

May 2020



# WestFAST News

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Chair – Patrick Lambert; Federal Liaison Officer – Deborah Lawler

## **Funding available to develop new water treatment technologies**

USBR 05/04/20. The Bureau of Reclamation is making up to \$1 million available through its Desalination and Water Purification Research Program. This funding opportunity is seeking innovative and cost-effective new water treatment technologies. This unique, two-phase funding opportunity will have selected applicants pitch their new technology to technical experts this fall.

"There is a need to reduce the cost, energy requirements and environmental impacts in treating unusable water," said Program Administrator Yuliana Porras-Mendoza. "This innovative program allows technical experts to help select the strongest applicants."

Reclamation is looking for new technologies or processes to:

- Treat brackish groundwater in a less energy-intensive way than currently available.
- Reduce cost, energy, and/or environmental impacts of reverse osmosis/nanofiltration concentrate.
- Improve the efficiency of the water treatment process—either by improvements to pre-treatment, post-treatment, monitoring, sensors, or other innovative process or technology.
- Reduce costs, energy usage, and/or environmental impacts of seawater desalination, including intakes and/or outfalls.

- Reduce costs, energy requirements, and/or environmental impacts of treating impaired and unusable water to standards necessary for an identified beneficial use.

The funding opportunity is available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by searching for funding opportunity number BOR-DO-20-F014. Applications are due by June 17, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. MDT. If your application is selected, you will be invited to participate in the "pitch" event on September 24 - 25, 2020.

Eligible applicants include individuals/entrepreneurs, institutions of higher education, profit organizations, state and local governmental entities, non-profit organizations, federally funded research and development centers, and tribal governments and organizations. No cost-share is required, but it is highly encouraged.

Learn more about Reclamation's Desalination and Water Purification Research Program at <https://www.usbr.gov/research/dwpr>.

## **Funding opportunity available to build drought resiliency through WaterSMART**

USBR 05/04/20. The Bureau of Reclamation has released a funding opportunity for communities to take a proactive approach to drought through building projects that increase water supply reliability, improve water management, or provide benefits for fish, wildlife and the environment. The

drought resiliency projects funding opportunity is available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by searching funding opportunity number BOR-DO-20-F002.

"We are looking for applicants that are working to implement projects that are identified in their drought response plans to avoid future crises and reduce the need for emergency response actions," said Reclamation's Acting Drought Response Program Manager John Whitler.

Eligible applicants for funding include states, tribes, irrigation districts, water districts or other organizations with water or power delivery authority located in the western United States or U.S. territories. It also includes Alaska and Hawaii, which are now eligible.

Up to \$300,000 per agreement is available for a project that can be completed within two years. Up to \$750,000 per agreement is available for a project that can be completed within three years. Recipients must match the funding with a minimum of 50% non-federal cost-share.

Applications are due on July 8, 2020, at 4 p.m. MDT.

Visit Reclamation's WaterSMART program at [www.usbr.gov/watersmart](http://www.usbr.gov/watersmart) and the Drought Response Program at [www.usbr.gov/drought](http://www.usbr.gov/drought) to learn more about this and other opportunities.

## **[USDA Announces \\$5 Million in Wetland Mitigation Banking Program Funds](#)**

NRCS 05/05/20. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today the availability of up to \$5 million for wetland mitigation banks. This funding through the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program is available to help conservation partners develop or establish

mitigation banks to help agricultural producers maintain eligibility for USDA programs.

"Wetlands are critically important to the health of our natural resources -- filtering water, reducing soil loss and providing habitat to our nation's wildlife while also helping to sequester carbon from the atmosphere," said NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr. "Through the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program, we're working with experienced wetland mitigation partners to give farmers another option to meet Farm Bill requirements."

Wetland mitigation banking is the restoration, creation or enhancement of wetlands to compensate for unavoidable impacts on wetlands at other locations. The Farm Bill's wetland conservation provisions, commonly called Swampbuster provisions, aim to remove certain incentives to convert wetlands or to produce agricultural commodities on converted wetlands.

Producers seeking benefits through most USDA programs must comply with wetland conservation provisions by affirming they will not impact wetlands on their lands. In situations where avoidance or on-site mitigation is challenging, the Farm Bill allows for off-site mitigation through the purchase of mitigation banking credits.

This competitive grants program helps states, local governments and other qualified partners develop wetland mitigation banks to restore, create or enhance wetland ecosystems.

Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) offsite link image by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 6, 2020.

NRCS is accepting proposals from eligible Indian Tribes, state and local units of government, for-profit entities and nongovernmental organizations.

For more information on wetland mitigation banking, visit our website.

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## USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

NRCS 05/06/20. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of \$3 million for grants through its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 6, 2020.

