



Shell Marine Habitat Program

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2013 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Due Date: Thursday, September 5th

OVERVIEW

The Shell Marine Habitat Program (SMHP) is a partnership between Shell Oil Company and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The purpose of the partnership is to support conservation and restoration activities that result in measurable benefits to key species and their habitats along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Up to \$700,000 is available for projects along the Gulf of Mexico coast including: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida (from the Western panhandle through Tampa Bay). Funding is also available for projects along the coast in the Savannah, Georgia area.

Additional funding of up to \$900,000 is available for projects benefitting wetland resources, marine and coastal resources, and the fish, wildlife, and plant species dependent on those resources in Bay County, Gulf County, and Walton County, Florida. Particular emphasis will be given to projects in and around St. Andrew Bay in Bay County.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Government agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions are eligible for funding.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Shell Marine Habitat Program funding will be focused on the following issues with the intent of achieving meaningful, measurable outcomes that advance the conservation priorities below.

Oyster conservation and restoration

Oyster reefs provide critical ecosystem services in the Gulf of Mexico, but have been significantly reduced from their historic extent. In order to reverse this trend, the Shell Marine Habitat Program is seeking to fund projects that:

- Increase populations of native Eastern oysters through restoration activities and sustainable management of the oyster fishery. Proposals that seek to restore oysters in areas protected from harvest will be considered particularly competitive;

- Conduct oyster restoration projects that serve as “living shorelines” to both enhance oyster populations and protect near shore coastal ecosystems;
- Innovative projects that increase the cost-effectiveness of oyster restoration (i.e. oyster shell recycling, etc.).

Coastal shorebirds and waterbirds

Coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico have been classified by national shorebird leaders as critically important for about 60 percent of the 50 shorebird species that are found in the United States. Consistent, year-after-year strategic efforts are required to provide dependable, high-quality habitat that can meet the energetic and other needs of migratory shorebirds, beach-nesting waterbirds, colonial wading birds, marshbirds and waterfowl that depend on the Gulf. The Shell Marine Habitat Program is seeking to support these efforts by providing grant funds that:

- Protect, restore or create critical coastal beach and wetland habitat for resting and overwintering migratory species using public-private partnerships and other innovative methods; and,
- Establish or support coastal breeding bird stewardship programs that are focused on high priority areas for shorebird conservation along the Gulf coast and that engage volunteers and conservation professionals in stewardship activities such as invasive plant removal, placement of signage for colonial nesting waterbirds, and reduction of nest predators.

Sea turtles

At least five endangered sea turtle populations depend on the marine and beach habitats of the Gulf of Mexico. Two populations of particular concern based on their reliance on the Gulf are the Kemp’s ridley and North Atlantic Loggerhead sea turtles. The Shell Marine Habitat Program seeks to build a positive population trajectory for these populations by increasing turtle nesting success rates and reducing incidental catch in fisheries in and around the Gulf. Specifically the Shell Marine Habitat Program will provide grant funding for projects that:

- Promote safe fishing gear and practices that reduce incidental catch of turtles while maintaining open and sustainable fisheries; and
- Protect critical habitat through monitoring and reducing the threat of driving vehicles on priority nesting beaches.

For additional information, visit the North Atlantic loggerhead and Kemps Ridley sections of the [NFWF Sea Turtle Business Plan](#)

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Highest priority will be given to projects that:

- Clearly and specifically describe activities that help meet the goals of one or more of the above listed conservation priorities;
- Provide measurable and meaningful conservation outcomes linked to the goals of the above priorities (e.g., acres protected, restored or enhanced, short- or long-term population increases);
- Build on existing conservation efforts for these issues;
- Enhance ecosystem structure or function (e.g., by increasing landscape-level connectivity) and/or population viability (e.g. increasing smaller populations toward recovery goals). Habitat parameters that provide appropriate conditions for viable populations should be considered, as appropriate;

- Are carefully planned, technically sound and involve qualified technical experts, agencies and/or organizations in their design and execution;
- Build new, or enhance existing, partnerships (list all partners involved). Applicants are encouraged to leverage diverse organization strengths and resources to enhance project sustainability through partnerships and collaborations;
- Describe any ancillary benefits that may result from the project, (e.g., serves as a model for others to replicate; shares methodologies developed with other practitioners; creates new partnerships; etc.);
- Address the long-term sustainability of the project by providing a monitoring and maintenance plan and describing how future funding will be secured; and
- Provide volunteer opportunities for the public and Shell employees, as appropriate.
- **NOTE:** Proposals including education, training, and/or public outreach as a main component must demonstrate how the project supports conservation goals related to the above listed priorities, how the project will motivate people to take the desired action(s), and include an evaluation component that measures the success of the project in achieving specific and quantifiable conservation outcomes.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

All applications should include quantitative performance metrics that will be tracked and measured to evaluate success in achieving stated conservation goals (degree of change from baseline or pre-project conditions as a result of activities), and that describe the plan for long-term monitoring and adaptive management.

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Grants awarded through *SMHP* will be expected to provide funder recognition in any communications related to the grant including issuing at least one press release and providing notice of external communications – articles, etc.- and events as they occur.

PROJECT EVALUATION

All applications should include a statement describing how the project and its quantifiable results will be evaluated.

GRANT SIZE

Typical grant awards range from \$50,000 - \$200,000

RESTRICTIONS

Grant funds **cannot** be used for political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying or litigation activities or to support projects resulting from legally mandated mitigation projects.

MATCH

A minimum 1:1 match of cash or in-kind/contributed goods and services is required; higher match ratios increase the competitiveness of the proposal. All potential sources, and amounts of match, including Federal funds, should be listed in the pre-proposal.

To be eligible, matching contributions must be:

- Raised and dedicated specifically towards the project;
- Voluntary in nature (mitigation, restitution, or other permit or court-ordered settlements are ineligible); and
- The cost of recent land acquisitions may also qualify as match for a project involving work at that site. Applicants may also include an easement put on the land, if this occurs during the award period.

Match contributed up to one year prior to the pre-proposal deadline may be included.

INDIRECT COSTS POLICY

Applicants should view the guidance provided [here](#) to understand the Foundation's policy on indirect costs in both the project budget and as matching contributions. Please keep in mind that cost-efficiency and diversity of partnerships as shown through matching contributions are important criteria used to evaluate proposals.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Only electronic proposals submitted through the [on-line application system](#) will be considered.

- If you are requesting continued funding for a project previously funded through the SMHP, describe how the current proposal builds upon or differs from the original project (e.g., justify the need for additional funding).
- If the funding request is for one phase of a larger project, please put in context the phase relative to the larger project by stating the goals, outcomes, and timelines for both the phase and the larger project (and the extent to which the funding request will help achieve the overall project goals).

TIMELINE

The anticipated timeline for this grant round is as follows:

September 5, 2013: Full proposal deadline

Mid-Sept. 2013: Follow-up with applicants for additional information, as necessary

November 2013: Grants announced

QUESTIONS

Please direct any questions to Suzanne Sessine, Assistant Director, Eastern Partnership Office, 202-857-0166 or suzanne.sessine@nfwf.org, or Lindsay Vacek, Program Coordinator, Eastern Partnership Office, 202-857-0166 or lindsay.vacek@nfwf.org.

