



Nonpoint Source Program Request for Proposals August 24, 2023

To be used in applying for funding for projects
implementing approved watershed management plans.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Planning Activities	2
Funding	2
Required Match.....	2
Eligibility	3
General Requirements for All Proposals	5
Guidance for Proposals within the Coastal Nonpoint Boundary	5
Project Specific Proposal Requirements	6
Signage Requirements.....	6
Announcements and Public or Media Events.....	6
Invasive Species Control.....	6
Implementing Physical BMPs.....	6
Land Protection Projects	7
Wetland Restoration or Protection Projects.....	8
Infiltration Practices.....	8
Infiltration Practice Design:.....	8
Rain gardens.....	9
Dams and Dam Removal	9
Projects within Phase II Storm Water Areas.....	9
On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems	9
Agricultural Practices.....	10
Outreach and Education.....	10
Project Evaluation.....	10
Monitoring and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP)	11
Project Outcomes	11
Areas of NPS Program Emphasis	12
Funding Priorities (In ranked order).....	12
Evaluation Criteria (in priority order).....	13
Process, Schedule, and Deadlines.....	14
Contacts:	15

NONPOINT SOURCE (NPS) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Introduction

Michigan's NPS Program assists state, federal, and local partners to restore water bodies impaired by polluted runoff and other categories of NPS pollution as well as protecting high quality waters from NPS pollution impacts. 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

Except in overburdened and underserved communities (see [Appendix A](#)), general updates of existing watershed management plans and the development of new watershed management plans are not eligible activities under this Request for Proposals (RFP). However, in very limited cases outside of overburdened and underserved communities, a task for technical revisions of an existing eligible watershed management plan can be added to an implementation project (see [Appendix B](#)).

The activities required for the development of engineered site plans and pre dam removal planning are also eligible under this RFP. However, proposals including site planning and pre dam removal planning must include an implementation element. Eligible planning type activities might include site assessment, modeling, and design work.

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 \$2.9 million may be available. This includes up to \$2.4 million in federal funds and approximately \$500,000 in state funds. Funds should be available for selected projects in mid-2024. Grant awards are contingent upon the sale of CMI general obligation bonds to support these projects and the enactment of sufficient funding in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 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

The minimum required local match is 25 percent of the project total which is equivalent to one third of the grant request, except in communities with environmental justice concerns ([Appendix A](#)) where the minimum required match is 10 percent of the project total (equivalent to one ninth of the grant request). Local match may include cash and/or in-kind services from non-federal sources.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Non-federal 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. Tribal entities, with an up-to-date U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)-approved Tribal NPS management program plan (see [Appendix A](#)), are also eligible. In addition, all applicants must:

- Supply proof of a successful financial audit for a period ending within the 24 months immediately preceding the release date of this Request for Proposals 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.** The applicant organization should, at a minimum include enough staff time to adequately administer the project including attendance at project meetings, and the review and submittal of project products and reporting. **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 **August 24, 2021**.
- Be in good standing with Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) programs. Within the 24 months immediately preceding the release of this RFP (August 24, 2023):
 - No EGLE 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 EGLE.
- 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 as defined in [MCL 129.312](#).

Ineligible Applicants

Federal agencies, individuals and groups without nonprofit status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, 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 NPS based priority recommendations in approved watershed management plans or USEPA-approved Tribal NPS management program plans including physical, vegetative, and managerial best management practices (BMP), information and outreach activities, effectiveness monitoring, and monitoring associated with a technical watershed management plan update are eligible. Activities must directly address the NPS pollutants, causes, and sources identified as priorities in the watershed management or USEPA-approved Tribal NPS management program plan. Projects installing BMPs that directly address known sources of NPS impairment in overburdened and underserved communities ([Appendix A](#)) are also eligible. Hereafter, these types of projects are noted as

implementation projects. The pollutants, causes, and sources addressed in implementation projects must be consistent with [Michigan's NPS Program Plan](#).

