Table of Contents
Introduction .................................................................................................................................................... 1
Planning Activities ......................................................................................................................................... 1
Funding ......................................................................................................................................................... 1
  Required Match ........................................................................................................................................ 1
Eligibility ....................................................................................................................................................... 2
  Eligible Applicants ..................................................................................................................................... 2
  Eligible Activities ....................................................................................................................................... 2
  Eligible Watersheds .................................................................................................................................. 3
General Requirements for All Proposals ..................................................................................................... 3
Project Specific Proposal Requirements ....................................................................................................... 4
  Signage Requirements .............................................................................................................................. 4
  Announcements and Public or Media Events ............................................................................................. 4
  Invasive Species Control ............................................................................................................................ 4
  Implementing Physical BMPs ..................................................................................................................... 4
  Land Protection Projects ............................................................................................................................ 5
  Infiltration Practices ................................................................................................................................ 5
  Rain gardens ............................................................................................................................................... 6
  Dams and Dam Removal .............................................................................................................................. 6
  Projects within Phase II Storm Water Areas ............................................................................................... 6
  On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems .................................................................................................... 6
  Agricultural Practices ................................................................................................................................ 7
  Outreach and Education ............................................................................................................................ 7
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP) ........................................................ 7
  Phosphorus Load Reductions from the Western Lake Erie Basin ................................................................. 8
  LID and Green Infrastructure .................................................................................................................... 8
  Agricultural Practices ................................................................................................................................ 9
Areas of NPS Program Emphasis ................................................................................................................. 8
Funding Priorities ........................................................................................................................................ 10
Evaluation Criteria ....................................................................................................................................... 10
Process, Schedule, and Deadlines ................................................................................................................. 11
Submittal Addresses: .................................................................................................................................. 12
Contacts: ..................................................................................................................................................... 12
Other Funding Sources ............................................................................................................................... 12
NONPOINT SOURCE (NPS) PROGRAM GRANTS

Introduction
Michigan’s NPS Program assists state, federal, and local partners to restore water bodies impaired by NPS pollution and protect high quality waters from impairments caused by NPS pollution. The basis of our program is watershed management; therefore, we are requesting proposals that will implement the priority NPS recommendations in critical areas defined in approved watershed management plans.

Planning Activities
General updates of existing watershed management plans and the development of new watershed management plans are not eligible activities under this RFP. However, in very limited cases, a task for technical revisions of an existing eligible watershed management plan can be added to an implementation project. Technical revisions are typically focused on incorporating new information into a recently completed watershed management plan for a specific pollutant, cause, or source. For example, technical revisions might include:

- Updates to watershed modeling to account for changes in land use.
- Incorporating the NPS load allocation from approved Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL).
- Incorporating a Landscape Level Wetlands Functional Assessment (See Appendix A).
- Monitoring (environmental or social) or inventories to fill data gaps.

Projects including a technical update task are encouraged to complete the technical update prior to beginning the implementation phase of their project so that any new insights can be incorporated.

The activities required for the development of engineered site plans are also eligible under this RFP. Activities might include site assessment, modeling, and design work.

The NPS Program will continue to review and approve watershed management plans as meeting state and federal criteria (See Appendix B). It is strongly encouraged that NPS staff is contacted for involvement early in all planning projects that will seek approval from the NPS Program regardless of the project funding source.

Funding
Sources and Availability
This RFP contains information concerning both federal and state funding sources. Federal funds are authorized under the federal Clean Water Act and state funds are from the Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI). A total of up to $4.3 million may be available. This includes up to $2.3 million in federal funds and approximately $2 million in state funds. Funds should be available for selected projects in mid-2019. Grant awards are contingent upon the sale of CMI general obligation bonds to support these projects and the enactment of sufficient funding in the FY 2019 federal and state budgets to support this grant program as well as any other necessary approvals.

Minimum and Maximum Funding Amounts
The minimum request is $25,000 in grant funds. While there is no maximum request, the NPS Program encourages comprehensive implementation projects that will result in restoration of impaired waters or the long-term protection of high quality waters.

