

Priority List of Projects Eligible for Funding in FY 2012 under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) provides state and local governments with matching funds to purchase significant coastal and estuarine lands, or conservation easements on such lands, from willing sellers. Each fiscal year, projects are ranked for selection based on an independent, competitive, merit-based evaluation. This report provides the priority list of projects that are ready and eligible for funding in FY 2012, subject to the amounts appropriated for the program. This report also describes the process and criteria used to develop the list.

The projects included on this list have not yet been selected for funding. Rather, NOAA will use this list as a guide in selecting projects for funding within the amounts appropriated for FY 2012, after confirming that projects are still viable.

The President's Budget for FY 2012 requested \$25 million for land conservation projects under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). The requested funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative also includes funds for additional land conservation projects to protect habitat in the Great Lakes.

Background on CELCP

Established in 2002 under the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, and re-authorized in 2009 under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, CELCP provides matching funds to state and local governments to protect lands with significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural, undeveloped, or recreational state to other uses. CELCP's authority specifies that priority be given to lands which can be effectively managed and protected, that have significant ecological value, that have a demonstrated need for protection, and that have ability to successfully leverage funds.

Since 2002, NOAA has awarded more than \$250 million to state and local governments in 28 of the 34 eligible coastal states and territories, which are matched 100% with non-Federal funds. CELCP funds have supported the protection of nearly 100,000 acres, and the number of acres will continue to grow as ongoing projects come to completion. Additional information about the CELCP can be found on NOAA's website at: <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/welcome.html>.

FY 2012 Competitive Process

The FY 2012 CELCP competition was conducted in much the same manner as in previous years. Because NOAA was no longer required to publish a Federal Register Notice (FRN) announcing the competition, the FY 2012 CELCP Federal funding opportunity notice was posted via Grants.gov on January 6, 2011, with the application period ending May 11, 2011. The deadline was subsequently extended to April 15, 2011. The funding opportunity notice and

associated application materials were posted through Grants.gov and on the CELCP website at: http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/celcp_fundingop.html.

In total, coastal states and territories submitted thirty-six (36) proposals requesting over \$58 million in land conservation project funds for the FY 2012 competition. NOAA has generated a ranked list of projects considered ready and eligible for funding (below). *Funding for projects on the list is subject to the availability of FY 2012 appropriations.*

Development of the FY 2012 Priority List

Under the funding opportunity, each eligible coastal state and territory could nominate up to three projects addressing priorities identified within the state or territorial CELCP plans for the national funding competition. Each qualifying project proposal was evaluated by four merit reviewers according to criteria described in the funding notice. Criteria included:

- *Program purpose (up to 55 points)*, i.e., relevance to program goals, including ecological, conservation, recreational, aesthetic, historical/cultural values, and public benefits gained from the long-term protection and management of the property. Priority was given to projects that protect lands with significant ecological value.
- *Technical merit (up to 25 points)*, i.e., whether a project could be effectively managed and protected over the long-term; the degree of threat of conversion from a natural or recreational state to other uses; and whether the project could be executed within the performance period.
- *Qualifications of applicants (up to 10 points)*, i.e., capacity and experience of the applicant to execute the land transaction consistently with CELCP Guidelines and to manage (either directly or through partnerships) property for long-term conservation of the values for which it is being protected.
- *Project costs (up to 20 points)*, i.e., whether land acquisition costs are reasonable and based on an independent appraisal or other assessment of fair market value; whether the source of the required non-Federal matching share of funds is consistent with CELCP program authority and guidelines and is likely to be available within the performance period; and whether direct and indirect costs for implementation of the project, if requested, are reasonable and consistent with CELCP guidelines.

Program staff ranked eligible projects in priority order based on the averaged scores of the four merit reviewers. Projects were further evaluated according to the following selection factors, which were listed in the funding notice: program objectives and priorities (as set forth in section I.A. and I.B. of the FFO notice), including priority consideration for lands with significant ecological value and that can be effectively managed and protected; geographic distribution of projects and/or funds; benefits to National Estuarine Research Reserves; and the applicant's prior CELCP award performance (if applicable). Program staff also reviewed each project for eligibility and completeness. Two projects were withdrawn from consideration because they received funding in FY2011.

Final Selection of FY 2012 Projects for Funding under CELCP

The list below comprises the ranked list of projects that are ready and eligible for funding in FY 2012, subject to the amounts appropriated for the program. *The projects included on this list have not yet been selected for funding.* NOAA will use this list as a guide in selecting projects for funding within the amounts appropriated for FY 2012, after confirming that projects are still viable. NOAA must also first review and approve a final grant application before funds will be awarded, as well as review supporting due diligence documents (such as appraisal and title documentation) for each project before funds will be released to grant recipients.

For any projects selected for funding, applicants will need to submit additional documentation either at the time of final grant application, or as a condition of a grant award. This documentation includes: an appraisal that meets Federal appraisal standards to support the requested funding amount; evidence of title; evidence of seller's willingness; evidence of agreement; survey plat map; and state certification that the project complements working waterfronts needs. Documentation is required for each property that will be acquired with CELCP funds and also for each property that will contribute toward the non-Federal cost share. Documents will be used to substantiate cost estimates contained in project proposals and ensure the clear transfer of title or proper recordation of conservation easements to the grant recipient. These requirements are further described in section 4.4 of the CELCP Guidelines and in section IV.B.2. of the FFO.

If funding is appropriated for CELCP in FY 2012, NOAA would expect to award grants between June and October 2012. NOAA recognizes that some projects may cease to be viable before a grant is awarded. NOAA will confirm the status of projects prior to making a final selection for funding. NOAA also recognizes that projects selected for funding may fall through prior to completion, even after a grant award has been made. To address this possibility, NOAA will maintain a contingency list of projects that were not able to be funded with available appropriations. NOAA will select replacement projects from this list in the event that a selected project cannot be completed and/or if funds are returned to the program.

FY 2012 Prioritized List for the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

Rank	State	Project Name	Funding^{#*}
1	WA	Dabob Bay Coastal Conservation Phase II	\$ 2,700,000
2	SC	Binden Plantation, Beaufort County ^β	\$ 3,000,000
3	ME	Pleasant Bay Wildlife Management Area [†]	\$ 2,992,500
4	MA	Nasketucket Bay	\$ 2,430,000
5	VA	Virginia Eastern Shore Land Protection: Beaches, Marshes, Dunes and Migratory Bird Habitat	\$ 2,101,850
6	GA	Altamaha River Boyles Island Tract (Wayne County, GA) ^β	\$ 2,000,000
7	NC	Lea Island State Natural Area	\$ 1,750,000
8	GA	Fort Frederica North Marsh Property	\$ 1,511,250
9	NH	Sprucewood Forest - Oyster River ^β	\$ 3,000,000

10	VA	Virginia Beach Lynnhaven Oyster Restoration and Estuary Protection	\$ 3,000,000
11	RI	Whale Rock, Narragansett Bay NERR	\$ 2,300,000
12	WA	Port Gamble Bay Conservation Area	\$ 3,000,000
13	VA	Scotland Landing, King William County ^β	\$ 414,900
14	CA	Upper Devereux Slough Acquisition (Ocean Meadows Property), Santa Barbara County	\$ 2,500,000
15	OH	Lake Erie Bluffs Preservation Project II	\$ 2,822,906
16	NJ	Zander - Dix Wildlife Management Area	\$ 286,750
17	WA	Beaconsfield-on-the-Sound Feeder Bluff Acquisition [†]	\$ 1,013,500
18	HI	Paukukalo Coastal Wetlands	\$ 925,000
19	ME	Westport Island Conservation Initiative [†]	\$ 680,000
20	NY	Acquisition of Jonas/Mooney/Oelsner Parcels on Long Island Sound	\$ 384,600
21	IN	Moon Valley acquisition	\$ 1,260,649
22	MI	Clay Cliffs Natural Area	\$ 1,740,000
23	WI	Duck Creek Corridor Conservancy and Wildlife Area [†]	\$ 3,000,000
24	PA	Hunters Crossing/Camp Security	\$ 946,000
25	NY	Mill Dam Road Acquisition	\$ 75,000
26	PA	Lake Erie Watershed/Elk Creek [†]	\$ 330,750
27	WI	Amsterdam Dunes	\$ 2,250,000
28	MP	Makpo Wetland Acquisition Project	\$ 200,000
29	LA	Grand Isle Marshes	\$ 936,500
30	PA	Heidelberg Township Acquisition	\$ 400,000
31	LA	Frenchtown Road Conservation Area	\$ 1,148,500
32	WI	Bender Park Acquisition. Lake Michigan	\$ 830,750
33	LA	Livingston Parish	\$ 2,500,000
34	GA	Richmond Hill Colonial Marsh Property	\$ 1,000,000

Guide to Notations:

* Signifies that projects may require negotiation or clarification of some elements with applicant, particularly regarding proposed project costs or uses of property. NOAA reserves the right to review any lease or management strategy for consistency with CELCP guidelines. NOAA also reserves the right to review all costs at the time of final grant application to determine eligibility and reasonableness and request budget changes accordingly, if needed.

Signifies that the costs for purchase of lands or easements, or the value of in-kind properties or donated land value proposed as match, must be documented through appraisals that meet Federal "Yellow Book" appraisal standards and/or the Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). These and other costs will be reviewed at the time of final grant application or as a part of the due diligence documentation and, if necessary, NOAA may request or negotiate budget changes accordingly.

† Signifies projects that have been recommended for the list, but may contain certain ineligible proposed costs, match, or uses that necessitate an as-yet-undetermined reduction in funding level from the requested amount. If

selected for funding, program officials will work with applicants to determine the eligible federal funding amount.

^β Signifies documented benefits to a National Estuarine Research Reserve.