

Release Date: February 2, 2016

Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement

Request for Proposals

Measurement of selected cyanotoxins and mercury in fish consumed from Lake Champlain

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for services to collect and analyze tissue collected from targeted sportfishes of legal consumption size within Lake Champlain for cyanotoxins and mercury in Lake Champlain. Up to **\$56,700** is available for this project. The successful applicant will collect tissue samples from yellow perch, white perch, walleye, smallmouth bass, and lake trout for mercury analysis and appropriate selected species for cyanotoxin analysis. This work is applicable to Chapter 5 from 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 Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) in support of the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

This Request for Proposals 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 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 the Lake Champlain Basin Program office by 4:30pm on:

March 16, 2016

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

The successful applicant will be notified by mid-April, 2016. LCBP anticipates granting one (1) award from this RFP.

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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, contracts 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

Reduction of toxins and contaminants within the Lake Champlain basin that pose a risk to human health and the Lake Champlain ecosystem remains a high priority for the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. Assessments of mercury concentrations in sport fishes of Lake Champlain are required to inform consumption advisories and lake management decisions. Similarly, as potentially harmful cyanobacteria blooms appear in Lake Champlain each season, questions arise regarding the safety of handling and consumption of fish that are caught in or near cyanobacteria blooms. Guidance for anglers ranges from discarding fish remnants or skin to not eating fish caught in areas experiencing blooms, with limited scientific data to inform that guidance.

Data generated from this project will help resource managers and health officials frame appropriate guidance around the health risks of handling and consuming fish exposed to certain cyanotoxins. Additionally, results from this study will be used to inform lake managers about the distribution of these contaminants (cyanotoxins and mercury) in fish skin and tissue around Lake Champlain, and to provide updated information for the Northeast Regional mercury TMDL Phase II reassessment.

II. Scope of Work: Project Tasks and Deliverables

The Lake Champlain Basin Program seeks proposals for technical services to provide an assessment of mercury and cyanotoxin concentrations in fish tissues in Lake Champlain and to perform the following tasks:

Anticipated tasks will include the following elements:

1. Monitor, at minimum, microcystin and anatoxin in fish muscle and liver tissue at a minimum of two locations - Missisquoi Bay and the Main Lake segment of Lake Champlain. Cyanotoxin monitoring should focus on two sampling periods – during a spring period of low cyanobacteria density and late summer period of higher cyanobacteria density (where blooms occur) and will incorporate multiple fish species across the available size range for those species. Each specimen will be sampled for toxin content in both liver and muscle tissue, to be analyzed through appropriate ELISA methods.
2. Sample water biweekly for background concentrations of the targeted cyanotoxins at three sites per location, beginning three weeks prior to fish collection, through duration of fish collection period.
3. Assess mercury concentrations within the tissue of standard indicator taxa (at minimum, sampled taxa should include lake trout, walleye, smallmouth bass, and yellow and white perch). A minimum of 10 samples per species will be collected from each of seven Lake Champlain segments: Missisquoi Bay, Northeast Arm, Malletts Bay, south lake (south of Crown Point), the north main lake (north of Cumberland Head/Grand Isle), middle main lake, and south main lake (south of Split Rock/Thompson's Point). It is recognized that lake trout and white perch may not be obtainable from all identified lake segments. All mercury samples should be collected from lake trout of representative legal consumption size for each species in Lake Champlain, and if possible, be of a range of lengths above the legal threshold. Yellow and white perch should be a minimum of six inches in total length.
4. Provide an analysis evaluating historical mercury data, including the new data from the results of this study to determine trends in mercury content of fish muscle tissue. Historical data will be made available to the successful applicant.
5. Provide an analysis relating microcystin concentrations in fish tissue relative to ambient cyanotoxin concentrations in the sampling locations, and a similar analysis of anatoxin if feasible. This baseline information will be used to inform further work that may result in development of a consumption advisory for fish exposed to microcystin.

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 meet LCBP approval before a contract agreement can be executed and the work begun. The workplan will detail the logistical elements of the project, including tasks and corresponding deliverables and the 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 completion of task-based workplan deliverables.
2. Once the grant agreement has been executed, the contractor must develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to be approved by the LCBP before beginning 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 of approximately 2-3 weeks following workplan approval. No primary or secondary data may be collected or analyzed with LCBP funding prior to QAPP approval.
3. The successful applicant will prepare and submit 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. The successful applicant may be asked to provide a presentation of the results of the project to the Lake Champlain Basin Program.
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, March 16, 2016
Applicants Notified of Funding Decisions	mid-April, 2016
Detailed Project Workplan Due	May, 2016
Project Start Date	Late May, 2016
Project Deliverables and Final Report Due	May 1, 2017

*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, and

the GLFC in a suitable file format. LCBP, NEIWPC, 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, NEIWPC, and 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 LCBP's QAPP and EPA's National Geospatial Data Policy (see 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 NEIWPC as a deliverable.
8. NEIWPC 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, though subcontracted work may be permitted by the LCBP Project Officer upon written request. Individuals and 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 are subject to an external peer review, and will be judged according to the following criteria:

1. Use of technology and methods that minimize fish mortality.
2. Inclusion of quality assurance/quality control measures in the experimental design for both mercury and cyanotoxin aspects of the project.
3. Demonstrated familiarity with standard mercury and cyanotoxin collection procedures and data analysis.
4. Technical merit and applicability of the proposed product toward the priority objectives identified in this RFP.
5. Demonstrated ability to accomplish the deliverables outlined in Section II.
6. Clarity, conciseness and adherence to the proposal guidelines.

7. Demonstrated ability to create documents and user-friendly products that are accessible to and can be used by local partners working to address cyanotoxin and mercury concerns in sport fishes in the Lake Champlain Basin.
8. 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 \$56,700 may be made available for this project. Proposals with budgets that exceed this amount will not be considered. Applicants may budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, meeting expenses, and subcontracts (subcontracts only with prior permission from LCBP). 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. LCBP anticipates granting one (1) award from this RFP.

VII. Notification of Award

Award notification to applicants is expected in mid-April, 2016. The award recipient may be asked to submit a revised workplan, timeline, and task-based 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 and acceptance of quarterly progress reports and project deliverables.

VIII. Period of Performance

Work is expected to begin **by late May, 2016** and is to be completed no later than **May 1, 2017**.

IX. 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 on or before the submission deadline. Electronic copies ONLY will be accepted and must be received via email no later than 4:30pm on **March 16, 2016** by ehowe@lcbp.org. The body of the proposal must be received in editable Microsoft Word or Word-compatible format. The full proposal (including curricula vitae, maps, references, publications, etc.) may be submitted in .pdf format.

X. Contact Information

Direct all proposals and other inquiries to:

Eric Howe

NEIWPCC Environmental Analyst

Lake Champlain Basin Program Technical Coordinator

54 West Shore Rd., Grand Isle, VT 05458

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

ehowe@lcbp.org ; www.neiwpcc.org ; 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 and investigator resumes. Incomplete proposals will be eliminated from consideration. Pages in excess of the stated maximum will not be reviewed.

Project Title: (Concise and descriptive)

Organization:

Primary Investigator Name and Contact Information:

Financial Contact Name and Contact Information (if applicable):

Project Partners (if any):

LCBP Funds Requested: \$

Matching Funds (if any): \$

Federal Tax Identification Number:

DUNS Number:

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.

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.

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

SAMPLE 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	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
Fringe (x% of Personnel)	\$300		\$600	\$900		\$900
Travel	\$300		\$250	\$550	\$250	\$800
Supplies		\$1,250		\$1,250	\$250	\$1,500
Professional Services		\$10,000		\$10,000		\$10,000
Total Direct	\$1,600	\$11,250	\$1,850	\$14,700	\$1,500	\$16,200
Indirect (y% of direct)	\$240	\$1,688	\$278	\$2,205	\$0	\$2,205
TOTAL BUDGET	\$1,840	\$12,938	\$2,128	\$16,905	\$1,500	\$18,405

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

Note: A minimum of 10% of the total LCBP award should be reserved for the final task, delivery of the final report. Task columns should be arranged to be invoiced when the task is 100% complete. Purchase of any single items exceeding \$5,000 should be explicitly identified in the budget table, under the appropriate task. Indirect rates should not exceed 21% of the Direct budget.