

**Alabama Coastal Area Management Program Annual Request for Proposals  
Application Guidance**

**Table of Contents**

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
A. Eligible Applicants.....	2
B. Grant Amount.....	2
C. Match Requirement.....	2
D. Award Period.....	3
E. Project Location.....	3
F. Application Timeline.....	3
G. Application Submittal.....	3
H. Questions and Assistance.....	3
I. Additional Information for Applicants.....	4
<b>II. GRANT FOCUS AREAS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
A. Government Coordination and Local Government Planning.....	4
B. Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities.....	4
C. Coastal Habitats, Wetland Protection and Coastal Resource Stewardship.....	5
D. Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control.....	5
E. Public Access to Coastal Resources: Construction and Land Acquisition.....	5
<b>III. REVIEW PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>IV. APPLICATION CHECKLIST</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>V. EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
A. Example of a Simple Data Sharing Plan.....	10
B. Location Map Example for Public Access to Coastal Resources Focus Area.....	11
C. Project Site Plan Example for Public Access to Coastal Resources Focus Area.....	12
D. Sample Title Opinion and Title Affidavit for Public Access to Coastal Resources Focus Area.....	13

## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program, or Coastal Program, is to balance economic growth with the need for preservation of Alabama's coastal resources for future generations. The program promotes wise management of the cultural and natural resources of the state's coastal areas and fosters efforts to ensure the long-term ecological and economic productivity of coastal Alabama.

One specific function of the Coastal Program is to provide coastal management grant funds to Alabama's coastal communities and partners for planning and implementation of projects that address environmental problems affecting the coastal area and that promote sustainable economic development. Funding is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and administered by Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division, Coastal Section on a competitive basis. These grant funds are available pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

The Coastal Program is accepting applications through this Request for Proposals (RFP) for projects that protect, enhance, and improve the management of natural, cultural, and historical coastal resources and that increase the sustainability, resiliency and preparedness of coastal communities. Grant applications must meet the purpose of at least one of the following focus areas:

- ❖ Government Coordination and Local Government Planning
- ❖ Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities
- ❖ Coastal Habitats, Wetland Protection and Coastal Resource Stewardship
- ❖ Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control
- ❖ Public Access to Coastal Resources: Construction and Land Acquisition

Details regarding grant focus areas are included in Section II. This complete RFP Application Package can be found at [www.outdooralabama.com/public-lands/stateLands/landsCoastal/ACAMP.cfm](http://www.outdooralabama.com/public-lands/stateLands/landsCoastal/ACAMP.cfm).

### A. Eligible Applicants

- ❖ Coastal units of government including Mobile County, Baldwin County, and municipalities or tribal governments within Mobile and Baldwin counties
- ❖ Area-wide agencies, regional planning agencies, conservation districts, and port authorities
- ❖ Alabama state agencies whose activities affect or are affected by activities in the coastal area
- ❖ Alabama school districts, public colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning
- ❖ Nonprofit organizations that are legally constituted as 501(c)(3) organizations and have been nominated to undertake the project by one of the other eligible entities listed above. Nonprofit organizations are not eligible to receive funds for construction or land acquisition projects under the public access focus area. Applications submitted by non-profit organizations that propose these activities will be disqualified.

### B. Grant Amount

The preferred minimum funding amount is \$20,000 federal funds; the preferred maximum is \$50,000 federal funds. Several projects from one unit of government or entity may be bundled to meet the minimum. Applications for funding less than the minimum will be accepted, but the applicant must provide justification and the proposal must meet a unique or critical need. Project expenditures will be paid on a reimbursement basis.

### C. Match Requirement

All awards require a 1:1 ratio of non-federal matching funds. Match may consist of cash, in-kind services or donations that support the project. Federal funds, received directly or passed-through by a state

agency, cannot be used as match. If volunteer services will be used as non-cash match, applicants may calculate volunteer time by going to [http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

**D. Award Period**

The anticipated project start date is October 1, 2016 for a period not to exceed 12 months or by request of the applicant 15 months. Projects will be evaluated on project readiness and feasibility for completion within this project time frame.

