

Release Date: November 1, 2016

## Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement

### Request for Proposals

*Alternative & Innovative Tributary Phosphorus Load Reduction Projects from Agricultural Sources in the St. Albans Bay Watershed*

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) are pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for alternative and innovative projects to address phosphorus load reduction priorities in the St. Albans Bay watershed. Successful projects may range from innovative planning or farm management programs to installation of management practices demonstrated to be successful elsewhere that have not yet been widely explored in the Lake Champlain region. Up to **\$350,000** is available for supporting projects from this RFP. Proposals may be submitted in amounts up to \$350,000 and may request funding for a discrete phase of a larger project to ensure ideas are not inhibited by level of funding available.

This work is applicable to Chapter 4 of the LCBP's long-term management plan - *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*. This project is supported by funds awarded to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) by the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) in support of the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

This Request for Proposals is available on the Lake Champlain Basin Program website at [www.lcbp.org/grants](http://www.lcbp.org/grants). To receive a copy of the RFP via U.S. 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 electronic format ONLY. Please see the RFP and the attached proposal format information for complete details.

#### **DEADLINE NOTICE:**

Electronic versions (no facsimiles or hardcopies will be accepted) of proposals must be RECEIVED by [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) no later than 4:30pm EST on:

**January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Successful applicants will be notified by late February 2017. Although LCBP reserves the right to make no awards, it anticipates granting multiple awards from this RFP.

## Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement

### Request for Proposals

#### *Alternative & Innovative Tributary Phosphorus Load Reduction Projects in the St. Albans Bay Watershed*

#### **0. Overview**

Congress designated Lake Champlain as a resource of national significance with the Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990. The Special Designation Act also established the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and authorized it to receive direct support from U.S. EPA under the Clean Water Act. The LCBP works in partnership with government agencies from New York, Vermont, and Québec, private organizations, local communities, and individuals to coordinate and fund efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin's water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources. These efforts are guided by the comprehensive management plan *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*.

Since 1992, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) has served as the primary program administrator of LCBP at the request of the LCBP's Steering Committee, and administers the program's personnel and finances. NEIWPCC is a congressionally authorized not-for-profit interstate organization whose membership includes all six New England states and New York State and whose mission is to help its member states to realize their individual and collective clean water program goals.

#### **I. Background**

Lake Champlain management agencies have set significant phosphorus loading reduction goals for the St. Albans Bay watershed in the Lake Champlain TMDL. In order to meet some of those goals, alternative strategies for phosphorus reduction may be required. Assessments of the Jewett Brook watershed and the St. Albans Bay have shown that historical agricultural uses have created legacy phosphorus loading challenges, both in the lake sediments and in agricultural soils. Additionally, the modeling and assessments have shown that if significant phosphorus reductions can be achieved from the watershed then it is feasible that in-lake treatment options can further reduce loading into the watershed from these legacy sources.

## II. Project Tasks and Deliverables

The Lake Champlain Basin Program seeks proposals for innovative projects or programs targeted at reducing phosphorus loading into Lake Champlain from agricultural sources, particularly within the St. Albans Bay drainage area. This RFP aims to implement non-traditional practices that will further support the implementation of the traditional agricultural conservation practices such as those offered through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Examples of applicable projects might include, but are not limited to, development and implementation of innovative programs or practices that remove phosphorus from the watershed, reduce the import of phosphorus into the watershed, and/or retain the phosphorus such that it is no longer able to enter Lake Champlain or its tributary network.

Anticipated tasks to be included in successful proposals will include the following elements:

1. A description of the potential for the project to reduce or manage phosphorus loading within the St. Albans Bay watershed, and transferability of the concept to other agricultural areas in the Champlain watershed, including an estimated cost/benefit analysis.
2. Complete description of the capability to quantify phosphorus removed or prevented (if a field BMP, include how runoff will be measured) by the agricultural practice, or program, upon completion of the project.
3. Description of the quantifiable success of the concept or project elsewhere, and how it can be successful in the Champlain watershed, with a particular application to St. Albans Bay.
4. If the project includes installation of a practice, please provide a description of an evaluation process for the practice. If the project includes acquisition of large agricultural equipment, please describe how this equipment will be accessible to the farming community after completion of this project. If the project includes partner participation or permitting please describe a plan for how the applicant will receive support from necessary partners, and obtain letters of support with commitments from agricultural producers, permitting agencies, landowners, etc.

## III. Summary of Other Requirements for the Selected Proposal

The selected applicant will be required to complete the following additional tasks:

1. Following initial notification of the award, a workplan must be approved by the LCBP before a contract agreement can be executed and the work begun. The workplan will detail the logistical elements of the project, including deliverables and project timeline. Information about the LCBP grant process, workplan development guidelines, and reporting requirements can be found on the LCBP website at: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>. The successful applicant

will enter into a contract with NEIWPC in order to complete the work and will be compensated based on the approved completion of workplan deliverables.

