Section I-Background

Pursuant to the New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protections Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9B-1 et seq.), the New Jersey Wetlands Mitigation Council (Council) is responsible for the disbursement of funds from the Wetlands Mitigation Fund (fund) to finance mitigation projects. A mitigation project is one in which wetlands are created, enhanced, or restored to compensate for a wetlands loss or disturbance caused by a regulated activity. On February 4, 2005 it was recommended by the Council that money from the fund be used to develop an inventory of potential mitigation sites in the Arthur Kill watershed. This proposal and the request for a qualified student have been developed to accomplish these goals.

Section II-Purpose and Intent

To hire a qualified graduate student to develop an inventory of suitable lands in the Arthur Kill watershed, which may be purchased for preservation and/or wetlands enhancement and restoration and which have no contamination on the property. Over the course of approximately 2 to 3 months during the summer of 2005 working full time or approximately 5 to 7 months during the summer and fall of 2005 working part-time, a student will coordinate with government agencies and non-profit agencies to locate and identify lands suitable for wetlands enhancement, restoration, and preservation purposes. The work will begin with the list of potential sites submitted by the NY/NJ Baykeeper. The student will then consult with knowledgeable experts, non-profit organizations, academic scientists, and government agencies to identify all other possible sites in the watershed. The work will be conducted under the supervision of Council Staff.

Section III-Tasks:

Design a form letter for the entities listed below requesting information or assistance on locating wetland areas suitable for preservation/enhancement and/or restoration of freshwater wetlands within the Arthur Kill Drainage Basin. The student will work with the responding parties to acquire the following information about possible wetlands 1) a copy of a USGS map showing the location, 2) a county map showing the property location, 3) ownership information if known, 4) Block and Lot information, 5) HUC11 code and identification of the sub-basin within which the wetland is located, 6) size (acres) and wetland type(s) designated on the Freshwater Wetland Maps, and 7) any available information known by the proposer or by NJDEP concerning contamination. In addition, the researcher will determine if the entities would potentially be interested in long term management of the suggested sites, or provide assistance to the Council on the enhancement or restoration of the suggested site. Each form letter will have an attachment of criteria developed by NJDEP, Land Use Regulation Program to be used in screening the suggested sites.

List of entities to be contacted:

1. Conservation/Non-Profit Organizations; and
2. County Governments (within Arthur Kill Watershed); and
3. Municipal Governments (within Arthur Kill Watershed); and
4. State Government Divisions (Fish and Wildlife, Green Acres, Parks and Forestry, Natural Lands); and
5. Federal Government (USEPA, USFWS, USACOE, NRCS).

B. The researcher will prepare the information as a database searchable by submitting organization, subbasin location, wetland type, and contamination class.

The researcher will contact and meet with entities, as necessary; and will compare information submitted with other data already collected, including GIS information and New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Maps.

C. Field Investigations:

The researcher will visit potential sites with Council Staff, after obtaining property owners permission to access site. Investigation should begin with NY/NJ Baykeeper list of sites followed by other sites identified through outreach to above organizations and GIS search. The GIS search will entail a search of wetland maps to help in identifying potential mitigation locations. Visits will verify the existing vegetation, assess existing hydrology, and assess potential for restoration/enhancement.

Section IV-Deliverables:

The qualified graduate student must produce a report of findings from non-profit and governmental agency outreach. This report will include a ranking of suitable sites available for the Council to purchase for wetlands enhancement, restoration, and/or preservation.

Section V-Estimated Time and Costs:

It is anticipated that the tasks will take a qualified student approximately 10 weeks to complete. The grant will allocate up to $7,000, including $15/hr for 40 hrs/week x 10 weeks, plus up to $1,000 for travel, postage, supplies, and photographic expenses. * For a part-time student the grant will allocate up to $7,000, including $15/hr (maximum 400 hours), over the course of approximately 5 to 7 months during the summer and fall of 2005, plus up to $1,000 for travel, postage, supplies, and photographic expenses.*

* The purchase of the camera is subject to approval of Council Staff and will become property of the Council. As property of the Council, the camera will be returned to staff at the completion of the project.

Section VI-Qualifications:

The applicant must have the following education and experience:

A. Education
1. Undergraduate Degree in a Scientific field; or
2. Formal coursework in wetland ecology; and
3. Other coursework in general ecology and/or plant ecology.

B. Experience
Knowledge of and experience with GIS systems; Preference will be given to a candidate with the following additional skills:

1. Knowledge of wetland identification using the 1989 Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands; and/or
2. Experience with wetland mitigation programs and projects, and/or
3. Experience with wetland ecology

The student must have his/her own car and access to a computer.

Students should send a cover letter and resume with 3 references to the attention of Jill Aspinwall, Staff to Council, 501 East State Street, PO Box 439, Trenton NJ, 08625 or by Fax 609-777-3656, by March 31, 2006.