Request for Proposals
Gulf of Mexico
Tidal Hydrology Restoration Projects
2013 - 2014

Sea Grant
Texas • Louisiana • Florida
Mississippi-Alabama

Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being released through a partnership between the NOAA Restoration Center and Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant College Programs. Successful projects will be for on-the-ground hydrological restoration that fits this definition: **"To remove or modify anthropogenic barriers to restore historic tidal estuarine and freshwater exchange to benefit coastal and marine fisheries habitat."** Principal Investigators are strongly encouraged to consult with a Sea Grant and/or NOAA Restoration Center staff member prior to submitting a proposal to be sure the project fits the tidal hydrology definition. A list of Sea Grant and NOAA Restoration Center staff contacts is provided on the last page of this RFP. Restoration sites must be located between Brownsville, Texas, and Key West, Florida. Projects will be viewed favorably if they have the following three elements:

- a strong benefit to marine and estuarine fisheries,
- demonstrated support by others via match and letters of support, and
- community-based participation and support.

Proposed budget cannot exceed a total request of $100,000, and match is required at the level of at least $1 of non-federal match per $1 requested. We expect three to four projects to be funded through this competition.

Full proposals must be received by 4 P.M. Central Time on Friday, August 17, 2012. No extensions.

Eligibility

Local governments, county governments, state governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, communities, homeowner associations and universities are eligible.

Timetable

The following list provides key milestones for this competition along with corresponding dates for each.

Full proposals due	August 17, 2012
Notification of funding decisions	October 26, 2012
Project initiation	January 4, 2013

Proposal Submission Guidance

Electronic mail submissions are preferred and should be addressed to Loretta Leist (loretta.leist@usm.edu). If an electronic mail submission is not possible, please contact Loretta Leist for guidance on submitting a hard-copy. Late submissions will not be considered in the selection process. The electronic submission should contain the five or six files described below.

All forms including the Hydro Restoration Project Summary Form, Hydro Restoration Title/Cover, Project Schedule, Hydro Restoration Budget (90-4) and Hydro Restoration Budget Justification and their instructions should be downloaded at: http://www.masgc.org/gulfhydrorestoration/rcrfp12.

What Must be Included in the Full Proposal

1. Hydro Restoration Project Summary Form (Microsoft Word)
2. Completed and unsigned copy of the cumulative Hydro Restoration Title/Cover form (Microsoft Word)
3. In a single file (Adobe PDF format)
   a. Signed Hydro Restoration Title/Cover form (signed by institutional authority)
   b. Project Narrative (up to ten pages)
      i. Rationale
      ii. Approach
         - Goals and objectives
         - Restoration project design and methods
         - Status of project
         - Monitoring plan
      iii. Expected Outcomes and Application of Results
      iv. Community Engagement and Outreach
         - Role and expertise of partners in this project
         - Community involvement
         - Outreach plan
   c. Literature Cited (no page limit)
   d. Curriculum Vitae (up to two pages per investigator)
   e. Letters of Support (no page limit)
   f. Maps (no page limit)
   g. Photos, if available (no page limit)
   h. Project Schedule Form
4. Hydro Restoration Budget Form, 90-4 (Microsoft Excel)
5. Hydro Restoration Budget Justification (Microsoft Excel)
6. Copy of permits that are already obtained (optional)

Description of Each Section of the Proposal

Hydro Restoration Project Summary Form (Microsoft Word)
Follow the instructions on the Hydro Restoration forms website. We suggest completing this form as the final step in writing the proposal to concisely summarize what is stated in the project narrative.

Hydro Restoration Title/Cover Form
Follow the instructions on the Hydro Restoration forms website. Submit one cumulative, non-signed, original Microsoft Word file of the Hydro Restoration Title/Cover form with all the investigators listed and their contact information. In addition, an original signed Hydro Restoration Title/Cover form should be post-marked no later than August 17, 2012 and mailed to:

Research Coordinator
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium
703 East Beach Drive
Ocean Springs, Microsoft 39564

Project Narrative (Maximum length, 10 pages)
Maximum length is 10 pages and single-spaced on 8.5” x 11” paper with one-inch margins. Times New Roman or an equivalent serif typeface with a 12-point or larger font should be used. Tables and figures are included in the page limit. Paginate the narrative with page numbers centered in the footer. No appendices are permitted.

Rationale
Describe how the project meets the partnership definition "to remove or modify anthropogenic barriers to restore historic tidal estuarine and freshwater exchange to benefit coastal and marine fisheries habitat."

Address both the scientific and technical rationale for the project and quantify from a practical standpoint why the issue is a high priority and why the conditions warrant restoration. Describe how the project benefits living marine and estuarine resources in and adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico and the significance of the habitat that will be positively impacted from the project. A strong proposal will demonstrate both the ecological and socioeconomic benefits of the project. The goals and objectives of the proposal should flow logically from this discussion.

