

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Prescott 2009

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NMFS-PRPO-2009-2001461

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.439, Marine Mammal Data Program.

Dates: Proposals must be postmarked or submitted online by 11:59 PM EDT on Wednesday, October 1, 2008.

Funding Opportunity Description: The Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program of the National Marine Fisheries Service is charged under the Marine Mammal Protection Act with facilitating the collection and dissemination of reference data on stranded marine mammals and health trends of marine mammal populations in the wild. Through cooperation with NMFS Regional Coordinators, local organizations and state and local government officials respond to and collect valuable data from stranded marine mammals as participants in the national Marine Mammal Stranding Network. The John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program is conducted by NOAA to provide Federal assistance to eligible members of the Stranding Network to: 1) Support basic needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, 2) fund scientific research objectives designed to answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals, and 3) support facility operations directly related to the recovery or treatment of stranded marine mammals and collection of data from living or dead stranded marine mammals.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act of 2000 amended the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to establish the John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program (16 U.S.C. 1421f-1) (hereafter referred to as the Prescott Grant Program). This document describes how to submit proposals for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2009 under the Prescott Grant Program and how we will determine which proposals will be funded.

The Prescott Grant Program is conducted by the Secretary of Commerce to provide federal assistance to eligible stranding network participants (see section I.E. of this document) for (1) basic needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, (2) scientific research objectives designed to answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals, and (3) facility operations directly related to the recovery, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals and investigation of scientific research objectives designed to answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals. For purposes of this document, a stranded marine mammal is a marine mammal in the wild that is (1) dead and on a beach, shore, or in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States or (2) is live and on a beach or shore of the United States and unable to return to the water, is in apparent need of medical attention, or is in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States but is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power or without assistance. The Prescott Grant Program is administered through the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

In 1992, the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Act amended the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1421) and formalized the MMHSRP. The MMHSRP was established to achieve 3 broad goals: (1) to facilitate the collection and dissemination of reference data on marine mammals and health trends of marine mammal populations in the wild; (2) to correlate the health of marine mammals and marine mammal populations in the wild with available data on physical, chemical, and biological environmental parameters; and (3) to coordinate effective responses to unusual mortality events. To achieve these goals, the MMHSRP (through close coordination with regional stranding networks) has the following objectives: improve the rescue, care and treatment of stranded marine mammals; reduce public health risks during response to and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals; collect life history and biomedical data from live and dead stranded marine mammals; develop baseline reference data on health of wild populations and normal stranding rates and causes;

improve the rapid detection of unusual morbidity and mortality events; collect archival samples for future retrospective studies on causes of mortality or illness and for placement in the National Marine Mammal Tissue (and Serum) Bank and other archival facilities including genetics and genomics; and develop comprehensive and consistent guidance for the rescue and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals, collection of specimens, quality assurance, and analysis of tissue samples.

NMFS has reserved a portion of previous year funds to make emergency assistance available for catastrophic stranding events throughout the FY 2008 funding year on an as-needed basis. These emergency events should fall under one of the three program categories, and one or more national or regional funding priority. This emergency assistance is available to eligible organizations or individuals even though they may already be receiving funds from the Prescott Program's annual competitive award cycle for another project. Responders to such stranding events should contact the NMFS Regional Office that oversees the area of action or the Program Office (Office of Protected Resources, Silver Spring, MD) for further information. Until further guidance is published, those seeking emergency assistance funding should prepare for submission to the Regional Office and the Office of Protected Resources all forms and documentation outlined in Section III, Proposal Instructions and Requirements, of this document.

B. Program Priorities

As a result of comments received from those who submitted proposals in FY 2007 and those who took part in the FY 2007 technical and merit reviews of those proposals, changes to the solicitation and review processes are being instituted in this competition. Therefore, we encourage applicants who submitted a proposal in FY 2008 or previous competitions to read this entire document before preparing a proposal for FY 2009.

For this solicitation, all applications must fall within one of the four following categories: Category A _ Collaborative proposals involving 3 or more stranding network groups and/or associated researchers as Co-Investigators to fulfill regional or national needs in marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation; Category B - Scientific research objectives designed to test hypotheses and answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals; Category C _Basic and enhancement needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, such as facility enhancements and major program changes or initiatives: C1 for new organizations in existence for less than three years and C2 for stranding network facilities that have been in existence for more than 3 years; and Category D - Modifications and/or upgrades to rehabilitation facilities (existing and new) to meet the Interim Rehabilitation Facility Standards and Interim Standards for the Release of Rehabilitated Marine Mammals.

