

# **Community Partnerships Grant Program (CPGP)**

# Workshop Agenda

- **CPGP** overview
- What does my project need?
- GLRI outcomes and alignment
- **CPGP** timeline

# **Community Partnerships Grant Program Overview**

# Community Partnerships Grant Program (CPGP) Overview

The Alliance for the Great Lakes is administering the US EPA funded Community Partnerships Grant Program (CPGP).

Partners supporting applicants:

- Calumet Collaborative
- Faith In Place
- Friends of the Chicago River
- Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

# CPGP Overview

We invite proposals for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) projects in communities where these projects are needed most - *project teams that have never applied for GLRI funding are strongly encouraged to apply!*

Projects must be located in this project area: [Southern Lake Michigan sub-watersheds](#).

This program is funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Successful applicants must be registered to receive federal funds and will need to be compliant with federal regulations.

# CPGP Overview

## Project Key Characteristics

**Pre-implementation projects** up to \$300,000 are eligible. Selected projects will:

- Include a clearly defined and meaningful partnership role for community-based organization(s) (CBO) in the area where the project is located
- Have up to 18 months for completion
- Result in 90-100% design for on the ground projects. A range of activities can be supported, including
  - Developing design and engineering plans
  - Continuing and expanding stakeholder engagement
  - Preparing detailed cost estimates
  - Engaging permitting officials
  - Other activities that result in 90-100% design

## **CPGP Overview: Project Key Characteristics *continued***

Projects **MUST** address one or more key “Great Lakes Restoration Action Plan” outcomes:

- Control of invasive species
- Capture and treat stormwater runoff
- Restore Great Lakes shoreline and riparian corridors
- Restore, enhance, and/or protect coastal wetlands, nearshore, and other habitats

# CPGP Overview: Project Key Characteristics *continued*

Projects may additionally include these optional “Great Lakes Restoration Action Plan” outcomes:

- Stakeholder engagement and community benefits, including workforce development
- Financial and project management capacity building, to develop a financial management strategy and/or project management work plan
- Project implementation and long-term maintenance plans, including development of monitoring and site maintenance plans, as well as identification of funding opportunities to implement the project once the design work is complete



# CPGP Overview: Supports for Applicants + Awardees

The CPGP team is offering a range of supports for planning and capacity building:

- Workshops and recorded webinars
- Office Hours to explore programmatic and geographic eligibility and think through your project development, budget and partnerships before you submit an LOI, and to further refine before the full proposal stage (Office Hours July 27th - September 4th)
- Supports to awardees and their subrecipients to ensure project success, including:
  - Financial trainings
  - Facilitated peer to peer learning; opportunities to troubleshoot challenges; and some additional as needed assistance as you prepare for your team's future project phases

# CPGP Overview: Timeline

- Announcement and Request for Applications (RFA) release, **July 13, 2026**
- In Person Workshops: **July 22, 2026 4pm and July 23, 2026 4pm**
- Office hours, **July 27-September 4, 2026**
- Letter of Interest (LOI) due, **September 4, 2026**
- Invitations to full proposal, **October 2, 2026**
- Office hours for accepted applications, **October 5, 2026-November 2, 2026**
- Full proposals due, **November 13, 2026**
- Full proposals award notifications, **December 21, 2026**
- Contracting, **January 8 2026 – March 8, 2027**
- Subawardee start date, **March 15, 2027**
- Awardees complete project, **September 15, 2028**
- Final reporting, **November 15, 2028**

# CPGP Overview: Letter of Interest + Full Proposal

The project includes two submission stages:

