

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
SOLICITED BY THE
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY HARBOR ESTUARY PROGRAM
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW ENGLAND INTERSTATE
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL COMMISSION:

ESTUARY HABITAT RESTORATION PLANNING GRANTS:
TRIBUTARY CONNECTIONS**

1. Summary

The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), in partnership with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), is requesting proposals for the development of **habitat restoration plans** to promote **tributary connections** within the geographic area of interest defined below. \$150,000 is available and HEP/NEIWPCC intends to fund one project. This grant supports implementation of the Draft Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) as endorsed by the HEP Policy Committee.

2. Background on the Harbor Estuary Program and NEIWPCC

Designated as an Estuary of National Significance by the Clean Water Act in 1987, the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary is a complex ecological system in the midst of a major urban center. The NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) (www.harborestuary.org) is a National Estuary Program authorized in 1987 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Program is an ongoing effort to protect, conserve, and restore the estuary. As asserted in its mission statement, “the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program works to shape policy and implement actions that positively impact the health of the Estuary by convening a partnership of interested stakeholders, utilizing sound science to analyze the issues, and working to carry out recommendations that are environmentally and economically responsible.” Participants in the program include representatives from local, state, and federal environmental agencies; scientists; citizens; businesses; and environmentalists among others.

NEIWPCC is a partner of the NY-NJ HEP and supports the Program’s efforts by helping to manage HEP’s Grants Programs, and by performing other activities. NEIWPCC is a not-for-profit interstate agency that serves and assists its member states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont) by coordinating activities and forums that encourage cooperation among the states, educating the public about key water quality issues, supporting research projects, training environmental professionals, and providing overall leadership in water management and protection.

Geographic area of interest

The geographic area of interest for this RFP is the study area as defined beginning on page 8 of the Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP). The plan can be found at www.TheWatersWeShare.org.

3. Schedule

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Call for Project Proposals | July 8, 2010 |
| b) Full Proposals Due | October 22, 2010 |
| c) Projects Selected | November 12, 2010 |
| d) Project Period | December 1, 2010-November 30, 2011 |
| e) Final Report | December 30, 2011 |

4. Overview

The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), in partnership with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), is requesting proposals for the development of habitat restoration plans. Proposals should focus on **tributary connections**, one of the eleven Target Ecosystem Characteristics (TEC) categories set forth in the Draft Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP).

The tributary connections TEC aims to reconnect freshwater streams to the estuary by the removing barriers such as dams, tide gates and culverts which prevent the passage of migratory fish. In instances where the removal of a barrier is not feasible, connections may be made by the construction of fish ladders, rock ramps, bypass channels, or other appropriate means, with the necessary permits and approvals. In stream and riparian habitat restoration may also be components of the project. Additional details on the **tributary connections** TEC can be found in the Comprehensive Restoration Plan at: www.TheWatersWeShare.org.

5. Project Objectives

Many dated and out of use dams or other impediments to fish passage exist within the study area. Removing these barriers or constructing fish passage structures (fish ladders, rock ramps and bypass channels) has the potential to reconnect thousands of feet of freshwater stream to the estuary for diadromous fish.

The award recipient will **develop a feasibility study and concept restoration plans** or will **advance a current feasibility study to the completion of construction documents**. In both cases, the recipient plans will be supported by data that they can then use as part of an application for other funding programs to either expand on the plans or to implement (construct) the restoration project. Applicants must **identify** at least one program or **potential funding**

source that they could work with **to implement/construct the restoration plan** developed under this grant. An indication from the program or potential funding source as to their willingness to potentially support a particular project would be highly desirable.

6. Funds Available

A total of \$150,000 is available and HEP and NEIWPCC expect to select one project. No matching funds are required, but the contribution of in-kind services, *pro bono* work, or other match will be favorably reviewed. If the project costs exceed the available funds for this grant program, please be sure to demonstrate in your **budget** section how this will be addressed. This information, if applicable, will help us assess your ability to complete the full scope of your proposal.

7. Proposal Package

Please email your proposal as one complete file (pdf) to Susy King, NEIWPCC, sking@neiwpc.org

Each package should not exceed the equivalent of 15 single spaced pages (12-point standard font and 1-inch margins) and **must** include the following information under these headings:

