Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement

Request for Proposals

Release date: October 13, 2006

Nutrient Management Planning in the Missisquoi Bay Watershed

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for technical services leading to the development of Nutrient Management Plans for small farms in the Missisquoi Bay watershed. The project is funded through a US federal appropriation to the International Joint Commission, US Office, for implementation by the LCBP. This project will support the goal of reducing phosphorus pollution, as outlined in the Lake Champlain's long-term management plan, *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin.*

This contract seeks to further trans-boundary cooperative linkages between phosphorus reduction efforts in Vermont and in Quebec in the Missisquoi Bay watershed; it also seeks to reduce phosphorus loading in the Missisquoi Bay watershed through the development of Nutrient Management Plans on small farms in the Missisquoi Bay watershed for farmers participating on a voluntary basis. The expectation is that at least thirty (30) such Nutrient Management Plans will be produced over the approximately thirty (30) month period of the contract.

The RFP is available from the Lake Champlain Basin Program website. Look for the link on our homepage at www.lcbp.org. To receive a copy of the RFP via US Postal Service, contact the Lake Champlain Basin Program office at (802)372-3213 or toll free at (800)468-LCBP in New York and Vermont.

To facilitate the review process, applicants must submit proposals in both paper and electronic format. Please see the RFP and the attached proposal format information for complete details.

DEADLINE NOTICE:

Hardcopy (8 copies) and electronic versions (no facsimiles) of proposals must be RECEIVED by the Lake Champlain Basin Program office by 4:30pm:

Friday, November 17th, 2006

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Lake Champlain Basin Program

Request for Proposals

Release date: October 6, 2006

Nutrient Management Planning in the Missisquoi Bay Watershed

I. Background

The Lake Champlain Basin Program is a partnership between state, provincial and federal government agencies, as well as many local community and business groups, all working together to protect and enhance the environmental integrity and the social and economic benefits of the Lake Champlain Basin. In 1996, the Lake Champlain Basin Program completed *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of Lake Champlain,* a comprehensive management plan for Lake Champlain, addressing a range of issues from water quality to cultural heritage protection. The highest priorities in the plan are reducing phosphorus pollution, protecting human health, reducing pollution from toxic substances, and controlling nonnative aquatic nuisance species.

Missisquoi Bay (Vermont and Quebec), an international watershed within the Lake Champlain Basin, has the highest phosphorus concentrations of any watershed within that basin. The International Joint Commission (IJC), in its 2005 report, *Transboundary Impacts of the Missisquoi Bay Causeway and the Missisquoi Bay Bridge Project*, identified the poor water quality in Missisquoi Bay as an urgent matter of bi-national concern and recommended that the Governments of the United States and Canada take the necessary steps, both individually and jointly, to assist in reducing phosphorus levels in Missisquoi Bay.

The Lake Champlain Basin Program identified the most critical and immediate problem in the area of phosphorus loadings from agriculture in the Missisquoi Bay watershed as the management of on-farm nutrients. This includes excessive runoff from plowed fields, barnyards, stored manure, and milk houses.

Approximately 60% of the Missisquoi Bay watershed is located in the State of Vermont. Vermont regulatory mandates now address both Large Farm Operations (LFO) and Medium Farm Operations (MFO), and require development of and adherence to comprehensive nutrient management plans. However, the agricultural sector in the U.S. portion of the Missisquoi Bay watershed is dominated by small farm operations not governed by either LFO or draft MFO regulations. In order for phosphorus reduction to be effective and manageable, pollution prevention must be a priority on all sizes of farms.

Many small farms need assistance in developing and implementing Nutrient Management Plans, but available state and U.S. federal resources are chronically inadequate to cover the requests for nutrient plan development. Thus, most U.S. farms in the Missisquoi Bay watershed do not have nutrient management plans and do not have the financial resources to obtain the technical assistance required to develop plans.

There is substantial cooperation among the state and provincial governments, including technical and financial support, along with additional support from the federal governments, to address the serious water quality issues in Missisquoi Bay. However, coordinated efforts to examine and exchange information regarding specific targeted efforts that can have a significant effect on phosphorus inputs and resulting water quality have not been established.

The IJC has stated that it is urgent and important for authorities in both countries to accelerate the development of the local and regional bi-national capacity to address a wide range of issues regarding Missisquoi Bay, and that this matter is a prime example of the type of effort envisaged by the IJC when it developed the watershed board proposal. Accordingly, the IJC has decided to examine ways to address this matter within the context and scope of the 1998 Reference.

The U.S. Congress provided in the FY2006 appropriation for the U.S. Section funds for the Lake Champlain Basin Program. This is intended to provide a mechanism to use those funds to address high priority needs of the Lake Champlain Basin Program within the context of the above noted effort under the 1998 Watershed Reference. http://www.ijc.org/en/home/main_accueil.htm

II. Development of Basic Nutrient Management Plans

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is seeking proposals for technical services to perform the following tasks:

(a) Provide services in accordance with the summary document describing the application of Vermont NRCS 590 Standard Nutrient Management Plans and the included guidance on necessary farm soil testing and effective nutrient recordkeeping.

(b) Recruit at least thirty (30) small farm operations in the Missisquoi Bay watershed, not governed by either LFO or draft MFO regulations, for voluntary participation in this Nutrient Management Planning program.

