ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2013-2003491

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM EST on November 16, 2012. No fax or e-mail applications will be accepted. Please Note: It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

Funding Opportunity Description: On behalf of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (Trustee Council), the NOAA Fisheries Service is soliciting proposals for marine habitat restoration, protection, planning and improvement projects in Exxon Valdez Oil Spill affected communities and environments, as defined by the Trustee Council at: (http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/evos/). For Fiscal Year 2013 the Trustee Council has identified the availability of $900,000 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conduct this grant competition. Selected projects must provide ecosystem benefits, have scientific merit, be technically feasible, and be cost-effective. Priority projects will address water quality through improvements to storm water or waste water runoff, harbor improvements or related actions. Project idea proposals selected for Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program funding are subject to final approval by the Trustee Council and will be implemented through a cooperative agreement with NOAA. The Council anticipates up to $900,000 may be available for marine habitat restoration this year, for multi-year projects funding will be approved annually by the Council. Awards are expected to range between $25,000 to $500,000.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The principal objective of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program is to provide financial and technical assistance to marine habitat restoration, protection, and planning projects that benefit Alaskan estuarine habitats and NOAA trust resources that were impacted by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. NOAA trust resources include living marine resources and their habitats, including commercial and recreational fishery resources (marine fish and shellfish); coastal habitats; diadromous fish species; endangered and threatened marine species; marine mammals; areas identified by NOAA Fisheries as essential fish habitat (EFH); and areas within EFH identified as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC). NOAA trust resources can also include marine habitats and resources associated with National Marine Sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and areas under state coastal management programs. The projects funded under this solicitation must restore, in a cost-effective manner, Alaskan coastal ecosystems and promote increased partnership among government agencies and public and private sectors. Projects focusing on harbor and marine spill prevention are this program's primary target. Such efforts will contribute to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (Trustee Council) goal of overseeing the on-going restoration of the injured resources from the oil spill and the NOAA Restoration Center goal of protecting, restoring, and promoting stewardship of coastal and marine habitat to support our nation's fisheries for future generations.

The NOAA Restoration Center funds and implements restoration projects to ensure healthy, productive, sustainable fisheries. It employs technical staff to help improve project design, ensure environmental compliance and advance restoration techniques. The NOAA Restoration Center also engages the local community and encourages stewardship of our nation's coastal habitat in projects that support the economy through restoration activities, expertise, and materials. NOAA collaborates with public, private, and government partners to prioritize projects and leverage resources and uses scientific monitoring to evaluate restoration project success and maximize the use of tax dollars. NOAA also conducts socioeconomic research that demonstrates the benefits of coastal restoration for community and environmental purposes. More information about the NOAA Restoration Center can be found at http://www.restoration.noaa.gov.

The Trustee Council was formed to oversee restoration of the injured resources through the use of the $900 million civil settlement awarded as a result of the oil spill. The Trustee Council consists of three state and three federal trustees (or their designees), currently served by The State of Alaska: Departments of Fish and Game, Law, and Environmental

Conservation and the United States: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Departments of Agriculture and Interior. The Trustee Council is advised by members of the public and by members of the scientific community. More information about the Trustee Council may be found at http://www.evostc.state.ak.us/

B. Program Priorities

The NOAA Restoration Center is interested in working with communities in Alaska affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill to restore coastal habitat impacted by the oil spill. The primary program priority of this solicitation is to address water quality and marine habitat impacts, links should be made on how work on these projects will improve habitat around harbors or in the harbors themselves. Project types can include design, construction or implementation in any of the following project types, or combinations of project types:

1. Improvement of harbors, stormwater treatment, or wastewater projects to improve water quality in the marine environment in and around harbors;

2. Re-establishment of chemical, physical, hydrologic, and biological features and components associated with marine habitat in or around harbors;

3. Restoration, protection, or improvement of marine habitat or re-establishment of historic hydrology in or around harbors;

4. Improvements to water quality affecting marine habitats in and around harbors;

5. Establishment of riparian buffer zone; creation of reef, substrate, or habitat ;or planting of native estuarine wetland and submerged aquatic vegetation to improve water quality around harbors;

6. Water quality projects such as wastewater treatment plant upgrades, combined sewer outfalls, and non-point source pollution projects such as replacement of failing septic or heating oil systems, and stormwater management projects;

7. Cleanup of pollution for the benefit of marine habitat may be considered, as long as it does not overlap with a concurrent Trustee Council request for proposal for marine debris clean ups.