Required Match
Projects require a minimum of 25 percent match, which may include cash and in-kind services from non-federal sources.
Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Units of government (state agencies, counties, cities, townships, and villages), regional planning agencies, conservation districts, public and private colleges and universities, and incorporated nonprofit organizations who are exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. In addition, all applicants must:

- Supply proof of a successful financial audit for a period ending within the 24 months immediately preceding the Notice of Intent (NOI) due date as demonstrated by an Independent Auditor’s Report signed by a Certified Public Accountant from a Comprehensive Annual Report. The audit must be of the applicant organization – No fiduciary arrangements will be accepted. Note: The audit date is based on the audit period and not the date of the audit or the audit letter. To be eligible under this RFP the end date of the audited period must be after July 18, 2016.
- Be in good standing with DEQ programs. Within the 24 months immediately preceding the NOI due date:
  - No DEQ grant terminated for cause.
  - No demonstrated inability to: sign a contract in a timely fashion, manage a grant, or meet the obligations in a project contract with the DEQ.
- Not appear on the Federal Debarment and Suspension List. The list can be searched through the federal System for Award and Management.
- Successful applicants and all contractors will be required to certify they are not an Iran-based business and contractors must also certify they are not an Iran-linked business as defined in MCL 129.312 (www.legislature.mi.gov/).

Ineligible Applicants

Federal agencies, individuals and groups without nonprofit status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, Inter-County Drainage Boards, and entities without proof of a successful audit within the 24 months preceding the application due date. However, these entities can serve as project partners or receive grant funds as subcontractors to eligible grantees.

Eligible Activities

In general, implementing water quality-based priority recommendations in approved watershed management plans including physical, vegetative, and managerial best management practices (BMP) and information and outreach activities are eligible. Activities must directly address the NPS pollutants, causes, and sources identified as priorities in the watershed management plan. In addition, the pollutants, causes, and sources must also be addressed in Michigan’s NPS Program Plan.

Permits: Some eligible activities may require permits from the DEQ. Appendix C of this RFP contains additional information concerning the types of activities that may require a permit and the information needed by the DEQ to help make this determination. Application for a grant does not constitute a permit application, nor does a grant award signify DEQ approval for an activity requiring a permit.

Ineligible Activities

The following types of activities will not be considered for funding:

- Activities that are required or will be required under a permit, required in a court or enforcement order, or required by law.
- Maintenance practices (repair or replacement of existing infrastructure). However, the additional cost of upgrades to existing structures for water quality improvement is eligible (for example; replacing an existing culvert with a free span bridge, or repaving using pervious pavement).
- Land acquisition (land purchase in fee simple).
• Construction or operation of septage facilities, sanitary sewer, or traditional storm sewer collection systems (this includes installing catch basin inserts and other practices between the inlet and outlet of an existing storm water collection system).
• Purchasing capacity at an existing wastewater treatment plant.
• Point source-related projects.
• Addressing the symptom but not the source of NPS pollution (including, but not limited to, weed harvesting, alum treatments, sand traps, and dredging).
• Addressing issues not included in Michigan’s NPS Program Plan (e.g., atmospheric inputs or contaminated sediments).
• Development of, or other work related to, wetland mitigation banks.
• Projects that negatively impact any water resource.
• Development or general updates of watershed management plans.

**Eligible Watersheds**

- Watersheds covered by a watershed management plan approved by the DEQ as meeting CMI criteria and the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA) “Nine Minimum Elements of Watershed Management Planning” on or before July 18, 2018. The list of currently approved and pending watershed plans is available on the NPS program web site.

**Federal Uniform Guidance**

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 200 and 1500) will apply to all new awards including:

- Indirect costs are calculated as follows (additional details are included in the Budget Instructions for this RFP):
  - Entities with a current federally approved negotiated indirect cost rate must use their negotiated rate and are required to submit a valid negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with their NOI form.
  - A de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of the Modified Total Direct Costs must be used by entities without a current NICRA.
- The Single Audit threshold has been raised to $750,000 in federal awards per year.

**General Requirements for All Proposals**

- Project timelines cannot exceed three (3) years.
- The USEPA’s policy, “Timely Obligation, Award and Expenditure of USEPA Grant Funds” requires the expedient obligation of federal grants. Therefore, applicants must be able to enter into a grant contract with the DEQ within 90 days of a grant award. The DEQ retains the right to withdraw funding if a contract has not been signed within 90 days.
- Projects must implement specific high priority recommendations in a watershed management plan approved by the DEQ as meeting the USEPA’s “Nine Minimum Elements of Watershed Management Planning” and include in the Project Description Section A (see Instructions) reference(s) to the specific recommendations proposed for implementation.
- Applicants must include in the Project Description (Section A) an explanation of how the proposed work fits into the overall watershed management plan implementation strategy and priorities.
- Proposals must include the targeted load reduction from the watershed management plan and the projected pollutant load reduction of the project in the Project Description (Sections B and F) for each targeted pollutant.
- Projects must include, as a separate attachment (one page maximum) or as part of the Project Description (Section A), a statement on the status of the implementation of the watershed management plan. The statement should summarize past and ongoing
actions and discuss progress in terms of the priorities of the watershed management plan.

**Project Specific Proposal Requirements**

**Signage Requirements**
- Signage is required at all construction sites easily viewable by the general public and costing $50,000 or more in grant and match funds.
- Construction site and informational signage installed as an outreach component must follow the [NPS Program Acknowledgement Guidance](#).

**Announcements and Public or Media Events**
- Announcements through the Web or print materials for workshops, conferences, demonstration days, or other events as part of a project must follow the NPS Program Acknowledgement Guidance.
- The DEQ Project Administrator must be notified at least 15 working days prior to any public or media events publicizing significant events related to the project to provide the opportunity for attendance and participation by state and federal representatives.

**Invasive Species Control**
All projects selected for funding will be required to take steps to minimize the risk of spreading terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. Selection of project-appropriate measures should be dependent on the type of work being conducted and the specific situation. Additional information can be found in [Appendix D](#), Section XXIII.

**Implementing Physical BMPs**
- Proposals to implement physical BMPs with NPS program funds or used as match must include specific locations and BMP information utilizing a BMP form and site plans (See exceptions for On-Site Wastewater Treatment System proposals; certain agricultural practices; and some outreach and education proposals – for these exceptions BMP locations must be reported prior to grant close out).
- Applicants must submit site plans for any vegetative or structural practices, including any earth change activities, physical modifications of the stream channel, or practices that modify hydrology. Site plans are a depiction of each project area showing all existing water bodies (including designated flood plains and wetlands), structures, and on-site conditions as well as the proposed treatment. For the proposal, conceptual site plans will suffice. However, prior to implementing a BMP, engineered site plans prepared by a licensed professional engineer, architect, or other professional working under a licensed engineer’s authority, must be submitted to and approved by an NPS Program engineer when the BMP will be installed with NPS funds or used as match.
- Applicants must include a task to obtain all federal, state, and local permits that may be needed to complete the work plan. Include a list of permits that will be obtained prior to BMP implementation as part of the task (an [Environmental Permit Information checklist](#) is available from the DEQ.
- Projects that will affect stream flow, including any potential upstream and downstream impacts from BMP implementation, must include a hydrologic analysis (see [Appendix E](#)).
- The DEQ reserves the right to work with applicants to select new sites or BMPs, or cancel a grant award in whole, or in part, if prior to implementation, the DEQ determines that the proposed sites or BMPs are not viable or will not meet the proposal outcomes or program priorities.
- Proposals that implement physical BMPs to address active/known localized sources of NPS pollution in high quality waters must describe the basis for selecting the site(s) in terms of measurable water quality improvements. Priority will be given to those proposals utilizing up-stream/downstream monitoring or assessment as justification.
Proposals that will utilize NPS funds for technical and staff support and implement BMPs using other sources of funding (Farm Bill for example) will not have to provide specific locations and BMPs at the proposal stage. Rather, such proposals must include a description of the methodology that will be used to target the pollutants/causes/sources and critical areas of the applicable watershed management plan. Applicants should be aware that if selected for funding:

- Structural or physical BMPs installed with non-federal funds and used as match for the project require DEQ engineering review and approval.
- Projects will be required to report on the location, costs, and load reductions for each installed BMP.

