



Policy on Great Lakes Stewardship Proposals

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Great Lakes Fishery Trust's Great Lakes Stewardship grant category is to increase awareness and understanding of the ecology of the Great Lakes so that Michigan's residents become (1) active and effective stewards of the Great Lakes and (2) advocates for strategies that support the long-term sustainability of the Great Lakes fisheries.

This goal is being achieved primarily through the **Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI)**. The initiative supports a proven method of community-based learning in K–12 classrooms across Michigan. In these places, the local environment provides the context for education: students learn academic content while studying issues or problems of local importance. This approach builds students' enthusiasm for learning and results in higher academic achievement. For more information about the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, please go to <http://www.GLStewardship.org>.

The GLFT recognizes that there may be worthy stewardship projects that employ structures or strategies other than those used in the GLSI. This document provides guidance for prospective applicants seeking grants in this category.

FUNDING CRITERIA

- **There must be a clear connection between the specific goals of the project and the overall goal of this grant category: to increase awareness and understanding of the ecology of the Great Lakes so that Michigan's residents become (1) active and effective stewards of the Great Lakes and (2) advocates for strategies that support the long-term sustainability of the Great Lakes fisheries.**

Projects must focus on educating Michigan residents about the Great Lakes in a way that causes them to actively protect the Great Lakes ecosystem.

- **Projects must have stewardship benefits primarily directed to the Lake Michigan basin of the Great Lakes.**

Projects must provide clear and lasting benefit to the Great Lakes and their users. Priority will be given to projects focusing on Lake Michigan and its stewardship. Some projects may involve residents of other Great Lakes states, in addition to those living in Michigan. For those projects that do not involve residents of Michigan, the applicant must explain how the proposed effort will enhance stewardship throughout the Great Lakes basin, particularly Lake Michigan.

- **Projects should complement and enhance (but not duplicate) existing stewardship efforts in the Great Lakes basin.**

Projects must not duplicate ongoing activities in the region or activities funded by alternative sources. Projects may build upon or otherwise advance existing work, preferably with the endorsement or involvement of the originators of that work. New approaches for addressing persistent issues are encouraged.

■ **Projects must involve sufficient support and collaboration of individuals and/or organizations.**

Projects should demonstrate support and engagement of key entities (e.g., the scientific community, organizations interested in the Great Lakes or its fisheries, and/or organizations focused on education). Projects should also strengthen and broaden partnerships among people or organizations.

Applicants that propose to involve K–12 schools must describe how such efforts are both linked to and supported by the work of other organizations in the schools' community or region, and how the proposed work with schools will be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

If a project is conducted in an area served by a Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative regional hub, the applicant must document a connection to that hub (either by making the hub aware of the project's design and intent, or through more active engagement during the life of the project). For a list of GLSI hubs, see <http://www.GLStewardship.org/Hubs/hubs.html>.

■ **Education projects targeting youth or teachers must contribute to Michigan's education reform efforts,¹ even if the proposed efforts are not seated in formal education.**

Applicants that propose to engage K–12 students during the school year through a link to a formal K–12 program or informal education must describe how their work aligns with and supports the applicable Grade Level and/or High School Content Expectations.² Applicants that propose to work with K–12 teachers must describe how their efforts align with and support the Professional Development Vision and Standards for Michigan Educators.³

Direct, real-world experiences are an effective way to engage people of all ages in learning. Outdoor experiences, in particular, may be especially powerful in developing environmental stewards. Research indicates that outdoor experiences are more likely to motivate people to care, want to learn more, and do more to exhibit stewardship behavior. While not every activity within a project must involve outdoor experiences, preference will be given to projects that either support or provide some direct experiences with the outdoors.

¹ Currently, school reform efforts are focused mainly on 1) defining what students must know and be able to do through Grade Level and High School Content Expectations (GLCEs and HSCEs); 2) developing strategies to increase students' achievement, particularly in under-achieving schools; 3) providing effective professional development for teachers; and 4) strengthening the connection between schools and their communities.

² The GLCEs and HSCEs for various subjects are available at the Michigan Department of Education's website, <http://www.michigan.gov/mde>.

³ *Professional Development Vision and Standards for Michigan Educators* (http://www.michigan.gov/documents/ProfDevStdsVISWStrategies_4_9_03_C61067__A62638_12_09_02_62686_7.pdf).

■ **Project results must be effectively communicated.**

Plans for effectively disseminating the results of the project to key/target audiences must be incorporated into the project proposal. The messages and communication channels used in the project must be appropriate to the needs of the target audience(s).

■ **Proposals must have an integrated plan to evaluate their efforts.**

The evaluation should be clearly linked to the project's goals, and should focus on outcomes and impacts, not just the number of participants. Evaluation should also provide information or insights that will help guide future grant activities of the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. For school-based projects, at least 10 percent of the direct costs of the budget should be allocated to the evaluation.

■ **Proposals must include a sustainability plan.**

Except for work that is of an obvious, one-time nature, applicants should present a clear plan for sustaining the effort beyond the GLFT grant's ending date.

■ **Projects must have large benefits relative to the GLFT investment requested.**

Benefits can be measured in various ways (e.g., numbers of participants who are meaningfully involved, or the impact on the resource), depending upon the nature of the proposed work.

■ **Applicants must have the capacity to administer and complete the proposed project.**

Applicants must demonstrate experience in successfully managing grants and executing projects of a scope and depth comparable to those of the proposed project.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The GLFT will consider projects for the following activities:

■ **Increase people's understanding of the following issues at the ecosystem or watershed level, *and* promote taking action based on such understanding:**

- Protecting biological diversity
- Sustaining commercial and recreational fisheries
- Controlling non-native nuisance species
- Reducing pollution

Stewardship involves both knowledge *and* action. Applicants that propose to focus on one to the exclusion of the other must describe a plan to collaborate with others to ensure that the goal of developing environmental stewards is addressed and achieved.

■ **Promote environmental stewardship through direct experiences with natural resources.**

Research indicates that direct experiences in the outdoors are powerful motivators for action. Projects that engage people or groups that have historically lacked access to such experiences are especially encouraged, as are projects that build young people's awareness of and capacity for careers focused on stewardship and natural resources.

■ **Promote awareness of and access to existing Great Lakes stewardship education programs and resources.**

Many education resources/materials exist, but some individuals and groups may not be aware of them or use them. Through networking opportunities and dissemination activities (e.g., professional development programs, workshops, conferences), various audiences (e.g., teachers, non-formal educators, interested scientists) can learn about and access existing programs and resources.

INELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The GLFT will **not** provide funding for the following activities:

- Projects that do not meet all of the funding criteria listed above.
- Development of new or modification of existing Great Lakes curricula, unless a strong case can be made for the need for said curricula. In making such a case, applicants must reference studies in the subject of choice. For the subject of fisheries education, the GLFT-funded study: *A Great Lakes Fisheries Education Assessment and Summary of Needs* (2000–2001, University of Michigan in cooperation with Ohio State University) may be helpful: gaps identified by that study include fisheries and biodiversity, fisheries and critical habitats, ecosystem (including fisheries) management, treaty fishing rights, fisheries and sustainability. For more details, see <http://www.glft.org/resourcelibrary/attachments/PROJECTS-100WebFile59-GLFTedAssessment.pdf>.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Project applicants must be a public entity, nonprofit organization, or private educational institution. Nonprofit organizations receiving funds and managing a project must demonstrate evidence of current 501(c)(3) tax status with the IRS.