Release date: March 2, 2020

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement**

**Request for Proposals**

*Creation of Marketing Campaign Materials that Empower Local Organizations to Run Successful Stream Wise Award Programs in the*

*Lake Champlain Basin*

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP), in cooperation with NEIWPCC, is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of marketing campaign materials for a new Stream Wise Award Program designed to inform and incentivize communities within the Lake Champlain Basin to engage in activities that enhance and protect water quality, aquatic/riparian habitat, and increase flood resiliency. The successful applicant will propose a project that completes the outputs described in the attached RFP according to the required project timeline. Up to $50,000is available to support this project, and it is anticipated that one successful project will be chosen.

This work is applicable to the Clean Water Goal of the LCBP’s long-term management plan - [*Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*](http://plan.lcbp.org). This project is supported by funds awarded to NEIWPCC on behalf of the Lake Champlain Basin Program by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

This RFP is available on the Lake Champlain Basin Program website ([lcbp.org/grants](http://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.

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 of proposals must be RECEIVED by [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) no later than:

**April 13, 2020**

**Late, incomplete, or non-electronic proposals will not be considered**.

Successful applicants will be notified in June 2020. Although LCBP reserves the right to make no awards, we anticipate granting one award from this RFP.

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Request for Proposals**

*Creation of Marketing Campaign Materials that Empower Local Organizations to Run Successful Stream Wise Award Programs in the*

*Lake Champlain Basin*

**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 US EPA under the Clean Water Act. The LCBP coordinates, and funds, efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin’s water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources. The LCBP works in partnership with government agencies from New York, Vermont, and Québec, private organizations, local communities, businesses and citizen groups. These partners lead collaborative, non-partisan actions to address water quality and environmental challenges that cross political boundaries in a multi-national watershed. Management efforts are guided by the comprehensive management plan [*Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*](http://plan.lcbp.org).

Since 1992, NEIWPCC has served as the primary program administrator of LCBP at the request of the Lake Champlain 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 advance clean water in the Northeast through collaboration with, and service to, their member states.

**I. Stream Wise Award Program Background**

Streambank erosion occurs when lands near a river or stream are altered by activities that remove or inhibit a vegetated stream buffer. The erosion of streambanks accounts for approximately 18% (165 metric tons or 365,000 pounds) of the annual phosphorus load to Lake Champlain[[1]](#footnote-1). Planting, protecting, and enhancing vegetated stream buffers in riparian corridors decreases the amount of phosphorus loading to Lake Champlain and enhances aquatic and riparian habitats as well as community flood resiliency.

Vegetated stream buffer regulations, standards, and planting programs exist. However, they vary greatly across jurisdictions within the basin. The goal of establishing a basin-wide Stream Wise Award Program is to market a consistent message and brand. This will encourage riparian landowners within the basin to support good stewardship of streams and rivers through the installation, maintenance, and enhancement of recommended best management practices for riparian corridors on their lands.

This awards program, inspired by [VTDEC’s Lake Wise Program](https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise), will harness social science research that has demonstrated that people are most influenced by their neighbors. Properties that meet certain riparian corridor management conditions will earn a Stream Wise Award. These “model” properties are intended to inspire other landowners to adopt Stream Wise practices to earn the Stream Wise recognition and help protect their shared rivers and streams.

The Stream Wise Award Program will work cooperatively with existing vegetated stream buffer programs within the Lake Champlain basin. This includes New York State’s *Trees for Tribs* program and the *Trees for Streams* programs located in Vermont. The program will take into consideration existing jurisdictional standards and regulations to help understand the current capacity of local organizations to run successful programs.

**II. Stream Wise Award Program Project Collaboration**

The program is intended to be a collaborative effort among federal, state, provincial, municipal, and local organizations across the Lake Champlain Basin.

Federal, state, and provincial input will be provided during the development of the materials, standards, and award criteria for the Stream Wise Award Program. This will be accomplished through meetings co-hosted by LCBP and the award recipient for this opportunity. This advisory group will represent scientists, environmental interests, and fisheries-related businesses within the basin.

