

## **Barnegat Bay Partnership FY11 Request for Implementation Proposals**

The Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP) is pleased to announce a request for proposals for implementation projects to address priorities identified in the BBP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. The BBP anticipates that a total of approximately \$150,000 will be available to support one or two projects addressing our environmental priorities.

The BBP's top implementation priority is addressing the causes of water quality degradation within the ecosystem, especially eutrophication in the bay and stormwater and non-point source pollution in the watershed. The BBP and its partners also identified three additional implementation priorities: (1) addressing water supply and flow issues that affect the bay and watershed; (2) preventing habitat loss, especially of submerged aquatic vegetation, and supporting habitat restoration; and (3) improving our understanding of, and addressing, fisheries declines. Each of these priorities is supported by several long- and short-term objectives, and a number of specific actions, all of which are identified in the BBP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan (SP). Projects that focus on implementation measures that will improve water quality, enhance state and local capacity to use existing regulations and authorities, and provide measureable results/outputs will receive highest consideration. Additional information about each priority is provided below. The entire Strategic Plan is available online ([www.bbep.org/downloads/BBNEP%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf](http://www.bbep.org/downloads/BBNEP%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf)).

### **2008-2011 Environmental Priorities**

#### **Water Quality and Eutrophication**

These priorities were established to achieve the long-term goal of water quality which sustains healthy populations of fishes, shellfishes, and submerged aquatic vegetation, and supports human recreation throughout the bay. Examples of implementation projects that would be considered under this Request for Proposal (RFP) include, but are not limited to, stormwater basin restoration (SP WQ6), low impact development, and stormwater and nonpoint-source pollution pilot and/or demonstration projects using sustainable site-design practices (SP WQ8).

#### **Water Supply and Flow Issues**

This environmental priority was established to address water supply and flow issues that affect the bay and watershed. The BBP's long-term goal is to provide natural freshwater flows to the bay to: (1) support healthy living resources; (2) support societal uses; and (3) prevent salt water intrusion. The State's water supply plan projects that water demand throughout the watershed will exceed the available supplies, especially in summer. Thus, the short-term goals are focused on water use and promoting appropriate reuse (SP WS5). Projects that increase conservation and reuse of water will be considered in this funding cycle.

#### **Habitat Loss and Habitat Restoration**

The BBP's strategic objective is to prevent habitat loss, especially of submerged aquatic vegetation, and support habitat restoration. The long-term goal of the BBP and its partners is the continuing protection of quality habitats, vegetated with appropriate native species, which support self-sustaining populations of native species, including federally- and state-listed species (*e.g.*, pine barren tree frog, swamp pink). Projects eligible for funding may include those which: (1) restore and improve shoreline buffers adjacent to coastal wetlands and freshwater tributaries (SP H1); (2) implement alternative restoration approaches (*e.g.*, "living" shorelines, reuse of dredged material) (H3); and (3) support erosion control and create opportunities for non-structural stabilization (SP H4).

### **Fisheries Declines**

The BBP's strategic objective is to improve our understanding of, and address, fisheries declines. Our long-term goals include establishing and promoting: (1) stable populations of healthy freshwater, estuarine-dependent, and marine fishes and/or shellfishes; (2) consumable fishes and shellfishes (*i.e.*, reduction in fish and shellfish contamination); and (3) consistent management of commercially and recreationally important fisheries for river herring, blue crabs, hard clams, bait, and other species. Among the types of projects that would be considered are those which remove in-stream migration barriers or create and/or restore habitats, especially wetlands.

### **Application Process and Proposal Review**

A new application and review process will be used to evaluate projects. The new process has a number of new and modified components to streamline the application process and avoid any appearance of conflict of interest in the selection of projects for funding.

(1) All applicants should submit a 1–2-page letter-of-intent (LOI) to the BBP office via email to [jvasslides@ocean.edu](mailto:jvasslides@ocean.edu). The LOI should include the following: (1) a project title and overview; (2) project justification; (3) project relevance to BBP priorities (see the CCMP and 2008-2011 Strategic Plan); (4) estimated project request and total budget (including the match); and (5) project proponents and management (*i.e.*, who will perform and oversee the work).

(2) The BBP office will review LOIs, discuss the LOIs with applicants, and notify applicants within one week if the project has been approved for submission as a full proposal. This initial review and selection of the LOIs will be based on the criteria identified in (6) below.

(3) All approved applicants will then develop and submit a full proposal; see the section below titled "Proposal Structure and Other Guidelines" for details about the structure and content of the proposal.

(4) The BBP office will then solicit three or more reviews of each proposal from independent, external reviewers (*i.e.*, not affiliated with the applicants) to address the technical merits and limitations of the proposed projects. The BBP office will use the reviews in subsequent discussion and project selection. All reviewers will remain anonymous; reviews will be shared with applicants upon request at the completion of the selection process.

(5) All applicants will give oral presentations of proposed projects at a joint meeting of the BBP's Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and Advisory Committee.

(6) The BBNEP's Joint STAC and Advisory Committee will rank the proposals using the following evaluation criteria: (a) the description and technical merits of the project; (b) project outcomes and/or benefits, including their assessment; (c) justification of the project, including its relevance to the BBP's CCMP and/or Strategic Planning priorities; (d) the budget's consistency with BBP guidelines, including matching provisions; and (e) qualifications, experience, and past performance of project proponents (*i.e.*, managers, PIs). Please note that organizations associated with any submitted proposals will not participate in the discussion and ranking of proposals to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Committee members and reviewers may be disqualified from reviewing proposals with respect to which they have any actual or potential conflicts of interest. An individual may not serve on a review panel if he/she has any direct personal/familial or financial relationship or connection with any of the

proposals to be reviewed or any of the applicants. In addition, individuals who have other types of relationships with the proposals being reviewed or any of the applicants cannot serve on a review panel if that relationship would impair or influence their objectivity or impartiality in reviewing proposals and the conflict of interest cannot otherwise be mitigated or avoided. Some situations that may constitute a conflict of interest include the following:

- Principal investigators, consultants, or any other participants in proposals cannot serve on review panels to review proposals submitted in response to a solicitation/announcement.
- The application or proposal being considered is from the reviewer's parent institution or member organization. This applies to subcontractors or sub-recipients.
- The reviewer and the applicant are related through family or have been related as a student or thesis/post doctoral advisor.
- The reviewer and the applicant have collaborated within the last 3 years on a related project, article or paper.
- The reviewer will benefit directly from the project, *e.g.*, as a consultant or paid collaborator.

