

**USGS-National Park Service Water Quality Partnership Program
Call for proposals for projects initiating in FY2013**

Due Dates for proposals:

November 30, 2011 for short (5-page) proposals for regional evaluation
March 31, 2012 for full proposals (from those selected by regional evaluation)

USGS National Program Manager: Mark Nilles, manilles@usgs.gov, 303-236-1878

NPS Program Manager: Gary Rosenlieb gary_rosenlieb@nps.gov 970-225-3518

Program Web Site: http://water.usgs.gov/nps_partnership/

Introduction: This program employs a joint USGS-NPS managed competition and project selection process administratively based on USGS boundaries that correspond to the service areas for USGS Water Science Field Team-Water Quality Specialists (eastern, central, and western). These specialists work with appropriate Park Service and USGS regions/areas to coordinate a regional selection process. Key elements of the program are: 1) A well publicized USGS-NPS program-specific call for short (5-page) proposals with a single and common deadline of November 30, 2011, 2) a regional selection process involving USGS and NPS areas and regions that gives equal representation to reviewers from both agencies, and 3) A requirement for completion of longer (full) proposals only for projects selected in the regional step for consideration by a national selection and funding process. Short proposals are submitted to the appropriate USGS Water Science Field Team-Water Quality Specialist who takes the lead in organizing and hosting the joint USGS-NPS regional review panels. These panels evaluate the shorter proposals using a reduced number of four ranking criteria (significance, severity, problem resolution, and scientific merit) with equal weighting. Specific proposal ranking criteria and weighting for regional evaluation are indicated on page three, and a template for the 5-page proposals is provided on the program web site. After successful regional selection, the project principal investigators (PIs) are requested to develop full proposals that are evaluated by a national panel represented by USGS and NPS discipline specialists on an equal basis including national, regional, park, and Water Science Center (WSC) personnel, using nine ranking criteria.

Timeline:

No later than October 1, 2011

USGS-NPS water quality partnership FY13 call for proposals from USGS and NPS program coordinators goes out to all USGS areas, WSCs, NPS regions, and parks by agency memos.

November 30, 2011

Due date for short (not to exceed 5 pages) proposals. Proposals go to the appropriate USGS Water Science Field Team to the attention of the Water Quality Specialist based on where the project will be conducted.

December 1, 2011 - January 31, 2012

Joint USGS-NPS regional panels evaluate and select proposals to forward to national panel.

On or before February 1, 2012

USGS project PI's who authored short proposals selected to be forwarded to national panel, and benefitting parks, are notified and instructed to expand proposals to meet national standards for full proposals.

March 31, 2012

Expanded proposals and approval letters are collected by USGS Water Science Field Team Water Quality Specialists and sent to NPS-WRD and USGS-OWQ.

April 1, 2012 - May 31, 2012

NPS-WRD and USGS-OWQ finalize proposal packages and coordinates national panel team selection and dates.

Early mid-June 2012

National panel convened to select projects for funding. PIs are informed of selection or non-selection for FY12 funding immediately following the end of panel.

On or before July 31, 2012

The NPS-USGS Partnership web site is updated with new selected projects.

On or before August 31, 2012

Comments from national panel reviewers are posted to the NPS-USGS partnership web site.

No later than October 1, 2012

Memos from USGS and NPS Program coordinators sent to both agencies' offices with FY13 new selected, non-selected and existing (ongoing) projects and new project rankings. USGS-NPS water quality partnership FY14 call for proposals from USGS and NPS program coordinators goes out to all USGS regions, WSCs, NPS regions, and parks by agency memos.

Documentation: USGS Water Science Centers must submit a MS Word or Adobe PDF version of their technical proposal in order to compete for FY 2013 funding from this program. A NPS-assigned PMIS number is optional at the short proposal regional level evaluation and required for full proposals evaluated by the national panel. A template for short proposals and guidance for full proposals are available on the program web site. All full project proposals require written approval by both USGS Water Science Center Directors and Park Superintendents.

Funding Amount: There is no minimum funding level. However, the four types of projects addressed by this funding source have the following maximum funding levels:

1. Intensive Studies: \$100,000/project/year.
2. Synoptic Studies: \$50,000/project/year.
3. Fixed-Station Monitoring Studies: \$50,000/project/year.
4. Technical Assistance Requests: \$50,000/request.

Project Duration: Not to exceed three years, with the exception of Technical Assistance Requests which are limited to one year.

Number of proposals selected by area/regional panels for the national panel: Joint agency regional panels with equal representation between USGS and NPS personnel evaluate and select 5-page proposals submitted by/for park locations in the service area of the USGS Water Science Field Team Water Quality Specialists. Each joint regional panel will select a total of eight proposals in the following funding range for full proposal development and submission to the national panel: four intensive study proposals up to \$100K/year over three years (\$300K total), two synoptic and/or fixed-station monitoring proposals up to \$50K/year over three years (\$150K total), and two technical assistance proposals up to \$50K for one year. This will result in a maximum of 24 proposals to be considered by the national panel and provide a range of project scopes and durations.