The applicant must select one category in which to place their proposal. Since we recognize that some projects could be designed to meet more than one category, you should determine which category best fits the goals of your proposed project. Proposals submitted in Category B should clearly state the hypothesis to be tested, outline analytical and statistical techniques chosen and address sample size and predicted power.

For each of the proposal Categories the MMHSRP has identified multiple national-level funding priorities. These Program priorities pertain only to species that the MMPA provides are under the authority of the Department of Commerce (cetaceans and pinnipeds, except walrus). No FY2009 Prescott funds will go towards basic scientific research on non-stranded marine mammals (i.e., wild population studies). In addition, no projects involving construction of brand new buildings or facilities for the rescue and rehabilitation of stranded marine mammals will be considered; however, construction projects in established facilities (i.e., those that involve build-outs, alterations, upgrades and renovations to existing spaces) would be appropriate as part of a Category C or D project.

In addition to the four proposal categories and their related National funding priorities, Regional funding priorities have been identified under each category. Each NMFS Region has separately identified these funding priorities that will improve the capabilities of their regional stranding network in achieving the goals of the Prescott Program in the 2009 competitive cycle, in addition to the national priorities. These priorities may be different from previous competitions. The overarching Program goals and regional funding priorities are designed to adapt to changing needs in the marine mammal stranding network and will be re-evaluated by MMHSRP staff and NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinators annually prior to each competition.

The priorities are not listed in any particular order and each is of equal importance, whether national and regional. Note that the purpose of the priority list is to guide applicants in application development by identifying those applications that will best compete during this grant cycle for these limited funds, and to provide technical reviewers with guidance for their evaluations. Details of the four categories (with the 2 subcategories) and the national and regional funding priorities are as follows:

Category A _ Collaborative proposals involving 3 or more stranding network groups and/or associated researchers as Co-Investigators to fulfill regional or national needs in marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation.

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Regional or ocean basin collaboration to standardize and analyze samples for diagnostic services for specific retrospective or prospective disease or agent analyses using standardized protocols and appropriate quality assurance and validation.
- b. Collaborative marine mammal stranding response (e.g., large whales, mass strandings, etc.) throughout a stranding region, ecoregions, and/or across ocean basins.
- c. Analyze current and/or previously collected tracking and sighting data to assess

- post-release success of rehabilitated animals (e.g., foraging, breeding records, behavior, etc.) utilizing data from multiple facilities to increase sample size.
- d. Intraregional, cross regional, and/or multi-disciplinary training for conservation medicine, stranding response, rehabilitation practices, disease detection, emergency response, and other health and stranding related issues.

2. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

a. Alaska Region

- i. Foster a collaborative program working with fishermen to investigate gear modifications and alternative fishing practices that will reduce marine debris, bycatch of marine mammals, and marine mammal entanglements.
- ii. Analyze and publish data related to historical Alaska marine mammal strandings and health.

b. Northeast Region

- i. Collaborative development of region-wide Incident Command System (ICS) structure for large scale emergency events such as oil/hazardous material spills and multi-agency response to mass strandings.
- ii. Collaborative analyses of historical, current, and/or future infectious disease samples and data.
- iii. Collaborative genetic analyses for large whale individual identification
- iv. Enhancement for data analysis and (collaborative) publications for strandings in the Northeast Region.

c. Northwest Region

- i. No additional regional priorities

d. Pacific Islands Region

- i. No additional regional priorities

e. Southeast Region

- i. Collaborative proposals to provide large whale response capabilities in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. These could include, but are not limited to: drugs and equipment for euthanasia; retrieving large whale carcasses (e.g., towing to shore); equipment for thorough necropsies and disposal of carcasses; and providing training opportunities for future Necropsy Team Leaders in the Southeast Region.
- ii. Providing tags and post-release monitoring/tracking of injured, stranded, and/or released marine mammals throughout the Southeast Region, as well as providing general summary information once tracking is complete.
- iii. Collaborative proposals to provide necropsy training for stranding organizations in the Southeast Region.
- iv. Enhance assessment of marine mammal ship strike injuries to determine vessel parameters (e.g., estimated vessel type, size, speed, and direction of

travel)

f. Southwest Region

- i. Collaborative response to large whale strandings to determine cause of death, especially from anthropogenic causes.
- ii. Collaboration amongst rehabilitation facilities for long-term tracking of released pinnipeds to determine survivability success, especially domoic acid-affected animals.
- iii. Collaborative training needs to achieve the above objectives.