### **Funding, Budget, and Reporting Guidelines**

- Funding is available to support project-specific expenses only and may not be used for general organizational operating expenses. Indirect expenses may be used as match, but generally will not be covered by the grant without special justification.
- Requested salary costs generally should not exceed 25% of the total requested amount. Costs exceeding 25% must be justified.
- The applicant must minimally provide a 1:1 ratio of matching funds or in-kind services from non-federal sources. Federal sources may be used as match with special justification and prior approval. Special consideration will be given to proposals which provide more than the minimum match.
- The scheduling of projects is flexible to accommodate seasonal and other special considerations; however, we anticipate that projects may begin as early as **September 1, 2010**, and should be completed within two to three years of the start date. Projects may be extended under special circumstances with justification from the PI and a supporting recommendation from the PI's agency/organization. The proposal must explicitly identify all project deliverables and a schedule of their delivery.
- The BBP reserves the right to terminate projects that are not initiated and/or completed (including any project deliverables) in accordance with agreed-upon project schedules. In such cases, any remaining payments to the agency/organization will be forfeited. Such termination does not relieve the grant recipient of any reporting requirements.
- Receipt of a signed fully executed agreement will be required for an initial partial payment of 30% of the award amount. Submission of a progress report to the STAC is required for the second payment (50%). The final payment (20%) will not be made until the final report is submitted and a presentation of key findings is given to the STAC. The final report must include detailed descriptions of all work, findings, and the final (as-spent) budget (including match). Except in special

circumstances, final reports and all other required materials (see below) are due within 90 days of the project's completion.

- In addition to completing a final report and giving a presentation to the STAC, all grant recipients must develop an outreach product (*e.g.*, newsletter article with photos) that provides an overview of the project for a general audience. All project reports, presentations, and other media presentation must include specific recognition of the funding provided by the BBP.
- The final report and the outreach products become the property of the BBP.
- The successful applicant(s) must be able to provide the appropriate evidence of liability insurance, and be able to indemnify and hold harmless the BBP and Ocean County College from all claims for proposed project activities.

### **Proposal Structure and Other Guidelines**

The proposal narrative has a 5-page limit and should include the following sections: (1) project title; (2) lead organization and project manager; (3) project description: including the problem, goals, approach(es), outcomes/benefits, and schedule; (4) project justification, including its relevance to Program priorities (see the CCMP and 2008-2011 Strategic Plan); and (5) project assessment, *i.e.*, a description of how the project's outcomes and/or benefits will be assessed. Maps and figures do not count against the 5-page limit.

In addition, all proposals must also include: (1) detailed budget (2-page limit), which identifies the requested amount and the match; and (2) a budget justification (1-page limit). A *curriculum vitae* for each project manager (2-page limit) should also be submitted.

A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required for any environmental data collection and/or data use projects, including modeling and secondary use of data. An EPA-approved QAPP is required before commencement of any environmental data collection and/or use. Data collection must also comply with all state requirements and standards to ensure data can be used by the state. EPA Guidance for the development of QAPPs for environmental monitoring projects can be found at the following link <http://www.epa.gov/region02/qa/documents.htm>. Development of the QAPP is an allowable cost; however, QAPP costs should generally be a minor component of the total budget.

Please contact Jim Vasslides ([jvasslides@ocean.edu](mailto:jvasslides@ocean.edu); 732-255-0472, x6) with any questions regarding the proposal guidelines or other issues.

### **Tentative Proposal Schedule**

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| May 26, 2010:  | LOIs must be submitted electronically to Jim Vasslides by 5:00 p.m.                                |
| May 28, 2010:  | Selection of LOIs for development of full proposals.   |
| June 25, 2010: | Submission of full proposals electronically to Jim Vasslides.                                      |
| July 27, 2010: | Presentation of proposals to STAC and AC for review; selection of proposals by Advisory Committee. |
| July 30, 2010: | Notification to applicants.  |

### **Who May Apply**

Proposals are welcome from organizations, government agencies, and individuals, including: academic institutions (colleges and universities), governmental or public agencies, private businesses, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations (501[c]3), and other individuals. All projects must identify a project leader (*i.e.*, Project Manager), whose qualifications (education, background, and experience) are a component in the evaluation process. Organizations and individuals may submit more than one proposal.

### **About the Barnegat Bay Partnership**

The National Estuary Program (NEP) was established in 1987 by Congress pursuant to Section 320 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1330) to promote comprehensive planning, conservation, and management of nationally significant estuaries threatened by pollution, development, or overuse, and to encourage the preparation of management plans for those estuaries. The Clean Waters and Estuaries Act (P.L. 106-457) amended Section 320 to provide for plan implementation.

The Barnegat Bay estuarine system was accepted into the NEP in 1996. A Management Conference was convened to develop the BBP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (see [www.bbnep.org/ccmp.html](http://www.bbnep.org/ccmp.html)), which was approved by the USEPA in 2002; the BBP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan was adopted in May 2008. The BBP is one of only 28 NEPs in the United States and Puerto Rico.