



GREAT LAKES PROTECTION FUND

SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR PREPROPOSALS:

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPARENCY,
AND POSITIVE CHOICES**

PREPROPOSALS DUE: APRIL 20, 2008

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SUMMARY

The Great Lakes Protection Fund seeks a suite of projects to design, deploy, and evaluate information technology prototypes that permit individuals, institutions, and/or private corporations to make healthier choices for the Great Lakes ecosystem. These prototypes will provide resource users with real-time feedback about their choices and how those choices can improve or degrade ecosystem health. Projects should use new or available technology to present opportunities for a range of actors to undertake seemingly inconsequential activities that, in aggregate, can lead to ecologically meaningful results. The Fund believes that the deployment of new or existing information technology prototypes that connect behaviors and ecosystem outcomes can push the collection of individual, isolated behaviors towards a tipping point that improves Great Lakes health. We want to support a number of project teams willing to test this hypothesis.

Like all Fund supported work, these projects should be team-based, collaborative efforts that lead to meaningful actions to restore Great Lakes' health. The most successful prototype efforts will combine cutting edge information technology skills, conservation leadership, and commercial partners willing to work together. Teams must discover new collaborative partnerships and synergies. The Fund will not support advocacy campaigns.

Five page preproposals are due by Midnight, April 20, 2008. The Fund will begin review upon receipt and earlier submittals are encouraged. In early May 2008 project teams from the selected preproposals will be invited to submit a more detailed full proposal in June 2008. Funding decisions will be made in September 2008.

BACKGROUND

Many of the problems plaguing the Great Lakes are the result of a large number of individual, seemingly inconsequential, disjointed decisions. These problems include: the widespread use of water at times that stress the infrastructure and lead to combined sewer overflows; the use of electricity during peak periods from power plants that are relatively high emitting facilities; purchasing, shipping, and other contract decisions that lead to the release of exotic species; and other manufacturing, planning, development, or land-use choices that result in toxic or nutrient pollution of the Lakes.

The common thread in these problems is that they are often the result of choices whose consequences are invisible to the decision maker—superior environmental performance cannot be selected, poor environmental performance cannot be avoided. For example, individual households that choose not run their appliances during a rainstorm are usually unaware of and not rewarded for the reduced stress on

combined sewers. Similarly, individuals or institutions that overcool their facilities during peak summer power hours are unaware of the impacts of this decision on the region's ambient air quality. The aggregate impact of such small choices can be significant enough to drive either degraded or improved ecosystem conditions.

The Fund believes that information technology can be used to increase the transparency of these seemingly inconsequential actions and provide individuals with the opportunity to make changes on basin lands, and in basin waters, to improve the ecological integrity of the Great Lakes.

PROJECT CRITERIA

The Fund wishes to support a portfolio of projects that design, test, and deploy information technology prototypes that make consequences visible to the decision maker and lead to a healthier Great Lakes ecosystem. Projects may undertake activity anywhere that affects Great Lakes' health.

The Fund wishes to support multi-institution and multi-sector project teams. Teams that design and run projects should include the full range of experts relevant to their project's expected outcome, work plan and strategy. These might include software design engineers, social networking experts, hardware developers, hydrologists, biologists, management professionals, and individuals and institutions that will test the prototypes developed.

Ideally, projects will not only include a subset of users in demonstration or pilot settings, but also be designed with the active involvement of future, potential users or customers. This strategy has proven to be the most effective way of creating a path to scale, so that the project team can influence behavior across the set of actors that affect the health of the basin. Projects that rely on a "create and disseminate" approach—building a prototype without the involvement of the basin-wide community of potential users and distributing reports, software or samples—are not encouraged.

As with all Fund-supported work, these teams must be collaborative in nature and represent the full suite of interests relevant to improving the health of water resources. The Fund will not support advocacy campaigns. Supported teams must be willing to collaborate with other grantees, Fund staff, and others in the basin to capture and share the lessons learned from the supported projects.

The Fund hopes to support an array of innovative strategies to apply information technology in actions that lead to a healthier Great Lakes ecosystem. The Fund prefers projects that target multiple sites for pilot testing, but will also consider smaller, regionally relevant projects that add value to the larger body

of work supported. Some projects could also begin as an early planning and development stage, to be implemented with future Fund support.

