Welcome. Thank you for attending this informational webinar on the Gulf of Mexico B-WET FY22 Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity.

I am Amy Clark. I manage the Gulf of Mexico B-WET program which is part of the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office.
The 1-hour webinar will include 45 minutes of presentation, followed by Q & A.

Today, we will go over:
• B-WET Overview and Definition of the MWEE
• Program Priorities
• Application Package and How to Apply
• Evaluation Criteria
• Review Timeline
• Questions

I will be available phone (727-466-8586) or email (amy.clark@noaa.gov) throughout the application period, to answer any questions or concerns you may have about this funding opportunity. We will post these slides and script on the Gulf of Mexico B-WET webpage: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/noaa-gulf-mexico-bay-watershed-education-and-training-gulf-b-wet-program.

Please note that all information included in this webinar about the funding opportunity can also be found in the Federal Funding Opportunity announcement, and information regarding the resources can be found on NOAA websites.
B-WET Overview and Definition of the MWEE
NOAA’s B-WET program is an environmental education program that funds locally relevant, authentic experiential learning for K-12 audiences. B-WET currently serves seven areas of the country – California, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Hawaii and Pacific Northwest. The primary delivery of B-WET is through competitive grants that promote MWEEs.
MWEEs are student experiences that focus on investigations into local environmental issues that lead to stewardship actions. The MWEE framework includes best practices such as issue definition, outdoor field experiences, synthesis, and stewardship, and includes teacher training and support. All B-WET projects support the MWEE. I will describe the elements of the MWEE in summary. There is much more detail in the Funding Opportunity Notice and here: https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience.
MWEE Essential Elements

These elements describe “what students should do”. The promote a learner-centered approach in which the student actively constructs meaning from the learning experiences.

- Issue definition
- Outdoor field experiences
- Synthesis and conclusions
- Environmental action projects

MWEEs Essential Elements:

1. ISSUE DEFINITION: Throughout the MWEE, students focus on a driving question that guides their inquiry, investigations, and ultimately results in environmental actions. To support this, teachers define a locally relevant environmental issue, problem, or phenomenon and a driving question—often referred to as an essential question, organizing question, or overarching question. This is the “big picture” question that is important for sparking curiosity and organizing student inquiry. The driving question should be open-ended, relevant to the students’ lives, maintain continuity of activities, and meet learning objectives. During Issue Definition, students are actively involved in co-developing supporting questions with teachers.

2. OUTDOOR FIELD EXPERIENCES: Students participate in multiple Outdoor Field Experiences sufficient to explore the driving question. Within appropriate safety guidelines, students are actively involved in planning and conducting the field investigations, including developing supporting questions to explore the driving question in the field. Field experiences allow students to interact with their local environment and contribute to learning in ways that traditional classroom or laboratory settings may not. During field experiences, students use their senses, scientific equipment, and technology to make observations, collect data or measurements, and conduct experiments necessary to answer their supporting questions and inform Environmental Action Projects. Students who have opportunities to learn in, thrive in, and appreciate the outdoors can become informed and engaged champions for our
natural resources. **Gulf of Mexico B-WET funded projects should aim to include at least 5 hours of student activity time spent outdoors.**

3. **SYNTHESIS and CONCLUSIONS:** Students identify, synthesize, and apply evidence from their investigations to make claims and draw conclusions about the issue. These claims are used by students to create a plan for environmental action. Synthesis and Conclusions should happen regularly throughout the MWEE. Teachers dedicate time for students to reflect on each experience and investigation in relation to the issue and facilitate students sharing their claims and conclusions with each other. Students may demonstrate understanding of their investigations and conclusions through communication to a variety of audiences such as their peers, other classrooms, school leaders, parents, or the community.

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROJECTS:** Students identify and implement an environmental action project as a solution that directly addresses the defined issue within their school, neighborhood, town, or community. Students are actively engaged in and, to the extent possible, drive the decision-making, planning, and implementation of the action project, while teachers play a facilitation role by forming groups, moderating, and answering questions. Students reflect on the value of the action and determine the extent to which it successfully addressed the issue. This essential element allows students to understand that they personally have the power to bring about change by taking action to address environmental issues at the personal, community, or societal level. Taking action instills confidence in students and can contribute to students becoming environmental stewards in their communities. Environmental Action Projects can take many forms and may fall into the following types: Restoration or Protection, Everyday Choices, Community Engagement, and Civic Engagement.
The MWEE also includes four supporting practices that describe “what teachers do” to ensure successful implementation with students.

