

**Corporation for Open Lands
O'Hare Modernization Mitigation Account Wetlands Restoration
Request for Pre-Proposals**

Introduction

The Corporation for Open Lands (CorLands), in conjunction with the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will soon make more than \$25 million in wetland mitigation funds available for restoration projects using funds from the O'Hare Modernization Mitigation Account ("OMMA"). A map showing the Des Plaines River watershed boundaries where eligible projects must be located is available at www.corlands.org.

This program represents an historic opportunity to restore and enhance wetlands, Waters of the United States, and associated upland habitat in the Des Plaines River Watershed at an unprecedented scale. We invite pre-proposals from public and private agencies, organizations and/or individuals with projects located in the Des Plaines River watershed in Lake, Cook, Du Page or Will County, Illinois who can demonstrate their experience in natural area restoration and land management. Permitted and/or proposed wetland mitigation banks within the defined watershed boundaries may also submit pre-proposals to CorLands to provide mitigation credits.

Eligible projects must include a minimum of 25 acres. Applicants must agree to permanent protection of the project site through a conservation easement or Illinois Nature Preserve Commission dedication. Activities eligible for funding may include (but are not limited to):

- Wetland restoration and enhancement, especially including hydrologic restoration of property currently drained by ditching, subsurface drain tile or other methods
- Restoration and/or enhancement of Waters of the United States and associated wetland and upland habitats
- Native plant community and habitat restoration in wetlands and upland buffer areas
- Restoration planning
- Limited land acquisition critical to wetland restoration projects
- Land management practices including the control of invasive plant species via mowing, herbiciding, or other means, and prescribed burns
- Costs related to development of interpretive materials (such as handouts, brochures, signage) and development of volunteer stewardship programs.

Priority projects will leverage additional funds, protect threatened or endangered species and/or contribute to a broader state, local, county or regional conservation plan. Note that certain restrictions apply for properties located in proximity to airports. If the project being considered for pre-proposal application is within 10,000 feet of an existing airport please contact Joseph Roth at CorLands before proceeding with the pre-proposal process.

Criteria

To qualify for OMMA funds, the sites shall:

1. Be on public or private land;

2. Contain a majority of drained or hydrologically modified hydric soils, recognizing that restoration of former wetlands and/or former or degraded Waters of the United States are a preferred form of mitigation;
3. Have no high quality wetlands that would be adversely affected by the construction or restoration work;
4. Contain adequate perimeter upland areas to buffer the wetlands from potentially incompatible land uses on adjacent parcels;
5. Be so situated that adequate hydrology can be ensured (e.g., be located on a floodplain or possess a high groundwater table);
6. Be proximate or adjacent to public land holdings so as to create contiguous, large-scale habitat areas;
7. Be part of an adopted or accepted open space plan, watershed plan, conservancy district, protected riparian corridor, or other local or regional conservation land use plan. This criterion has been established in order to help implement local and regional conservation plans, and to ensure maximum consistency and compatibility with future surrounding land uses;
8. Contain no known hazardous waste, documented by a written environmental assessment conducted by a qualified person or firm;
9. Be of sufficient size to generate at least 25 acres of wetland credit;
10. Development of the site shall not adversely affect federal or state listed endangered or threatened species, or their habitat, or other high quality habitats or natural areas such as oak groves, prairies, or savannas: and
11. Development of the site shall not result in any taking, substantial impairment of, or constructive use of any lands purchased with Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON Section 6(f)) funds, and/or any historic properties of national, state or local significance protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

Pre-proposal process

Prior to submitting a pre-proposal, potential applicants are encouraged to discuss your project with Joseph Roth, CorLands Director of Restoration Programs and Special Funds. Permitted and/or proposed wetland mitigation bank operators interested in submitting a pre-proposal please contact Joseph Roth before proceeding. He can be reached at 312-863-6275 or jroth@corlands.org.

Deadline: Pre-proposals should be submitted on or before 3 p.m., on April 7, 2006. Additional pre-proposal deadlines may be announced depending on the initial response.

Submission: An agency, organization, or individual that has multiple projects to propose may submit more than one pre-proposal for funding consideration. The application form must be submitted electronically as an attachment to an email, or by mailing a disk. A Word document version is available at www.corlands.org. No faxes will be considered. Six copies of all maps, photographs and other attachments must be submitted by mail, along with a full digital version on a compact disc. All submissions must be in CorLands office by the stated deadline. Complete applications will be acknowledged with an e-mail receipt.

Matching Funds: Matching cash and/or services are not required for an organization to submit a pre-proposal application, though CorLands will look to leverage OMMA funds wherever possible to achieve its program goals. Costs that will be considered as suitable for consideration as project match will include but are not limited to, cash and/or in-kind services necessary to plan, implement, or manage the proposed project; land acquisition cost (real estate cost) necessary to implement the proposed project; and project costs for developing interpretive/educational programs and/or signage and volunteer stewardship programs related to the project. Note that costs related to developing public access will not be funded by OMMA but may be counted toward the project match.