1. **Project Title**: Provide both a short and a descriptive title for your project.
2. **Contact Information**: For the main and alternative contact(s). Please include name, title, address, phone number, fax number, and email address.
3. **Potential Conflict of Interest Disclosure**: Please indicate if you are involved with HEP or NEIWPCC and in what capacity (e.g., participate in HEP's Citizens Advisory Committee). NOTE: this has the only purpose of open disclosure; it will **not** preclude a potential applicant from submitting an application and will **not** affect grading.
4. **Goals and Rationale**: Summarize the major goals of the proposed habitat restoration project—what it will accomplish. How will the Target Ecosystem Characteristic (tributary connections) be addressed and how will the goals of the NY-NJ HEP be met?
5. **Site Identification & Location**: Provide the specific location of the site proposed for habitat restoration planning, including a map of the area to be addressed, aerial image of the site (e.g., from Google Earth), documentation of ownership, and an indication of the willingness of the owner to allow restoration. Clearly state if the area is within one of HEP's priority sites for restoration. If so, provide the site code and number (from the list available at <http://www.harborestuary.org/interactivemap.htm>).
6. **Site Photos**: Provide 4 to 6 color photos (with captions) of the proposed project site. Photos shall be at a minimum 4"x 6" in size.
7. **Target Ecosystem Characteristics (TEC) & Site Selection**: Explain why this site makes sense for restoration planning and the TEC selected. State how the project will extend its influence and benefits beyond the site.
8. **Adequacy of Site Data**: Provide a list of all data that you will need to develop the proposed habitat restoration design project and clearly indicate whether these data have already been collected and are available or if additional data collection will be necessary. For data collection and/or the use of secondary data, please address the need and implementation of a QAPP (see Appendix A). Please note that almost certainly a QAPP

will be required for this grant program as any habitat restoration plan would need to take into account environmental conditions at the site and thus rely on data analysis (whether the data are/were collected by the award recipient or are already available). QAPP development may be funded as part of the project provided that the applicant has properly accounted for it and included it in the budget and timeline. Failure to account for the need for a QAPP in the timeline and budget when a QAPP would be needed will negatively impact your proposal's score.

9. **Professional Merits**: Provide information on the qualifications and experience of the applicant and project team.
10. **Work Plan**: Describe your approach for developing the habitat restoration plan, including a detailed discussion of policy issues and any required permits and how those issues will be addressed. Please try to present the work plan as "fact based," discussing the development of the project and how to proceed. Do not discuss the merits of the project as this would have been explained in section 4 (Goals and Rationale).
11. **Implementation Plan**: If the restoration concept plan is funded, what steps will you take to ensure that the project is implemented? How will you secure support to bring the project to a full completion? Include a list of potential funders for the plan implementation as well as any indications from the potential funding source(s) as to their willingness to support the project.
12. **Project Schedule**: Include a complete, draft project schedule.
13. **Project Budget**: Please provide an itemized budget in table format, clearly indicating what types of expenses are covered under each expense category. Indicate in separate columns and for each category: the total costs, the amount requested from HEP, and any matching funds. Also please indicate the source of any matching funds and whether they will be provided as in-kind services or *pro bono* work.
14. **Letters of Support**: Two letters of support from participating agencies or other partners, public officials or other organizations.

Applicants are welcome to contact HEP with questions, including regarding the suitability of a particular project and QAPP guidance (please see section **12. Time, Date, Place and Manner of Requested Response**).

8. Proposal Evaluation Procedures

All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a Restoration Program Review Team. Applications will be evaluated based solely on the project's merits. In addition, any given member of the Review Team will not review an application where a conflict of interest may arise. Criteria for project evaluation include:

- A clear link to the Target Ecosystem Characteristics (TEC) – Tributary Connections
- Practicability
- Professional Merit
- Expected Benefits
- Cost Effectiveness

The rating criteria are available for download together with this Request for Proposals.

9. Deliverables

Award recipient will be required to submit quarterly progress reports throughout the duration of the project. The final deliverables for the funded project are a feasibility study and concept habitat restoration plan, ready or close to ready for implementation (construction) **or** construction documents ready for implementation. Award recipient shall assess existing conditions and needs and formulate recommendations that blend best management practices with innovation and context specific solutions.

Deliverables from an awarded recipient who received funding for the development of a feasibility study and concept plan is described below in part ‘**A**’

An award recipient who received funding for the development of construction documents shall submit deliverables outlined in part ‘**B**’

- A.** The awarded recipient shall submit a report and concept habitat restoration plan containing the following information:
- Research and Site Analysis
 - Assess existing conditions
 - Discussion of methodology used
 - References to all sources of information
 - Identify and interview key stakeholders
 - Complete document of findings and research including:
 - Narrative description of existing site conditions
 - Existing and created maps and diagrams used for analysis
 - Photos of existing site and conditions
 - Visioning & Schematic Design
 - Starting from stated project goals develop set of principles and overall vision for an improved site and establish framework of recommendations
 - Develop schematic design of changes to existing site
 - Recommendations and Concept Restoration Plan
 - Identify specific interventions and techniques to be used to meet restoration goals
 - Provide narrative text and illustrative drawings depicting what restoration site might look like
 - Implementation strategy
 - Estimate materials needed for implementation
 - Implementation objectives
 - Implementation entities (individuals, organizations, public agencies)
 - Phasing plan (a conceptual timetable for the project from project development through implementation and monitoring)
 - Preliminary cost estimate

- Construction funding plan

B. The awarded recipient shall submit a construction document set containing the following information:

- 100% Construction Document Plans
 - Overall Site Plan
 - Demolition Plan
 - Layout and Dimensions
 - Grading Plan
 - Construction Details
- Engineering and Construction Specifications
- Cost and Quantity Estimate
- Construction Timeline
- Permit Application submitted to appropriate agencies for review

Award recipient(s) will be required to attend a pre-award meeting to determine scale, format, and review procedures for deliverables along with a preliminary schedule for interim project reports at 50 percent and 90 percent completion levels. The restoration plans will be due by December 30, 2011. HEP may post online or otherwise disseminate the conceptual restoration plans to foster and facilitate the implementation of similar projects by other organizations throughout the Estuary.

