

N8

FY21 (Year 20)
EPA / Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO PREPARE REVISED
COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program (PRP) invites interested parties to submit written proposals to revise the Program's Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). This funding opportunity is made through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The PRP program is authorized by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended under Section 121 of the Estuaries and Clean Waters Act of 2000, and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Act of 2000, 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 1500, AND 40 CFR 33. The program is codified under CFDA Number 66.125. Proposals are solicited in accordance with the terms, conditions, and instructions set forth in this Request for Proposals (RFP).

ANNOUNCEMENT DATE:	December 1, 2022
PROPOSAL FORMAT:	All Proposals Must Be Complete, concise, and aligned with EPA Strategic Plan, placed in electronic format, i.e., Adobe Acrobat PDF and signed. Supporting budgets, maps, graphs and/or pictures must also be included.
DELIVERY FORMAT:	Email Proposals to PRPgrant@unofoundation.org
RECEIPT DEADLINE:	Friday, January 20, 2023 (Late Proposals Will Not Be Accepted)
PLEASE DIRECT INQUIRIES TO:	Blair Bourgeois (504) 280-1044 PRPgrant@unofoundation.org

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM / PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program is to reduce pollution and to restore the ecological health of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin and its habitats by developing and funding restoration projects and related scientific and public education projects. Workplans must describe how they align with the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 5 (Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities) and Objective 5.2 (Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds).

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration's current Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) was developed in 1995. It requires major changes in the form of a revision to reflect current stakeholder priorities and provide a long-term framework for action in the watershed. The subawardee will develop a workplan to produce a revised CCMP. The CCMP does not need to follow a specific format so long as it meets the content checklist of the CCMP Revision Guidelines (see Appendix 1). The Management Conference must formally review and recommend EPA approval of the final CCMP after a period of public review. Finally, the Management Conference must submit the final CCMP to EPA Region 6 for approval. To ascertain the scope of necessary revisions, EPA Region 6 has performed a preliminary evaluation of the 1995 CCMP and provided comments (see Appendix 2). The projected date of CCMP completion is Summer 2025.

The National Estuary Program (NEP) has a robust set of resources available to help navigate through the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan revision process. The subawardee may review the latest CCMP resources, including examples of approved CCMPs, on the NEP website (<https://www.epa.gov/nep>).

PRE-AWARD PROCESS

EPA Region 6 serves as the federal oversight agency for the PRP grant program. The University of New Orleans Research and Technology Foundation, Inc. (UNORTF) will serve as the grant recipient and *Pass-Through Entity*. The initial proposals will be received and reviewed by UNORTF based on the criteria listed below, after which, a risk assessment will be made of those submitting proposals based on past grant management performance. After UNORTF's initial review, the Executive Committee of the PRP Management Conference will review the proposals, rate the proposals, and recommend which proposal best satisfies the CCMP Revision Guidelines. The selected participant will be notified by UNORTF, and a subaward agreement will be prepared.

SCORING CRITERIA

Criterion	Description
1) Project Need (20 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant demonstrates the need for the revision of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). The applicant should review the current CCMP based on the content checklist of the CCMP Revision Guidelines (see Appendix 1 of the RFP), be able to discuss needed improvements and updates based the Clean Water Act Section 320 National Estuary Program CCMP Guidelines (2016), and the State's Coastal Management Plan. Revisions to the CCMP should be aligned with the purpose of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program under the Clean Water Act Section 121 which is to restore the ecological health of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin and its habitats.
2) Project Tasks (15 Points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they outline project tasks for revising the PRP CCMP revision. This includes a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products and the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task.
3) Milestones and Schedule (10 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they provide a clearly articulated milestone schedule to produce an approvable CCMP. The milestones shall reflect specific tasks described in the workplan.
4) Budget Table and Narrative (5 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable including whether: the applicant identified the requested funds and the total project cost for each component/task for each budget item; the applicant explained how non-federal partners will provide cost share/match and demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs.
5) Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes and Tracking (20 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate environmental outputs and outcomes based on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Results – the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and links to the EPA’s Strategic Plan Goal 5 and Objectives 5.2 (10 points). 2. Tracking – The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. (10 Points)

