

Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program 2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline March 26, 2018: 6:00 p.m. EDT

Special Note:

This year's projects will address the following priorities: implementing nutrient management / 4R-type programs and reducing sediment and phosphorus runoff into the Great Lakes through installation of long-term practices. Project goals must include pounds of phosphorus reduced and tons of soil saved. **All projects within the Western Lake Erie Basin will be required to show that participating land users are using a 4R-type nutrient management protocol.**

"4R-type" programs or protocols focus on applying nutrients of the right source, at the right rate and right time, in the right place.

I. General Eligibility

All projects must clearly demonstrate how they will reduce sediment and particulate and/or dissolved phosphorus into the Great Lakes. It is anticipated that roughly \$800,000 in funding will be available for project support contingent upon final authorization from the funder (NRCS). **A twenty-five percent match will be required of each project.**

Applicants must be non-federal units of government or incorporated non-profit organizations. Eligible applicants include but are not limited to: conservation districts, county and municipal governments, regional planning commissions, and state agencies. Examples of nonprofit organizations include watershed organizations, stream and lake associations, citizen monitoring groups, environmental groups, conservation groups, land conservancies and fish and wildlife groups. Only areas within the United States portion of the Great Lakes basin are eligible for funding. Priority will be given to projects within Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) designated priority watersheds. U.S. federal agencies, public and private Canadian organizations, for-profit companies and private landowners cannot apply directly, but are encouraged to participate as project partners. Monitoring, research, and data analysis activities cannot be funded under this program.

Applicants selected to receive a grant award will be required to enter into a project contract with the Great Lakes Commission. A project contract consists of standard "boilerplate" language¹ and the applicant's approved project description, work plan, time line, and budget information. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will likely result in cancellation of the grant award.

II. Program Background

Funding for the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (GLSNRP) is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)-led initiative designed to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the water resources of the Great Lakes basin. Funding for GLSNRP supports work under GLRI Focus Area 3 aimed at controlling nonpoint source pollution and reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful/nuisance algal blooms. This initiative uses outcome-oriented performance goals and measures to target the most significant problems and track progress in addressing them. Under the GLRI, U.S. EPA and its federal partners coordinate state, tribal, local, and industry actions to protect, maintain, and restore the chemical, biological, and physical integrity of the Great Lakes.

¹ An Example Contract is available at: <https://keepingitontheland.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2018/02/GLSNRP-ExampleContract-2018.pdf>.

In accordance with the agreement between the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) and NRCS, the primary focus of grants issued under GLSNRP is the reduction of sediment and particulate and/or dissolved phosphorus into the Great Lakes. Other nonpoint source control benefits may occur as a secondary result of the project and should be clearly articulated as such in the project proposal.

III. Program Objective and General Criteria

A. Objective: To implement portions of Focus Area 3 recommendations of the GLRI by installing long-term conservation practices to reduce sediment and particulate and/or dissolved phosphorus to improve water quality in the Great Lakes.

B. General Criteria

The following criteria will guide the **review and selection of proposals** under GLSNRP. The projects must:

- Show a direct and discernible reduction of sediment, particulate phosphorus, and dissolved phosphorus into the Great Lakes;
- Address phosphorus and/or sediment problems from agricultural, urban, forest, range, and pastureland and other crucial land uses;
- Consider new, innovative, or nontraditional approaches to sediment and phosphorus control;
- Encourage the development of partnerships and networks; and
- Share the results of project outcomes to the project funder and, through outreach and technology transfer with the public.

IV. Program Grant Information

A. Program Focus

There will be two areas of focus which can be addressed singularly or together in an application:

- Implementing nutrient management/4R-type programs for phosphorus reduction, and/or
- Installing permanent/long-term sediment and phosphorus reduction practices.

Applicants will be required to estimate the amount of soil erosion and phosphorus reduction their project will achieve when implemented and briefly describe the methodology used to arrive at the estimations.

Note: There are two types of phosphorus, particulate and dissolved. Together they constitute what is termed total phosphorus. Conservation practices may reduce one or both types of phosphorus. Particulate phosphorus is phosphorus attached to soil particles. It can be controlled and reduced by the installation of traditional soil erosion/sediment control practices. Dissolved phosphorus is phosphorus in the water. Conservation practices designed to reduce dissolved phosphorus involve reducing phosphorus at its source, managing drainage water, and/or filtering.

Proposed projects within an area having a state-approved nonpoint source reduction plan (e.g., watershed plan) and/or a nine key elements plan will be given additional consideration for funding.

