

New York's Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program 2015 Request for Proposals

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) in partnership with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is requesting proposals for projects that serve to benefit the environment and economy of New York's Great Lakes basin by demonstrating the application of ecosystem-based management (EBM) to local watershed challenges. This small grants program is made possible by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and Article 14 of Environmental Conservation Law.

Proposals due by 4:30 PM Eastern September 30, 2015

Time Line:

- RFP announced – August 10, 2015
- Application Guidance Webinars – Noon on August 24 and September 4, 2015
- Proposal Submission Deadline – 4:30 PM EST, September 30, 2015
- Award Notification – Week of November 1, 2015
- Project term dates – January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017
- Projects must be completed – June 30, 2017
- Final Reports due by August 14, 2017

INTRODUCTION to the PROGRAM:

With guidance from planning initiatives by New York State agencies and NYSG, the New York's Great Lakes basin small grants program is intended to support stakeholder-driven efforts to restore and revitalize the state's Great Lakes region and demonstrate successful application of EBM.

In July of 2014, New York State published an interim copy of *New York's Great Lakes Basin Action Agenda*, commonly referred to as the Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA), an action plan for the application of ecosystem-based management principles in New York's Great Lakes basin. The document identifies pressing problems and actions which will benefit from holistic approaches needed to protect natural resources, environmental quality and economic development. The complete document may be found at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html>

This small grants program is designed to support local projects that lead to larger-scale activities described in the GLAA. The grants program is anticipated to be available on an annual basis, depending on funding. Each year, new priorities may be identified.

PROJECT PRIORITIES:

This year, NYSG is soliciting proposals (up to \$25,000) for projects that implement Goal #2 and Goal #7 of the GLAA. Respectively, these goals are to:

- “control sediment, nutrient and pathogen loadings so that drinking water quality is protected, desired aquatic biotic communities flourish, humans and wildlife are

- protected from coastline health hazards, and natural processes are sustained” and
- “enhance community resiliency and ecosystem integrity through restoration, protection, and improved resource management.”

It is anticipated that a total of \$200,000 will be awarded to 8-10 proposal requests. Consistent with the actions listed under these goals and the preliminary feedback from a series of GLAA work group meetings conducted in June 2015, projects that contribute to maintaining and restoring healthy waters, improved shoreline/riparian management, flooding avoidance, and erosion control and planning for future coastal and community resilience will be preferred. Furthermore, projects should integrate the principles of ecosystem-based management to the degree possible (see page 5, Evaluation of Proposals for a description).

Eligible projects may include community-based and/or project planning, project implementation, information management tool development, demonstration projects and targeted outreach and education initiatives, to support management actions and address the following areas as they relate to Goals #2 and #7:

- Storm water management
- Septic system management (excluding removal/replacements)
- Natural infrastructure/nature-based shoreline protection
- Riparian restoration
- Wetlands
- Green infrastructure

WHO CAN APPLY:

Proposals will be accepted from the following entities which are located in New York’s Great Lakes Basin:

- Not-for-profit organizations,
- County and local governmental or public agencies, such as municipalities and regional planning or environmental commissions; and,
- Educational institutions, including, but not limited to, public and private K-12 schools, Colleges, and Universities.

DURATION OF PROJECTS:

Projects must be completed within 18 months of the award date. Expenditures made before or after the project term dates will NOT be eligible for reimbursement.

BUDGET SIZE:

Budget requests cannot exceed \$25,000.

COST-SHARE REQUIREMENTS:

Match is not required but preferred. Applications should clearly show how this project can leverage opportunities for other funding.

HOW AND WHEN TO SUBMIT:

Full proposals must be submitted by **4:30 pm EST on September 30, 2015**. They must be submitted electronically through New York Sea Grant's electronic submission web site: www.nysgproposal.org

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

A standardized application cover sheet and budget form are available through website link above and **must** be used with each application.

1. Cover Sheet:

Title; project lead and project team; contact information, including address, telephone and email; amount requested; and checklist.

2. Project Description:

The main body of the proposal must be succinct and be no longer than five (not including the cover, budget forms, biographical sketch of top three personnel, required letters of support, timeline and budget justification) single-spaced pages in 12 point Times New Roman font. Provide:

- Identify GLAA goal and specific action(s) that project addresses
- Project Summary
- Goals and Methods
- Objectives, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Deliverables
- Briefly describe how the project integrates Ecosystem Based Management principles (See Evaluation Criteria)
- Personnel and Collaboration
- Project Location: all projects must be located within and/or directly related to New York's Great Lakes basin (see map at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/29065.html>)

3. Personnel and Partners:

List the key personnel involved in the project, identifying the project lead. Include a brief biographical sketch (2 page maximum per person) for the three top personnel. Include name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail address for each. If you are working with other partner organization(s), state the name of the organization and how the partnership will work. (These pages do NOT count toward the 5 page project description.)