<p>7) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/Qualifications (12 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s ability to successfully manage and complete the CCMP revision considering their:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to complete the CCMP revision by Summer 2025. 2. Organizational and programmatic experience related to the proposed project, its infrastructure, readiness, and ability to implement the proposed project in a successful and within the approved deadline. Ability to bring together meetings with all the stakeholders involved. Follow the approved scope of work and communicate quickly with UNORTF on any issues. Submit deliverables to grantee on time and on budget. (6 points) 3. Superior qualification and experience, staff management experience and knowledge, meet logistic and resource demand, or ability to obtain them with haste. Successfully achieve the goals and meet the approved milestones of the project. (6 points)
<p>8) Partnerships (8 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant has demonstrated appropriate and necessary partnerships. The entity will be expected to work collaboratively with the PRP Management Conference and UNORTF on a regular basis during this project. Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects under this announcement. The complexity of developing a CCMP requires various levels of government and non-government stakeholders (e.g., community residents, universities, nonprofit organizations, etc.) to work together.</p>
<p>9) Past Performance (10 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their past performance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe whether, and how, the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage those agreements. (4 points) 2. Describe the applicant’s history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. (2 points) 3. Describe the extent and quality to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not. (2 points)
<p>SUBTOTAL (QUESTIONS 1-8)</p>	
<p>10) Disadvantaged Communities and Climate Change - Bonus Points (10 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they outline project tasks with climate change/resilience/sustainability and investments that can benefit underserved communities while implementing CCMPs.</p>
<p>TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE: 110</p>	

FINAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

EPA will make a final review and analysis of proposals for the CCMP. After final approval is received from EPA, UNORTF will prepare a subaward agreement for execution by the authorized officials. Project work may only begin after a Subaward Agreement has been fully executed.

APPENDIX 1

Content Checklist – Essential Components of a Revised CCMP (major changes)

The revised CCMP should:

1. _____ Identify clearly if there are any changes between the existing and draft CCMP so that reviewers and the public can easily determine what has changed and why. These changes include program priorities and goals; any new information that suggests more promising approaches or currently unaddressed issues, etc.
2. _____ Describe how the Program has contributed to or supported activities that helped develop new information, if applicable, when highlighting major changes due to new information. Major changes could be informed by the latest Status and Trends or SOB and SOE Reports, Indicator Reports, and associated monitoring programs where adequate monitoring data are available. This is where a discussion of the Program's broad, risk-based climate changes vulnerability assessments, other climate-related work, and/or adaption strategies should appear.
3. _____ Include a map of the study area. If there are any boundary changes, provide the reasons for those changes. Any study area boundary changes should be based on sound science with the support and approval of the Management Conference in a transparent and open process.
4. _____ Describe the Program's Management Conference and membership with any proposed changes and explain how the structure will support the Program's ability to oversee and promote CCMP implementation. This would include a discussion about the Program's approach to achieving financial sustainability and for involving the public and stakeholders in its programs.
5. _____ Discuss changes to existing CCMP action plans, and new action plans, including their relationship to previously stated goals and priority problems; the probably causes and sources they address; and measurable objectives, where appropriate, to attain the goal.
6. _____ Each CCMP Actions must identify the key activities expected to be implemented to address the priority problem.

Note: It would be very helpful to include a table comparing the old completed or deemed obsolete actions, and new, revised, or on-going actions in the CCMP. This could appear upfront in the document, or within each chapter. A crosswalk from previous action to current action and a description of change should be included as a chart in the document.

