

New York's Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program 2016 Request for Proposals

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS 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 23, 2016

Time Line:

- RFP announced – June 20, 2016
- Application Guidance Webinars – Noon on July 11 and July 25, 2016
- Proposal Submission Deadline – 4:30 PM EST, September 23, 2016
- Award Notification – Week of October 31, 2016
- Project term dates – March 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018
- Projects must be completed – August 31, 2018
- Final Reports due by November 30, 2018

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 EBM 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, as sub basin work group meetings identify regional and basin wide collaborative actions needed. New York State researchers are encouraged to apply to the New York State Great Lakes Protection Fund small grants program, administered by the Great Lakes Research Consortium with support from the NYS DEC and New York Great Lakes Basin Advisory Council. More details of that small grants program can be found at <http://www.esf.edu/glrc/nyglpf.htm>.

PROJECT PRIORITIES:

This year, NYSG is soliciting proposals (up to \$25,000) for projects that implement Goal #5 and Goal #7 of the GLAA. Respectively, these goals are to:

- “conserve and restore native fish and wildlife biodiversity and habitats to achieve and sustain resilient ecosystems and vibrant economies” 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 quarterly throughout 2015 and 2016, projects that contribute to maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems and habitats, improved shoreline/riparian management, flooding avoidance, and erosion control and planning for future coastal and community resilience will be preferred. Furthermore, projects should integrate EBM principles to the degree possible (see page 5, Evaluation of Proposals for a description).

Eligible projects may include project planning, design, and/or 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 #5 and #7:

- Aquatic connectivity
- Vulnerable landscape/habitat conservation and/or enhancement (e.g. wetlands, shorelines, floodplains, etc.)
- Natural infrastructure/nature-based shoreline protection
- Riparian restoration
- Green infrastructure
- Storm water management

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.

HOW AND WHEN TO SUBMIT:

Full proposals must be submitted by **4:30 pm EST on September 23, 2016**. They must be submitted electronically through New York Sea Grant's electronic submission web site, www.nysgproposal.org, which will **not** accept proposals submitted after 4:30 pm EST on September 23, 2016.

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

A standardized application cover sheet, goal and focus checklist, 90-2 project summary form, and 90-4 budget form are available through the website link above and **must** be used with each proposal. All proposal components should be submitted as one document.

1. Cover Sheet:

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

2. Goal and Focus Checklist:

Title; project lead; GLAA goal(s); focus area(s); EBM principle(s).

3. Project Description:

The main body of the proposal must be succinct and be no longer than five single-spaced pages in 12 point Times New Roman font (not including the cover sheet, goal and focus checklist, biographical sketch of top three personnel, required letters of support, timeline, budget justification, cost reasonableness statement, budget form, and project summary form). 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 EBM 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>)

4. 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.

5. 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. Projects that take place on private lands must demonstrate broad public value and may require additional oversight. These pages do not count toward the 5 page project description. General project support letters are not required and will not be considered in the evaluation process.

6. Timeline:

Schedule for starting and completing the project. These pages do not count toward the 5 page project description. *Projects must be completed by August 31, 2018.* Be sure to include your tasks, project measures and deliverables in your timeline. Please limit timelines to 1 page.

7. Budget Justification:

Budget justifications should reflect key project milestones, deliverables, and schedules to support invoicing. These pages do not count toward the 5 page project description. 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.

8. Cost Reasonableness Statement:

Cost reasonableness statements should identify how costs were determined and how they are appropriate and competitive (e.g. used market rates, competitive salaries, etc.). These pages do not count toward the 5 page project description. Budget justifications and cost reasonableness statements are not the same.

9. 90-4 Budget Form:

Use the provided form to detail the project's budget. These pages do not count toward the 5 page project description.

10. 90-2 Project Summary Form:

Use the form provided to list project leads, co-leads, and term dates, and to summarize objectives, methods, and rationale (objectives and methods must match what is in the Project Summary). These pages do not count toward the 5 page project description.

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, Workmans Compensation and Disability benefits.
- **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, at a minimum, 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 #5 and Goal #7.
- Degree to which the project integrates EBM principles 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 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:

A contract between Stony Brook University and the selected recipient must be signed before a Purchase Order will be issued. 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 invoices 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 July 11 and July 25, 2016 at noon. Please register through Cornell's event registration service: https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/SmallGrantsProgramWebinars_112.

If you have questions or difficulties registering, please email Heather Weitzner at hw528@cornell.edu or call (315) 331-8415.

For more information, contact:

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