Category B - Fund scientific research objectives designed to test hypotheses and answer questions about marine mammal strandings, health, or rehabilitation techniques utilizing data from living and dead stranded marine mammals.

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Collect and analyze specimens and/or data (using quality control procedures) from stranded marine mammals to retrospectively or prospectively assess health trends in wild populations of cetaceans and pinnipeds, with emphasis on infectious (i.e., zoonotic, epidemic) and non-infectious (i.e., biotoxins, nutritional, anthropogenic contaminants, trauma) diseases.
- b. Collect and analyze samples and/or data for baseline information, trends and correlations between population demographics, life history, movement and distribution, diet, health, pathogens, and environmental parameters (physical, biological and chemical).
- c. Develop or use developed tools to assess auditory capabilities of stranded marine mammals (e.g., baseline sensory capabilities) and investigate potential effects of age, natural factors, ototoxic drugs, and other anthropogenic impacts on marine mammal auditory capabilities.
- d. Enhance the capability to assess anthropogenic sound-related impacts on stranded marine mammals, both in the field and in the laboratory, including development of protocols for the detection of these injuries relative to other potential causative factors.

3. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

a. Alaska Region

- i. Test hypotheses regarding the survival of Northern fur seals, or other Alaskan marine mammals, entangled in different types and sizes of marine debris.
- ii. Test hypotheses regarding the short- and long-term effectiveness of disentanglement efforts for Northern fur seals or other marine mammals.
- iii. Collect and analyze data from stranded Alaskan cetaceans and pinnipeds to investigate hypotheses related to exposure to disease, acoustic trauma, or pollutants.

b. Northeast Region

- i. Enhance assessment of marine mammal ship strike injuries to determine vessel parameters (e.g., estimated vessel type, size, speed, and direction of travel).
 - ii. Enhance ability to assess the short- and long-term effects and outcomes of stranding response, human interaction, and rehabilitation on marine mammals in the Northeast Region.
 - iii. Enhance our understanding of marine mammals as a reservoir of infectious diseases by collecting and analyzing data from stranded marine mammals.
- c. Northwest Region
 - i. Collect and analyze specialized data from stranded killer whales to investigate contaminant burdens, health parameters, prey types, diseases, and immune and reproductive functions.
 - ii. Collect and analyze data from marine mammals released from rehabilitation to investigate post-release survival success and health status.
- d. Pacific Islands Region
 - i. No additional regional priorities
- e. Southeast Region
 - i. Develop or use developed tools to assess auditory capabilities of stranded marine mammals (e.g., baseline sensory capabilities) and investigate potential effects of age, natural factors, ototoxic drugs, and other anthropogenic impacts on marine mammals.
 - ii. Analyze life history tissues, particularly from mass stranding events or Unusual Mortality Events.
 - iii. Investigate anthropogenic impacts to marine mammals, with an emphasis on collecting and analyzing biological data to better understand the nature of human-caused injuries/mortalities (e.g., entanglements, hooking and gear interaction, and vessel strikes).
 - iv. Enhance cooperative research that investigates causes for, and increases understanding of, pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*) stranding events.
 - v. Enhance assessment of marine mammal ship strike injuries to determine vessel parameters (e.g., estimated vessel type, size, speed, and direction of travel) (preference will be given to this work submitted as a collaborative proposal-see Category A above)
- f. Southwest Region
 - i. Collect specimens from live and dead strandings to detect health trends in local populations and determine baseline levels.
 - ii. Collect specimens from live and dead strandings to determine cause of death, especially from anthropogenic factors.
 - iii. Training needs and the development of protocols to achieve the above objectives.
 - iv. Analysis of DNA from stranded Northern fur seals to assess stock status (Pribilof Islands versus San Miguel Island).
 - v. Develop and validate tools or methods for assessing releasability of marine

mammals with biotoxigenesis due to domoic acid.

Category C _ Support basic and enhancement needs of organizations for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals, such as facility enhancements and major program changes or initiatives.