Land Protection Projects
Land protection projects prevent NPS pollution due to land use changes that may impact water quality. Past land protection projects have included actions such as local ordinance development and permanent conservation easements.

- Projects must be primarily based on preventing future water quality impacts from NPS but may also consider secondary factors such as endangered species.
- Applicants must provide reporting measures directly related to the watershed management plan goals and water quality conditions addressed by the proposal. For example, a proposal intended to address phosphorus and sediment impacts to designated uses must project phosphorus and sediment loads that will be avoided by the proposal.
- Proposed conservation easements must be selected based on potential water quality benefits and must permanently protect the proposed area.
- NPS Program staff will inspect all proposed easement sites prior to signing a grant contract.
- Proposals including conservation easements that will be paid for or used to match NPS Program funds must provide maps and aerial images showing each parcel of interest overlain with a proposed easement boundary.

Infiltration Practices
Infiltration of storm water runoff is necessary to provide stable and healthy lakes and streams and is strongly encouraged by the DEQ. However, sufficient site characterization is needed to assure these practices will function properly and not cause unintended environmental problems by impacting existing or creating new areas of soil and groundwater contamination. For additional information about the following requirements for infiltration practices please contact Mr. Chad Kotke (517-284-5516 or kotkec@michigan.gov).

Projects including infiltration BMPs must include as part of the application:

- Note any known on-site conditions that would impede infiltration.
- Conduct a background check of the BMP location(s) to determine the potential for leaking underground storage tanks, past or present contamination that is not registered as a known contaminated site, or other soil/groundwater concerns in the area (such as: drinking water wells, roads, and structures). For guidance see the Due Diligence section of the Part 201 Citizens Guide, Baseline Environmental Assessments (BEA).
- Provide a soil boring log, or equivalent method of soil characterization for each location.
  - Each boring must be to a depth of an impermeable layer (including bedrock), water table, or a minimum of four (4) feet below each proposed practice.
• Using the Unified Soil Classification System or equivalent, note grain size distribution percentages, moisture, color, odors, and staining for each infiltration BMP location.

• Provide an estimate of the contributing area for each BMP and indicate this area on the site plan.

Infiltration Practice Design:
• Subsurface findings must be incorporated into the site plans.
• It must be demonstrated that infiltration practices will not exacerbate known sources of groundwater or soil contamination.
• Infiltration practices should have 4 feet or more of appropriate soils between the bottom of the practice and an impermeable layer or the water table.

Where known sources of contamination exist as defined by Part 201, Environmental Remediation, or Part 213, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act 1994 PA 451, as amended, additional design features may be necessary to prevent exacerbating on-site contamination. Applicants proposing infiltration practices near areas of contamination will be asked to show that the practice does not increase the magnitude or extent of the contamination.

**Rain gardens**
The NPS Program recommends the use of mature plants over the use of plugs and discourages the use of seeds to establish the rain garden plantings.

**Dams and Dam Removal**
- Eligible Activities:
  o Pre-removal engineering designs for dam deconstruction and stream restoration.
  o Analysis of reservoir sediment samples for contaminants, as necessary to generate the removal design.
  o Stream channel restoration or stabilization practices following, or performed in conjunction with, dam removal.
  o Pre- and post-removal monitoring, especially to assess sediment and hydrologic impacts or biological changes.

- Ineligible Activities:
  o Deconstruction of existing dam structures.
  o Stabilization or removal of contaminated sediments.

- Additional information on Dams and Dam Removal is available on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [Dam Management](#) Web site.

