a number of letters of support. You can combine those into one file. However many you have. Rather than have a separate attachment for each letter. You can do whatever you think works best for you. This is similar to what you have seen in the past. Those of you who have applied. I mentioned earlier before that one of the new things on this form is an actual listing of the CWMA. This is the second line from the bottom. That has to be put in there. If it is more than one put both in. That is new for this year. Another thing that is new for this year is we try to streamline and make things better. This time the measurable results and outcomes table is a little bit different. The furthest table used to be a lot smaller. There used to be more of a reliance on [indiscernible]. It is acres treated and other measures. If your application involves a lot of survey, you can put in as an output a number of acres survey. If it is surveying streams or lake edges you can put in an estimate of miles of streams surveyed. Things like that. Or the number you're expecting to have trainings or volunteer hours. Anything that could be used as outcome or as a result from your application you should put in there. There are 12 lines in there. Hopefully that will be enough to add those. This is a little bit different than before. Another thing that is different than before is the budget detail. This is revised in an attempt to standardize some of the responses that we have had. We would have responses that were thorough and clear for some. Basically this breaks the budget into categories. Personnel, travel, supplies and contracts. Other things like that. It let you put in the amount of money you are requesting from this grant. It also allows you to put in how that would be matched. As you recall I said earlier there is a 20% minimum matching requirement. You can match over that all you would like. It's tricky to figure that out every once in a while. You take the amount of federal funds that you want and you multiply it times .25. That is what your match will need to be. If you have a \$50,000 grant you multiply that times .25 and that's \$12,500. Total project is \$62,500, including the match. Hopefully that will be clear. There is a spot in their for putting in descriptions. And other things like that. At the bottom there is a spot for additional [indiscernible]. Try to get through this. If you feel you need to supplement that with additional information, like I said before you can put it on the attachments form. However feels best to you. The other thing that is different this year is the evaluation criteria. We have done reorganization compared to last time. Some things are re-sequenced. There are changes within some of the categories. This is right out of the instructions document. It is exactly as it shows up in the proposal and in the narrative proposal. It is similar to those who have applied in the past. As you look through this the top when their shows the work you are proposing links to different plans. The Great Lakes action plan. The national state forest plan. There is a forest that is involved that may have links to their plan. Specifics are good in this section. Rather than something a little more open ended and vague. There other plans that are okay to include in this part too. Just none that are included in the bullet point. Basically after that you link that to the plans and strategies from within your CWMA. Most CWMA's have management plans and things. You can pull out specifics from that. You can put this in the context of what is at risk and why the project needs to be done. Hopefully what you will see is the outcome at the very end. What the desired condition would be. These are in a number of different documents. You can read these

over. This is how we word the points. For the applications. Last time this was labeled in [indiscernible]. It's called the technically sound and sustainable scope of work. This describes what will the project do? Will you do detections and treatments? You can do more than one thing. You can do a lot of things in there. If you can explain exactly what you will be doing and the ways in which you will be doing it. The second bullet point describes whether you will control. There is a list in the GRLI action plan. It is an abbreviated list. There are many plans outside of this list. That still pose an ecological threat. They are perfectly acceptable. Don't confine your work to the plans that are mentioned here. We ask you to discuss follow-ups and monitoring, whatever that does. Whatever that means for your group. It includes what you will do if your goals are not met. What you will do in terms of prevention of reestablishment and restoration, if there is replanting that will be involved. Finally, if it is relevant for the last bullet point you can explain how your previous work got its application. If there was work you have done in the past that was particularly helpful and has guided you, and what you choose to do this time around, be sure to include that. That is helpful to understand how groups change and improve as they go through time. This is the measurable result. And outcomes. This is 30% of the total points that are awarded here. I basically discussed this previously. Basically it is the work to be done of whatever that is. If it's acres of treatment or survey, or other things like that. Include education and outreach if that is an appropriate part of your project. One of the things you can add in here is that this project builds on previous work. Perhaps you did surveys last year or the year before. This is your chance to go through and do treatments to deal with what you have found. Also, be sure as you are doing this the budget and the maps are very clear. It says up at the top cost per acres is a rating factor. Sometimes we get some that are very expensive and sometimes we get cost per acres that are unexpectedly low. Just put in an estimate of what that will be. If that is relevant to your application. The last series of points are awarded for partnerships and sharing. The first bullet point, and ask you to identify the partners that will be involved. Ideally those partners would contribute a letter of support. In that letter, ideally it would state specifically how they will share the responsibility of this program. Perhaps they will contribute to match you with funds. Maybe they have equipment or other things like that. It helps with the review to have good descriptions of what those are. Also, part of the goal of this program as I said before is to strengthen partnerships and relationships. We would love to see the capacity of CWMA's and other groups like that be strengthened. If you have thoughts on how this could help with that aspect of CWMA work, also you can include how this project will engage with the community. Especially underserved communities. All that is relevant, and it can make for a stronger application. The selection process goes like this. We assemble a review team after the proposals are due. After the applications are due. The forest service staff and stoke folks from agencies and nongovernmental agencies will get together and evaluate and prioritize those proposals. Ones that come in are dismissed because they are ineligible. We will review and rank them. Hopefully, as I said before We will have the work done in September. We really make a big effort to notify different groups of what has happened with their applications. And who was selected and who wasn't. Also, in the past the proposals and the reviewers can be posted on our website. The selection process, hopefully the notifications will occur in September of this year. Here is the timeline again. The application period is open now. Applications are due Thursday, July eighth, at 6:00 p.m. After we get the applications we will rank and review them. September we will notify different groups. Hopefully after that the information will go to our grant shops. It could be in January when these are awarded. That was a lot of stuff to discuss. A lot of times you might find you need additional information or help. Out of the instructions here is the group of people you can contact. Including myself or Jason or Sheila. If you are in different parts of the United States or the Great Lakes basin you can see other people who might be local. And relevant to your application. Please feel free to reach out to them. In terms the last thoughts I have, again minor changes to the applications and timelines for this year. You can get a lot of this information from our region nine or Eastern region grants page. All applications go through grants.gov. Grants.gov suggest you apply a couple days before the deadline. Just in case there are technical issues. Finally, as I said please contact us if you have questions. We are more than happy to help out with that. With that I think that is the last slide that I have.