Projects could be financed with outright cash grants, convertible grants, debt, equity or some combination.

Each project should:

- Test a hypothesis about what behavior(s) can be changed by the provision of information in the right form at the right time and how the Lakes are likely to benefit from those changes;
- Consider possible incentives that lead to behavior change and identify the particulars of information delivery—time, granularity, and format;
- Demonstrate an innovative and scalable strategy;
- Create a prototype information system that meets an important and existing demand;
- Be a collaborative effort by a multi-institution and multi-sector team that includes users of the tools to be developed;
- Include an evaluation plan to verify and quantify the project results and test the hypothesis; and,
- Make maximum use of existing efforts and leverage Fund support as much as possible.

ELIGIBILITY

The Great Lakes Protection Fund can support a wide variety of applicants. Non-profit organizations (including environmental organizations, trade associations, and universities), governmental agencies, individuals, and for-profit businesses are eligible for Fund support. Successful applicants must maintain open access to certain project data, records and information.

All applicants must show that the proposed work has clear public benefit and that any related financial benefits will accrue to the public good. Government agencies must show that Fund support is not being used to replace or duplicate funds.

CONTENT OF PREPROPOSALS

Preproposals should include an applicant [cover sheet](#), no more than five pages of narrative (including the project budget), and a copy of the project manager's resume. No other attachments are permitted. The Fund prefers that preproposals be submitted via e-mail.

All preproposals must be delivered to the Fund's offices no later than Midnight, April 20, 2008. The Fund will begin review upon receipt. In May 2008, the Fund expects to request more fully developed project proposals from a subset of teams submitting preproposals. Fund staff and other technical experts will review these full proposals prior to a funding decision by the Fund's Board of Directors.

In your preproposal, please address the following issues in the order below:

Ecosystem Impacts

Identify how the proposed work will improve ecosystem health and why it is important for the Great Lakes. Be as specific as possible. Please include a testable hypothesis for the project's on-the-ground work, describe the specific, exportable prototype system the team expects to create, identify how success will be measured, and explain what—if anything—must happen beyond the work proposed to ensure that these outcomes are realized.

Proposed Work

Outline the work to be carried out. Include a project timeline that contains the major interim objectives. Show how the work will lead to the expected environmental outcome identified above. Describe the human behavior the project intends to change, the incentives that will drive that change, the information technology (hardware, software, and/or data necessary) to relay those incentives, and explicitly what the team will do to demonstrate positive changes and grow the impact of the work. Describe the target audiences for the project and identify their role. Discuss how the exportable tools and other results matter to the target audiences, and lay out a strategy to engage them, even if projected environmental outcomes are not achieved.

Key Personnel

Identify the project team members (those supported by the request, by other funding sources, and volunteers), and indicate their roles, responsibilities and qualifications. By the time a full proposal is submitted (and ideally well before) the team should reflect meaningful collaboration among all interests affected by the project and include members from entities that will ultimately use the tools and approaches developed.

Financial Plan

Present the estimated costs of the proposed work in summary categories: personnel, equipment and supplies, travel, consultants, overhead, etc. The Fund will not support overhead costs in excess of 15% of

the direct project costs (excluding travel and sub-contracts.) Identify the type and amount of support requested of the Fund. Identify how other monies will be raised to support the proposed work.

Submit a single copy via e-mail to:

TransparencyandchoiceRfp@glpf.org

If electronic submission is not possible, submit six (6) copies via mail to:

Preproposal:

Great Lakes Protection Fund

1560 Sherman Ave., Suite 880

Evanston, IL 60201

Fax: 847.424.9832

Visit the Fund's [Information Technology Rfp website](#) to find important links to *Project Ideas*, *Frequently Asked Questions*, and *Additional Resources*.

CALENDAR

March 2008

Requests for Preproposals

April 20, 2008

Preproposal Submissions Due

(Note—Preproposals will be reviewed as received. Early submissions are strongly encouraged so that Staff may provide feedback on project ideas, team membership, etc.)

May 2008

Full Proposals Invited

Summer 2008

Full Proposal Review and Revision

September 2008

Announcement of Awards