



Casco Bay Habitat Protection Fund Spring 2023 Request for Proposals

Overview

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, requests proposals for the spring 2023 *Casco Bay Habitat Protection Fund*. The Fund supports permanent protection of # " that integral to aquatic ecosystems public access to water resources and open space.

The Fund aims to be strategic in advancing projects through key stages. Strategic uses vary by project but might include early "due diligence" expenses, exploratory projects with a compelling potential outcome, or projects that are a strong fit with the Fund focus on water, but which may be difficult to finance. Innovative practices such as use of riparian easements are encouraged, as are projects that incorporate aquatic habitat restoration. Grants often serve as seed money for larger campaigns.

CBEP has allocated \$100,000 for the Fund in 2023, a portion of which will be held over for the fall 2023 RFP. Proposals up to \$25,000 will be considered for the spring 2023, but actual grant awards may be lower, and will depend on the number and quality of proposals received.

Applicants are asked to share parcel lot/map information with CBEP as soon as possible, and no later than 4/21/23, to be eligible for this round. Completed applications are due Thursday, 5/25/23.

Requirements

1. Projects must be located within the Casco Bay watershed (see [map](#)), including the Calendar Islands.
2. Proposals should target properties with one or more of the following characteristics:
 - a. Shoreline on tidal waters, coastal streams, main stem rivers, or perennial streams.
 - b. Coastal wetlands, low-lying areas suitable for marsh migration, and adjacent upland buffers.
 - c. Freshwater wetlands, including floodplains and naturally occurring vernal pools.
 - d. *Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas* ([fact sheets](#)).
 - e. Conservation priorities identified by local, regional, or statewide habitat-focused plans.
 - f. Forested areas adjacent to headwater streams.
3. Grants cover costs incurred or anticipated between 1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023.
4. Eligible applicants include tax-exempt 501(c)(3) land trusts, or units of government.
5. Individual conservation projects are eligible to receive up to two grants from the Fund.
6. Applicants may submit proposals for different projects in the same round.

Eligible Expenses

1. Early transaction costs such as boundary surveys, attorney fees, environmental assessments, appraisal costs, recording fees, title research, or other "due diligence" costs.
2. Costs associated with securing a conservation easement or fee ownership.
3. Stewardship funds are eligible if an applicant can demonstrate that they are necessary for the project to succeed.

Personnel costs are ineligible.

Please contact CBEP for clarification, or if unusual circumstances present rationale for other uses.

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.
3. If intensive land management activities are envisioned on the property, they should be conducted in an ecologically sensitive manner, consistent with the overarching purpose of protecting high value habitat. If forestry, limited agriculture, or other intensive practices are anticipated, the applicant must provide a detailed review of these activities in the proposal and describe legal and other mechanisms for ensuring compliance with long-term 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 the completions of an acquisition project is strongly encouraged. This commitment will need to be documented in writing on the organization’s letterhead and is typically requested in the summer.

Application Process

The process for applying is as follows:

1. Interested parties should notify CBEP and provide tax parcel lot/map information **as soon as possible, and no later than 4/21/2023**. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Coastal Program will then prepare a set of maps on a first come/first served basis. Maps will be provided to applicants for use in developing proposals when they are completed.
2. Applicants should submit an electronic copy of the following items to CBEP by **5/25/2023 by COB**.
 - a) Cover letter briefly describing the 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, as described above;
 - d) An appraisal summary sheet or opinion of value, if available;
 - e) A budget, preferably in Excel, outlining the total project costs, committed matching funds, and potential funding sources (both for the project and for any planned stewardship/management); and,
 - f) Medium-resolution photos of the parcel suitable for use in CBEP outreach and reporting (provide credits).

In some cases, the Committee may request a site visit. The Committee meets in early June, and **CBEP intends to announce funding decisions by mid-June 2023**.

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;
- Proximity / adjacency to other permanently 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;
- Significance of the project relative to improving equity of access to water bodies and open space, particularly in context of proximity to existing protected land and population centers.

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

Matt Craig Habitat Program Manager Casco Bay Estuary Partnership 207-228-8359 Matthew.Craig@maine.edu	(vacant) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of ME Coastal Program	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 Thursday, May 25, 2023.



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? Does it contain structures? What recreational or commercial uses will be permitted on the property once it is permanently protected?

How would permanent protection of the property improve public access to the water and open space? Does this project address equity needs in the region? Explain.

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 objectives for the property. How will these objectives be met and maintained through time?

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

Casco Bay 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	