**Request for Proposals

*NORTH ATLANTIC***

***LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE***

***PRIORITY SCIENCE PROGRAM***

 **The North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for grants under the 2012 NALCC Priority Science Program.**

**Please Read This Entire RFP, Including the Frequently-Asked-Questions Section, Before Submitting An Application for NALCC Grant Funds.**

**The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) Coordinates and Administers the NALCC Priority Science Program on Behalf of the NALCC.**

**Background:**

The Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a coordinated network of landscape conservation cooperatives to provide the science necessary to undertake strategic conservation efforts across large geographic areas, in part to address major environmental and human-related factors that limit fish and wildlife populations at the broadest of scales.

To protect the natural and cultural resources of the Northeast, natural resource managers and partners have formed the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC). The North Atlantic LCC partnership includes: States, Tribes, Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other species specific partnerships like migratory bird joint ventures and fish habitat partnerships.

The North Atlantic LCC partners work together to identify common science needs, shared scientific capacity and information and coordinate natural resource conservation actions across the region. The objective of the NALCC Priority Science Program is to address landscape-scale conservation issues by combining resources, leveraging funds, and prioritizing conservation actions identified by the best available science.

#  2012 NALCC PRIORITY SCIENCE NEEDS

**NALCC Topic 4:**  ***Evaluation of restoration methods that allow salt marshes to adapt to sea-level rise***

**Background**: Salt marshes and associated habitats form critical, productive coastal systems along the coast of the North Atlantic LCC. These salt marsh systems have long been threatened by filling, ditching for mosquito control, encroachment by adjacent development and other stressors. They are now and will increasingly be threatened by sea level rise, increased storminess and other climate change related impacts. There are a variety of standard and newly developed salt marsh restoration techniques that can be applied to increase resilience to climate change stressors such as accelerated sea level rise. Because climate-adapted restoration is a relatively new concept, these restoration techniques have yet to be evaluated in field demonstrations for actual resilience conferred or calibrated in a meaningful way to different starting points (e.g. different "marsh capital" levels, tidal ranges, salinities, nutrient inputs) commonly found in salt marshes along the North Atlantic coast. In order for restoration to be successful in the long term, project designs need to plan for future accelerated sea level rise and a range of other climate-induced changes. Determining adjustments required to quantifiably increase marsh resilience given different starting conditions will greatly benefit practitioners and resource managers in raising the quality and longevity of our coastal salt marshes. Partnering with existing or proposed restoration efforts would provide an opportunity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate techniques that increase a salt marsh’s resilience to climate change stressors. The field demonstration would be for a restoration technique that is already part of a management portfolio (e.g. removing tidal restrictions, adding sediment to a degrading marsh surface, restoring tidal channel hydrology) and the choice of technique would depend on the opportunity to collaborate with a partner project, as well as the transferability of the proposed experimental methods. While field implementation is the optimal test, proposals that combine detailed modeling with mesocosm hypothesis testing constitute acceptable submissions for funding consideration.

**Potential Project Outcomes:** This project will result in specific quantifiable recommendations on how salt marsh restoration technique(s)can be implemented to increase resilience to climate change stressors. These specific recommendations will be based on monitoring and evaluating the implementation of in-the-field restoration projects or modeling and mesocosm hypothesis testing. Addressing the science need could include the following components:

1. A research framework for evaluating salt marsh restoration techniques under different salt marsh state conditions (such as tidal range, status of marsh capital etc.);
	1. For a chosen technique, the successful project will create an experimental design and monitoring protocol to evaluate specific variations on appropriate restoration technique(s) that will improve marsh resilience to climate change stressors (such as, but not limited to, sea level rise);
2. Implementation criteria for a specific restoration technique.
	1. What are the best practices for project design within that technique, considering a range of state conditions?
3. Quantitative evaluation of changes to ecosystem health as a result of implementing each design and projected climate and sea level conditions; this may be compatible with one of the variety of marsh condition assessment techniques that would be broadly applicable (e.g. Salt Marsh Integrity (SMI) score, Recovery Potential Indicators, habitat suitability for representative salt marsh species) although other appropriate and easily implemented assessment measures will be considered.

Recommendations from this project will be in the form of a final report no later than three years after the initiation of the project. Proposals that include the ability to continue monitoring beyond the initial three-year period using matching funds are preferred.

Technical Coordinator responsible for project oversight and for more information contact:

Scott Schwenk

Science Coordinator

North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative

413-253-8647

William\_Schwenk@fws.gov

<http://northatlanticlcc.org/>

**Proposal Deadline:** **XXXXXXX, 2012**.  Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.  The complete program funding schedule is available at <http://northatlanticlcc.org/>

**Funding:** Proposals for the 2012 funding cycle for the NALCC Priority Science Program are now being solicited.  The total amount of funding available for new projects within this NALCC Priority Science Program RFP is estimated at a maximum of $175,000. Funding for approved projects will be available no earlier than December 1, 2012.

**Submission Procedures:** Please read carefully and follow all of the guidance listed in the “Instructions on Submittal of Proposals” included herein. Instructions are also available at [www.NALCCgrants.org](http://www.RCNgrants.org).

**Instructions on Submittal of Proposals:**

Please read these instructions carefully as well as all of the information provided above.

1. Proposals must be submitted as email attachments in MS Word to wmisw@together.net no later than XXXXXX, 2012 at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.
2. The proposal is limited to a total of 6 pages:
* Page 1 is a single cover page with contact information (see details in section #3 below) and a concise description of the proposed project.
* Pages 2-5 are four pages of text about the proposed project, including budget (see details in section #4, #5 and #6 below).
* Page 6 is a single page outlining the qualifications of the individuals and organizations involved.
1. The cover page should provide the following information:
* Title of Project
* Name of Project Director and Job Title
* Name of Institution
* Email Address
* Physical Mailing Address
* Telephone and Fax Numbers
* Other Principal Investigators Involved (name, title, institution, email address)
* NALCC Funds Requested
* A Concise Description of the Proposed Project. The description should not exceed 250 words and include primary objectives, a brief summary of methods, expected outcomes and a timeline. **THIS ABSTRACT WILL BE WIDELY DISTRIBUTED SO PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED ON CONTENT CAREFULLY.**
1. Four pages of explanatory text are the principal component of the proposal and should be written as clearly and concisely as possible, address the following questions, and provide the following information (note that tables, graphs and photos can be included in the proposal but they must be contained within the four pages of text):
	1. In what area(s) or state(s) will your project be conducted?
	2. What is the start date of the project and the projected end date.
	3. What is the goal of your project and what major objectives or tasks will you undertake to achieve that goal?
	4. What are the methods by which you propose to carry out your work?
	5. What measurable products or outcomes will result from your project?
	6. What is the proposed total budget of your project? Separate the budget into the following categories: Personnel Service, Fringe Benefits, Indirect Overhead, Supplies and Materials, Travel, Contractual Service, and In-kind Services. Clearly indicate which activities will be supported by NALCC grant funds and which will be supported by other funds. For any matching funds or contributed partner funds committed to the project, specify whether those funds are direct or indirect and clearly designate the source of the funds.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**How does the grant proposal process work?**

The NALCC Executive Committee annually establishes priority sciences needs within the NALCC region. Proposals are solicited for projects that deliver science products that contribute to the understanding of, resolution of, or advancement of conservation actions addressing highest priority conservation needs.

**Who developed the Priority Project Topics?**

Priority science needs were developed by federal, state and NGO scientists within NALCC Technical Committees

**Who may apply?**

Eligible applicants include individuals, non-governmental organizations, state and federal agency employees, members of academia, and for-profit corporations.

**What is the schedule of review and approval of proposals?**

Proposals are due by XXXXX 2012. Proposals will be reviewed by WMI for clarity and completeness. WMI may contact applicants for clarification or to allow for amendments to remove disqualifying elements. Eligible applications will be forwarded to Technical Review Committees by XXXXX. Highest ranking proposals will be submitted by Technical Committee to the NALCC Steering Committee. Funding decisions will be made by the NALCC Steering Committee at their fall meeting and funds will be available in early January.

**How will proposals and proposals be graded?**

Funding priority will be placed upon projects that are feasible and practical in a 2 year time period, with an additional 2-3 years of monitoring, are designed to address priority topics, and that leverage other sources of matching funds. Funds cannot be used to support political lobbying or capacity building of organizations.

**What is the source of funding for NALCC grants?**

The source of funding for NALCC grants is from federal funds apportioned to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Are matching funds required?**

No, but matching funds are encouraged. In-kind match is allowed.

**How will I receive payments?**

The NALCC Grants Program is a reimbursement program. Applicants must be prepared to fully fund their projects in the first instance and submit payment requests to WMI for reimbursement. Grant recipients will be required to enter into a service contract with WMI in order to receive payment. Payment requests may be submitted to WMI on a quarterly basis. No advance payments will be provided. WMI will retain 20% of the grant amount pending receipt of all contract deliverables. Upon the NALCC’s approval of said deliverables, the final 20% retainage will be released to the grantee.

**Where should proposals be submitted?**

Proposals should be emailed in MS Word format to wmisw@together.net

**Can a single organization submit multiple proposals?**

Yes, single organizations can submit multiple proposals within one priority topic area, or may submit proposals to more than one priority topic area.

**Are partnerships encouraged?**

Yes, partnerships in funding and/or delivery of project products are encouraged.

**What are some applicant responsibilities?**

Grantees must meet federal eligibility requirements under this grant program. All funds awarded through this RFP are contingent upon the applicant meeting all federal permitting requirements. The NALCC reserves the right to reallocate grant awards in the event that the project applicant cannot meet the federal or state grant and/or permitting requirements. Applicants are encouraged to contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for technical assistance on projects that may impact federally listed species. Applicants selected to receive a grant may also have their proposed budgets revised pending federal review of eligibility of costs and matching funds. It is the applicant’s responsibility to investigate the permits that may be required to carry out their proposal, and obtain all applicable federal or state permits.

**What are eligible costs?**

Grant reimbursement payments will be based on actual expenditures incurred by the grantee that are necessary and reasonable to the accomplishment of the work. Grantees will be required to provide documentation of project-related costs, including submission of copies of invoices and cancelled checks, with each payment request. Applicant budgets may include billable expenses related to the project in the following categories:

* + - Personal services: includes salary of project staff employed by the applicant organization.
		- Fringe Benefits: The fringe benefits such as health care and retirement provided to permanent employees of the applicant organization. State employees must use the approved federal rates for their agency. Fringe benefits are normally calculated as a percentage of an employee’s salary.
		- Indirect/Overhead: The costs of maintaining the offices for project personnel such as utilities, support services, rent, etc. This is normally calculated as a percentage added to the salary and fringe benefits of an employee.
		- Travel and Equipment Usage: Vehicle mileage at the federal rate, fuel costs, commercial carrier costs, and other similar expenses. Equipment usage covers the equivalent cost of the use of equipment such as tractors, brush clearing equipment, research vessels, etc.
		- Supplies and Materials: Office supplies, consumable field gear such as flagging tape and stakes, non-retrievable animal tags, nets, software, etc.
		- Contractual Services: If you are a not-for-profit organization and you subcontract out for services such as data entry or laboratory analysis, you must be able to provide proof that those costs are necessary and reasonable to the accomplishment of the work.

**What are some ineligible costs?**

Costs related to the preparation of this application or any other costs incurred prior to notification from the NALCC acknowledging final approval of the grant award, are NOT eligible for reimbursement and cannot be used as match. Costs related to land acquisition, purchase of development rights, and purchases of easements are not eligible for reimbursement under this program. These costs are not eligible as matching costs, either. Generally speaking, education and law enforcement activities are not eligible for funding or match under this program.

**How will applications be evaluated?**

All applications received by the due date will be reviewed by WMI for completeness and eligibility. All projects that are deemed complete and eligible by WMI will be forwarded to the NALCC science staff who will coordinate evaluation by NALCC Technical Review Teams based using the General Scoring Criteria provided below.

**How will my proposal be scored?**

NALCC proposals will be graded according to the degree that the proposal meets the following criteria:

1. Does project address the desired products described in the NALCC?
2. Are project objectives/goals clearly defined, measurable, and connected to specific milestones/deliverables and timelines?
3. Will/can proposed methods accomplish/produce the project’s objectives/goals, deliverables, and timelines?
4. Does project have major, public opposition or require permits that are difficult or impossible to obtain?

**How will I be notified of an award?**

Applications that score high enough to be selected to receive an award will receive written notification from WMI.

**When may I start work?**

You may begin work once federal compliance is met, and you have received written notification from WMI of your final grant award. However, WMI advises grantees NOT to begin work until all required and necessary permits are obtained for the activities identified in their project proposal. Please note that grantees may not request or receive any reimbursement payments prior to completion of federal compliance.

 **For More Information, Contact:**

**Andrew Milliken**

**North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Coordinator**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**300 Westgate Center Drive**

**Hadley, MA 01035**

**phone 413-253-8269**

**fax 413-253-8424**

**cell (on travel only) 413-835-5538**

**andrew\_milliken@fws.gov**

[**http://www.northatlanticlcc.org**](http://www.northatlanticlcc.org/)