Introduction

The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) supports the management, protection, and restoration of Wisconsin's coastal resources, and increases public access to the Great Lakes.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) administers WCMP Grants in collaboration with the Wisconsin Coastal Management Council (WCMC) and the Office for Coastal Management (OCM), U.S. Department of Commerce, through funding provided under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

The following principles guide the WCMP grant program:

1. Coastal management means achieving a balance between natural resource protection, preservation, and economic development.
2. All projects will be environmentally sustainable and respect ecosystem integrity.
3. All projects will protect, restore, or enhance coastal resources.
4. All projects must demonstrate a need for WCMP funding and that no other viable funding source exists.
5. All projects must identify measurable outcomes of the grant as part of the grant application and final report.
6. Community planning and educational projects, where appropriate, are encouraged to serve underrepresented communities and populations.
7. Educational projects that are appropriate for distribution (i.e., studies and curricula) must specify a distribution and marketing strategy.
8. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a high relative impact on coastal resources.
9. Any applicant that submits multiple applications must prioritize projects.

Grant Categories

WCMP Grants are available in five categories. Details are provided on the following pages.

1. Coastal Wetland Protection and Habitat Restoration
2. Nonpoint Source Pollution Control
3. Coastal Resources and Community Planning
4. Great Lakes Education
5. Public Access and Historic Preservation

Project Location and Project Period

Projects must be located in one or more Wisconsin counties adjacent to Lake Superior or Lake Michigan. WCMP Grants may start no earlier than July 1, 2025, and must be complete by December 30, 2026.

Application and Selection Timeline

Application Webinar (Recorded):	August 2024
Application Webinar (Live):	September 25th
Application Deadline:	November 1, 2024
Project Review Committee:	January 2025
WCMC Meeting:	February 2025
Projects Selected:	Spring 2025
Projects Begin:	July 1, 2025*
Project Completion:	December 30, 2026**

* Subject to release of federal funding
**Starting July 1, 2025, projects may have an 18-month timeline

How to Apply

1. Read this Request for Proposals (RFP), the Grant Application and Grant Application Instructions at http://coastal.wisconsin.gov.
2. Contact WCMP staff to discuss project proposals and application requirements.
3. Download the Grant Application, Grant Application Instructions, and other documents from the WCMP website. Complete the Grant Application and required forms according to the instructions provided.
4. The Grant Application and other forms must be submitted electronically by email to coastal@wisconsin.gov by November 1, 2024. The application should be submitted by the contact person listed in the application (not a consultant or other third party). If your application is too large to submit by email, please contact WCMP staff for instructions on sharing the file.

Although it is not required unless the grant request exceeds $100,000, applicants are encouraged to reach out to WCMP staff while developing proposals.

Application Presentation (Recorded) and Live Webinar

WCMP staff will host a live webinar on September 25, 2024. Please check the WCMP website, http://coastal.wisconsin.gov., for details. A recorded, narrated slide show presentation will be posted on the WCMP website.

For more information, please contact staff directly (names and contact information are below) or at coastal@wisconsin.gov. WCMP staff members are available for consultation. Please feel free to contact staff to discuss project ideas, eligibility, the application process, or related concerns.

Review Process

Following an eligibility review by WCMP staff, a panel of technical reviewers for each grant category (nonpoint, public access, etc.) reviews proposals, provides comments, and assigns points using the evaluation criteria.

WCMP staff will use technical scores to compare projects within the same grant category. Staff recommendations are further based on consideration of reviewer comments, an applicant's past performance, and a balanced allocation of limited grant funds among fifteen coastal counties and five grant categories.

Applicants are invited to make brief presentations to a Project Selection Committee consisting of WCMC members and WCMP staff in January 2025. The full WCMC will make funding recommendations at its February 2025 meeting. The recommendations will include a list of projects subject to changes in available funding. DOA will select final projects in Spring 2025 once final program funding is determined.

Project Evaluation Criteria

All project types are important and will be considered equally. Scoring will give greatest weight to impact on coastal resources:

- Impact on Coasts   0-15 points
- Methods   0-5 points
- Budget   0-5 points
- Timetable   0-5 points

A bonus point system encourages applicants to develop creative proposals. Applications that address the following objectives are eligible for bonus points:

- Build partnership alliances
  with other organizations or agencies: 0-5 points
- Develop exceptional marketing,
  outreach or education strategies: 0-2 points
- Encourage coast-wide projects: 0-2 points
- Engage underrepresented
  communities: 0-2 points

Overview

The WCMP will make available approximately $1.6 million of WCMP Grants for:

- Coastal wetland protection and habitat restoration
- Nonpoint source pollution control
- Coastal resource and community planning
- Great Lakes education
- Public access and historic preservation projects.

Applicants requesting more than $100,000 should contact the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program to discuss their proposal.

WCMP Grant projects totaling $60,000 or less require a 50% match. Projects with a total budget larger than $60,000 require a 60% match.

Match may be in-kind, cash, or a combination of the two. Applicants must certify that they can supply the required match. Match cannot be federal funds except for tribal "self-sufficiency" grants. Local money spent before the grant is awarded cannot be considered as match, including expenses incurred in preparing this application, preliminary engineering reports, etc.

Eligible applicants are local units of governments, state agencies, colleges and universities, school districts, regional planning commissions serving coastal areas, tribal units of government and private, nonprofit organizations. (Special eligibility requirements for land acquisition, habitat restoration, and public access projects are noted below.)

For more information, please refer to the Grant Application Instructions available at http://coastal.wisconsin.gov. Please contact WCMP staff to discuss project ideas and application questions. Contact information is below, as well as on the WCMP website.

Coastal Wetland Protection and Habitat Restoration

Wetlands enhance water quality, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and flood control. Protection and restoration of coastal wetland and upland habitat supports effective management of coastal resources. The WCMP grant program will protect and restore sensitive natural resources, including wetlands. The following principles guide the selection and eligibility of projects in this category:

1. Restoration must be done on publicly owned land or land where public access can be assured. Only governmental entities may apply for habitat restoration funding.
2. The program will strengthen the capacity of local governments to undertake effective coastal habitat management and protection.
3. Project review criteria will favor restorations that have an impact on Great Lakes water quality and/or enhancement of wildlife or fisheries.
4. Wetland restoration projects cannot create a wetland where none previously existed.
5. The project may not be the direct result of a permit condition or other regulatory action. Projects that add significant improvements or habitat, aesthetic, flood control, or water quality value, beyond what a permit condition requires, may be considered. Projects that may help meet overall goals of a municipality or region (such as meeting Total Maximum Daily Loads) may be considered.
6. The project must make a strong effort toward restoring or managing diversity in wetland and upland plant communities (e.g. a "high quality" restoration).
7. The restoration project must be designed to be permanent and actively maintained for at least five years.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Control

Nonpoint source pollution is a leading contributor to water quality problems on the Great Lakes coasts. The purpose of the nonpoint pollution control grants program is to address pollution arising from multiple and diffuse sources and their impacts. The following principles guide the selection and eligibility of nonpoint source pollution control projects:

1. The project must improve the coordination of activities undertaken by federal, state and local governments to control nonpoint source pollution.
2. The project must strengthen the capacity of local governments to undertake effective coastal management to control nonpoint source pollution.
3. The project may not be the direct result of a permit condition or other regulatory action. Projects that add significant water quality, pollution reduction, habitat or aesthetic improvements beyond what a permit condition requires may be considered. Projects that may help meet overall goals of a municipality or region (such as meeting Total Maximum Daily Loads) may be considered.
4. The project must be designed to be permanent and actively maintained for at least five years. A maintenance plan must be included.
5. The project must have an outreach and education component to generate awareness.

Coastal Resources and Community Planning

The WCMP grant program encourages local governments and other organizations to protect coastal resources and address land use conflicts through planning efforts. Eligible projects include (but are not limited to) outdoor recreation plans, comprehensive plans, waterfront plans, hazard mitigation plans, and resource management plans. Plan implementation through ordinance development is also eligible.

Updates to existing plans should fully explain the need for revisions. Comprehensive plan updates must identify additional activities or topics that will be addressed through WCMP funding that would not otherwise be completed through an update. Proposals for comprehensive plan updates should itemize tasks within the budget to show how much of the funding will be directed to the additional activities/topics. Local governments are encouraged to collaborate with neighboring communities. The WCMP grant program encourages eligible projects that will serve underrepresented communities.

The following principles guide the selection and eligibility of coastal planning projects:

1. Projects must protect coastal resources.
2. Natural hazard planning and implementing projects are encouraged.
3. Projects will emphasize the importance of public participation in the planning process.
4. Proposals that benefit underrepresented communities are encouraged.
5. Priority will be given to proposals that combine coastal resource protection and economic development, plans that address water conservation/sustainable water use, and plans that address changes in lake levels.
6. Plan or ordinance updates must fully explain the need for the revisions. Updates to comprehensive plans must focus on activities or topics that would not be addressed without WCMP funding: tasks should be itemized within the budget to show the amount of funding going to these additional activities.
7. Projects must be integrated with the local comprehensive plan.