1. **TEACHER FACILITATION**: MWEEs require that teachers support student learning for the duration of the MWEE -- both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers balance roles of facilitation, direct instruction, and coaching to create a student-centered learning experience where the essential elements of the MWEE come together to support goals for learning and create opportunities for students to take active roles in the learning process. Teachers provide space for student choice and voice by creating learning experiences that center on what students value. To support this level of engagement, teachers should have access to professional development opportunities that support their content knowledge, understanding of the MWEE framework, and confidence and intention to implement MWEEs independently (see Teacher MWEE Professional Development Practices for specifics).

2. **LEARNING INTEGRATION**: The MWEE is an educational framework that helps teachers meet their learning objectives in an engaging way. MWEEs are not meant to be something “extra”, but rather a means of enriching lessons for deeper student learning while meeting academic standards. To achieve this vision, MWEEs should be embedded into the school curriculum to support goals for learning and student achievement. They can also provide authentic, engaging interdisciplinary learning that crosses traditional boundaries between disciplines. Finally, the MWEE essential elements can also be used by educators in out-of-school settings (e.g. after-school programs; clubs; summer
camps) to enrich activities and complement school-based programming.

3. SUSTAINED EXPERIENCE: MWEEs rely on teachers to plan and implement a multi-faceted unit of inquiry where each essential element—from asking questions through implementing action—builds upon and reinforces the others to provide rich learning opportunities. MWEEs are spread over the course of a unit or multiple units, where learning happens both in and out of the classroom. A Sustained Experience provides adequate time for students to not only reflect on the individual lessons and experiences, but also on how all of the elements cohesively come together. While an individual lesson may occur in one class period or field experience, that lesson or experience should be explicitly connected to the larger learning sequence of the MWEE.

4. LOCAL CONTEXT: MWEEs have teachers use the local environment and community as a context for learning that is relevant to students’ lives. Situating the MWEE within local contexts promotes learning that is rooted in the unique culture, history, environment, economy, literature, and art of a students’ school, neighborhood, town, or community. To enrich MWEEs, local resources (e.g. partners; expertise; field sites) should be incorporated. Partnerships, such as those with local community-based organizations, allow students to engage with members of their community of diverse cultures, values, and expertise for a more equitable and inclusive experience. Emphasizing the local context enables students and teachers to develop stronger connections to, and appreciation for, their local environments and communities. This also enables students and teachers to explore how their individual and collective decisions affect their immediate surroundings and in turn affect larger ecosystems and watersheds.
To prepare teachers to effectively implement MWEEs, it is recommended that teacher professional development include these elements.

1. **INCREASES TEACHERS’ KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:** Teachers must have an adequate level of content knowledge for their MWEE topic area specific to their grade level and discipline, including an understanding of the interactions between natural systems and social systems and human impacts on local watersheds and larger Earth systems. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions, teachers must also have a deep understanding of the facts related to environmental issues, along with an understanding of the various stakeholder values. In addition, teachers who demonstrate environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviors may be role models for their students and increase their ability to guide students in environmental actions to address complex environmental issues.

2. **MODELS MWEE FRAMEWORK:** Facilitators should utilize the same techniques and experiences in professional development that teachers are expected to use with their students, such as hands-on Outdoor Field Experiences, critical thinking about environmental issues, and Environmental Action Projects. Professional development should also provide opportunities for teachers to understand the goals and rationale behind the MWEE as a framework to learning and environmental stewardship. Professional development should include ongoing support for teachers, and include
time for teachers to reflect on modeled activities, and plan for how the student MWEEs will be implemented in their own classrooms. The B-WET program recommends that facilitators/trainers offer teachers more than 30 hours of professional development time, of which more than 10 hours should be spent outdoors.

3. ALLOWS FOR ADEQUATE INSTRUCTIONAL TIME: Professional development should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several weeks or months. Professional development should include ample opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and plan for how to use knowledge and skills gained from professional development in the classroom. Opportunities to share ideas and challenges with colleagues in a cohort creates space for dialogue that can provide teachers with additional support and inspiration.

4. PROVIDES ONGOING TEACHER SUPPORT AND APPROPRIATE INCENTIVES: Even in cases where teachers participate in robust multi-day workshops, such as summer or weekend courses, it is still essential that professional development providers have a structure in place for on-going teacher support and enrichment. This can take the form of follow up meetings, creating web-based forums for communication and feedback, establishing mentor teachers who can serve as points of contact, or including teams of teachers from one particular school. Continuing education credits and stipends can be used to encourage participation in on-going professional development opportunities. Outreach and training opportunities for school administrators help increase high level support for both environmental education and continuing teacher professional development for teachers.

5. MEETS JURISDICTIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Each jurisdiction has established guidance and recommendations relevant to all forms of teacher professional development. When possible, professional development opportunities for MWEEs should adhere to these general guidelines set forth by local education agencies.
The following resources explain the MWEE and provide guidance on implementing a MWEE. Though some of the following resources are Chesapeake Bay-focused, the information provided is highly applicable to MWEEs implemented in the Gulf of Mexico.

- **MWEE definition:** [https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience](https://www.noaa.gov/education/explainers/noaa-meaningful-watershed-educational-experience). The full definition of the MWEE is provided online in an easy to use online format.

- **Bay Backpack:** [http://baybackpack.com/mwee/what-is-a-mwee](http://baybackpack.com/mwee/what-is-a-mwee). Bay Backpack is an online resource that supports hands-on environmental learning. By providing educators with information about funding opportunities, field studies, and curriculum guides and lesson plans related to the Chesapeake Bay, Bay Backpack helps educators find the tools they need to give their students MWEEs. It has resources for developing, promoting and funding your MWEE project.

- **MWEE guidebook:** [https://d18lev1ok5leia.cloudfront.net/baybackpack/Documents/Educators-Guide-to-MWEE-Editable-Download_2021-11-01-134828_infd.pdf](https://d18lev1ok5leia.cloudfront.net/baybackpack/Documents/Educators-Guide-to-MWEE-Editable-Download_2021-11-01-134828_infd.pdf). This guide provides basic tools to help think, plan, and evaluate a MWEE. It has been designed for users with varying levels of familiarity with the MWEE. It defines and explains the MWEE, guides you through creating a solid plan that connects a MWEE to the curriculum, helps you identify opportunities to build on existing MWEEs and assess success, and provides guidance on communicating MWEE successes and securing funding.
• MWEE 101 training: https://cbexapp.noaa.gov/course/view.php?id=5555. This is an online course for the MWEE and is made up of three lessons: Why MWEEs, What Makes a MWEE, and Planning and Evaluating MWEEs. These lessons will introduce you to the MWEE, explore what MWEEs can look like, highlight the MWEE's components, and introduce the tools that support the development and implementation of MWEEs.

• EPA’s “How’s My Waterway?” Tool: https://mywaterway.epa.gov/. This is a GIS based tool for viewing water quality information on several geographic scales, and also pulls in environmental justice data.
It is important that B-WET project educate audiences on NOAA-related science, and to this end, the following resources are provided to assist partners and applicants in exploring the wealth of NOAA information may be used in watershed education programming

- NOAA Education Resources Collections: https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections
- NOAA Education “At Home” Resources: https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/education-at-home
- NOAA in your backyard: https://www.noaa.gov/education/noaa-in-your-backyard

NOAA Assets

- NOAA Education Resource Collections: https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections
- NOAA Education “At Home” Resources: https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/education-at-home
- NOAA in your backyard: https://www.noaa.gov/education/noaa-in-your-backyard

NOAA has hundreds of facilities and professional communicators across the nation. This resource provides information in various regions of the country that would be of interest.
to educators so that they may get connected to NOAA guest speakers, field trips, and professional development in each area.
Program Priorities
Proposals must address one of the following B-WET priority areas:

1. **Professional Development for Teachers related to MWEEs**
   - Proposals submitted under this area should address the specific elements and types of activities that are defined under “Teacher MWEE Professional Development Practices”.

2. **Exemplary Programs combining Teacher Professional Development with MWEEs for students**
   - Long-term professional development for teachers coupled with multiple MWEEs for students that are fully supported in the classroom by their teachers will ensure that the concepts of watershed education are fully reinforced throughout the school year. Proposals submitted under this area should address the specific elements and types of activities that define both Teacher Professional Development and MWEEs for their Students.

3. **Systematic MWEE Implementation** – Systemic MWEE projects reach the entire student population in one or more grades within a school district, with teacher-supported MWEEs and ensure that the teachers of these students receive high quality professional development to give them the content knowledge and pedagogical skills for outdoor learning to support all aspects of the MWEE. Projects that are systemic promote long-term sustainability of the MWEE project in a school district, require substantial involvement of the school division/district, and are embedded into the formal curriculum (or work to do so).

4. **Capacity Building for Expanded Statewide K-12 Environmental Literacy Initiatives** – This
priority supports projects that increase opportunities for advancing the MWEE and environmental literacy at the state-level. These capacity building projects will define the barriers to advancing environmental literacy at the state level and explain how the proposed work will fill a recognized gap. They will expand the ability to advance environmental literacy strategies and lay the foundation for sustainable and equitable environmental literacy, including MWEES, at the state or multi-state level. Projects under this priority implement coordination, networking, leadership, and other support structures necessary for advancing the MWEE as an approach at the state or multi-state level. The MWEE definition provided within this NOFO gives context for the ultimate goals that projects under this priority should work towards; however, projects under this priority do not directly implement MWEES.

Projects proposed under this priority area build capacity for statewide or multi-state K-12 environmental literacy initiatives which support the policies and structures necessary to advance environmental literacy at a statewide level. Increased capacity for environmental literacy efforts at this level creates opportunities for more and higher quality MWEES in school districts throughout the watershed. Proposals to this priority area should create state-level frameworks, incentives, support systems, and/or drivers for environmental literacy to encourage or support systemic MWEE planning and implementation in local school districts. Projects should also seek to connect to existing education initiatives like Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programming, project-based learning, climate education, or other efforts/initiatives that already have momentum at the state-level. The proposed project should also look for opportunities to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, directly supporting authentic representation of these voices.

Examples of activities that may be funded under this priority include but are not limited to:
> Developing a state-level environmental literacy strategy, plan, or framework.
> Creating a state-level environmental literacy advisory group to inform decision makers.
> Expand upon the work that has been started through regional networks to increase state-level communication across networks and organizations seeking to increase environmental literacy.
> Building capacity for agencies, organizations, and collaboratives that are working statewide to modify or enhance existing programs that ultimately support systemic MWEES.
> Building a cadre of professionals (school district and/or nonformal leaders) to work across the state to increase knowledge sharing and communication pathways to scale best practices for systemic and sustainable environmental literacy programming (aka “Network Weavers”) with an emphasis on reaching underrepresented communities.
> Supporting and providing resources for key partners to elevate awareness of and the importance of environmental literacy among decision makers, including state boards of education, superintendents, state department of education leadership, funders, and others who create policies, set standards of learning, and make funding decisions to support formal education (aka “Network Influencers”).
> Increase the number of practitioners committed to advancing the MWEE framework with an emphasis on bringing new disciplines and perspectives to environmental literacy (aka
“MWEE Ambassadors”).
The K-12 education system is a well-positioned venue for instilling comprehensive knowledge, skills, competencies, and resilience around one of the most pressing economic, social and environmental issues of today: climate change.

Education has the power to help students develop meaningful personal connections to climate solutions, a sense of personal agency and empowerment, and ultimately impact their behaviors and decision-making in relation to climate change.

The MWEE educational framework can directly foster climate knowledge, skills, and competencies to address climate change, climate impacts, and the opportunities to contribute to climate solutions in their own communities. Therefore, the B-WET program strongly encourages the purposeful incorporation of education about climate change into programming.
The Southeast Regional Office is an office under the National Marine Fisheries Service. We work with partners to ensure sustainable fishing opportunities, protection for endangered species and marine mammals and the conservation of the habitat needed to support marine life. Given these commitments, NOAA is interested in B-WET projects that develop student understanding around the ecological, economic, or cultural importance of Gulf of Mexico fisheries and protected resources including but not limited to shrimp, snapper, grouper, sturgeon, sawfish, sea turtles, coral, or marine mammals; and the habitats that support them. Projects addressing this special interest area have fisheries or protected resources as the main issue student’s investigate, and include student action to protect or restore the species and/or its habitat.
Additionally, consideration will be given to applicants who show prior experience in working in the Gulf of Mexico region, who show prior experience with Gulf of Mexico regional issues, or who demonstrate partnerships with local organizations in the Gulf of Mexico region on proposed projects. Also, consideration will be given to applications that address elements of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and the NOAA Education Strategic Plan.
For the purposes of this federal grant opportunity, eligible applicants are K-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments. For profit organizations, federal agencies, and foreign organizations are not eligible to apply, but they can act as partners. Applicants may be physically located in any U.S. state.
Projects must target K-12 teachers or students in five Gulf of Mexico states.
Application Package and How to Apply
Each one of these are detailed in the NOFO
Project Evaluation

• Collection and documentation of information about your project's short-term outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, document successes towards meeting project objectives, and inform decisions about future programming.

• Up to 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation.

National B-WET Evaluation is paused

• We are currently analyzing evaluation data collected between 2016 and 2020. Once the analysis is complete, we plan to make changes to our evaluation approach going forward and will publish aggregate results of the analysis.
It is anticipated that approximately $600,000 will be available in FY 2022 to fund eligible applications. NOAA anticipates making approximately four to seven new awards, subject to the availability of appropriations. For applications to B-WET priority areas 1 and 2, the total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed $100,000. For applications to B-WET priority areas 3 and 4, the total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA should not exceed $150,000 per award. In all cases, the minimum Federal amount to request from NOAA is $25,000.

Applications should not include cents. Round to the nearest dollar. Ensure numbers are parallel across application documents.
Cost categories help think through actual costs. If you cannot break request down into this level of detail, you may need to think more about the project!
**Project Period**
- Earliest possible project start date: August 1, 2022
- Project period: up to 24 months
- Projects should begin and end on first or last day of a month

**Where/When to Apply**
Submit online at Grant.gov *preferred method*
- Due 11:59 p.m. ET on February 18, 2022
- Look for confirmation emails

The project start date should not begin before August 1, 2022. The period of awards may be for a maximum period of up to 24 months. Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire award period.

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., Eastern February 18, 2022 to be considered for funding. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration. Applications should be submitted through Grants.gov. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness. Use of Grants.gov requires an advance registration process that may take a few days or several weeks. Keep in mind that it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject a submitted application.

Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service. Mail hard copy applications to Amy Clark, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, 1021 Balch Blvd, Suite 1003, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529. Hard copy applications must be received (not postmarked) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 18, 2022. Hard copy applications arriving after the deadline given above will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service that guaranteed delivery prior to the specified closing date and time. Hard copy applications received by Southeast Regional Office later than two business days following the closing date will not be accepted.
Search for the full application package at www.grants.gov using the NOFO #: NOAA-NMFS-SE-2022-2007159
Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov. Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Because first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks or more, it is strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible. Call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance.
Evaluation Criteria
1. Importance, Relevance, and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (20 points) - This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

2. Technical Merit (45 points) - This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For Gulf B-WET, this includes (among others) review of the methods against the elements of the MWEE or against the focus of pandemic response

3. Overall Qualification of Applicant (10 points) - This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. Project Costs (20 points) - This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. Outreach and Education (5 points) - This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA’s mission to protect the Nation’s natural resources.
Evaluation Criteria for Priority 4

1. Importance, Relevance, and Applicability of Proposal to the Program Goals (20 points) - This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

2. Technical Merit (36 points) - This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

3. Overall Qualification of Applicant (19 points) - This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. Project Costs (20 points) - This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

5. Outreach and Education (5 points) - This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.
The following is the rough schedule we will follow in completing the review and awarding process. This timeline is dependent on the timing of the finalization of FY22 federal appropriations.

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<th>Review Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Minimum requirements review (early March 2022)</td>
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<td>- Application received by deadline</td>
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<td>- Eligible applicant</td>
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<td>- Addresses one of the B-WET priority areas</td>
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<td>- Complete application</td>
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<td>2. Technical review (early March – mid March 2022)</td>
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<td>3. Panel review (late March – mid April 2022)</td>
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<td>4. Notify applicants/negotiations (spring – early summer 2022)</td>
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<td>5. Awards finalized (late summer 2022)</td>
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Recent Key Changes

- Added “Capacity Building for Expanded Statewide K-12 Environmental Literacy Initiatives” priority
- Opened target audience to teachers and students in the entirety of the five Gulf states
- Added Climate Education Special Interest Area
- Emphasized participation of marginalized communities in watershed education

The following are changes to the FY22 Notice of Funding Opportunity from last fiscal year’s opportunity.

- Added “Capacity Building for Expanded Statewide K-12 Environmental Literacy Initiatives” priority to expand the ability to advance environmental literacy strategies and lay the foundation for sustainable and equitable environmental literacy, including MWEEs, at the state or multi-state level.
- Opened target audience to teachers and students in the entirety of the five Gulf states (rather than only those in the defined coastal communities).
- Added Climate Education Special Interest Area which suggests that the MWEE educational framework can contribute to one of the most pressing economic, social and environmental issues of today - climate change - by directly fostering climate knowledge and competencies to contribute to climate solutions.
- Emphasized participation of marginalized communities in watershed education and the importance of partnering with organizations and institutions that are run by and/or serve marginalized groups, particularly minority communities.
Please feel free to contact me to discuss the Notice of Funding Opportunity, B-WET, or the MWEE. I am teleworking and am best reached by email or cell phone.