7. _____ CCMP Actions encompass environmental goals, metrics, and milestones that the Program strives to achieve over time as implemented through annual workplans. They need to be clear, understandable, and plainly link to CWA §121. They should:
 - a. Describe each action and what is proposed
 - b. Identify proposed action plan responsibilities, including affected habitat types, or resource(s) if appropriate; some activities may take place system-wide or involve policy changes rather than on-the-ground projects;
 - c. Identify proposed action plan responsibilities, including likely lead parties, along with any implementing partners;
 - d. Include a timeframe, and where appropriate, key milestones for completion (or indicate on-going);
 - e. Estimate the range of potential costs of the overall action and identify the possible sources of funding; and
 - f. Include performance measures (quantitative measures and intended environmental results wherever possible).
8. _____ Discuss CCMP Actions eligible for CWA §121 funding. CCMP Actions not funded by CWA §121 should also be clearly identified along with the other potential funding source.
9. _____ Discuss the relevance and applicability of the: 1) monitoring; 2) habitat; 3) finance; and 4) outreach component strategies, including any needed substantive changes. If such changes are not discussed in the revised CCMP as a chapter, they should be described in a separate document and completed within 3 years of the final Revised CCMP.

- a. Include a Monitoring Plan to track and detect changes and/or improvements within the study area (so change in environmental indicators can be detected over time), and effectiveness of CCMP Actions. This can be described in a separate document, or chapter in the CCMP. The Monitoring Plan should identify: i) objectives; ii) data the Program and partners are collecting for which parameters/indicators; iii) the party/parties responsible for collecting the data; iv) frequency of collecting and reporting the monitoring data; v) how the data are shared, reported, and used; vi) data gaps; and vii) additional funding needed for monitoring activities and filling data gaps. This section should explain how monitoring has/will change as a result of new/modified actions and priorities, and any new environmental indicators. Monitoring should be tied to the State of the Basin Report produced every three to five years and has similar components.

Note: A Quality Management Plan or Quality Assurance Project Plan can supplement the Monitoring Plan but does not in and of itself meet this requirement.

- b. Include a Finance strategy that will establish long-term financial sustainability to implement the CCMP through diverse resources and partners. The strategy can be a separate document or chapter in the CCMP. The strategy should discuss: i) priorities for

funding; ii) current funding and other support such as staff assignments, or in-kind partnering; iii) short- and long-term resource needs; and iv) proposed actions or strategies to maintain or garner new resources for CCMP implementation and their timeframe.

- c. Include a Habitat Protection/Restoration strategy. The strategy should clearly tie back to habitat or ecosystem issues addressed in the CCMP, including those habitats and species prioritized for protection and or restoration efforts. Strategies can be addressed in a separate document or a chapter in the CCMP and should discuss: i) relevant habitat types and key species in the study area; ii) goals and measurable objectives to address them; and iii) actions that reflect a climate change vulnerability assessment.
 - d. Include a Communication/Outreach strategy to ensure community involvement and ownership in CCMP implementation that can be represented as a stand-alone document, chapter, or a series of actions in the CCMP that includes: i) guiding principles, or goals and objectives; ii) a target audience(s); iii) a narrative description of activities, including any tool used such as branding and messaging, behavior change campaigns, or social media; iv) implementers for those activities; v) any key deliverables; and vi) a budget and timeframe for implementing the activities.
10. Include a public review process that extends beyond the Management Conference members and ensures robust stakeholder participation. Responses to comments should be summarized and be made publicly available. A 60-day comment period should be employed when revising a CCMP.