Thank you John. What a great presentation. I appreciate you sharing all of your knowledge there. With that I expect we will be getting some Q&A. A reminder your options are to type your questions into the chat. We can address them for you. And share any information you need. If you are on the phone line and you would like to speak up with a question you can raise your hand using the raise hand feature. That should be in the top center. Where there is an icon. It looks like we are getting our first question into the chat. I will read these off and John you are unmuted. Jason if you would like to speak up just remember to hit star six. The first question is, about the second slide of the presentation could you please repeat when the grant decisions would be announced? So we can plan for our fieldwork.

These decisions will be announced in September. Hopefully. That is our plan. It takes a little while for that to work here in our grant shops. A legitimate start date would be anything after the beginning of the next

calendar year. Starting the following spring. Sheila or Jason may have comments on that too. It takes a while to get through our system.

That sounds great. I know in the instructions we have lifted a wide range of awards from October, 2021-February 2022. To let people know that the applications are reviewed again. Once we select projects for funding. Everything is typically signed and finalized likely in January or February. A start date around that time is reasonable. That was our second question. Any other questions, feel free to type in the chat. You can also raise your hand. I do see some typing. We will pause to let people stop and think of their questions. While we are waiting to let people think about that I will click the CWMA direct grant page in the chat one more time. The URL is not the prettiest. [indiscernible] has pulled up the file pod. If you would like to download the [indiscernible] instructions, the narrative for them if you scroll down there is a PDF version of the slides. They include hyperlinks. You can review all of those and share them. We are glad to see so much interest in CWMA's. John mentioned at the beginning that we do have another application that is funded through GRLI. Covering insect and disease and mitigation. Reducing runoff and [indiscernible] and coastal habitats. If there is no objection from John I will put in a quick note on the time of that in the chat as well. In case that is something else people are interested in. And maybe you would like to join us again. That recording of this webinar will be hosted on the CWM a website that I put into the chat. Even sooner than that we will put it in the related documents tab of grants.gov. When you search that grant opportunity number. I encourage you to look at the related documents tab. As well as the webpage for additional resources for applicants. John did you have any last thoughts you want to share?

Not really Sheila. I would really encourage people if they have questions to reach out to us. We are happy to help them however we can. We get a number of questions like that in the preparation stage. Some people seem sheep us to reach out to us. Don't let that stop you. Were happy to talk to you about your project and the things you want to do. Please get in touch with us via email or the phone. Email is probably best since we are all working remotely. Please do get in touch with us.

That is a great point. Thanks for that. We do not seem to be getting any more questions in. Thanks for joining today and for the work that you do during this invasive species awareness week. Thanks to John for presenting, and to Sherry and are captioner for helping make this webinar work for all of us. With that we will sign off.

Thank you everybody.

[Event Concluded]