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NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE SYSTEM SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE
2015 SCIENCE TRANSFER FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT & REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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<th>12pm noon EST March 26, 2015</th>
<th>Deadline for submitting questions regarding this RFP. Questions should be submitted via email to <a href="mailto:NERRS-info@umich.edu">NERRS-info@umich.edu</a>. Responses will be posted on a rolling basis for all interested applicants to view online at <a href="http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs/funding">http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs/funding</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 27, 2015 at 11:59pm EST</td>
<td>Proposals Due</td>
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ABOUT THE NERRS SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE
The University of Michigan Water Center and partners are working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to coordinate the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Science Collaborative (NSC). One of the NSC’s goals is to support the co-development and application of relevant and usable knowledge and assessment information to address critical coastal management issues identified by the NERRS in order to improve the long-term stewardship of the nation’s valuable estuaries. The NSC works to achieve these goals through regular funding opportunities, project support and management, and an adaptive approach to program implementation that fosters ongoing learning and improvement.

The NSC supports projects that address NSC and reserve priorities, engage end users\(^1\), are highly collaborative and integrated, and emphasize outcome-oriented products that are usable and accessible.

ANNOUNCEMENT
The NSC solicits proposals for funding from the NERRS network for the transfer of existing information, approaches, and/or techniques within the NERRS and with partners outside of the reserve system.

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\(^1\) End user is defined as a person or group in a position to apply the information or tools being produced, evaluated, or transferred through an NSC project in a way that is of direct consequence to the ecological, social, or economic integrity of a reserve(s) and/or surrounding watershed(s). Examples of end users include, but are not limited to, reserve staff, and public, private or non-governmental decision/policy makers, including landowners, resource managers, land use planners, and educators at all levels.
The NSC will support science transfer projects that help build a stronger national network through increasing opportunities for collaborations, information sharing between reserves, between reserves and key partners, as well as within a single reserve.

Individual awards of up to $45,000 total will be awarded for up to two years. All project products and activities must be completed by the end of the project period.

All projects must address one or more of the **NSC priorities**, which are to:

- Further understanding of:
  - Biophysical and socio-demographic impacts of climate change on estuarine systems, including, but not limited to, sea level rise, marsh sustainability, and estimating community risk to climate change;
  - How to utilize ecosystem valuation to characterize the benefits and tradeoffs of preserving estuarine ecosystems;
  - The impacts and tradeoffs of shoreline stabilization, and which factors communities need to consider when adopting such measures;
  - How to mitigate the impacts of land use change and estuarine eutrophication and contamination in estuarine ecosystems; and
  - How to restore estuarine habitat once it has been degraded or lost.

- Support the active engagement of intended end users in the development of System-wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) and NERRS Sentinel Site data-derived information products, particularly the development of regional and national data syntheses that address coastal management needs in the NERRS and NOAA.

- Encourage the utilization of SWMP or NERRS Sentinel Site data as appropriate in activities that support the research priorities listed above.

Projects that involve more than one National Estuarine Research Reserve (reserve) and use data or incorporate components from the System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) and/or NERRS Sentinel Sites are strongly encouraged. Projects are encouraged to include NERRS coastal training, education, and stewardship programs in project development, implementation, and the translation of results as appropriate.
FUNDING ELIGIBILITY
Projects must be directly related to at least one reserve, address at least one or more reserve priorities in the context of the NSC priorities, and must have the full support of the relevant reserve manager(s), as demonstrated in the reserve manager proposal assessment. This funding opportunity is open to NERRS staff working in partnership (as appropriate) with applicants from the United States (U.S.) academic, private, or public sectors. Each proposal must designate a fiscal agent. The person in this role must be a project team member from the agency, institution, or friends group that will receive the award, if granted. A NERRS staff member may be (but does not have to be) the fiscal agent on the project. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. may be included on the project but cannot serve as the fiscal agent. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. may only be included in the budget if they meet certain requirements for receiving federal funds. Federal employees and institutions are not eligible to receive funding from this RFP, but they can participate as unfunded project team members.

SCIENCE TRANSFER PROJECT OVERVIEW
The primary emphasis of science transfer projects is to build a stronger and more connected NERRS network through increased opportunities for information sharing and cross reserve exchange and learning. Science transfer projects leverage outputs from external research, educational, and training programs in addition to NSC and other reserve-based programs. These projects facilitate and implement the transfer of existing information, approaches, and/or techniques to support NERRS activities and programs of direct relevance to NSC and reserve priorities.

Projects may support cross-reserve collaborations, transfer within a single reserve, or between reserves and key partners. Projects may but are not required to be tied to existing or previous projects supported by the NSC. Projects must help to address a science transfer need that is related to at least one reserve priority. Projects that develop products from the SWMP and/or NERRS Sentinel Sites, particularly development of regional and national syntheses that address the NSC priorities, are encouraged.

