

# Request for Research Proposals

Issued February 8, 2010

## “Challenge Grant Program for Conservation Engineering Projects - Winter Flounder Bycatch Reduction”

NOAA Award Number NA09NMF4720414

### Part I: Proof of Concept Program

A program to support teams of researchers and fishing industry members interested in working together to test alternative fishing gear and fishing strategies to reduce bycatch of winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*) in the southern New England stock area.

Note: Part I will be focused on providing an opportunity for fishermen and researchers to be supported while undergoing a proof of concept phase to identify promising designs and techniques for further testing. Part II, a competitive research program aimed at funding full proposals designed to test and fully evaluate promising concepts through appropriate field methodology and analysis protocol, will follow.

A project of the

## Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

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Part I Total Budget: \$150,000  
Maximum amount per project: \$30,000  
Testing Phase: June – August 2010  
Proposal deadline: March 19, 2010

## **Overview**

There is an urgent need, particularly in the southern New England fishing area, to develop and test alternative gear designs and fishing strategies to better target healthier species of fish within the groundfish complex while reducing winter flounder bycatch. This need applies to both large and small mesh fisheries in which there are possible interactions with winter flounder. To meet this need, the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, through an award received from NOAA/NMFS and with funding support secured through U.S. Senator Jack Reed's efforts, is administering a program entitled "Challenge Grant Program for Conservation Engineering Projects – Winter Flounder Bycatch Reduction".

The overall goal of the Challenge Grant Program is to provide support to teams of researchers and members of the fishing industry to work together collaboratively and cooperatively to develop and test alternative gear designs and fishing strategies aimed at reducing the winter flounder bycatch problem in the southern New England fishing area. It is intended to draw upon the experience and expertise of researchers, fishermen, and gear suppliers alike, and to foster effective working relationships to try and solve this problem. The overall Challenge Grant Program will span the time period of 2010 through 2013.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) pertains to Part I of that program – the "Proof of Concept Program". Part I will provide small grants to teams of fishermen and researchers to undergo a proof of concept phase to test selective fishing gear design ideas or modified fishing techniques. The goal of Part I is to identify promising designs and techniques for further testing. A Part II will follow which, through an additional competitive process, will provide awards for longer projects to evaluate ideas and techniques using more extensive, rigorous research protocols.

### **General Description of Part I - Proof of Concept Program**

Through the Part I - Proof of Concept Program, the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation will make awards, through a competitive process, of relatively small grants (up to \$30,000) to teams of scientists and members of the commercial fishing industry to test ideas. These ideas may encompass 1) new gear designs; and/or 2) new strategies for using existing gear that will result in reducing winter flounder bycatch in the southern New England fishing region (the southern New England fishing area boundaries are recognized and described as the area east of the Great South Channel west to New Jersey).

A Conservation Engineering Review Panel comprised of industry representatives, and scientists and gear technicians from academic institutions, state/federal agencies, and the private sector, will be formed to review applications and make recommendations to the Board of Directors of the CFR Foundation regarding projects that should be funded. The Conservation Engineering Review Panel will also review research results and make recommendation to the Board of Directors of the CFR Foundation regarding designs and techniques that may warrant further testing and funding support.

## General Research Criteria

Research proposals submitted under this RFP will need to follow the following general criteria:

- Project Teams must be comprised of both members of the fishing community and fisheries scientists and/or research technicians affiliated with a state or federal agency, scientific institution, or an accredited educational institution.
- Vessels used to conduct the research must be either authorized vessels owned and operated by the supporting academic or scientific institution or commercial fishing vessels that are federally permitted.
- Proposals must address the topic of gear design or alternative fishing strategies that will reduce the bycatch of winter flounder in the southern New England fishing area.

## Duration of Research Projects

The testing phase of projects funded under Part I – Proof of Concept Program must be completed during the time period of June – August 2010 provided that all required state/federal permits to conduct the research are obtained by June 1, 2010. Pre-spending activities for equipment procurement and assembly prior to June 1, 2010 are permissible but must have the approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation. A final project report will be due on September 15, 2010.

## Funds Available

Total funding available for Part I – Proof of Concept Program is \$150,000. The maximum amount of funding available for individual projects awarded under Part I is \$30,000.

## Evaluation Criteria

The following is a list of the key considerations will be used by the members of the Conservation Engineering Panel in evaluating proposals submitted under Part I:

- **Innovation:** The degree of innovation incorporated into the proposed new gear design or new fishing strategy.
- **Likelihood of Success:** The likelihood of success of the proposed idea in comparison to other proposed ideas.
- **Collaboration:** The amount of collaboration between members of the fishing industry and science partners in developing and testing the idea.
- **Relevance to southern New England:** The degree to which the idea fits fishing practices and conditions in the southern New England fishing area.
- **Professional Merit and Past Record:** The qualifications, experience, and past performances of the members of the Project Team and the degree to which those factors support the proposed activities.
- **Utilization:** The ease with which the results are likely to be incorporated into fishery management practices or used by the commercial fishing industry.

➤ **Reasonableness:** The reasonableness of the proposed budget and the practicality of the methods proposed.

## **How to Submit a Proposal**

Proposals must be submitted electronically via e-mail attachment to Peg Parker, Executive Director, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation by 4:00 PM on March 19, 2010 (E-mail address: [pparker@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:pparker@cfrfoundation.org) - Phone : (401) 515-4662). It is preferred that proposals be submitted as a single PDF formatted document. However, proposals will be accepted as a single Microsoft Word document with allowable attachments.

### **Proposal Length and Format**

Proposals are limited to five pages including the title page and all text, figures, tables, references, etc. used to describe the idea to be tested. (This page limit excludes the required budget form and vitae of members of the Project team). Pages included beyond the page limit will not be considered.

Proposals must have the following components:

1. Title page listing project title and Project Team members (including contact information for each member, name of fishing vessel or supporting institution, team leader);
2. Brief project summary describing the idea to be tested and the methods to be used to test the idea;
3. A description of the type, size, and amount of gear to be used;
4. The approximate time(s) and place(s) fishing will take place;
5. Budget (separate form);
6. Vitae of members of Project Team (separate attachment).

### **Budget Form**

A completed budget form must accompany the proposal. The required form can be downloaded from the CFR Foundation website at [www.cfrfoundation.org](http://www.cfrfoundation.org) or by e-mail request to Peg Parker at [pparker@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:pparker@cfrfoundation.org)

## **Other Information**

Those seeking help with the application process or in finding researcher partners should contact Peg Parker, Executive Director, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (e-mail: [pparker@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:pparker@cfrfoundation.org); phone: (401) 515-4662.)

### **Indirect Cost Limits**

The maximum amount of indirect costs allowed for this RFP is 25%. To obtain a copy of a letter from the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation stating this policy, contact Peg

Parker, Executive Director, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, phone: (401) 515-4662, e-mail: [pparker@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:pparker@cfrfoundation.org)

### Match Requirement

There are no match requirements for this RFP.

### Student Tuition/Stipends

Budget requests for student tuitions will not be issued under this RFP. Student stipends will be considered.

### Federal/State Review

Project Teams will be required to submit all necessary applications and information for federal/state permits and review processes as required.

### Reporting Requirements

All funded Project Teams are required to submit a project report to the CFR Foundation summarizing the research results by September 15, 2010. The project report should be sent to Peg Parker, Executive Director, e-mail: [pparker@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:pparker@cfrfoundation.org)

The final report should be concise. It is not necessary to repeat the information about the idea, gear used, methods, etc. that was already included in the project proposal. The project report, however, must include the following:

1. Title page listing project title and Project Team members (including contact information for each member, name of fishing vessel or supporting institution, team leader);
2. A summary of the research findings (all data collected, analysis of data);
3. Conclusions – What was learned about the performance of the gear design or the alternative fishing strategy? What adaptations, if any, would the Project Team propose? Does the Project Team feel the gear design or alternative fishing strategy warrants further investigation?

The Project Team leader may also be called upon to present the findings to the Conservation Engineering Review Panel reviewing the report if the members have questions.

### Submittal of Vessel/Project Team Information

Upon acceptance of an award offer and before field testing begins, the Project Team leader must submit to the Executive Director of the CFR Foundation the following information:

1. All required safety training and insurance documents for the vessel and team members;
2. Vessel operator name;
3. Vessel's Federal Fishing Permit number;

4. Vessel registration or documentation number.

#### Announcement of Awards

Award decisions are expected to be completed by the last week of April 2010. The Project Team leader will be notified of the decision by the Board of Directors of the CFR Foundation regarding the Team's proposal by mail and e-mail.

### **Timeline for Part I – Proof of Concept Program**

The Part I- Proof of Concept Program will commence in February 2010 and extend through October 2010. It will include the following components and timeline:

**February 8, 2010** – Issuance of Request for Proposals

**March 19, 2010** – Deadline for submitting proposals

**March – April 2010** - Review of the proposals by the Conservation Engineering Review Panel and forwarding of recommendations to the Board of Directors of the CFR Foundation for final award decisions

**Last week of April 2010** – Issuance of decisions on awards by CFR Foundation

**May – June 2010** - Finalization of Work Agreements/Budgets with Project Teams and acquisition of appropriate federal/state permits to conduct research

**June – August** - Research to test ideas

**September 15, 2010** - Deadline for submittal of project report to CFR Foundation and Review Panel

**October 2010** - Review of project results by Review Panel and development of recommendations for further support

**October 2010** - Review of Part I projects by Board of Directors of CFR Foundation