



*Theodore Roosevelt*  
GENIUS PRIZE

## Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competition for Management of Invasive Species

*#CombatInvasiveGrasses!*  
*#StopHorticulturalHitchhikers*  
*#InnovationInConservation*

### Description

Invasive species are non-native species that cause harm to native ecosystems, human health, or the economy. They affect all habitats, terrestrial and aquatic. Well-known examples include zebra mussels, feral swine, lionfish, the fungus which causes white-nose syndrome, invasive carp, aquatic and terrestrial weeds, and pythons. One characteristic of invasive species is that they reproduce and spread rapidly, often out-competing native species. This often makes them challenging to control. Preventing new invasions is the most effective strategy. However, managers often need more tools to restrict invasive species' inadvertent movement through commerce.

For example, the introduction and subsequent rapid spread of medusahead grass have caused serious management concerns because of its swift migration, vigorous competitive nature, and low forage value. In 2020, annual grasses dominated approximately one-fifth (>19 million acres) of Great Basin rangelands. This rapid expansion was associated with a broadening topographic niche, with widespread movement into higher elevations and north-facing aspects consistent with the predicted effects of a warming climate. ([The elevational ascent and spread of exotic annual grass dominance in the Great Basin, USA - Smith - 2022 - Diversity and Distributions - Wiley Online Library](#)) This continues to be a dominant challenge in the western U.S., as indicated by the current Western Weed Action Plan, which states: "One of the most pervasive challenges/opportunities to the long-term viability of this landscape (western United States) is the spread of invasive annual grasses and regulated noxious weeds, and their role in altering natural ecosystem dynamics, including increasing wildfire frequency, intensity, and size, particularly in the Great Basin region and critical sage-grouse habitat." (<https://westernweed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WesternWeedActionPlan.pdf>) Keeping invasive grasses out of un-infested habitats is a central tactic of the 2022 Sagebrush Conservation Design and similar strategies. However, managers often need more tools to prevent and control the spread of invasive grasses.

Another example is the spread of invasive animal species (including insects) through the movement of plants and other horticultural products into and within the United States. Coqui frogs and spotted lanternflies are two examples of ecologically and economically harmful species recently found in nursery products transported between current infestations and uninvaded areas. Although existing regulatory and education programs reduce some risk, these ongoing interceptions illustrate that new solutions are needed to improve the prevention of unintentional animal species moving into new habitats and regions through the horticultural trade pathway.

To win the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competition for Management of Invasive Species, participants must submit their solution that addresses the issue through one of these high-priority focal areas:

- a) Invasive Grasses: A solution that provides land managers with new methods, tools, and strategies to help prevent and reduce the spread of invasive grasses and conserve our native ecosystems. Although solutions may be species-specific, we prefer they address multiple species.
- b) Horticulture Pathway: A solution that reduces or prevents inadvertent movement of invasive animal species (including insects) by targeting transmission pathways associated with plant nursery trade and other commercial horticulture activities.

**Dates:**

- Prize Competition Launch: May 1, 2023
- Submission Deadline: June 27, 2023
- Judging: July - August 2023
- Winner Announcement: October 2023

**Statutory Authority to Conduct the Prize Competition:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s mission is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize for the Management of Invasive Species was established to encourage technological innovation with the potential to advance the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with respect to the managing of invasive species and to award one or more prizes annually for a technological advancement that manages invasive species. (P.L. 116-9; as amended, 15 U.S.C. 3719, as amended).

## Prizes

**Amount of the Prize:** The total prize purse from the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competition for Management of Invasive Species is up to \$100,000 for winning technology

innovation(s). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may recognize additional participants with non-monetary, honorable mention awards.

**Award Approving Official:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director will be the award Approving Official for prizes offered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Rules for the Prize Competitions

Thank you for your interest in the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competitions (the “Prize Competition”). Please know that by participating in this Prize Competition, in accordance with these rules, you are eligible to receive various forms of recognition and a possible award of up to \$100,000 as a winner.

Please read these rules and the terms carefully, as they describe the conditions under which you are allowed to participate. As a participant, you will be asked to accept these rules and the terms when you submit your solution.

