



February 11, 2011

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Mr. Timothy T. DePriest
Chairman, Greenway Ecological Standing Committee
c/o New York DEC/Natural Heritage Trust
270 Michigan Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14203

Dear Mr. DePriest:

As requested by the Niagara Relicensing Environmental Coalition (NREC), attached is an Executive Summary and supplemental information for the Riverkeeper/Ecology & Environment proposal titled "*Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy*".

Please circulate this supplemental information to the members of the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee and their respective organizations, to assist with the review of the full application.

If there are any questions or concerns about this Summary, please forward them to me prior to our scheduled presentation on Tuesday, February 15, 2011.

Thank you, and we look forward to speaking with both the NREC and GESC about this project.

Sincerely,

Jill Spisiak Jedlicka
Director of Ecological Programs

cc: Kris Erickson, E&E
Margaret Wooster, NREC Chair

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Executive Summary- Niagara Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy

Brief Project Description:

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper in partnership with Ecology & Environment, Inc., is requesting GESC funding to contribute to the development of a Niagara Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy.

The strategy will be developed through stakeholder participation with the end product being a consensus-based habitat restoration “master plan” for the Niagara River. The strategy will be a resource to the Niagara River Greenway, Niagara River RAP, and any regional stakeholder with an interest or commitment to habitat restoration and protection.

The GESC-funded effort would be integrated with a parallel project, which covers the remainder of the Niagara River watershed, and was recently funded by the USEPA as part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Project Need:

Although the second Greenway Criteria gives priority status to projects involving "Restoration of the Niagara River Ecosystem," it does not provide sufficient guidance to help project sponsors and funding committees satisfy that criterion. A consensus-based, habitat restoration strategy with realistic goals and objectives needs to be developed. There is also an opportunity here to support the habitat restoration objectives of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP). The NYSDEC cited in the “Compilation of Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Stage2 Addenda for New York State Areas of Concern, January 28, 2011” that there is a need for the Niagara River RAP to “*create and implement long-term management plans and programs for priority habitats*”, “*develop measurable targets for habitat types within the AOC*”, and “*identify additional HIPs eligible for Niagara Greenway assistance*”.¹ A Niagara regional habitat strategy would provide a significant amount of information to NYSDEC and help make progress towards delisting. We have the opportunity to capitalize on the potential synergy between these two initiatives, not just to satisfy Criterion 9 in the Greenway Plan which calls for projects to support other major regional plans, but also to use our region’s resources as wisely as possible.

Funding for habitat restoration implementation is extremely competitive not only at the local, state, and federal agency levels, but for foundations and even private companies who fund such work. USEPA and other state and federal agencies have made it clear that regions that have already completed “*ecosystem restoration master plans*,” or a “*regional habitat restoration strategy*” will be the priority areas to receive Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding now and into the foreseeable future.

Summary of Key Project Objectives:

The following summarizes the key objectives of this project. For detailed work products and deliverables, please refer to the full application document. For a summary of tasks and outcomes, please refer to Table 1.1 below.

- 1) Facilitate regional habitat coordination in order to leverage partnerships and identify opportunities for collaboration;

- 2) Contribute to the development of a comprehensive watershed based, functional habitat database that will provide the tools needed to map, identify, quantify, organize and analyze non-sensitive habitat information to be accessible and usable by any regional habitat restoration stakeholder;
- 3) Identify, screen, analyze and categorize potential habitat restoration/protection areas. Field assessments for 30 sites and detail conceptual planning for up to 5 sites to support active project implementation;
- 4) Establish the framework for a regional monitoring program utilizing performance-based measures and metrics (i.e.: acres of habitat, species enhanced, water quality parameters, % closer to delisting the AOC, etc.);
- 5) Provide support and information needed for the delisting process of beneficial use impairments in the Niagara River Area of Concern, and other complementary Niagara River ecosystem restoration efforts.

Project Budget Narrative Supplement

Project costs have been calculated based on each task and partner responsibility as summarized in Table 1.1 and also detailed in the application narrative. Each Task budget incorporates multiple positions needed to complete the deliverable. Salary and labor rates are calculated based on discipline, years of experience, and areas of expertise. In addition, rates often include fringe and indirect costs such as: health insurance; disability insurance; Social Security; Medicare; pension; and vacation days and holidays. Additionally, overhead costs must be covered which include: utilities; office space; building maintenance; insurance; supplies and equipment; training; hiring costs; and expenses related to obtaining work (such as proposal development).

There is very little difference in salary rates between a non-profit and a private corporation, in this case between Riverkeeper and Ecology & Environment. However, overall costs to Riverkeeper for this project are lower since the non-profit staff does not receive health insurance or disability insurance, pension/retirement, or sick days, and there are no operational profits to be taxed. Ecology & Environment is a publicly traded company and is obligated to provide gains for investors in the form of dividends provided through operational profits. E & E's rates are consistent across projects and ultimately reflect what the market deems reasonable and fair rates for the value and quality of services provided.

Summary Table 1.1 of Key Project Outputs, Outcomes and Expected Results

Objective	Action Steps/Tasks	Outputs/Outcomes/Measureable Results	Stakeholder Coordination
1) Facilitate regional habitat coordination in order to leverage partnerships and identify opportunities for collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partially fund Strategy Project Manager for two years ▪ Support overall grant administration and project management ▪ Facilitate meetings and technical teams ▪ Coordination of public outreach and community involvement ▪ Involve E&E Technical support to Riverkeeper and assistance with 24 meetings over 2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of GESC and GLRI efforts ▪ Centralized project management and administration ▪ Transparent and collaborative open strategy development process 	Local, state, and federal agency reps, community groups, GESC, NREC, HETF, non-profits, private business and landowners.
2) Contribute to the development of a comprehensive, watershed based habitat database and quantify, analyze and organize non-sensitive habitat data and information to be accessible and usable by <u>any</u> regional habitat restoration stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify data sets currently available ▪ Collect/acquire data to fill gaps ▪ Update datasets ▪ Quantify and analyze updated datasets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-depth electronic, standardized, geo-related library of environmental, hydrological, and ecological information ▪ Refined habitat classifications ▪ Basis for screening potential habitat restoration projects 	Local, state and federal agency reps, environmental community groups, GESC and NREC.
3) Identify, screen, analyze and categorize potential restoration/protection areas. Field assessments for up to 30 sites and detail conceptual planning for up to 5 sites for active project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate datasets and large list of potential sites using input from stakeholders ▪ Develop project and site assessment screening protocol ▪ Screen potential sites for suitability ▪ Update regional database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape level organization and evaluation ▪ Initial identification and “short-listing” of potential sites ▪ Summary site descriptions and habitat restoration/protection opportunities for 30 sites ▪ Detailed site summaries and conceptual plans for up to 5 priority sites 	Local, state, and federal agency reps, community groups, GESC, NREC, HETF, non-profits, private business and landowners.



<p>4) Establish the framework for a regional monitoring program utilizing performance-based measures and metrics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify measures to properly maintain and protect the project sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish baseline conditions for potential project sites ▪ Develop detail monitoring protocol for up to 5 priority sites ▪ Region-specific template for project monitoring 	<p>State and federal agencies, NR Remedial Advisory Committee</p>
<p>5) Provide support and information needed for the delisting process of beneficial use impairments in the Niagara River Area of Concern</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate stakeholder comment and feedback on draft document ▪ Draft Strategy document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed Phase I Habitat Strategy document ▪ Identify general maintenance and monitoring requirements needed at potential sites in the AOC ▪ Refine NR RAP delisting targets and metrics 	<p>NR Remedial Advisory Committee, NYSDEC, NREC</p>

