



Pooled Monitoring Initiative's Restoration Research Award Program

FY 21 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust

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At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Restoration Research Award Program funds the answers to key restoration questions focused on the effectiveness of watershed restoration practices.

Information Session:

January 5, 2021, 12 to 1 pm (EST)

Deadline:

4:00 pm (EST), January 29, 2021

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at www.cbtrust.org/restorationresearch

Contact:

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Program Goals

Efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries call for a significant increase in the number of watershed restoration projects intended to improve both water quality and habitat. The practitioner, regulatory, management, policy, and scientific communities are united in their desire to support the best, most cost-effective practices at the best sites. However, differences of opinion sometimes exist, and questions about the performance and function of some of these practices persist.

The Pooled Monitoring Initiative pools resources to support scientists who answer key restoration questions posed by the regulatory and practitioner communities through this Restoration Research Request for Proposals (RFP). The research teams then provide the answers back to those who asked the questions for direct application. The goal of the Restoration Research award program is to answer these key restoration questions that serve as a barrier to watershed restoration project implementation. Funding partners hope that answering these questions will ultimately lead to increased confidence in proposed restoration project outcomes, clarification of the optimal site conditions in which to apply particular restoration techniques, information useful to regulatory agencies in project permitting, and information that will help guide monitoring programs.

The ability to pool funding allows for rigorous research to address these large, complicated questions that require robust experimental design carried out by the best research teams. Finally, the RFP research questions are the result of the top key restoration questions identified for a particular year and the previous RFP questions may be removed while research is ongoing to inform future research direction. See past research supported including their progress and final products at:

<https://cbtrust.org/grants/restoration-research/>.

This program is funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust), the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program Office, the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration, and Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection. Future funding partners are welcome, including Maryland Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permittees that opt in to the MS4 permit's Pooled Monitoring Program.

Information Session

A workshop at which the program will be described and questions from potential applicants will be answered will be held January 5, 2021, from 12 pm to 1 pm (EST). Register to attend at the following link: <https://forms.gle/wHAMfXb6V4HdrjDH6>. Any updates to this Information Session will be posted on this program's website.

Eligible Project Types

Members of the regulatory and restoration communities have worked together to identify several key restoration questions that are challenging watershed restoration work in the Chesapeake (see “Key Restoration Questions” section). Investigators may request funds to undertake the following activities pertaining to any of these questions:

- a) Conduct a literature review/synthesis, if the case can be made that enough is already known about a question (\$50,000 maximum request);
- b) Answer a component of the question with a research project in which specific hypotheses are tested. Research projects may include:
 - i. experimental or descriptive work in the field;
 - ii. experimental work in the laboratory;
 - iii. modeling studies; and/or
 - iv. use of existing data, if deemed appropriately suited (properly collected with appropriate metadata); or
- c) Develop a regulatory or practitioner tool related to one or more of the questions that advances the pace or efficacy of the field in question, if the case can be made the tool is needed and you have ample information to support tool development.

Experimental Design Guidance

This program supports research that addresses the key restoration question(s) in this RFP. Applicants must provide a graphical or tabular description of the study design. Experimental designs shall be robust and must be tailored to deliver the answer to the question. Guidance for sampling is provided to support your study design.

Methodological Guidance

- Levels of the factor(s) to be compared must be clearly articulated in the description of the experimental design and a justification provided for their selection. Potentially confounding factors must be considered, discussed in the application, and, if sample size does not allow it, kept constant. Additional factors can be added as sample size allows.
- The strongest proposals will use paired series (Osenberg, et al., 2006¹) or BACI (before-after-control-impact) designs with sufficient replication to capture variability and control sites to capture variability due to other factors. However, “space for time” experimental design will be considered, if justified (i.e., no “before” data were collected, but the sites provide a particularly good opportunity to test the research question).
- Sample size must be justified. As discussed above, applicants are encouraged to perform power analysis to determine whether the sample size chosen/possible is enough to be able to detect differences among treatments.
- **All water quality sampling projects intended to quantify loads must include methodology that captures both base flow and storm flow in a representative way.** The best way to achieve this

¹ Osenberg, C.W., B.M. Bolker, J.S.S. White, Colette M. St. Mary, and J.S. Shima. 2006. Statistical Issues and Study Design in Ecological Restorations: Lessons Learned from Marine Reserves. Foundations of Restoration Ecology. Eds. Donald A. Falk, Margaret A. Palmer, and Joy B. Zedler. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. pp. 280-302.

standard is flow-paced sampling using automated samplers. See Thompson, et al. (2014²) for water quality sampling methods, associated error, and optimal sampling to reduce error.

- Studies that simply produce nutrient and sediment reduction values for one site/catchment in one set of site conditions will typically not be supported. We are looking for comparative studies.

Key Restoration Questions

The following research questions are organized into four themes:

- A. Effectiveness of stormwater and stream restoration programs at the watershed/catchment scale
- B. Effectiveness of restoration practices at the project scale
- C. Impact of construction activities on natural resources
- D. Trade-offs in resource improvements incurred by restoration practices and the resulting net ecological change as measured by a common “currency”

A. Effectiveness of stormwater and stream restoration programs at the watershed/catchment scale

Questions 1 and 2 in this RFP are similar to the two questions posed in the monitoring section of the Maryland MS4 permit. These two questions are extremely important in our understanding of whether stormwater best management practices (BMPs) including stream restoration practices are effective and are working at the watershed scale.

