

SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR PREPROPOSALS

FLOW REGIME – AN ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION STRATEGY

SUMMARY

The Great Lakes Protection Fund seeks preproposals for innovative demonstration projects that improve the ecological health of the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes by restoring the physical hydrology of the environment. Projects should test the hypothesis that such improvements to the physical environment improve biological health, are cost effective over the long term, and increase the impact of existing government and private restoration programs. The Fund expects to support a number of coordinated projects.

The deadline for submitting preproposals in response to this supplemental request is 5:00 p.m., March 15, 1999.

BACKGROUND

The Fund specifically seeks to test the usefulness of re-establishing a more natural flow regime as a core strategy to protect and restore the ecological health of waters of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The water resources of the Great Lakes basin have been highly modified – chemically, biologically, and physically. They have been altered chemically by the introduction of pollutants from the air; from point source discharges, and from water that enters these systems from the surrounding watershed. They have been biologically modified by the intentional and accidental introduction of exotic species. And they have been altered physically by channelization, dredging, and the installation of structures such as jetties, dams, locks and culverts. While many successful efforts are underway to address biological and chemical pollution, restoration of the physical environment appears to offer an opportunity to further restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes.

The natural dynamic character of water systems – their flow regime – drives their ecological integrity. Yet, the flow regimes of the basin's waterways have been fundamentally altered. These alterations are caused not only by the physical modifications noted above, but also by changes in land use. Water and materials enter the basin's water courses at different times, at different rates, and in different amounts because of the significant changes on the land they drain. While the end result has been biological degradation, the diverse symptoms of these altered flow regimes can include sedimentation, stream bank erosion, decreased dry weather flows, habitat loss, and separation of the tributary habitat from the open lakes.

PROJECT CRITERIA

The Fund envisions supporting a portfolio of coordinated, local initiatives that collectively test a set of creative, transferable approaches to restoring more natural flow regimes in the basin. The Fund anticipates that this portfolio could include projects to protect a range of relatively intact natural communities which may serve as a “source” for the restoration of larger areas as well as other projects that restore key natural communities where they have been damaged by the alteration of physical processes. This set of projects would illustrate how more natural flow regimes improve the health not only of tributaries, but also of near-shore and open lake communities. Collectively, these projects will serve to demonstrate that the ecological and economic benefits of dynamic natural systems are greater than heavily managed, artificial ones.

The Fund wishes to encourage a broad array of innovative strategies to strengthen the health of the basin’s aquatic resources. As usual, The Fund will consider regional projects that target multiple sites, but this supplemental request, the Fund will also consider supporting innovative local projects that add value to the larger body of work supported. Applicants must be willing to work with other grantees, Fund staff, and others in the basin to capture and share the lessons from the supported projects.

Each individual project should:

- Identify a specific, scientifically-based, testable hypothesis for restoration and/or protection objectives;
- Demonstrate an innovative strategy to eliminate major alterations of the system’s natural flow regime;
- Be a collaborative effort;
- Include sufficient monitoring to measure project results and test the hypothesis; and
- Make maximum use of existing efforts and leverage Fund support as much as possible.

The following list is illustrative of the kinds of strategies that applicants may wish to consider: the key consideration is that the strategy proposed should have relevance throughout the basin and be likely to enhance the health of the entire Great Lakes ecosystem. Such strategies might include:

- Reconnecting biologically impacted tributary stretches to those more rich in aquatic life by addressing small structures such as dams, culverts, or other blockages;
- Demonstrating new methods of draining agricultural fields that restore a more natural pattern of stream flow;
- Returning stream channels, flood plains, and coastal areas to a more natural state;
- Restoring connections between surface and ground waters to return a more natural flow regimes to basin tributaries;
- Creating water conservation efforts to minimize negative impacts of withdrawals and diversions from basin waters;
- Restoring coastal, riparian or upper watershed wetlands; and

- ❑ Demonstrating how downstream interests can work in the upper watershed to improve ecological health and minimize society's costs (e.g., reduce flooding or the need for additional sewage treatment.)

ELIGIBILITY

The Great Lakes Protection Fund can support a wide variety of applicants. Non-profit organizations (including environmental organizations, trade associations, and universities), governmental agencies, individuals, and for-profit businesses are eligible for Fund support. Successful applicants must maintain open access to certain project data, records and information.

All applicants must show that the proposed work has clear public benefit and that any related financial benefits will accrue to the public good. Government agencies must show that Fund support is not being used to replace or duplicate public funds.

CONTENT OF PREPROPOSALS

Preproposals should be no more than three pages of text. No attachments are permitted. Staple a completed Cover Sheet to each copy of the preproposal. Please submit six copies of the entire package. Do not send cover letters, covers, or binders. No fax or e-mail applications will be accepted.

All preproposals must be delivered to the Fund's offices no later than 5:00 p.m., March 15, 1999.

Please address the following issues, in the order below, in your preproposal:

Environmental Outcomes

Identify the expected environmental outcome(s) of the proposed work. Be as specific as possible. The specific outcome should be presented as a testable hypothesis for the project's on-the-ground work. Also identify the likely impacts of the project's results on the Great Lakes ecosystem, and what must happen beyond the work proposed to ensure that these impacts occur. Explain why the specific project outcome and more general results are priorities for the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Proposed Work

Outline the work to be carried out. Include a timeline for the project that lays out when the work will be complete and the major interim objectives. Show how the work will lead to the expected environmental outcome identified above and employ the restoration of natural flow regimes as the key strategy. Identify how project success will be measured. Identify target audiences for the project. Discuss how the results, even if the projected outcomes are not achieved, matter to the identified target audiences, and lay out a strategy to communicate those results.

Key Personnel

Identify the members of the project team (those supported by the request, by other funding sources and volunteers), indicating roles and responsibilities. The project team

should reflect meaningful collaboration among all interests affected by the project. Briefly describe qualifications.

Financial Plan

Present the estimated costs of the proposed work in summary categories: personnel, equipment and supplies, travel, consultants, overhead, etc. The Fund will not support overhead costs in excess of 15% of the direct project costs (excluding travel and sub-contracts.) Identify the type and amount of support requested of the Fund. Identify how other monies will be raised to support the proposed work.

Submit six copies to:

Preproposal Application
Water Resources Project
Great Lakes Protection Fund
25 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 1880
Chicago, IL 60601

CALENDAR

December 1998

Request for Preproposals

March 1999

Preproposal Submissions

May 1999

Full Proposals Invited

Summer 1999

Full Proposal Review and Revision

September 1999

Announcement of Awards

THE GREAT LAKES PROTECTION FUND

The Great Lakes Protection Fund is a private, nonprofit corporation formed in 1989 by the Governors of the Great Lakes States. It is a permanent environmental endowment that supports actions that improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The Fund seeks projects that lead to tangible improvements in the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem, address the interdependence of ecological and economic health, and are innovative, creative, and venturesome. The Fund accepts preproposals at any time and in response to periodic supplemental requests for preproposals on specific topics such as this.