Great Lakes Education

The purpose of this grant category is to promote greater awareness about the Great Lakes, improve environmental literacy and engage stakeholders on coastal resources stewardship. Eligible education projects include workshops, training, experiential education, curriculum development and other innovative public outreach efforts. The following principles guide the selection and eligibility of coastal education projects:

1. Projects must support public information and education efforts that address coastal issues of regional importance.
2. Projects that benefit underrepresented communities are encouraged.
3. Projects must be sustainable beyond the term of the grant.
4. Projects must identify the audience targeted, and the intended outcome.
5. Preference will be given to projects:
   - With a focus on sustainable use and management of coastal resources, nonpoint pollution/water quality, watershed management principles and invasive species.
   - That can be replicated by other organizations and agencies.
   - That incorporate a media or public relations plan.
   - That incorporate an evaluation plan with clear expectations of measurable results.

Public Access and Historic Preservation

The WCMP grant program may fund low-cost construction projects such as parks, recreational trails, walkways, piers, viewing decks, fishing piers, historic building restorations, coastal land acquisition and other public access facilities. The following principles guide the selection and eligibility of public access and historic preservation projects:

1. Construction must be done on publicly-owned land or land where public access can be assured. Only governmental entities may apply for public access and historic preservation funding.
2. All public access and historic preservation projects must have a direct relationship to the Great Lakes.
3. Projects must be open to the public on an equal basis and for direct use with no membership fee or reservation required. If a project is part of a revenue-producing enterprise, a minimum fee may be charged for use provided it is devoted to maintenance, and no advance reservation is required. (An example of this situation would be a fee paid for the use of a boat ramp).
4. Construction projects must be designed to comply with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-480) and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
5. Fee-simple acquisitions are preferred, but easements and other less-than-fee-simple acquisitions will be considered. Only governmental entities may apply for land acquisition funding.
6. Projects must include an educational or resource protection component.
7. Funds may not be used for maintenance projects of any kind.
8. Projects that are not eligible include harbor dredging, warehouse demolition, breakwater construction, constructing an erosion-control structure, building marinas and improvements to buildings for rental and lodging.
9. Funds may be used to purchase materials and pay labor and management costs for construction. Wages for implementation of the project must comply with the Davis Bacon Act.
10. Preference will be given to projects:
    - That demonstrate creative or innovative means to provide public access to the waterfront.
    - That incorporate sustainable building practices (through LEED® certification, for example) and "green infrastructure" that reduces stormwater runoff.

- That are part of an adopted waterfront or public access development plan that incorporates planning for lake level changes.

11. Projects must be designed to be permanent (20-year minimum lifespan) and include a maintenance and operations plan.

Additional Notes

Some activities associated with a proposal may be ineligible under WCMP funding guidelines or may require additional explanation. Please contact WCMP with any questions on the eligibility of proposed activities.

The following activities may require additional explanation and documentation:

- Acquisitions and Groundwork of any kind, including installation of signage, sampling, or other fieldwork: *Requires a 306A Questionnaire and other documentation for environmental review.*
- Nonpoint projects that include groundwork: *Must have a strong habitat restoration component. 306A questionnaire and other documentation required.*
- Drone flights: *Will need information including licensed pilot, dates, flight times, and exact locations of flights.*
- Collection of environmental data or geographic information, including story maps: *Requires a data management plan.*
- Outdoor activities: *May require additional documentation, such as a commitment to following best practices.*
- Surveys and questionnaires: *May require approval by or waiver from Institutional Review Board.*
- Supplies or equipment costs that exceed $5,000: *Requires additional documentation that may include a detailed explanation of the need, lease versus purchase analysis, and documentation post-award. May be ineligible.*
- Travel: *Interstate travel may require additional documentation. International travel is generally ineligible.*
- Purchase of iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials: *Must follow requirements of Build America, Buy America Act.*
- Subawards/subcontracts: *Must comply with applicable labor standards, including the Davis-Bacon Act. May not be awarded to federal agencies.*

In addition to restrictions noted above, the following activities are ineligible for funding:
- Activities to fulfill requirements of a permit.
- Pass-through/small grants competitions.
- Honoraria/awards.
- Lobbying.

Questions?

WCMP staff welcome questions and discussion of project ideas. Please contact WCMP staff at:

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