USEPA is allowing Clean Water Act §319 funds to support watershed plan development and capacity building in overburdened and underserved communities. EGLE encourages projects that build community capacity for NPS work, for example, by supporting local watershed coordinators and leveraging community resources such as local minority serving institutions, community organizations, and local businesses ([Appendix A](#)). Hereafter, these types of projects are noted as capacity-building projects.

Permits: Some eligible activities may require permits from EGLE. [Appendix C](#) of this RFP contains additional information concerning the types of activities that may require a permit and the information needed by EGLE to help make this determination. Application for a grant does not constitute a permit application, nor does a grant award signify EGLE 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 lake aeration, weed harvesting, alum treatments, dredging, sand traps and other in stream treatments).
- 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 or storm water mitigation banks. BMPs installed with NPS grant funding or used as match cannot be used to generate credits in mitigation or trading programs.
- Projects that negatively impact any water resource.
- Except in communities with environmental justice concerns (see [Appendix A](#)), development or general updates of watershed management plans.

Eligible Areas

- Critical or priority areas covered by a watershed management plan approved by EGLE as meeting CMI criteria and the USEPA's "Nine Minimum Elements of Watershed

Management Planning” on or before August 24, 2023. The list of currently [approved and pending watershed plans \(PDF\)](#) is available on the NPS Program Web site.

- Areas included in USEPA-approved Tribal NPS management program plans (see [Appendix A](#))
- Environmental justice impacted communities (see [Appendix A](#)).

General Requirements for All Proposals

- Project timelines cannot exceed three (3) years.
- Outreach, informational, and educational products including all publications and electronic presentations must be consistent with the [Acknowledgement Guidance](#) and meet accessibility criteria.
- 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 awards.
- To be consistent with USEPA’s policy, “Timely Obligation, Award and Expenditure of USEPA Grant Funds”, applicants must be able to enter into a grant contract with EGLE within 90 days of a grant award. EGLE retains the right to withdraw funding if a contract has not been signed within 90 days.
- Implementation projects must either:
 1. Address specific, high-priority recommendations in a watershed management plan approved by EGLE as meeting both state and federal criteria (See [Appendix B](#)), or in an USEPA-approved Tribal NPS management program plan (see [Appendix A](#)) and include in the Project Description Section A (see [Instructions](#)) reference(s) to the specific recommendations proposed for implementation. -OR-
 2. Address known NPS sources in one or more environmental justice impacted communities (see [Appendix A](#)).
- Implementation project 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 G) for each targeted pollutant.
- Implementation 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 and how the proposed work fits into the overall watershed management plan implementation strategy and priorities.

Guidance for Proposals within the Coastal Nonpoint Boundary

The Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, established by Section 6217 of the federal Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments (CZARA), addresses NPS pollution problems in coastal waters. Section 6217 requires states and territories with approved Coastal Zone Management Programs to develop Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Programs. As a condition of Michigan’s Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, EGLE has agreed to

prioritize specific activities within Michigan's Coastal Nonpoint Boundary. Applicants should refer to [Appendix D](#) to determine if this guidance applies to their proposal.

Project Specific Proposal Requirements

Signage Requirements

- Signage is required at all construction sites easily viewable by the general public.
- 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 EGLE 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 is available from [NPS Program staff](#).

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, costs, and load reductions 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, licensed landscape 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 review and approval of the site plans by a NPS engineer as a task.
- Applicants proposing to take a phased approach to implementation (due to project cost, access, or other reason) must understand that obtaining funding for one phase does not guarantee funding for additional phases of implementation. Also, most often, implementation should be approached in an upstream to downstream fashion, not a

piecemeal or partial implementation approach. Full implementation from upstream to downstream will minimize disturbance to streambanks and increase project success.

