

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking public input on our proposal to create a new grant program using Federal funds. Particulars for this new grant programs may be found in the attached guidance: *"Program Guidance: A Watershed Approach to Wetland Conservation Planning."*

A. **Why Are We Making This Change?** This is new a grant program.

B. **Background.** The DNR is looking for a partner to collaborate on this statewide project, through a one-time grant award. The successful applicant will have an established track record of collaboration with the DNR in watershed and wetland conservation including:

- 1) cooperative watershed planning,
- 2) mutual sharing of data and methods for watershed and wetland conservation,
- 3) providing in-kind match on key projects, and
- 4) sharing strategies and goals to promote the health of watersheds and the communities they contain.

C. **Summary of Proposed Program Guidance.**

- 1) Eligible Organization
- 2) Grant Program Priorities
- 3) Source of Program Funds
- 4) Total Available Funding
- 5) Project Sponsor Responsibilities
- 6) Application Review
- 7) Grant Award and Grant Agreement
- 8) Reimbursement Process
- 9) Final Report Requirements

D. **Remaining Steps.** Once the 21-day comment period is complete, all comments will be considered, revisions will be made to this program guidance document as warranted, a Response Summary will be prepared, then both the Response Summary and Final Guidance will be made available using the existing DNR Program Guidance web page <http://dnr.wi.gov/news/input/guidance.html>.

Please forward your comments about this proposed policy no later than November 19, 2014, to:	Name:	Phone:
	Christina Isenring, Budget and Policy Coordinator	(608) 266-5285
	Email:	
	Christina.Isenring@wisconsin.gov	

Program Guidance -- A Watershed Approach to Wetland Conservation Planning



Grant Program Specifications

Introduction

The Wisconsin DNR (WDNR) is looking for a partner to collaborate on this statewide project through a one-time grant award. A successful partner will have an established track record of collaboration with the WDNR in watershed and wetland conservation including:

- 1) cooperative watershed planning,
- 2) mutual sharing of data and methods for watershed and wetland conservation,
- 3) providing in-kind match on key projects, and
- 4) sharing strategies and goals to promote the health of watersheds and the communities they contain.

The successful applicant must complete project work within 20 months of signing the grant agreement. The WDNR will negotiate specific budget items and eligible project costs with the successful applicant before developing the grant agreement.

The WDNR has obtained a Program Development Grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop and demonstrate both a comprehensive framework and specific GIS-based tools for wetland conservation planning using a watershed approach useful for both regulatory program improvements and voluntary restoration and protection as well as refine and verify the tools in three demonstration watersheds in Wisconsin.

Eligible Organization

Any entity registered with the Department of Financial Institutions or Wisconsin residents is eligible to apply. Due to the statewide nature of this project, applicants must be able to work anywhere in Wisconsin.

Grant Program Priorities

This grant program addresses two of EPA's Core Elements:

- EPA Core Element II, Regulatory Strategy Refinement Action c:
Develop a framework and GIS tools to incorporate a watershed approach into Advanced Watershed Planning for the Department's In-lieu Fee and compensatory mitigation programs.
- Core Element III Voluntary Restoration and Protection Action b:
Address the broader conservation community engaged in wetland voluntary conservation by providing a means of establishing watershed-based priorities through a transparent science-based set of assessment tools that can be applied to both existing wetlands and restoration opportunities.

Source of Program Funds

Funding for the project is from an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant, CFDA #66.461. The successful applicant will be responsible for meeting the administrative terms and programmatic conditions listed in the grant agreement (as specified in the grant application).

Total Available Funding

This is a one-time grant award and the maximum amount available to award is \$280,000.

Project Sponsor Responsibilities

A. Financial Responsibilities. The financial responsibility contained in the WDNR's grant agreement cannot be passed to another entity by a resolution or any other means. All reimbursement requests must be submitted by the sponsor named in the grant agreement on forms provided by WDNR.

B. Grant match. "Grant match" means that portion of the total project cost (no less than 19% in this case) that is not coming from a WDNR grant. Your grant match may consist of staff time, fringe benefits, indirect, and supplies and service costs for personnel directly working on the project. Funds from other Federal sources may not be used as grant match. Grant match is eligible if incurred on or after Oct. 1, 2014. You will be required to document your grant match on DNR Form 9300-230. Grant match must be documented with every reimbursement request submitted to WDNR.

Application Review

Proposals will be scored based on applicability to program priorities and detail included in the application by a team of WDNR staff. See Table 1 for Project Scoring Criteria. Projects will be ranked, in descending order, based on application score.

Table 1. Project Scoring Criteria

Topic		Possible Score
Project Priority		9 points maximum
More than Acceptable (7-9)	Organization meets acceptable qualifications and has demonstrated their commitment to collaborating on these projects with the WDNR.	
Acceptable (4-6)	Organization can describe why developing a wetland approach is a priority for them.	
Not Acceptable (1-3)	Organization	
Project Tasks		9 points maximum
More than Acceptable (7-9)	Organization has experience in all 4 and has an established record of completing these types of projects with WDNR.	
Acceptable (4-6)	Organization has experience in 3 of the 4.	
Not Acceptable (1-3)	Organization has experience in less than 3.	
Project Personnel		9 points maximum
More than Acceptable (7-9)	Organization meets the acceptable qualifications and has an established record of completing these types of projects with WDNR.	
Acceptable (4-6)	Organization can describe their ability to complete this work, they can describe their staff and qualifications, and they will not subcontract for a majority of the work.	
Not Acceptable (1-3)	Organization cannot describe their qualifications or the staff listed is not experienced in this work or the organization will subcontract for a majority of the work.	