8. Harbor improvement projects which would benefit the marine environment

9. Creation of quick spill response kits for harbor dock spaces

10. Bilge sock giveaway program

11. Overhaul and revamp of disposal area for hazardous materials

12. Cleanup of improperly disposed of batteries and debris in harbors

13. Boater education program
14. Harbormaster training program
15. New/improved plastics recycling stations for vessel waste
16. Signage for proper handling of waste materials
17. Updates of waste management plans
18. Waste transportation/recycling plans
19. Storm water management plans
20. Wastewater management plans
21. Vegetative buffer installation
22. Oily /grit separator installation
23. Snow removal management
24. Assistance in obtaining an industrial stormwater permit

Successful proposals under this competition will demonstrate:

- maximum benefit to marine resources, habitat or water quality in and around harbors;

- support by the community in which the project will take place; and

- adequate assurances that project will be maintained into the future;

For purposes of this program, 'marine' is defined as salt or brackish water. Projects may take place on land or in freshwater but must be linked to improvements to the marine environment either directly or indirectly by addressing marine habitat or marine species habitat through terrestrial or stream improvements. NOAA works closely with DEC and Alaska Sea Grant as a board member in the Clean Harbors Program and offers applicants assistance through this program and identification of possible project ideas in the Clean Harbors guidebook:
http://www.nukaresearch.com/projects/cleanharbor/documents/100429AKCleanHarborsGuidebookvWEB.pdf

Project Requirements are discussed in brief detail here and in further detail as indicated:

Volunteer/Community participation/Education: each project will be asked to involve volunteers (as appropriate) and give educational lessons on why the work is being done and the benefits of the work. See V. A. 2 for more details.

Match: the inclusion of matching contributions is encouraged. Match may include in kind services. See III. B for more details.

Monitoring: each project will be responsible for project monitoring. NOAA liaisons will aid in determining appropriate metrics and timeframes. See IV. B. 4 for more details.

Eligibility: institutes of higher education, U.S. Territories, state, local and Indian tribal governments, commercial (for-profit) organizations, and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to apply. See III. A for more details.

Voluntary Restoration: applications will not be accepted for projects which are already required as mitigation or are required under current legislation. However, required projects may apply for funds to improve the project beyond minimum mitigation or legislated requirements. See III. C for more details.

Impact: projects must benefit marine habitat in and around harbors. See V.A.1 for more details.

Budget: project requests may range from $25,000 to $500,000. See II. A for more details.

Excluded Activities: Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program Funds will not be used for any activity that constitutes mitigation required under any Federal or State law for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by Federal or State law, or that constitutes restoration for natural resource damages required under any Federal or State law. Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program funds will not be used for remediation of any hazardous substances regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9601-9675). Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program Funds may be used for exceeding Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's standards but cannot be used to meet these standards.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration:

- Estuary Restoration Act of 2000 (PL 106-457, Title I), as amended by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007;

- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; and

- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, 16 U.S.C. 1891a

Public L. 106 - 113, STAT 1501A-207, SEC 350 provides authorization for federal agencies to issue grants to implement programs using the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund

The NOAA Restoration Center and Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council are authorized to provide funds to Marine Habitat Restoration Program projects using cooperative agreements.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces funding available for one year (2013) will be $900,000. Individual project requests may range from $25,000 to $500,000. All projects will be reviewed by the Trustee Council to determine funding. Multi-year funding will be reviewed annually by the Trustee Council. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all proposals. The number of proposals funded as a result of this notice will depend on the number of eligible proposals received, the estimated amount of funds required for each selected project, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available and projects approved by the Trustee Council.

