Western Alaska LCC



REQUEST FOR COOPERATIVE PROJECT PROPOSALS 2012

The Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative (WALCC) is seeking project ideas related to *Coastal Storms and their Impacts* in western Alaska for potential funding in 2012. Total available funding is **uncertain** at this time, however, the Cooperative may have up to $1 Million dollars to distribute for projects in 2012 and decisions will need to be made by early April to distribute funds. This will be the first of a two-year program funding multiple projects on this topic (the proposed 2013 announcement will continue to focus on coastal storms and their impacts though the emphasis areas may differ from the four in this announcement). Successful projects will demonstrate how the WALCC adds value to existing efforts in western Alaska and helps partners address shared science needs. Proposals supported by the program are intended to produce both short term results and longer term benefits to an array of stakeholders. To the extent possible, Principal Investigators (PI) of successful proposals will be asked to coordinate activities with other selected projects to provide for the greatest opportunity for integration.

Background

The Mission of the WALCC is to promote coordination, dissemination, and development of applied science to inform landscape level conservation, including terrestrial-marine linkages, in the face of landscape scale stressors, focusing on climate change.

In spring 2011, the WALCC, DOI's Alaska Climate Science Center, and BLM gathered 150 land and resource managers, field specialists, researchers, and local knowledge experts to identify climate change-related priority science needs for resource management in western Alaska. "*Changes in Coastal Processes"* (e.g., inundation, erosion, salinization, etc.) was one of the three most important changes expected in regional geophysical processes with anticipated impacts on important resources throughout the LCC.

In fall 2011, the WALCC Steering Committee adopted a Pilot Program focused on *Changes in Coastal Processes* and organized a team of 21 scientists and managers familiar with the region to refine program objectives, identify key components, and identify strategies and opportunities for leveraging. The Team recommended focusing on ***Changes in Coastal Storms and their Impacts*** since large changes in coastal storm characteristics are expected due to climate change. Storms have a wide range of impacts on local, regional, and national decisions (e.g., management of subsistence resources and other fish and wildlife, infrastructure siting and operation, emergency response planning, etc.) and **we are encouraging applicants to propose efforts that will address cross-cutting gaps and issues**. Existing efforts and stakeholders are varied and disparate, providing opportunities for partner engagement, leveraging, collaboration, and synthesis.

General Guidelines

Due to time constraints, all projects should be cooperative projects allowing for funding mechanisms through interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, a USGS Cooperative Research Unit agreement, or Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Agreements. **Proposals submitted by NON-FEDERAL entities must be submitted via the Grants.gov website. See Announcement F12AS00052. Proposals submitted by FEDERAL agencies must be submitted** via the Western Alaska LCC website (http://www.arcus.org/western-alaska-lcc).

Projects can take up to three years to complete (FY2015), but full funding must be requested in FY2012. Projects that address science information needs for multiple entities are preferred, and projects which leverage funds from other sources are encouraged, however, there is no set matching-fund requirement. In FY2011 the WALCC funded projects at levels ranging from $20,000.00 to $209,000.00.

The WALCC assumes that information generated with its support will be made widely available in an easy to interpret manner and that the WALCC will receive data collected/associated with any WALCC-funded project (in a format and at a time mutually agreed upon by the WALCC and the Principal Investigator). However, we recognize that some data have restrictions associated with its distribution. The proposal template requests that you disclose any limitations that you may have on sharing data. Proposals will not be penalized for restrictions in data sharing created by policies or regulations outside of the Principal Investigator's (PI) control.

Proposals selected for funding will be required to provide a detailed budget, scope-of-work, and clearly articulate a communication strategy to disseminate resulting information. The WALCC will work with successful PI to complete the cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement, and determine a funding schedule. Funded projects will also be required to submit a data management plan within three months of funding. The plan should detail appropriate activities and timelines for establishing, maintaining, validating, describing, and sharing project data, metadata, and data products.

Topics of Interest

We are seeking proposals in four areas of science needs related to *Coastal Storms and their Impacts* in western Alaska. While we are interested in proposals that cover wide geographic areas of the WALCC, we recognize that some proposals will focus on smaller geographic areas to develop, test or demonstrate methodology or applications.

1) Shorefast ice dynamics

Develop and apply methods to document shorefast ice characteristics and long-term dynamics. Of particular interest are ice timing, residency, extent and characteristics (i.e. from slush to solid). Ultimately, the WALCC is interested in synthesizing long-term shorefast ice dynamics and relating it to existing data on nearshore salinity, biological populations and ecological processes. Proposals that use readily available data (such as the National Ice Center "ice charts") or imagery (such as MODIS) will be preferred.