**Projects within Phase II Storm Water Areas**
Activities that are above and beyond permit requirements are eligible for funding. However, the proposal must clearly identify permit requirements and the activities for which grant funding is being requested, or which will be used as match. Additional information on Phase II requirements and a list of Michigan’s Phase II (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System [MS4]) storm water communities can be found on the [Storm Water Program Web site](#). Applicants invited to submit full proposals will be required to assert that projects in MS4 communities meet the criteria described in the USEPA’s supplemental guidance: “Watersheds In and Near Metropolitan Areas – Preventing, Reducing, and/or Eliminating Impacts Associated with Urban Runoff.” ([Appendix F](#)). Examples and further discussion of storm water BMP eligibility can be found in [Appendix F.1](#).

**On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems**
It is a long-term goal of the NPS Program to protect and restore waters of the state through control of discharges from inadequately functioning on-site wastewater treatment systems. Proposals targeting these efforts through the implementation of watershed management plans
may be eligible for funding. Specific guidance for the use of NPS grants for addressing on-site wastewater treatment systems can be found in Appendix G.

Due to human health concerns, the NPS Program will allow an exception to the requirements regarding identification of specific locations, BMPs, and site plans for proposals to identify and correct failed or failing on-site wastewater treatment systems under the following conditions:

- The proposal meets all of the requirements in Appendix G.
- The proposal will include a methodology for addressing systems ineligible for (i.e., cheater pipes), or in excess of, NPS funding.

**Agricultural Practices**

Specific locations for the following practices are not required to be included in proposals:

- Cover crops,
- Tillage practices,
- Filter strips, and
- Drainage water management practices.

However, proposals that include land owner letters of support and/or specific locations will be favored over proposals that do not provide this information. In addition, location, cost and load reduction information will be required for all practices installed as part of a NPS funded project.

**Outreach and Education**

Whether as a stand-alone effort or as part of a larger restoration or protection project, outreach and education efforts should focus on the targeted audiences, critical areas, and priority pollutants identified in the approved watershed management plan. Typically, before and after surveys utilizing the Social Indicator Data Management and Analysis (SIDMA) tool are used to measure the impact of the outreach campaign through changes in awareness, attitudes, constraints, and behavior. Results of the “pre” survey should be used to refine the proposed outreach message and methods. Additional information can be found in Appendix H.

- Grant funds for outreach and education efforts are limited to $150,000. Match contributions are not limited.
- Site locations for BMPs installed as a training effort do not need to be specified in the proposal. Selected sites must be appropriate for the BMP being demonstrated and the BMP must follow NPS design standards. Sites must be reviewed and approved by the DEQ prior to installation and a BMP form is required upon completion.

**Monitoring, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP)**

All projects must include an evaluation component to determine the success of the project activities in relation to the stated project goals. Projects that collect physical, chemical, biological, or social information for evaluation or project guidance will be required to submit a QAPP for approval by the DEQ. A QAPP is not needed for the proposal phase.

Projects that propose water quality monitoring to determine the status of designated uses will be required to meet or exceed the state’s sampling protocols, so the state can make a decision on designated use support using project data. This requirement does not apply to other water quality monitoring that might be proposed as part of the project, such as pollutant source identification monitoring.

**Guidance for environmental monitoring** and associated QAPPs is available on the NPS Program website. Applicants proposing to perform environmental measurements (water quality, macroinvertebrate populations, stream morphology, etc.) must complete an environmental monitoring table (see Instructions), and include it in Section F of the Project Description. Applicants are encouraged to contact Dr. Alyssa Riley at 517-284-5519 or rileya3@michigan.gov prior to submitting a proposal including environmental monitoring.

Applicants proposing to measure social change (i.e. a social survey) must complete a social monitoring table (see Instructions) and include it in Section F of the Project Description.
Applicants are encouraged to contact Mr. Robert Sweet at 517-284-5520 or sweetr@michigan.gov prior to submitting a proposal including social monitoring. Additional information on social monitoring is in Appendix H and guidance for social monitoring and evaluation and social monitoring QAPPs is available on the NPS Program website.