1. BMP Effectiveness Monitoring: What is the effectiveness of stormwater best management practices implemented to address the Environmental Site Design (ESD) sizing criteria in the Maryland Stormwater Design Manual for assessments in Maryland? Does provision of the full treatment volume for the 1-year 24-hour design storm event to address the ESD unified sizing criteria to replicate woods in good condition reduce the water flow enough to protect stream channels in Maryland? How effective is the BMP (or suite of BMPs) for reducing total suspended solids (TSS), total phosphorus (TP), or total nitrogen (TN)?

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: Select multiple catchments with similar characteristics (to allow for replication) that will be treated with ESD practices. Ensure that catchment characteristics remain as consistent as possible, including factors of size, % impervious cover treated, land use, and type and scale of ESD practices to be used. For projects in Maryland, use the approved stormwater management design for determining the ESD treatment volume for the 1-year 24-hour design event. Regress degree of bank loss (measured with cross sections and/or other method both before and after ESD installation) and load reductions for TSS, TP, or TN (loads measured after vs. estimated loads prior to development) against the full ESD treatment volume, considering the untreated catchment(s) as a control.

2. Watershed restoration assessment: What are the cumulative effects of watershed restoration activities within a watershed? Of interest in the restoration community is whether, given the high temporal and spatial variability of nutrient concentrations and flows, a signal from the restoration activities even in a highly targeted, small watershed can be measured relative to a control site (before vs. after restoration activities). The following are related questions: What percentage of the impervious surface in a watershed must be treated with stormwater BMPs before a difference can be measured at the outfall? Does BMP type (e.g., stream restoration, ESD practices, stormwater wetlands) influence that percentage?

² Thompson, Joshua, Rachel Cassidy, Donnacha G. Doody, Ray Flynn. 2014. Assessing suspended sediment dynamics in relation to ecological thresholds and sampling strategies in two Irish headwater catchments. *Science of Total Environment* (468-469): 345-357.

We recognize that this question is extensive and reviewers will accept proposals that address just one component of this research question.

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: Select multiple watersheds (to allow for replication) of similar characteristics in which 0 to a significant percentage (e.g., 20%) of the impervious area can be treated. Some hypothesize that due to variability driven by spatial forces (e.g., watershed characteristics) or temporal forces (e.g., rainfall) at least 20% of the watershed must be treated to enable seeing a signal of restoration in the watershed. In choosing watersheds, ensure that watershed characteristics remain as consistent as possible, including factors of size, land use, and type and scale of BMPs to be used to treat impervious cover. Regress load reductions in TN, TP, TSS, and other pollutants of interest (loads measured after vs. loads measured before restoration at a point where the watershed drains into the stream) against % of impervious surface treated in the watershed, considering the untreated watershed(s) as a control.

B. Effectiveness of restoration practices at the project scale

3. Biological Community Restoration: Recent research has shown that in many situations, especially in watersheds with relatively high impervious cover, stream restoration may result in improved physical habitats but not restored biological communities (macroinvertebrates, fishes, etc.). The reasons are not yet clear, but three hypotheses are high flows (impact benthic drift behaviors, suspended sediment tolerance, available carbon), the lack of source populations, and chemical habitat barriers (e.g., conductivity, temperature). We seek a research team to test the hypothesis that individual/species/community seeding/transplantation in urban/suburban restored streams (in which physical habitat conditions would predict them to occur) will result in benthic communities that are more similar to reference streams compared to control restored sites in which individuals/species/communities were not transplanted. As part of this effort, researchers may also choose to test the chemical habitat hypothesis.

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: Choose a set of restored streams in which biological communities have not been restored (to some reference baseline level), assign some to a “transplantation” experimental treatment and leave some as control. Measure biological communities before and after transplantation. In choosing sites, make sure to control for or have enough replicates to account for stream restoration type (or restoration function restored), stream restoration size/scope, stream size, stream size/flow, stream benthic type, impervious cover draining to the stream restoration site, appropriate survivability conditions of the target population, and other factors that could confound the results.

4. Climate change impacts to restoration practice: Climate change models predict that frequency and intensity of rain events will increase, growing season will lengthen, and other processes related to the Chesapeake community’s approved set of BMPs will change. As a result, some suggest that standards for stormwater practices, stream restoration, and other BMPs should change (e.g., need to evaluate high intensity storms of varied frequencies (vs 24-hour event, conveyance limitations, etc.).

Funders are looking for investigators to compare the modeled or measured outcomes of varied storm frequency and duration (and associated flood impacts, loading rates, and % loads reduced for TN, TP, TSS, etc.) of current stormwater BMPs to those of a new set of stormwater BMP design scenarios (e.g., evaluating water quality practices such as ESD implemented in a watershed where additional storage such as the 1 year 24-hour extended detention or peak management controls are provided). The ultimate use of this information would be to evaluate design criteria of these BMPs (new or retrofits) that achieves the most effective treatment and conveyance strategies when comparing varied rainfall

design storm scenarios. The research will build on a project supported in this program titled, "Climate Impacts to Restoration Practices," with the final report available at: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/restoration-research/> (in the table).