Projects proposing a nutrient management plan will also be given additional consideration for funding. Examples include:

- NRCS staff/Technical Service Provider (TSP)-approved Nutrient Management Plans consistent with Practice Standard 590;
- Approved 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program Nutrient Management Plans; and
- Nutrient Management Plans adopted within Ohio's Senate Bill 150, effective August 21, 2014.

Examples of implementing practices that reduce sedimentation and particulate and/or dissolved phosphorus

delivery under the two focus areas may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Nutrient Management / 4R-type Projects

- Hold a competition or issue a challenge to landowners for the highest yield with the lowest phosphorus input
- Assessment of a producer's current implementation of a nutrient management plan and results
- Intensive soil tests including stratified soil tests
- Financial incentives to permanently change/modify management practices
- Financial incentives to permanently change/modify equipment and services
- Equipment purchases to implement 4R-type nutrient management

Long-Term Sediment and Nutrient Control Practices

- In-stream treatment for sediment and/or phosphorus reduction
- In-field treatment for sediment and/or phosphorus reduction
- Subsurface drainage treatment for sediment and/or phosphorus reduction
- WASCOS with blind inlets
- "Constructed wetlands" for sediment and/or phosphorus reduction ⁽¹⁾
- Drainage channel redesign (i.e. two stage channels, in-stream sediment traps)
- Runoff retention structures
- Blind inlets to replace surface inlets
- Streambank, shoreline and ravine stabilization
- Structural sediment control practices

⁽¹⁾ These activities may trigger various federal and state regulations.

B. Project Size, Funding and Timeframe

Under this year's program, GLSNRP will fund two different project types: watershed scale and site-specific. Applications can be submitted for either of the two project types. Projects should begin on October 1, 2018 and can be up to three years in duration.

Applicants may submit more than one application under this RFP. **The maximum request for each application will be capped at no more than \$200,000.**

A **watershed scale** project is one that implements numerous conservation practices over a wide area within a watershed at different sites that are often noncontiguous. For these projects, the exact implementation locations may be unknown at the time of the application. An example of a watershed scale project could be to implement five in-stream phosphorus scrubbers, twenty WASCOS and ten blind inlets to control runoff and reduce phosphorus in the XYZ watershed. Funding for this type of project can range up to \$200,000. Projects within an area having a state-approved nonpoint source reduction plan (e.g., watershed plan) and/or a nine key elements plan will be given additional consideration for funding.

A **site-specific** project is a project that implements conservation practices at a known site (or sites) designated in the application. An example of a site-specific project would be to restore 300 feet of streambank erosion on the XYZ property and 700 feet of critical area stabilization of the ABC property. Funding for site-specific projects will be up to \$50,000 per site. Multiple site projects can be submitted in a single application but may not exceed a maximum request of \$200,000.

Funds may be used for both technical assistance and financial assistance. **However, grant dollars cannot be used to fund technical assistance (i.e., personnel or consultants) with the sole purpose of implementing other Farm Bill cost-share programs.** The mix of technical and financial assistance will depend on the local situation. Applications with substantial technical assistance and consultant funding requests must justify the proposed amounts in their application.

All projects must be completed within a three-year time period, inclusive of the time required to obtain all permits and approvals. Applicants should be realistic when planning the project timeframe to account for possible permitting delays. If a project can be completed in less than three years, please specify this within your proposal.

C. Eligible Areas and Priorities

Projects must be located within the United States portion of the Great Lakes basin to be eligible. Projects in [U.S. EPA's designated priority watersheds](#) under the GLRI Focus Area 3 (i.e., Lower Fox River, WI; Maumee River, OH/IN/MI; Saginaw River, MI; and Genesee River, NY/PA) may be given priority for funding.

Regardless of the location, scale or particular land use, projects must be designed to significantly reduce sedimentation and/or phosphorus runoff from the designated project area. Under the program, **monitoring, research, and data analysis activities cannot be funded.**

It is suggested that watershed scale project areas be limited to no more than four (4) USGS twelve-digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs) within an eight-digit HUC, but can vary outside this range with justification. Project sites can be contiguous or separate.

Projects proposing work activity above significant dams within eligible areas should demonstrate that the project will provide sediment and phosphorus reduction to Great Lakes waters not already provided by the presence of the dam. A dam will be considered significant if it creates a reservoir that is more than five times the average width of the river channel below the dam.

New and innovative conservation practices and approaches to providing incentives and cost-sharing are encouraged and will be considered for funding. Innovative implementation methodologies are extremely important in a non-regulatory program to respond to local economic and social conditions.

