



Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment/ NOAA Habitat Restoration Partnership **Request for Proposals** **Habitat Restoration Grants Program • 2010**

Optional Letters of Intent are due by 5:00 PM EST on January 15, 2010. Mandatory Full Proposals must be submitted online March 1-April 2, 2010. Projects selected for funding by this Partnership will be notified by May 21, 2010. Contracts with successful applicants will not be issued until summer 2010, contingent upon renewed funding of this GOMC-NOAA Partnership (anticipated in June 2010).

Introduction

This request for proposals is made under the auspices of a partnership between the US Association of Delegates to the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (the Council) and the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Community-based Restoration Program. The purpose of this Partnership is to further the Council's goal of habitat restoration and to support a strategic approach to marine, coastal and riverine habitat restoration within the Gulf of Maine (GOM). The Partnership is inviting eligible organizations to compete for Habitat Restoration Grants made available through this solicitation. This funding program is managed by the Association of US Delegates to the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment on behalf of the Council.

Applicant Eligibility

Non-governmental organizations (e.g., community associations, cooperatives, civic groups), municipalities, schools and tribal and state governments are eligible to apply. Funded projects are generally located in an area that includes the Gulf of Maine watershed and extends to nearshore ecosystems in the Gulf. The coastal region within this area extends from the elbow of Cape Cod in Chatham, Massachusetts to Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, but proposals for projects outside of this geographic range may be considered if they clearly demonstrate direct benefits to the GOM ecosystem.

Project Type Eligibility

Where marine, estuarine and associated freshwater habitats/communities have been significantly altered, restoration activities contribute to the recovery of ecosystem functioning and biodiversity that more closely reflects a pre-altered condition. The GOMC-NOAA Habitat Restoration Partnership funds restoration projects that benefit living marine resources, including diadromous fish species. Successful restoration often requires a comprehensive approach including feasibility assessments and planning, design, permitting, implementation and pre/post restoration monitoring phases. We request project proposals that address one or more of these project phases and focus on habitat restoration types including those listed below:

- Diadromous fish restoration and stewardship – Projects targeting improvements for fish passage and spawning habitat are priorities for this type of restoration. Project design and planning may involve characterization of impounded sediments, dam safety evaluation, surveying, hydrologic evaluations, engineering design and pre- and post-restoration monitoring of biological and physical parameters.
- Coastal wetland restoration and stewardship – Removing or mediating effects of tidal restrictions, restoring altered hydrology and drainage, mediation or abatement of excessive runoff to coastal wetlands, fill removal and invasive plant species control. Project design and planning may involve hydrologic evaluations, surveying, botanical analyses, engineering design and pre- and post-restoration monitoring of biological and physical parameters.
- Riverine restoration and stewardship – Restoration of historical riverine diadromous fish habitat where altered hydrology, riparian corridors, or other factors have degraded bank stability and aquatic habitat. Project design and planning may include physical habitat and/or stream stability assessments, sediment transport analyses, natural channel design and bioengineered alternatives to riverbank armoring.
- Restoration projects for other habitat types including submerged aquatic vegetation, shellfish beds, and other subtidal and intertidal habitats are also eligible for funding. These projects can include pre- and post-restoration monitoring of biological and physical parameters for GOMC/NOAA Partnership funded projects.

All proposed monitoring activities must demonstrate a direct nexus with proposed, or previously-funded, Partnership grant projects.

Ineligible Activities: The Partnership does not fund projects that lack a central focus on restoration for its conservation value. This program does not fund projects required by consent decree, court order, statute, regulation or other legal means to mitigate, compensate or otherwise offset the effects of another activity.

Available Funding, Match Requirements and Project Duration

Funds Available: Contingent upon renewed funding of this Partnership, we anticipate that up to \$520,000 will be available for new projects in 2010. Awards will typically range between \$40,000 to \$100,000.

Matching Requirements: Match may be in the form of cash, or in-kind staff/volunteer time, goods or services. The amount of funding sought from this program must be matched by at least a same amount (1:1) of non-federal match value that has not been used as match for other grant programs. Eligible match cannot be accrued prior to renewal of the GOMC-NOAA Habitat Restoration Partnership (anticipated in June, 2010). Letters demonstrating requests for match or promised match must be included with full proposals submitted to this grant program.

Project Duration: Work conducted for the portion of the project funded by this grant program must be complete within 24 months of grant contract execution, unless a longer contract period is negotiated.

Letter of Intent

Submitting an optional letter of intent (LOI) affords applicants the opportunity for Partnership input on their restoration concept before having to develop a full proposal.

The applicant should fully review this entire RFP, including requirements of this grant program, before deciding to develop an LOI. LOIs should not exceed three typed pages, not including the project location map page, and must include the following information:

- Applicant's complete contact information (phone, email, mailing address)
- Project location description and map
- A brief statement describing conditions warranting restoration
- Previous / ongoing work on this project
- Project goals, including a quantified projection of restored habitat, if applicable
- Proposed approach and methods for achieving project goals
- Existing or likely project partners and community support for the proposal
- Opportunities or challenges potentially influencing project success
- Existing or potential funding sources other than this grant program
- Estimated total project cost and amount of funds requested of this grant program in US dollars.

Each LOI and any supporting materials must be submitted as a single PDF file. File names should be formatted as follows: LOI-[state or province abbreviation]-[project name]-[applicant name]. For example: "LOI-MA-Green Marsh Restoration- Friends of Green Marsh.pdf". Submit files via email by 5:00 PM EST on January 15, 2010 to Slade Moore (slade.moore@maine.gov). No materials will be accepted after this deadline, so please plan ahead. Applicants will be notified during the week of March 1st, 2010 if their proposals are among those encouraged forward to the Full Proposal Application process.

Full Proposal Applications

Submissions

Full Proposal Applications must be submitted March 1-April 2, 2010. Proposals selected for funding by this Partnership will be notified by May 21, 2010. Application materials must be submitted online using instructions provided by the GOMC web-based application system accessed at <http://www.gulfofmaine.org/grantapp/>. A completed application must include the following items:

- **Cover letter / Proposal Summary** (2 pages maximum)
- **Project Narrative** providing a detailed description of project goals, approach, methods, participants, monitoring, and expected outcomes, benefits, and deliverables. The Narrative structure and content should follow and address the elements detailed below in "Review Criteria" and should not exceed 8 pages. At a minimum the narrative should include the following information:
 - Applicant information:
 - Organization
 - Project name and location
 - Project contact name and title
 - Address
 - Phone, Fax, email
 - project type (e.g. anadromous fish restoration coastal wetlands restoration, riverine restoration, marine restoration)
 - Project objective(s): briefly explain the anticipated outcome(s) of the project
 - description of the pre-degraded habitat type and the current habitat conditions
 - size of the entire system and the area to be restored,
 - species which will benefit from the restoration activity,
 - specific techniques and methods that will be used to restore the habitat,

- monitoring plans,
- current ownership of the project area,
- provisions to protect the restoration after completion of the project,
- partners and community support
- permits needed (federal, state, and local) and which, if any have already been secured.
- **Project Scope of Work and Timeframe** (Appendix A – 2 pages maximum)
- **Budget Table and Narrative** (Appendix B – 2 pages maximum)
- **Maps and photos** of the proposed project site (Appendix C – 5 pages maximum)
- **Letters of Support** (Appendix D – 5 pages maximum)

Support letters, maps/photos and other materials uploaded to the applications website should first be grouped into PDF files corresponding to material type (e.g. map and photos or support letters). None of these files may exceed 2 MB. PDF file names should be formatted to indicate their contents, such as: [state or province]-[project name]-[applicant]-[file type]. For example: "MA-Green Marsh Restoration-Friends of Green marsh-maps and photos.pdf"

Review Criteria

A proposal review team composed of members representing Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Canada, NMFS and the Council will evaluate full proposals using the criteria provided below. In applying these criteria to project proposals, the review team will consider the proposal and other information reasonably available for a given project.

Potential for the project to restore degraded habitat to a self-sustaining, pre-degraded condition (30%)

- To what extent will this project restore habitat, and the larger system to pre-degraded conditions?
- What is the size of the overall system and the projected amount of habitat to be restored, for instance:
 - acres/miles of restored stream habitat
 - miles and acres of renewed fish access to streams and spawning habitat
 - acres of wetland and subtidal habitat restored
- How will this project promote living resources, such as species having regional significance?
- Once restored, to what extent will the restoration be self-sustaining and protected from future degradation?
- Does the project build upon previous restoration work and/or facilitate future restoration actions?
- Is the project part of a local and/or regional restoration plan?
- Who will be responsible for ongoing maintenance/management costs at the project site and how will costs be paid?

