

Release Date: May 29, 2013

## Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement

### Request for Proposals

#### *Facilitation of the Development of a Structured Decision-Making Process for the Lake Champlain Basin Program*

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for technical services to facilitate the development of a structured decision-making process for the Lake Champlain Basin Program. This project will aim to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and defensibility of the LCBP's decision-making process around phosphorus management by providing the LCBP with a formalized and rigorous procedure for explicitly connecting the Program's strategic management goals with the annual budgeting process. This project will support the management of phosphorus loadings by aiding planning and prioritization efforts as outlined in the LCBP's long-term management plan: *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*. This RFP is supported by US EPA funds provided to New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) in partnership with LCBP.

This project will develop and execute a repeatable methodology for use by the LCBP Steering Committee to refine management goals, evaluate competing management strategies, estimate the outcomes of those strategies, choose preferred actions, and promote learning over time.

This Request for Proposals is available from the Lake Champlain Basin Program website. Look for the link on our homepage at [www.lcbp.org](http://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 (10 copies) and electronic versions (no facsimiles) of proposals must be RECEIVED by the Lake Champlain Basin Program office by 4:00pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time (EDT) on:

**July 10, 2013**

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

The successful applicant will be notified by late August 2013.

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#### **I. Background**

In many impaired water bodies around the nation, control of non-point source pollution and attainment of water quality goals continues to evade management agencies and organizations despite continued federal and state investments in water treatment infrastructure and programs providing financial incentives, technical support, research opportunities and outreach campaigns. As a result, these agencies and organizations face increasing pressure from federal oversight agencies and from the public to ensure that they make the best possible use of the limited funding that exists to achieve water quality goals.

Attaining this level of accountability, defensibility, and transparency requires the use of formalized methods for illustrating the connection between the available short-term management actions and longer-term strategic goals, and for making clear the rationale behind selecting preferred management actions on a short-term basis. These methods are well developed in the field of decision analysis, and have been applied with increasing regularity in various natural resource management problems, including forest management, wildlife population management, and water quantity and quality issues. Adaptive management programs make extensive use of the same methods for weighing the merits of competing management alternatives and stating clear hypotheses about their effectiveness.

Adaptive management has become an increasingly popular approach for dealing with management problems where uncertainty about the effects of management plays a large role in limiting the achievement of management goals. Since 2009, the Lake Champlain Basin Program has been developing an adaptive phosphorus management framework for Lake Champlain; over that time, it has become increasingly clear that the LCBP lacks a defined and consistent structure for developing yearly management actions that are strongly connected with goals stated in the Lake Champlain management plan *Opportunities for Action*, and for prioritizing the wide array of potential management actions based upon best professional judgment about their potential effectiveness. The development of a process for improving these aspects of the LCBP's decision-making will provide a solid foundation for the Program's developing adaptive management program.

#### **II. Project Tasks and Deliverables**

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) seeks proposals for technical services to facilitate the development of a structured decision making process for the Lake Champlain Basin Program and prioritization of resources to achieve management goals. The decision process developed by the contractor should focus on the LCBP's goals around the reduction of phosphorus loading and algae blooms in the lake, but should also provide enough flexibility to be applied to the LCBP's other focal areas in the future (see Task 1, below).

Anticipated tasks include the following or equivalent workplan components:

1. Develop and assist with the implementation of a repeatable and robust set of methods for periodically re-evaluating and refining the LCBP's suite of goals for reducing nutrient pollution and linking these to potential management alternatives according to diverse stakeholder input,
2. Develop and assist with the implementation of a structure for connecting annual budgetary decisions to the refined goals and management options developed in Task 1,

3. Develop a method for using the criteria developed in Task 2 to help the LCBP prioritize annual funding decisions.
4. Produce a final report that:
  - provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the LCBP's current decision-making framework, including suggestions of specific improvements in the decision-making process,
  - clearly details the methods and analyses used in Tasks 1-3 (above), with the understanding that these descriptions should provide the LCBP with the tools to facilitate this process internally in the future.

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

The selected contractor 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 grant agreement can be executed and the work begun. The workplan will detail the logistical elements of the project, including deliverables, project timeline, and budget. 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/>. Following workplan approval, the awardee will enter into a funding agreement with NEIWPC.
2. The successful applicant will 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, no later than September 30, 2014.
3. When approved, the final report will be edited for content and style in consultation with the successful applicant 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/>.

### **IV. Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and 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 request. 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 will be judged according to the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated knowledge of structured decision making and decision analytic methodologies,
2. Technical merit and feasibility of the proposed methods for garnering important stakeholder input, for helping to inform a rigorous and efficient decision-making process,

3. Potential for the project to enhance the capabilities and infrastructure within the Lake Champlain Basin (proprietary products are not acceptable),
4. 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 not more than **\$58,000** is available for this project. No match is required.

#### **VII. Period of Performance**

Work is to be completed no later than **September 30, 2014**. A draft report describing the structured decision making tools described under Part II of this RFP should be delivered by **May 31, 2014**. Further, it is anticipated that the successful applicant will participate in meetings as needed with LCBP staff and with members of the LCBP Steering Committee, in the course of both developing and assisting in the implementation of a structured decision making process, and should include time and travel associated with these meetings into their budget.

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

1. Please follow the format outlined in the attached Technical Proposal Format Requirements.
2. Ten (10) paper copies of each proposal must be RECEIVED by the LCBP office by 4:00pm on **July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013**. Please submit paper copies bound only with a single staple or binder clip.
3. *In addition*, an ELECTRONIC VERSION of the proposal, either on disk or via e-mail must be submitted in Microsoft Word or Word-compatible format. Letters of support may be provided in pdf format. Electronic versions also must be RECEIVED by 4:00pm on **July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013**.

#### **IX. Contact Information**

Direct all proposals and other inquiries to:

Eric Howe

Technical Coordinator, Lake Champlain Basin Program

Environmental Analyst, NEIWPC

54 West Shore Road

Grand Isle, VT 05458

(802) 372-3213

[chowe@lcbp.org](mailto:chowe@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, Times Roman). This does NOT include budget information, references cited 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.

**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, supplies, travel), 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 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.