Examples of nontraditional methodologies may include but are not limited to:

- Paying for pounds reduced over the lifetime of the conservation practices rather than paying for the conservation practice directly;
- Cost-share on a sliding scale (e.g., higher rates for high-priority areas and lower rates for low-priority areas); and
- Utilizing funding and resources from other non-governmental entities and businesses.

D. Proposal Information

Applications will be submitted online at <https://keepingitontheland.net/apply-for-funding/>.

1. Specific Project Requirements

Each proposal must:

- Show a direct and discernible reduction of sediment and phosphorus into the Great Lakes;
- Address phosphorus and/or sediment problems from agricultural, urban, forest, range, and pastureland and other crucial land uses;
- Encourage the development of partnerships and networks;
- Include a plan for implementation, including such items as: conservation practice types, timeline for implementation, specific and measurable outcomes and/or deliverables for the project, and financial incentive methodologies;
- Describe a strategy to keep the public, land users, elected officials, and government officials informed of project activities; and

- Outline a plan to share project results and outcomes with the project funder and with the public through outreach and technology transfer.

For projects focused on reducing particulate phosphorus and sediment, a soil erosion and phosphorus reduction goal should be estimated using the U.S. EPA Region 5 Spreadsheet or STEPL model, as appropriate for the proposed project. (Used to estimate particulate phosphorus reductions, both the Region 5 and STEPL spreadsheet models are available online at: [http://it.tetrattech-ffx.com/stepweb/models\\$docs.htm](http://it.tetrattech-ffx.com/stepweb/models$docs.htm).)

For projects focused on reducing dissolved reactive phosphorus, include an estimation of anticipated load reductions supported by references to scientific literature, monitoring results from similar projects, or other reliable sources of information.

Watershed scale projects should include a methodology to delineate high-priority areas within the proposed project area.

Each applicant must also have the ability to:

- Hire or contract for technical assistance (e.g., personnel);
- Provide office space, administrative support, computer and other equipment, general office supplies, and other items to perform the proposed implementation effort;
- Enter into a legally binding contract with landowners for the life span of the practice;
- Provide a plan to maintain the implemented practices over their life span;
- Design and install all implementation practices according to USDA-NRCS standards and specifications and applicable state standards. Applicants are encouraged to use the services of a certified professional engineer or agronomist for this purpose as appropriate.
- Obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work prior to the expenditure of funds for those activities requiring permits.
- Achieve the total soil and phosphorus reduction savings as specified in the project proposal.
- The ability to use the STEPL or Region 5 modeling tool. Please consult with GLC staff if assistance is needed in using the STEPL modeling tool.
- Initiate/take advantage of outreach opportunities throughout the project period.
- Provide before, during, and after pictures of the implementation, media events, and other activities of interest to the project.
- Abide by all local, state/provincial, and federal laws, rules, ordinances and regulations in the performance of this project and conduct all work in a lawful and safe manner, consistent with the standards and level of care normally provided for comparable work.
- Track conservation practice implementation progress using the procedures provided; and
- Provide administrative capacity to submit reports of expenses and activities as well as provide other documentation as needed.
- Provide the minimum levels of liability insurance coverage (see details below)

2. Administrative Requirements

Funds and Reimbursement

- Except for the first payment, all subsequent payments to the grantee are made in arrears, based on signed invoices submitted at least quarterly to the GLC using the forms provided to successful applicants. During the construction season (June – October), invoices may be submitted monthly upon request and with prior written approval from the GLSNRP manager. Reimbursement will take up to **90 days** to be processed once submitted.
- There will be one upfront payment (10% of grant amount) at the start of the project, which will occur once the GLC receives the signed contractual agreement from the grantee.

Progress Reporting

Progress reporting must be submitted at least quarterly, even if no activity has occurred during the reporting period. Progress report forms must include a signed (electronic or hard copy) invoice for reimbursement, a description of the conservation practice(s) installed during the quarter, and a narrative report of the project's activity. Before, during, and after pictures will be required.

A final report will be required within 30 days of the completion of the project. Progress and final report forms can be found at <http://keepingitontheand.net/final-reporting/>.

Insurance

The grantee must agree to provide the minimum levels of liability insurance coverage as indicated below and will be responsible for all deductibles. The grantee will be required to provide a certificate of insurance coverage to the GLC as part of the grant contract. The grantee must also require that all contracted personnel or companies used by the grantee in performing the project maintain the required insurances contained in this section.