### **SUBMISSION OF AN ENTRY IN ANY OF THE SIX THEODORE ROOSEVELT GENIUS PRIZE COMPETITIONS CONSTITUTES FULL AND UNCONDITIONAL AGREEMENT TO AND ACCEPTANCE OF THESE RULES.**

This Agreement constitutes the rules and terms (“Agreement”) for all Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competitions. This Prize Competition is being conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established under the John D. Dingell, Jr., Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, March 12, 2019 (Public Law 116-9, as amended by the America’s Conservation Enhancement Act, October 30, 2020 (Public Law 116-188)); and authorized under the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3719, as amended). To participate in this Prize Competition, you must accept the terms of this Agreement, so please take the time to understand them.

To contribute a solution for consideration in this Prize Competition, your submission must include the following statement of understanding: “I accept and understands the rules, terms and conditions described in this Prize Competition and agree to abide by them myself and ensure all team members abide by them.” By doing so, this Agreement will be a valid and binding agreement between you and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for all purposes relating to this Prize Competition. Please save a copy of this Agreement for your records. For the purposes of the terms and conditions, rules, eligibility, etc. of these six competitions, a “solver” is anyone who provides a submission to the Prize Competition(s), and a “winner” is the solver declared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to have the winning submission(s) of the Prize Competition(s).

## 1) Eligibility.

Any individuals, legal entities, or their family members involved with the design, production, execution, distribution or evaluation of any of the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competitions, or individuals determined to have a conflict of interest, are not eligible to submit as potential solvers in these Prize Competitions. A potential or actual conflict of interest exists when commitments and obligations are likely to be compromised by other material interests, or relationships (especially economic), particularly if those interests or commitments are not disclosed.

- a) To be able to win a cash prize purse, a solver must:
  - i) Agree to the rules of the Prize Competition;
  - ii) In the case of a private entity, be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States or its Territories, or in the case of an individual, be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States;
  - iii) Not be a Federal entity or Federal employee acting within the scope of their employment; and
  - iv) Not use Federal facilities or consult with Federal employees during the Prize Competition unless the facilities and employees are made available to all individuals and entities participating in the competition on an equitable basis.
- b) Meritorious, non-cash prizes may be awarded. To be eligible for non-cash, meritorious prizes a solver must:
  - i) Agree to the rules of the Prize Competition; and
  - ii) Agree to be recognized in publications issued by the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announcing the results of the Prize Competition, such as press releases, website, social media, etc.
- c) The following solvers are not eligible to win any prize regardless of whether they meet the cash prize purse or meritorious prize eligibility criteria set forth above:
  - i) Federal entities or Federal employees acting within the scope of their employment are not eligible to win a prize.
  - ii) An individual or entity that is determined to be on the [GSA Excluded Parties List](#) is ineligible to participate, receive a monetary or non-monetary prize and will not be selected as a Prize Competition winner.
  - iii) If you/entity/team/organization are a resident or entity designated by the United States Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, you are not eligible. (See <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/sdn-list/pages/default.aspx> for additional information.)
  - iv) Employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, current or past members of the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Advisory Council or Boards, and any of their subsidiaries and affiliates, and immediate family members (spouse, parent, child, sibling, and their respective spouses, regardless of where they live) or persons living in the same households of such employees, are not eligible.
  - v) Any solver that employs an evaluator (e.g., Judge) on the Judging Panel or otherwise has a material business relationship or affiliation with any Judge.

- vi) Any solver who is a member of any Judge's immediate family or household.
- vii) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, participating organizations, and any advertising agency, contractor, or other individual or organization involved with the design, production, promotion, execution, or distribution of the Prize Competition, and all employees, and all members of the immediate family or household of any such individual or organization.
- viii) Any solver that uses Federal funds to develop the written proposed solution for the Prize Competition (“Proposed Solution”) now or anytime in the past, unless such use is consistent with the grant award, or other applicable Federal funds awarding document. Solvers that have been funded by the Federal Government in the past to work within the technical domain of the Prize Competition are eligible, provided that they did not develop their specific submission with Federal funds. Submissions that propose to improve or adapt existing federally-funded technologies for the solution sought in this Prize Competition are also eligible. Solvers are also encouraged to consult with their employer’s Ethics Officer for additional guidance and considerations.
- d) Winning technology innovations are not eligible to be submitted nor to compete in any future Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competitions. This includes any innovations that builds upon a previous winning technology innovation.

## 2) Submission of Solutions.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will make reasonable efforts to acknowledge receipt of and accept relevant Proposed Solutions submitted via Challenge.gov; however, nothing herein shall be construed as requiring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to accept or respond to every submission.

The Challenge.gov platform provides the following entry fields: Title, Brief description (500 characters), and a Description—for longer text. Participants can also upload one file, per the rules and terms stated in this document. Participants should use the attached *Submission Requirement* document to see how to properly format their submission within the Challenge.gov and required PDF.

## 3) Intellectual Property and License.

Each application should indicate the anticipated ownership, use, and licensing of any intellectual property. You represent and warrant that your Entry is an original work created solely by you, that you own all Intellectual Property in and to the Entry, and that no other party has any right, title, claim or interest in the Entry, except as expressly identified by you to us in writing in your application. You retain all right, title and interest in any inventions, software or work of authorship invent or create. The ownership and use of intellectual property arising from this Prize Competition remains with you. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may choose to negotiate for a right to use license for winning solutions developed as a result of the Prize Competition.

#### 4) No Infringement.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not authorize or consent to participants infringing on any United States patent or copyright while participating in the Prize Competition.

#### 5) Prize.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will notify the solver within a commercially reasonable period whether the solution will receive a prize. The Department of Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have the absolute and sole discretion to determine whether to make a prize, multiple prizes, or any prize. The solver agrees to hold the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service legally harmless in the selection of winning solvers.

#### 6) Confidentiality.

A solver's submission does not create a confidentiality agreement or a commitment to keep any information shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confidential. No confidential relationship is to be established by submission of the Proposed Solution or implied from consideration of any material in the submitted Proposed Solution. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and any agents working on its behalf do not make any commitment that the idea or material submitted in the Proposed Solution shall be kept confidential.

#### 7) Receipt and Consideration Not a Waiver of Ability to Contest Patent Rights.

The reception and consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of any submitted Proposed Solution shall not in any way impair the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's right to contest the validity or infringement of any patent that may have been or thereafter obtained on a Proposed Solution submitted in this Prize Competition. The solver's sole remedy, with respect to alleged patent infringement by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is to notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of any suspected infringement of patent or patents obtained on the Proposed Solution of this Prize Competition and inform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of any evidence of such infringement.

#### 8) No Return of Materials.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall be under no obligation to return any material submitted, or to reveal its acts in connection with its consideration of the submitted Proposed Solution.

#### 9) Compliance with Law and Policies.

Participation is subject to all federal, state, local, and country of residence laws and regulations for the United States.

## 10) No United States Government Funds May be Used to Prepare Your Submission.

## 11) Payment of Prize to Winners.

If the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines that you have submitted a winning solution, the payment amount (“Cash Prize Purse”) specified in the specific Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competition will be paid directly to the Cash Prize Purse winner(s) by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation via electronic funds transfer or check.

- a) If selected as a winner, the prize payment will be made to the person who registered and submitted the application once verification of eligibility is completed.
- b) Payment may be subject to Federal and state income taxes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will comply with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) withholding and reporting requirements, where applicable. This normally consists of an IRS Form 1099 to the Cash Prize Purse winner(s).
- c) Winner(s) can expect payments from 60 to 90 days after the occurrence of all of the following steps are completed:
  - (1) Solver is notified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that solver’s Proposed Solution has won a Cash Prize Purse.
  - (2) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed certain verification procedures and accepted the results.
  - (3) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have sought, and the solver has provided information necessary to process the payment as described above.
- d) Payment of any Cash Prize Purse is conditioned upon solver’s cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service verification procedures and the actions required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for payment of any Cash Prize Purse, or any part of any Cash Prize Purse, to any party other than to the solver through whom the Proposed Solution was submitted for the Prize Competition. The solver understands that the Cash Prize Purse represents a complete payment, minus any taxes that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation may be required to withhold, for any accepted Proposed Solution and that the solver is not entitled to any other compensation of any kind. If local law does not require withholding of taxes, all taxes on Cash Prize Purses shall be the solver’s sole responsibility.

## 12) Identity Disclosure.

By making a submission to this Prize Competition, the solver gives permission to use, release, or publish the solver’s identity (e.g., name and/or photograph) and to make public, an agreeable description of their submission as part of any communication effort if the solver’s submission is selected to win a prize.