The program itself, once established, will be administered by local organizations (e.g., watershed groups or conservation districts) well-positioned to foster Stream Wise communities within the areas they serve. Input from these groups also will be solicited during the development of Stream Wise Award Program materials, standards, and award criteria.

Municipalities will be encouraged to support the program by delivering and communicating Stream Wise Award Program materials and other information. This will provide education and technical assistance on the social, ecological, and economic value of Stream Wise including: revenue from anglers and enhancing co-benefits like flood resilience and swimming hole protection.

Once fully developed, a single entity will serve as the host organization for the Stream Wise Award Program. The host organization will be selected via a process separate from this grant opportunity. This organization will have the responsibility to house and coordinate distribution of all Stream Wise Award Program material, as well as to collect, analyze, report, and share Stream Wise Award Program data to local organizations and the public. The contract recipient of this grant opportunity will be eligible to apply to serve as the host organization.

**III. Project Overview**

A contractor will be selected from this grant opportunity to work with local stakeholders to create marketing materials and an accompanying guide that will empower jurisdictions to market a consistent Stream Wise Award Program message and brand.

The successful contract recipient will:

* Compile a literature review of vegetated stream buffer related regulations, standards, grant and funding opportunities, and planting programs within the Lake Champlain Basin.
* Co-facilitate meetings with LCBP and stakeholders to guide the development of the Stream Wise Award Program materials, standards, and award criteria.
* Create a draft Stream Wise Award Program brand and related social marketing materials.
* Create a draft comprehensive ‘how-to’ guide/communications plan on how local organizations can successfully administer a Stream Wise Award Program within their jurisdiction.

This program most closely aligns with LCBP OFA Task Areas:

* IV.C.3.a: Social Marketing - Implement social marketing techniques to foster sharing of information and stewardship ethic, and
* IV.C.2.a: Outreach materials - Produce web content and print materials that describe lake-friendly products and practices.

Because this program would be cross developed with agricultural and forestry lands, it also will address additional LCBP OFA task areas including:

* II.A.1.a Support programs to expand protection of river corridors;
* I.C.1.b fund programs to protect or enhance river corridors for nutrient reduction and flood resilience;
* I.C.4.c Educate and Assist Landowners to Promote Clean Water Regulations on Forested Lands;
* III.A.1.b: Technical Resources Provide technical assistance through meetings, workshops, and presentation;
* III.A.3.a: Outreach - Support and advise municipalities’ efforts to educate residents about sound river/ floodplain management

**IV. Project tasks and outputs**

**Summary:**

The primary goal of this project is to create social marketing materials for the new Stream Wise Award Program, a campaign that will educate and incentivize communities in the Lake Champlain Basin to engage in activities that support the enhancement and protection of riparian water quality and aquatic habitat, as well as, the community’s flood resilience. To achieve this goal, the following tasks, outputs, and outcomes must be successfully met.

**Tasks:**

1. **Compile a ‘Clearing House’ or literature review** of existing vegetated stream buffer related regulations, standards, grant and funding opportunities, and planting programs within the Lake Champlain Basin
   * The work product will be the compiled information.
2. **Co-facilitate a team of experts** who will lead the development of award program criteria as well as provide input in development of the social marketing campaign materials (Task 4) and communications plan (Task 5).
   * The work product will be detailed meeting summaries and a list of award program standards and criteria.
3. **Bring together local organizations and separate jurisdictions** to analyze different approaches in development of Stream Wise Award Program material.
   * The work product will be detailed meeting summaries, comments on the program standards, and award criteria
4. **Develop social marketing materials** for a campaign that will result in behavior change. This campaign should target communities as a whole, in addition to riparian landowners. The campaign will include best management practices and fact sheets, education and technical assistance materials, lists of resources, and slogans that can be used across the New York, Vermont, and Québec portions of the Lake Champlain basin.
   * The work product will be detailed meeting summaries, slogan and graphics (branding) for the campaign, list of actions that could become part of an award program, and draft factsheets, educational and technical assistance materials and lists of resources.
5. **Develop a comprehensive ‘how-to’ guide /communications plan** that details how local organizations can organize and successfully run a Stream Wise Award Program from scratch. This plan should be geared toward local organizations and include a social media component.
   * The work product will be the ‘how-to’ guide /communications plan.