C1. Further development of new organizations (those in existence for less than 3 years) for response, treatment, and data collection from living and dead stranded marine mammals in geographic areas where there has historically been no pre-existing coverage.

NOTE: All organizations applying under Category A should be authorized to conduct stranding network activities as of the date of application, either through a Stranding Agreement or official designee status from the applicable NMFS Region, or under MMPA Section 109(h) authority. The eligibility letter from the NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinator should explicitly state that your organization is authorized and is in an area with no pre-existing coverage.

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Foster the development of stranding network operations, those in existence for less than 3 years, in those areas where none currently exist, to enable collection of Level A data from a majority of stranded animals.
- b. Foster the creation of new marine mammal rehabilitation facilities, in those areas where none currently exist, to respond to, rescue, transport, rehabilitate, treat, and release or humanely euthanize, when necessary, live stranded marine mammals that are sick or injured.
- c. Assist those stranding network members that are not currently authorized to rehabilitate marine mammals, but are in an area of geographic need for rehabilitation, to expand their program into live animal rehabilitation.
- d. Train new responders to improve consistency and quality of assessments, documentation, and data management for live and dead stranded marine mammals.

4. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

- a. Alaska Region
 - i. Enhance response, sampling, and necropsy capacity in Western and Northern Alaska.
- b. Northeast Region
 - i. Enhance rehabilitation capacity for cetaceans in areas with low or intermittent coverage, including states Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey.
- c. Northwest Region

- i. Develop capability for response and Level A data collection in areas with low or intermittent coverage.
 - ii. Secure basic infrastructure (facilities, equipment, supplies, administrative support) to support a sustainable response level for investigation of marine mammal stranding events.
- d. Pacific Islands Region
 - i. Build capacity for stranding response for each island in the Main Hawaiian Island chain, excluding Oahu, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.
- e. Southeast Region
 - i. Enhance rehabilitation capacity for cetaceans in areas with low or intermittent coverage, including eastern Florida, Texas, and/or Louisiana
 - ii. Address gaps in stranding response coverage, capability, Level A data collection (live and/or dead), and increase the number of necropsies conducted in the following geographic areas where there is little or no coverage: Florida (Wakulla County through Pasco County), and/or South Carolina (entire coastline).
 - iii. Assist developing facilities to enhance existing coverage in Florida (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, and Franklin counties), Alabama, Louisiana, northern North Carolina, and/or the Caribbean.
- f. Southwest Region
 - i. Enhance response to dead stranded cetaceans in Mendocino County.

C2 _ All other stranding network facilities (i.e., those that have been in existence for greater than 3 years)

1. National Funding Priorities

- a. Enhance the quality, consistency, quantity, reporting, and sharing of Level A, B, and C data collected from stranded marine mammals, including: complete diagnostic screening on stranded animals; equipment necessary to collect samples and perform analyses; and detection and reporting of emerging diseases.
- b. Enhance attendance and participation by professional staff and facility volunteers in training, particularly in the areas of ICS, public health, marine mammal disease and treatment issues, veterinary care, and to improve consistency and quality of assessments.
- c. Enhance outreach and education by developing materials and messages for both the network and the general public regarding stranding response and rehabilitation, particularly those that convey the more challenging aspects and limitations (e.g., humane euthanasia, natural selection, resource limitations, etc.).
- d. Improve capacity for response to mass strandings, hazardous material spills, Unusual Mortality Events, natural disasters, out-of-habitat situations, and other events impacting multiple animals, including live animal triage, treatment, short-

and long-term care, and thorough necropsy and sample analysis of dead or euthanized animals.

- e. Analyze current and/or previously-collected tracking and sighting data to assess post-release success of rehabilitated animals (foraging, breeding records, behavior, etc.). Develop criteria for post-release monitoring (e.g., determining how to best monitor coastal vs. offshore species, determining tagging priorities based on limited number of tags etc.).
- f. Collaborative marine mammal stranding response (e.g., large whales, mass strandings, etc.) throughout a stranding region, ecoregions, and/or across ocean basins.

5. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

a. Alaska Region

- i. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough large whale necropsies and diagnostics, including recovery of floating carcasses, gear caches, sampling protocols, and skeletal salvage and curation.
- ii. Collect and analyze data from stranded cetaceans to investigate overall health parameters, prey types, diseases, and immune and reproductive functions.

b. Northeast Region

- i. Enhance large whale stranding response to include equipment and resources for at-sea investigation, recovery of floating carcasses, necropsy, genetic analysis, sampling, skeletal salvage, and disposal.
- ii. Enhance resources for routine surveillance of infectious diseases in rehabilitated animals.
- iii. Organizational enhancement for marine mammal stranding data management and data quality assurance protocols.
- iv. Enhance rehabilitation capacity for cetaceans in areas with low or intermittent coverage, including states Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey.
- v. Enhance capability and capacity for storing and archiving samples in conditions that ensure sample stability (i.e., ultra low freezer)

c. Northwest Region

- i. Secure basic infrastructure (facilities, equipment, supplies, administrative support) to support a sustainable response level for investigation of marine mammal stranding events.
- ii. Broaden capabilities to perform thorough necropsies and diagnostics on unusual stranded marine mammal species and to perform thorough necropsies on dead specimens in good condition rapidly prior to degradation.
- iii. Develop capability for handling, stabilization, or treatment of live stranded odontocetes.
- iv. Collect and analyze data from marine mammals released from rehabilitation to

- investigate post-release survival success and health status.
 - v. Enhance sample collection from stranded killer whales and/or harbor porpoise to support taxonomic and stock identification research in progress
 - vi. Develop protocols for the disposal of dead marine mammals that carry contaminant burdens based on current knowledge of contaminant levels and requirements for disposal of contaminated materials.
- d. Pacific Islands Region
- i. Increasing quality of care, including veterinary care, data collection, and necropsies during stranding events in the Main Hawaiian Islands.
Organization of outreach and training in the Main Hawaiian Islands for response, readiness, and treatment of stranded marine mammals.
 - ii. Increasing quality of care, including veterinary care, data collection, and necropsies during stranding events in the other U.S. Pacific Islands.
Organization of outreach and training in the U.S. Pacific Islands (e.g., Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands) for response, readiness, and treatment of stranded marine mammals.
 - iii. Improving responses to reports of ship strikes for verification and assessment and retrieving (including towing) and disposing of large whale carcasses for necropsy and for forensic investigation.
 - iv. Improving access to veterinary care of stranded marine mammals, including facility improvements, on-site (laboratory or field) equipment, instruments for more rapid assessment of medical condition, and instruments for monitoring of treatment response.
 - v. Enhancement of facilities to maintain and operate small cetacean rehabilitation and holding.
- e. Southeast Region
- i. Organize, sponsor, and host the Marine Mammal Stranding Network Workshop for the Southeast Region.
 - ii. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough necropsies on dead stranded marine mammals in good condition rapidly prior to degradation- particularly during mass stranding events, large whale stranding events, and Unusual Mortality Events. Enhance capabilities to perform thorough diagnostics on stranded marine mammals. Enhance or upgrades for permanent and/or mobile necropsy facilities. This includes staging equipment caches for small and large cetaceans throughout the Southeast Region.
 - iii. Provide necropsy training for stranding organizations in the Southeast Region.
- f. Southwest Region
- i. Enhancing the quality and consistency of data collected and reported from stranded marine mammals (i.e., standardized necropsy examinations and reports, standardized sample analyses)
 - ii. Enhancing the training of staff and volunteers for response, treatment, and data collection.
 - iii. Enhancing outreach programs and education opportunities for staff and

- volunteers.
- iv. Enhancing large whale stranding response and necropsy.
- v. Enhancing large whale disentanglement activities.
- vi. Enhancing response to fresh dead pinnipeds in southern California in order to assess shooting mortality and other potential causes of death.

Category D - Support needed modifications and/or upgrades to rehabilitation facilities (existing and new) to meet the _Best Practices_- Interim Rehabilitation Facility Standards (available on the Internet at:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/health/rehab_facilities.pdf) and Interim Standards for the Release of Rehabilitated Marine Mammals (available on the Internet at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/health/release_guidelines.pdf).

1. National Priorities

- a. Enhance capability to: meet minimum animal spacing requirements; construct quarantine enclosures; improve record keeping; and enhance the ability to comply with all other facets contained in the Interim Rehabilitation Facility Standards.
 - i. Develop standard operating procedures and protocols for treatment and rehabilitation and health certification to meet the Interim Rehabilitation Facility Standards and Interim Standards for Release of Rehabilitated Marine Mammals
- b. Enhancing diagnostics, testing, and husbandry and veterinary practices to reduce the risk of new or altered diseases into the wild
- c. Enhancing physical plant capabilities to increase the quality of care and diagnostics (e.g., ultra-cold freezers for sample storage and archiving)
- d. Develop standard operating procedures and protocols for ensuring human safety
- e. Develop training for rehabilitation practices to meet the Interim Rehabilitation Facility Standards

2. Regional Funding Priorities - In addition to the above national priorities, each region has identified the following priorities of particular interest:

- a. Alaska Region
 - i. No additional regional priorities
- b. Northeast Region
 - i. No additional regional priorities
- c. Northwest Region
 - i. No additional regional priorities
- d. Pacific Islands Region
 - i. No additional regional priorities
- e. Southeast Region

- i. No additional regional priorities
- f. Southwest Region
 - i. No additional regional priorities

C. Program Authority

16 USC 1421 f-1

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that approximately \$4M may be available for distribution under the FY 2009 annual competitive Prescott Program. Actual funding availability for this program is contingent upon Fiscal Year 2009 Congressional appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that these funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and therefore exact dollar amounts cannot be given. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The maximum Federal award for each grant cannot exceed \$100,000, as stated in the legislative language (16 U.S.C. 1421f-1).

Funds will be set aside from the annual appropriation to provide for emergency assistance awards to eligible stranding network participants. These emergency funds will be available until expended.

There is no limit on the number of proposals that can be submitted by the same stranding network participant during the 2009 competitive grant cycle. However, since there are insufficient funds to award financial assistance to every member of the network, organizations will receive no more than two awards per year as part of the competitive program. The two awards must be for projects that are clearly separate in their objectives, goals, and budget requests and must be successful in the competitive review process. The two projects should be completely independent (i.e., you will be able to carry out either proposal even if the other does not receive funding). In addition, eligible researchers applying as Principal Investigators, but not independently authorized under the MMPA Section 112(c), the MMPA Section 109(h) (50 CFR 216.22), or the National Contingency Plan for Response to Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Events, can receive no more than one award per year as part of the competitive cycle.

Authorized stranding network participants and researchers may be identified as Co-Investigators or collaborators on as many proposals as needed as long as no more than 100 percent of their time is funded through the Prescott Program. In addition, Department of Commerce (DOC) and Department of Interior (DOI)

employees may act as collaborators if they are responsible for performing analyses on data or samples collected under a Prescott award. See section I.F. for Eligibility requirements.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If an application for a financial assistance award is selected for funding, NOAA/NMFS has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years beyond the award period.

If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Notwithstanding any verbal or written assurance that applicants have received, pre-award costs are not allowed under the award unless the Grants Officer approves them in accordance with 15 CFR 14.28.

B. Project/Award Period

This solicitation announces that approximately \$4M may be available for distribution under the FY 2009 competitive program. Prescott awards may have a maximum project period of 3 years, but the total Federal award share cannot exceed \$100,000 regardless of the length of the project period. We will not accept proposals requesting incrementally funded projects exceeding \$100,000.

If an applicant wishes to continue work on a project funded through this program beyond the approved award period and obligated award funds have not been expended by the end of this period, the applicant can notify the assigned Federal Program Officer 30 or more days prior to the end of the period to determine eligibility for a no-cost extension. If, however, the money is expended and funds are needed to continue the project, the applicant should submit another proposal during the next competitive award cycle (FY 2009) or seek an alternate source of funding.

If a proposal is selected for funding, we have no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Under this solicitation, NOAA will fund Prescott grants or cooperative agreements as a maximum of a \$100,000 award, with a maximum project period of 3 years.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

There are three categories of eligible stranding network participants that may apply for funds under this Program: 1) Stranding Agreement (SA) holders or their designee organizations; 2) holders of researcher authorization letters issued by a NMFS Regional Administrator; and, 3) state, local, eligible federal government or tribal employees or personnel.

All applicants must currently be:

1. Active as an authorized participant or researcher in the marine mammal stranding network;
2. In good standing and;
3. Not a current full or part-time employee or contractor of DOC or DOI.

