

Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program Project Review Committee

Terms of Reference (October, 2005)

Section 506 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000 authorizes the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program (GLFER). Under GLFER, the Corps of Engineers (COE) shall plan, design, and construct projects to restore the Great Lakes fishery, ecosystem, and beneficial uses of the resources. As authorized, GLFER requires a non-federal partner to provide 35% of the funds for any project.

WRDA envisioned the active involvement of the signatories of *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* in the implementation of GLFER. The following terms of reference establish the *Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program Project Review Committee* (Project Review Committee) of the Council of Lake Committees (CLC). The Project Review Committee is responsible for:

- Helping the COE to solicit GLFER proposals;
- Reviewing GLFER proposals;
- Evaluating GLFER proposals; and
- Providing recommendations for GLFER proposals to the CLC.

MEMBERSHIP AND SELECTION OF MEMBERS

The GLFER Project Review Committee shall consist of 13 members. Members shall include representatives of all State Directors, a representative of the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority, a representative of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and a representative of either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division. In addition, the CLC shall nominate 2 representatives to serve on the committee from outside organizations such as (but not limited to): a Great Lakes university research institution, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, a representative of a municipality, or a non-governmental organization eligible to cost-share a GLFER project. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), the COE, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources shall be provided the opportunity to be represented by observers.

Members of the GLFER Project Review Committee shall be nominated by a member of the Council of Lake Committees and approved by the Council of Lake Committees during the spring meeting of the CLC. Observers shall be nominated by their agency for CLC approval. Members and observers shall serve a two-year term. The CLC shall appoint a chair of the committee from the CLC membership, to serve a term of two years. The chair shall rotate among the CLC membership on the committee after the two-year term. If a members wish to no longer serve on the committee, it is incumbent on members or the organization they represent to provide a nominee to fill their place.

REPORTING

The GLFER Project Review Committee shall meet prior to CLC meetings to discuss and rate the projects. The review committee shall then provide advice to the CLC during the council's regularly scheduled bi-annual meetings. The CLC shall review and consent to or revise the committee's recommendations.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. The COE has agreed to provide the GLFC with project proposals as they are proposed to the COE. The GLFC shall provide the review committee with a list of projects no sooner than 30 days prior to scheduled meetings of the Project Review Committee.
2. The Project Review Committee shall meet no fewer than twice annually (prior to the April and October meetings of the CLC) to review proposed projects, consistent with the criteria listed below. During these meetings, projects shall be sorted into three categories: (1) highest priority projects that offer the greatest potential for contributing to Great Lakes fishery and ecosystem restoration; (2) second priority projects that are beneficial in achieving restoration goals, but rank significantly lower in one or more criteria; and (3) projects that are not recommended for funding.
3. Recommendations of the Project Review Committee are made by consensus.
4. Entities or individuals represented on the Project Review Committee may submit proposals. Individuals, however, associated with the proposal or with the submitting entity shall recuse themselves from the discussion when the proposal is rated by the Project Review Committee.
5. Members of the Project Review Committee shall respect intellectual property rights and shall not share letters of intent or any other deliberations of the committee in an indiscriminate manner outside the committee.
6. The Project Review Committee is encouraged to work with the COE to actively seek potential GLFER projects, consistent with the GLFER communications strategy.
7. The Project Review Committee shall provide its recommendations for projects at least bi-annually to the CLC, during the CLC's regular meetings.

CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The following criteria shall be considered by the Project Review Committee when reviewing proposals:

1. Consistency with the goals of the GLFER, the Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, Fish Community Objectives, or other plans or legislation aimed at protecting and restoring the Great Lakes, and is not inconsistent with existing Remedial Action Plans or Lakewide Management Plans.
2. Whether the project has the endorsement in writing of the agency or agencies responsible for management of resource targeted for restoration, has the support of any public agency that controls the land or structures that will be directly affected by the project, and that the cost-sharing funds are available.
3. Whether the project is considered to be a reasonable application of scientific knowledge and/or engineering principles to achieve project restoration objectives (i.e., if any serious scientific or engineering questions are raised in the review process, have they been, or can they be adequately addressed?).
4. Likelihood of achieving stated objectives.
5. Whether the project can be completed within a reasonable time frame.
6. Whether there is a realistic estimate of project cost based upon available information.
7. Documented success of similar restoration projects.
8. Applicability of what can be learned from project to other sites or restoration activities in the Great Lakes (i.e., pilot or demonstration value).

REVIEW OF THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Project Review Committee and the CLC shall review these terms of reference within two years of their approval.