The exact amount of the Federal and non-Federal matching amount for each selected project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA Restoration Center representatives and specified in the agreement. Publication of this document does not obligate NOAA or the Trustee Council to award any specific project or obligate all or any parts of any available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

The earliest start date for project awards is anticipated to be June 1, 2013. Applicants should plan the restoration and planning activities proposed for this funding to be completed within 36 months of the start date of the award. Awards may have a longer performance

period to meet any minimum monitoring requirements. Permission to extend the period of performance beyond the 36 month award period is at the discretion of NOAA and the Trustee Council and should be requested in writing at least 60 days in advance of an award's expiration date. If an application is selected for funding, NOAA and the Trustee Council have no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Any subsequent proposal to continue work on an existing project would be submitted to the competitive process for consideration and would not receive preferential treatment.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Proposals selected Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program funding and approved by the Trustee Council will be implemented through a cooperative agreement with the NOAA Restoration Center. By entering into a cooperative agreement with successful applicants, NOAA staff will be substantially involved in aspects of the project. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, activities such as hands-on technical or permitting assistance, support in developing protocols (e.g., for data collection or monitoring), tracking the progress of removal efforts through site visits and progress report evaluation, discussing development of meaningful performance measures to assess project outcomes, and involvement in public meetings and events to highlight marine debris removal activities.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutes of higher education, U.S. Territories, state, local and Indian tribal governments, commercial (for-profit) organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Applications from Federal agencies or employees of Federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, conservation corps organizations and others that are eligible to apply. Landowner support is required. In most cases this means the applicant must either be the landowner or have written support from the land owner.

In order to be eligible, project proposals must:

1. Originate from an eligible applicant as outlined above;

2. Address marine habitat needs in the Exxon Valdez Spill area, as defined at http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/evos/

NOAA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of veterans, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in under-served areas. NOAA encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

The inclusion of matching contributions is encouraged; however there is no requirement for matching contributions Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program. Match will be considered in the ranking of proposals as it illustrates community support of a project.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Project proposals that include activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state or federal law; activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state or local law; and/or; activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation will not be eligible under this solicitation and will be disqualified.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required Federal forms and instructions, and Supplemental Guidance for Prospective Applicants can be found on www.grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should apply through the Grants.gov website (www.grants.gov), the clearinghouse for Federal financial assistance. A complete standard NOAA grant application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NOAA Restoration Center or the Trustee Council as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, or internet access is not available to the applicant, a hard-copy application (with the SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511 signed in ink - blue ink is preferred) must be mailed to the NOAA Restoration Center (see Section IV. F. "Other Submission Requirements" for complete mailing information). No fax or e-mail applications will be accepted. Paper applications should be printed on one side only, on 8.5" x 11" paper, and should not be bound or stapled in any manner.

Each application should include:

- Required Federal application forms:

  + Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)

  + Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: SF-424A

  + Assurances for Non-construction Programs: SF-424B

  + Certification Regarding Lobbying: CD-511

  + Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)

- Project summary (described below, 2 pages);

- Project narrative (described below, 5-10 pages);

- A detailed, narrative budget justification (described below, 4 pages);

- Monitoring plan appropriate for project proposed (or explanation if not applicable);

- Project design plans, if available;

- A site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map with site location(s) highlighted;

- Brief curriculum vitae or resume of primary project personnel (maximum of 1 page per person, no more than 5 individuals);

- Documentation of title, easement, or other written permission from the private landowner or public land manager for use, including long-term operation and maintenance of the land required for the project; and

- Any other relevant supporting documents, such as additional letters of financial or in-kind support and site photos.

Applications submitted through the Grants.gov website should include a maximum of six (6) files (PDF files are preferred) in addition to the Federal application forms:

1) Project summary and narrative;

2) Budget justification;

3) Justification and associated budget if project is being considered innovative;

4) Monitoring plan (if applicable);

5) Design plans (if available);

6) Supplemental Information - all other attachments combined into one, indexed file, such as maps, resumes, and project support letters, including landowner or land manager documentation (see Section 5. Supplemental Information, below), not to exceed 20 pages.

Information about converting documents to PDF files is available on the Grants.gov website under Download Software under Applicant Resources.

The following application content and form is recommended.

1. Project Summary (2 pages):

- Non-Federal Sponsor Organization

- Project Title

- Site Location (nearest town or watershed, and geographic coordinates if known)

- Land Owner (name and address if privately owned, resource agency contact if public land)

- On-the-Ground Implementation Start Date (proposed start dates should be reasonable and no sooner than June 1, 2013)

- Marine habitats and species to benefit from the project and any listed threatened or endangered species in the project area or in the vicinity

- Project Scope (briefly list specific tasks to be accomplished with requested funds, and proposed techniques that will be used to implement and monitor the restoration)

- Project Outputs/Outcomes (number of acres restored, metrics illustrating improved water quality above minimum standards required by EPA/DEC, or other estuarine organisms, anticipated long-term ecological and socioeconomic outcomes)

- Project Time Line

- Permits and Approvals (identify permits or regulatory approvals necessary for this project and current status of permits secured, or applications and/or consultations pending)

- Federal Funds Requested & Non-Federal Match Anticipated

- Overall Project Cost

2. Project Narrative (max 10 pages):

The project narrative should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The body of this narrative description should be no more than 10 pages long (in 12-point font with 1" margins), and should give a clear presentation of the proposed work. In general, applications should indicate how the proposed work will restore marine habitats and achieve cost-effective restoration of ecosystems while promoting increased partnerships among agencies and between public and private sectors.

Where applicable, the narrative should describe the historic condition of the restoration site and, if applicable, the processes which resulted in degradation of the area and how these processes have been abated to allow for successful restoration. It should list the key or target species currently found in the project site, identify the problems the project will address, describe short and long-term objectives and goals, detail the methods for carrying out and monitoring the project, and describe how the project will be managed and maintained in the long-term. Detailed information about the objectives, implementation plan, techniques, anticipated results, management and monitoring of the project, appropriate to the type of project, should be included.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicants that are seeking Federal funding. Applications should provide enough detail for the funding agency to make a NEPA determination (see NEPA details below, Section VI. B). For projects with NEPA documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (e.g. CE, EA, EIS), the lead Federal agency, the contact at the agency, and where public drafts of the document are available.

3. Budget Justification (max 4 pages):

The narrative budget justification should include a detailed breakdown by cost categories (object classes) separated into Federal and non-Federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the project, with appropriate narrative justification for both the Federal and non-Federal (if applicable) shares. The object classes should match those found on the SF-424A. Applicants are encouraged to include a budget table to further clarify the cost breakdown. Applications will be evaluated for cost-effectiveness by examining the proportion of funds directed to on-the-ground restoration/monitoring activities compared with that to be used for general program support.

Requests for equipment purchases (any single piece of equipment costing $5,000 or more) should be strongly tied to achieving on-the-ground habitat restoration and a comparison with rental costs should be included to justify the need to purchase.

If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project should be provided to allow the Restoration Center to make an informed determination of a project's readiness. The narrative budget justification should indicate if the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, what amount has been requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are Federal or non-Federal in origin. The Restoration Center will review budget information for recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic.