Example elements within science transfer projects include:
- Workshops;
- The transfer of outputs and associated training from a NSC research project to a new group of decision makers to support, for example, local land use, estuarine, watershed
or coastal water management; climate change adaptation and related efforts in hazard mitigation and resilience building;

- The aggregation and synthesis of relevant scientific information and stakeholder perspectives to address a specific management need identified by the reserve, such as the development of indicators and metrics of climate adaptation success;
- The transfer of an outreach and/or communications campaign from one reserve to other reserves in a region;
- The creation of information transfer and dissemination frameworks and networks within and between reserves and stakeholders; and
- The translation of science into curricula to support education programs like a Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE) workshop.

PROJECT OUTPUTS
Project outputs will vary according to project focus and design; outputs may include items such as:

- Educational curricula;
- A suite of integrated, end user driven communication strategies and products, such as, but not limited to, factsheets, an informational website, technical reports or visuals and interactive communication tools;
- Decision support tools and guides;
- Development and implementation of a targeted training module, e.g., TOTE workshop, technical training for land managers or other local decision makers; and
- Issue-specific public outreach.

PROJECT OUTCOMES
Project outcomes will vary according to project focus and design; outcomes may include:

- Changes in management strategies that result from transfer activities on reserves or within the watershed affecting the reserve;
- Documented change in the level of awareness, knowledge or behavior among targeted audiences as a result of the science transfer effort;
- Transfer and application of lessons learned in one reserve to another reserve or set of reserves;
- Creation and sustaining of information/knowledge networks; and
- Common outreach approaches being applied at numerous reserves, such as how to engage a community in planning efforts to enhance climate adaptation.
REQUIRED ELEMENTS

COLLABORATION & END USER INTEGRATION
Science transfer projects leverage existing knowledge, data, and information to support NERRS activities and programs of direct relevance to NSC and reserve priorities. To do so, science transfer projects must clearly identify, engage, and be responsive to the interests and needs of end users. Each project must therefore be structured and managed in a way that encourages and accommodates effective ongoing collaboration between the science transfer team and end users.

RESERVE ENGAGEMENT
Reserve managers and staff must be consulted and engaged in the development of project proposals. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the reserve manager and/or staff are engaged sufficiently in project development. Managers will be submitting a proposal assessment addressing the following three criteria for each proposal of relevance to their reserves:

1) To what extent does the proposal address an end user need that aligns with reserve priorities?
2) To what extent was the reserve engaged in the proposal development?
3) To what extent does the proposal reflect agreement between the proposing team and reserve regarding reserve resource commitments?

These assessments will be submitted by the reserve managers directly to the NSC, independent of all proposals. Applicants must provide a copy of their final proposal to the relevant reserve manager(s).

DATA MANAGEMENT
Science transfer projects should not include the collection of new data, except in the following two instances:

1) Data collection for the purposes of project evaluation; or
2) Data collection currently undertaken as part of the SWMP.

In the case of the latter, a proposal must refer to the relevant SWMP component(s), articulate a data collection approach that complies with the SWMP protocol, and state how the project complies with other relevant data management requirements in the SWMP.
PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be provided as a single pdf file using 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Proposals must include a title page, 5 page maximum narrative, and appendices as outlined below.

Proposals must be submitted at http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31973 by Friday, March 27, 2015 at 11:59pm EST.

Title Page (one page):

1) Project Title
2) Project Lead / Principal Investigator (primary contact for the project) –
   a) Title / Position
   b) Institution
   c) Telephone Number
   d) Postal Mailing Address
   e) E-mail Address
3) Additional Team Members (anyone receiving project resources or contributing significant resources to the project) – Name, institution, telephone, e-mail, and nature of contribution
4) Fiscal Agent – Provide the name of the fiscal agent. If different than the project lead, please include contact information.
5) Name of Reserve(s) – Identify the reserve(s) affiliated or involved with the project.
6) Budget Request – Requested dollar amount
7) Project Duration – Project start and end dates. Those projects chosen for funding should plan for a start date of September 1, 2015 or later.
8) Project Summary – Provide a 250-word summary of the proposed project suitable for a non-technical audience.

Project Narrative (5 page maximum):

Please organize your narrative using the following headers:

1) Statement of Need and Current Conditions – State and provide background and context for the need for this science transfer project. Describe what the project will accomplish, with particular emphasis on how it will address at least one reserve priority in the context of the NSC priorities described in the “Announcement” section of this RFP.
Identify the project end user(s) and describe how they will use the information being transferred.

2) Outputs and Outcomes – Describe the outputs and outcomes of the work, focusing on their direct contribution to reserve and end user needs.

   Output – a specific product that is developed during or upon project completion; there may be several outputs associated with the project. See examples provided above in the “Project Outputs” section of this RFP; these are illustrative only and not meant to be exhaustive.

