

U. S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Northeast Climate Science Center

**Statement of Interest and Proposal
Solicitation and Guidelines**

March 12, 2012 – Final Notice

Due Date: March 30, 2012

General Information

- I. Background.** The outline below is guidance for the development of pre-proposals and preliminary guidance for full proposals for the first round of science projects to be sponsored by the NECSC. This process is a prototype for the proposal process, which in the future will be guided by the NECSC Advisory Council and by the NECSC Strategic Plan, once those structures and documents are in place. The attached document, NECSC Preliminary Science Focus Areas, is our working document and guidance while the Strategic Science Plan is under development. This abbreviated process is due to the tight time constraints imposed by the 2012 budget cycle.
- II. Eligible applicants.** Federal funds administered by the Northeast Climate Science Center are available to investigators affiliated with the NECSC Consortium of Universities hosted by the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) in collaboration with the College of Menominee Nation, Columbia University, Marine Biological Laboratory, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, (Columbia), and the University of Wisconsin (Madison) and to USGS Science Centers, Cooperative Research Units and the USGS National Research Program and Water Resource Research Institutes. Each proposal must have a Principal Investigator (PI) from an eligible entity. Parties from other organizations (Federal, state, tribal, or other) not listed here may (serve as co-P.I.s) on projects headed by a Consortium University or USGS PI.
- III. Estimated Available Funds.** In Fiscal Year 2012, \$530,000 in Federal funds will be administered by the NECSC to support new projects funded through this solicitation and other priorities at the discretion of the NECSC Director. The core funding for the NECSC comes from the U.S. Department of the Interior through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Project awards may be funded for a maximum of 2 fiscal years; however, the total cost of a two year project may not exceed \$150,000, unless otherwise noted, which includes total project costs (direct plus indirect costs).

- IV. Project Duration.** Projects may be funded for a maximum of 2 fiscal years. Budgets for FY 2012 funds awarded directly to USGS investigators must demonstrate how the FY 2012 funds will be expended before September 30, 2012. Award of FY 2013 funds will be contingent on fund availability. Estimated carry over funding for USGS Centers is estimated at three percent.
- V. NECSC Contacts.** Please deliver pre-proposals in electronic format, (Word document), or in paper form to Rachel Muir, Interim Director, and Rick Bennett, Interim Science Partnership Committee Coordinator, (see contact information below) by COB, 03/30/2012.

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- VI. Outline for Pre-Proposals.** Below is the recommended outline/format of information for the pre-proposals;

Section 1. Project Administration Information

- Project title;
- Short description (generally one sentence);
- Name of Lead Agency/Institution/Organization requesting funding;
- Project Lead Contact or Principal Investigator with CV (NSF format; not more than two pages) for PI and Co-PIs, (CVs are not included in the total length for the proposals);
- Mailing Address;
- City, State, Zip Code for PI;
- Telephone, Fax and E-mail for PI.

Section 2. Project Summary

Please provide a brief narrative summary of the project in **no more than two pages**. Total length of the pre-proposal should not exceed 5 pages. Be sure to include the following information:

- Specific research questions to be addressed and their management relevance;
- Significance of project to addressing the CSC climate science priorities. Identify which of the following ecosystem and land use ecosystem types or types that the research would address:
 - Agro-ecosystems;
 - Coastal and Ocean Ecosystems, (including the Great Lakes);
 - Forested and Forested Montane Ecosystems;
 - Freshwater Ecosystems;
 - Grassland and Prairie Ecosystems;
 - Urban Ecosystems;
- Brief description of overall methodological approach to the project and its anticipated contribution to the advancement of natural resource and climate science;
- The geographic application area for this project;
- Anticipated outcomes, data types, and data management approach;
- Brief description of previous work or existing capacity.

