



Policy on Land Acquisition

BACKGROUND

According to the language in the settlement agreement that defines the purposes of the Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT), acquisition of real property for the following purposes is explicitly set forth, with preferential treatment being given to projects that benefit the Lake Michigan fishery, as follows:

1. Research projects directed at increasing the benefits associated with Great Lakes fishery resources
2. Rehabilitation of lake trout, lake sturgeon, and other populations
3. Protection and enhancement of fisheries habitat including Great Lakes wetlands as fisheries habitat
4. Public education concerning the Great Lakes fisheries
5. Providing access to the Great Lakes fisheries

Since its inception, the GLFT has reviewed several acquisition proposals but has funded only one. The GLFT has determined that its primary mission is not to acquire property except in limited circumstances where the acquisition of fee simple or lesser interest in property is an essential element in accomplishing its primary mission. In general, the GLFT relies upon federal, state, and local agencies, private land conservancies, and private foundations that routinely acquire interest in lands to protect, enhance, and preserve natural resources or access of value to the public. The GLFT has determined that written criteria and established priorities for future grant requests for land acquisition projects will be helpful to staff and members in evaluating proposals and in providing guidance to potential applicants.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that grantmaking decisions made by the GLFT Board of Trustees are consistent with GLFT mandates and assist in achieving desired outcomes adopted by the GLFT by applying consistent review procedures and evaluation criteria. The policy will provide a framework for all members and staff in the review of proposals as well as provide guidance to potential applicants.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered for funding fee simple acquisitions/leases/easements or similar land control costs, a project shall demonstrate, at a minimum, that it has submitted the information requested in the GLFT Land Acquisition Grant Application that the proposed land control cost is an essential component in support of one of the following activities:

- Fisheries research that will provide critical information required to maintain or enhance benefits associated with the Great Lakes fisheries (e.g., purchase of

easements/leases to place monitoring or other devices on private property as part of the research effort)

- Rehabilitation of lake trout, lake sturgeon, or other important Great Lakes fish populations (e.g., acquiring interest in property required to implement management plans to rehabilitate fish populations)
- Protection, enhancement, and/or restoration of valuable Great Lakes fisheries habitat (e.g., acquiring property interest to preserve, enhance, or restore coastal wetlands or to provide fish passage)
- Public education and information on the Great Lakes ecosystem and fisheries (e.g., providing a physical location for Great Lakes education facilities or education kiosks)
- Recreational or tribal access to the Great Lakes fisheries (e.g., acquiring interest in property to secure public access to shore-based recreational fishing facilities or to construct/operate a tribal fishing facility)

FUNDING CRITERIA

In deciding whether or not to fund a land acquisition grant, the GLFT shall consider the following criteria:

- Benefits of the project in relation to the GLFT's mission
- Cost of the land control compared with the total project cost and the expected relative value of the total project benefits directly attributable to the GLFT's mission
- Level of certainty that the GLFT mission-related activities to be conducted on the property will be funded and completed
- Assurances that the property interest will remain available for project purposes and in control of the applicant, and will be maintained by a public agency or private nonprofit entity
- Degree to which other public and private contributions are part of the land acquisition and total project costs
- Overall priority of the project compared to other GLFT grant objectives
- Cost of the GLFT portion of the project compared to other present and future funding priorities of the GLFT
- Available alternative sources of funding
- Thoroughness of the information provided by the applicant to allow the board to evaluate the project
- Ability of applicant to comply with general grant requirements for all projects funded by the GLFT

FINAL DECISION ON LAND ACQUISITION PROPOSALS

The board may take the following actions in response to a motion and second from board members to fund a *land acquisition proposal*. Provisional board members may move or second the consideration of a *land acquisition proposal*, but may not vote on the project unless provided a proxy by a member with voting privileges.

- Reject the proposal
- Approve the proposal at the funding level requested
- Approve the proposal for an amount less than requested or with conditions
- Refer the proposal to the SAT and/or staff for further review, to obtain additional information, or to negotiate conditions with proponent of project with or without a delegation of authority to fund the project if certain specified conditions are met
- Table the proposal for consideration at a future meeting

It should be noted that all grants, special or otherwise, require the appropriate number of votes of the Board of Trustees to be approved.

Approved by the GLFT Board of Trustees on August 3, 2004