### 13) Privacy Statement.

The collection and maintenance of any personal information from Prize Competition winners by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that is necessary to issue payments will comply with the [Privacy Act of 1974](#). In order to protect the personally identifiable information (PII) and guard against unauthorized uses, the PII collected will be used and maintained in accordance with the Department of the Interior System of Records Notification (SORN) for the Acquisition of Goods and Services ([SORN DOI-87](#)). In addition to using the PII to issue payments, DOI-87 informs of other authorized uses such as information transfers to any regulatory law enforcement authority, whether Federal, State, territorial, local, tribal, or foreign when the information collected is relevant to civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations or prosecutions. Disclosure of PII to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is voluntary and there is no personal liability to the solver if the solver does not furnish the requested information. However, if information is not furnished, payment may not be processed.

### 14) General Conditions.

The following general conditions apply.

- a) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the right to verify each solver's eligibility and compliance with this Agreement, and to terminate any solver's registration or participation in a Prize Competition based on its investigation. Participation is conditioned on providing the data required as part of the submission.
- b) You are the sole author, creator, and owner of the Entry.
- c) The Entry is not the subject of any actual or threatened litigation or claim.
- d) The Entry does not and will not violate or infringe upon the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, publicity rights, or other legal rights of any third party.
- e) The Entry does not and will not contain any harmful computer code (sometimes referred to as "malware," "viruses" or "worms").
- f) The Entry, and your use of the Entry, does not and will not violate any applicable laws or regulations, including, without limitation, applicable export control laws and regulations of the United States and other jurisdictions. If the Entry includes any third-party works (such as third-party content or open-source code), you must provide the Prize Competition Sponsor with all appropriate licenses and releases for such third party works. In the event you cannot provide all such required licenses and releases, the Prize Competition Sponsor reserves the right, in the Prize Competition Sponsor's sole discretion, to disqualify the applicable Entry.
- g) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is under no obligation to withhold such information required for registration from public disclosure, and it may be made publicly available at any time. Solvers should direct any request to access, update, or correct information to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for human error, theft, destruction, or damage to Proposed Solutions, or other factors beyond its reasonable control.



- h) Solvers should not register with multiple emails and/or street addresses. In the event of a dispute as to any Proposed Solution, the authorized account holder of the email address used to enter will be deemed to be the person who submitted the Proposed Solution. The authorized “account holder” is the natural person assigned an email address by an Internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address.
- i) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reserves the right to disqualify any solver who, in its discretion:
  - 1) Is not in compliance with this Agreement;
  - 2) Tampers with the submission process, the Prize Competition, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<https://www.fws.gov/>); or
  - 3) Acts in an uncooperative, unsportsmanlike, disruptive, abusive, or threatening manner.
- j) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reserves the right for any reason, including but not limited to an insufficient number of qualified entries, to modify or cancel the Prize Competition at any time during the duration of the competition.

## 15) Representations and Warranties.

Solvers represent and warrant that:

- a) All personal and, if applicable, business information provided by the solver (“solver information”) is true, accurate, current, and complete information and the solver will maintain and update the solver information to keep it true, accurate, current, and complete.
- b) If a solver is an individual participant or in a group, the solver is a citizen or permanent resident of the United States or, if not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, the solver acknowledges that he/she is ineligible to receive a cash prize purse.
- c) If a solver is an individual representing a business or other entity, the solver is authorized to enter into this Agreement on behalf of that business or entity, and that business or entity is incorporated in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States or its Territories or, if not incorporated in and maintaining a primary place of business in the United States, the solver acknowledges that it is ineligible to receive a cash prize purse.
- d) Unless otherwise disclosed in the Proposed Solution, the solver is the owner of the Proposed Solution and the Proposed Solution does not infringe or violate any patent, copyright, trade secret, trademark, or other third-party intellectual property right.

## 16) Liability and Indemnification.

The following liability and indemnification apply.

