

HARRY R. HUGHES CENTER FOR AGRO-ECOLOGY REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Ajax Eastman Fund for Forest Health in Maryland: Improving forest health through management in Maryland's private and public forestlands.

The mission of the Hughes Center is to *provide leadership to promote environmentally sound and economically viable agriculture and forestry as Maryland's preferred land use through research, outreach and collaboration.*

OVERVIEW

Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology seeks to lead an effort to promote healthy forest ecosystems in Maryland by expanding public awareness of forest health and promoting forest management activities on private and public forested lands. Healthy Forests provide air and water ecosystem services that are degraded when invasive plants and insects disrupt ecological processes. Unmanaged or poorly managed forests are often vulnerable to drought, disease, fire, and storm damage while supporting deer population growth. Healthy forests are resilient to climate change and disturbance, increase the capacity for carbon sequestration, water filtration, and provide critical habitat to native animals and plants. Further, managed forests may provide income to landowners and wood for the forest product industry. Forestry in Maryland employs 10,000 people and contributes \$4 billion to the state's economy. Each year, the state of Maryland receives \$26 million in tax dollars from forestry. Investing in managing Maryland's forests will support the quality of our environment and our economy.

The Objectives

- 1) Assess forest health with quantitative measures and communicate results to build awareness with private landowners and/or public managers of Maryland's forestlands. Approaches must minimally consider structural composition, regeneration, invasive species, disease and deer damage.
- 2) Use forest health assessments or tools as a catalyst to increase economically sustainable forest management of private and public lands. Examples include removal of invasives, thinning, replanting, deer management, etc.
- 3) Identify and promote economically viable relationships between landowners/managers and skilled service providers to effectively manage forest landscapes.

Ideal outcomes will A) catalyze active forest management within Maryland's fragmented forest landscape. The proposal shall identify the number of acres of forest that have been improved. B) Provide tools that effectively communicate the state of forest health on a local and regional scales and then leverage that information to motivate landowners/managers to implement appropriate actions. C) Projects that expand lasting relationships between landowners/managers, with forest conservation sector and service providers are preferred. The proposal shall identify a minimum number of newly trained service providers. D) Participants are encouraged to utilize training skills within University of Maryland's Extension staff to provide current and future training to service providers. E) Proposals that consider economic constraints of service providers and landowners/managers while crafting strategies that meet competing needs will be prioritized.

The Opportunity

The Hughes Center will fund a project up to \$150,000 over a 3-year period to achieve the desired results. The Hughes Center does not fund overhead costs. All qualified proposals will be considered, however proposals that identify opportunities to provide matching or in-kind funds will receive preference. The Center encourages multi-disciplinary proposals that engage in collaboration across academic areas or industrial sectors. However, implementation must take place within the state of Maryland.

Researchers applying for this funding will be at the forefront of solving a critical need in the State's effort to plant and manage forests.

The Criteria

Preproposal Due Date and rubric

- Preproposal Due: May 15, 2018
- Full Proposal July 15, 2018
- Presentation to Board of Directors September 2018
- Who can Apply: Professionals and academics with credentials supporting their proposal subject matter.
Researchers with outstanding reports due to the Hughes Center are ineligible.
- The project presents novel research that enhances knowledge and science and economics in agriculture forestry and/or natural resources to benefit working lands and the Chesapeake Bay.
- This proposal is grounded in objective science?
- The design appears to be well thought out with testable hypothesis, appropriate methods.
- Do the investigators have the experience and skills to perform the work?
- Does the budget seem plausible and likely to achieve the desired outcomes?
- Is the time frame adequate?
- How relevant is this project to the priority of forest health as outlined in the proposal?
- Evaluate the collaborations found in this project especially value those non-traditional collaborations. ¥
- Is matching funding identified and likely?

Pre-Proposal Format

Pre-Proposal Format 12 font size or larger

1. Cover Sheet: 1-page
 - a. Proposal Title
 - b. Names and contact information of participants with Principal Investigator identified
 - c. Date of submittal
2. Proposal: 2-pages
 - a. Clear statement of the hypothesis and objectives with literature review
 - b. Discussion of the methods needed to address the question
 - c. Discussion of the tools and facilities that will enhance the success of the project
 - d. Potential limitations or barriers to completion
3. Qualifications of the participants (no more than 2 pages)
 - a. Brief bio of the project participants with highlights of the skills that will enhance the project outcomes
4. Timeline 1/2 page
 - a. Provide specific dates when deliverables will be complete and available to the Center
 - b. Include any contingencies for deliverables
5. Budget 1/2 page
 - a. Provide a chart that includes a minimum of the following budget items divide into year 1, 2, & 3:

- i. Salaries
- ii. Fringe Benefits
- iii. Equipment/materials/supplies
- iv. Travel
- v. Identify potential match and established matches (in-kind) and the sources and timelines
- vi. Total proposal requested from the Hughes Center

Next Steps

Proposal Approval Process:

- Pre-proposal Review and selection May-June 2018
- Includes independent review
- Announcement of Short listed proposals June 2018
- Full Proposal due July 15, 2018
- Proposal Review Complete September 10 2018
 - Includes scientific review
 - Hughes Center Board review and selects grantees
 - Board meeting with proposal finalist presentations: September 10, 2018
- Announcement of final project selection no later than September 12, 2018

The Center will establish a payment schedule that aligns with the timeline of deliverables. Failure to meet deadlines will result in delayed or denied payment.

Contact Point

All inquiries should be directed to Suzanne E. Dorsey, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology. Sdorsey1@umd.edu 410-827-8056.

The Ajax Eastman Fund

The Fund memorializes the work of Ajax Eastman, one of the Hughes Center's founding Board of Directors. Ajax has been called a "state treasure" and "everybody's environmental conscience." In addition to her contribution to the Hughes Center, Ajax worked on environmental issues from beach erosion to forest conservation. Her determination was, in part, responsible for recycling in Maryland. Tom Horton said that "a thousand pieces of the Bay region exist only because of the dedication of you and your colleagues." Ajax died in March 2018 and this fund honors her work in Maryland while representing the respect many current Board members share for her life's work. The awardee will present findings from this project in a Baltimore venue to be organized by the staff of the Harry Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology.