



ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2009 EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER WATER MONITORING

I. PURPOSE OF AN EPA EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER WATER MONITORING

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified improved water quality monitoring as one of its highest priorities. The agency recognizes the value of monitoring data in guiding EPA, states and tribes in efforts to improve the health of the Nation's waters. There are waters, however, that states, tribes and EPA are not able to monitor at all or only on at a very limited basis. Here in New England, volunteer groups have played a valuable role in supplementing available monitoring data. With this equipment loan program, EPA New England expects to support and enhance the work of existing monitoring groups and assist the start up of new groups to meet the goal of expanding the number waters which are monitored.

This year, the priority for equipment loans will be groups who have received no more than one equipment loan from this program. Others may apply in case there is funding for groups with more than one loan.

This loan program is restricted to equipment only, and does not include expendable supplies (e.g. gloves, calibration standards, disposable pipettes, etc.).

II. EQUIPMENT EPA CAN PROVIDE TO VOLUNTEER MONITORING GROUPS

Attachment A of this announcement contains examples of equipment that may be requested, with some estimated costs. The equipment loaned to each selected group this year will be limited to \$2,500 in total value. This equipment will be available through a long-term loan of five years, on an annual renewal basis.

III. ELIGIBILITY OF VOLUNTEER MONITORING GROUPS

The equipment loan program is open to all volunteer monitoring groups in New England, including those coordinated by states, tribes, municipalities, universities and other organizations. It is open to groups along a wide spectrum of experience levels – those that are just getting started as well as those with extensive and long-term experience. Higher priority will be given to groups which have not yet received equipment loans from EPA.

As part of the loan program, selected groups will need to have a current Quality Assurance Program or Project Plan (QAPP). If a group is just getting started in monitoring, the QAPP will need to be approved by a deadline agreed upon by EPA, which will allow some time for a new group to become familiar with details of monitoring protocols and QA requirements.

The goals of data use must include a local application and sharing with at least one state or tribal regulatory agency responsible for assessing water quality conditions and reporting to EPA. Groups collecting data only for educational purposes will not be eligible for this program.

IV. SELECTION PROCESS

Organizations that are eligible include:

- Organizations that currently provide monitoring data to a state or tribal agency, and are seeking to upgrade the type of methods used, and expand the number or types of monitoring sites. Expanding coverage on a watershed basis will be highly regarded by EPA.
- Organizations just getting started with monitoring who need equipment to get underway. Evidence of a commitment to undertake monitoring with a goal of producing data for long-term use, and meeting QA and data use requirements is necessary.

Minimum criteria for ranking applications include the following:

- Complete application – applications with incomplete or missing information may not be considered.
- Identification of the type and number of pieces of equipment. Cost estimates are very helpful, but EPA understands that final costs will be determined at the time of the agency's purchase. Groups are encouraged to provide a list of equipment in order of priority.
- The group has an EPA or State approved Quality Assurance Project or Program Plan, or indicates the intention of having an approved QAPP by a reasonable deadline.
- A description or map indicating location and number of sample sites for which equipment will be used.
- A description of how the monitoring program will be improved by upgrading protocols, adding protocols, and/or expanding the number of sample sites.
- A statement that indicates there has been agreement with a state or tribal regulatory agency about providing data for reporting under a Clean Water Act or other federal statutory program. The name and phone number of the contact with the agency is required.
- A statement identifying a goal of uploading useable data to EPA's national water quality data system, WQX/STORET, using a web-based approach. EPA will assist uploading the first year's data that is useable for sharing, if the group needs assistance. EPA expects data to be provided in a spreadsheet format (e.g., ACCESS, EXCEL, etc.)
- A statement regarding maintaining equipment in useable condition, and notifying EPA concerning loss or damage.
- A statement concerning the willingness to participate in an event highlighting the equipment loan program and/or World Monitoring Day.

The application must also reflect agreement with additional conditions contained in this announcement

V. CONDITIONS OF EQUIPMENT LOANS

- a. Equipment can be loaned on a long-term basis of up to five years, renewable on an annual basis. After this period, an additional loan or return of equipment may occur.
- b. Applicant agrees to maintain equipment in good working condition.
- c. Equipment will be labeled as belonging to EPA and will remain EPA equipment for the duration of the loan.
- d. The applicant agrees to notify EPA upon loss or damage to the equipment. Damaged equipment may be repaired by EPA or may need to be returned to EPA without replacement, depending upon circumstances.
- e. A loan agreement will be signed by the responsible leader of the organization.
- f. Each group will be required to provide a brief (5 page maximum) annual environmental data report. The report will be due to EPA by April 1st of each year in which the monitoring equipment is on loan.
- g. Each applicant agrees to upload data to EPA's national water quality database, the Water Quality Exchange (WQX), which is a user-friendly web-based system replacing STORET. If not able to upload data, the applicant can provide data in a compatible format to EPA for uploading to WQX. If EPA uploads the data, the group will need to provide metadata and other organizational information as needed.

VI. APPLICATION PROCEDURE & SCHEDULE

An application form is attached to this announcement. Applications should be limited to five pages, including an equipment list and a map of sites (if appropriate).

Once applications are received, an Equipment Loan Application Review Committee will review and make recommendations on selections. EPA will seek input from State agencies regarding selections, if there is no conflict of interest, i.e., if a state program is not an applicant.

Applications will be accepted through close of business **May 8, 2009** with selections to be announced by June 5, 2009. Applications can be submitted through email (preferred) or in hard copy to:

Diane Switzer
EPA New England
11 Technology Drive
North Chelmsford, MA 01863
Email: switzer.diane@epa.gov

For further information, please contact Diane Switzer at 617-918-8377 or switzer.diane@epa.gov, or Katrina Kipp at 617-918-8309 or kipp.katrina@epa.gov

VII. EXAMPLES OF WATER MONITORING EQUIPMENT

These are suggested items, but are not the only items EPA may loan. Prices listed are estimates only.

Item Number	Item Description
1	Yellow Springs Instruments, Professional Plus, \$1500
2	Yellow Springs Instruments, Model pH100, pH Meter, \$350
3	Handheld sonar, \$90
4	HB Instruments EnviroSAFE Thermometer \$7
5	Beta Horizontal Water Sampler, 2.2 liter, \$300
6	Chlorophyll Filtering Kit, \$430
7	Kick Net, \$130 - \$230
8	HOBO base station, equipment & 10 temperature monitors, \$1800+
9	Microscope for phytoplankton ID & enumeration, \$700 - \$1000
10	Barometer, watch style, \$60
11	Sieve bucket, \$100 - \$130
12	Secchi Disk & line, \$75
13	Gravelometer, \$50
14	Kestral Pocket Weather Meter (Wind speed, Temperature, Wind chill) with replacement impeller, \$120
15	Macroinvertebrate Sampling Kit, \$90
16	Forceps, \$1.50
17	D-frame Dip Net, \$70
18	Lufkin 100' Nyclad Steel Tape (feet/inches), \$45
19	Garmin GPS 76CSx Meter with accessories, \$600
20	Wisconsin Net, \$260

*The mention of brand names does not constitute recommendation of a specific company.

**APPLICATION FOR 2009 VOLUNTEER MONITORING
EQUIPMENT LOAN**

1. ***Organization Name, Address, Phone #***

2. ***Name of Person Responsible for Loan
& Contact Information (Phone, Email)***

3. ***Is this a new or existing monitoring organization?***

WATERS TO BE MONITORED

4. ***◇ What is the name of the waterbody and the watershed it is in?
◇ Do sampling locations have latitude/ longitude data determined by GPX?
◇ Attach a map if available.***

5. ***If a new organization, provide a brief description of your organization, and the purpose of generating monitoring data. Are there other monitoring activities in the same waterbody? Are you partnering with other organizations?***

6. ***If an existing organization, provide a brief description of experience and use of monitoring data. What is the purpose of generating monitoring data, and how is it used? Are you partnering with other organizations?***

WATER QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS THAT WILL BE MONITORED

7. ***What parameters will be monitored, and what equipment will be needed through the loan program?***

8. ***How many monitoring stations will be sampled, and at what frequency? Describe where in the water column samples will be collected (e.g., surface, vertical profiles, near-shore or deep water, etc.). Describe where sediment or biological samples will be collected, if applicable.***

9. ***Does the organization have a current Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP)?***
 - ◇ ***If yes, what is the date of EPA or state approval?***
 - ◇ ***If no, is a QAPP going to be written?***

10. ***List the equipment that the organization would like to borrow. Provide the name of equipment sources if known. Be as specific as possible. The total value of equipment borrowed cannot exceed \$2,500.***

EXPECTED USE OF DATA

11. ***What will the organization do with the data?***
 - ◇ ***Will there be an annual data summary available?***
 - ◇ ***Will useable data be uploaded to EPA's national waterbody system, WQX/STORET (EPA will assist with initial uploading as needed)?***
 - ◇ ***Will data quality indicators be available with submitted data?***
 - ◇ ***How will the data be used in the local community and by a state agency?***

12. ***What state agency will be using your data? Provide the name/phone #/email address of your contact with the agency. (EPA will seek concurrence with the state agency that data will be useable and meet their data quality requirements).***

AGREEMENT WITH EQUIPMENT LOAN CONDITIONS

13. ***Who serves as the responsible lead to sign EPA's long-term equipment loan agreement?***
14. ***Does the responsible lead agree to submitting deliverables, including brief progress reports upon request, data summaries upon request, data uploads to the national WQX/STORET system, and a copy of the organization's current approved QAPP?***
15. **Submit the completed application by May 8,2009 by email (preferred) or mail to:**

**Diane I. Switzer
USEPA NERL
11 Technology Drive
North Chelmsford, MA 01863
switzer.diane@epa.gov
Phone: 617-918-8377**