In addition, for stream restoration practices funders are looking for investigators to compare modeled or measured outcomes (e.g., criteria for site selection, design approach for habitat, or construction technique) of stream restoration practices under current conditions vs a new set of conditions (e.g., design element(s) improve habitat) to reduce the impacts of future climate change such as changing intensity duration frequency curves, frequency of storms, and/or periods of drought. Finally, a literature review that provides a synthesis of stream restoration siting criteria, design conditions, construction techniques/sequences, and/or other factors to manage for future climate impacts will be considered. The findings will support current stream restoration maintenance/upgrades and future stream restoration siting, designs, and/or construction practices.

Example possible study: Use current and future (e.g., 50 or 100 years) rainfall data and the associated intensity duration frequency curves to compare outcomes/response variables (e.g., changes in loading rates and BMP performance) across various rainfall intensity and duration scenarios. Model a design change (e.g., new stormwater BMPs designed offline from smaller ESD (water quality practices) or providing greater volume in stormwater BMPs) and repeat the exercise. Sample size must be high enough to capture the variability and the experimental design must control for important factors expected to impact the results (e.g., impervious cover, soil type, land use, drainage area, storm drainage conveyance limitations). Your effort should build on/compliment but not duplicate a 2019 project funded through this Initiative; see past projects funded at www.cbtrust.org/restorationresearch.

5. Pollutants of Emerging Concern: Temperature; chloride; toxics, particularly polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and fecal coliform bacteria, have been identified as "emerging pollutants" of concern by the restoration community, beyond the "traditional" pollutants of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment that have been the focus of much of the restoration community to date. Questions within this area are:

- a) Thermal – What best management practice design and siting methods will reduce thermal impacts to Maryland's Use III and IV streams (see the [Maryland Stormwater Design Manual Section 4.1](#))? Management practice design/strategy examples to test include various surface ponding and discharge structure configurations, variable media depths in filtering practices, and specific stream restoration design features and types such as legacy sediment removal, stage zero/emergent wetlands, and other management strategies.

Current state (Maryland) modeling efforts indicate that a reduction in heated surface runoff in addition to riparian forest buffers to provide shading are necessary to meet thermal water quality endpoints (68° F or 20° C for Use Class III streams). What is the cumulative impact of thermal mitigation practices in urban and rural watersheds? If possible, explain how practices were combined to reduce thermal impacts to streams.

Possible Elements of the Experiment Design: Compare stream thermal condition in watersheds/catchments restored with different stormwater management BMPs (e.g., wet pond retrofits with various surface ponding and discharge structure configurations or ESD filtration practices using variable media depths) or restored with different stream restoration techniques. Follow the methodological guidance provided above in this RFP.

- b) Road salt can negatively influence the performance of stormwater BMPs (e.g., nutrient removal and surface water runoff retention). Road salt in BMPs can mobilize heavy metals and other pollutants adsorbed to the BMP's organic sediments. How do different levels of salt present in a BMP due to road application impact the BMP's nitrogen removal efficiency and export rates out of the BMP of pollutants such as heavy metals? Funders are interested in the **salt loading** and its impact to the BMP's function (temporal and spatial) as well as the practice types that are less/more effective. Funders are not interested in testing stormwater management types or designs for salt removal.

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: Establish a set of stormwater BMPs (such as bioretention) otherwise similar in characteristics but subjected to different salt input levels (e.g., from different road salt application rates). Regress nitrogen removal efficiency (and/or heavy metal export rate out of the BMPs) against various salt loading rates. In your experimental design, try to keep all factors other than salt input level constant, but if that's not possible or you want to test another effect, include enough replication to control for confounding/second factors (e.g., organic content, BMP soil mixture, underlying soil type, underdrain presence/absence) per the methodological guidance provided above in this RFP.

- c) PCBs – Many regional water bodies have PCB impairments. Some of these impairments result from *in situ* legacy sources and may naturally attenuate over time, while in other cases active sources of PCBs have been identified. The specific sources of PCBs are often unknown as are whether practices used to reduce nutrient loads can also reduce PCB loads.
- i. Are there significant differences in PCB loadings across different land use types, industry types, and eras of development?

Toxics (specifically PCBs) – Both "traditional" (e.g., Maryland Stormwater Design Manual Chapter 3 and 5 practices: https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Pages/stormwater_design.aspx) and innovative stormwater management techniques may reduce delivery of pollutants such as PCBs and other toxins to receiving waters.

- ii. What are the removal capabilities of different stormwater management designs on reducing toxic contaminant loads? We seek proposals that address either a) comparisons of traditional and innovative stormwater practices in this area (e.g., bioretention with traditional media vs. filters with variable media designs) or b) comparisons of effectiveness of different innovative techniques at reducing PCBs and other toxins.

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: Compare loads of key elements(s) of concern (PCB) among two or more stormwater BMP types. Remember to include replication and keep as many factors constant as possible or build an experimental design robust enough to account for levels of factors other than BMP type; see methodological guidance.

