



Maine Coast Heritage Trust



CBEP Habitat Protection Fund

Grant Application and Guidelines 2012

Background

In 2012-2013, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP), will distribute approximately \$60,000 to support the protection of high value habitat in the Casco Bay watershed through its *Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund*. The fund will be administered through a partnership between CBEP and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Program, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries as described below. Funding levels for individual projects will vary from a few hundred dollars to cover transaction costs associated with acquisition to funding ranging from \$5,000 - \$20,000 for land acquisition. Larger amounts will be considered for exceptionally large or significant projects.

Use of the Fund

The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund may be used to:

- Pay costs associated with acquisition of high value habitat (e.g. miscellaneous fees, surveys, appraisals);*
- Purchase an easement on or acquire fee title to high value habitat; or
- Purchase an option on lands with high value habitat.

**Costs associated with acquisition will be considered for funding if it is demonstrated that, without assistance, the project is not likely to proceed.*

Geographic Region of Interest

Casco Bay watershed; See the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership website, www.cascobayestuary.org for a map of the applicable watershed area. The focus of this fund is on lands that are integral to aquatic ecosystems (e.g. coastal, riverine, and freshwater wetland systems). A majority of the funds will be directed to projects in the coastal subwatersheds of the larger Casco Bay watershed.

Who Can Apply?

Non-profit conservation groups (land trusts, watershed groups), towns, state and federal conservation agencies are all eligible to apply, as long as they demonstrate their commitment and capability to protect and manage land acquired in perpetuity for its natural resource values.

CBEP Habitat Protection Subcommittee

The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund will be administered by a subcommittee consisting of the members listed at the end of this RFP. Applicants may contact any one of these individuals to inquire about the fund or initiate the application process.

Requirements for all Properties Protected

All requirements for the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund must be met in order to be eligible for funding.

1. All lands protected through easement or acquisition must be protected and managed for habitat conservation in perpetuity. Applicant must sign a statement provided by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership ensuring permanent protection/management of the property for its natural resource values in perpetuity.
2. Public access, permitted in a manner sensitive to the habitat values of the property, must be assured in perpetuity (due to the use of federal funds from EPA for this program). Applicant must sign a statement provided by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership ensuring permanent appropriate public access to the property for its natural resource values in perpetuity. However, if a compelling case can be made for why public access will not be allowed on the protected property (such as protection of sensitive wildlife habitats), the application will be considered.
3. If land management activities (e.g. forestry, agriculture) are envisioned on the property, those activities must be carried out in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner, consistent with the overarching purpose of protecting high value habitat for fish, wildlife and plant communities in perpetuity. Applicants anticipating land management activities must discuss proposed activities with the Habitat Subcommittee.
4. In outreach efforts associated with land acquisition (e.g., written materials, public ceremonies, discussions with key partners), the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund requests appropriate recognition as a partner involved in supporting the land protection initiative. We will supply partners with our logo for visual presentation purposes. In written materials, we request that the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund be credited as co-administered in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Program, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.
5. Although it is not currently a requirement to receive funding through the CBEP Habitat Protection Fund, the provision of non-federal matching funds for CBEP's federal contribution to any project is strongly encouraged. This commitment of dedicated, non-federal match will need to be documented in writing on the organization's letterhead.

Application Process

In an effort to be responsive to applicants and to maintain flexibility, the application process will be relatively simple and informal. There will be no application deadline; instead, applications will be processed as they are received. The process for applying for funding through the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund is as follows:

1. Interested applicants should call one of the members of the CBEP Habitat Protection Subcommittee listed at the end of this document to explain the project to insure that it falls within fund requirements and criteria, and to confirm that funds are still available.
2. The applicant should then submit an electronic copy of the following information to the Habitat Protection Subcommittee member with whom they've been in contact:
 - a) Cover letter briefly describing project and requesting funds;
 - b) Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund application with a project narrative or a pre-existing grant application that addresses the selection criteria and requirements;
 - c) Map that clearly identifies the boundaries of land and parcels proposed for protection;
 - d) Appraisal summary sheet or opinion of value, if appropriate; we have not been requiring this separate fund application form;
 - e) Budget outlining the total project costs, committed funds, and potential funding sources – both for the project and for any planned stewardship/management; and
 - f) Letters of support or other supporting materials (optional).

Following a review of the application materials, the selection committee may request additional information or may contact the applicant to arrange a site visit. The Subcommittee aims to finalize funding decisions on an application within 4-8 weeks of receipt of the application.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the CBEP Habitat Protection Subcommittee to select projects for funding. Please address all applicable criteria in your application materials.

- Protection of land that is integral to an aquatic ecosystem (e.g. coastal, riverine, and freshwater wetland habitats);
- High habitat value(s) for fish, wildlife and/or plant communities*
- Permanent protection of the property
- Public access
- Part of a larger conservation vision
- Contiguous with conservation land other protected lands
- Level of threat from development
- Size of the project (larger is generally better)
- Cost-effectiveness of proposal
- Condition of surrounding land
- Likelihood of successful implementation (including acquisition and long-term stewardship)

- Matching funds
- Community support
- Outreach potential

** Note: Habitat values will be analyzed and prioritized, using multiple tools that may include but are not limited to the following:*

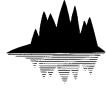
- *USFWS Gulf of Maine Program's GIS analysis for the Gulf of Maine watershed*
- *USFWS Gulf of Maine Coastal Program/Casco Bay Estuary Partnership GIS analysis for the 15 towns surrounding Casco Bay*
- *USFWS Gulf of Maine Program's database identifying high value nesting islands*
- *"Beginning with Habitat" initiative, incorporating habitat data from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Maine Natural Areas Program*
- *Land cover maps and aerial photographs*
- *Local knowledge*
- *Site visit observations*

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CBEP Habitat Protection Fund

Application Form, Section I

Project Name:

Date:

(Please attach locator map and parcel map that clearly delineate property boundaries.)

Town:

Latitude & Longitude:

Total Acreage:

Approximate acres of different habitat types:

Wetland

Tidal marsh

Forest

Grassland

Other:

Shorefront Feet (if applicable):

Shorefront type (e.g., ocean, river, lake/pond, wetland)

Organization or agency seeking Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection funding:

Organization/Agency Name

Contact Person

Street or P. O. Box

Contact Phone/FAX

City/State/Zip

Contact Email Address

Briefly, describe ecological/ habitat values for fish, wildlife, and/or plant communities. Indicate how you identified the ecological/habitat values (e.g., formal or informal biological inventories, local naturalist, statewide databases such as *Beginning with Habitat*, literature).

Are there any structures on the property? If so, how are they used, and what will happen to them once the property is permanently protected?

How is the property currently being used? What recreational or commercial uses will be permitted on the property once it is permanently protected?

Are there any conservation easements, other easements, rights of way, or deed restrictions currently on the property?

FUNDING

Please attach detailed project budget, fundraising budget, and Appraisal/Opinion of Value summary sheet.

Amount requested:

Use for funds requested (accepted uses include easement/fee acquisition or transaction costs):

Total purchase price of property or easement:

Fair Market Value for the property or easement:

Total cash raised to date:

Projected closing date:

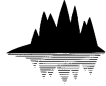
Prepared by:

Date:

I (we) understand that permanent protection (in the form of a conservation easement or other double layer mechanism) and public acknowledgement of funding from the CBEPHPF are requirements of projects funded by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Habitat Protection Fund. I (we) agree to meet these requirements. I (we) also understand that the CBEPHPF encourages the establishment of public access where appropriate.

Signature:

Date:



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Application Form, Section II

(If you have a pre-existing grant proposal that answers all the questions in Section II, feel free to send that to us instead of completing Section II. If a pre-existing grant proposal does not answer all the questions in Section II, you only need to complete those sections of Section II that are not covered in your pre-existing grant proposal.)

Describe ecological/ habitat values for fish, wildlife, and/or plant communities. Indicate how you identified the ecological/habitat values (e.g., formal or informal biological inventories, statewide databases, literature).

What are the community sentiments toward the project?

Please describe the current condition of surrounding lands. Is this project part of a larger conservation vision, and is it adjacent to existing conservation lands?

Please describe the level of threat from development.

Please describe fundraising activity to date.

What is the long-term management plan (including public access and land management) for the property (ies) involved in this proposal?

What outreach/educational initiatives will be undertaken in conjunction with this habitat protection project?

Current property owner(s):

Name

Name

Street or P. O. Box

Street or P. O. Box

City/State/Zip

City/State/Zip

Is there a written agreement on the property (i.e., Purchase and Sale, Option, or Right of First Refusal)? If not, please describe the level of commitment that the landowners have expressed toward the project.

Please attach additional sheets, if necessary.