**Outputs**

1. Compiled information of regulations, standards, grant and funding opportunities, and planting programs
2. Detailed meeting summaries of meetings with the ‘Team of Experts’ and local organizations
3. Stream Wise Award Program Standards
4. Stream Wise Award Criteria
5. List of specific Stream Wise BMPs with maintenance needs identified
6. Stream Wise fact sheets, education and technical assistance materials, lists of resources\*
7. Stream Wise Slogan and graphics (branding) for campaign\*
8. List of actions that could become part of an award program
9. Stream Wise Communications Plan\*

\*made available in French and English (translation costs will be supported by LCBP outside the scope of this RFP)

**Outcomes**

1. Engagement of State, federal, and NGOs in development of program
2. When implemented, the award program will increase the number of river miles of vegetated stream buffers planted, maintained, and enhanced in the Lake Champlain Basin
3. When implemented, the award program will increase in landowner awareness of the importance of vegetated stream buffers to the health of Lake Champlain

**Success of the development of the program will include the following metrics:**

1. Engagement of State, federal and NGOs in development of program: number of participants and organizations represented.
2. Sufficient recruitment for focus group engagement
3. Development of communications plan, slogan and development of branding

**Success of the implementation of the program will include the following metrics:**

1. Number of landowners who have planted or increased the acreage of vegetated stream buffer on their property
2. Increased river mileage of vegetated stream buffers planted, maintained, and enhanced in focus communities.
3. Number of landowners who have participated in the award program, and number who have received awards.
4. Number of municipalities who promote the awards program

**III. Summary of other project requirements**

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 initiated. 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 NEIWPCC in order to complete the work and will be compensated upon completion of 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 and NEIWPCC before initiating 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 earlier than 6 weeks following contract execution. No primary or secondary data may be collected or analyzed with LCBP funding prior to QAPP approval.
3. Grant applicants are 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 $10,000 and less than $250,000. 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 $10,000 may be made without soliciting competitive quotes if the price is considered reasonable.
   * Procurement of supplies, equipment and services that are greater than $10,000 and do not cost more than $250,000 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/>
4. The successful applicant will prepare brief quarterly reports documenting progress on each task in the project (see attached Proposal Format Requirements). A final report fully documenting the project’s results will be required at project completion.
5. When approved, the final report will be edited for content and style 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 or NEIWPCC public outreach materials.
6. The successful applicant will complete the project according to the following schedule (subject to change):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposals due to LCBP | April 13, 2020 |
| Applicants notified of funding decisions | June, 2020 |
| Detailed project workplan due | June, 2020 |
| Project start date | July, 2020 |
| Project deliverables and draft final report due | July, 2022 |

1. All materials and work products, regardless of physical form or characteristics, produced as a result of this project shall be made available to LCBP and NEIWPCC in a suitable file format. LCBP and NEIWPCC 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 NEIWPCC, and subject to any other approvals required by state or federal law. Reports and other deliverables will credit LCBP, GLFC, and NEIWPCC as funding partners for any work completed under the project contract.
2. The successful applicant will be required 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- government agencies. Federal, state, and provincial government entities are ineligible to apply to receive funding through this opportunity. 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.

The contract recipient of this grant opportunity will be eligible to apply to serve as the host organization for the Stream Wise Award Program. The host organization will be selected via a process separate from this grant opportunity through the issuance of a new competitive opportunity when the Award program is fully developed.

**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 marketing experience and ability to collaborate with stakeholders (20 points).
      2. Knowledge of the Lake Champlain Basin and riparian best management practices (10 points).
      3. Demonstrated ability to accomplish the tasks described above (20 points).
      4. Potential for the developed marketing strategy to achieve stated goals (30 points).
      5. Clarity, conciseness, and adherence to the proposal guidelines (10 points).
      6. Appropriateness of budget and budget justification, describing how the awarded funds will be used to produce the set of deliverables, outputs, and outcomes described above (10 points).