C. Impact of construction activities on natural resources

6. Work in the wet vs work in the dry for stream restoration: When permitting stream restoration, most regulatory agencies require practitioners to divert water around the stream section to be restored. Such diversion can be costly and can prolong the projects and therefore construction disturbance, leaving some to hypothesize that the net sediment impact of diverting is no "better" than that of a quicker project done with the stream flowing.

Funders seek to ask: What is the difference in effects on water quality (turbidity) and total sediment load delivered downstream between stream restoration work “in the wet” (construction without diverting the stream) vs work “in the dry” (construction accomplished through diversion of the water flow) for streams that are larger than 1st order (e.g., streams that will use at least a 6 inch pump, estimated for base flow of 5.1 ft³ per second)? All aspects of work in the wet vs work in the dry that affect sediment input must be considered, including:

- a) Installation of a diversion when working in the dry, which may release sediment for some period of time at some high concentration (e.g., greater than the water quality standard of 150 NTU) during the installation;
- b) Removal of the diversion, which may also release sediment; and
- c) Duration of construction (hypothesized to be shorter for work in the wet).

This work will build on a previous study of this question in smaller-scale streams funded through this program. Preliminary results can be found [here](#) and the final report is [here](#). The management and regulatory communities have reason to hypothesize that larger streams may present different scenarios than smaller streams.

You will be required to articulate potential covariates, such as restoration type, restoration size, project duration, sediment type, substrate type, slope, stream size, stream flow, land use, drainage area, area disturbed, and other factors. Your experimental design must include the replication needed for scientifically defensible results, and you must justify the number of replicates chosen. You are encouraged to perform a power analysis to ensure that your sample size is large enough to detect the hypothesized difference. Reviewers will be sensitive to the degree of replication proposed.

The Pooled Monitoring Advisory Committee (PMAC) that supports this Pooled Monitoring Initiative is available and able to provide applicants assistance finding sites that will work for your experimental design. The PMAC has access to stream restoration sites that are available for study and likely to be implemented within the timeframe of your proposed study. Contact the program manager to assist with site selection at sdrescher@cbtrust.org.

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: Compare the sediment load before and during stream restoration using “work in the wet” construction techniques to “work in the dry” construction techniques. Make sure to keep any factors that could confound the results constant, such as the restoration type, restoration size, project duration, sediment type, substrate type, slope, stream size, stream flow, land use, drainage area, and area disturbed. The project will be conducted in larger stream systems (e.g., where a 6 inch pump would be used) because they are typical throughout the state for stream restoration where “work in the wet” vs “work in the dry” is questioned during the design and permitting stage).

D. Trade-offs in resource improvements incurred by restoration practices and the resulting net ecological change as measured by a common “currency”

7. Resource trade-offs in different types of restoration projects. The decision to install a restoration project at any given site by definition implies that an existing condition at that site will be modified, replaced, and/or improved. The hypothesis of the restoration practitioner is that the net condition will be *improved*. However, a value judgment is placed on the existing condition, (e.g., deeming the existing condition to be inferior to the desired “restored” condition) that is often not based on quantification. In addition, there is an accompanying value judgment on the proposed resulting condition that may not take into account reductions of certain functions (e.g., removing trees to create

a wetland). One difficulty is that the units of the resource negatively affected is often not the same as the units measured to report the restoration work (often, for example, pounds of nitrogen reduced).

The goal of this question is to encourage quantification, in some comparable metric, of the resources present prior to the activity compared to the resources available after restoration project installation, calculating net ecological impact after evaluation of individual functional components. Your project should explore the “positive” and “negative” impact for at least two resources using common metric(s) (e.g., vegetation biomass, pounds of pollutant reduced, a habitat metric) to determine the net change.

With certain kinds of restoration projects or practices, do the net benefits (nutrients, sediment, habitat, hydrology, biological resources) outweigh the net impacts (tree loss and resulting habitat loss, etc.)?

Include at least two resources for consideration, such as, but not limited to the following:

- Wetland trade-offs in stream restoration projects: Certain stream restoration practices can impact type and function of existing wetlands. Impacts can include changes to the wetland’s hydrology and plant community extent and distribution. What are the changes to the wetland community and does this result in a loss of wetland function compared to the benefit of the other elements of the restoration practice?
- Invasive species in stream restoration and tree planting projects: The act of restoration, in ecological terms, can be considered a disturbance. Colonization by invasive species following any disturbance is common and restoration practices are no different. In addition, managing invasives can be a costly component of post-project maintenance regimes. As a result, many in the practitioner community are looking for ways to implement restoration projects that result in less colonization by invasive species and to articulate whether an “acceptable” threshold for invasive species could be quantified and used as a management tool. Specifically, funders are looking for research comparing the value of different techniques in reducing invasive colonization in stream restoration and tree planting projects. Researchers choosing to address this question will be responsible for identifying or proposing one or more alternative methods, then testing them ideally with a paired BACI design (i.e., a suite of restoration projects in which traditional methods are used compared to a suite of restoration projects in which a new method to reduce invasive colonization is tested).
- Tree trade-offs in stream restoration projects: Certain stream restoration practices by necessity can result in removal of trees: 1) trees may need to be removed on a short-term basis for construction site access; 2) trees may be removed for various methods of stream restoration in nontidal forested wetlands; 3) trees may be removed to accomplish legacy sediment removal in which the stream banks are forested; and 4) trees, even when remaining after restoration, may experience mortality due to changes in hydrology leading to higher water levels/inundation. What is the water quality and habitat cost of tree removal of certain practices compared to the benefit of the other elements of the restoration practice? Your effort should build on/compliment but not duplicate two projects on this topic funded in 2017; see past projects funded and final reports at www.cbtrust.org/restorationresearch.
- Construction impacts of stream restoration, consider both short- and long-term impacts: Some in the community are concerned that the act of project construction can have negative consequences on the resource(s). For example, construction equipment can compact soils, reducing infiltration and therefore water quality benefit. Certain alternative construction mechanisms may be available or adding a step of countering the soil compaction may help.