2) Local involvement in monitoring coastal dynamics

Instrumentation to document changes in relative sea level, wave height, storm surge extent, shorefast ice dynamics and coastal erosion in western Alaska are extremely limited. However, residents of coastal communities across western Alaska observe these changes as they occur throughout the year, offering a potential source of baseline information for assessing storm effects. Successful proposals will develop, test, demonstrate, and/or expand approaches that utilize the expertise of local residents to provide data for assessing or strengthening physical models of coastal processes.

There should be no expectation of long-term funding commitment from the WALCC.

3) Effects of changes in coastal storms on coastal biological resources (including subsistence resources and habitats)

This is an open category where we are willing to entertain a wide range of ideas on this topic. Keep in mind that our mission focuses this category on the marine-terrestrial linkages rather than purely marine topics. Ultimately, the WALCC is interested in understanding the relationships between storms, habitat change, and biological resources. However, we will also consider proposals predominantly focused on physical processes and system drivers *if* the linkages to biological resources and habitats are made clear and the final product includes a framework outlining how the results can be used to determine impacts on biological resources.

We foresee three broad types of proposals in this category:

- synthesis or integration of existing data;
- data collection or methods development;
- physical modeling and vulnerability assessments of biological resources and their habitats.

4) **Opportunities to leverage deployment of instrumentation or data collection**

We will consider proposals for the purchase of instrumentation, or expansion of data collection efforts, for measuring parameters associated with coastal storms or their impacts *if the proposal* leverages planned deployment/collection activities. For example, through proposing to expand the spatial coverage or increase the spatial density of an instrument deployment already funded by another entity or organization. Parameters of particular interest include relative sea level, wave height, tides, storm surge, nearshore bathymetry and topography, salinity, etc.

There should be no expectation of long-term funding commitment from the WALCC. Among instrumentation proposals, those that identify sources of long-term maintenance and monitoring of instruments will be preferred. Ownership and security of instrumentation falls upon the entity whose planned activities are being leveraged.

Proposal Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the Western Alaska LCC Steering Committee, Staff and outside experts using a tiered evaluation approach. Criterion 1, Soundness of Design/Technical Feasibility, and Criterion 2, Applicant Capability to Satisfactorily Complete Project, are "Go/No Go" criteria; proposals that warrant a score of Low on either criterion will not be reviewed further. Proposals receiving further review will be scored with respect to all seven criteria listed

below, with scores summed across criteria. Proposals with total scores in the moderate to high range will then be evaluated with respect to additional criteria, including: potential impact of the expected products on the topic(s) addressed, overall contribution to the Pilot Program's goals, and project spatial scale and transferability of data/knowledge throughout the WALCC region.

The Steering Committee will select a suite of proposals for funding in consideration of both the individual project evaluation and the ability of the final suite of selections to provide the best foundation for the LCC to meet its conservation goals associated with the Pilot Program.

Evaluation Criteria

The requirements under 'Scoring Guidelines' illustrate the rating levels.

1. Soundness of Design / Technical Feasibility –
Is there a clear statement of project objectives, explanation of what the project will accomplish and why it is important for the WALCC Pilot Program? Have the applicants demonstrated a clear understanding of the problem being addressed, the present state of knowledge in the field, and the project's relation to other work? Is there sufficient information to evaluate the project technically? What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive results? Is there an assessment of project uncertainties and how they could impact the success of the project?

2. Applicant Capability to Satisfactorily Complete Project -
Does the proposal demonstrate that the technical capability of the applicant is sufficient to successfully complete the project, taking into account such factors as the applicant's 1) past performance in successfully completing projects similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project, 2) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project, 3) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the objectives of the project, and 4) applicant's experience in working in western Alaska or in similar remote high-latitude environments? Has the applicant identified all necessary permits? Was the proposal accompanied by CVs or resumes for each PI?

3. Useability / Applicability –
Have the applicants demonstrated a clear understanding of the decision makers or clientele whose information needs the work will address? Have they demonstrated a clear understanding of what those information needs are, the measurable benefits to decision making that will result from the work, and the form or manner in which the work's products should be made available so as to be most readily used by these decision makers? The LCC will contact up to three decision makers from among those whose contact information is provided in the proposal or from others in similar positions within the recommended agency/entity.

