

Release Date: July 30, 2010

## Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement

# *Request for Proposals*

## **Water Quality Improvement Grants for Agricultural Operations in the Southern Lake Champlain Watershed**

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the implementation of on-farm pollution prevention Best Management Practices (BMPs). Program funds are available for projects that implement water quality protection measures on agricultural operations in the southern portion of the Lake Champlain Basin. Up to \$400,000 in funding is available for BMPs in New York and Vermont, which support the over-arching goal of reducing phosphorus pollution into Lake Champlain, as outlined in the LCBP long-term management plan, *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*. Funding for this RFP is from Lake Champlain Mitigation Funds paid by the American Electric Power Company as a result of a court-ordered settlement, and provided to the LCBP by the Attorneys General of New York and Vermont.

The LCBP seeks proposals from eligible applicants to initiate and implement projects to improve water quality protection on farms in the “southern lake” portion of Lake Champlain. For purposes of this RFP the “southern lake” portion of Lake Champlain is defined as all areas draining into Lake Champlain south of the former Crown Point Bridge location (see map below). An electronic version of this RFP is available from the Lake Champlain Basin Program website. Look for the link on our homepage at [www.lcbp.org](http://www.lcbp.org). To receive a copy of the RFP via US Postal Service, contact the Lake Champlain Basin Program office at (802)372-3213 or toll free at (800)468-LCBP in New York and Vermont.

To facilitate the review process, applicants must submit proposals in both paper and electronic format. Please see the RFP and the attached proposal format information for complete details.

### **DEADLINE NOTICE:**

**Hardcopy (10 copies) and electronic versions (no facsimiles) of proposals must be RECEIVED by the Lake Champlain Basin Program office by 4:30pm Daylight Savings Time (DST) on**

**October 21st, 2010 to be considered for funding.**

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Successful applicants will be notified by **November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010**.