Researchers choosing to address this question will be responsible for identifying or proposing alternative methods, then either modeling their effect on TN, TP, and TSS load reduction and/or habitat characteristics, or testing them empirically. In the alternative construction methods used to address this question, consider how the construction methods impact the construction time, restoration materials used, and cost.

Possible Elements of the Experimental Design: An example of an alternative method that may reduce construction disturbance is to limit clearing for access around the stream channel. To evaluate whether limiting clearing improves total infiltration rate, ultimate pollutant load reduction, and final stream health and recovery; representative sites (with similar characteristics such as soil type) would be randomly assigned to treatments (e.g., measured by % of trees removed or # of feet cleared around the stream channel). Restoration construction would ensue, then restoration success (as measured by soil infiltration rate, pollutant reduction, quantity of input leaf and brush detritus for organisms, stream temperature, or other defined metric) would be measured at representative samples within each site before and after restoration construction. In addition, resulting construction time and costs of the methods would be reported.

Additional examples of construction techniques that impact soil compaction include different treatments for construction access paths (including different depths of wood chip mulch, timber wetland matting, mulch plus matting combinations, temporary gravel roads, decompaction with tiller/spader, etc.). To evaluate the impact of different construction access path treatments, representative sites (with similar characteristics) would be selected for each treatment, and total infiltration rate, soil compaction, and tree mortality (both short and long term) would be measured both before and after construction.

This research should allow restoration practitioners and permittees to more accurately calculate the resource's functional uplift at a particular site in order to optimize system functions in decision making.

Resources to Support Proposal Development

Current Research

Twenty-seven projects focusing on these and related research questions have been funded over the past six years. To become acquainted with the scope of ongoing work, forge partnerships, and avoid duplication of effort, visit www.cbtrust.org/restorationresearch and see the "Awarded Projects and Final Products" section.

Existing Scientific Literature

A list, though not exhaustive, of relevant literature is presented at: www.cbtrust.org/restorationresearch.

Restoration Project Sites

Given budget constraints, investigators are encouraged to couple efforts with planned or completed restoration projects where appropriate. The Trust and collaborators will work to provide project sites and/or list(s) of relevant restoration projects for your project. Reach out to this program's point of contact, Sadie Drescher, at sdrescher@cbtrust.org for assistance.

Proposal Narrative Format

All proposals shall be organized as follows:

- I. Introduction and Literature Review: Begin with a short review of the literature to support the research direction and methodology chosen.
- II. Hypothesis Section: Clearly identify the research question addressed and specific hypothesis to be tested. Hypotheses proposed must be directly linked to one or more of the RFP research questions.
- III. Methods – Data Collection: Contain a **robust and scientifically defensible methods section**, including:
 - A narrative describing the experimental design and justification of sample size to be used given existing spatial/temporal variability (power analysis highly encouraged for relevant studies).
 - A tabular or graphical depiction of the experimental design – **provide reviewers with a picture of exactly what the experimental design is that you are proposing**; unknown or unclear experimental designs will not be funded. Reviewers will include technical experts in your field; however, members of the management and regulatory communities who are not necessarily scientific experts in your specific field will also evaluate your proposal (see Application Review Process section below).
- IV. Methods – Data Analysis: Describe your data analysis methodology, including identification of statistical tests to be used. Note that statisticians are included on the review panel.
- V. Work Products: Conclude with a section describing the products of the work, at a minimum to include:
 - Annual presentation(s) to the regulatory community at the annual Pooled Monitoring Initiative’s Restoration Research Forum (if invited) and additional regulatory training events for the duration of the study period as appropriate;
 - A talk at a restoration conference for the practitioner audience; and
 - At least one scientific paper in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.

Reviewers will carefully consider how clearly the hypothesis, methods, and analysis approaches were crafted.

Application Review Process

Each proposal is reviewed and scored by technical expert peer reviewers based on the criteria below. Peer review scores are discussed by a Review Panel composed of both technical and management/regulatory experts who will consider the input of the technical expert reviewers as well as the value of the work to the management, regulatory, and practitioner communities. The review panel then recommends a suite of applications to the Trust’s Board of Trustees.

Because both technical and non-technical reviewers will consider your proposal during this two-phased review process, your proposal must be both robust enough scientifically to be attractive to the technical reviewers and well-explained enough to be clear to non-experts in your field.

