

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking public input on a proposal to **refine and clarify application form, application instructions, and project guidance for Surface Water grants that include the following:**

- Lake Management Planning (Large and Small Scale)
- Lake Protection (Wetland & Shoreline Habitat Restoration, Lake Management Plan Implementation)
- Lake Classification & Ordinance Development
- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Education, Prevention & Planning
- AIS Established Population Control
- AIS Early Detection & Response
- River Planning
- River Management

The DNR is being proactive in notifying partners and potential 2016 grant applicants now about these anticipated changes so that they can better plan their grant application work.

A. Why Are We Doing This?

Application form, instructions, and project guidance were last revised September, 2014. Based on applicant and DNR staff comments during the first cycle using these materials, we see that additional improvements are needed. Proposed modifications will provide clearer instruction for grant applicants on what to include in the application, improve customer service, and reduce staff work load.

B. Background

In fall 2013, a lean government team initiated a project to consolidate all the grant applications bulleted above into a single electronic application form with updated application and project guidance. Lean government applies objective methods to both identify and then implement the most efficient, value-added way to provide government services. The updated grant application and guidance resulting from the lean government project were put into use for surface water grant programs for funding awards in 2015.

The DNR received feedback on how to improve the grant materials and changes have been incorporated in the attached draft materials. The DNR expects that refining and clarifying the application form, instructions and guidance will increase clarity. These changes will be incorporated into the 2015/2016 grant application cycle and will eventually be incorporated into a comprehensive administrative code revision that will soon begin for chs. NR 190, NR 191, NR 195, and NR 198.

C. Summary of Proposed Changes.

1. **Refine consolidated application form.** Proposed modifications provide clearer instruction for grant applicants about what to include in the unified application.
2. **Refine and clarify project guidance.** The DNR updated the application instructions and grant guidance to provide clearer instruction about what details applicants should include in their grant application to increase likelihood of a grant award. Notable updates include:
 - How to determine applicant's share of costs related to training versus education
 - How to determine applicant's share of global positioning system units
 - Understanding grant match requirements
 - Depreciation of equipment costs as part of reimbursement request
3. **Incorporate ranking guidelines into project guidance.** The DNR proposes to incorporate updated application ranking criteria into the project guidance document so applicants understand how each question in the application will be scored. Application score determines project rank. Funds are awarded to applications in order of application score.

D. Remaining Steps. Once the 21-day comment period is complete, all comments will be considered, revisions will be made to this draft guidance document as warranted, a *Response Summary* will be prepared, then both the *Response Summary* and *Final Guidance* will be made available using the existing DNR Program Guidance web page (<http://dnr.wi.gov/news/input/guidance.html>) and will be posted on the specific web pages for all affected surface water grant programs. The ultimate goal is to have the final guidance and updated forms published on the grant web pages and available for distribution around September 1, 2015.

Please forward your comments about this proposed policy no later than July 28, 2015 , to:	Name: Shelly Thomsen, Lakes & Rivers Team Leader	Phone: (608) 266-0502
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