Prior to initiation of a project, the applicant will enter into an agreement with NOAA in which the applicant agrees to provide its share of the project cost (where applicable), including necessary lands, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations and long-term maintenance. The applicant may apply services and in-kind contributions toward its match share of the project cost, including monitoring. Credit for the value of in-kind contributions is subject to satisfactory compliance with applicable Federal labor laws covering non-Federal construction, including but not limited to the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a et. seq.), the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327 et. seq.), and the Copeland Anti-Kickback Act (40 U.S.C. 276c). Credit may be afforded for the value of required work undertaken by volunteers, using the hourly value in common usage for grants programs but not to exceed the Federal estimate of the cost of activity. The applicant will have a long-term responsibility for all costs associated with operating, maintaining, replacing, repairing, and rehabilitating recommended projects. The cost of these activities may not be included in the total project cost, and NOAA will not have any responsibility to provide funding in future years to operate, maintain, replace, repair, or rehabilitate recommended projects.

4. Monitoring Plan, or explanation if not applicable; (4 page maximum)

Any restoration monitoring plan must include information to allow for successful implementation and evaluation of the project over the long term. Plans should include monitoring parameters, including one structural and one functional; methods for evaluating results; baseline monitoring; reference site comparison; and appropriate frequency and length of time.

5. Supplemental Information (max 20 pages)

Inclusion of supplementary materials such as photographs, diagrams, copies of secured permits, etc. are strongly encouraged, and should be submitted in the Grants.gov application (as a single PDF file if possible, and should not exceed 20 pages).

Private Landowner or Public Land Manager Support:

To protect the Federal investment, a letter of commitment from the landowner should be provided for projects on private land, or from relevant resource agency personnel for projects on public, permanently protected land. This letter should provide assurance that the project will be maintained for its intended purpose. Documentation of plans for long-term project management should also be included. Easements or fee title may be required for some projects.

Public/Private/Governmental Agency Letters of Support:

All other letters of support should demonstrate the entity's specific and quantified commitments to the project.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM EST on November 16, 2012. No fax or e-mail applications will be accepted. See Section IV. F Other Submission Requirements for complete mailing information.

D. Intergovernmental Review

All applications are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs". Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

E. Funding Restrictions

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Circulars A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations" (2 CFR, Part 230); A-21, "Cost

Principles for Education Institutions" (2 CFR, Part 220); A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments" (2 CFR, Part 225); and Federal Acquisition Regulation, codified at 48 CFR, Subpart 31.2 "Contracts with Commercial Organizations." All cost reimbursement sub-awards (subgrants, subcontracts, etc.) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

Awards will not be considered final until signed by the authorized representatives of both NOAA and the applicant. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA provides an award document is at the applicant's own risk.

The earliest anticipated award date is expected to be June 1, 2013. Applicants should consider this award timing when developing plans for proposed restoration activities.

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal government should be included with the application. If the applicant does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency, then all charges may be considered direct costs if itemized and described accordingly in the proposal's budget, or the applicant may submit a request to establish a rate. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit applications electronically through www.grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1- 800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov. To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a DUNS number (visit http://www.sba.gov/content/getting-d-u-n-s-number for information on getting a number) and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Applicants should allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration; registration is required only once, however must be renewed each year. After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. It may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants should allow themselves sufficient time to submit their application to Grants.gov in advance of the deadline to ensure applications have been submitted successfully, as the deadline for

submission cannot be extended. NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date.

If an applicant does not have internet access, a hard copy application with the SF-424 forms signed in ink (blue ink is preferred) must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by November 16, 2012, and sent to NOAA at the below address. Applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service after the deadline will not be considered for funding. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. No fax or e-mail applications will be accepted. Paper applications should be printed on one side only, on 8.5" x 11" paper, and should not be bound. Applicants submitting paper applications must also include a full copy of the application on a CD.

NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, ATTN: Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat/Water Quality Grants, 1315 East West Highway - Rm. 15864, Silver Spring, MD 20910

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive. For the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Marine Habitat, Harbor Water Quality Improvement Program Solicitation, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

1. Importance and Applicability of Proposal (35 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work (including planning activities) and/or relevance to Federal, regional, state or local activities.