Section 3. Partnerships and Communication

- Description of any collaborative partnerships and additional investigators involved in this project;
- Potential links to LCC and other DOI Partner Strategic Science needs;
- Outreach opportunities;
- Anticipated deliverables;
- Opportunities provided to post-docs, graduate and undergraduate students.

Section 4. Estimated Budget

- Project Fiscal Contact;
- Telephone and E-mail;
- Total project cost (NECSC plus leveraged dollars);
- Total NECSC funding request;
- Agency overhead (general indirect costs not directly associated with the project
- Agency/Partnership matching amount(s).

VII. Evaluation. The evaluation of pre-proposals will be conducted by a panel composed of independent regional scientists and partners, (“interim science implementation panel”). Any members of the interim panel submitting proposals will recuse themselves from review or recommendations regarding their own proposals. Applicants may be contacted

to provide additional or clarifying information. The evaluation criteria will be applied in both the pre-proposal and full proposal process. However, the criteria below are not expected to be addressed in detail in the pre-proposal portion of the process. In the pre-proposal process we recommend using the criteria below as a guide, not as a list of issues that need to be addressed item by item.

1. Relevance / Applicability to Management Needs

- Clearly demonstrates a connection to the NECSC science focus areas and/or LCC climate priorities regarding climate and land use change;
- Identifies relevancy of project results to climate and natural resource management issues;
- Implements the shared science mission of CSC science focus areas and the science needs of NECSC partner needs, (e.g., LCCs) across University and Federal Research agencies (see accompanying Science Priorities document);

2. Knowledge Transfer

- Engages targeted users in the study design and describes outreach components to disseminate research findings and information;
- Plans for cooperation with the NECSC to disseminate progress and results via electronic media, (Science Center websites or other methods);
- Identifies human dimension (i.e., safety, health, social, economic, etc.) of project;
- Identifies collaborative partnerships that will participate in the project.

3. Scientific Design

- Overall methodological approach to the project;
- Value of project contribution to science;
- Project results have broad geographic application;
- Describes desired outcomes, anticipated data types and data management approach;
- Identifies any necessary monitoring and evaluation efforts;

4. Leveraging & Capacity Building

- Coordinates funding with other fiscal resources, science support or resources to leverage the proposed project (eligible forms of match include cash, donated services or products, equipment, salaries, or Agency overhead/indirect costs);
- Where feasible, involves both Federal and University consortium science capacity;
- Builds upon existing work and capacity;
- Provides opportunities to young researchers and post-docs to participate.

VIII. Northeast Climate Science Center Overview and Background.

Background. On March 11, 2009 DOI Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar released Secretarial Order 3285, (<http://www.doi.gov/whatwedo/climate/cop15/upload/SecOrder3289.pdf>), established the mission of the **USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center**, (NCCWSC), and the **Landscape Conservation Cooperatives** (LCCs). These two initiatives form the cornerstones of this integrated approach to climate-change science and adaptation. Each has a distinct science and resource-management role but also shares complementary capacities and capabilities. This strategy will serve the Department's land, fish, wildlife, water, marine, tribal, and cultural heritage managers, as well as our Federal, State, local, Tribal, NGO, private landowner, and other stakeholder partners. The backbone of the NCCWSC are the eight regional Climate Science Centers (CSCs) which will provide a regional focus for climate change studies and bring together regional partners. Interior's U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is taking the lead in establishing the CSCs and providing initial staffing. Ultimately, funds and staff from multiple Interior bureaus will be pooled to support these Centers and ensure collaborative sharing of research results and data. The host institutions for the CSC was determined by a competitive process and in most cases the host institutions consist of a consortium of universities and other academic partners with the research capacity to compliment federal research and monitoring regarding climate change and other landscape-scale stressors and support LCCs and other partners.

