



## Request for Pre-Proposals 2009

### *Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Fish Populations*



The Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) invites three-page electronic pre-proposals for Great Lakes fisheries projects under its **Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Fish Populations** funding category. Pre-proposals must be submitted electronically on or before Monday, January 26, 2009, at 5:01 p.m. This RFP process will be used for the disbursement of up to \$2.4 million in grants in 2009.

#### **MISSION**

The mission of the GLFT is to provide funding to enhance, protect, and rehabilitate Great Lakes fishery resources to compensate for lost use and enjoyment caused by the operation of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant. Funding priorities in 2009 continue to reflect the GLFT strategic plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2005. A copy of the strategic plan is available at:

<http://www.glft.org/resourcelibrary/attachments/PROJECTS-13WebFileStrategicPlanExecSumm2005.pdf>

#### **FUNDING PRIORITIES**

The GLFT will

1. Provide funding for projects that have direct fisheries management implications (e.g., applied research or development/enhancement of management tools);
2. Support basic research<sup>1</sup> only when there is a clear consensus that such efforts are essential to address a critical issue facing fishery managers; and
3. Encourage collaborative projects among researchers and between management organizations to address high-priority issues.

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<sup>1</sup> **Basic research** is work, of an exploratory nature, conducted in order to acquire knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts *without any obvious practical application in view*.

## GOALS

The goal of this RFP is to develop knowledge and management capability through targeted and adaptive management research; to increase predictability and sustainability of the Great Lakes fisheries; and to promote the understanding of ecosystem health. Proposals within these areas of study should be focused on activities that apply science, technology, and policy to promote sustainable fish populations, and prevent the introduction and/or control the abundance and distribution of invasive species.

## THEMES

While the goals stated above represent a wide range of potential research activities, the research themes listed below are provided to assist in the preparation of pre-proposals.

- Research and related management activities consistent with the goals in the Lake Michigan Committee identified in the following documents:
  - Lake Michigan Fish-Community Objectives, available online at [http://www.glf.org/pubs/SpecialPubs/Sp95\\_3.pdf](http://www.glf.org/pubs/SpecialPubs/Sp95_3.pdf)
  - Environmental Objectives for Lake Michigan, available online at <http://www.glf.org/lakecom/lmc/lmenvironobj.pdf>
  - A Guide for the Rehabilitation of Lake Trout in Lake Michigan, available online at <http://www.glf.org/pubs/SpecialPubs/2008-01.pdf>
- Innovative research into effective means to prevent the introduction of invasive species in the Great Lakes or to limit the range and/or abundance of invasive species already present in the Great Lakes
- Research that models critical ecosystem components essential to sustainable population management of the Great Lakes fish species (e.g., lake sturgeon, lake trout, salmonids, forage species)
- Research and analysis that documents the contribution (economic, environmental, and/or social) of various elements of the fishery
- Research and analysis that addresses the mechanistic effects of *Diporeia* declines in the Great Lakes

### ***Specific Focus Areas***

Applicants are encouraged to focus on four areas: fish health, fish recruitment, lake sturgeon, and outreach.

#### ■ **Fish Health**

- Projects that focus on fish **diseases** that affect the growth, survival, reproduction, or use of a Great Lakes fish species (e.g., identification of potential triggers, factors influencing rates of infection and mortality, transmission mechanisms, potential controls, etc.)

***OR***

- Projects that focus on the **diet** of a Great Lakes fish species and how changes in food supply organisms may be significantly affecting the growth, survival, or reproduction of a fish population (e.g., *Diporeia*)

## ■ **Fish Recruitment**

Projects that describe and clarify mechanisms—such as abiotic conditions, predation, competition, fish health, or food-web disruption—which control the reproduction and recruitment of Great Lakes fish species. While meritorious proposals will be considered for any Great Lakes fish species, special interest is placed on lake trout within this research theme.