APPENDIX 2

EPA Comments:

1. The Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) should be revised to reflect the current priorities, goals, objectives, and actions developed by a broad-based group of stakeholders. The revised CCMP should be available to the public for review and comment. It should include a wide range of issues that encompasses the needs to restore and protect the watershed that will result in water quality, human health, and habitat improvements. Specifically, the CCMP should contain goals and objectives, provides a long-term framework for action, and includes metrics that can be used to measure progress towards goals and objectives. The plan should also include strategies to: monitor progress, finance CCMP implementation, engage in habitat protection and restoration, and communicate with stakeholders.
2. The most up-to-date technical basin analysis was performed in 2002 and captured in the 2006 Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan (CHMP). The EPA recommends conducting a new technical analysis that utilizes up-to-date monitoring data, technical papers, and other information to evaluate the state of the basin and priority issues to inform future planning and decision making and develop a CCMP.
3. Revisions to the original Monitoring Plan: The Monitoring Plan should identify a) objectives; b) data the Program and partners are collecting for which parameters/indicators; c) the party/parties responsible for collecting the data; d) frequency of collecting and reporting the monitoring data; e) how the data are shared, reported, and used; f) data gaps; and g) additional

funding needed for monitoring activities and filling data gaps. The Monitoring Plan should explain how monitoring has/will change as a result of new/modified actions and priorities, and any new environmental indicators. EPA notes that the 1995 CCMP identifies a) objectives, b) data for parameters/indicators and c) the parties responsible for collecting the data (see: CCMP Phase II - Action Agenda Items; MP Phase III). The 1995 CMP and 2006 CHMP also identifies f) data gaps (see: CCMP Phase II - Sub Committee Reports; 2006 CHMP). The 1995 CCMP and 2006 CHMP do not address e) how the data are shared, reported, and used. Although the CCMP and CHMP provide a list of projects to address restoration recommendations, g) additional funding needed for monitoring activities and filling data gaps, is not addressed.

4. Revisions to original Finance Plan: The Finance Strategy should discuss a) priorities for funding; b) current funding and other support such as staff assignments, or in-kind partnering; c) short- and long-term resource needs; and d) proposed actions or strategies to maintain or garner new resources for CCMP implementation and their timeframe. The CCMP should provide a list of updated projects recommended for funding based on the current priorities and actions developed by a broad-based group of stakeholders.
5. Revisions to original Education/Outreach and Public Involvement Strategies (see: pgs. 33 - 39 CCMP Phase II - Action Agenda Items; pgs. 7 - 34 CCMP Phase II - Sub Committee Reports): The Education/Outreach and Public Involvement Strategies should discuss a) guiding principles, or goals and objectives; b) a target audience(s); c) a narrative description of activities, including any tool used such as branding and messaging, behavior change campaigns, or social media; d) implementers for those activities; e) any key deliverables; and f) a budget and timeframe for implementing the activities. After reviewing the Education/Outreach and Public Involvement Strategies included the 1995 CCMP, the plan does not include e) key deliverables, and f) a budget and timeframe for implementation.
6. Revisions to original Habitat Protection/Restoration Plan should reflect the results of and planned responses to a broad, risk-based vulnerability assessment. The 2006 Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan (CHMP) should serve as the basis for an updated habitat protection/restoration plan.

According to EPA's guidance on Habitat Protection/Restoration Plans, the plan should discuss a) relevant habitat types and key species in the study area; b) goals and measurable objectives to address them; and c) actions that reflect a climate change vulnerability assessment. The 2006 CHMP discusses a) relevant habitat types and key species and b) goals and objectives. Recommended actions are discussed which reflect the ecological needs of the basin to preserve and restore natural habitats to baseline conditions. It is not clear if a climate change vulnerability assessment was conducted or considered when making these recommendations.

7. New priorities, goals, and objectives: The 1995 CCMP should be reviewed, and a new technical analysis should be conducted to inform new priorities, goals, and objectives. The new action plans should indicate:
 - Whether they replace or enhance former plans
 - Entities that will serve as lead implementers
 - A timeline and milestones for completion
 - Where the action will take place or resource affected
 - Potential costs
 - Performance measures (quantitative/environmental results whenever possible)

8. A cross walk description of how all new actions/updated actions compare with related original actions and what the basis was for change. Discussion of what was accomplished under the previous CCMP, what challenges remain, and why the new CCMP is better to address those challenges, including sufficient information to credibly track improvement and make necessary changes.