**VI. Available funds, match requirements, and indirect costs**

A total of $50,000 may be made available for a project to be supported under this RFP. No in-kind or cash match is required, though match will be considered favorably during budget review.

LCBP and NEIWPCC encourage 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. Use of some grant funds for indirect costs is also allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 and LCBP approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP or refer to [OMB Circular A-87 (Revised)](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004/#atta). ***Sections D, E,*** and ***F*** of **Attachment A** provide an overview of direct and indirect costs. **For projects in response to this RFP, the indirect budget should not exceed 10% of the direct project budget, and indirect offered as match should similarly not exceed 10% of direct match contributed, unless a higher federally negotiated indirect rate is in place, and proof of that negotiated rate is provided.** The LCBP Indirect Policy can be found here: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>

**VII. Appropriate Use of Funds**

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.

**VIII. Notification of Award**

Award notification to applicants is expected by May 2020. 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. LCBP and NEIWPCC 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 in **summer 2020** and is to be completed no later than **July 31, 2022** (see specific deliverable deadlines in Section II above).

1. **Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission**

* Please follow the format outlined in the attached Proposal Format Requirements.
* Submit an electronic version of your proposal to [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) no later than **April 13, 2020**. Please be sure you receive email notification that your application was received. Electronic submissions must be in MS Word compatible format.

1. **Contact Information**

Please direct all inquiries to:

Lauren Jenness

LCBP Environmental Analyst

802-372-0223

[ljenness@lcbp.org](mailto:ljenness@lcbp.org)

**Proposal format requirements**

Proposals should adhere to the following format and should not exceed an 8-page maximum length (font size 12), NOT including budget information, references cited and investigator resumes, supplemental material, and letters of participation or support.

**TITLE:** Concise and descriptive.

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

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

**ABSTRACT:** Brief description of proposed work.

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

**TASKS:** Describe in detail the tasks that will be performed, including methods and approaches.

**DELIVERABLES AND OUTPUTS:** Detailed description of the items that will be sent to LCBP as documentation of work completed through the award, and the elements of the projects that are not delivered to LCBP, such as outreach efforts. Quarterly progress reports and a final report (including GIS data) are required deliverables.

**OUTCOMES:** Provide a description of the anticipated impact or change in condition (i.e. behavior or environment) that you are trying to achieve through this award. Outcomes may be short-term or long-term.

**SCHEDULE:** Timeline showing anticipated dates for completion of the major tasks and deliverables and outputs. 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 tasks and budget categories (e.g., 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 any match amounts and totals. (1 page, not included in the 8-page maximum total for the proposal).

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS** (not counted as part of the 8-page limit) may provided to demonstrate social marketing products delivered or developed by the applicant team for previous opportunities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EXAMPLE** Budget Spreadsheet | | | | | | |  |  |
| ***Line Item*** | | **Task 1** | **Task 2** | **Task 3** | **Task 4** | **Task 5**  (add or remove columns as needed) | ***Line Item* *Totals* for All Tasks** | Proposed Match (if any) | *Line Item* *Totals* + Proposed Match |
| Personnel | | $500 | $1,200 | $800 | $495 | $1,000 | $3,995 | $3,000 | $6,995 |
| Fringe | | $150 | $360 | $240 | $149 | $300 | $1,199 | $1,000 | $2,199 |
| Travel | | $0 | $100 | $300 | $100 | $0 | $500 | $400 | $900 |
| Supplies | | $0 | $200 | $0 | $2,000 | $500 | $2,700 | $1,000 | $3,700 |
| Professional Services | | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,500 | $0 | $2,500 | $1,000 | $3,500 |
| **Total Direct** | | **$650** | **$1,860** | **$1,340** | **$5,244** | **$1,800** | **$10,894** | **$6,400** | **$17,294** |
| Indirect | | $78 | $223 | $161 | $629 | $216 | $1,307 | $0 | $1,307 |
| **TOTAL BUDGET** | | **$728** | **$2,083** | **$1,501** | **$5,873** | **$2,016** | **$12,201** | **$6,400** | **$18,601** |

1. Lake Champlain Basin Program. *2018 State of the Lake and Ecosystem Indicators Report*. Grand Isle, VT. June 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)