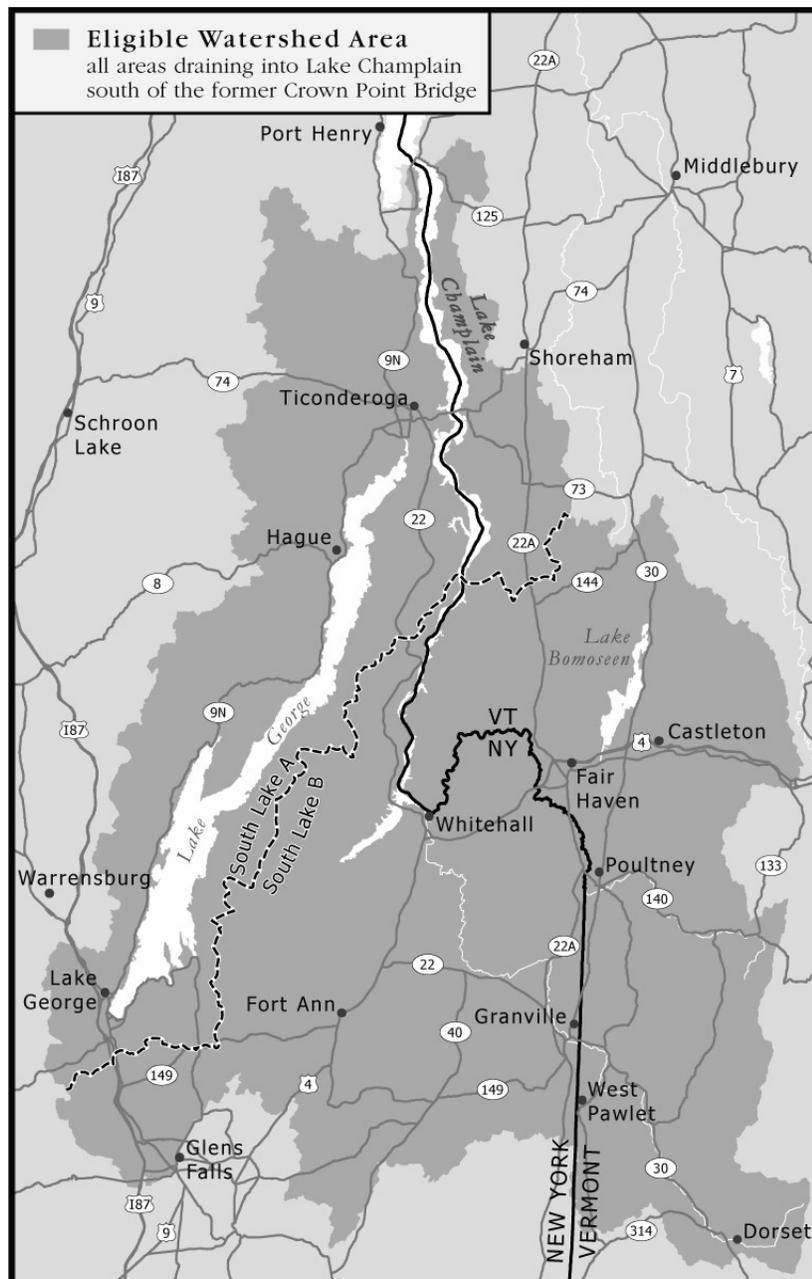
## Request for Proposals

# Water Quality Improvement Grants for Agricultural Operations in the Southern Lake Champlain Watershed

### I. Background

The southern-most segments of Lake Champlain – areas draining into Lake Champlain south of the former Crown Point Bridge location, also referred to as South Lake A and B (see map below) – show profound effects from phosphorus pollution, as described in the most recent LCBP *State of the Lake* 2008 report. Agriculture in Vermont and New York is estimated to account for approximately 41-63% of the non-point source phosphorus pollution load in the lake segment known as South Lake B and 12-79% in South Lake A. Due to water quality concerns associated with elevated phosphorus and high sediment loading, this grant opportunity will focus on water quality improvements where reductions in phosphorus and/or sediment are achieved.

The selected applicants will provide local farmers with the necessary technical assistance to initiate and implement priority water quality projects on New York and Vermont farms in the southern-most Lake Champlain watersheds. A high priority for this project is to focus on reducing phosphorus loading from production areas (i.e., clean water diversions, silage leachate collection and treatment, livestock exclusion fencing, etc.).



## II. Proposal Format

Successful applicants responding to this RFP will need to identify specific, on-farm water quality problems and an applicable solution, consistent with appropriate state and/or federal practice design standards. Solutions must be selected in consultation with the landowner(s) and be suited to the management style and site location.

The response should include a complete application for each farm identified, that contains the following information:

- Location of the farm including an aerial photo and/or topographic map for each farm which clearly identifies the township, key roads, and relevant watershed boundaries.
- Nature and severity of the problem, including photographs.
- Proposed farm-specific solutions (e.g., BMP(s)) that address the identified needs.
- Specific objectives and tasks of the project (e.g., how the project will help improve water quality and reduce nonpoint source pollution).
- Relevant technical practice standards and anticipated design modifications, if any; more complex practices requiring engineering or other special skills will be designed by state or federal agency employees and/or private consultants.
- A project timeline.
- Estimated project costs (see sample budget table below); in addition to the budget table, please include a brief explanation for each line in your budget. If the work on a single farm includes several BMPs, individual budgets should be prepared.
- Letters of support and/or a farm commitment letter (example provided)

While there are no cost caps for individual projects, cost and anticipated benefits will be strongly considered in the selection process. Please attach a budget for each farm identified within the application using the format below:

**Sample Budget Table, per farm (not all budget lines may be needed)**

Expense	LCBP Grant	Applicant/Sponsor
<b>Costs:</b>		
Personnel		
Contractor	\$900	\$99
<i>(Add specific lines as needed)</i>		
Travel	\$100	
<i>(Add specific lines as needed)</i>		
Supplies/Materials		
Wood		\$250
<i>(Add specific lines as needed)</i>		
Contracts		
<i>(Add specific lines as needed)</i>		
Equipment		\$300
<i>(Add specific lines as needed)</i>		
Other (please specify)		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$649</b>

Explanation:

- Contractor: to construct BMP, 50 hours @ \$18/hour
- In-kind match by landowner of 5.5 hours @\$18/hour

The applicant is responsible for identifying and obtaining any necessary permits (e.g., wetlands, storm water, stream alteration, etc.). The contractor also will be responsible for coordinating project activities with appropriate staff at the state natural resources and agricultural agencies to ensure project objectives are met. Specifically, more complex practices requiring engineering or other special skills should be reviewed with appropriate agency staff. All structural practices must be designed and approved by a State licensed engineer or a state or federal employee with equivalent job approval authority.