Approach
Describe in detail the overall project design and include enough detail to demonstrate the technical qualities of the proposed approach so that the salient features can be quantitatively assessed by both the investigator and reviewers. The approach should include the following sub-sections:

Goals and Objectives All proposals should clearly state the goals of the project, followed by a numbered list of objectives. Be specific and brief. Proposals that state objectives in a way that is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) will fare best during the review process. Be realistic and do not list more objectives than can be accomplished.

Restoration Project Design and Methods Provide specific details on the methods, approaches and techniques that will be used to meet the stated objectives. Proposals should describe major aspects of the project and steps required to meet objectives. Include information about facilities, equipment, personnel, management, and interactions with other institutions or other resources that are directly applicable to the proposed project. Include the latitude and longitude to identify which location(s) will be modified.

Status of Project If permits and/or approvals are required for the proposed project please list all permits and/or approvals required and their status. If they are not yet obtained, provide an estimated date that you expect to obtain them and the contacts for the permitting agency(ies). Tabular format of all permits and their status is encouraged. You have the option of submitting copies of the permits if desired. Provide details about other federal or non-federal funding sources that are already allocated or encumbered for this restoration project (if applicable).

Successful proposals will be required to meet all applicable laws and federal requirements prior to project implementation. This includes the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

Monitoring Plan Include details on how impacts from the project will be measured (e.g. specific parameters and metrics) and if the infrastructure and support is in place for longer-term monitoring beyond the life of this funding. This partnership is developing a set of monitoring criteria for hydrological restoration projects. The names of the parameters in the criteria are available at (http://masgc.org/gulfhydrorestoration/monitor.htm) and this webpage will be updated by mid-July with more details. Principal Investigators are highly encouraged to incorporate the core parameters that align with the project goals and objectives. They are also encouraged to consider including optimal parameters, if appropriate. Principal Investigators are encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center or Sea Grant staff regarding monitoring plans prior to submitting proposals. Contacts for monitoring questions are provided on the last page of this RFP. Successful projects will work with NOAA Restoration Center staff, Sea Grant staff, and others to refine and implement a monitoring plan as needed.

Expected Outcomes and Application of Results
Outcomes and the application of the results are critical to the success of the restoration project. Under this section describe how the proposed work will provide local and/or regional benefits. Be as specific as possible.

1. An outcome comes out of or results from something; a visible or practical result, effect, or product. Describe the outcomes to be achieved during the project.
2. Describe the expected applied results of the project including the potential economic impact. Include the anticipated impact including number and type of acres positively affected and species affected and their status (e.g. threatened, endangered, commercially important).

Community Engagement and Outreach
Successful application of the project will depend on the inclusion of end-users, partners and in many cases co-sponsors. This section should identify the specific technical or lay interests (e.g., business, agency) that would participate in or contribute to the project. Also, describe their role in the project (e.g., matching funds, equipment, personnel). Proposals should explicitly identify any extramural co-sponsors and clearly describe their commitment to funding and participation and if match is confirmed or pending.

Describe the degree to which communities have been brought into the planning of the project; will be brought into the execution of the project; and will use the project for education and outreach. Identify how the project involves local landowners (public or private) that are located at the project site and that will be directly impacted by the restoration project. Provide details on volunteer opportunities through this project and how the opportunities will be coordinated.

Letters of support or commitment are highly recommended especially if the partner is providing match. Proposals that include letters of support from end-users are encouraged.

Literature Cited (no page limit)
Provide complete reference information. At a minimum the citation should include author, date, title, source and page number. Up-to-date citations are expected.

Curriculum Vitae (up to two pages per PI)
Provide one CV per investigator that includes evidence of the investigator's position, education, qualifications, and experience in the field. A strong CV will identify PI's success in implementing similar restoration projects.

Letters of Support (no page limit)
Strong proposals will include letters of support from potential end-user groups, partners and co-sponsors. The best examples of letters of support are those which include formal commitment from end-users of the proposed project. All letters should be included in your proposal submission packet and cannot be appended after submission.

Project Schedule Form
Projects should be completed within 24 months of the start date. Provide milestones in the project schedule form. Milestones are specific actions that will be undertaken to accomplish the objectives whereby progress toward the goals and/or outcomes is realized. Examples of milestones are obtaining permits, implementing on-the-ground restoration, coordinating volunteer activities, implementing the monitoring plan, and implementing specific outreach activities. Mark with an "X" the appropriate year(s) and month(s) expected for individual milestones identified for the proposed work.

Hydro Restoration Budget Form, 90-4 (Microsoft Excel)
A minimum of 1:1 non-federal match (cash or in-kind) is required and must be provided within the project period. Note that federal funds passed through a state agency or other non-federal entity are not eligible to be used as match. Complete one budget for each year of the project, and one cumulative budget page for the entire project. Sub-award recipients will need to complete a budget form for each year. Submit this as one Microsoft Excel Workbook with tabs labeled by year and sub-award recipient. Label each budget form where indicated to appropriately describe the budget year and sub-award recipient.

Hydro Restoration Budget Justification Form (Microsoft Excel)

Investigators must use the Hydro Restoration Budget Justification Form. Complete one overall Hydro Restoration Budget Justification form for each year of project and one cumulative Hydro Restoration Budget Justification form for all years of the project. Sub-award recipients will only need to complete a budget justification form for each year. Submit this as one Microsoft Excel Workbook with tabs labeled by year and sub-award recipient. Label each budget justification form with the budget year and sub-award recipient.

Review Process

External merit reviews and panelist reviews will be obtained for each proposal. All proposals will be evaluated using five criteria. A description of the criteria and the percent assigned to each is described below.

Rationale (15%)
Evaluate whether the proposed project adequately addresses the partnership definition "to remove or modify anthropogenic barriers to restore historic tidal estuarine and freshwater exchange to benefit coastal and marine fisheries habitat."

Approach (40%)
Assess whether the approach is technically sound and innovative; whether there are clear goals and objectives; if methods are appropriate; if permitting needs and timing expectations are appropriate; and whether the monitoring strategy to track success of project is appropriate to measure change in structure and function as a result of the restoration project. Consider the potential of the proposed project to attain stated goals and objectives in the timeframe provided.

Expected Outcomes and Application of Results (25%)
Evaluate the overall impact and anticipated outcomes of the completed project; extent of ecological and socioeconomic benefits to marine and estuarine fisheries in and adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico; and likelihood of long-term success with limited maintenance required. Assess whether project costs are accurately estimated and the cost benefit ratio is appropriate for the project.

Community Engagement and Outreach (15%)
Assess the degree to which communities have been brought into the planning of the project; will be brought into the execution of the project; and will use the project for education and outreach. Consider if the project incorporates support from local, state or federal agencies in real or in-kind funding that enhances the project. Evaluate the extent the project involves local landowners (public or private) that are located at the project site and those that will be directly impacted by the restoration project.

Investigator Qualifications (5%)
Assess the degree to which the applicant and identified collaborators possess the necessary education, training and/or experience to execute the proposed activity. If applicable and known, consider the investigator's record of productivity with previous funding.

Additional Items

If your proposal is selected for funding the following items may also be required.

1. Response to any significant review comments.
2. Letter of commitment from the institutions involved, if not provided in full proposal. Letters of commitment will be required for each sub-award recipient, co-sponsor(s) and unfunded collaborators identified within the proposal. Letters of commitment from sub-award recipients must be signed by the appropriate institutional authority.
3. Consent Form - Intellectual Property.
4. Form CD-512 or CD-511 (Certification regarding lobbying).
5. Standard Form 424B (Assurances – Non-Construction Programs).
6. Additional materials may be requested as needed in order to meet the NOAA partnership requirements.

Contacts

Submission Procedures	Loretta Leist, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium	loretta.leist@usm.edu 228-818-8835
Budget Preparation and other Fiscal Procedures	Devaney Cheramie, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium	devaney.cheramie@usm.edu 228-818-8839
Technical Questions	Steve Sempier, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium Meg Goecker, NOAA Restoration Center	stephen.sempier@usm.edu 228-818-8830 meg.goecker@noaa.gov 251-861-2141 ext7509
Monitoring Plan Questions	Meg Goecker, NOAA Restoration Center Steve Sempier, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium Jamie Schubert, NOAA Restoration Center	meg.goecker@noaa.gov 251-861-2141 ext7509 stephen.sempier@usm.edu 228-818-8830 jamie.schubert@noaa.gov 409-621-1248
Texas Projects	Granvil Treece, Texas Sea Grant Jamie Schubert, NOAA Restoration Center	g-treece@neo.tamu.edu 979-845-7527 jamie.schubert@noaa.gov 409-621-1248
Louisiana Projects	Maurice Wolcott, Louisiana Sea Grant Mel Landry, NOAA Restoration Center	mwolcott@agcenter.lsu.edu 225-578-8291 mel.landry@noaa.gov 225-578-7667
Mississippi and Alabama Projects	Chris Boyd, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium Meg Goecker, NOAA Restoration Center	cboyd@ext.msstate.edu 228-546-1025 meg.goecker@noaa.gov 251-861-2141 ext. 7509
Florida Panhandle Projects	Chris Verlinde, Florida Sea Grant Meg Goecker, NOAA Restoration Center	chrismv@ufl.edu 850-623-3868 meg.goecker@noaa.gov 251-861-2141 ext. 7509
Southwest Florida Projects	John Stevely, Florida Sea Grant Marti McGuire, NOAA Restoration Center	jsmarine@ufl.edu 941-722-4524 marti.mcguire@noaa.gov 727-551-5785