

Request for Proposals Lake St Croix Watershed Improvement (LSCWI)

The St. Croix River Association is soliciting proposals for funding consideration within the Lake St. Croix Watershed Improvement (LSCWI) program. The intent of the program is to encourage partnerships and capacity growth to: 1) identify sources of phosphorus nutrient loading to Lake St. Croix and 2) to implement best management practices to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake St. Croix to help meet Lake St. Croix TMDL phosphorus reduction goals.

Funding for this program comes from a Minnesota Clean Water Land and Legacy appropriation specifically for watershed improvements on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix watershed. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has made \$200,000 in funding available to the St. Croix River Association to allocate towards phosphorus reduction and monitoring activities beginning in 2019.

Selected projects are designed to measurably reduce nutrient runoff to Lake St. Croix and to gain a better understanding of nutrient movement throughout the watershed. Projects leverage technical and financial resources between organizations and their partners to complete on-the-ground activities within the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River watershed. Awards may not be used for lobbying, fundraising, political advocacy, or litigation.

Eligible Applicants:

Non-state agencies and organizations are eligible to apply, including local government units, non-profit organizations, institutions of higher learning, and other conservation organizations. All non-profit organizations must be registered as a 501(c)(3).

Project Timeline, Grant Amount, and Match Requirements:

A watershed improvement grant may be awarded for a period not to exceed **two years, and grantees must provide at least 25% of the total project cost. The maximum award amount is up to \$40,000 per application.** Match may be a combination of cash and in-kind from non-state sources. The SCRA may decrease the matching requirement to as low as 10% if the applicant can demonstrate in writing that fiscal circumstances are constrained to such an extent that fulfilling the matching funds requirement would impose undue hardship.

Proposal Submission:

Proposals should be completed by **Wednesday, May 15th, 2019** and submitted electronically to Monica Zachay, SCRA, at monicz@scramail.com. Any format is acceptable if the content requirements below are addressed. Selections will be announced by June 1st, 2018 with an anticipated project start date of June 30th, 2018.

Proposal Review and Selection:

An evaluation of eligible projects received will be completed by a Proposal Ranking Team consisting of SCRA representatives and non-competing members of the St. Croix Water Resources Planning Team (Basin Team). Proposals will be evaluated based on clarity of the project description, goals, and activities; the overall need for the project; the extent to which resources are leveraged and partnerships utilized; and the overall impact of the project shown using measurable results.

Additional Information and Requirements:

Consideration will be given to all qualified applications. Applications selected for funding will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the SCRA. Payments will be based on reimbursable expenses. A semi-annual Accomplishment Report and a Final Report will be required of selected projects (further guidance will be provided). All implemented BMPs must be entered into the State of Minnesota's eLink and all monitoring data must be submitted to the MPCA for submittal into the EQUIS database.

Proposal Outline and Instructions:

The body of proposals should be no more than 4 pages (maps, budget, and project design plans may appear in an appendix). Proposals must contain the following information:

- 1) Project Title
- 2) Primary Points of Contact – *list names and contact information for lead applicant and any project managers associated with the project*
- 3) Project Area – *describe the project area*
- 4) Need – *describe the need for the project*
- 5) Project Description – *provide clear goals, objectives, activities, and results of your proposed project. For a phosphorus reduction project, the applicant must explain how the proposed project will result in a quantifiable reduction of phosphorus loading into Lake St Croix. For a proposed monitoring project, the applicant must explain how the project will lead to improved monitoring data or that the identified monitoring will lead to an increased understanding of current and future phosphorus levels in the applicant's targeted area. Applicants should provide supporting information, as applicable.*
- 6) Partner Engagement and Contributions – *list actively engaged partners and contributions (funds, staff, or other). Include a budget table clearly showing the financial contribution or dollar value of contribution in-kind from each partner.*
- 7) Monitoring and Evaluation – *describe how you will measure the impact of your project and estimated nutrient reductions, if applicable.*
- 8) Budget - *include a budget table clearly outlining how grant and matching funds will be spent over the two year project period. Include items such as staff wages, anticipated supplies, mileage, printing, consultant fees, and any additional expenses. Cash and in-kind contributions to the project must be identified in the budget as to source and use, and be applicable to the project.*
- 9) Letter of Support - *letters confirming cash and in-kind support from partners and other funding sources must be included with the application.*
- 10) Maps and project designs – *any pertinent project designs and maps of the project location may be included in the proposal as an appendix. Maps and project designs will not count towards the four page maximum proposal length.*

Application submissions, and additional questions regarding the application process and proposal eligibility should be submitted to:

Monica Zachay, *Land & Water Director*
St. Croix River Association
monicaz@scramail.com or (715) 483-3300