**E. Project Location**

Funding is geographically limited to Mobile and Baldwin Counties. For construction or land acquisition projects under the Public Access to Coastal Resources focus area, funding is geographically limited to sites located completely or partially within the legislated Alabama Coastal Area, which includes lands and waters seaward of the continuous 10-foot contour in Mobile and Baldwin Counties. For further information, see the Coastal Area Boundary Map at <http://www.outdooralabama.com/images/file/ACAMP/ALCoastalAreaMap.pdf> or contact Coastal Section staff. Construction projects may only occur on lands that are publicly owned, leased, or otherwise protected through an easement. Leases or easements should be in perpetuity or, at a minimum, 20 years.

**F. Application Timeline**

March 18, 2016	Proposals must be received in the Coastal Section office by 5:00 PM.
June 30, 2016	Applicants will be notified of their selection status.
October 1, 2016	If approved by NOAA, funding becomes available on this date. Grant agreements may be executed prior to this date so that projects commence on October 1, 2016.
September 30, 2017	Projects must be completed.
December 31, 2017	Per request of applicant, projects must be completed.

**G. Application Submittal**

Submit a completed application form and signed cover page along with any supporting documentation by 5:00 PM on March 18, 2016 to [DCNR.Coastal@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:DCNR.Coastal@dcnr.alabama.gov).

Applications must be submitted electronically using the provided application form and cover page. Supplemental materials for projects in the Public Access to Coastal Resources focus area should be included as attachments in PDF format. Hard copy and faxed submissions will not be accepted, and late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

**H. Questions and Assistance**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Coastal Section staff early in the application development process if assistance or guidance is needed.

ADCNR, State Lands Division, Coastal Section, Phone: (251) 621-1216

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## **I. Additional Information for Applicants**

Proposal information will not be kept confidential. All materials submitted in response to this request for proposals are considered public information.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement with ADCNR which includes standard terms and conditions which are not subject to modifications. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the grant award.

Awarding of grants will be subject to receipt of funds from NOAA.

## **II. GRANT FOCUS AREAS**

The Coastal Program is accepting applications through this RFP for projects that protect, enhance, and improve the management of natural, cultural, and historical coastal resources and that increase the sustainability, resiliency and preparedness of coastal communities. Grant applications must meet the purpose of at least one of the following focus areas. Please contact Coastal Section staff if you are unsure whether a project is eligible.

### **A. Government Coordination and Local Government Planning**

The purpose of this focus area is to increase local government capacity to plan and implement projects that address environmental problems affecting the coastal area and that promote sustainable economic development. Projects should demonstrate a balance of economic development and resource protection.

Project examples include:

- ❖ Comprehensive and community planning
- ❖ Smart growth planning
- ❖ Zoning and ordinance development for resource protection
- ❖ GIS applications for coastal management
- ❖ Spatial data collection for coastal management
- ❖ Public access planning
- ❖ Working waterfront revitalization planning
- ❖ Planning for sustainable tourism to ensure long-term economic and environmental benefits
- ❖ Community education and outreach related to government coordination and planning

### **B. Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities**

The purpose of this focus area is to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards in Coastal Alabama. Projects within this focus area should help coastal communities prepare for and respond to the effects of natural hazard events, disasters and sea level rise.

Project examples include:

- ❖ Hazard mitigation planning
- ❖ Floodplain management planning
- ❖ Post-disaster recovery and redevelopment planning
- ❖ Conducting vulnerability analyses and risk assessments
- ❖ Developing policies, guidance and best management practices to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to natural hazards
- ❖ Development of policies and practices that support community participation in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS)
- ❖ Development of flood damage prevention ordinances and supplemental building codes to account for storm surge, flooding, erosion and scour

- ❖ Development of sea level rise and/or climate change adaptation strategies for incorporation into local comprehensive plans or ordinances
- ❖ Community education and outreach related to coastal hazards and resilient communities

**C. Coastal Habitats, Wetland Protection and Coastal Resource Stewardship**

The purpose of this priority area is to promote protection, restoration and stewardship of Alabama's coastal resources through an ecosystem approach to management.