Review of Pre-proposals: All pre-proposals submitted will be forwarded to the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and reviewed in conjunction with a Mitigation Review Team which consists of the Chicago Illinois Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Region 5 Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Great Lakes Office of the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. All organizations which submit pre-proposals will be contacted by Corlands regarding the decision made on their submittal on or by May 19, 2006. Organizations who submit pre-proposals selected for further consideration will be invited to submit a more detailed project prospectus.

Site visit: Following review of pre-proposals, the Army Corps and Mitigation Review Team may elect to schedule a site visit to learn more about the project and to view the project site. In this situation CorLands will contact the organization who submitted the pre-proposal to schedule a field date and time.

Full proposals: Following the pre-proposal review process, by May 19, 2006, CorLands will invite selected applicants to submit a more detailed project prospectus. The prospectus will include specific information addressing site selection criteria, technical feasibility, method of credit generation, buffers, performance criteria, goals and objectives, baseline conditions, monitoring and reporting protocols, contingency plans and responsibilities, financial assurances, compensation ratios, and provisions for long-term protection and management. A minimum 5-year monitoring plan will be a part of the prospectus, including a soil erosion and sediment control plan. Final decisions on projects approved for OMMA funding and all related project plans, details, performance standards, and monitoring plans will be made by the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Corporation for Open Lands
O'Hare Modernization Mitigation Account Wetlands Restoration
Request for Pre-Proposals**

Note to applicants: Please submit one application for each separate project.

Application date:	
Project title:	
Applicant Agency:	
Contact person: Name: Title:	
Address:	
Email:	
Phone:	
Land owner and contact information (if different from applicant):	
Project summary (include a 2-5 sentence summary describing the project and how it will benefit wetlands restoration):	
Approximate project cost:	
Grant request (note: Applicants may use OMMA as the only source project funding but priority will be given to projects that leverage additional funds):	
Amount and source of matching funds:	
Additional project partners:	
Name, affiliation	Contact information
Qualifications: Describe the agency's (or partners) demonstrated experience in natural area restoration and long-term management:	
Project size	

Total project acreage:
Wetlands acreage:
Total surrounding buffer acreage:
Current conditions
Existing vegetation:
Current hydrology/drainage:
Location to ensure adequate hydrology (e.g. floodplain or high ground water table):
Project plans and significance
Over all goals and objectives of the project (note – objectives should be tied to specific outcomes whenever possible):
How will hydrology be established? (note whether native soils will be used).
Description of vegetative communities to be established. Note that priority projects will maximize vegetative diversity and abundance, structure specific wildlife habitats, and optimize wetland hydrology:
Benefits to threatened or endangered species:
Likely future adjacent land uses:

Contribution to large-scale protected habitat area and/or connectivity to other natural areas including high quality habitats or natural areas such as oak groves, prairies or savannas (provide map):		
Contribution to local, regional, state or national conservation plans (cite plans specifically and reference the location where plans are accessible):		
Planned design, maintenance and monitoring procedures including soil erosion and sedimentation control plans. (Note, preference is given to projects that minimize energy needs, human intervention and costs):		
Planned public access and/or educational programming:		
Project timeframe:	Projected start date	Projected end date
Planning:		
Acquisition (if necessary):		
Restoration:		
Ongoing management:		Continuing
Long term conservation: how will the site be protected?		
Conservation easement in perpetuity: ____yes _____no Note whether there are any legal concerns that would have an impact on the owner's ability to donate a conservation easement:		
Illinois Nature Preserve Commission dedication ____yes _____no If yes, note why eligible for nature preserve status:		

Distance from nearest airport (see attached list):
Will the project have any impact on (if yes, describe):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lands protected with LAWCON funds? <input type="checkbox"/>yes <input type="checkbox"/>no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic properties of local, state or national significance? <input type="checkbox"/>yes <input type="checkbox"/>no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal or state listed endangered or threatened species or their habitat? <input type="checkbox"/>yes <input type="checkbox"/>no
Has an environmental assessment been conducted? (if yes, please attach) <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Are there any known hazardous wastes on the site? (if yes, describe) <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Attachments (6 copies in hard copy required):
Maps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site location map (note eligible sites must be within the DesPlaines River watershed in Lake, Cook, DuPage or Will County, Illinois) ____ USGS topographic map (or more detailed topographic map if available) ____ NWI map ____ ADID map (if available) ____ Aerial photographs ____ Soil survey ____

**Submit pre-proposal application via email
and 6 copies of attachments via mail to
Joseph Roth
Director of Restoration and Special Projects
Corporation for Open Lands
25 East Washington, Suite 1650
Chicago, Illinois 60601
jroth@corlands.org
312-863-6275**