All projects must be voluntary in nature. Projects that are required as the result of any enforcement proceeding or action will not be considered voluntary and are not eligible for funding.

## Sample Commitment Letter

Lake Champlain Basin Program  
54 West Shore Road  
Grand Isle, VT 05458

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to seek assistance from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to construct a critical project(s) at the [farm name] in [town(s), state].

*Briefly :*

- *Describe why the BMP is needed, including the nature and severity of the problem (please attach photographs)*
- *Describe the specific objectives and elements of the project, including preliminary design plans*
- *Describe how the project will help improve water quality and reduce nonpoint source pollution*

The amount requested from the LCBP is [insert amount]; please see the attached budget for a detailed description. Construction will begin [month and year] and is projected to be complete within [x weeks or months].

I understand that money from this grant program cannot be spent on projects that are required for an enforcement action. I also understand that the Lake Champlain Basin Program and its committee volunteers may schedule a site visit to see the project during construction or once it is complete.

Thank you for your consideration. You can contact me at the following: [name, street address, email address, phone number].

Sincerely,  
[name of applicant]

### III. Summary of Other Requirements for the Selected Proposal

- For the selected proposal, following initial notification of the award, an approved workplan will be required before a grant agreement with the LCBP can be executed and the work begun. This workplan should be submitted to the LCBP for review within 60 days of award notification.
- Following approval of the workplan, the LCBP will prepare a grant agreement that, when signed, will specify the terms of the award and the date on which funded work may begin.
- Where necessary, the successful applicant will need to prepare a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) as part of their workplan. QAPPs are required for all activities involving the collection, generation, compilation, management, analysis, evaluation, and/or use of environmental data. It is possible that some project proposals might not require a QAPP – depending on the scope of the workplan. This QAPP must be approved by the LCBP before work can begin on this project. The QAPP development and approval process can be quite lengthy (up to 90 days, depending on the size of the project), so please make sure that an appropriate amount of time has been

allocated to this step in the project budget and timeline. More information about the LCBP QAPP process can be found on the LCBP website, here: [www.lcbp.org/QAPP](http://www.lcbp.org/QAPP)

- The successful applicant will be required to obtain at least two estimates for contracted work involved with the BMP implementation and, where the higher bid is chosen, a justification must be included in the reporting.
- The successful applicant will be required to prepare quarterly reports documenting progress on each objective and task in the project. A final report fully documenting the project's results will be required at project completion, no later than **December 31, 2011**.

#### **IV. Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies including farms, and government agencies. The selected contractor will be responsible for the completion of all project tasks, though subcontracted work may be permitted by the LCBP Project Officer upon request. Individuals and representatives from organizations that participated in the development or review of this RFP and its contents are ineligible to apply.

Eligible expenses include:

- architectural and/or engineering services
- plans and specifications, including personnel services to conduct individual farm level agricultural nonpoint source abatement and control plans
- Other direct expenses related to planning and implementation (e.g. funding for Cultural Resource Determination and Historical Preservation determination on ground-disturbing BMPs. Ground-disturbing BMPs do not include areas where soils have already been impacted such as farm production areas). *Note if cultural resource constraints exist, the project costs will be weighed against the benefits including consideration of the cultural resource costs. If the costs are greater than the benefit the project may be terminated or modified if alternatives can be identified within the approved budget.*

Payments may not be used to cover the lease or purchase of equipment not directly related to the function of the BMP.

All costs associated with the operation and maintenance of BMPs will be the sole responsibility of the landowner and/or operator. The expectation is that the landowners and/or operators maintain the practice during its expected life span.

BMPs to be implemented on rented property should not be submitted for funding unless there is a written lease for the use of the property for the life span of the BMP.

