



Casco Bay Habitat Protection Fund Fall 2021 Request for Proposals

Overview

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) has allocated \$20,000 for the permanent protection of lands that are integral to aquatic ecosystems through the fall 2021 RFP of the *Casco Bay Habitat Protection Fund*. The RFP is in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (MaineDIFW), and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Coastal Program (USFWS).

This fund strategically supports land protection by paying for transaction costs, including boundary surveys, appraisals, legal fees, title research, environmental assessments, recording fees, and related "due diligence" expenses, which occur prior to the acquisition of conservation easements or fee ownership. As such, grants serve as seed money for fundraising, when there may be risk inherent to incurring expenses in order to develop a project. CBEP often provides letters of support to grantees.

Applicants are asked to provide parcel lot/map information to USFWS & CBEP by **November 15, 2021**. Completed proposals are due by **December 22, 2021**.

Fund Criteria

1. Projects must be located within the Casco Bay watershed (see [map](#)), including the Calendar Islands.
2. 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 wetlands, salt marsh migration corridors, and adjacent upland buffers.
 - c. Freshwater wetlands, including floodplains and naturally occurring vernal pools.
 - d. *Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas* ([factsheets](#)).
 - e. Conservation priorities identified by local, regional, or statewide habitat-focused plans.
3. Grants cover anticipated costs incurred between 11/1/2021 - 12/31/2022.
4. Funds must be invoiced no later than 12/31/2022.
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 grants from the Fund.

Eligible Expenses

1. Priority: Early transaction costs such as boundary surveys, attorney fees, environmental assessments, appraisal costs, recording fees, title research, and related 'due diligence' expenses.
2. Secondary: Costs associated with purchasing or receiving a conservation easement.
3. Ineligible: Personnel costs, fee ownership acquisition costs, and long-term stewardship funds are ineligible for this round.
4. Other: Please contact CBEP for clarification, or if unusual circumstances are present that may warrant further consideration of strategic uses of funds.

Grant Amount

Individual grant awards typically range from \$3,000 - \$7,500, with a maximum of \$10,000, and depend on the number and quality of proposals received. A total of \$20,000 is available this round.

CBEP Habitat Protection Committee

The CBEP Habitat Protection Committee, comprised of representatives from CBEP, USFWS, MaineDIFW and MCHT, evaluates proposals and provides recommendations to CBEP for allocation of funding.

Requirements for all Properties Protected

1. All lands protected must be managed for habitat conservation. The applicant must ensure 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. (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, CBEP will provide a logo and requests recognition as a partner involved in supporting the land protection initiative. In written materials, we request that "Casco Bay 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 parties should notify CBEP at the contact information. Contact information is provided below.
2. Provide tax parcel lot/map information to USFWS and CBEP by **11/15/21**. Maps will be prepared on a first come, first served basis, and provided to applicants by **12/8/21**.
3. Applicants should submit an electronic copy of the following items to CBEP by **12/22/21**.
 - 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 (especially p.1 of the HPF 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); and,
 - f) A set of photos of the parcel suitable for use in CBEP outreach and reporting (provide credits).

Following review of the application, the Committee may request 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 Maine DIFW, 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

Applicants may contact any of the individuals listed below about the Fund.

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	Bethany Atkins Land Acquisition and Grants Biologist Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife 207-287-5878 Bethany.Atkins@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 December 22, 2021.



Casco Bay 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 CBEP HPF 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 CBEP HPF 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	