The DOI Northeast Climate Science Center (NECSC). October 7, 2011 the Department of the Interior announced the selection of the host institution for the Northeast Climate Science Center. The University of Massachusetts-Amherst is the host institution for NECSC and a consortium of seven institutions. Consortium members and their principal investigators are listed below;

University of Massachusetts Amherst -- Richard Palmer (Lead PI)

College of Menominee Nation -- Melissa Cook (Lead PI)

Columbia University -- Radley Horton (Lead PI)

Marine Biological Laboratory -- Linda Deegan (Lead PI)

University of Minnesota -- Anthony W. D'Amato (Lead PI)

University of Missouri Columbia -- Frank R Thompson III (Lead PI)

University of Wisconsin-Madison -- Kenneth Potter (Lead PI)

More detailed information on these partners and the consortium may be found on the web at: <http://www.cns.umass.edu/neclimate/doi-csc>. The interim Director for the NECSC is Rachel Muir, Science Advisor for the USGS Northeast Area. A permanent director and additional USGS research and support personnel will be established at the University of Massachusetts later this year. Authorization and funding for the NECSC was approved by Congress and signed into law by the president as part of the FY 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012, on December 23, 2011. Through a cooperative agreement established between the USGS and the NECSC Consortium, funding to enhance our shared capacity for climate science research will be directed to the consortium members, chiefly to provide support for university personnel and graduate

students whose time will be directed to research priorities for climate change in the Northeast and upper Midwest.

Governance and Structure for the NECSC. Once the NECSS is fully in place, an Advisory Council, representing the leadership of the principal partners for the region encompassed by the NECSC, will provide the strategic direction for the NE Consortium research activities and will be the decision-maker on funding for research and monitoring activities. The Council will be chaired by the USGS Area Executive and supported by NECSC Director and the NECSC Principal Investigator for the University of Massachusetts, the host institution. A second committee, a science and technical committee, (referred to as the Science Implementation Panel or SIP); will provide the science support to assist the Advisory Council in its decision-making. The mechanism for establishing the long-term and strategic direction for the Climate Science Center will be the development of a multi-year strategic science planning document that will be revised annually as research and monitoring progresses and science needs of our partners are refined.

- **Process for the Current Request for Proposals.** In addition to the funding to support the Cooperative Agreement with the Consortium, USGS has 2012 funding to initiate research activities by the NECSC. While this funding (\$530,000) is just now being released to establish the NECSC research effort, USGS policy requires that expenditures by USGS be completed within this fiscal year, ending October 1, 2012. For this reason, the top priority activity for the NECSC is to use currently available information from our partners, primarily the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), to identify science priorities for this budget cycle. When the NECSC is fully established and an Advisory Council, supported by a standing committee of scientists with expertise on climate and natural resource management, will guide the development of science priorities through the development of a NECSC Strategic Science Plan. However, these governance committees, their guidelines and a strategic plan are still in the early stages of development. This current call for proposals is using a synthesis of priority needs identified by the collaboration of the LCCs and through outreach activities already conducted in the brief time since the creation of the NECSC. This synthesis activity has identified six generalized ecosystem and land use types for the geographic region of the NECSC. A balanced portfolio of research activities among these ecosystem types will be an organizing principle in the development of the NECSC science plan. These are:

- Agro-ecosystems
- Coastal and Ocean Ecosystems, (including the Great Lakes)
- Forested and Forested Montane Ecosystems
- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Grassland and Prairie Ecosystems
- Urban Ecosystems

As part of the science planning process, science priorities should identify which of these ecosystem and land use ecosystem types will be addressed by the proposed research.

IX. Anticipated Process and Dates for Full Proposal Process:

Pre-proposals due:	March 30
Selection of Pre-proposals:	April 13
Final Proposals due:	April 27
Final Funding Decisions	May 7

Final funding decisions may be moved up if final reviews and decisions are completed early by the review team. For specific questions regarding NESCS priorities, contact interim Director Rachel Muir or Interim Science Partnership Committee Chair Rick Bennett, (contact information below). If necessary, conference call times will be established to address questions – Centers and Consortium members will be alerted with time and contact information.

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