“These grant opportunities underscore USDA’s commitment to all segments of agriculture, including swiftly expanding areas of urban agriculture,” Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey said. “Such projects have the potential to address important issues such as food access and education and to support innovative ways to increase local food production in urban environments.”

“We are proud to be able to offer support through this cross-agency effort,” said Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Greg Ibach. “In creating this grant opportunity, USDA will build upon its years of experience providing technical support, grant funding and research to help farmers and local and urban food businesses grow.”

### *Planning Projects*

USDA is making available \$1 million for Planning Projects that initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

### *Implementation Projects*

USDA is making available \$2 million for Implementation Projects that accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers. Projects will improve local food access and collaborate with partner organizations and may support infrastructure needs, emerging technologies, educational endeavors and urban farming policy implementation.

### *Webinar*

A webinar, which will be held on June 3, 2020, from 2 to 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, will provide an overview of the grants’ purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application. Information on how to register and participate in the webinar, [offsite link image](#) or listen to the recording, will be posted at [farmers.gov/urban](#). [offsite link image](#)

### *More Information*

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It includes representatives from many USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Marketing Service, and is led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. More information is available at [farmers.gov/urban](#). [offsite link image](#)

Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include AMS grants to improve domestic and international opportunities for U.S. growers and producers and FSA loans.

The deadline for application was updated from midnight to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 6, 2020. to align with grants.gov.

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## Tribes and tribal organizations eligible for water management technical assistance funding from Reclamation

USBR 05/15/20. The Bureau of Reclamation is making up to \$1 million available for tribes and tribal organizations in the western United States to develop, manage, and protect tribal water and related resources. Each selected tribal project is eligible to receive up to \$200,000. Funding will be provided by a grant or cooperative agreement, depending on the project.

The funding opportunity is available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by searching for funding opportunity number BOR-DO-20-F013. Applications are due no later than 4 p.m. (MDT), Oct. 28, 2020.

This funding opportunity is exclusively limited to federally recognized tribes or tribal organizations located in the 17 western states identified in the Reclamation Act of 1902 as amended and supplemented. Federal, state, and local governments, as well as individuals, are not eligible to apply.

This funding opportunity is available through Reclamation's Native American Affairs Technical Assistance Program. They provide technical assistance through cooperative working relationships and partnerships with Indian tribes and tribal organizations. To learn more, please visit the program website.

## EPA Releases Draft Criteria to Help Protect Lakes and Reservoirs

EPA 05/21/20. Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued new, draft ambient water quality criteria recommendations for nutrients in lakes and reservoirs. The agency's criteria

recommendations serve as important resources that states and authorized tribes can use to protect public health, pets, and aquatic life from the adverse effects of excess nutrients in surface waters, including during the summer recreation season.

“Under the Trump Administration, we are working with states, tribes and farmers from across the country to develop a wide range of tools that will reduce excess nutrients in America’s water bodies,” said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water David Ross. “These draft criteria are the first update to EPA’s recommended nutrient criteria in almost 20 years. This flexible approach is based on the latest scientific information and will help States and Tribes protect lakes and reservoirs from harmful algal blooms.”

When finalized, these recommendations will replace EPA’s previously recommended ambient nutrient criteria for lakes and reservoirs that were published in 2000 and 2001. Using statistical stressor-response relationships that incorporate data collected from approximately 1,800 lakes, the draft criteria recommendations represent the latest scientific knowledge regarding the concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus that are protective of drinking water sources, recreational uses and aquatic life in lakes and reservoirs. EPA developed national statistical models that provide a flexible approach for deriving numeric nutrient criteria. States and authorized tribes can incorporate local data into the national models to help develop numeric nutrient criteria that are consistent with national relationships while accounting for unique local conditions. States, territories and authorized tribes can consider adopting the resulting criteria into their water quality standards but are not compelled to revise existing EPA-approved criteria or total maximum daily load targets.

Under the Trump Administration, EPA is focusing its attention on reducing excess nutrients in the nation’s waters through an all-of-the-above approach, which includes enhanced federal and

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state coordination, stakeholder engagement, and promoting market-based and other collaborative approaches to water quality improvements. Examples include providing grant funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Farmer to Farmer Cooperative Agreements, hosting an innovative nutrient financing webinar series and national forum, issuing a water quality trading policy memorandum, and co-chairing the Hypoxia Task Force.

EPA is requesting input via public comment for 60 days on the new draft recommendations. For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/technical-support-numeric-nutrient-water-quality-criteria-development>.