## ■ **Lake Sturgeon<sup>2</sup>**

Comprehensive lake sturgeon rehabilitation will likely be achieved only on a basin-wide scale, either for one of the Great Lakes or the entire basin; thus rehabilitation will require the coordination of multiple research and management agencies. GLFT lake sturgeon funding will be used in a basin-wide approach. All proposals under this research area must be designed to foster the development of new or existing partnerships among fishery agencies and researchers. Project proposals should describe how the expected results would do the following:

- Support the goals of existing organizations established to coordinate research and management on a basin-wide scale (such as the Great Lake Fishery Commission Lake Committee structure)
- Support the goals of existing rehabilitation plans such as those reviewed in the GLFT-sponsored June 2000 and December 2002 lake sturgeon workshops
- Initiate broad partnership support for the project
- Support projects that explore stocking strategies recommended and endorsed by the Lake Michigan Lake Sturgeon Task Group formed under the auspices of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission

## ■ **Outreach: Synthesis and Dissemination of Scientific Research**

Projects that synthesize and disseminate scientific information to other researchers, policy makers, stakeholders, and the general public may be funded under this research area either as standalone projects or traditional research projects that incorporate communication and dissemination strategies. The GLFT encourages the following activities consistent with GLFT priorities listed above:

- Collaborative determination of research priorities
- Sharing of findings among Great Lakes researchers
- Sharing of findings between researchers, management agencies, and stakeholders
- Conferences, seminars, and symposia
- Other communication strategies to ensure broad dissemination of information to Great Lakes researchers, management agencies, stakeholders, and the general public

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<sup>2</sup> GLFT's funding priorities for its lake sturgeon grant category are based largely on workshop reports available at the GLFT resource library [at www.glft.org/Research.htm](http://www.glft.org/Research.htm). *Leave the keyword section blank, select Other Documents and Publications under Type, and select Lake Sturgeon Rehabilitation under Topic; results will include four reports from workshops between 2000 and 2006.*

## PROJECT SIZE

There are no cost or time limitations on grant requests. However, projects will be evaluated on the cost versus the expected benefits as well as upon the reasonableness of the time requested to complete the project.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Proposals are encouraged from educational, governmental, tribal, and nonprofit institutions with a 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS. Canadian public and nonprofit organizations may also be eligible but should contact GLFT staff prior to submitting a proposal.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

The Great Lakes Fishery Trust will accept online pre-proposals only through its e-Grant system [www.glft.org/Research.htm](http://www.glft.org/Research.htm) on or before the deadline of **5:01 PM on Monday, January 26, 2009**. Pre-proposals submitted after this date and time will not be considered.

## IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION CONCERNING HABITAT

**Please note: *Habitat assessment, inventory, and classification projects will not be funded under this RFP.*** A separate RFP will be issued in 2009 to fund habitat projects based on recommendations from the 2006 report, titled *Identifying and quantifying critical fisheries habitat for Great Lakes lower riverine and nearshore zones*.<sup>3</sup>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please note: Projects that focus on the human health implications of environmental contaminants will **not** be funded under this RFP. However, projects that examine the consequences of environmental pollutants on the recruitment or health of a Great Lakes fish species are eligible.

This grant announcement, further information on the GLFT, descriptions of projects previously funded by the GLFT, and information regarding funding opportunities for other Great Lakes fishery-related projects can be found on the GLFT website, [www.glft.org](http://www.glft.org).

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<sup>3</sup> This report was jointly funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Its purpose was to help funding organizations identify collaborative funding priorities related to habitat.



## Pre-Proposal Requirements

### *Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Fish Populations Research*



1. **Problem statement:** Explain in quantitative and qualitative terms the importance of the problem relative to Great Lakes fisheries. Describe the problem impacting Great Lakes fisheries recruitment and/or health **AND** the ability of fisheries managers to resolve it. The problem statement (or needs assessment) is a key element of a proposal. An applicant may include data that support the problem statement. The information provided should be both factual and directly related to the problem addressed by the proposal.
2. **Hypothesis to be tested:** Describe the basis for the proposed research and assumptions that will be tested. For basic research projects (see footnote 1 on page 1), provide documentation of a clear consensus that such efforts are essential to address a critical issue facing fishery managers. For projects that focus on synthesis and dissemination of research rather than testing a hypothesis, describe the intended goal of the project.
3. **Methods:** Describe the activities that will take place in order to achieve project objectives. Identify any pilot work necessary to substantiate proposed methodology. Describe specific methods that have been successfully applied to other projects. Also describe alternative research approaches that were considered and explain why they were rejected.
4. **Potential management benefits and outcomes of proposed project:** Describe the impact of your project and its ability to advance management goals of the Great Lakes fishery (e.g., how will fisheries managers use information developed by the project?) and describe the outcomes.
5. **Communication of findings:** Describe how the results of the project will be published, peer reviewed, and/or disseminated to fisheries managers and other stakeholder audiences. Identify the target audience that will most likely apply results of the research. For those projects that are designed to synthesize and disseminate