- a) By participating in this Prize Competition, each solver agrees to assume any and all risks, and waives claims against the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation except in the case of

- willful misconduct, for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue, or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from participation in this Prize Competition, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise.
- b) By participating in this Prize Competition, each solver agrees to assume any and all risks, and waive claims against the United States, the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and, indemnify, save and hold harmless, and defend the United States against all fines, claims, damages, losses, judgments, and expenses arising out of, or from any omission or activity of such person, organization, its representatives, and employees, and all entities it retains for the activities or any of its authorized sublicenses under this Agreement arising from or related to Prize Competition activities.
  - c) By submitting your Entry, you agree to release, discharge, and hold harmless the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and their partners, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising agencies, agents and their employees, officers, directors and representatives from any loss arising out of your participation in Prize Competition and the acceptance and use, misuse, or possession of any prize(s). Neither the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation assume responsibility for any error, omission, interruption, deletion, defect, or delay in operation or transmission; communications line failure; theft or destruction of or unauthorized access to Prize Competition entries or entry forms; or alteration of entries or entry forms. Not the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nor the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are responsible for any problems with or technical malfunction of any telephone network or lines, computer online systems, servers or providers, computer equipment, software, failure of any entry to be received on account of technical problems or traffic congestion on the Internet or any website, human errors of any kind, or any combination thereof, including any injury or damage to competitors' or any other persons' computers related to or resulting from participation, uploading or downloading of any materials related to this Prize Competition. In the event of a dispute about the identity of any participant, an online registration will be declared as if made by the authorized account holder of the e-mail address submitted at time of entry.

## 17) No Insurance Required.

Based on the subject matter of the Prize Competition, the type of work that it will possibly require, as well as an analysis of the likelihood of any claims for death, bodily injury, or property damage, or loss potentially resulting from Prize Competition participation, solvers are not required to obtain liability insurance or demonstrate financial responsibility in order to participate in this Prize Competition for the benefit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Judging Criteria

**Basis Upon Which a Winner Will be Selected:** Submissions, that have the potential to advance the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and provide solutions that are Genius-- new or significantly improve a current model or concept-- will be evaluated based upon the following Judging Criteria.

Criteria are maybe divided into critical and supplementary. Failure to address all the critical criteria will result in ineligibility. Supplementary criteria, when included, provide an opportunity for submissions to receive additional points from judges if the proposal adequately addresses those criteria. Failure to address supplementary criteria alone, will not result in disqualification.

### A) Invasive Grasses

The critical criteria includes:

- Species Targeted- The solution focuses on species that cause harm to native ecosystems in the United States and/or its territories. Solutions with application to address multiple species, or with wide application geographically or across multiple ecosystems are preferred. (40pts)
- Benefits- The solution results in significant and measurable benefits (e.g., acres, species) and focuses on preventing or reducing the spread. (40 pts)
- Readiness- The solution is adoptable by the intended users and describes the anticipated time frame for the development and implementation. (10 pts)
- Regulatory Risk- The solution is likely to gain necessary governmental approvals (NEPA, OSHA, EPA registration) and includes a paragraph addressing how managers might address environmental and safety compliance laws to implement the proposed solution, if applicable. (10 pts)

The supplementary criteria includes:

- Sage-Grouse Habitat- The solution is applicable to the Great Basin region and benefits greater sage-grouse habitat. (10pts)
- Cost Efficiency- The solution is efficient in use of monetary and human resources. (10pts)
- Expected Impact- The solution generates results that are persistent beyond one year, three year or long-term. (10 pts)
- Ease of Use- The solution is easy of use and implement. (10pts)
- Operational Enhancements- The solution can be operated independently or in remote locations. (10 pts)

Submissions that solely consist of spread modeling, early detection, test kits, species identification, or monitoring will not be eligible.

## B) Horticultural Pathway

The critical criteria includes:

- Benefits: The solution results in significant and measurable benefits (e.g., native species) and focuses on prevention and control of hitchhiking invasive animals associated with the horticulture trade. (40 pts)
- Species Targeted: The solution focuses on documented high-priority invasive animal species (including insects) that cause harm to native ecosystems in the United States and/or its territories. (40 pts)
- Readiness: The solution is sufficiently developed that intended users can readily adopt it without lengthy delays. (10 pts)
- Regulatory Risk: The solution is likely to gain necessary governmental approvals (NEPA, OSHA, EPA registration) and includes a paragraph addressing how managers might address environmental and safety compliance laws to implement the proposed solution, if applicable. (10 pts)

The supplementary criteria includes:

