



2017 – Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund Request for Proposals

Overview

The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) is offering grants of \$1,000 to \$10,000 per project to support the permanent protection of targeted habitats in the Casco Bay watershed through its *CBEP Habitat Protection Fund* (Fund). The Fund will be administered via grants by the University of Southern Maine, CBEP's fiscal host, in partnership with CBEP and Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, as described below. NOTE: The Fund application form and guidelines have been revised following completion of the [2016-2021 Casco Bay Plan](#). CBEP anticipates two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the Fund in 2017 and in future years, timed with late winter and early fall, pending available funds. **Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 PM on Friday, March 24, 2017.**

Eligibility

1. Proposed projects must be located within the Casco Bay watershed (see [map](#)), including the Calendar Islands. For further clarification of watershed boundaries, please check with CBEP staff.
2. The focus of this fund is on protecting lands that are integral to resilient aquatic ecosystems (e.g. coastal, riverine, and freshwater wetland systems). Specifically, proposed projects should incorporate one or more of the following characteristics:
 - a. Shoreline on tidal waters, small coastal streams, rivers, or perennial streams.
 - b. Freshwater or tidal wetlands, including floodplains and naturally occurring vernal pools.
 - c. Salt marsh migration corridors.
 - d. Focus area designation by Beginning With Habitat ([map](#); [factsheets](#)) or other regional habitat-focused conservation plans.
3. Reimbursable expenses should be incurred by June 30th, 2018. CBEP expects that project expenses claimed as match will be reported by August 31, 2018.
4. The Fund cannot be used to reimburse costs that predate the grant application.
5. Grants can be awarded to tax-exempt 501(c)(3) conservation organizations or units of government.

Eligible Expenses

1. Transaction costs associated with acquisition of high value habitat, including: land surveys, attorney fees, environmental assessments, appraisal costs, recording fees, and title expenses.
2. Purchase of a conservation easement on high value habitat.
3. Purchase of fee title to land with high value habitat.

Other costs associated with acquisition, such as stewardship endowments, will be considered in extraordinary cases if it is demonstrated that, without assistance, the project is unlikely to proceed.

Grant Amount

Grants will range from **\$1,000 to \$10,000**. Total available funds are currently **\$25,000**. Unspent funds will be rolled over into a subsequent RFP, to be released in the fall of 2017 pending funding availability.

CBEP Habitat Protection Committee

The Fund is administered by a committee consisting of representatives of the organizations listed at the end of this announcement. Applicants may contact any of these individuals to initiate an application.

Requirements for all Properties Protected

1. All lands protected through conservation easement or acquisition must be managed for habitat conservation in perpetuity. The applicant must sign a statement provided by CBEP ensuring permanent protection and management of the property for its natural resource values in perpetuity.
2. Public access, permitted in a manner sensitive to the habitat values of the property, must be assured in perpetuity (due to the use of federal funds from EPA for this program). The applicant must sign a statement provided by CBEP ensuring permanent public access to the property. (NOTE: Rare exceptions may be granted where conservation value is especially high, and public access would undercut conservation goals.)
3. If intensive land management activities (e.g. forestry, agriculture) are envisioned on the property, those activities must be carried out in an environmentally sensitive manner, consistent with the overarching purpose of protecting high value habitat in perpetuity. Applicants anticipating intensive land management activities for non-habitat values must discuss proposed activities in the proposal and describe legal and other mechanisms for ensuring compliance with those plans.
4. In outreach efforts associated with land acquisition (e.g., written materials, public ceremonies, discussions with key partners), CBEP requests appropriate recognition as a partner involved in supporting the land protection initiative. CBEP will supply a logo for visual presentation purposes. In written materials, we request that "Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund" be credited as co-administered in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Program, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.
5. Although it is not currently a requirement to receive funding through the Fund, the provision of non-federal matching funds for CBEP's federal contribution to any project is strongly encouraged. This commitment will need to be documented in writing on the organization's letterhead.

Application Process

The process for applying is as follows:

1. Interested applicants should contact a member of the CBEP Habitat Protection Committee to ensure that a proposed project meets fund requirements and criteria.
2. The applicant should then submit an electronic copy of the following information to CBEP staff:
 - a) Cover letter briefly describing project and requesting funds;
 - b) A completed CBEP Habitat Protection Fund application, OR a pre-existing grant application, with supplemental materials as needed, that addresses the selection criteria and requirements. Note: All applications must include completed information from p. 1 of the application form);
 - c) A map showing boundaries of parcels proposed for protection (including map/lot #);
 - d) An appraisal summary sheet or opinion of value;
 - e) Budget outlining the total project costs, committed funds, and potential funding sources – both for the project and for any planned stewardship/management.