10. Collection and Use of Environmental Data

Environmental data collection and/or data analysis require the applicant to have an EPA/NEIWPC- approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) before the start of work (see Appendix A). Because QAPP development can extend the project schedule and add to the project costs, carefully evaluate whether new environmental data collection and/or data analysis are needed.

QAPP development may be funded as part of the project provided that the applicant has properly accounted for it and included it in the budget and timeline. Guidance is provided in Appendix A.

Please note that almost certainly a QAPP will be required for this grant program, as any habitat restoration plan would need to take into account environmental conditions at the site and thus rely on data analysis (whether the data are/were collected by the award recipient or are already available). If you have any questions regarding the necessity of a

QAPP for your project, please contact HEP or NEIWPCC prior to submitting your application.

11. Postponement/Cancellation

The NY-NJ HEP and NEIWPCC reserve the right to postpone or cancel this solicitation and to reject all responses. Awards are contingent upon NEIWPCC's receipt of federal funding.

12. Time, Date, Place and Manner of Requested Response

Responses to this solicitation must be received no later than 5:00 PM EST on October 22, 2010. No hand deliveries, faxes, or late responses will be accepted.

Please Email as one complete file (pdf) to Susy King, NEIWPCC, sking@neiwpc.org

Please address any inquiries to:

Bob Nyman, HEP Director

Phone : 212-637-3809

Email: nyman.robert@epa.gov

Tips for a Successful Application

1. When planning your project and preparing your proposal, please **keep in mind the project objectives** listed in **Section 4**.
2. Please carefully follow the list provided in **Section 6. Proposal Package** and **provide all information** required under each heading. This is extremely important as it will determine the rating of your proposal. Reviewers can only evaluate you based on the information you provide us; if it is incomplete, it will impact your score. Closely follow the directions and answer directly any questions posed.
3. **Be concise and focused, and get to the point.** A successful application can be complete and succinct at the same time. Provide only the information that is requested. Remember that reviewers will not evaluate pages beyond the 15-page limit, so do not waste precious space with irrelevant information.
4. **Be organized.** Follow the structure provided in the Proposal Package and include each bit of information in the section where it is requested. This will increase your chances of success and speed up the evaluation. Consider that reviewers will evaluate specific aspects of your proposal (see next bullet point). These relevant facts may get lost in a sea of unorganized information, impacting your score.
5. **Keep the rating criteria in mind.** It tells you how each section of your proposal will be graded. Make sure to adequately cover all aspects, and look for those scored highest. We encourage you to submit PDF files to avoid formatting and/or software compatibility issues.

More Information and Resources

The following resources may be helpful in developing your proposal:

- Harbor Estuary Program Website: www.harborestuary.org (click “About the Program”)
- Grant writing tools (these might help with general issues, but remember to address what is requested in this particular RFP):
 - Grant Proposal Writing Tips from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html
 - Non-Profit Guides: www.npguides.org
 - EPA’s Tips On Writing a Grant Proposal: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>
 - Minnesota Council on Foundations’ Writing A Successful Grant Proposal: <http://www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm>
- Program evaluation tools
 - UW Extension Program Development & Evaluation: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/>
 - An Interactive Teleconference on Using Logic Models in Program Evaluation (CYREFnet) - www.cyfernet.org/interactrain/logicmodels.htm

APPENDIX A: QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLANS (QAPPS)

Proposed projects that involve the collection, analysis, or manipulation of environmental data, which are selected for funding, will require an EPA/NEIWPCC-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The use of “secondary data” to make environmental decisions also requires a QAPP. The term “secondary data” refers to previously collected data describing environmental conditions (which may have been collected by other entities, not just the current grantee). Secondary data can include (but are not limited to) historical data, information from computer databases, computer models, research projects, and surveys.

Preparation of a QAPP does require a level of planning and documentation greater than is needed for other projects. QAPP preparation is intended to facilitate the project planning and development process and to assure that the data used or provided (both grantee-generated and secondary data) are of known and adequate quality.

Grantees need to include preparation and implementation of this plan into their budgets and timelines. Keep in mind that it usually takes several months to complete the QAPP writing and approval process. In no case should environmental data activities proceed before the QAPP is submitted to and approved by both NEIWPCC and EPA.

If your project requires a QAPP, or if you are unsure whether a QAPP is needed, we encourage you to contact us prior to submitting your proposal, so we can better assist you and point you to useful resources. Guidance materials are available from the EPA

(http://www.epa.gov/region02/qa/qa_documents/air_h20_qapp04.pdf and

<http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5-final.pdf>) and NEIWPC (<http://www.neiwpc.org/quality/quality-docs/qapp31march06.pdf>) websites. In addition, HEP and NEIWPC can provide or arrange for further assistance in planning for a QAPP as needed.