- Applicants must include a task to obtain all federal, tribal, 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 EGLE).
- Projects that will affect stream flow, including any potential upstream and downstream impacts from BMP implementation, must include a hydrologic analysis (see [Appendix E](#)).
- EGLE 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, EGLE 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 upstream/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:
 - BMPs must be designed and installed according to recognized standards (The Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide, EGLE NPS Best Management Practices Manual, or Statewide Low Impact Development (LID) manual for example).
 - Projects will be required to report on the location, costs, and load reductions for each installed BMP, even if another funding source was utilized.

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 nonpoint source pollution 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 proposed project.
- 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.

Wetland Restoration or Protection Projects

Proposals in watersheds with a completed LLWFA must use the tool to identify specific wetlands to address the water quality concerns and critical areas identified in the watershed plan. Proposals in areas without an LLWFA must include the rationale or methodology used to select specific wetlands for restoration or protection. Details can be found in [Appendix F](#).

Infiltration Practices

Infiltration of storm water runoff is necessary to provide stable and healthy lakes and streams and is strongly encouraged by EGLE. 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 Dale Ehinger, NPS Unit, Surface Water Assessment Section (SWAS), Water Resources Division (WRD) at EhingerD@Michigan.gov or 269-716-8305.

Projects including infiltration BMPs must, 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 the site 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 \(BEA\) \(PDF\)](#).
- 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 feet below the bottom of 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 four 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:
 - Stream channel restoration or stabilization practices following, or performed in conjunction with, dam removal.

The following activities are also eligible when the full proposal includes an implementation element.

- Pre-removal engineering designs for dam deconstruction and stream restoration.
- Characterization of reservoir sediment as necessary to generate the removal design.
- Pre- and post-removal monitoring, especially to assess sediment and hydrologic impacts or biological changes.
- Ineligible Activities:
 - Deconstruction of existing dam structures.
 - Stabilization or removal of contaminated sediments.
- Additional information on Dams and Dam Removal is available on the EGLE [Dam Safety](#) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) [Dam Management](#) web sites.

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 G](#)). Examples and further discussion of storm water BMP eligibility can be found in [Appendix G.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 H](#).

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 H](#).
- 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
- Drainage water management practices

However, proposals that include landowner 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 an 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 in implementation projects must focus on the targeted audiences, critical areas, and priority pollutants identified in the approved watershed management or USEPA-approved Tribal NPS management program plan. Outreach and education efforts within capacity-building projects must address known sources of NPS impairment. 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 I](#).

- Grant funds for outreach and education efforts are limited to \$200,000. 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 EGLE prior to installation and a BMP form is required upon completion.

Project Evaluation

All projects must include an evaluation component to determine the success of the project activities in relation to the stated project goals. It is important to consider the scale of change that will result from your project during the project period (site specific, stream reach, sub-basin or larger) when selecting evaluation methods. While measurable environmental or

social change is the preferred standard, other means of assessment such as modeling may also be acceptable depending on the project type, products and/or goals.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP)

Projects that collect physical, chemical, biological, or social information for evaluation or project guidance will be required to submit a QAPP for approval by EGLE. A QAPP is not needed for the proposal phase and a QAPP development task is eligible for grant reimbursement or for use as match.

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 decide 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 Web site. 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 Caroline Keson, NPS Unit, SWAS, WRD, at KesonC1@Michigan.gov or 517-512-0892 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 Robert Sweet, NPS Unit, SWAS, WRD, at SweetR@Michigan.gov or 517-512-9765 prior to submitting a proposal including social monitoring. Additional information on social monitoring is in [Appendix I](#) and [guidance for social monitoring and evaluation](#) and social monitoring QAPPs is available on the NPS Program Web site.

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. This can include perfecting permanent conservation easements or enacting changes to local ordinances or zoning.

Outreach and Education projects

Should be designed to meet the following outcome:

1. Result in measurable change in one or more 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 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 percent or higher reduction in phosphorus on a per site basis as predicted by modeling (for example, the USEPA Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Load or the Region 5 Spreadsheet), design performance, or other method.

