



Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund Spring 2020 Request for Proposals

Overview

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) is offering grants to support the permanent protection of targeted habitats in the Casco Bay watershed through its *Habitat Protection Fund* (Fund). The Fund will be administered by CBEP via the University of Southern Maine, in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (MDIFW), and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program (USFWS). A minimum of \$20,000 is available this round.

Prospective applicants must provide parcel lot/map information to USFWS & CBEP by March 6, 2020. USFWS will then prepare a standard series of maps to accompany each proposal on a first come, first served basis. **Completed proposals must be emailed to CBEP by 5:00 PM on April 3, 2020.**

Fund Criteria

1. Projects must be located within the Casco Bay watershed (see [map](#)), including the Calendar Islands.
2. The Fund aims to support protection of lands that are integral to aquatic ecosystems. Proposals should target property with one or more of the following characteristics:
 - a. Shoreline on tidal waters, small coastal streams, rivers, or perennial streams.
 - b. Tidal or freshwater wetlands, including floodplains and naturally occurring vernal pools.
 - c. Salt marsh migration corridors.
 - d. Focus areas designated by Beginning With Habitat ([map](#); [factsheets](#)).
 - e. Conservation priorities identified by local, regional, or statewide habitat-focused plans.
3. **Grant funds must be expended by March 31, 2020** unless an alternate time frame is described in the proposal and agreed upon during the application process.
4. The Fund can be used to reimburse transaction costs (defined below) that predate this RFP, provided that: a) the cost was incurred between July 2019 - February 2020, b) documentation of cost and completion are provided, and c) the acquisition is expected to close by December 31, 2020.
5. Grants can be awarded to tax-exempt 501(c)(3) conservation organizations or units of government.
6. Individual conservation projects are eligible to receive up to two awards from the Fund.

Eligible Expenses

1. Transaction costs such as boundary 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

Individual grant awards will depend on the number and quality of proposals received, with a maximum award of \$10,000. At least \$20,000 is available through the Fund for this round.

CBEP Habitat Protection Committee

The Fund is administered by a Committee consisting of representatives of CBEP, USFWS, IFW and MCHT. Applicants may contact any of the individuals listed at the end of the RFP about the Fund.

Requirements for all Properties Protected

1. All lands protected 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 habitat values, must be assured in perpetuity due to the use of U.S. EPA federal funds. 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 ecologically 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 review these activities in the proposal and describe legal and other mechanisms for ensuring compliance with management goals.
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 Coastal Program, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.
5. Although it is not a requirement to receive a grant 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 are encouraged to start by contacting Matt Craig of CBEP.
2. Provide tax parcel lot/map information to USFWS and CBEP **by March 6th**. It may take at least two weeks to create maps. Maps will be prepared on a first come, first served basis.
3. Applicants should submit an electronic copy of the following information to CBEP **by April 3rd**:
 - a) Cover letter briefly describing project and requesting funds;
 - b) A completed Habitat Protection Fund application OR a pre-existing grant application with supplemental information as needed. All applicants must provide information from p.1 of the application form.
 - c) Series of habitat maps prepared by USFWS (#2, above);
 - d) An appraisal summary sheet or opinion of value, if available;
 - e) Budget outlining the total project costs, committed funds, and potential funding sources – both for the project and for any planned stewardship/management.
 - f) Two - four photos of the parcel suitable for use in outreach and reporting.

Following review of the application, the Committee may request additional information or a site visit. The Committee aims to finalize funding decisions within 4 weeks of the application deadline.

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, estuarine);
- 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;
- Integral to 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 on habitat values;
- Likelihood of successful implementation (including acquisition and long-term stewardship);
- Community sentiments toward the project, including public access considerations.

Habitat values will be analyzed and prioritized using a standardized set of maps prepared by USFWS Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, including:

- *Beginning With Habitat (BWH) Riparian Resources*
- *BWH Resources as documented by MDIFW, Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources and USFWS*
- *Regional conservation lands and BWH Undeveloped Habitat Blocks*
- *Parcel map on aerial imagery*
- *Nature's Network Conservation Design (naturesnetwork.org)*

Applicants are also welcome, but not required, to submit additional information such as:

- Applicant-provided site environmental surveys
- Other GIS-based habitat analyses and models as available
- Local knowledge and site visit observations

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Committee

Matt Craig Habitat Program Manager Casco Bay Estuary Partnership 207-228-8359 Matthew.Craig@maine.edu	Bob Houston Biologist/GIS Specialist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of ME Coastal Program 207-781-8364 x 11 Robert_Houston@fws.gov	Keith Fletcher Project Manager Maine Coast Heritage Trust 207-729-7366 KFletcher@MCHT.org	Amanda Cross Wildlife Planner Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife 207-287-5260 Amanda.S.Cross@maine.gov
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Proposal Submission

Applications will be considered complete when information requested in the application form has been provided and any supplement materials (photos, maps) have been included as attachments.

Completed applications must be emailed to Matthew.Craig@maine.edu by 5:00 pm on April 3, 2020.



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	