Following review of the application, the committee may request additional information or a site visit. The committee aims to finalize funding decisions within 4-8 weeks of the RFP close date.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Committee to select projects for funding:

- Protection of land that is adjacent to and/or integral to an aquatic ecosystem (e.g. coastal, riverine, and freshwater habitats);
- High habitat value(s) for fish, wildlife and/or plant communities*;
- Location and size of the project, as well as condition of surrounding land;
- Contiguous with other protected lands;
- Part of a larger conservation vision;
- Cost-effectiveness of proposal, including matching funds;
- Level of threat from development;
- The potential impact of current uses and/or future land management practices;
- Likelihood of successful implementation (including acquisition and long-term stewardship);
- Community sentiments toward the project, including public access considerations.

*** Note: Habitat values will be analyzed and prioritized, using multiple tools that may include but are not limited to the following:**

- *USFWS Gulf of Maine Program's GIS analysis for the Gulf of Maine watershed*
- *USFWS Gulf of Maine Coastal Program/CBEP GIS analysis for the 15 coastal towns surrounding Casco Bay*
- *USFWS Gulf of Maine Program's database identifying high value nesting islands*
- *"Beginning with Habitat" (BWH) initiative, incorporating habitat data from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and Maine Natural Areas Program. BWH Map 1 ('Water Resources and Riparian Habitats', Map 2 (High Value Plant and Animal Habitats), and forthcoming data pertaining to Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) as identified in the 2015 Maine State Wildlife Action Plan, are of particular relevance to CBEP.*
- *Applicant-provided site environmental surveys*
- *Land cover maps and aerial photographs*
- *Local knowledge and site visit observations*
- *Other State, Federal, or NGO GIS-based habitat analyses and models as available*

CBEP Habitat Protection Fund Review Committee

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Proposal Submission

Applications will be considered complete when all fields in the application form have been completed and the mandatory maps have been included as attachments. Email submittal is required. Completed applications should be emailed as attachments to Matthew.Craig@maine.edu.

Questions? Contact Matt Craig at 207-228-8359 or Matthew.Craig@maine.edu.



CBEP Habitat Protection Fund Application

Application Date

HPF Contact Name

Organization Name

Organization Address

Contact Name

Title

Phone Number

E-Mail Address

Project Name

Project Town

Tax Parcel Map/Lot

Latitude & Longitude

Total Acreage

Amount Requested (\$)

Method of Protection

Acquisition Method

Organization that will hold the conservation easement or own the protected land:

Acres of different habitat types:

Tidal Marsh

Wetland

Forest

Pond

Other:

Shorefront (Total Feet)

Shorefront Type:

Ocean

Wetland

River/stream

Lake

Pond

Briefly describe ecological / habitat values for fish, wildlife, and/or plant communities. Indicate how you identified the ecological/habitat values (e.g., formal or informal biological inventories, local naturalist, statewide databases such as *Beginning with Habitat*, literature). Provide relevant documentation if appropriate.

How is the property currently being used or managed? What recreational or commercial uses will be permitted on the property once it is permanently protected?

Are there any structures on the property? If so, how are they used, and what will happen to them once the property is permanently protected?

Are there any conservation easements, other easements, rights of way, or deed restrictions currently on the property?

What are the community sentiments toward the project?

Describe the current condition of surrounding lands. Is this project part of a larger conservation vision, and is it adjacent to existing conservation lands?

Please describe the level of threat from development.

Describe long-term management goals, including public access and land management, for the property (ies) involved in this proposal. How will these goals be met and maintained?

Current Property Owner(s)

Address

Is there a written agreement on the property (i.e., Purchase and Sale, Option, or Right of First Refusal)? If not, please describe the level of commitment that the landowners have expressed toward the project.

How will CBEP funds be used? Please be as specific as possible.

Total purchase price of property or easement (\$)

Fair market value for the property or easement (\$)

Source and date of market value estimate (provide attachments if applicable)

Amount requested (\$)

Total cash raised to date (\$)

Projected closing date

Pledged match amount (\$)

I (we) understand that permanent protection and public acknowledgement of funding from the CBEPHPF are requirements of projects funded by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund. I(we) agree to meet these requirements. I (we) also understand that the CBEPHPF requires the establishment of ecologically-sensitive public access.

Signed:

Date:

Required Attachments

Cover letter

Project budget

Property boundaries marked on a tax parcel map

Appraisal summary sheet or opinion of value (preferred), or assessed value

CBEP Habitat Protection Fund Application Budget

Project Budget for:

Submitted by:

Date:

Assessed or Fair Market Value of Property:

EXPENSES	\$ needed
Fee Purchase	
Easement Purchase	
Interest on loans	
Appraisal	
Survey	
Closing Costs (filing fees, title search, recording fee, etc.)	
Title Insurance	
Legal fees	
Environmental Site Assessments	
Soil Sampling Analysis	
Baseline Documentation	
Management Plan Preparation	
Personnel (staff salary & benefits)	
Stewardship Endowment	
Public outreach including signs, maps, website, etc.	
Total Expenses	

INCOME	\$ received
Grants received - List sources & amounts	
Gifts received - List sources & amounts	
Projected Grants - List sources & amounts	
Projected Gifts - List sources & amounts	
Projected in-kind donations - List sources & amounts	
CBEP Request	
Total Income	