Technical merit and project feasibility (25%)

- Is the project feasible from ecological, social, and engineering perspectives?
- Are the monitoring parameters and benchmarks for project success well-matched and likely to provide an accurate evaluation of project impacts?
- Are the monitoring parameters appropriate for a long-term analysis?
- Do the applicant and their partners have the capacity to successfully complete this project?
- Are there any potential adverse impacts (such as flooding or habitat loss) associated with the project and how will they be addressed?

Partnerships with community groups and other organizations (20%)

- Does the landowner support the proposed project (as documented through a letter of support)?
- What are the roles of partnering non-governmental organizations and groups (as documented through letters of support)?
- Is the project supported by local, state, and/or federal agencies (as documented through letters of support)?

Cost effectiveness and budget detail and consideration (25%)

- Is there sufficient detail in the budget table and narrative?
- Is non-federal match likely to exceed 1:1 ratio?
- Does the project appear to be cost effective?

New Proposal and Grant Contract Requirements for the 2010 RFP

Climate change considerations – Uncertainty prevents an adequate understanding of which climate change-induced physical, chemical, and biological shifts are most likely to occur and to what magnitude. However, several studies indicate that depending on the emissions scenario used, we can expect several broad classes of physical change that will influence ecosystems in the Gulf of Maine and its watershed. If greenhouse gas emissions continue unabated, sea level rise increases of more than 3 feet by 2100 have been projected, which several regional studies consider a conservative estimate. Changes in precipitation patterns and more frequent, intense storms are also projected. Some anticipated results of these shifts are a net loss of coastal wetlands area due to flooding, coastal geomorphologic changes due to intense storms, and highly variable stream flow.

The full implications of these changes on the long-term value of restoration activities are difficult, if not impossible to assess. Given current levels of uncertainty, examples of highly-tuned, preemptive responses to projected climate-induced changes are few, but an emerging approach is to err on the side of precaution by planning for greatest probable range of variability in conditions. Proposals should address how the proposed project will address and respond to relevant environmental shifts associated with projected climate change.

Safety Plans – GOMC-approved safety plans will be required of all new grantees prior to initiation of physical work (e.g. for monitoring, inventories, construction, and post-construction conditions). The Partnership will provide further guidance during development of grant contracts. Full proposals should acknowledge this requirement as a tasking item and product in Appendix A.

Permitting Strategies – grantees will be required to prepare written permitting strategies (as applicable) for inclusion in their grant contracts. The Partnership will provide further guidance during development of grant contracts. Full proposals should acknowledge this requirement as a tasking item and product in Appendix A.

Monitoring Plans – Projects that will implement direct, physical restorative actions, such as culvert replacement to improve fish passage, will be required to prepare a written monitoring plan in order to document and evaluate pre- and post-restoration habitat conditions. The monitoring plan will include a detailed methodology and description of the physical and biological parameters proposed to assess restoration success. The Partnership will provide further guidance during development of grant contracts. Full proposals should acknowledge this requirement as a tasking item and product in Appendix A.

Monitoring guidance is provided at the GOMC's Habitat Restoration Web Portal, which can be found at <http://restoration.gulfofmaine.org/monitoring/index.php>. *Regional Standards to Identify and Evaluate Tidal Wetland Restoration in the Gulf of Maine* (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/resshow/neckles/Gpac.pdf>) and *The Stream Barrier Removal Monitoring Guide* (<http://www.gulfofmaine.org/streambarrierremoval/>) provide additional guidance.

Economic Benefits – along with final reporting materials, grantees will be expected to provide a brief accounting of economic benefits associated with their projects. The Partnership will provide further guidance during development of grant contracts. Full proposals should acknowledge this requirement as a tasking item and product in Appendix A.

Press Releases – Before final reporting materials are submitted, grantees will draft and issue at least one local press release or article for local media outlets that describes work completed under their project and acknowledges funding and technical support provided by the GOMC-NOAA Habitat Restoration Partnership. Full proposals should acknowledge this requirement as a tasking item and product in Appendix A.

Grant Administration

Applicants will be notified of award decisions by May 21, 2010, however contracts will not be issued until summer 2010, contingent upon renewed funding of the GOMC-NOAA Partnership (anticipated in June 2010). Successful applicants will enter into contracts with the Association of US Delegates to the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment that specifies work tasks, work products, and reporting requirements. Prior to applying to this grant program, applicants should confirm that they have adequate administrative capacity to meet this program's requirements. It is the responsibility of grantees to know and comply with deadlines and procedures for submitting the following project materials listed below:

NOAA Data Forms: an Initial and Final version of this document is submitted online by the grantee during the contracting and final project phases, respectively.