**Project Outcomes**

**Restoration projects** should be designed to meet one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Result in measurable improvements that meet the USEPA strategic targets, Sub-objective 2.1
   i. Fully restore impaired water bodies that are not attaining designated uses due to NPS causes.
   ii. Remove at least one specific cause of water body impairment from impaired water bodies that are not attaining designated uses due to NPS causes.
   iii. Improve water quality in 12-digit hydrologic unit code (HUC) subwatersheds in Michigan. Improved conditions mean that one or more of the designated use impairment causes are removed for at least 40 percent of the impaired water bodies within the subwatershed.

2. Result in measurable improvements in water quality in water bodies that are not meeting designated uses due to NPS causes.

3. Achieve or make substantial progress toward achieving the NPS load reduction targets of an approved TMDL or an approved watershed management plan in areas where a TMDL has not been developed.

**Protection projects** should be designed to meet one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Result in measurable water quality improvement at NPS impacted sites in high quality watersheds.

2. Achieve or make substantial progress toward achieving the land use protection targets of an approved watershed management plan.

**Outreach and Education projects** should be designed to meet the following outcome:

1. Result in measurable change in social indicators (e.g., awareness, behavior, knowledge) for targeted audiences in critical areas and focused on priority pollutants from the approved watershed management plan.

**Areas of NPS Program Emphasis**

*Phosphorus Load Reductions from the Western Lake Erie Basin*

The NPS Program is encouraging projects that make substantial progress toward achieving the Annex 4 goal of reducing both soluble and reactive phosphorus (SRP) and total phosphorus entering the western and central basins of Lake Erie by 40 percent. “Substantial progress” is defined as an anticipated 40% or higher reduction in phosphorus on a per site basis as predicted by modeling (for example STEPL or the Region 5 Spreadsheet), design performance, or other method.

**LID and Green Infrastructure**

The NPS Program is encouraging projects that utilize LID and Green Infrastructure to address water quality and quantity issues. High priority projects will have the following attributes:

- Projects will be in watersheds with impacts caused by unstable hydrologic conditions.
- LID or Green Infrastructure will be identified as a high priority activity to address restoration or protection goals in the associated approved watershed management plan.
- LID or Green Infrastructure activities will be focused on critical areas identified in approved watershed management plans.
- Projects will either:
  - On a site basis – reduce runoff to a pre-settlement or undeveloped rate, or
  - Apply LID or Green Infrastructure practices to address water quality or stream channel stability issues across a broad area.
**Agricultural Practices**

Targeted and comprehensive approach to farm conservation planning: To be considered a priority for funding, agricultural BMPs must be implemented in a comprehensive manner and targeted to critical areas of the watershed.

**Cropland Management Strategies:** Higher priority will be given to proposals that meet the following criteria:

- Proposals to address sediment and nutrients from cropland (where there is no manure application) by implementing (at a minimum) all of the following Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) practices on fields proposed for grant funding or for use as match:
  1. Nutrient Management (590)
  2. Residue and Tillage Management, no-till/strip till (329)
  3. Cover Crops (340)
  4. Filter Strips (393)
- If the landowner is already implementing some of the practices, then funding for the remaining practices is eligible for grant funding as part of the project.
- Grant funds are only available for implementation of new practices and can include additional practices needed to restore and/or protect water quality. Any additional practices will be funded on a case-by-case basis after considering the causes and sources described in the watershed management plan; the high priority recommendations from the watershed management plan; and the anticipated outcomes described in the grant application.
- Locations for nutrient management, residue and tillage management, no-till/strip till, and cover crop BMPs do not have to be included in the proposals. However, all proposals must state that critical areas will be targeted and priority proposals must state that a systems-approach will be used. Also, BMP locations must be reported prior to grant close-out.

**Livestock Management Strategies:** Higher priority will be given to proposals that address nutrients and bacteria from manure application or livestock operations by implementing the following practices (at a minimum) on all livestock farms receiving cost-share:

- Comprehensive nutrient management plan (includes no manure application on frozen or snow covered fields).
- Controlled/restricted livestock access to surface waters.
- Residue and tillage management, no-till/strip till
  - For summer or fall manure applications, if tillage is needed for manure incorporation, a cover crop will be planted and no tillage will occur the following spring.
  - For spring applications of manure, if tillage is needed for manure incorporation, then no tillage shall occur the previous summer/fall and a cover crop will be planted during the previous summer/fall.
- Filter Strips.
- Proposals must include a list of the livestock operations that will be targeted. BMP locations must be reported prior to grant close-out.

BMPs at permitted livestock facilities are only eligible where it can be demonstrated they are above and beyond permit requirements.

**Drainage Water Management Strategies:** Managing agricultural drainage water in Michigan can provide benefits such as; conserving subsoil moisture, increasing productivity on tile drained fields, and reducing nutrient loading to surface waters. Drainage water management can reduce loadings of nitrates and soluble reactive phosphorus to surface waters and works most effectively on flat or very gently sloped fields with slopes of 0.5% or less. A priority will
be placed on proposals that promote drainage water management strategies in watersheds with appropriate soils and slopes as well as nutrient impairments or flow-related impairments caused, in part, by tile line inputs. Proposals for drainage water management should follow NRCS Standard 554 or equivalent. In addition, the highest priority proposals will implement drainage water management practices in combination with nutrient management (NRCS standard 590) and cover crops (NRCS standard 340).

Funding Priorities (In ranked order)

Tier 1
Projects for any eligible water body that meet one or more of the following outcomes or NPS Program emphasis:

- Restoration of impaired water bodies (Restoration Projects 1.i.).
- Removal of at least one specific cause of impairment from an impaired water body (Restoration Projects 1.ii.).
- Measurable water quality improvements in impaired water bodies or watersheds (Restoration Projects 1.iii. or 2.).
- Measurable water quality improvement at NPS-impacted sites in high quality watersheds (Protection Projects 1.).
- Achieve or make substantial progress toward achieving the land use protection goals of an approved watershed management plan (Protection Projects 2.).
- Phosphorus load reductions from the Western Lake Erie Basin, LID, Green Infrastructure, and agricultural projects consistent with the areas of program emphasis above.

Tier 2
Projects for any eligible water body that:

- Achieve or make substantial progress toward the NPS load reduction target of an approved TMDL or watershed management plan (Restoration Projects 3.).
- Successful outreach and education campaign indicated by measurable change in social indicators (Outreach and Education Projects 1.).

Tier 3
Other NPS projects that are consistent with the eligibility criteria and the NPS Program Plan.

Proposals meeting the criteria for Tier 1 will be considered for funding first. Tier 2 projects may be selected over Tier 1 projects based on the projected project outcomes. Tier 3 proposals will be considered last.

Site selection should follow the prioritized list or prioritization strategies in the watershed management plan and implementation should proceed in a logical manner. Projects that include specific sites with landowner letters of support will rank higher than similar proposals that do not demonstrate land owner support.

Evaluation Criteria (in priority order)

- The anticipation that the project will result in a water body meeting one or more of its designated uses.
- The anticipated improvement or protection of water quality.
- The consistency of the project with the priorities identified in the watershed management plan being implemented.
- Site specificity – proposals with site-specific information will rank higher than proposals implementing practices over a defined area (proposals without specific sites identified).
- Demonstration that there is an identifiable source of funds for the future operation and maintenance of the proposed project.
- The anticipated water quality benefits of the project in relation to the cost (although a thorough cost/benefit analysis is not required).
• Whether the project provides water quality benefits to sources of drinking water.
• The ability of the applicant and the partners and contractors to carry out the project as demonstrated by previous NPS grants or submitted information.
• Financial and technical assistance from the partners in the project, as documented by letters of commitment.
• Financial and other resource contributions in excess of the required minimum match. Note: The percent match listed in the proposal will be used in the project contract if the proposal is selected for funding.
• Expectations for long-term water quality improvement or protection.
• The balanced distribution of projects throughout the state as part of project selection.

