



Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership - NOAA Community-Based Restoration Grant Program Request for Pre-Proposals & Proposal Information

Deadline for Pre-proposal Submission: May 20, 2009

Introduction: The Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program are pleased to request pre-proposals for their matching grant program, initiating the proposal process. The partnership between SARP and NOAA provides funds for projects in the Southeast Region which further the goal of the Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan (SAHP):

To maintain, restore, and conserve the quantity and quality of freshwater, estuarine, and marine habitats to support healthy, sustainable fish and aquatic communities and sustainable public use for the benefit of all in the southeastern region and the entire U.S

Projects meeting this request for proposals will target the nine coastal states of the southeastern United States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

Eligible applicants include: non-governmental organizations (e.g., community associations, watershed user groups, cooperatives, civic groups), municipalities, universities, schools, state and tribal governments. Federal agencies are not eligible to apply.

SARP and NOAA seek to fund projects that:

1. Result in **on-the-ground aquatic habitat restoration** benefitting NOAA trust resources (please see section below);
2. Have applicability to one or more of the eight objectives of the Southeast Aquatic Habitat Plan (SAHP). The SAHP can be found at www.sarpaquatic.org;
3. Ensure lasting benefits and **enhanced community stewardship** through a focused and effective education and outreach element;
4. Provide a minimum 1:1 non-federal match to the partnership funds requested;
5. Include a mechanism to **monitor and evaluate** the success of the project.

Projects of interest may include but are not limited to the following: Removal of impediments to fish passage for diadromous species; restoration of spawning, foraging, and thermal refugia for diadromous species; improvement of hydrologic flow regimes affected by dams, reservoirs, siltation, and commercial or residential development; restoration of foraging, spawning, and nursery habitat such as riparian corridors along tidally-influenced streams and bayous, estuarine wetlands, mangroves, oyster reefs, seagrasses, and coral reefs for estuarine and marine fish species; improvement of hydrological regimes in tidally-influenced areas; and control or elimination of invasive species affecting native fish and shellfish populations.

Applicants are strongly urged to discuss project ideas and questions prior to submitting pre-proposals. For questions regarding applicability to the SAHP, contact Marilyn Barrett-O'Leary, SARP Project Manager at 225-892-7470. For technical questions, including those regarding NOAA's trust resources, contact your local NOAA representative (see Appendix B).

NOAA trust resources and the habitats that support them serve as the focus of this partnership. Applicants must demonstrate that habitat restoration will result in a benefit to NOAA trust resources:

- Commercial and recreational fishery resources (marine fish and shellfish and their habitats);
- Anadromous species (fish, such as sturgeon, which spawn in freshwater then migrate to the sea);
- Endangered and threatened marine species and their habitats;
- Marine mammals, turtles, and their habitats;
- Marshes, mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs, and other coastal habitats; and
- Resources associated with National Marine Sanctuaries and National Estuarine Research Reserves.

Project Duration: Work conducted for the project is to be completed within 18-24 months of contract approval. Projects should be designed to begin in fall 2009.

Funding: Although about \$300,000 is available for projects, the maximum amount available for any one project is \$50,000. Most awards will be between \$10,000 and \$35,000. Grants must have a minimum 1:1 non-federal match, which may be in cash, time, goods, or other services. Eligible costs will be paid for work done no earlier than contract approval. Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis with 15% of the grant award allowed up-front.

Grant funds may NOT be used to support overhead, permanent staffing costs, political advocacy, scholarships to individuals, deficit reduction activities, projects that have already been completed, or for activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or Federal law.

Pre-Proposal Requirements: Pre-proposals must be received by May 20, 2009 and should be no more than three pages in length. The pre-proposal will provide a summary of the proposed restoration project and identify the objectives that are being supported by the project as well as the beneficiaries of the project outcome. Pre-proposals must include:

1. What project criteria will be met by this project? See previous information on SAHP and NOAA trust resources.);
2. The information marked by an asterisk (*) in Appendix A.

It should be formatted as shown in Appendix A. Attachments and appendices are not included in this maximum page requirement. Note that the full proposal will further describe these points, incorporating additional plans necessary for sustainable restoration. Timelines may use an October 1, 2009, starting date, but the actual start date will be determined by completion of the contract document. Letters of invitation for full proposals will be sent to principal investigators on or about July 1, 2009.