The grantee must protect the GLC from claims which may arise out of or result from the grantee's performance of services under the terms of the contract, whether the services are performed by the grantee, or by any subcontractor, or by anyone directly or indirectly employed by any of them, or by anyone for whose acts they may be liable.

The grantee waives all rights against the GLC for recovery of damages to the extent these damages are covered by the insurance policies the grantee is required to maintain under this contract.

1. Commercial General Liability with the following minimum coverage:
 - \$2,000,000 General Aggregate Limit other than Products/Completed Operations
 - \$2,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate Limit
 - \$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury Limit
 - \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence Limit

Grantee must list the GLC as an ADDITIONAL INSURED on the Commercial General Liability certificate or an acceptable alternative method with written permission from the GLC.

2. If a motor vehicle is used to provide services or products under this contract, the grantee must have vehicle liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage as required by law on any auto including owned, hired and non-owned vehicles used in business.
3. Workers' compensation coverage must be provided per applicable laws governing the employees and employers work activities in the state in which the project is located.
4. Employers liability insurance with the following minimum limits:
 - \$100,000 each accident
 - \$100,000 each employee by disease
 - \$500,000 aggregate disease

Budget and Open Records

All applicants must submit realistic, itemized project budgets for the proposed work along with appropriate justification for project expenses. Project budgets should not be increased arbitrarily to meet the suggested maximum amounts, and should be representative of the project's proposed size, scope and geographic location. Budget lines can be adjusted throughout the life of the grant with written

permission. **Grant dollars cannot be used to fund technical assistance (i.e., personnel) to implement other Farm Bill cost-share programs.**

All successful applicants will be required to provide open access to all data, records, financial information, and other materials generated by or associated with the funded project (within the limits of state and federal regulations). It is essential that successful applicants maintain detailed records of all expenses and activities as well as copies of submitted reports for future audits. Project results must also be disseminated in a manner that ensures accessibility to others.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project, and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. Applicants with a current federally approved negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional) must use their negotiated rate to calculate indirect costs for the proposed project budget, and are required to submit a valid negotiated indirect cost agreement with their proposal. These indirect cost rates are sometimes referred to as a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or NICRA. Applicants who have never negotiated an indirect cost rate with the federal government or do not have a current approved NICRA may elect to charge indirect costs at de minimis rate of 10 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs, as defined by 2 CFR 200.414 (“Indirect (F&A) costs”), for the period of the grant agreement or until the applicant obtains an approved NICRA. Applicants wishing to deviate from their approved NICRA to recover a lesser indirect rate will be required to acknowledge the deviation in writing at the time the grant agreement is established.

For multi-year projects, grant recipients with an approved NICRA shall be approved to recover indirect costs at the approved rate in effect at the time the eligible costs are incurred by the recipient. Applicants will be required to submit any subsequent approved NICRAs received during the project period to the GLC if selected for funding.

Match

A twenty-five percent match is required. Match can be cash, in-kind, or a combination of both, but may not include activities that would otherwise be deemed ineligible for direct funding support under GLSNRP (e.g., monitoring, research, and data analysis activities). The following list provides some examples of acceptable match, but is not intended to be exhaustive. Total project costs include the requested grant amount plus the twenty-five percent match.

- Cash is any money received from any source, other than from federal sources, that is part of the applicant’s annual budget and audit process and will be utilized in the implementation of the project.
- In-kind includes services or financial contributions to the project not paid for with the grant or other federal funds.

Examples may include:

- Technical and/or administrative assistance provided by the applicant, other entities, or persons not paid for with the grant or with federal funds.
- A portion of the applicant’s administrative costs and office expenses not paid for with the grant or with federal funds.
- Use of local and state agency vehicles other than that of the applicant.
- Volunteer labor calculated at a rate of \$7.25 per hour. Unpaid members of local task forces, watershed councils, work groups, citizen groups, etc. are considered volunteers.

V. Deadline

Applications received after 6:00 p.m. EDT on March 26, 2018 will be disqualified unless the applicant has received permission to submit a late application from GLC staff prior to the deadline.

VI. Application Review Process

Proposals meeting all criteria identified above will be reviewed and evaluated through the Sedimentation and Nutrient Reduction Task Force coordinated by the GLC. The task force is comprised of representatives from each of the eight Great Lakes states as well as federal agencies. **Applicants are urged to contact their state task force member to discuss their potential project.** A list of task force members can be found at <http://keepingitontheand.net/task-force/>.

VII. Contact information

Please direct any administrative questions pertaining to the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program application process to either of the following two individuals:

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