Process, Schedule, and Deadlines
NOI: The NPS Program is requiring all applicants interested in funding through this RFP to electronically submit a NOI form for each proposed project. Following the NOI Instructions, submit all NOI forms in Microsoft Word® or searchable PDF format to deq-npsgrants@michigan.gov before 5:00 p.m., August 15, 2018. This address should be used only to submit NOI forms. All questions and comments should be sent directly to NPS Staff. The DEQ will reply to all NOI forms submitted to the listed address. If you do not receive a reply within two hours during regular business hours, please contact Mr. Robert Sweet at sweetr@michigan.gov or 517-284-5520 for assistance. Information supplied on the NOI form will be used to judge eligibility, and all eligible entities will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will only be accepted from invited entities. All applicants will be notified by the DEQ via e-mail on or before August 29, 2018, regarding their eligibility and, if eligible, extended an invitation to submit a full proposal.

The request for a full proposal will identify an NPS Program technical contact person; applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the identified NPS staff to discuss their project ideas and the program priorities.

Full Proposals: Each project should be applied for separately, with a complete proposal package consisting of three hard copies including a checklist signed by the preparer of the application and one electronic copy of all required components. Please read this information package carefully. Extraneous information will not be accepted or included in the grant proposal review process. Staple or clip the pages of the proposal. Do Not bind the proposal or use a cover letter or cover sheet other than the NPS Program Application Cover Sheet. If color graphics such as maps or photos are important for evaluating your proposal, your proposal package should include three color copies and an electronic copy of each.

The required electronic copy of your proposal must include all aspects of your proposal on a flash drive, CD, or DVD. The project description, work plan, time line, budget, and all necessary forms must be submitted using Microsoft Office compatible formats. The Cover Sheet (signed), maps, graphics, and photographs can be submitted as PDF or similar files.

Instructions for the grant proposal should be downloaded and followed. One copy of the checklist on page six (6) of the instructions must be completed and signed by the preparer of the application and submitted as part of each application. Proposal evaluation will be based on the information received by the due date. Full applications from invited entities must be received by 4:00 p.m., October 12, 2018, or carrier dated (i.e., U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service, and Federal Express) no later than October 12, 2018. Late materials will not be accepted or reviewed.

All required forms for this grant proposal are available from the NPS home page (www.michigan.gov/nps under “Grant Applicant Information”). Forms should be downloaded and saved to your computer, completed, and then submitted with the other components of the grant proposal. Do not use forms from previous years or from other programs.
Project Clarification/Revisions
The DEQ may request additional information for clarification purposes. The DEQ can offer grants for amounts other than those requested and request changes to the proposed work plan.

Confidentiality
Submitted proposal information is not confidential. Grant proposals are considered public information under the Freedom of Information Act, PA 442 of 1976, as amended.

Acceptance of Contract Content
Successful applicants will be required to enter into a project contract with the DEQ. A project contract consists of standard “boilerplate” language (Appendix D), the applicant’s project description, work plan, time line, and budget information. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the grant award.

Please note:
1. Dates from mail metering machines will not be accepted as a qualifying date. Metered mail must be delivered, or U.S. Postal Service post-marked by the deadline (metered mail is not usually post-marked – you must specifically request this service).
2. The tracking code and electronic tracking systems will be relied on to determine carrier dates for proposals sent via United Parcel Service and Federal Express.
3. Packages weighing one pound or more cannot be mailed from drop boxes under United States Postal regulations. Packages weighing one pound or more left in a drop box will be returned to the sender undelivered.
4. Faxed or e-mailed full proposals will not be accepted.
5. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

Submittal Addresses:
**Postal Address** for U.S. Postal Service:  
Attention: Robert Sweet  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Resources Division  
Nonpoint Source Program  
P.O. Box 30458  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7958

**Physical Address** for UPS, FedEx, etc.:  
Attention: Robert Sweet  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Resources Division, Nonpoint Source Program  
Constitution Hall  
525 West Allegan Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Contacts:
For questions about this RFP and its contents, contact Mr. Robert Sweet at 517-284-5520. For questions about specific project ideas contact the appropriate NPS Staff.

Other Funding Sources
The following links to additional funding sources are provided here for informational purposes only.

- [DEQ - Grants and Loan Information](#),
- [DNR - Grants and Loan Information](#), and
- [Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection](#).