Marine Habitat Benefits in and Around Harbors (25 Points)

- The potential of the project to restore, protect, conserve or significantly enhance marine habitat and contribute to the long-term conservation of marine habitat function (includes planning) in spill affected areas, as identified at http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/evos/ (10 points)

- The potential of the project to provide sustainable, long-lasting marine habitat benefits of regional significance (5 points)

- In the context of the local environment, the significance of the project in the amount of habitat (e.g. number of stream miles opened or acres / restored / protected / preserved) that will receive long-term benefits (5 points)

- The extent that the project will restore/protect habitat types or species identified as injured by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, as identified at http://www.evostc.state.ak.us/ (5 points)

Coordination and Partnership (10 Points)

- The extent of the applicant to demonstrate coordination and cooperation among nonprofit organizations, community groups, or Federal, state, or local government agencies. This includes the extent of the project to promote collaboration or create partnerships among such public and private entities into the future for sustaining project accomplishments, and whether those have been outlined in formal agreements among all project partners (10 points)

2. Technical/Scientific Merit and Community Outreach (40 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. In addition, this criterion evaluates the potential of the project to foster long-term stewardship and generate a community conservation ethic.

Technical Feasibility and Scientific Merit (30 points)

- Extent to which the proposal clearly describes the project and its objectives with adequate detail, features a realistic scope of work or implementation plan achievable within 36 months, and includes a project timeline. (5 points)

- Extent that the proposed approach is technically sound and likely to achieve project goals and objectives both from a planning, biological and engineering perspective. (5 points)

- Likelihood of long-term success, including self-sustaining restoration techniques or future implementation support. Likelihood of follow through on planning, and long-term management (5 points)

- Extent that the proposal demonstrates competent implementation of the restoration techniques proposed. If the techniques are innovative, the proposal should describe the likelihood of success. (5 points)

- Extent the applicant provides assurance that the project will expeditiously meet environmental compliance and permitting requirements, so that activities will begin within the first 12 months after the award's start date. (5 points)

- Extent that the proposal describes a clear connection between the monitoring methods and the project goals, including success criteria, accomplishment targets and proposed corrective actions using monitoring information. Whether the proposal provides a clear definition of how monitoring results will be evaluated, reported, or incorporated into adaptive management. (5 points)

Community Outreach (10 points)

- Whether the activities proposed will involve citizens, broaden their participation in coastal planning and restoration activities, and lead to achievement of long-term stewardship for restored living marine resources and a heightened community conservation ethic. Community participation may include hands-on training, involvement in planning and on-the-ground restoration activities, education activities, physical debris removal, community planning, and monitoring activities undertaken by volunteers or work crews. (10 points)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicant (10 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary experience, training, education, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed work.

- The capacity of the applicant and associated project personnel to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work or to access necessary technical expertise, as indicated by the qualifications and experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing projects that benefit living marine or coastal resources. (5 points)

- The facilities and/or administrative resources and capabilities available to the applicant to support and successfully manage the project, guide the project to successful completion, and adequately report project results and outcomes. (5 points)

4. Project Costs (15 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame.

- Whether the proposed budget is sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of both federal and non-federal shares by object class as listed on form SF-424A. (5 points)

- The ability of the applicant to demonstrate that a significant benefit will be generated for a reasonable and realistic cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame. (5 points)

- The extent to which funds will be dedicated to project implementation, compared to the percentage for general program support such as research, administration, salaries, overhead, and travel. Proposals should contain a detailed breakdown of personnel hours/costs and contractual hours/costs by task so the extent to which costs are directly related to on-the-ground implementation can be assessed. If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project should be included in the proposal to determine the project's cost effectiveness. (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

In consultation with the Trustee Council, the NOAA Restoration Center will be the agency to solicit and evaluate project proposals submitted under this competition. Applications will undergo an initial administrative review to determine if they are eligible and complete. Eligible applications will then undergo a technical review, ranking and selection process by the NOAA Restoration Center to determine how well they meet the stated goals of the EVOS Marine Habitat Restoration Program. Technical reviews may be requested from NOAA offices and staff, the Regional Fishery Management Councils, other federal and state agencies (e.g., state coastal management agencies and state fish and wildlife agencies), and private and public sector experts who have knowledge of a specific applicant, program, or its subject matter.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by at least three individual technical reviewers according to the criteria and weights described in Section V.A.

