Appendix E. Aquatic Invasive Species Management

Name of Granting Agency: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Title of Grant Program/Opportunity: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program

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E.1 Purpose and when to use Appendix E

Use Appendix E when the primary funded purpose of your project is aquatic invasive species management.

An AIS project should identify the AIS issue or spread pathway, the waterbody, aquatic resource, location or pathway involved, the proposed management activity and the expected environmental, stewardship or management result.

The Community Grant Program complements Minnesota's existing AIS management system. A Community Grant does not replace required permits, approvals, species-handling requirements, reporting obligations or Tribal, local, state or federal authority.

For this funding opportunity, grant requests must be $20,000 to $150,000, and substantive project work must be completed within 12 months or less. Up to two additional months may be authorized for necessary startup and close-out administration, but not to extend substantive project work.

E.2 What makes a project fit

A project may fit this activity area when it makes a credible contribution to preventing, detecting, monitoring, responding to, controlling or otherwise managing aquatic invasive species.

Projects may address an aquatic invasive species, a credible prevention or spread concern or an emerging AIS threat when the issue and proposed management approach are supported by current authoritative information. Applicants are not expected at Stage 1 to perform a specialized regulatory or species-status determination.

A project does not fit Appendix E merely because it occurs on or near water, includes general lake stewardship or environmental education, purchases aquatic equipment or discusses invasive species in general. AIS management must be the project's principal funded purpose.

E.3 Types of AIS management projects

AIS management projects may use different approaches. Depending on the project and applicable technical requirements, approaches may include:

- Prevention of AIS introduction or spread
- Early detection or monitoring tied to an established management or reporting purpose
- Local or community response to an identified AIS issue
- Treatment, control or removal using an appropriate and authorized method
- Education or stewardship that directly supports AIS prevention, detection, response, control or management
- Planning or coordination tied to a defined AIS management need

Planning or coordination may qualify when it addresses a defined AIS management need, produces an actionable or implementable result and has a reasonable pathway toward management action.

Monitoring, surveillance or data collection may qualify when its primary purpose is to support AIS management, prevention, response, stewardship or implementation rather than to conduct scientific research.

E.4 Projects that may fit

Depending on the AIS issue and project design, projects that may fit include:

- Locally coordinated prevention or spread-reduction activities
- Volunteer or community early-detection and monitoring using appropriate methods and reporting pathways
- Community stewardship or coordinated response supporting an identified AIS management objective
- Education or training directly connected to an AIS management purpose
- Development of an implementable AIS prevention, response or management plan
- Chemical, mechanical, physical, biological, decontamination or other treatment or control activities when the method is authorized, technically appropriate and suitable for the proposed grantee role
- Specialized equipment when it is directly necessary for an eligible AIS project and appropriate controls for use, maintenance, ownership and disposition are established

Treatment and control methods may include chemical, mechanical or physical, biological or other technically appropriate approaches. Specific methods may require project-specific technical review, permits, authorizations, qualifications, monitoring, safety measures or other conditions. Applicants should identify material known requirements at Stage 1 and develop them during Stage 2 as applicable. Required permits and authorizations must be obtained by the time required by law, the responsible authority or the grant agreement. Applicants are not expected to submit a fully engineered management plan at Stage 1.

Equipment purchases do not independently establish eligibility. Equipment must support a defined AIS management purpose and be reasonable for the proposed project.

E.5 Projects that do not fit

Appendix E is not intended to create a parallel AIS regulatory or technical system. A project may not fit when its primary purpose is:

- General lake, water-quality or natural-resource work without a defined AIS management purpose;
- Scientific research prohibited by the Community Grant Program
- General organizational operations unrelated to a defined AIS project
- Equipment acquisition without a defined management need
- Regulatory, enforcement, permitting, inspection or other governmental functions that Community Grant funding may not lawfully replace, or
- An activity that inherently requires more than 12 months of substantive implementation or cannot reasonably be designed within the $20,000–$150,000 grant range

The existence of other governmental AIS responsibilities does not by itself determine whether a proposed AIS management project is eligible. Under Section 14.2 of the main RFP, Community Grant Program funds may supplement traditional funding for environmental and natural resource activities but may not replace funding already available or ordinarily used for the same activity. Projects must also comply with applicable legal requirements.

An unresolved permit, technical method, specialist agreement, equipment plan or other implementation detail does not automatically make a project ineligible unless it fails a published eligibility requirement. Otherwise, a material unresolved issue is evaluated under the published Stage 1 Project Feasibility criterion.

E.6 Activity-specific information required at Stage 1

If you select this as your primary activity area, the Stage 1 Concept Note will ask for concise information needed to understand how the project fits Appendix E. You should be prepared to identify:

- The AIS species, if known, or the AIS management concern or spread pathway
- The waterbody, aquatic resource, project location or spread pathway involved
- Whether the project primarily involves prevention, early detection, monitoring, response, treatment or control, education supporting management or planning or coordination
- The main activities proposed
- The realistic AIS management or stewardship result expected during the grant period
- What the applicant knows now about permits, approvals, proposed methods, specialized expertise, contractors, equipment, reporting or other significant technical needs

Applicants are not expected to make a specialized taxonomic determination when authoritative confirmation is pending. Technical and approval needs do not necessarily have to be resolved at Stage 1.

E.7 Additional activity-specific information at Stage 2

If your Concept Note advances, the Stage 2 Full Application may ask for additional information needed to evaluate the actual project. Depending on the project, this may include:

- The AIS problem, species or spread pathway, affected waterbody or project area, management context and objective and authoritative information supporting the proposed approach
- The technical, monitoring, treatment, prevention or control method
- Permit or approval status and applicable reporting pathway
- Qualified contractor, technical expert, partner or other implementation roles
- Equipment specifications and plans for appropriate use and maintenance
- Species-handling, disposal, safety, data-management and non-target-risk considerations when applicable
- Follow-up management and long-term stewardship needs
- Practical performance measures appropriate to the project

The DNR will request information proportionate to the project. A prevention or volunteer-monitoring project should not be required to provide the same technical information as a chemical treatment or other specialized control project.

E.8 Technical, regulatory, equipment and authorization issues

Applicants are responsible for complying with applicable AIS laws, permits, approvals, technical requirements, species-handling requirements, environmental requirements and reporting obligations. Community Grant funding does not authorize an activity that otherwise requires approval from the DNR or another authority.

Projects involving multiple jurisdictions or connected waters should identify relevant management entities and a credible pathway to necessary coordination. Not all agreements need to be finalized at Stage 1.

A Community Grant applicant does not need to possess every specialized AIS skill internally. An applicant may use qualified contractors, technical partners, DNR guidance, Tribal natural-resource expertise, county or watershed expertise or other appropriate expertise. The proposed project must have a credible path to obtaining the expertise needed to carry out the work safely and effectively.

Where the eligible legal applicant differs from the substantive project lead, the application must identify their roles. The eligible legal applicant remains responsible for the award if selected, subject to successful pre-award review and execution of the grant agreement.

Projects involving Tribal lands, waters, natural resources, jurisdiction, treaty-protected interests, culturally important resources or other matters subject to Tribal governmental authority will require coordination, authorization or other action by the affected Tribal Nation. At Stage 1, applicants should identify known Tribal governmental actions that could materially affect feasibility when that information can appropriately be included. Applicants should not submit culturally restricted, sacred or other protected information through ordinary application fields.

E.9 Help and technical information

Applicant resources and technical assistance may provide additional help with choosing the appropriate activity area, locating authoritative AIS information, understanding permits and reporting pathways and developing a realistic prevention, monitoring, response, treatment, control or planning project.

The DNR will rely on existing authoritative AIS technical and reporting systems rather than create separate Community Grant Program AIS standards or reporting systems.

Resources and technical assistance may explain the requirements in the RFP but do not create new eligibility or scoring requirements.