

or two workshops with other NCBO supported researchers to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, and presentation of results of supported work.

II. Areas of Interest

Proposals should exhibit familiarity with related work that is completed or ongoing. When appropriate, proposals should be multi-disciplinary. Coordinated efforts involving multiple eligible applicants or individuals are encouraged. Proposals must address one of the areas of interest listed here. If the proposal addresses more than one area of interest, it should list first on the application the area of interest that most closely reflects the objective of the proposal. Proposals should follow and refer to the guidance in the Chesapeake Bay Program's "Strategy to Accelerate the Protection and Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in the Chesapeake Bay" which is available at: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/> or via Peter Bergstrom (see ADDRESSES).

All proposals should address the manner in which the applicant will obtain the necessary permits (if applicable) for collecting plant materials from tidal waters and bottom disturbance or putting structures in tidal waters. For collecting permit requirements in Maryland, see: <http://mddnr.chesapeakebay.net/savrrc/index.html>. For permit information for Virginia tidal waters, see: <http://www.mrc.state.va.us/page3.htm>.

These areas of interest are not listed in any particular order of importance: *A. Enhance supply of SAV propagules for restoration, especially seeds.* Propagate seeds, rooted cuttings, and/or whole plants of SAV species native to Chesapeake Bay to use in restoration projects. Priority will be given to proposals to produce seeds of species that are known to grow well from seed, especially eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) and wild celery (*Vallisneria spiralis*). Proposals for other propagation techniques that will minimize the ongoing need to harvest plant materials from the field are also encouraged. Source materials should come from the Chesapeake Bay watershed if possible, and the applicant must have all required collecting permits before collecting any source material from tidal waters. If a proposal is solely for propagation, the application should list organizations that are interested in using the plant materials they produce in restoration projects in Chesapeake Bay. If the propagules produced will be sold, the applicant must explain in his or her proposal how this income will be used to promote program objectives.

B. Applied research to increase the success of planting SAV directly from seeds. Investigate factors directly related to improving the large-scale cultivation and planting of SAV from seeds in Chesapeake Bay. These factors may include the following: optimal conditions for seed production and maturation, seed viability and germination; seed harvest and storage methods; natural modes of seed transport and fates of seeds that disperse naturally; distribution and viability of seed banks; and other factors. Collecting information useful to the direct planting of seeds of wild celery and/or redhead grass (*Potamogeton perfoliatus*) is encouraged. Proposals that would increase our knowledge of the seed ecology of eelgrass are also encouraged.

C. Large-scale SAV planting in 2003 and/or 2004. Conduct large-scale SAV restoration, including one or more projects that can be done in fall 2003 and/or in 2004. Proposed projects may be expansions of projects already planned, especially if done in 2003. Projects should use native species that have grown well when planted in past Chesapeake Bay projects and sites that have been assessed and shown to have a good chance of SAV survival and include regular evaluation of success for at least 2 years from date of planting. Projects that involve harvesting whole plants from donor beds and transplanting them are discouraged.

D. Site assessments needed to choose SAV planting sites for 2005. Conduct site assessments in 2003 and 2004 of potential sites for large-scale planting projects to be done in 2005 or later. Sites that are assessed should be pre-screened for good SAV growth potential using a GIS targeting tool that uses existing monitoring data. Site assessments may include measuring light availability (water clarity), salinity, temperature, bottom substrate characteristics, water depth, waves and currents, and epiphyte occurrence; mapping current and historical SAV presence by species; conducting small test plantings or other bioassays; and measuring other pertinent water chemistry and environmental parameters.

III. Funding

A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that approximately \$425,000 will be made available through the NCBO for SAV culture and large scale restoration projects in FY 2003. This document describes how interested persons can apply for funding and how funding decisions will be made.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so solely at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

B. Award Limits

There are no specified award limits for proposals submitted under this solicitation.

C. Funding Instrument

Whether the funding instrument is a grant or a cooperative agreement will be determined by the degree of NOAA's involvement in the project. A cooperative agreement will be used if NOAA shares responsibility for management, control, direction, or performance of the project with the recipient. Specific terms regarding substantial involvement will be contained in special award conditions.

D. Cost-sharing Requirements

The NOAA strongly encourages applicants applying for either area of interest to share as much of the costs of the award as possible. Funds from other Federal awards may not be considered matching funds. The nature of the contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the final selection process. Priority selection will be given to proposals that propose cash rather than in-kind contributions.

IV. Instructions for Application

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include state, local and Indian tribal governments, institutions of higher education, other non-profit organizations and commercial organizations.

The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. The NOAA