Projects that are invited to submit a full proposal (approximate submittal date July 27, 2009) will more fully describe the activities to be accomplished and will include a specific timeline, a monitoring plan, and a detailed budget. Full proposals must include all of the information in Appendix A., and should not exceed 10 pages. Full proposals will be accepted only from invited applicants, selected on the basis of a pre-proposal.

Applicants invited to submit full proposals may be required to include a letter of support from an appropriate organization. Final projects will be selected for funding following review by the SARP-NOAA Selection Committee. Grantees will be notified of awards within six to eight weeks of the proposal deadline.

Proposal Selection Process: Both pre-proposals and proposals will be reviewed by the SARP-NOAA Partnership Project Selection Committee on the basis of the criteria below. The Committee consists of the SARP Coordinator and one representative from: NOAA, each of the SARP coastal states, USFWS, USGS, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. These criteria will be used as appropriate for both the pre-proposal and proposal review process.

Evaluation criteria: Projects will be scored according to criteria in five categories:

- **Category 1: (20 %) Importance and Applicability**
 - Does the project support the identified habitat conservation objective(s) of the SAHP?
 - Does the project contribute to the restoration, conservation, or enhancement of NOAA trust resources?
 - Considered in the context of the existing local environment, will restoration activities in the target habitat make a significant positive impact?
 - Will the project deliver tangible, specific results that are measurable (acres, stream miles, volunteer hours, adequate monitoring parameters, etc)?
- **Category 2: (30%) Technical/Scientific Merit**
 - Can the project be completed within 18-24 months of receiving funding (excluding monitoring and evaluation)?
 - What is the overall technical feasibility of the project, from both a biological and an engineering perspective?
 - Is the proposal technically sound in its use of appropriate methods that are likely to achieve project goals and objectives on both ecological and community stewardship levels?
 - Does the project addresses the root causes of habitat degradation or loss, ensuring that the restoration project will sustain itself over time?
 - Does the proposal provide assurance that the project will meet all Federal, state and local environmental laws and follow applicable permit requirements so that on-the-ground activities will begin soon after the project's proposed start date?
 - Does the proposal provide landowner assurance of support and dedication to protecting the project for its useful life (such as letter of support, conservation easement, or significant financial investment)?
 - Does the proposal include an effective mechanism to evaluate project success that includes an appropriate, clearly stated goal and at least one structural and one functional monitoring parameter?
- **Category 3: (10%) Applicant Qualifications**
 - Do project leaders have the appropriate qualifications and technical expertise or access to appropriate expertise to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed project?
- **Category 4: (20%) Project Costs**
 - Is the proposed budget realistic and cost-effective, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame, and sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification?
 - Does the proposed budget include an appropriate ratio of match leveraged from other sources?

- **Category 5: (20%) Outreach, Education, and Community Involvement**

Does the project contribute to the aquatic habitat conservation outreach goals of SARP or foster a community conservation ethic through citizen involvement?

Does the project involve public outreach, and seek to disseminate information on project goals, results, project partners and the sources of funding and other support provided, or otherwise compliment or encourage other local restoration or conservation activities?

Does the proposal have significant community support as demonstrated by a diversity of active, contributing partners and/or sponsors?

Administrative Requirements: Applicants will be required to demonstrate that all necessary permits and consultations have been completed prior to conducting any earth moving activities. Each project will be assigned a NOAA technical monitor that, upon request, can assist with aspects of project implementation.

NEPA: NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>. In order for NOAA staff to complete a NEPA analysis, applicants will be asked to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g. introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Minimum Monitoring/Evaluating: In support of the Estuary Restoration Act of 2000, SARP will work toward monitoring and evaluating restoration project proposals under this partnership. Projects will identify at least one structural and one functional parameter of the restoration project site to be quantitatively monitored. These parameters should reflect a major objective or goal of the project. The plan should define a target value (realistic outcome) for the parameter after restoration as well as a reference value (ideal value) for the parameter. SARP and NOAA will work with successful applicants to finalize monitoring parameters and develop success targets to evaluate project results. Applicants are encouraged to contact NOAA staff or use Restoration Monitoring Planner at <http://habitat.noaa.gov/restoration/rmp/> when developing monitoring plans.