Project examples include:

- ❖ Developing policies, guidance and best management practices to restore and preserve coastal wetlands and shorelines
- ❖ Developing long-term conservation and/or restoration strategies for sensitive natural areas
- ❖ Shoreline and wetland restoration planning to mitigate the effects of natural hazards (also fulfills the Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities focus area)
- ❖ GIS applications for natural resource management
- ❖ Spatial data collection for coastal habitats
- ❖ Measuring land use changes and developing long-term protection strategies
- ❖ Community education and outreach related to coastal habits, wetland protection and coastal resource stewardship

**D. Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control**

The Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program was established by Congress in 1990 to encourage better coordination between state coastal zone managers and water quality experts to reduce polluted runoff in the coastal zone. The Program is unique in that it establishes a set of management measures for states to use in controlling polluted runoff. Funding in this focus area will be provided based on the extent to which projects advance the State of Alabama toward final approval and implementation of its Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, particularly in currently unapproved management measure areas outline below. More information on the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program can be found at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/nonpoint/welcome.html>.

Potential projects include planning, engineering and design, data collection/analysis, monitoring, mapping, modeling and education and outreach related to the following areas:

- ❖ Agricultural best management practices
- ❖ Storm water runoff from new development
- ❖ Comprehensive planning for development to protect sensitive ecological areas, minimize land disturbances and retain natural drainage and vegetation
- ❖ Watershed planning (must be done using EPA Section 319 elements and guidelines)
- ❖ Nutrient/pathogen loadings to surface water and groundwater from new and operating on-site disposal systems (OSDS)
- ❖ Hydromodification improvement to address existing nonpoint source pollution problems caused by dams, dredge and eroding streambanks and shorelines
- ❖ Wetland and riparian area protection and restoration
- ❖ Engineered vegetated treatment systems

**E. Public Access to Coastal Resources: Construction and Land Acquisition**

The Public Access focus area is designed to help Alabama's coastal communities identify and improve public access to cultural, historical and natural areas while protecting resources from overuse and damage. Projects may protect, restore or enhance public access opportunities through **small-scale construction or land acquisition**.

Project examples include:

- ❖ Engineering design and construction of fishing piers, kiosks, dune crossovers, boardwalks, observation decks, kayak launches
- ❖ Design and installation of educational and interpretive signage
- ❖ Fee simple acquisition of land to minimize development in high hazard areas while increasing public access to coastal resources
- ❖ Purchasing an easement for a public right-of-way to the beach
- ❖ Natural shoreline restoration for habitat enhancement (primary goal cannot be erosion control)

Public access grant funds may be used for projects meeting one or more of the following objectives:

1. Provide public access to coastal areas including beaches, coastal waterways and other coastal areas;
2. Preservation or restoration of areas that contain one or more coastal resource of national significance including coastal wetlands, beaches, dunes, barrier islands, reefs, estuaries, or fish and wildlife habitat;
3. Preservation or restoration of areas designated in Alabama's Coastal Area Management Program such as the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Point aux Pines Wetland System and Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary;
4. Redevelopment of deteriorating and underutilized urban waterfronts and ports that are designated as Areas of Particular Concern in Alabama's Coastal Area Management Program such as the Port of Mobile;
5. Restoration and enhancement of shellfish production through the purchase and distribution of clutch material on publicly-owned reef tracts;
6. The development of a coordinated process among state agencies to regulate and issue permits for aquaculture facilities in the coastal zone.