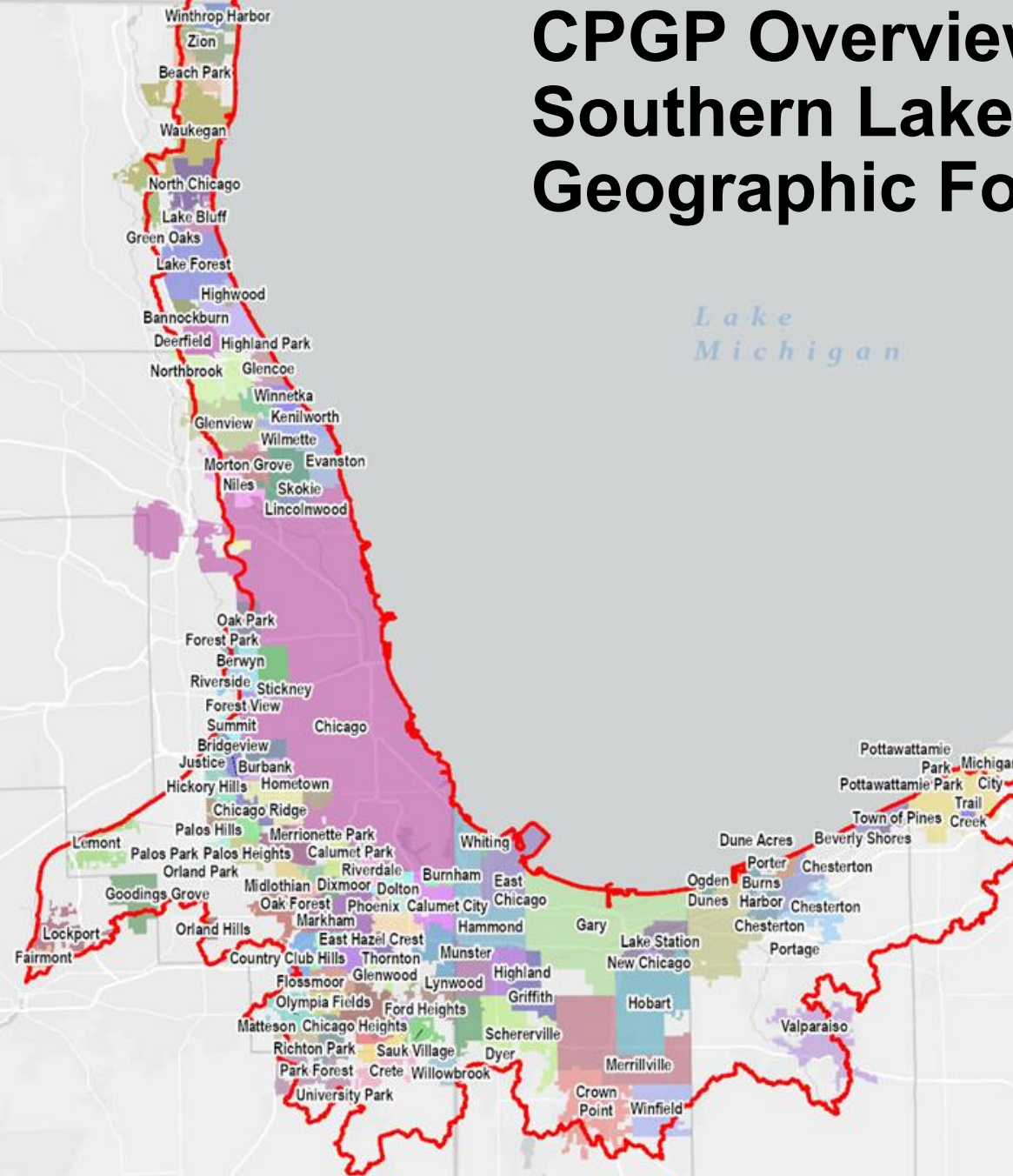
1. Applicants submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) *Due Sep 4*, then
2. Invited applicants submit a full proposal *Due Nov 13 (only some applicants will be invited to the full proposal stage)*

Organizations may submit multiple LOIs or full proposals either as a lead organization or as a partner on another organization's application

# CPGP Overview: Southern Lake Michigan Geographic Focus Area

## Legend

-  Area where projects can occur
-  County Boundaries



# CPGP Geographic Focus Area

Check your eligibility here:

<https://bit.ly/4lnLZKZ>

*More questions about eligibility?  
Join our office hours to get  
answers from the team*



# Project Requirements

# ELIGIBLE PROJECT SITES and ACTIVITIES

## What Does My Project Need? *PROJECT SITE*

This grant funds final designs for GLRI projects in your community. Projects can be small (even smaller than a city lot) or large, but funding is limited to \$300,000.

### **Possible eligible project sites include:**

- Community gardens or urban farms
- Vacant lots or neighborhood entrance areas
- Schoolyards, playgrounds, and parks
- Public buildings (libraries, senior centers, city halls, etc.)
- Streets, trails, and sidewalks
- Existing natural areas

# ELIGIBLE PROJECT SITES and ACTIVITIES

## What Does My Project Need?

Projects can also include

- Job training
- Family and high school age youth engagement in implementation and/or stewardship

BUT these must be connected to GLRI aligned physical improvements at a specific site.



# PROJECT PREREQUISITES

There are certain prerequisites for all Community Partnerships Grant Program LOIs. If an LOI does not sufficiently meet these prerequisites, then the LOI will not move forward in the evaluation process. Once submitted, there is not opportunity to modify an LOI to meet the criteria.

## **Organizational Capacity and Partner Roles**

Organizations have existing (already hired) staff identified as the project manager and lead contact. Applicants demonstrate capacity to manage federal funding. Roles for the applicant and their partners are clearly articulated.

## **Community Need and Aligned Outcomes**

The proposed project is located in the eligible project area; is located in a community where GLRI projects are needed most; and clearly advances the required GLRI outcomes and one or more required GLRI measures of progress.

# PROJECT PRE-REQUISITES (continued)

## **Readiness**

The project team can complete 90% design and permitting in 18 months and has an existing agreement or commitment with the landowner. The applicant confirms if they need a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and who on the team would be responsible for developing and managing the QAPP.

## **Budget**

The budget is reasonable based on proposed deliverables. Partners roles are clear and fully compensated for their time and expertise. If the proposal includes optional capacity building outcomes and measures of progress, the budget clearly identifies costs and these do not exceed 25% of the total project budget. The budget aligns with EPA cost principles.

# BUILDING a STRONG PROJECT TEAM

What makes a good project team?

- Team decision making emphasizes community vision and voice
- Partners possess the skill range for successful implementation
- Project team can ensure long-term stewardship of the site, including long-term commitment of the land owner
- The applicant partner can manage a federal grant

# BUILDING a STRONG PROJECT TEAM

Possible partner roles to consider:

- **Community role:** ensure projects reflect local vision, center local leadership, prioritize local decision making, and nurture local stewardship.
- **Government role:** will your partnership benefit from government involvement?
- **Conservation role:** conservation groups may help ensure implementation meets GLRI goals and may support long term site control and/or stewardship

# GLRI Outcomes and Alignment

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Projects must address key “**Great Lakes Restoration Action Plan**” goals:

- Control of invasive species
- Capture and treat stormwater runoff
- Restore Great Lakes shoreline and riparian corridors
- Restore, enhance, and/or protect coastal wetlands, nearshore, and other habitats

# Measures of Progress

A “Measure of Progress” is how the funding agency requires projects to show how their project contributes to regional watershed infrastructure goals.

These four measures of progress are eligible under this grant program:

- **Non-Point Source Runoff Reduction**, measured in:  
Gallons of untreated water captured or treated
- **Restoration of Great Lakes shoreline and riparian corridors**, measured in:  
Miles of shoreline and riparian corridor restored or protected
- **Habitat restore/ enhance/ protect**, measured in:  
Acres of habitats restored, protected or enhanced
- **Invasive Species Control**, measured in:  
Acres treated

# Non-Point Source Runoff Reduction

Non-point source runoff is pollution that stormwaters carry into rivers, lakes, etc. Snow and rain carry harmful pollutants - e.g. industrial toxins, street oils and salts, fertilizers, animal waste, etc. into lakes, rivers, and wetlands

Many on-site improvements reduce non-point source runoff:

- Strategies that make your site sponge-like help reduce nonpoint source runoff
- Replacing non-absorbent concrete, asphalt, turf grass, and compacted soil with plants, trees, healthy soils, and other absorbent ground covers all can be measured as improving stormwater capture
- Consider using EPA Stormwater Calculator Tool to estimate runoff reduction, <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/national-stormwater-calculator>



# How can we measure positive non-point source impacts?

- The land area of the site (and any areas that drain to the site) where plants and other more absorbent materials (like better soil) replaced surfaces like concrete or compacted soil is used to calculate how much more stormwater will be filtered / captured
- This land area is multiplied by a base number of gallons of stormwater the new surface captures

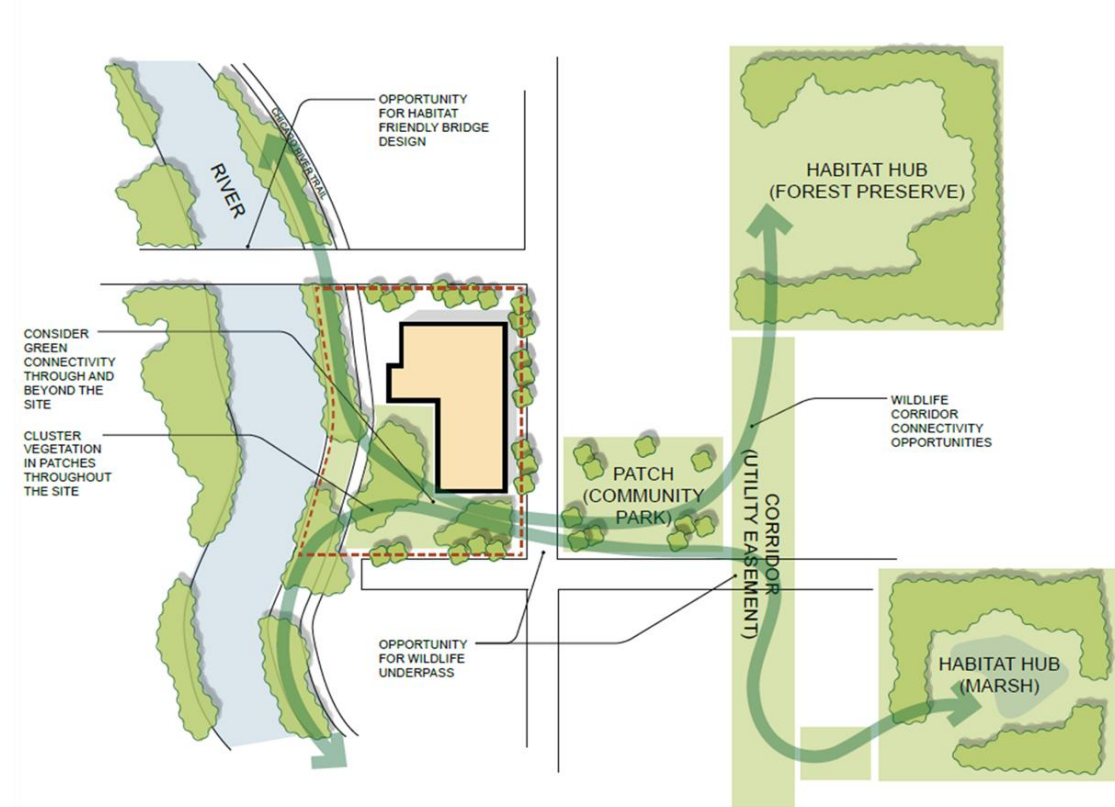


Source: Friends of the Chicago River

# Restore, Enhance, Protect Great Lakes Wildlife Habitat

Habitat improvements result when you plant your site in specific ways that support the needs of insects, birds, fish, and other wildlife.

- Many sites in neighborhoods can provide habitat for wildlife, *they do not need to be large preserves*
- “Microhabitats” are small clusters of planted areas on any site or even a green roof
- Think about how your site can connect: networks of even small landscape patches support wildlife populations in everyday activities and migration
  - Just like people, wildlife need shelter, food, + safe ways to move around



Source: Friends of the Chicago River



# How can we measure positive habitat impacts?

- The land area of newly planted native landscape measures how much habitat was created
- Identifying and planting certain species and types of landscapes can show benefit to specific wildlife
- Together, this change in area of new landscape + the use of specific plants can show positive improvements for endangered species like dragonflies or turtles

*Example of microhabitat patch*



*Source: [chicagolivingcorridors.org](http://chicagolivingcorridors.org)*

# Invasive Species Prevention and Control

Invasive species are plants + animals that are not native to the Great Lakes and aggressively harm the economy, environment, or human health.

- Invasive plants include phragmites, buckthorn, and Canada thistle
- Invasive aquatic animals include zebra mussels and invasive carp

Many types of projects can help to prevent or control invasive species:

- Prevention can include educational outreach, monitoring, or the creation of barriers that block invasive aquatic species from entering waterways
- Control methods include invasive plant removal projects - this can be paired with native plantings

*Zebra mussel infestation*



*Source: NOAA GLERL*



# How can we measure invasive species impacts?

- Measure the land area of the site that was changed from invasive plants to native plants or other uses that benefit habitat, native species, and people. *Small projects are OK!*
- Count the number of pathways or entry points for non-native species invasion cut-off/prevented
- Calculate the percentage of potential areas for invasive introduction being monitored

*Manual removal of woody invasives*



*Source: Student Conservation Association*

# CPGP Timeline

| Event                          | Date                  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Announcement and RFP Release   | July 13, 2026         |
| Workshops + Webinar            | July 22-July 23, 2026 |
| Office Hours                   | July 27-Aug 28, 2026  |
| Letter of Interest (LOI) Due   | September 4, 2026     |
| Invitations to full proposal   | October 2, 2026       |
| Full proposals due             | November 13, 2026     |
| Awards announced + Contracting | December 21, 2026     |
| Awardees complete project      | September 15, 2028    |
| Final Reporting                | November 15, 2028     |

# OFFICE HOURS

We encourage both applicants and identified sub-applicants to join office hours with us.

Office hours are helpful for:

- **Project Development:** We can help as you frame your project and narrative for GLRI measures of progress, and ensure local leadership and impact
- **Budget Guidance:** We can support you in capturing ALL expenses, and understanding approved vs. restricted expenses
- **Matchmaking Assistance:** We can aid community-based organizations in identifying technical and capacity project team partners

*Office hours are intended to create a supportive environment where questions can be explored, ideas can be refined, and partnerships can be strengthened.*

# Next Steps and Adjourn

LOI Deadline: September 4, 2026

Sign up for Office Hours at: [Click here to register for office hours](#)

More questions?

Check out our website at: [Community Partners Grant Program Website](#)

Email the team at: [CommunityPartnershipsGrant@greatlakes.org](mailto:CommunityPartnershipsGrant@greatlakes.org)