GOMC Progress Reports: updates of tasking progress and expenditures submitted online at six month intervals (deadlines are 30 July and 31 January).

GOMC Final reports: A summary of tasking completion and budget expenditures for the entire project submitted online within 30 days of project completion or the end of the contract period, whichever comes first. Final reporting materials require complete match documentation in the form of letters from contributing organizations.

Invoicing Requirements: Payment will be made to grantees in US dollars on a reimbursement basis, except that up to 15% of the total grant award may be requested by the grantee before work begins. At least 20% of the award is reserved for the final payment. There will be no adjustments to the total award amount based on fluctuations in Canadian-US exchange rates. Disbursal of payments by this program is contingent upon the grantee's compliance with program requirements.

Ineligible Costs: Project costs incurred before execution of contracts will not be reimbursed by this grant program. Funds may not be used to support permanent staffing

costs (however, a reasonable level of overhead during the grant period is acceptable), scholarships to individuals, deficit reduction activities, projects that have already been completed, or activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state, provincial or federal law. Indirect or overhead costs are acceptable provided they do not exceed 25% of the total grant request. Indirect or overhead costs include, but are not limited to: administrative salaries, general software, office supplies and postage expenses not directly related to the grant.

State / Provincial Contacts

For assistance with the application process, contact the Habitat Restoration Coordinator, Slade Moore, using the information provided below. For assistance with specific technical aspects of proposed projects, contact the Jurisdictional Representatives listed below that are most appropriate given your project location.

Maine	Slade Moore	207.287.8935	slade.moore@maine.gov
Massachusetts	Hunt Durey	617.626.1245	hunt.durey@state.ma.us
New Hampshire	Ted Diers	603.559.0027	ted.diers@des.nh.us
Canada	Anita Hamilton	902.426.1642	hamiltona@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Note: Appendices A-C are provided below to indicate the type of information required for full proposals through the online application. The application system is accessed at: <http://www.gulfofmaine.org/grantapp/>.

Appendix A
Project Scope of Work and Timeline

Applicant:

Project Name:

PROJECT TASKS

Task 1: (provide task name)

Description:

Begin date:

End date:

Task 2: (provide task name)

Description:

Begin date:

End date:

CONTINUE AS NECESSARY WITH ADDITIONAL TASKING ITEMS

PROJECT PRODUCTS

Work Product/Deliverable 1: (provide product name)

Description:

Completion date:

Work Product/Deliverable 2: (provide product name)

Description:

Completion date:

CONTINUE AS NECESSARY WITH ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS/DELIVERABLES

Appendix B Budget Table and Narrative

Applicant:

Project Name:

Budget category (add items as necessary under each of the headings)	Projected/requested amounts (\$US) by source				Non-fed match	
	GOMC-NOAA	Non-fed Match	Other	Total	Type	From whom
Personnel						
Fringe						
Travel						
Equipment						
Supplies						
Contractual						
Other						
Total						

Notes: Indicate type of match in the table; “C” for cash, “K” for in-kind, “O” for other. Include documentation of match in the form of scanned letters or other written agreements supporting whether the match is requested or promised. There will be no adjustments to the total award amount based on fluctuations in Canadian-US exchange rates.

Narrative: Provide a detailed narrative of all costs identified in the above table and a justification for those costs. An example of narrative format follows:

Contractual

Fish ladder design

GOMC-NOAA: \$5,000 toward design costs

Non-fed match: \$1,200 in cash for design from the friends of Green Marsh

Fish ladder site prep/construction

GOMC-NOAA: \$5,000 to hire local contractor for construction

Non-fed match: 100 volunteer hours of site prep donated by local volunteer contractor at 20.25/hour = \$2,250

Other: \$5,000 USFWS cash contribution for construction

Appendix C

Maps and photos of project location

Provide materials that make clear the location and extent of the project. Aerial imagery is often complimented by 1:24,000 scale USGS topographic sheets and NOAA charts. Well-labeled photos taken from the ground should also be included to demonstrate current site conditions. Please include the following materials in separate PDF files that contain for each of the two

1. Include aerial photos, orthophotoquads, USGS topographic sheets (or maps), and NOAA charts of the project area with the project location clearly identified.
2. Photos that that have locations corresponding locations on a map and labeled the direction the camera was facing (e.g., photo #1, east side of dam, facing W).