information from existing research, explain the origin of the material to be synthesized and disseminated, identify the target audience of the project, and explain how additional outreach and communication may overcome barriers that have previously prevented sharing this information with both technical and non-technical audiences.

6. **Relationship of the project to ongoing activities:** Provide information demonstrating that the proposed project will not duplicate existing research activities in the region. Describe how the project may complement existing research efforts. If the project is closely tied to ongoing work, explain how coordination will occur.
7. **Prior experience:** Provide information that demonstrates your ability to successfully manage grants or projects of similar size and complexity. Identify key members of the project team by name and title. Do not submit curriculum vitae at this time.
8. **Project budget:** Proposals must provide a budget highlighting category line items listed below. Overhead costs should not exceed 10 percent. Identify other monies that will be raised to support the proposed work.
  - Salaries
  - Fringe benefits
  - Equipment/supplies
  - Overhead/indirect
  - Amount requested from GLFT
  - Total project cost

Pre-proposals must be received online through the GLFT's e-Grant system [www.gfft.org/Research.htm](http://www.gfft.org/Research.htm) by **5:01 PM on Monday, January 26, 2009**, to be considered for funding. Late proposals will not be accepted.

### ***Review Process***

The Scientific Advisory Team (SAT) consisting of 12 members representing parties to the Settlement Agreement that established the Trust (and other fisheries scientists designated under the agreement) will review the pre-proposals based upon the GLFT's Funding Criteria (see next section) and invite full proposals, which will be due in April 2009. Full proposals will be subjected to external peer review; the SAT will evaluate the full proposals and peer reviews and make funding recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Grants are targeted for award in August 2009.

### ***Additional Questions***

If you have further questions about the funding process, please contact Mark Coscarelli, Trust Manager, at (517) 371-7468.



## *Funding Criteria*

Proposals will be evaluated on the degree to which they meet the following five criteria:

- **Projects must target RFP priorities and have measurable outcomes**  
Project proposals must address research priorities outlined in the request for proposals and contain measurable objectives and processes for measuring success.
- **Projects must have benefits directed primarily to the Great Lakes**  
Projects must provide benefits to the Great Lakes fishery and support the advancement of management goals. Projects outside of the Lake Michigan basin will be considered if their results and outcomes are transferable to Lake Michigan.
- **Project applicants must be a public entity, nonprofit organization, or private educational institution**  
Organizations receiving funds and managing a project must demonstrate evidence of current 501(c)(3) tax status with the IRS.
- **Projects must not duplicate ongoing activities in the region or activities funded by alternative sources**  
Projects must represent new efforts not currently under way in the Great Lakes region.
- **Project applicants must have demonstrated an ability to undertake such projects**  
Project applicants must be able to demonstrate prior experience in successfully managing similar grants or projects.

In addition, proposals that will result in the following three outcomes will be reviewed more favorably than those lacking these outcomes:

- **Highly visible results**  
Dissemination of results to the scientific community, resource managers, the public, and other appropriate forums or groups should be incorporated into the project proposal.

■ **Broad support**

Projects should have a broad range of demonstrated support from organizations interested in Great Lakes fisheries, the general public, and/or the scientific community.

■ **Facilitation of future uses of GLFT funds**

Projects should provide information or results that will help guide future research activities of the GLFT.

***Further Guidance for Research Projects provided by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust Board***

The GLFT is interested in funding both short- and long-term research, the outcomes of which will lead directly to application of management practices and policies intended to enhance the Great Lakes fisheries. The GLFT board has determined that to meet its charge of providing mitigation for fish losses related to operation of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant, it is required to fund projects that produce tangible assets to current users of the fishery. Therefore, the GLFT's Scientific Advisory Team will evaluate research proposals to determine if such projects are of a theoretical or applied nature as a part of the funding evaluation process.