   Outcome – the consequences of the application of the output(s) associated with the project. See examples provided above in the “Project Outcomes” section of this RFP; these are illustrative only and not meant to be exhaustive.

3) Project Approach – Enumerate and describe the activities intended to achieve the project outputs and outcomes. Include a description of the process that will be followed to ensure that productive collaboration occurs between the science transfer team and intended users of the outputs.

4) Team – Identify each team member and explain how the team and its expertise are well qualified to implement the project. Describe the role(s) of the various team members and identify and discuss their contribution to the project. Two-page resumes for the project lead and other team members must be included as an appendix.

Appendices:

1) Timeline – Using the timeline template found on the application website, http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31973, identify anticipated start and end dates of the proposed work. Include milestones, interim products, and other relevant aspects that will help document project progress. The timeline must include completion of the final project outputs. Please anticipate a start date of September 1, 2015, or later.

2) Budget – Use the budget template found on the application website http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31973. Please use the budget categories provided; do not modify them in any way.

3) Budget Narrative – Provide a budget narrative to justify expenses in all budget categories. Personnel costs shall be broken out by team member including number of months and percentage of time requested. Any unnamed personnel (e.g., graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) must be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to that described above. The contribution of
any personnel to the project goals shall be explained even if not receiving support under this grant. In particular, all reserve staff time anticipated for the project must be accounted for, even if funds are not being requested to support that time. Travel costs must be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Equipment costs shall describe the equipment to be purchased, and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals. A separate budget narrative is required for each institution in a multi-institutional project and for each subcontract. Signed approval from each subaward and contractor’s institution is also required.

4) **Data Management** – If relevant (i.e. the proposal includes data collection as part of the SWMP), a proposal must refer to the relevant SWMP component(s), articulate a data collection approach that complies with the SWMP protocol, and state how the project complies with other relevant data management requirements in the SWMP.

5) **Resumes** – Two-page resumes for each team member are required.

6) **Other Supporting Documents** – Up to five pages of supporting documents may be included as appendices.

**REVIEW PROCESS**
Proposals will be reviewed by NSC staff for compliance with proposal guidelines. Reserve manager proposal assessments will be due April 3, 2015. Proposals along with reserve manager proposal assessments will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel composed of collaboration and communications experts and relevant technical experts. Proposals will be rated according to the evaluation criteria below.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**
All proposals must comply with all submission instructions and guidelines to be considered for funding.

Those proposals selected for funding will:
- **Address a priority issue, or issues, for the reserve(s) in question (20%)**: Does the proposal clearly articulate a science transfer need that aligns with at least one reserve priority?
- **Identify an end user or end users and meet their clearly articulated needs (20%)**: Does the proposal clearly identify an appropriate end user or end users? Does the proposal demonstrate how the project outputs will meet well-defined end user needs?
• **Integrate the end user(s) into the project (20%)**: Does the project approach describe a process that sufficiently integrates end user input and engagement?

• **Include a highly-qualified and technically relevant team, including those qualified to confirm the accuracy of the information translation and transfer (15%)**: As demonstrated in their resumes, do the team members have the appropriate expertise and experience to do the proposed work?

• **Identify clear, specific, and feasible outputs and outcomes associated with the proposed work (15%)**: Are the outputs and outcomes clearly identified and appropriate for the proposed work? Are the outputs achievable within the proposed timeframe and budget request? Are the outcomes appropriate given the scope of the project?

• **Provide an appropriate budget and feasible timeline that are consistent with the guidelines (10%)**: Are the proposed budget and timeline adequate to conduct the proposed work?

**QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS?**

**EMAIL**

The NSC will accept written questions regarding this request for pre-proposals until 12pm noon EST February 26, 2015. Questions should be submitted to NERRS-info@umich.edu. Responses to questions, without reference to project specifics, will be posted on a rolling basis for all interested applicants to view online at http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs/funding.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

More information about the NERRS Science Collaborative can be found at http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs.

The NERRS Science Collaborative hosted two webinars on the NSC’s special focus area on successful climate adaptation. Reserves interested in integrating a climate adaptation element into an NSC grant should review and listen to the presentation; the webinar slides and audio are available at http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs/resources.

** PROPRIETARY INFORMATION & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Applicants should be aware that the disclosure of patentable ideas, trade secrets, and privileged, confidential, commercial, or financial information can hinder an applicant’s chances to secure patents, trademarks, or copyrights.

Proprietary information of this kind should only be included in proposals when it is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Applicants must mark proprietary
information clearly in the proposal with appropriate labels, such as, “The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (proposing entity) requests not be released to persons outside the NERRS Science Collaborative, except for purposes of review and evaluation.”

Please protect your intellectual property rights at the proposal preparation stage as appropriate. This will allow you to speak freely about ideas and avoid the inadvertent loss of intellectual property rights. You should contact your institution’s technology transfer or intellectual property office to determine the best way to protect your intellectual property.