Subject of Projects: Projects will be accepted in the four categories below. Researchers are encouraged to include a data analysis and interpretation component by USGS to make the information immediately applicable by NPS resource managers, and also make specific provisions for park interpreters and the USGS to present the information to the public.

1. Intensive Studies: Relatively large projects that require in-depth study of park water quality. Designed to characterize known or suspected water quality problems, these projects will also focus on understanding causes of contamination and the implications of water quality impairment to aquatic biota. Most intensive studies are strongly issue-driven and oriented towards priority water quality issues confronting the NPS.
2. Synoptic Studies: Short-term investigations of water quality from several sites during selected seasonal periods or hydrologic conditions. These projects are designed to focus on park-specific issues that may have broader regional implications. Synoptic studies are intended to provide a quick assessment of aquatic conditions at selected locations and to evaluate the spatial relationships or contributions to those conditions, or to provide baseline data and information where little exists.
3. Fixed-Station Monitoring: Monitoring that documents long-term trends in water quality (if continued) and determines if management actions are achieving water quality objectives. Fixed-station monitoring will be designed to enable park managers to know the health of nationally significant NPS water bodies, know the effects of remediation actions, and document whether external activities adversely affect park water quality. Fixed-station monitoring may be implemented using a "site rotation" concept.
4. Technical Assistance: Short-term assistance provided to the park for purposes of installation of instrumentation, training, scoping water quality issues, or providing technical representation at venues requiring water quality expertise.

USGS Coordination: Early in the process of assembling short proposals for regional submission, parks and Water Science Centers should communicate to identify park needs, USGS expertise, discuss strategies, and coordinate writing or revising project proposals and addressing the ranking criteria. One or more USGS professionals normally collaborate with the benefiting park and prepare an original short technical proposal for the project, and the USGS collaborators, cooperating WSC, and benefiting park(s) do not necessarily have to be within the same USGS area or NPS region.

In order for an expanded or full proposal to be considered by the national panel, the USGS Water Science Center Director of the USGS project PI must certify each submission with an approval letter, indicating that the work is feasible and the schedule and costs are appropriate. In addition, the local NPS Park Superintendent must certify each submission with an approval letter, indicating that the park approves the project work and is committed to being involved in the project during its implementation.

Criteria, Selection and Approval Process and Schedule: NPS and USGS personnel that screen the short project proposals for this partnership program will utilize a standard project selection process as stated in the introduction of this guidance that includes all affected parties and gives equal representation between NPS and USGS reviewers on the panels. The Eastern Region panel will represent the USGS Southeast and Northeast Areas and the NPS Northeast, National Capital, Midwest, and Southeast Regions. The Central Region panel will represent the USGS Midwest, Rocky Mountain and South Central Areas and the NPS Intermountain, Midwest, and Southeast Regions. The Western Region panel will represent the USGS Alaska, Northwest and Southwest Areas and the NPS Pacific West, Intermountain, and Alaska Regions. USGS Field Team Water Quality Specialists will communicate with NPS Regional Water Resource Coordinators in developing the regional evaluation panels. Project funds will be allocated by the USGS national program manager to the USGS WSC's performing the investigations. Parks will collaborate with the USGS WSC offices that will conduct the water quality assessments and monitoring studies necessary to satisfy park needs.

Proposal Ranking Criteria and Weighting for Regional Evaluation (5-page proposal length maximum)

1. Significance of the resource or issue to the park (25%): Describe why this is an important issue or resource to the park involved. What was the process that identified this as a priority?
2. Severity of resource threat, problem, or need(s) (25%): Is there a time-critical or urgent aspect to this project? What causes this to be an urgent need? How imminent is the threat, and what is its extent? What are the consequences of not doing the project now?
3. Problem resolution (25%): Describe how the proposed project will resolve the problem, as defined in the proposal. Will the project contribute directly to decisions or actions that will meaningfully resolve a management issue?
4. Scientific merit (25%): The project should have clearly stated objectives, well designed procedures, adhere to the scientific method, contribute to key science questions, and have realistically attainable results. Proposals should describe any new or innovative scientific approaches or techniques.

Full Proposal Submissions: USGS Water Science Field Team Water Quality Specialists are responsible for providing the following documents electronically to Gary Rosenlieb NPS-WRD and Mark Nilles USGS-OWQ no later than March 31, 2012: 1) The USGS full Technical Proposals and 2) Responses to all nine natural resource ranking criteria and approval letters.

Implementation Plan and Reporting Requirements: Brief annual progress reports and a Final Completion Report are required from USGS for all projects funded with these funds. Detailed Implementation Plans are not required from parks.

Proposal Preparation/Technical Assistance: Guidance is available from the USGS and NPS-WRD in selecting project statements for submission, preparing the overall project proposal submissions, and facilitating coordination with project partners. To obtain assistance or information please contact Mark Nilles, USGS, Office of Water Quality (manilles@usgs.gov, 303-236-1878) or your Water Science Field Team Water Quality Specialist. For National Park Service specific information, you may also contact Gary Rosenlieb, NPS-WRD, (Gary_Rosenlieb@nps.gov, 970-225-3518). For more information, see the partnership web site at http://water.usgs.gov/nps_partnership/.