Please note that this monitoring plan is not required for the pre-proposal but will be required for all SARP-NOAA applicants invited to submit full proposals.

Permitting: It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted including Endangered Species Act consultations as appropriate. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment.

Safety Plan: Successful applicants will receive and be required to adhere to a written safety plan for management of volunteers.

Reporting: The contract will include specific reporting requirements as follows:

- Progress reports will be submitted to SARP every six months. The progress report form will be available online. Each progress report will describe progress to date. Photos of the site and project are encouraged.
- A final report, including documentation of the completed project and financial report will be submitted to the project administrator within 30 days of the end of the grant period.

To whom should pre-proposals be submitted? Original copies of pre-proposals must be postmarked by May 20, 2009 to:

Marilyn Barrett-O'Leary
Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership
2420 Shadowbrook Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

| Send electronic copies to moleary@mbolcomm.com by the same date. Submittal address for full proposals will be incorporated into the letter of invitation.

Appendix A Proposal Format

Please use the format below to ensure a complete application: No pre-proposal should exceed 3 pages; no proposal should exceed 10 pages (optional items such as maps, photos or letters of support do not count toward the page limit).

* Applicant information:

Name and address of applicant organization

Name, title, and contact information of principal investigator or project leader

* Project Information:

Title

Location

Project focus (diadromous fish habitat or coastal fish habitat)

SAHP objective(s) benefitting from this project

NOAA Trust Resource(s) benefitting from the project

Estimated on-the-ground start and end dates (not award date)

Land ownership (public or private)

Estimated total cost

List of partners.

Project Abstract

1. *Project overview to include the existing relevant habitat conditions and the desired or targeted conditions, size of area to be restored, NOAA trust resources that will benefit from the restoration activity and the specific restoration methods and techniques that will be used. **The project overview is a critical part of the application that should provide reviewers with sufficient detail to fully understand the proposed project.**

2. Monitoring plan overview that identifies at least one structural parameter and one functional parameter of the restoration project site to be quantitatively monitored. These parameters should reflect a major objective or goal of the project. The plan should define a target value (realistic outcome) for the parameter after restoration as well as a reference value (ideal value) for the parameter. Applicants are encouraged to contact NOAA CRP staff or use Restoration Monitoring Planner at <http://habitat.noaa.gov/restoration/rmp/> when developing monitoring plans.

3. Outreach plan overview

5. Provisions to protect the restoration project site after project completion

7. List of permits needed (Federal, state, local), indicating any that have already been secured.

8. Project timeline. Projects should be designed to begin in summer or fall 2009.

Map(s) of the proposed project location and site.

Budget Table

Categories	Grant Amount	Match Amount	Type of Match	Match Source	Other	Total
Personnel						
Fringe						
Travel						
Equipment*						
Supplies						
Contractual						
Other						
Total						

*Equipment purchases costing at least \$400 per unit will require prior approval before purchase. Please submit a purchase request to SARP detailing the type of equipment, price, company, and a brief justification of why the purchase is to be made with comparison to rental costs.

A brief budget justification should be included to further explain how the funds will be used.

Optional supporting materials (do not count toward letter of intent page limit):

1. Aerial or on-the-ground photos of the proposed project site. Though not required, these visual aids will help to support the proposal. Photos taken from the ground should show the current condition of the site. All photos should be identified with date of photo and location.
2. Letters of Support
3. Vita of Principal Investigator or Principal Grant Contact.

Appendix B
NOAA Contacts

Name and Email Address	Phone	Area of Responsibility
Walter.Priet@noaa.gov	804-684-7385	VA
Howard.Schnabolk@noaa.gov	843-740-1328	NC, SC, GA, FL-NE
Daphne.Macfarlan@noaa.gov	727-824-5384	FL (NE, SW - south of Tampa Bay to Everglades)
Sean.Meehan@noaa.gov	727-824-5330	FL (Tampa Bay, SE - IRL to Keys)
Leslie.Craig@noaa.gov	727-551-5786	MS, AL, FL-NW (Panhandle to Tampa Bay)
Cheryl.Brodnax@noaa.gov	225-578-7923	LA
Jean.Cowan@noaa.gov	225-578-7924	LA
Kristopher.Benson@noaa.gov	409-766-3699	TX
Heather.Young@noaa.gov	409-766-3699	TX