Project Timeline		
More than Acceptable (7-9)	Organization meets the acceptable qualifications and has an established record of completing these types of projects with WDNR.	9 points maximum
Acceptable (4-6)	Organization can describe their ability to complete this work, they can describe their staff and qualifications, and they will not subcontract for a majority of the work.	
Not Acceptable (1-3)	Organization cannot describe their qualifications or the staff listed is not experienced in this work or the organization will subcontract for a majority of the work.	
Grant Match		9 points maximum
TOTAL MAXIMUM SCORE =		45 points

Grant Award and Grant Agreement

It is anticipated that successful applicants will have 20 months to complete this project.

Upon selection of your project, you will receive a notice of grant award and a grant agreement from the WDNR detailing the approved project scope, time period for the project, and budget.

Successful applicants must sign both copies of the grant agreement, keep one for their files, and return one to the following WDNR staff within 30 days of receipt:.

Christina Isenring (WT/3)
 Budget and Policy Coordinator
 101 So. Webster Street
 Madison, WI 53703
 Phone: (608) 266-5285
 E-mail: christina.isenring@wisconsin.gov

Important ! Costs incurred prior to the start date of the grant agreement or after the end date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

Reimbursement Process

This grant program is administered as a reimbursement program. This means you must incur and pay all costs associated with the project before seeking reimbursement from WDNR. No grant advances are possible.

It is possible for grantees to request partial reimbursements at quarterly intervals from the WDNR during the life of the project.

Reimbursement requests must be submitted using WDNR forms 8700-001 and 8700-002 and must include both proofs of purchase (examples of proof of purchase include invoices, receipts, or billing statements) and proofs of payment (example of proof of payment is copy of cancelled check [both sides] used to pay a vendor for supplies or services received). Send your reimbursement request(s) to the address below:

Christina Isenring (WT/3)
Budget and Policy Coordinator
101 So. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53703
Phone: (608) 266-5285
E-mail: christina.isenring@wisconsin.gov

The total of all partial reimbursements shall not exceed 90% of the total grant award. The last 10% of the project budget will be held by the WDNR for the final reimbursement payment.

The final reimbursement request must include a final report from the grantee.

Final Report Requirements

A final report must be submitted to the Budget and Policy Coordinator at the address above within 30 days of the end date of the grant agreement. Contents of the final report must include:

- Sponsor contact information (name, address, phone, e-mail, etc.)
- Findings
- Challenges to Overcome
- Suggestions for Future Work
- Financial Summary [starting budget minus expenditures, by line item as listed on the grant agreement (salary, fringe benefits, supplies & services, equipment)]

Application Instructions

There is no special WDNR application form. Interested parties must apply in writing, in narrative form. Applications will be scored based on the level of detail provided for each of the following sections.

Section I: Applicant Information

Applicant: Provide name and complete mailing address.

Authorized Representative: The authorized representative is the person named and authorized to act on behalf of the applicant as it relates to this project. The authorized representative will sign the application and all grant-related documents, submit reimbursement requests and grant match documentation, receive WDNR payments for the project on behalf of the applicant, and take necessary action to complete the proposed project. Provide name, complete mailing address, email address, and daytime phone number.

Project Contact Name: The contact person is the person the applicant designates to perform day-to-day management and coordination of the project. The contact person may or may not be the same person as the authorized representative. Provide name, complete mailing address, email address, and phone number.

Section II: Project Priority

Describe your organization's ability to develop a statewide watershed approach for wetland restoration and protection.

- Section III:
Project Tasks** Describe your organization's experience with the items below as they relate to watershed planning for wetland restoration and protection. Where applicable, describe past or ongoing projects in which your organization collaborated with the WDNR:
1. Adapting Wisconsin's Wetland Rapid Assessment Methodology (WRAM, v.2) for automation in GIS
 2. Validating GIS-WRAM rankings through comparison with the results of wetland assessments in the field, using WRAM v. 2.0
 3. Engaging stakeholders (local governments, the business community, residents, land trusts, academia, nonprofits, etc.)
 4. Producing GIS maps using ArcGIS software and following WDNR standards.
- Section IV:
Project
Personnel** Specifically list the staff that will be involved and their qualifications and what tasks will be subcontracted, if any, and the qualifications of subcontractors.
- Section V:
Project
Timeline** Describe your organization's ability to initiate and complete this project within a 20-month period, starting January of 2015.
- Section VI:
Grant Match** Describe the sources of grant match your organization will use for this project. Grant match may be provided beginning Oct. 1, 2014 and should be no less than 19% match for this project.

Application deadline: 4:00 pm on Wednesday, December 3, 2014.

Submit completed application and attachment to (electronic application only is permitted):

**Christina Isenring (WT/3)
Budget and Policy Coordinator
Bureau of Watershed Management
101 So. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53703
Phone: (608) 266-5285
E-mail: christina.isenring@wisconsin.gov**