4. Leveraging / Partnerships -
To what extent will the proposed work strengthen existing partnerships and/or initiate new partnerships and collaborations? To what extent does the proposed work take advantage of existing resources such as matching funding (including in-kind) or build on previous efforts?

5. Timeline and Costs -
Is there a clear table detailing appropriate timelines and associated measurable milestones, objectives, accomplishments, and deliverables that can be used to track and evaluate project performance through the entire award period? Is the justification and allocation of the budget, in terms of the work to be performed, unreasonably high or low? Are leveraged funds adequately described?

6**. Education / Outreach -**
Is the education and outreach plan clearly defined? Are there planned education and outreach activities/materials aimed at audiences including local communities, general public, stakeholders, and the scientific community? Are there activities/materials aimed at decision makers? Are the education/outreach costs itemized in the budget realistic for the proposed activities?

7. **Data Management -**
Does the proposal include a clear **summary** of the project's draft data management plan? Does the summary identify any limitations on access or reuse, articulate quality assurance and quality control procedures, and identify a long-term data management strategy, such as an existing publically-accessible repository and data server?

SCORING GUIDELINES – applies to each criterion.

High - The proposal responds to the criterion in a manner that leaves no questions from the reviewer that the applicant will successfully fulfill the criterion.

Medium –The proposal responds to most of the components of the criterion in a manner that results in only minor, non-scientific, easily addressed concerns that the proposed work will satisfy the criterion.

Low – The response to the criterion was insufficient to allow the reviewers to believe that the proposed action, as written, would address the criterion's intent.

How to Submit a Proposal:

Proposals **must be submitted online** by close of business Alaska Standard Time on **1 March 2012**. **Proposals submitted by NON-FEDERAL entities must be submitted via the Grants.gov website. See Announcement F12AS00052.** Proposals submitted by non-federal entities must also follow the following guidance:

- Successful applicants who are selected to receive grants will be required to complete the following documents before the grant agreement is awarded. Application for Federal Assistance Packet: Standard Form (SF) 424, SF-424A, SF-424 B for non-construction programs.

- Please note that annual renewal and re-confirmation of BPN/CCR registration is required. Active registrant status must be maintained throughout both the application and performance periods.
- Successful Non-Federal applicants must register in the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payment (ASAP) system, or have an approved waiver.

Proposals submitted by FEDERAL agencies must be submitted via the Western Alaska LCC website (http://www.arcus.org/western-alaska-lcc).

The WALCC will only distribute funds to one Non-Federal entity per proposal; thus, funding required by additional non-Federal partners would be distributed to them as subcontractors to the primary entity. The WALCC will distribute funds to no more than three Federal agencies per proposal. If the proposal is submitted through a Federal Agency, one of the Federal Agency partners on the proposal will be required to develop agreements with any non-Federal partner. **Principal Investigators for any successful proposal that requires the WALCC distribute funds to more than one entity will be expected to provide the WALCC with a signed agreement (such as a Memorandum of Agreement) that defines the partners agencies/entities' individual roles, responsibilities and commitment to complete the project.**

Formatting Requirements: The template below identifies the specific information requested for potential projects. Each proposal must be **no longer than seven pages, including title page and citations, with 1" margins, using 12 point font, and saved in a file type that can be edited using Microsoft Word 2010**. Each proposal must be accompanied by the curriculum vitae or resume of each PI; these can be pdfs or other file type readable by Microsoft Word 2010. More than one proposal may be submitted per organization or entity.

File Naming Convention: The proposal should be named using the convention 'LeadPI-LastName''LeadPI-FirstInitial'_1.doc. For example, MurieO_1.doc. If the lead PI is submitting multiple proposals, they should be named consecutively: MurieO_1.doc, MurieO_2.doc, etc.

CVs or resumes should be named using the convention 'LeadPI-LastName''LeadPI-FirstInitial'_1_CV_'PI-LastName''PI-FirstInitial'.pdf. For example, MurieO_1_CV_ReynoldsJ.pdf.

Two webinars will be held to respond to questions regarding this RFP on February 3rd at 11:00am Alaska Standard Time (AST) and February 8th at 1:00pm AST. Please see the Western Alaska LCC website (http://www.arcus.org/western-alaska-lcc) for connection information.

For additional questions, please contact Joel Reynolds, Western Alaska LCC Science Coordinator, at 907-786-3914 (Joel_Reynolds@fws.gov) or Karen Murphy, Western Alaska LCC Coordinator, at 907-786-3501 (Karen_Murphy@fws.gov).