(c) Provide for technical services leading to the development of Nutrient Management Plans compliant with NRCS 590 Standards for the small farm units as in (b). Complete and submit at least thirty written plans to the LCBP.

(d) Contractors must be able to maintain strict confidentiality of participating farmer identification, location and data developed under this contract.

(e) List ongoing best management practices applicable to small farms in the watershed, with particular emphasis on immediate reduction of agricultural non-point source phosphorus loading.

(f) Prepare data in a usable format in order for the LCBP perform subsequent analysis to quantify and assess the outcomes of the phosphorus reduction efforts.

(g) Present a detailed workplan of the logistical elements of the project, including deliverables, project timeline, and budget.

(h) Indicate the number of Nutrient Management Plans to be produced (minimum of thirty) and the rationale for the number chosen.

III. Summary of Other Requirements for the Selected Proposal

- For the selected proposal, an approved workplan will be required before a grant agreement can be executed and the work begun.

- The consultant will be required to prepare brief quarterly reports documenting progress on each objective and task in the project (see attached Proposal Format Requirements). A final report fully documenting the project's results will be required at project completion.

- When approved, the final report will be edited for content and style in consultation with the consultant and published as part of the Lake Champlain Basin Program's Technical Report Series.

- The consultant will be required to present interim and final project results to the appropriate Lake Champlain Basin Program committees, such as the Technical Advisory Committee and/or the Lake Champlain Steering Committee, for their review. The LCBP Technical Review teams typically include NRCS technical staff from VT and/or NY. In addition, NRCS will assist in the review of plans for compliance with 590 Standards.

IV. Eligibility

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and government agencies.

V. Proposal Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Proposals will be judged according to how well they address the following points:

1. Technical credentials of the investigator(s). Nutrient management planning will require an understanding of agronomy, soil conservation, land treatment, water and nutrient management practices, GIS and other mapping, and good communication skills. Investigator(s) must have experience with the development of nutrient management recommendations, assessment of environmentally sensitive areas, and the use and application of RUSLE2, the Vermont Phosphorus Index, and digital photography and GIS data. Certification or experience with the American Society of Agronomy or National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants is desired but not required.

2. Demonstrated understanding of the agricultural and water quality issues and management programs in the Lake Champlain Basin, especially those concerning nutrient management.

3. Demonstrated knowledge of control methods for agricultural nonpoint source pollution, including phosphorus.

4. Technical merit and feasibility of the proposed methods to design Nutrient Management plans that meet the Vermont NRCS 590 Standard for small farms. *Applicants should note that the LCBP intends that nutrient management planning will include manure and soil tests using a modified-Morgan's analysis including aluminum.*

5. Potential for the project to enhance the technical capabilities and infrastructure within the Lake Champlain Basin.

6. Clarity, conciseness and adherence to the attached proposal guidelines.

7. Demonstrated ability to create documents and products that are accessible to and can be used by local farm managers.

Please note: Proposals that provide for an iterative process of plan revision and that include steps towards the implementation of plans will be considered more competitive.

VI. Available Funds and Match Requirements

A total of $200,000 is available for this project. While there are no match requirements, a non-federal match may make the proposal more competitive.

VII. Period of Performance

Work is to be completed within thirty (30) months of the execution of a grant agreement and not later than May 15, 2009.

VIII. Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission

- Please follow the format outlined in the attached Technical Proposal Format Requirements.

- Eight (8) paper copies of each proposal must be RECEIVED by the LCBP office by 4:30pm on **Friday, November 17th, 2006.** Please submit paper copies bound only with a single staple or binder clip.

- *In addition*, an ELECTRONIC VERSION of the proposal, either on disk or via e-mail must be submitted. Electronic versions must also be RECEIVED by 4:30pm on **Friday, November 17th, 2006.**

IX. Contact Information

Direct all proposals and other inquiries to:

Molly Michaud
Technical Coordinator
Lake Champlain Basin Program
54 West Shore Road
Grand Isle, VT 05458
(802)372-3213

Technical Proposal Format Requirements

Proposals should adhere to the following format and should not exceed a 10 page maximum length (font size 12), NOT including budget information, references cited and investigator resumes.

TITLE: - Concise and descriptive.

POINT OF CONTACT: Name, organization, address, telephone, fax and email.

ABSTRACT: Brief description of proposed work.

INTRODUCTION: Overview of what the project is and what it will accomplish in relation to the RFP.

OBJECTIVES AND TASKS: List the project's objectives and describe in detail the tasks that will be performed relative to each objective, including methods and approaches.

DELIVERABLES: Detailed description of the planned products from each task of the project. Quarterly progress reports and a final report are required deliverables.

SCHEDULE: Timeline showing anticipated dates for completion of the major tasks and deliverables. Quarterly progress reports are due on the last day of December, March, June, and September. Work is to be completed within thirty (30) months after the execution of a contract or grant.

DETAILED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION: Cost breakdown by major budget categories (i.e. personnel, equipment), linking costs to specific tasks/deliverables wherever possible. Breakdown should show costs to be covered by the LCBP award and other sources (if applicable), as well as the any match amounts and totals. (1 page, not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal).

TECHNICAL REFERENCES CITED: List all references used for the proposal (not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal).

CURRICULUM VITAE/RESUME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Include up to 3-5 references for prior work pertinent to the proposed project. Please limit to one page per investigator, not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal.