DATE: March 5, 2015

TO: University of Wyoming Faculty

FROM: Wyoming NSF EPSCoR

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals for Wyoming EPSCoR’s Outside-the-Box Grants

I. GENERAL
The program’s objectives are to promote research and outreach in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines in directions that are novel and risky. We are looking for proposals that showcase high risk, high reward ideas that are unlikely to be funded by other sources. As the Outside-the-Box grants will be supported with funds from our current Track 1 RII grant, “Water in Changing West,” we ask that research proposals be broadly related to water and work being carried out by the Wyoming Center for Environmental Hydrology and Geophysics (WyCEHG). Outside-the-Box grants are intended to support cutting-edge research or outreach projects that would be otherwise difficult to fund but still build logically from existing literature in the discipline. Each project should be for one year in duration and may request up to $50,000 in funding support. A program maximum of $150,000 will be granted this year. Tentative start date for projects is June 1, 2015.

II. DEADLINE
5pm, April 17, 2015

III. ELIGIBILITY
All University of Wyoming faculty members are eligible to apply. Proposals from interdisciplinary collaborations are particularly welcome. Broader impact and/or workforce development proposals, as defined by NSF, are especially encouraged. EPSCoR welcomes innovative ideas that will develop new education, outreach, and diversity programs designed to increase participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and/or first-generation college students) in STEM, as well as creative ways to strengthen and contribute to the Wyoming workforce. Proposals may be specific to research, broader impacts, or workforce development, or may synergistically combine these approaches.

V. INFORMATIONAL MEETING
Come learn more about the Wyoming EPSCoR Outside-the-Box Grants and have your specific questions answered: Monday, March 30, 3:00 PM in the Wyoming EPSCoR Conference Room (425 Wyoming Hall).

IV. APPLICATION PROCEDURE
Interested individuals must submit the following in the form of a single pdf document to the EPSCoR Associate Project Director, Sarah Konrad, skonrad@uwyo.edu:

1) Abstract (1 page): Provide a brief, non-technical description of the problem, work to be performed, and expected outcome.
2) Narrative (3 pages): Describe the proposed research or outreach, including brief context or background. Explain why the project is novel and why, if successful, it would have notable impact. Describe the obstacles to success. Present specific objectives and methods including a timeline for completion during the one year funding period. Clearly describe why this type of high risk-allowing RFP is the best option for seeding the work.
3) Biographical Information of PI(s) (up to 2 pages): Please use the standard NSF format which can be found in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide, section II.C.2.f
4) Budget: The budget must be reasonable and well-justified; please use the attached spreadsheet to describe the resources needed to complete the project. This may include resources already available (e.g., laboratory equipment, computational resources, etc.) and resources to be funded by the Outside-the-Box Grant. Allowable expenses include, for example: expendable supplies, capital outlay, and travel to conduct research. Funds may be used for partial support of undergraduate or graduate students. Up to one month of PI summer salary is allowed; appropriate fringe must be included on any salary requests. Travel to professional meetings must be justified as related to the project’s outcomes.
VI. EVALUATION

Each proposal will be evaluated by reviewers from Wyoming EPSCoR, select UW faculty, and an external reviewer. Because the review panel is diverse, proposers should write for a non-expert, but scientifically literate, audience. Reviewers will evaluate each proposal on the following:

1) The novelty and relevance of the proposed project
2) The potential for high impact if successful
3) The difficulty of funding the work through other outlets
4) Overall quality and clarity of the proposal
5) Degree to which the budget is reasonable and well-justified

VII. AWARD CONDITIONS

1) If the proposed project will involve regulated activities (e.g., Human Subjects, Animals, biohazards), the PI will need to obtain appropriate assurances before the grant is awarded. All IRB approvals must be received before the funds can be awarded to those engaged in regulated activities.
2) A final project report will be required; the due date and format of the report will be provided to PIs at the time award decisions are made.