

# Request for Proposals for Fiscal Year 2013 Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grants

The North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) is seeking proposals from government agencies and nonprofit organizations to address nonpoint sources of pollution in the state. In federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, North Carolina anticipates receiving approximately \$1.3 million of federal grant monies from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that will be available on a competitive basis under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act. DWQ's Nonpoint Source Planning Unit will administer funding and oversight of selected proposals.

## Who Is Eligible to Apply?

The following agencies and organizations are eligible to apply for and receive 319 funds:

- State and local governments (including Councils of Government)
- Interstate and intrastate agencies
- Public and private nonprofit organizations and institutions (including academic institutions)

## How to Apply and When?

The application form to receive 319 grant funding and information on the 319 grant program can be found at the following website: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program/applyfor319>. The Statement of Qualifications must be completed in Section 3 of the application form to confirm that anyone designing, installing, or monitoring the proposed project is qualified to do so. Include in the statement any past and/or ongoing 319 grant funded projects. DWQ will accept proposals for consideration of 319 funding for FY2013 between March 4 and May 23, 2013. Applicants may submit their draft application up to two weeks prior to the deadline (no later than May 9) for review and comments by DWQ staff. Applications must be submitted in **electronic format**, preferably as a Word document and received by DWQ **no later than May 23, 2013** (email to [kimberly.nimmer@ncdenr.gov](mailto:kimberly.nimmer@ncdenr.gov)). Proposals received after this time will not be accepted. Selected projects will be contracted at the time of award notification, providing DENR has received the grant award from the U.S. EPA.

## Type of Proposals Requested

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), DWQ is only seeking proposals for watershed water quality restoration projects (formerly referred to as 319(h) Incremental funding) directed toward impaired waters. Applicants are encouraged to prepare a thorough but succinct proposal. Make sure the project is described thoroughly, but keep in mind that reviewers may be reviewing 20-30 proposals and may skim parts of the proposal, especially if sections get too lengthy or provide unnecessary detail. Take care to provide a clear description of the project in the abstract section of the proposal. All projects are encouraged to include an education/outreach component. Sharing of project findings with as broad and large an audience as possible is an important element of the grant. Please refer to the supplementary 319 application guidance on the 319 Grant Program website for additional information about preparing an application for funding ([http://portal.ncdenr.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=170b2849-3aec-4359-9646-4c76f7ed1a59&groupId=38364](http://portal.ncdenr.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=170b2849-3aec-4359-9646-4c76f7ed1a59&groupId=38364)).

## **Watershed Restoration Projects**

The amount of funding available for watershed restoration work in FY2013 is expected to be approximately **\$1,300,000**. The purpose of this funding is to *restore* waters impaired by nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. NPS impaired waters are those monitored by the state or other entities in which certain uses such as fishing, swimming or shellfish harvesting have been limited or prohibited because of excessive amounts of one or more identified water pollutants. Based on U.S. EPA guidance, **319 grant watershed restoration funds must be used to implement a Watershed Restoration Plan** for a waterbody or watershed that is impaired. To be approved, a Watershed Restoration Plan must include the nine specific elements required by EPA, and which are listed in Section 26 of the application form. A list of the 27 watershed restoration plans associated with the 319 program can be found here: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program/nc-watershed-plans>. **A limited amount of 319 grant funds will be available to support the enhancement of an existing watershed plan in order to meet the nine required elements.** Proposals involving on-the-ground implementation shall provide documentation assuring sustainable operation and maintenance measures for at least five years.

## **Impaired Waters**

An official list of North Carolina's impaired waters can be found in the North Carolina Water Quality Assessment and Impaired Waters List (Integrated 305(b) and 303(d) Report) at the following website: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/mtu>. The 2012 list should be used for preparation of the FY2013 319 application. The 2012 impaired waters list is divided into five overall categories. Waters in Category 4t already have TMDLs (total maximum daily loads) or watershed restoration plans developed and are therefore the most suitable for implementation. Waters in Categories 4s and 5 may be suitable for development and implementation of a watershed restoration plan. The 303(d) list is a list of Category 5 impaired waters that require a TMDL.

Proposed projects to restore waters listed as impaired in a Basinwide Plan completed after the 2012 list was submitted to EPA will also be considered for funding. Projects that address a need or priority issue identified in a Basinwide Plan will receive additional points during the evaluation process. Information about each of the state's 17 river basins can be found at the DWQ Basinwide Planning website: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/bpu>. Applicants should review their project concept with the appropriate Basinwide planner before developing the application. Basinwide planners are identified for each major river basin at: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/bpu/contacts>.

## **Measurable Results**

Both the U.S. EPA and North Carolina place a strong emphasis on achieving “**measurable results**” for projects selected to receive 319 Grant funding. Applications effectively addressing the following considerations are preferred:

- Highest ratings will be given to projects that are designed, implemented and monitored to show the effectiveness of the restoration effort through quantifying instream water quality improvements, estimating or modeling pollutant load reductions associated with implemented projects, or other such means of documenting improved water quality that will lead to the restoration of an impaired water body.
- Projects that focus on small watersheds have greater potential to effect measurable water quality improvements and will be given preference in this important regard.