2. For projects that will involve collection or analysis of data (primary or secondary) that may be used to inform environmental management decisions, the contractor must develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to be approved by the LCBP and the US EPA before the beginning of any data collection or secondary data analyses. More information about LCBP Quality Assurance Plans can be found at: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/qapp/>. The project timeline should be scheduled with an expected QAPP approval date no sooner than 6 weeks following contract execution. No primary or secondary data may be collected or analyzed with LCBP funding prior to QAPP approval.
3. The successful applicant will prepare brief quarterly reports documenting progress on each objective and task in the project and any problems encountered (see attached Proposal Format Requirements). A final report fully documenting the project’s results will be required at project completion.
4. When approved, the final report will be edited for content and style in consultation with the successful respondent and may be published as part of the Lake Champlain Basin Program’s Technical Report Series, located here: <http://www.lcbp.org/media-center/publications-library/technical-reports/>. Some content of this report may also be used for future LCBP public outreach materials.
5. The successful applicant will complete the project according to the following schedule\*:

Proposals Due to LCBP	4:30 PM EST, January 5th, 2017
Applicants Notified of Funding Decisions	Late February
Detailed Project Workplan Due	Late March
Project Start Date	May, 2017
Project Deliverables and Final Report Due	March 30, 2018

\*Schedule is subject to change.

6. All materials and work products, regardless of physical form or characteristics, produced as a result of this project shall be made available to LCBP, NEIWPC, EPA and the GLFC in a suitable file format. LCBP, NEIWPC, EPA and the GLFC shall have an unrestricted right to use any materials, software, maps, studies, reports, and other products or data generated using assistance funds or specified to be delivered. The contractor shall not obtain, attempt to obtain, or file for a patent, copyright, trademark or any other interest in any such materials, or work products without the expressed, written consent of LCBP and NEIWPC, and subject to any other approvals required by state or federal law. Reports and other deliverables will credit LCBP,

NEIWPCC, EPA, and the GLFC as funding partners for any work completed under the project contract.

7. GIS data produced under this project must adhere to the requirements of EPA's National Geospatial Data Policy (see [http://www.epa.gov/geospatial/docs/National\\_Geospatial\\_Data\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/geospatial/docs/National_Geospatial_Data_Policy.pdf)). Specifically, the selected contractor must provide documentation for all produced data, including source information for each digital data layer and specific information about the data layer itself. GIS data produced under this project will be submitted to NEIWPCC as a deliverable.
8. This project may be funded through a U.S. EPA Assistance Agreement with NEIWPCC; therefor NEIWPCC cannot use these funds to support a survey without completion of an Information Collection Request (ICR) describing the survey. The ICR must be submitted to the U.S. EPA Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. This is an extensive process that can take several months to complete. A survey is defined as the collection of identical information from ten or more non-Federal respondents within a 12-month period. OMB approval must be received before any survey activities supported by NEIWPCC funds can begin.
9. NEIWPCC requires its contractors to maintain workers compensation and liability insurance. More details will be provided to the successful applicant at the time of contracting.

#### **IV. Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and non-federal government agencies. The selected contractor will be responsible for the completion of all project tasks. Individuals and representatives from organizations that participated in the development or review of this RFP and its contents are ineligible to apply.

#### **V. Proposal Evaluation and Selection Criteria**

Proposals received in response to this RFP will undergo an external peer review, and will be judged according to the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated technical knowledge by the applicant of nutrient load issues in the Lake Champlain region, particularly for the St. Albans Bay drainage system.
2. Technical merit and applicability of the proposed product toward the priority objectives identified in this RFP. Proposals that are eligible for other grant programs may be less competitive in this RFP.
3. Demonstrated ability to accomplish the deliverables outlined in Section II.
4. Clarity, conciseness and adherence to the proposal guidelines.

5. Appropriateness of budget and budget justification, describing how the funds awarded will be used to produce the set of deliverables described in Section II.

## VI. Available Funds and Match Requirements

A total of \$350,000 may be made available for projects supported under this RFP. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee will ultimately decide the final distribution of funds across submitted proposals. Proposals may be submitted in amounts up to \$350,000 and may request funding for a discrete phase of a larger project to ensure ideas are not inhibited by level of funding available through this RFP.

Applicants may budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, meeting expenses, and subcontracts. Some allocation of project funds for indirect costs also is acceptable. However, **for projects in response to this RFP, the indirect budget must not exceed 21% of the direct project budget.** No in-kind or cash match is required, though match may be considered favorably during budget review.

## VII. Appropriate Use of Funds

- 1) LCBP grant funds **cannot be used** to produce for-profit products or to cover costs associated with regulatory compliance or direct fundraising efforts. LCBP grant funds also cannot be used for land purchases, endowment funds, or lobbying or legislative advocacy of any kind.

### **\*\* New in 2016\*\*:**

- 2) Grant applicants are now required to follow the small purchase method which is a relatively simple and informal method (procurement procedure) for purchasing supplies, equipment, and services that cost more than \$3,500 and less than \$150,000. This procurement procedure is applicable to proposals submitted in response to this RFP if the primary applicant is not a for-profit organization. The purpose is to ensure fair and open competition for purchases supported by LCBP/federal funding. If the applicant plans to use LCBP funding to obtain supplies, equipment or contractual services to complete its proposed workplan, then it must follow federal procurement regulations:
  - procurement of supplies and services that do not exceed \$3500 may be made without soliciting competitive quotes if the price is considered reasonable.
  - procurement of supplies, equipment and services that are greater than \$3500 and do not cost more than \$150,000 require that the recipient obtain multiple price quotes through a documented competitive process. Good faith efforts to obtain services from disadvantaged business enterprises should also be made, including contacting the small business administration and minority business development agency to inform them about the opportunity for businesses to submit price quotes as part of the competitive process. At least three price quotes for the contract work must be secured. The selected item or service does not need to be the lowest cost if it does not meet your requirements or you can otherwise demonstrate that the higher price offers the “best value.” Justification must be provided for the outcome of the bid process. This process may take place prior to

the submission of a proposal for LCBP funds. For further information, see the small purchase method described here: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>

- 3) Grant award funding may not be used for the purchase of food.

#### **About Direct and Indirect Costs:**

The LCBP encourages groups to budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, mailings, phone costs, office supplies, etc. However, use of some grant funds for indirect costs also is allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 and LCBP approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP or look refer to [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_a087\\_2004](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004). **Sections D, E, and F of Attachment A** provide a nice overview of direct and indirect costs. **For projects in response to this RFP, the indirect budget should not exceed 21% of the direct project budget, and indirect offered as match should similarly not exceed 21% of direct match contributed.** The LCBP Indirect Policy can be found here: <http://www.lcbp.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/2010-Indirect-Cost-Policy.pdf>.

#### **VIII. Notification of Award**

Award notification to applicants is expected in late February 2017. The award recipient may be asked to submit a revised workplan, timeline, and budget at this time. Project work cannot begin until a contract is signed by both parties. LCPB and NEIWPC will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the contract start date. Payment for costs incurred will be on a reimbursement basis per the contract payment schedule and contingent upon completion of quarterly progress reports and project deliverables.

#### **IX. Period of Performance**

Work is expected to begin on or shortly after **April 3, 2017** and is to be completed no later than **March 30, 2018** (see specific deliverable deadlines in Section II above).

#### **X. Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission**

1. Please follow the format outlined in the attached Technical Proposal Format Requirements.
2. Hardcopies of the proposal will NOT be accepted. Editable *electronic* copies ONLY will be accepted and must be received via email in Microsoft Word or Word-compatible format by 4:30pm EST on **January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017** to [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org). **Please include “Innovative Agricultural Grants” in your subject header.**

## XI. Contact Information

Direct all proposals and other inquiries to:

*Kathy Jarvis*

*NEIWPC Administrative Assistant*

*Lake Champlain Basin Program Technical Coordinator*

54 West Shore Rd., Grand Isle, VT 05458

p: 802-372-3213; f: 802-372-3233

[kjarvis@lcbp.org](mailto:kjarvis@lcbp.org); [www.neiwpc.org](http://www.neiwpc.org) ; [www.lcbp.org](http://www.lcbp.org)

### 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, partner letters of support, and investigator resumes.

**TITLE:** - Concise and descriptive.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Name, position, organization, address, telephone, fax and email of the person who will be the point of contact.

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** Name, position, organization address, telephone, fax and email of the person who is authorized to sign the contract.

**TRACKING INFORMATION:** Federal Tax Identification Number, DUNS Number, and Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE): (Yes or No)

**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 the specified performance period in the RFP.

**DETAILED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:** Cost breakdown by major budget categories (i.e. personnel, equipment), linking costs to specific tasks/deliverables wherever possible, as seen in the example budget below. Breakdown should show costs to be covered by the LCBP award and other sources (if applicable), as well as any match amounts and totals. (1 page, not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal). See example provided below. Task-based budget templates are available on the LCBP website: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>

**EXAMPLE Budget Spreadsheet**

Budget Spreadsheet for LCBP Grants: Line Item by Task/Deliverable*						
	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	LCBP Grant Total	Proposed Match (if any)	Project Total (Grant + Match)
Personnel	\$1,000		\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Fringe (x% of Personnel)	\$300		\$600	\$900		\$900
Travel	\$300		\$250	\$300	\$250	\$550
Supplies		\$1,250		\$1,000	\$250	\$1,250
Professional Services		\$10,000		\$10,000		\$10,000
<b>Total Direct</b>	\$1,600	\$11,250	\$1,850	\$13,200	\$1,500	\$14,700
Indirect (y% of direct)	\$240	\$1,688	\$278	\$2,205	\$0	\$2,205
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	\$1,840	\$12,938	\$2,128	\$15,405	\$1,500	\$16,905

\*The budget numbers in this table are used only for the purpose of example.

**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.