4. Letters of Support for projects including activities on public or private property:

Applicants are required to provide letters of support from municipal governments and/or private property owners if the proposal includes activities on public or private lands. (These letters do not count toward the 5 page project description.) Projects that take place on private lands must demonstrate broad public value and may require additional oversight. General project support letters are not required and will not be considered in the evaluation process.

5. Timeline:

Schedule for starting and completing the project. *Projects must be completed by June 30, 2017.*

Be sure to include your tasks, project measures and deliverables in your timeline. Please limit timelines to 1 page.

6. Budget Justification:

Budget justifications should reflect key project milestones, deliverables, and schedules to support invoicing.

For each budget category, identify the funding amount, why, who, when and where the requested funds will be used. Budget categories include the following:

- a. Labor costs: List each person separately. Provide basis for labor costs
- b. Fringe Benefits: Provide explanation of how fringe benefits are applied and documentation for the rate or dollar amounts assessed.
- c. Permanent Equipment: Provide make, model and dollar amount. Explain whether price was determined from vendor quote, catalogue price or past experience. Permanent equipment includes items like fish tanks, graduated cylinders, monitoring equipment, textbooks, etc.
- d. Expendable Supplies and Equipment: Provide a list of expendable supplies and equipment needed for the project.
- e. Travel/Transportation: Describe nature and purpose.
- f. Other Costs: Provide breakdown for items needed and include a justification.
- g. Indirect Costs: Provide Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS:

- **Certificate of Liability Insurance**: Applicants will need insurance coverage. At this time, do not include proof of insurance. However, should funding be awarded you will be required to provide proof of insurance.
- **Audited statements**: Please be aware that if you are successful, in order to process the award, we will require an A133 recent audit or recent audited financial statements.
- **Permits**: For all projects requiring permits, all necessary permits must be obtained prior to conducting the relevant activity.
- **Documentation of Ownership and Public Interest in Property**: Prior to receiving the award, successful applicants must be able to document adequate ownership rights in and to the subject property, and that the ownership or use of the subject property is of a public nature.
- **Municipal Endorsement**: Prior to receiving the award, successful applicants must provide a municipal endorsement and authorization to conduct the proposed project on municipal property.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS:

All proposals that are complete and meet the deadline will be evaluated by a technical review team consisting of members of New York Sea Grant and State agencies.

The Team will evaluate complete proposals based on the following criteria:

- Proposal must clearly identify and link to one or more of the actions and associated milestones listed under GLAA Goal #2 and Goal #7.
- Degree to which the project integrates the principles of ecosystem-based management and describes how they will be applied, as listed below:
 - Focusing on a particular place with natural boundaries (e.g. subwatershed);
 - Supporting sustainable activities in and uses of the ecosystem;
 - Prioritizing the health and integrity of the whole ecosystem over the needs of a single activity, species or interest;
 - Considering interactions within and/or among ecosystems;
 - Integrating ecological, social, economic and institutional perspectives and concerns;
 - Including the participation of stakeholders;
 - Promoting coordination and/or collaboration among various stakeholders and management entities;
 - Using and/or generating scientific information to inform decision-making; and
 - Implementing adaptive management.
- Appropriateness of the project's defined measurable outcomes or deliverables in regards to the project goals and whether they can be completed and invoiced within 18 months of contract approval.
- Prior experience of the project team
- Appropriateness of budget
- Project must be located within and/or directly related to New York's Great Lakes basin (see map at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/29065.html>).
- Inclusion of an outreach component to support broad scale communication and/or application of project results.
- Degree to which the project will leverage other sources of funding and present opportunities to maximize implementation of the GLAA.
- Degree to which the project builds local and/or organizational capacity for future related projects.

FUNDING GUIDELINES:

Proposals for new projects will be accepted. Funds are available for specific costs associated with project implementation, and for general overhead expenses. The selected projects will require application for reimbursement, including all receipts. If you are selected for funding, in addition to electronic copies of any products produced, you will have to send brief progress status reports and invoicing at the end of each calendar quarter and a mid-project and final report along with an evaluation of your project, electronically, to the New York Sea Grant office.

Webinars: Two webinars will be held to present information on the proposal process: on

Release date: 10 August 2015

August 24 and September 4, 2015 at noon. For more information and to register, please email your name and email address to nag3@cornell.edu or call (607)255-2832.

For more information, contact:

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