- Whenever possible, target project areas above and close to existing monitoring stations to maximize the ability to influence monitoring results and to take advantage of ongoing data collection to document project results.
- Watershed assessments should seek to identify disproportionate sources of pollutant loading, and BMPs should then be strategically located where they can effectively target these sources to address a documented water quality problem.

Examples for documenting a project's measurable results include, but are not limited to:

- Measurable in-stream improvements in water quality.
- Recovery of aquatic species, through the use of biological monitoring to measure the effects of BMPs on the ecologic health of a stream community.
- Implementation of BMPs that have prevented a quantifiable amount of pollutants, such as sediment or nutrients, from entering surface waters, with documentation providing measured, modeled, or estimated load reductions (e.g. 200 tons/year).
- Improved animal waste management or other farming practices that have reduced the amount of nutrients leaving a farm or farms, with documentation providing measured, modeled, or estimated load reductions (e.g. 30%).
- Low-tech measures such as photo-documentation to visually illustrate water quality improvements, such as stream appearance after a rainstorm shown before and after project implementation, or demonstrating improved water quality appearance after fencing out livestock from a stream.

### **Certain Regulatory Compliance Activities Ineligible**

Provided a proposed project satisfies the above requirements for watershed restoration funding, Section 319 funds may be used to fund any urban storm water activities that are not specifically required by a draft or final NPDES permit. Section 319 funds may be used for urban storm water discharges that are not addressed by Phase I and Phase II storm water program requirements. These include aspects of Phase I and II activities that support but do not directly implement activities required by Phase I or Phase II permits. Some of the storm water activities allowable for 319 grant funding include:

- Technical assistance to State and local storm water programs;
- Monitoring needed to design and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation strategies;
- Best management practices for pollution prevention and runoff control (except for BMPs required by a draft or final NPDES permit);
- Information and education programs, training, and technology transfer;
- Development and implementation of regulations, policies, and local ordinances to address storm water runoff. These may apply to areas covered by NPDES permits, provided that the regulations, policies and ordinances apply to non-permitted areas as well.
- Stormwater projects occurring outside o the NPDES permit area.

### **Monitoring Requires Quality Assurance Plan**

All selected projects that include a monitoring component shall provide a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to be reviewed and approved by DWQ prior to the release of funds for monitoring activities. EPA guidance for QAPPs can be found at:

(<http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer/qappcovr.htm>). A template to assist in the preparation of a QAPP, as well as approved QAPPs from past 319 projects, can be found on the 319 Program's website at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program>. Project budgets and timelines should account for the development and review of QAPPs accordingly.

### Lower Priority for Projects Fundable by the NCEEP

For applicants proposing stream, wetland or buffer restoration projects, please contact the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program (Mac Haupt: 919-707-8965 or [Mac.Haupt@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Mac.Haupt@ncdenr.gov)) to determine whether the project could be implemented by the NCEEP. Projects fundable by the NCEEP will receive a lower priority for 319 watershed restoration funding.

### Matching and Other Requirements

All projects must include non-federal matching funds of at least 40% of the project's total costs (i.e. 60/40 match of the 100% total cost, 60% is Federal funds and 40% is match funds). **Note that proposals that are able to provide significantly more than the minimum 40% match will receive additional points during the evaluation process.** Applicants should make an effort to identify other similar work going on within the state. Proposals are encouraged to show a strong sense of collaboration and partnership with other state or local agencies for measurable NPS pollution reduction. Applicants are encouraged to investigate partnering opportunities with the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (<http://www.cwmtf.net/>), Ecosystem Enhancement Program (<http://www.nceep.net/>), local Soil and Water Conservation District offices, or other state or federal NPS programs.

### Deadlines and Administration

The schedule for reviewing and funding FY 2013 proposals is presented in the following table:

March 4, 2013	Request for proposals (RFP) is released
<b>May 23, 2013</b>	<b>RFP period closes, all proposals must be received electronically</b>
July 8, 2013	Applicants notified whether they will be invited for interviews
July 30, 2013	Interviews for finalists in Raleigh
August 5, 2013	DWQ announces selected projects. Move forward with contracting, dependent upon receipt of EPA grant funding to North Carolina. Contract preparation can be up to a three-month process through DENR Office of Purchase and Services.
~ January 2014	Contract executed and project may start. (Estimated, depending on grant award date to NCDENR and time for contract preparation.)

### Still Have Questions?

If you need further information, please contact Kim Nimmer, 319 Grant Program Coordinator, by email ([kimberly.nimmer@ncdenr.gov](mailto:kimberly.nimmer@ncdenr.gov)) or phone (919-807-6438). Questions are encouraged if applicants are unsure of the eligibility of their project or need assistance with the application form. For information on required reporting if your project is selected for funding, see the 319 Grant Program website <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program> for quarterly report and invoice templates and final report guidelines.

The U.S. EPA has the 319 grant program's revised **draft** guidelines available at <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/cwact.cfm>. A list of past projects selected for funding in North Carolina is available at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program/319projects>.