Applications will be disseminated for peer review between February 1 and February 25, 2021. By March 1, 2021, applicants may be provided with a set of questions from the first round of proposal review. Applicants must make a representative available to answer reviewer questions for one hour on a date to be determined between April 19 to April 23, 2021. These dates and times are subject to change with any updates posted to the award program website.

The Trust and funding partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance its mission and meet its specific funding priorities and criteria.

To allow applicants to set expectations prior to investing time in application, the Trust provides historical application approval rates for the same or similar programs: The average approval rate from the last six rounds in this award program is 28%, including both fully and partially funded applications.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

- Robust Methods and Statistics (Scale of 1 to 20): Use of scientifically robust methods, including sampling regimes and parameters, and statistical analysis appropriate to address the proposed hypothesis. Your tabular or visual depiction of the experimental design will be evaluated for clarity and efficacy. For projects that require site availability or data availability, evidence that such availability exists will be considered in this criterion. Sites that are well-vetted, appropriate for the experimental design, and articulated in the application are preferred.
- Qualifications (Scale of 1 to 10): Organization, lead staff, and contractors (if used) qualifications.
- Usefulness of the Anticipated Result to the Target Audience (Scale of 1 to 10): Transferability of the results to key audiences, such as regulators, restoration implementers (e.g., local governments), and restoration practitioners.
- Cost Effectiveness/Budget (Scale of 1 to 15): Budget line items and associated costs per line item must: a) support the scope of work that will answer the research question(s) and b) be appropriate and cost-effective. Reviewers will evaluate whether procurement guidelines are appropriate for the funding source(s), e.g., contractual work must be secured by attaining at least three estimates or by using a competitive bid process. Cash and in-kind match is not required, but leveraging funds to make a research plan more robust can result in higher scores.

Eligible Applicants

Both not-for-profit entities (academic institutions, non-profit organizations) and for-profit entities are permitted to apply. The strongest proposals will show committed partnerships with various types of organizations. Organizations need not be based in Maryland, but the work must be relevant to Maryland's restoration, regulatory, and/or practitioner communities.

Funding Availability and Timeline

Funding partners have allocated approximately \$900,000 for this research program. Project timeframe and funding requests are not set and the research project funding request and timeline should correspond with the goals of the project.

Ineligible Budget Items

The following cannot be funded:

- Endowments, deficit financing, building programs, or venture capital
- Food and beverages
- Mitigation activities
- Political lobbying
- Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have been purchased

Requirements of Awardees

By submitting an application to this program, applicants acknowledge that if selected for an award, they:

- Will hold a kickoff meeting with funders to discuss reviewer feedback, make any scope adjustments, and ensure highest likelihood of usefulness of the work to the management, regulatory, and practitioner communities;
- Will disseminate research results in annual training sessions for regulators/policy makers (one per year during the award period as well as the year immediately following the award period upon conclusion of the work) if invited;
- Will provide the Trust with any data collected as part of this award. The timeframe for data delivery may be up to one year from the completion of the work and may be made publicly available for use;
- Will develop a summary of the research in a fact sheet (or similar approved by the Trust) for the two target audiences of regulators (primary audience) and practitioners;
- Will commit to submit one or more publications as a result of the work to a peer reviewed scientific journal;
- Will submit status and final reports through the course of the project;
- Will have and maintain professional liability insurance in full force and effect during the term of the contract usual and customary amounts of liability insurance coverage in connection with the performance or failure to perform services under the contract;
- Are and will be compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws; and
- Have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had a civil judgment rendered against them for fraud or related offense by any government agency (federal, state, or local) or been terminated for cause or default by any government agency (federal, state, or local).

Deadline

Applications must be submitted in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **4:00 PM EST on January 29, 2021**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close automatically and promptly at 4:00 PM EST. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline given the potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of technical assistance for our online system on the deadline date.

Awards and Notifications

All applicants will receive an emailed letter stating the funding partnership's decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. The Trust and funding partners may request changes to the experimental design based on reviewer feedback and/or that applicants include additional collaboration with other applicants prior to receiving the award.

Award Process: If approved, the Trust will send a contract with award conditions and due dates of status and final reports. In the agreement, awardees will agree to the terms in the Requirements of Awardees section. The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. In addition, all final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners.

If awarded and the Project Leader changes organizations and is considered essential to the project work, the award can be transferred to the new organization to continue and complete the project work.

In cases in which the awardee fails to submit a status report or final report by the due date, the Trust reserves the right to terminate the agreement. During the project term awardees will submit status reports and products/milestones outlined in the contract (e.g., deliverables). Organizations with outstanding status or final reports will not receive additional awards.

The FY 2021 Pooled Monitoring Initiative's Restoration Research awards will be announced in May 2021.

Introduction to the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the bays, streams, rivers, forests, parks, and other natural resources of our local systems, from the Chesapeake to the Coastal Bays to the Youghiogheny River. The Trust, supported in large part by Maryland's Chesapeake Bay License Plate and partnerships with other regional funders, engages and empowers diverse groups to take actions that enrich natural resources and local communities of the Chesapeake Bay region. Since 1985, the Trust has awarded over \$120 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Trust is committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in its award-making and environmental work. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages applications directly from underrepresented groups, and for projects that increase awareness and participation of communities that are traditionally underrepresented, such as communities of color. For a full description of the Trust's efforts to engage under-engaged groups, see our strategic plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan and <https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/>.