## Upcoming Meetings

### [WSWC Summer \(193<sup>rd</sup>\) Meetings](#)

Cody, WY  
July 22-24, 2020

### [WSWC Fall \(194<sup>th</sup>\) Meetings](#)

El Paso, TX  
October 13-16, 2020

### [Western Governors Association 2020 Winter Meeting](#)

Coronado, CA  
December 9-10, 2020

### [Western Governors 2021 Annual Meeting](#)

Sunriver, OR  
May 14-16, 2021

## Upcoming Events

### [Annual Sub-seasonal-to-Seasonal \(S2S\) Workshop](#)

San Diego, CA  
May 18-20, 2020 **POSTPONED UNTIL 2021**

## Other Federal News

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NRCS/WA 05/04/20. [USDA Announces \\$15 Million for Conservation Innovation Grants](#)

USBR 05/06/20. [B.F. Sisk Dam safety modification design package completed remotely](#)

NRCS/ID 05/07/20. [NRCS Idaho Releases May 2020 Water Supply Outlook Report](#)

NRCS/CA 05/08/20. [USDA Announces \\$5 Million in Wetland Mitigation Banking Program Funds](#)

NOAA/WEATHER 05/11/20. [NOAA's Component of the U.S. National Ice Center Now Part of NWS](#)

NRCS/OR 05/11/20. [USDA Announces \\$5 Million in Wetland Mitigation Banking Program Funds](#)

USFS 05/11/20. [USDA Forest Service Invest Millions to Support Community Forest Projects](#)

USACE 05/12/20. [USACE/NMSU Professionals Publish Joint Article - Sustainability management of short-lived freshwater fish in human-altered ecosystems should focus on adult survival](#)

USGS 05/12/20. [USGS Responds to Spring Flooding](#)

EPA 05/12/20. [EPA Aggressively Working to Increase Research and Understand PFAS](#)

NRCS 05/13/20. [Papers Published by the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation Provide Evidence that USDA Conservation Practices Work](#)

NOAA/CLIMATE 05/14/20. [April 2020: another month that's the second warmest on record](#)

NOAA/CLIMATE 05/14/20. [May 2020 ENSO update: road trip](#)

NRCS/CA 05/14/20. [Historic \\$10 Million for California Stewardship](#)

NRCS/CA 05/15/20. [USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production](#)

USBR 05/15/20. [Reclamation takes step to reduce seepage and erosion at El Vado Dam in New Mexico](#)

EPA 05/18/20. [EPA Takes Next Step to Implement PFAS Legislation](#)

NRCS/WA 05/18/20. [June 22 Deadline for Whatcom County Watershed Project](#)

EPA 05/20/20. [EPA Settlement with Swix Sport USA Resolves TSCA Violations Involving PFAS](#)

NRCS/TX 05/20/20. [NRCS Makes Funding Available for Texas Producers Impacted by Drought and Wildfire](#)

EPA 05/21/20. [U.S. EPA Reaches \\$6.5 Million Settlement to Clean Up Groundwater Contamination at Southern California Superfund Site](#)

USBR 05/21/20. [Reclamation increasing Green River flows from Flaming Gorge Dam and urges caution downstream](#)

USBR 05/22/20. [Reclamation Seeks Public Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply Project](#)

NOAA/CLIMATE 05/26/20. [Drought emerges across the Pacific Northwest in spring 2020](#)

RURAL DEVELOPMENT 05/26/20. [USDA Invests \\$281 Million in Rural Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements in 36 States and Puerto Rico](#)

NOAA/DROUGHT 05/27/20. [Addressing Challenges in Effective Red Flag Warning](#)

EPA 05/28/20. [EPA Announces \\$196 Million Water Infrastructure Loan to Inland Empire, California](#)

USF&WS 05/28/20. [Secretary Bernhardt Announces \\$160 Million in Funding for Wetland](#)

[Conservation Projects and National Wildlife Refuges](#)

NRCS/WY 05/29/20. [RCPP – EQIP Application Deadline Coming Soon for Select Wyoming Projects](#)

WHITE HOUSE 05/29/20. [Proclamation on National Ocean Month, 2020](#)

USGS. [SPARROW models, tools, and maps of streamflow, nutrients, and sediment for streams in five major U.S. regions](#)

## PEOPLE

NOAA/CLIMATE 04/27/20. [Arthur John “A.J.” Reiss, selected as director for NOAA’s Ocean Prediction Center](#)

BLM 05/04/20. [Angelita Bullets selected as District Manager for the Southern Nevada District](#)

NPS 05/06/20. [Kelly Woods Named New Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center Manager](#)

USBR 05/18/20. [Chris Beardsley named Director, Policy and Programs for Reclamation](#)

RURAL DEVELOPMENT 05/26/20. [Trump Administration Appoints Blake Curtis USDA Rural Development State Director for New Mexico](#)

USBR 05/28/20. [David Raff named as Reclamation's Chief Engineer](#)

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