- Cost Efficiency- The solution is efficient in use of monetary and human resources. (10pts)
- Ease of Use- The solution is easy of use and implement. (10pts)
- Operational Enhancements- The solution can be operated independently or in remote locations. (10 pts)

Solutions that address species listed as priorities of concern by a management agency, or that have had management plans created. For example:

- Western Governors' Association  
([https://westgov.org/images/editor/WGA\\_Top\\_50\\_Invasive\\_Species\\_List\\_1.pdf](https://westgov.org/images/editor/WGA_Top_50_Invasive_Species_List_1.pdf))
- USDA APHIS PPQ - Regulated Pest List  
<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/rppl>

Solutions need to include prevention aspects. Any solution that solely focuses only on spread modeling, early detection, test kits, species identification, monitoring, plants and plant pathogens or soil pathogens will not be eligible.

Judges will conduct blind review of the submissions. Names and affiliations of participants will be removed before judging. Submissions will then be evaluated for eligibility by a multidisciplinary Judging Panel composed of Federal and non-Federal experts. The Judging Panel will use the criteria to rank submissions and select up to five finalists. Finalists will present their innovation to the Judging Panel after which the Judging Panel will recommend prize winner(s) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Judging Panel can determine that none of the submission merit winning.

**Independence of Judging Panel:** The Judging Panel will be independent of all solvers. No judge nor any member of the judge's immediate family shall participate as a solver or with any solvers or have any financial or other material interest. All members of the Judging Panel shall promptly disclose to the Prize Competition administrators any such current, former, or expected future conflict of interest with any solver.

**Role of Judging Panel:** The duties and responsibilities of the Judging Panel will include but will not be limited to: (i) evaluating each solver's compliance with these rules for the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize Competition(s); (ii) participating in the Judge Panel ranking meeting; (iii) determining the finalists; (iv) participating in the Digital Session for the finalists; and (v) recommending winners to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Digital Session for Finalists:** Up to five finalists will be invited to participate in a digital session (such as in a web conference) and have the chance to describe their entries in more detail. Instructions on the format, timing, and judges' expectations for digital sessions will be provided 2-3 weeks before the session. Winner(s) will be determined from the participants of the digital session.

**Grounds for Judging Panel Decisions:** Official recommendations made by the Judging Panel will be approved by a majority vote of the judges, following careful consideration of the submissions as required by these rules. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service retains sole and absolute discretion to declare or not declare a winner of the Prize Competitions and otherwise allocate or choose not to distribute one or more of the awards and any other award associated with the Prize Competitions.

**Decisions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are final:** The Judging Panel shall have sole and absolute discretion: (i) to allocate duties among the judges; (ii) to determine the degree of accuracy and error rate that is acceptable to the Judging Panel for all Prize Competition calculations, measurements and results, where not specified in these rules; (iii) to apply the methodology used by the Judging Panel to render its decisions; and (iv) to recommend to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the winner(s) of the Prize Competitions. No solver shall have the right to observe other solvers' submissions unless such information is made publicly available by the solver.

In consultation with the Judging Panel, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service retains sole and absolute discretion to select Prize Competition winners. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also reserves the right not to award any prizes.

**Submission Guidelines:** Only complete submissions that follow the Submission Guidelines will be deemed eligible. In brief, submissions must:

1. Be written in English.
2. Be no more than 6 pages long, including any references.
  - Format any references according to the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) style.
3. Include an attached PDF in Challenge.gov, using the *Submission Requirement* format provided.
  - Including the sections headers and information as listed in the Submission Requirements.
4. Include the following statement of understanding: “I accept and understands the rules, terms, and conditions described in this Prize Competition and agree to abide by them myself and ensure all team members abide by them” e-signed and dated.
5. Be submitted by the submission deadline.

**Participants must submit a completed submission by noon, 12:00 pm Eastern Time on June 27, 2023.** Participants who do not submit their complete submission by the deadline will not have their submission considered for this Prize Competition. Submissions that do not follow the Submission Guidelines may not be considered at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s discretion, and any material that exceeds stated page limits will be considered supplemental and will be reviewed and judged at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s discretion. Submissions must not include the Department of Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundations logo or official seal and must not claim federal government endorsement.

## Additional Information

For Further Information Contact:

Please email your questions to: [TRGPrizeCompetition@fws.gov](mailto:TRGPrizeCompetition@fws.gov)