Contact

For technical assistance contact Sadie Drescher at (410) 974-2941 ext. 105 and/or sdrescher@cbtrust.org.

Narrative Questions

Answer the project narrative questions and upload the MS Word or PDF file. The project narrative should not exceed ten (10) pages of text. We recommend that you copy and paste the questions to use as an outline in the project narrative to demonstrate that the narrative addresses all questions. You may add photos/graphs, resumes, Letter(s) of Commitment, and other materials to support your project proposal in addition to the Project Narrative questions and submitted as one file (i.e., combine the Project Narrative answers with additional materials excluding the budget for submission). There is a file attachment limit of 1 gig for the entire application.

Project Narrative - Organize your proposal as follows:

1. Key Restoration Question(s): Articulate the key restoration question(s) your project will address. Reference the research question number listed in the RFP.
2. Introduction and Literature Review: Begin with a short review of the literature to support the research direction and methodology chosen. Discuss the background of the hypothesis you will be testing, including other relevant studies (peer-reviewed and gray literature) and their findings. How does your work build on previous activities? How does your proposed project advance the knowledge to the next level?

3. **Hypothesis Section:** Clearly identify the specific hypothesis to be tested. Hypotheses proposed must be directly linked to one or more of the RFP research question(s). Because both technical and non-technical reviewers will be evaluating your proposal, we recommend you present your hypotheses in graphical/schematic form (i.e., illustrate the hypothesized result you expect to see from your work).

4. **Methods – Data Collection and Summary of Finding(s):** Provide **robust and scientifically defensible methods section**, including:
 - a) A narrative describing the experimental design and justification of sample size to be used given existing spatial/temporal variability (power analysis highly encouraged for relevant studies). Identify sampling sites (if applicable), sampling regime (if applicable), and parameters measured. Your methods must be clear and justified to answer the research question(s).
 - b) A tabular or visual depiction of the experimental design. Remember again that two types of reviewers will be evaluating your proposal, and an illustration can be a very effective and efficient way to ensure that all reviewers clearly understand your project goals.

5. **Methods – Data Analysis:** Describe your data analysis methodology, including identification of statistical tests to be used. Note that statisticians are included on the review panel. Do you anticipate your project requiring a [Quality Assurance Project Plan](#) (Y/N)? If Yes, add this to the scope, deliverables, and budget.

6. **Work Products:** List the products of the work with a short description of each product, at a minimum to include:
 - a) At least one scientific paper in the peer-reviewed scientific literature;
 - b) Annual presentations to the regulatory community at regulatory training events for the duration of the study period, if invited; and
 - c) A talk at a restoration conference for the practitioner audience.

Also, provide a statement that data collected as part of this award will be provided to the Trust as described above.

7. **Deliverables:** Provide the deliverables schedule using the table format below and include details for the deliverable format (e.g., excel spreadsheet). A template is provided for the first deliverable. Add rows for additional deliverables. Awards will be managed as firm-fixed-price contracts.

Table X. Project deliverables and timeline.			
Report # and Reporting Period	Project Deliverables	Date of Delivery	Amount
Report #1: X/X/20XX to X/X/20XX	The deliverables are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (add deliverables here) 	X/X/20XX	\$

8. **Requesting Organization and Qualifications:** Briefly describe your organization. Describe the experience of your organization, the staff selected in your organization to perform this work, and the contractors selected to perform this work. Resumes may be added to the application package and will not be considered in this proposal narrative’s ten-page limit.

9. Contractual Work:

- Will contractors be used in this project? Yes or No
- If yes, describe how you will or have met the below criteria for contractual work as described in “c,” “d,” or “e” (whichever is appropriate for your project).

If contractors are expected to be retained for the proposed project, a competitive bid process must be or must have been used and described as below:

- a) For work <\$150k you must either a) get three estimates and show good faith efforts to reach MBE/WBE/DBE firms or b) put the work out for competitive bid (e.g., in a RFP) and make sure you did and can document you did good faith efforts.
- b) For work >\$150k you must put the work out for competitive bid and during that process make sure you did and can document you did good faith efforts to reach MBE/WBE/DBE firms.
- c) If the contractor/consultant has already been identified through a competitive bid process, describe the bid process used to obtain bids, including length of time the bid was open for responses, a description of the selection process/criteria used to select the winning bidder (e.g., low bidder, qualifications, criteria, etc.), and reason(s) for selection of the winning contractor (lowest qualified bid, etc.).
- d) If the contractor/consultant has already been identified because the contractor was already on retainer describe the competitive process used to place the contractor on retainer and how this process met the good faith efforts to reach MBE/WBE/DBE firms.
- e) If the contractor/consultant has not already been identified, describe the competitive bid process to be used to procure consultants including length of time the bid was open for responses, a description of the selection process/criteria used to select the winning bidder (e.g., low bidder, qualifications, criteria, etc.), and reason(s) for selection of the winning contractor (lowest qualified bid, etc.).

This funding opportunity includes federal funding. Therefore, to be eligible for the federal funds your project must follow procurement requirements in Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 for Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) #66.466. An organization proposed to receive funds other than the applicant organization is a contractor.