Information about approved BMPs relevant to water quality can be found here:

New York: [http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/SoilWater/aem/forms/Agricultural BMP Catalogue June 2007.pdf](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/SoilWater/aem/forms/Agricultural_BMP_Catalogue_June_2007.pdf) .

Vermont: [http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/Conservation\\_Practices/Index.html](http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/Conservation_Practices/Index.html)

## V. Proposal Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Proposals will be judged according to how well they address the following points:

- Experience working directly with agricultural producers. Demonstrated knowledge of agricultural/agronomic practices and associated best management practices for water quality improvement.
- Evidence of local support when a proposed project is expected to impact other local activities and/or persons.
- Familiarity with applicable state and federal technical standards including: NRCS's Conservation Practice Standards, Vermont's *Accepted Agricultural Practices* (AAPs), Vermont's on-farm *Best Management Practices* (BMP) Program and New York's *Agricultural Management Practices Catalogue for Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention and Water Quality Protection in New York State* (June 2007).
- Technical merit and feasibility of the proposed on-farm improvements to reduce phosphorus loadings from agricultural operations into surface waters in the Lake Champlain Basin.
- Clarity and conciseness of the proposal, and adherence to the proposal guidelines.
- Proposals that maximize the funding utilized for direct project implementation and keep administrative and indirect costs low shall be prioritized.
- Although matching funds are not required, the ability of a project to draw in matching funds, particularly for higher cost BMPs such as manure pits, will be considered in the selection criteria.

## VI. Available Funds and Match Requirements

A total of \$400,000 is available for this RFP. Awarded funds are non-federal and therefore can be used as match for other state or federal funding sources. Funds are expected to be evenly distributed between both states.

## VII. Period of Performance

Work is to be completed no later than **December 31, 2011**.

## VIII. Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission

Please follow the format outlined in the attached Technical Proposal Format Requirements.

- Ten (10) paper copies of each proposal must be RECEIVED by the LCBP office by **4:30pm on October 21st, 2010**. Please submit paper copies bound only with a single staple or binder clip.
- ***In addition***, an ELECTRONIC VERSION of the proposal, either on disk or via e-mail must be submitted. Electronic versions must also be RECEIVED by **4:30pm** Daylight Savings Time (DST) on **October 21st, 2010**.

## IX. Contact Information

Direct all proposals and other inquiries to:

Eric Howe, Technical Coordinator  
Lake Champlain Basin Program  
54 West Shore Road  
Grand Isle, VT 05458

(802)372-3213  
[ehowe@lcbp.org](mailto:ehowe@lcbp.org)

## Technical Proposal Format Requirements

Proposals should adhere to the following format and should not exceed a 10 page maximum length (font size 12), NOT including budget information, references cited and investigator resumes.

**TITLE:** Concise and descriptive.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Name, position, organization, address, telephone, fax and email of the person who will be the point of contact.

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** Name, position, organization address, telephone, fax and email of the person who is authorized to sign the contract.

**ABSTRACT:** Brief description of proposed work.

**INTRODUCTION:** Overview of what the project is and what it will accomplish in relation to the RFP.

**OBJECTIVES AND TASKS:** List the project's objectives and describe in detail the tasks that will be performed relative to each objective, including methods and approaches.

**DELIVERABLES:** Detailed description of the planned products from each task of the project. Quarterly progress reports and a final report are required deliverables.

**SCHEDULE:** Timeline showing anticipated dates for completion of the major tasks and deliverables. Quarterly progress reports are due on the last day of December, March, June, and September. Work is to be completed within fifteen (15) months after the execution of a contract or grant.

**DETAILED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:** Cost breakdown by major budget categories (i.e. personnel, equipment), linking costs to specific tasks/deliverables wherever possible. Breakdown should show costs to be covered by the LCBP award and other sources (if applicable), as well as any match amounts and totals (1 page, not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal).

**TECHNICAL REFERENCES CITED:** List all references used for the proposal (not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal).

**CURRICULUM VITAE/RESUME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:** Include up to 3-5 references for prior work pertinent to the proposed project. Please limit to one page per investigator; not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal.