

Sanctuaries Division, NOAA, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC4, N/ORM6, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

Section 315 of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1445a) allows the Secretary to establish one or more advisory councils to provide assistance to the Secretary regarding the designation and management of national marine sanctuaries. Councils are individually chartered for each sanctuary to meet the needs of that specific site. Once a Council has been chartered, the Sanctuary Manager starts a process to recruit members for that Council by providing notice to the public and asking interested parties to apply for the available seats. An application form has been developed to help ease the application process for the public and facilitate the review process for the Sanctuary Manager.

II. Method of Collection

The availability of seats on a Council are announced through various public channels, including local press releases, announcements at local meetings, and posting on the Sanctuary's web page. Interested persons can request the application kit (containing the application form, a copy of the Council's charter, and some information about the Sanctuary itself) by phone, fax, or e-mail. The applicant then completes and returns the form to the Sanctuary office.

III. Data

OMB Number: None

Form Number: None

Type of Review: Regular submission

Affected public: Individuals or households, business or other for profit organizations, and not-for-profit institutions (Councils generally have a membership that reflects the local community and it would likely include all of these categories).

Estimated Number of Respondents: 75

Estimated Time Per Response: 1 hour

Estimated Total Annual Burden

Hours: 75 hours

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$150

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c)

ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and /or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 30, 1999.

Linda Engelmeier,

Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-23484 Filed 9-9-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 990713192-9192-01; I.D. No. 080399D]

RIN 0648-ZA67

General Grant Administration Terms and Conditions of the Coastal Ocean Program

AGENCY: Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research/Coastal Ocean Program (CSCOR), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice for Financial Assistance for Project Research Grants and Cooperative Agreements.

SUMMARY: It is the intent of NOAA/NOS/CSCOR/COP to continue to provide direct financial assistance in the form of discretionary Research Grants and Cooperative Agreements under its own program for the management of coastal ecosystems.

This document does not solicit proposals; but rather describes the general grant administration terms and conditions of the CSCOR/COP program for fiscal year 2000. It is CSCOR/COP's intent to issue supplemental Announcements of Opportunities (AOs) to request proposals on specific projects throughout the year on an as-needed basis. Any Announcements of Funding Opportunity will be issued through the **Federal Register**, the CSCOR/COP Home Page, and CSCOR/COP's e-mail list, and provide specific program descriptions.

CSCOR/COP supports research on critical issues which exist in the

Nation's estuaries, coastal waters and the Great Lakes, and translates its findings into accessible information for coastal managers, planners, lawmakers and the public. CSCOR/COP's projects are multi-disciplinary, large in scale and long in duration (usually 3 to 5 years). Projects covering more than 1 year will usually be funded on an annual basis.

DATES: September 10, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research/Coastal Ocean Program, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1315 East West Highway, Room 9700, Silver Spring, MD 20910

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leslie McDonald, CSCOR/COP Grants Administrator, (301)713-3338/x137.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

(1) *Program Authority(s):* 33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq., 33 U.S.C. 883a et seq., 33 U.S.C. 1442, 16 U.S.C. 1456c, Section 201(c) of P.L. 102-567 and Title VI of P.L. 105-383.

(2) *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA):* 11.478 Coastal Ocean Program

(3) *Program Description:* NOAA's CSCOR/COP provides predictive capability for managing coastal ecosystems through sponsorship of research. CSCOR/COP seeks to deliver the highest quality science in a timely manner for important coastal decisions. It supports research on critical issues which exist in the Nation's estuaries, coastal waters, and Great Lakes and translates its findings into accessible information for coastal managers, planners, lawmakers, and the public.

Coastal Ecosystem Oceanography

CSCOR/COP supports the conservation and management of marine ecosystems through sponsorship of improved ecological and oceanographic predictions for resource management. Studies focus on: (1) identifying critical processes that control replenishment of fishery resources; (2) determining critical habitat process that influence fishery ecosystems; and (3) quantifying species interactions so models can be used in management decisions. Current efforts support studies dealing with Bering Sea pollack, cod and haddock on Georges Bank, and salmon in the Pacific Northwest.

Cumulative Coastal Impacts

CSCOR/COP sponsors a series of regional watershed projects on the causes and impacts of multiple stresses on coastal ecosystems. Studies focus on: (1) developing indicators of stress; (2) predicting impacts of multiple stresses (3) valuing natural resources in

ecological and economical terms; and (4) predicting the outcomes of management strategies. Current efforts are located in Chesapeake Bay, Florida Bay and the Keys, the Great Lakes and South Carolina.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

CSCOR/COP also sponsors studies on the ecology and oceanography of harmful algal blooms (HABs), focusing on identifying and modeling linkages between the physiology, ecology, behavior and toxicity of HABs and local/regional circulation patterns and water quality. These results will not only generate greater general knowledge of problematic species in U.S. coastal waters, but provide foundations for development of regional HAB forecasting capabilities, eventually providing a means to assess the effectiveness of prevention, control and mitigation strategies developed in the proframe. Current regional efforts are located in the Gulf of Maine, eastern Long Island, the mid-Atlantic States, and the western coast of Florida.

Benefits of the CSCOR/COP

Continued population pressures on the Nation's coastal areas and on-going changes in the environment will continue to stress our coastal waters, bays and estuaries and the Great Lakes. CSCOR/COP has focused on developing information for longer-range U.S. management and policy at large and complex scales. CSCOR/COP research will help the U.S. respond to the major challenges of the next century and to balance the needs of economic growth with those of conserving the environment.

(4) *Funding Availability:* On average, annual funding for each Announcement of Opportunity is approximately \$1,000,000. Each CSCOR/COP project generally consists of several coordinated investigations with separate awards, ranging from \$5,000 to \$200,000. Actual funding levels will depend upon the final budget appropriations for the fiscal year. AOs will be released with specific applicable dollar amounts.

Financial History of CSCOR/COP Grants: FY97 \$10.00M; FY98 \$8.5M; FY99 \$8.5M. Publication of this notice does not obligate Commerce/NOAA to any specific award or to obligate any part of the entire amount of funds available. Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, CSCOR/COP has no obligation to

provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

(5) *Matching Requirements:* None

(6) *Type of Funding Instrument:*

Discretionary research grants and cooperative agreements

(7) *Eligibility Criteria:* CSCOR/COP funding opportunities are open to all interested, qualified, non-Federal, and Federal researchers. Non-Federal researchers should comply with their institutional requirements for proposal submission. Non-NOAA Federal applicants will be required to submit certifications or documentation which clearly show that they can receive funds from the Department of Commerce (DOC) for this research. Foreign researchers must subcontract with U.S. proposers. Non-federal researchers affiliated with NOAA-University Joint Institutes should comply with joint institutional requirements and will be funded either through grants to their institutions or joint institutes. Proposals deemed acceptable from Federal researchers will be funded through a mechanism other than a grant or cooperative agreement. DOC requirements will prevail if there is a conflict between DOC requirements and institutional requirements.

(8) *Award Period:* Typically, CSCOR/COP's projects average one to five years. Projects covering more than 1 year will usually be funded on an annual basis.

(9) *Application Forms and Kit:* When applying for financial assistance under a published AO, applicants will be able to obtain a standard NOAA Application Kit at the following World Wide Web address: <http://www.cop.noaa.gov> in a read-only format. If you are unable to access this information, you may also call (301)713-3338 to leave a mail request. At time of submission, the applicant will follow the requirements presented in the funding announcement.

The Standard Forms 424 (Rev July 1997) Application for Federal Assistance; 424A (Rev July 1997); Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs; and 424B (Rev July 1997) Assurances-Non Construction Programs, will be submitted at time of application for financial assistance as part of the initial review process. Applications not adhering to these stated guidelines will be returned to the applicant without further review.

In addition, other forms required as part of a complete application package include the CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying; the CD-512, Certification Regarding

Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying (this certification is to remain with the recipient and is not forwarded to the Grants Officer); and SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable). These forms may be submitted at time of application, or at a later date if the application is subsequently notified of selection for funding.

(10) *Project Funding Priorities:* Priority considerations will be given to proposals that promote balanced coverage of the science goals, avoid duplication of completed or ongoing work and increase geographic diversity. Additional priorities may be detailed in CSCOR/COP Announcements of Funding Opportunities.

(11) *Evaluation Criteria:* The following criteria and evaluation weightings will be used for evaluating proposals:

(a) *Scientific Merit (20 percent):* Intrinsic scientific value of the proposed work and the likelihood that it will lead to fundamental advancements, new discoveries, or have substantial impact on progress in that field;

(b) *Research Performance Competence (20 percent):* The capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work as evidenced by past research accomplishments, previous cooperative work, timely communication, and sharing of findings, data, and other research products;

(c) *Relevance (20 percent):* Likelihood that the research will make substantial contributions or develop products leading to improved management of coastal resources;

(d) *Technical Approach (20 percent):* The proposed work has focused science objectives and a complete but efficient strategy for making measurements and observations in support of the objectives. The approach is sound and logically planned throughout the cycle of the proposed work;

(e) *Linkages (10 percent):* Connections to existing or planned studies, or demonstrated cooperative arrangements to provide or use data or other research results to achieve the objectives.

(f) *Costs (10 percent):* Adequacy of the proposed resources to accomplish the proposed work, and the appropriateness of the requested proportion of the total available funds.

(12) *Selection Procedures:* All proposals will be evaluated and ranked individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review. Both Federal and non-

Federal experts in the field may be used in this process. The peer mail reviewers will be several individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular proposals. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual proposals within their area of expertise, and rank them individually on a scale of one to five, where scores represent respectively: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor.

The peer panel will be comprised of 8 to 10 individuals, with each individual having expertise in a separate area, so that the panel as a whole covers a range of scientific expertise. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals, and will use the mail reviews in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals.

The program officer(s) will not vote as part of the independent peer panel. Those proposals receiving an average panel rank of Fair or Poor will not be given further consideration and proposers will be notified of non-selection. For the proposals rated by the panel as either Excellent, Very Good, or Good, the program managers will first select the proposals to be recommended for funding by applying the project funding priorities listed above and in each funding announcement; second, determine the total duration of funding for each proposal; and third, determine the amount of funds available for each proposal. Because of consideration of the project funding priorities, awards may not necessarily be made to the most highly-ranked proposals.

Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, are available to the proposer.

(13) *Other Requirements:*

(a) **Federal Policies and Procedures:** Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and Federal and DOC policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

(b) **Past Performance:** Unsatisfactory performance by a recipient under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding.

(c) **Preaward Activities:** 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 any verbal assurance that they may have

received, there is no obligation on the part of the Department of Commerce to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

(d) **No Obligation for Future Funding:** If an application is selected for funding, DOC/NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award.

Amendment of an award to increase funding or, unless the award specifically provides to the contrary, to extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of DOC/NOAA.

(e) **Delinquent Federal Debts:** No award of Federal funds shall be made to an applicant who has an outstanding delinquent Federal debt until:

(i) The delinquent account is paid in full,

(ii) A negotiated repayment schedule is established and at least one payment is received, or

(iii) Other arrangements satisfactory to the Department of Commerce are made.

(f) **Name Check Review:** All non-profit and for-profit applicants are subject to a name check review process. Name checks are intended to reveal if any key individuals associated with the applicant have been convicted of, or are presently facing criminal charges such as fraud, theft, perjury, or other matters which significantly reflect on the applicant's management honesty or financial integrity.

(g) **Debarment, Suspension, Drug-Free Workplace, and Lobbying Provisions:** All applicants must comply with the requirements of 15 CFR part 26, "Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (nonprocurement) and Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)" and 15 CFR part 28, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," including the submission of required forms and obtaining certifications from lower tier applicants/bidders.

(h) **False Statements:** A false statement on an application is grounds for denial or termination of funds and grounds for possible punishment by a fine or imprisonment as provided in 18 U.S.C. 1001.

(i) **Intergovernmental Review:** Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

(j) This action was determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

(k) This document involves collections of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) which have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under

OMB control numbers 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0348-0046.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection displays a current valid OMB control number.

Dated: September 2, 1999.

Captain Ted I. Lillestolen,

Deputy Assistant Administrator National Ocean Service.

[FR Doc. 99-23480 Filed 9-9-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 082699A]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Mississippi/Louisiana Habitat Protection Advisory Panel (AP).

DATES: The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 23, 1999 and conclude by 3:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Highway, New Orleans, LA 70062; telephone: 504-469-5000.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Rester, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission; telephone: 228-875-5912.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Louisiana/Mississippi group is part of a three unit Habitat Protection Advisory Panel of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The principal role of the advisory panels is to assist the Council in attempting to maintain optimum conditions within the habitat and ecosystems supporting the marine resources of the Gulf of Mexico. Advisory panels serve as a first alert system to call to the Council's attention proposed projects being developed and other activities which may adversely impact the Gulf marine fisheries and their supporting ecosystems. The panels