The use of public access grant funds is limited to:

1. The acquisition of fee simple or other interest in land, e.g., purchasing an easement for a public right-of-way to the beach or to purchase an ecologically important area to preserve as an area of particular concern;
2. Low-cost construction projects that provide for public access including but not limited to paths, walkways, dune walkovers, boardwalks, public piers, fences, parks and the rehabilitation of historic buildings and structures;
3. Educational, interpretive and other management;
4. Engineering designs, specifications and other appropriate reports related to the above; and
5. The revitalization of deteriorating or underutilized urban waterfronts or ports for
  - a. the rehabilitation or acquisition of piers for public use, including compatible commercial activity;
  - b. the establishment of small scale shoreline stabilization measures, including the installation or rehabilitation of bulkheads for the purpose of public safety or increased public access and use of urban waterfront area;
  - c. the removal or replacement of pilings where such action will provide increased recreational use of urban waterfront areas.

NOTE: Funds shall not be used to finance large-scale erosion-prevention structures, such as beach nourishment or hard structure erosion control projects.

Public access grant funds are for public benefit and may not be used to improve private property. Sites must be open to the general public and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In general, user fees should not be charged to access sites. See Project Location section above for additional information on geographic areas eligible for funding in this focus area.

### III. REVIEW PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications that meet the minimum requirements listed below will be reviewed by Coastal Section staff using the numeric criteria outlined in this section. Staff may coordinate the review of the applications with other state agency staff or organizations as appropriate and will recommend the highest scoring projects to the Commissioner of Conservation for funding. Projects approved by the Commissioner will be submitted to NOAA for final review and approval.

Applications must meet the following minimum requirements in order to be reviewed by the evaluation committee:

- ❖ Application was submitted electronically using the provided application form
- ❖ Application is fully completed and was received by the application deadline
- ❖ Applying organization is an eligible applicant
- ❖ Project is in an eligible project location

Each application will be scored using the evaluation criteria below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive. The final score of each application will be the average of the evaluators' scores. Complete applications will be evaluated for funding based on the following equally weighted considerations:

- 1) **Purpose and Scope of Work:** Purpose of the proposed project is clear and concise. Description of activity or work to be conducted is logical and technically sound. Highest scoring projects will provide a clear overview of the project and work to be undertaken. (0-5 points)
- 2) **Focus Area Connection:** Applicant has clearly explained how the proposed project addresses issues related to at least one grant focus area. Highest scoring projects will demonstrate the degree to which the project will result in improved management of coastal resources and uses. (0-5 points)
- 3) **Public Benefit:** Applicant has clearly explained how the proposed project fulfills an existing public need or benefit. Applicant describes the geographic area to be served by the project. Highest scoring projects will have the potential to benefit citizens outside of the immediate local government jurisdiction and will have a high degree of public benefit. (0-5 points)
- 4) **Outreach:** A significant and proactive public education and/or community outreach component has been incorporated into the project. The applicant describes components of the outreach effort and lists the tasks to be performed. Highest scoring projects will make the target audience aware of the project and/or coastal resources and will demonstrate a high degree of community involvement in all phases of project development, including implementation and monitoring. (0-5 points)
- 5) **Support:** Applicant has identified project partners, if any, and has demonstrated that there is support from the local community for the project. Highest scoring projects will include partnerships across departments, organizations and jurisdictions and will be supported by the local community. (Note that letters of support and/or commitment are not required, but serve to back an applicant's assertion of support. Therefore points should not be deducted for lacking letters of support.) (0-5 points)
- 6) **Schedule:** A project schedule has been completed and includes key project tasks by quarter with associated outcomes and deliverables. Method to achieve each deliverable is appropriate. Schedule is feasible and demonstrates that all tasks will be completed within the grant funding period. Highest scoring projects will include well-defined tasks with deliverables listed in chronological order and planned within a reasonable timeframe. (0-5 points)

- 7) **Measuring Success and Next Steps:** Applicant has clearly described how success of the project will be measured and includes specific performance measures, if applicable. Applicant has described next steps for the project after grant funding expires including how the product or outcome will be used. Highest scoring projects will include performance measures and will demonstrate a long-term commitment to project success. (0-5 points)
- 8) **Budget:** The budget appears reasonable, appropriate and accurate. The budget justification details all funds requested with reasonable justifications, and budgeted items are consistent with the project description and tasks for the project. Highest scoring projects will pose a high overall public benefit relative to its cost. (0-5 points)

Construction and land acquisition projects in the **Public Access to Coastal Resources focus area** will also be scored on the following additional evaluation criteria.