10. Transferability: Explain how you plan to disseminate the information (above and beyond the required participation in regulatory/policy-maker workshops described earlier).
11. Regulatory Support: If your project requires implementation of restoration work for data collection, describe the status of any permits.
12. Conflict of Interest: Projects in which there is independence between the lead investigator(s) and other phases of the project (e.g., design, build, monitor, maintain, etc.) will be ranked highest. Independence is defined as lack of involvement of the investigator(s) proposed here and the design or construction of the project(s) to be used to answer the questions in this study. Describe any connections your project team has with the design, construction, and/or funding of the restoration project(s) that could impact *or be perceived to impact* the results and their use.

Budget Instructions

Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Upload

You will be asked to upload your budget using the “Application Budget” worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Trust’s **Financial Management Spreadsheet (FMS)**, an excel file template. The template can be found by visiting <https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/> where you can also watch a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.

For your budget request:

- Budgets that are detailed, justified, and itemized are ideal.
- For any staff cost requests, list the percentage of overall time devoted to the project by each staff member in the budget item column. It is expected that all personnel included in budgets will be directly involved in the work conducted under this program. Requests that do not include full justification for personnel involved may not be fully funded.
- Matching/leveraged resources are encouraged. Indicate whether each match entry is applied for, pledged, or in-hand. Indicate in the narrative whether your organization has requested financial support from any other sources for the project not listed as match in the budget submitted.

Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information

This online application component will ask you to enter budget category and request totals. These totals will be automatically calculated in the FMS Application Budget, so you will only need to copy and paste the values from the FMS to the Online Application.

Additional Budget Justification

This online application component will ask you to provide a descriptive budget narrative to justify and explain costs such as: 1) if you requested staff costs (personnel/staff that are in your organization) you must provide a detailed justification for those staff costs that includes a scope of work for the staff costs requested, tasks for the scope of work, and hours associated with those tasks and 2) the source of any contractor cost estimates.

The body of work described in your proposal should be able to be accomplished with the resources requested in your budget. If the success of the work is contingent upon award of other funds, make this clear in your budget justification section.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. To apply for an award, go to <https://cbtrust.org/grants/restoration-research/> and click on “Get Started” to begin a new application. This will open a new window asking you to log in or create an account on our online system. If you have applied in the past, use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these use the ‘forgot password’ feature). If you have not used our online system before, click on “New Applicant” and follow the instructions.

Applicants must submit applications in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **4:00 pm (EST) on January 29, 2021**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 PM (EST).

Watch our video on how to apply for and submit an application using our online system at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/>.

Online Application Form

You will be asked to provide the following information on the online application form. Some items are required in order to submit your application. Refer to the online application for details.

- Eligibility Quiz
 - This three-question quiz is meant to assist you in determining if your project meets the requirements of this award program and that your staff/organizational structure best supports a successful application.

- Applicant Information Tab
 - Provide the organization's name, mailing address, phone number, organization type, mission, EIN number, and DUNS number.
 - Provide the Executive Officer and Project Leader's name, title, address, phone, and email address.
 - Both an Executive Officer and a Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications.
 - The Executive Officer and Project Leader must both be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization either as a board member, an employee, or other approved position recognized by the organization but not a contractor of the application.
 - The Project Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. The email address entered here **MUST** be the same as the email address you used to log in to the online system. The Project Leader is the primary point of contact for the application, and the email address used to submit the application via the online system must be that of the Project Leader. Applications in which the email address associated with the Project Leader in the applicant information tab of the online opportunity does not match the email address used to submit the application will not be considered for funding. The Trust cannot conduct any official correspondence with contractors or other project partners.
 - If at any time the Project Leader cannot continue in the position, the organization must contact the Trust and assign a new qualified Project Leader. If awarded and the Project Leader changes organizations and is considered essential to the project work, the award can be transferred to that organization to continue and complete the project work.

- Project Information Tab
 - Provide a project title; project abstract (include the research question to be addressed, hypothesis to be tested, and a summary of the project); the watershed, county, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location.

- Timeline Tab
 - Add the project start and end date. Provide a project timeline that includes major tasks and their associated start and end dates.

- Deliverables Tab

- Provide estimated metrics for your proposed project. Disregard deliverables that do not apply to your project.
- Project Partnerships
 - Provide a list of project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project. An organization proposed to receive funds other than the applicant organization is a contractor.
 - Applicants are encouraged to upload a letter of commitment for the project from each partner describing in detail the partner’s role or contribution to the project. Applications including strong letter(s) of commitment often receive higher scores. If not submitted with the application, letter(s) of commitment may be required prior to the release of any awarded funding. To better understand the Trust’s definition of and policy on Letter(s) of Commitment, visit our Forms and Policies webpage: www.cbtrust.org/forms.
- Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab
 - Upload a Microsoft Word or PDF file that contains your answers to the narrative questions found in the Narrative Questions section of this RFP. Upload additional supporting documents, if needed/required.
- Budget Tab
 - Upload your application budget, provide budget category and request totals, and provide additional budget justification. Use the Trust’s Financial Management Spreadsheet and fill out the “Application Budget” worksheet. Refer to the Budget Instructions of this RFP.
- Terms and Conditions Tab
 - Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.