LID and Green Infrastructure

The NPS Program is encouraging projects that utilize Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Infrastructure (GI) to address water quality and quantity issues including in areas serviced by combined sewers. Requirements, priorities, and additional information for LID and GI proposals are located in [Appendix J](#).

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. Requirements, priorities, and additional information for comprehensive agricultural proposals are located in [Appendix K](#).

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 through permanent easements or changes to local ordinances/zoning (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 with additional details in appendices J and K.

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.).
- Nonpoint source related planning or capacity building projects associated with communities with environmental justice concerns.

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 landowner 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 or USEPA-approved Tribal NPS management program 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 (beginning on Page 3 of the [NOI form](#)), submit all NOI forms in **searchable** PDF format to EGLE-NPSGrants@Michigan.gov before **5:00 p.m., September 20, 2023**. All forms are posted in a searchable PDF format and can be filled and signed electronically. The EGLE-NPSGrants address should not be used for correspondence. All questions and comments should be sent directly to [NPS Staff](#). EGLE 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 Robert Sweet, NPS Unit, SWAS, WRD at SweetR@Michigan.gov or 517-512-9765; or Rob Selesky, NPS Unit, SWAS, WRD at SeleskyR1@Michigan.gov or 517-331-7690 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 EGLE via email on or before **October 11, 2023**, regarding their eligibility and, if eligible, extended an invitation to submit a full proposal.

The request for a full proposal email will identify an NPS Program technical contact; applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the identified NPS staff to discuss their project ideas and the program priorities. All required forms for this grant proposal are available from the NPS home page (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.** Please read this information package carefully. Extraneous information will not be accepted or included in the grant proposal review process.

Full Proposals: Each project should be applied for separately, with a complete proposal package consisting of an electronic copy of all required components. The components can be combined into a single **searchable** PDF or submitted as separate Microsoft Office or **searchable** PDF files. The required electronic copy of your proposal must include **all** aspects of your proposal in a single email less than 35 MB in size sent to NPSGrants@Michigan.gov. “Zipped” files are acceptable. Contact [NPS Staff](#) if you are having difficulty meeting the 35 MB size limit. EGLE will respond to all proposals received. If you do not receive a reply within two hours during regular business hours, please contact Robert Sweet or Rob Selesky as described above for the NOI process. Full proposals from invited entities must be received **by 5:00 p.m., November 15, 2023**.

Project Clarification/Revisions

EGLE may request additional information for clarification purposes. EGLE 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 EGLE. A project contract consists of standard “boilerplate” language (an example is available from [NPS Staff](#)), and the project description, work plan, time line, and budget information. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations as presented may result in cancellation of the grant award.

Please note: Faxed full proposals will not be accepted and late proposals will not be considered for funding.

Contacts:

For questions about this RFP and its contents, contact Robert Sweet, NPS Unit, SWAS, WRD, at SweetR@Michigan.gov or 517-512-9765.

For questions about specific project ideas contact the appropriate [NPS Staff](#). Please note: NPS staff will respond to questions received through November 8, 2023, but may not have time to answer questions received after this date.

Other Funding Sources:

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

- [EGLE - Grants and Financing](#)
- [MDNR - Grants and Loan Information](#)
- [Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection](#)

Two programs that are underutilized in Michigan to fund NPS related projects are the [State Revolving Fund](#) (SRF) and the [Mitigation Grant Programs](#). SRF can fund both NPS and Storm Water related projects. Mitigation grants fund implementation of long-term measures that reduce or eliminate risk to people and property. The Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program in particular may be of interest to NPS stakeholders. Participation in the FMA Program requires a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved local or [State mitigation plan \(PDF\)](#).

To request this material in an alternative format, contact EGLE-Accessibility@Michigan.gov or call 800-662-9278.

EGLE does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability, political beliefs, height, weight, genetic information, or sexual orientation in the administration of any of its programs or activities, and prohibits intimidation and retaliation, as required by applicable laws and regulations.