- ❖ **Site Description:** Applicant clearly describes the current site conditions and proposed project footprint. Applicant has included a location map, project site plan and 1-3 photograph(s) of the project site. Highest scoring projects will clearly illustrate current site conditions as well as location and description of all proposed improvements. (0-5 points)
- ❖ **Coastal Uses:** Applicant has clearly described the current coastal uses at the project site and whether these uses will change as a result of the proposed project. (0-5 points)
- ❖ **Construction Impacts:** For projects that involve small scale construction, applicant lists the types of construction materials to be used, construction and operation practices to be followed and any best management practices (BMPs) the project will use to avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental impacts. Highest scoring projects will use low impact methods and materials and will take a proactive approach to minimizing environmental impacts. (0-5 points)

#### IV. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Ensure your completed application package includes the following information:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Completed Application Package (Signed cover page and Project Description Questions with Proposed Budget).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Data Sharing Plan (to be completed only if geospatial data will be collected and/or created as a part of the proposed project). A sample simple data sharing plan is included in Section V Example Documents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Optional letters of support from the public and letters of commitment from project partners included as PDF files.

Additional requirements for **construction and land acquisition projects in the Public Access to Coastal Resources** focus area:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Location Map in PDF format which shows where the project is located in the county/municipality (i.e. zoomed out map). A sample location map is included in Section V Example Documents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Project Site Plan in PDF format which shows the proposed project footprint as well as all construction elements and proposed improvements (i.e. zoomed in map). A sample project site plan is included in Section V Example Documents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) 1-3 Photograph(s) of the proposed project site which clearly show current site conditions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) Title opinion, title insurance commitment/certificate, or affidavit showing that the property on which the proposed project will be located is publicly owned, leased, or under easement in perpetuity or for the expected life of the project (at least 20 years). Title opinion and title affidavit examples are included in Section V Example Documents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) Public Access Checklist

## V. EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS

The following example documents are provided for reference.

### Example of a Simple Data Sharing Plan

**1. Describe the types of geospatial data and/or information to be created during the course of the project.**

LiDAR data will be collected over Asateague Island to provide highly accurate and current elevation points that will enable the creation of a digital elevation model. This digital elevation model will be compared to previous models to determine changes and then used to develop safer and more resilient park facilities.

**2. Describe the type of data collection method(s) (e.g. aircraft, ship, satellite, etc.).**

We plan to contract with a private sector photogrammetric firm for airborne data acquisition over study area.

**3. Provide the tentative date by which data/metadata will be shared/stored.**

The 'raw' point cloud LAS file will be shared with NOAA CSC immediately and the final DEM file will be posted to the State's public-facing web mapping service within two months of the final acceptance of the data. FGDC/CSDGM compliant metadata will be posted with the data.

**4. Describe the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content. Note that metadata for your geospatial data must be compliant with the Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM).**

The contractor will be responsible for meeting or exceeding the latest version of the USGS/NDEP LiDAR Standard.

**5. Describe your program's policies addressing data stewardship and preservation.**

We will leave the data on the (insert name) web site for at least three years. During that time period, we will ask NOAA if they have interest/resources for archiving the data and work with them as needed. If they do not have interest in archiving the data to provide for national access, we will arrange for data preservation at our State Archives.

**6. Outline the procedures for providing access to data and prior experience in publishing such data. Note that the Data Sharing Plan, metadata production and posting of metadata can be accomplished by using the GIS Inventory, which is available at <http://gisinventory.net>.**

We have not had experience sharing data in the past. We will use our \_\_\_ State Clearinghouse or \_\_\_ the GIS Inventory to document the data. We will work with \_\_\_ our State GIS Coordination Office or \_\_\_ NOAA CSC to provide data access via the Digital Coast.