The NOAA Restoration Center will compile reviewer comments, composite project scores, and a rank order, and will present those results to the Trustee Council. The Trustee Council, in consultation with the NOAA Restoration Center, will identify the proposals to be

recommended to the NOAA Grants Management Division for funding and determine the amount of funds available for each approved proposal. NOAA Restoration Center will be responsible for entering into funding agreements with the recommended projects' implementing organizations. Each applicant will be notified of their status at the conclusion of the award process. The NOAA Restoration Center will work with the applicant of each project recommended for funding to develop the details of the cooperative agreement and schedules for project implementation, and any other final award documentation.

C. Selection Factors

The Trustee Council, in consultation with NOAA, shall recommend funding for proposals in the rank order of the review, unless the selection of a proposal out of rank order is justified based on one or more of the following factors:

1. The availability of funding

2. The balance/distribution of funds

a. Geographically

b. By institution type

c. By partner type

d. By habitat type

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA, partner organizations, and/or other federal agencies

4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Sections I.A and B

5. The applicant's prior award performance

6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Management Division. Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest scored applications. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file until the selection process has been completed and then destroyed.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applicants generally will be identified approximately 180 days after the close of this solicitation. The earliest anticipated start date for projects will be June 1, 2013, dependent on the completion of all Federal/applicant negotiations, required NEPA analysis, and documentation supporting cooperative agreement or cost-share activities. Applicants should consider this timeline in developing requested start dates for proposed projects.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants may be asked to modify work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the funding agency prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific agency cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant, the NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA program staff. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until a notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Management Division in Grants Online, NOAA's online grants management system.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://ectr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpi=/ecfrbrowsw/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl and http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Successful applicants that accept an award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce standard terms and conditions for a cooperative agreement. For applicant's receiving NOAA funds, this document will be provided in the award package in Grants Online, NOAA's online grants management system.

In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Office in the Grants Online award package may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities

that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements to fulfill, and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable.

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applications that are seeking NOAA funding for projects.

Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, safety concerns, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, etc.).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary federal, state and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA staff to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted.

C. Reporting

Projects selected and funded by NOAA will be subject to Performance progress reports. Performance progress reports are due semi-annually and cover 6-month periods. Progress reports may be required to be submitted using a specific format for narrative information. Progress reports are to be submitted via NOAA's Grants Online system and are due no later

than 30 days after each 6-month reporting period. A final report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award. Progress reports may be required to be submitted using a specific format for narrative information. Currently, a format for project progress reports can be found on the NOAA Restoration Center website at: http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/partners/granteeresources.html.

Financial reports cover the periods from October 1 - March 31 (due by April 30) and April 1 - September 30 (due by October 30) throughout the award period and are submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division via NOAA Grants Online System.

Complete details on reporting requirements, including those that might be new to applicants under the Federal Financial Assistance Transparency Act, will be provided to successful applicants in the award documentation provided by NOAA in the award package.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

D. Data Sharing Plan

Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be

reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

VII. Agency Contacts

For further information regarding the NOAA application process contact Erika Ammann, Eric Rothwell or Laurel Jennings at restorationevos@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696) are applicable to this solicitation.

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs if programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553 (a) (2)) or by any other law for this document concerning grants, benefits, and contracts. Because notice and opportunity for comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are not applicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 (Regulatory Impact Review).

The use of the standard NOAA grant application package referred to in this notice involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, SF-LLL, and CD-346 have been approved by

OMB under the respective control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040, 0348-0046, and 0605-0001.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.