To be "in good standing", you must meet all of the following criteria:

1. If a the applicant is a designated Principal Investigator of an MMPA or Endangered Species Act (ESA) scientific research or enhancement permit holder, the applicant must have fulfilled all permit requirements, including but not limited to submission of all reports, and must have no pending or outstanding enforcement actions under the MMPA or ESA.
2. Have complied with the terms and responsibilities of the appropriate SA, MMPA Section 109(h) authorization, or researcher authorization letter. This includes, but is not limited to, the following reporting requirements: a) timely reporting of strandings to NMFS; b) timely submission of complete reports on basic or Level A data to the Regional Coordinator (includes investigator_s name, species, stranding location, number of animals, date and time of stranding and recovery, length and condition, and sex; marine mammal parts retention or transfer; annual reports); and c) collecting information or samples as necessary and as requested. This also includes the following coordination/cooperation requirements: a) cooperation with state, local, and Federal officials; b) cooperation with state and local officials in the disposition of stranded marine mammals; and c) cooperation with other stranding network participants.
3. Have cooperated in a timely manner with NMFS in collecting and submitting Level B (supplementary information regarding sample collection related to life history and to the stranding event) and Level C (necropsy results) data and samples, when requested.
4. Have no current enforcement investigation for the take of marine mammals contrary to the MMPA/ESA regulations.
5. Have no record of a pending NMFS notice of violation(s) regarding the policies governing the goals and operations of the Stranding Network and Stranding Agreement, if applicable (e.g., probation, suspension, or termination).

In addition to these general criteria, organizations and individuals must meet the following eligibility criteria specific to their category of participation:

1. SA Holder Participant or SA Designee Participant

SA participants must be holding a current (active) SA for stranding response (either live or dead animal response) or rehabilitation from a NMFS Regional Administrator or the Assistant Administrator. SA Designee participants must be holding a current (active) letter of designation from a NMFS SA holder, and designees cannot request authorization for activities beyond the scope of what is authorized by the SA to the letterholder.

2. Researcher Participant

Researcher participants must be holding a current (active) authorizing letter for the proposed award period from the NMFS Regional Administrator or the Assistant Administrator to salvage stranded marine mammal specimens and parts or samples therefrom for the purpose of utilization in scientific research (50 CFR 216.22).

Persons authorized to salvage dead marine mammal specimens under this section must register the salvage with the appropriate NMFS Regional Office within 30 days after the taking occurs.

Researchers who are authorized under an MMPA/ESA Scientific Research Permit must still obtain an authorizing letter from the Regional Stranding Coordinator in order to use parts or specimens from stranded animals. Researcher participants that would not require an authorizing letter from the NMFS Regional Administrator (i.e., they will be working with data only and not possessing samples or specimens) must still provide a letter of eligibility from the Regional Stranding Coordinator (see IV.B.8). Researcher participants must also have designated Co-Investigator(s) that are active NMFS authorized stranding network participants in good standing, and provide documentation to this effect.

3. State, Local, Federal Government Employees or Tribal Participants

State and local government officials or employees participating pursuant to MMPA Section 109(h) (16 U.S.C. 1379(h)) for marine mammal species not listed under the ESA fulfilling reporting obligations outlined in 50 CFR 216.22 (i.e., submission of written report to NMFS every six months containing description of animal(s) involved, circumstances of taking, method of taking, name and position of official or employee involved, and disposition of animal(s)). Government officials must be involved in areas of geographic need (i.e., municipality or larger region with no existing SA holder responder).

Applicants must submit the required documentation in their proposal (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information) as evidence that they are an SA holder or designee participant, researcher participant, or a state, local, or Federal government employee, or tribal participant at the time of the submission and during the award period. All eligibility criteria specified for the participant's category must be met in order for a proposal to be considered for funding.

We support cultural and gender diversity in our programs and encourage eligible women and minority individuals and groups to submit proposals. Furthermore, we recognize the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate marine management policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas, so we also encourage proposals from eligible individuals,

government entities, universities, colleges, and businesses in U.S. insular areas as defined by the MMPA (Section 3(14), 16 U.S.C. 1362). This includes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

We are strongly committed to broadening the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), which include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas in our programs. The DOC/NOAA/NMFS vision, mission, and goals are to achieve full participation by MSIs, to advance the development of human potential, strengthen the Nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and increase opportunities for MSIs to participate in and benefit from Federal financial assistance programs. Therefore, Prescott Grant Program encourages all eligible applicants to include meaningful participation of MSIs whenever practicable.

Applicants are not eligible to submit a proposal under this program if they are an employee of the DOC or DOI. NOAA/NMFS employees (whether full-time, part-time, or intermittent) are not allowed to help in the preparation of proposals, except for providing information on data or sample analyses as an identified collaborator/Co-Investigator in the proposal. Since this is a competitive program, NMFS and NOAA employees cannot provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for any proposal. However, for activities that involve collaboration with current NOAA programs that include, but are not limited to, the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank (NMMTB) or laboratories conducting analysis of tissues for contaminants, employees of NOAA or the National Institute of Standards and Technology can write a letter verifying that they are collaborating with the project, or that the organization or individual applying is trained to participate in the NMMTB or is currently participating in the National Marine Analytical Quality Assurance Program. In addition, proposals encompassing activities conducted under the authority of a MMPA Scientific Research Permit issued to a DOC or DOI organization (e.g., NMFS Regional Science Center) should include a copy of the permit and a letter from the Principal Investigator (DOC/DOI employee) verifying that the work is being conducted with their approval. Federal employee travel costs or salaries are not allowable costs under this program. MMHSRP staff (at the regional and national level) are available to provide information regarding statistics on strandings, MMHSRP programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing marine mammal programs, regional funding priorities for the current and previous Prescott solicitations, and, along with other Federal Program Officers, can provide guidance on application procedures and proper completion of required forms.

Unsatisfactory performance under prior or current Federal awards, including delinquency in submitting progress and financial reports, may result in proposals not being considered for funding under the 2009 Prescott Grant Program.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

All proposals submitted must provide a minimum non-Federal cost share of 25 percent of the total budget (i.e., $.25 \times$ total project costs = total non-Federal share). Therefore, the total Federal share will be 75 percent or less of the total budget. For a proposed total Federal share of \$100,000, the minimum non-Federal share is \$33,334 (total budget of \$133,334; $.25 \times$ \$133,334 = \$33,334). For a proposed total Federal share of \$80,000, the minimum non-Federal share is \$26,667 (total budget of \$106,667; $.25 \times$ \$106,667 = \$26,667). Cost share must be an integer, so please round up. The applicant can include a non-Federal cost share for more than 25 percent of the total budget, but this obligation will be binding. In order to reduce calculation error in determining the correct cost share amounts, we urge all applicants to use the cost share calculator on the Prescott Program webpage (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/proposals/costshare.htm>).

Legislation under which the Prescott Program operates requires this cost sharing, or non-Federal match, in order to leverage the limited funds available for this program and to encourage partnerships among government, private organizations, non-profit organizations, the stranding network, and academia to address the needs of marine mammal health and stranding response. If a proposal does not comply with these cost share requirements, it will not be returned and considered in this annual funding cycle. Pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a, match may be waived for applicants that are residents in the U.S. insular areas (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U. S. Virgin Islands).

The Federal Program Officer will determine the appropriateness of all non-Federal cost sharing proposals, including the valuation of in-kind contributions, according to the regulations codified at 15 CFR 14.23 and 24.24. An in-kind contribution is a non-cash contribution, donated or loaned, by a third party to the applicant. In general, the value of in-kind services or property used to fulfill a non-Federal cost share will be the fair market value of the services or property. Thus, the value is determined by the cost of obtaining such services or property if they had not been donated, or of obtaining such services or property for the period of the loan. The applicant must document the in-kind services or property used to fulfill the non-Federal cost share. If we decide to fund a proposal, we will require strict accounting of the in-kind contributions within the total non-Federal cost share included in the award document. The Grants Officer (i.e., the DOC official responsible for all business management and administrative aspects of a grant and with delegated authority to award, amend, administer, close out, suspend, and/or terminate awards) is the final approving authority for the award, including the budget and any cost-sharing proposals.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

1. Proof of Eligibility

In order to be considered for an award in this funding cycle, the applicant must provide proof of eligibility documents. This proof of eligibility will be a letter

or e-mail from the Regional Stranding Coordinator (or NMFS Regional Office) that states that you are an eligible stranding network participant or researcher, in good standing, that has a history of participation in or with the stranding network or that your organization is from a local area with no pre-existing stranding response and/or rehabilitation capabilities. As of this competition, providing a copy of your SA or research authorization will not be considered proof of eligibility. Any proposal that does not provide a letter from the Regional Stranding Coordinator will not be considered eligible, and will not be considered for further review. Contact information for the Regional Stranding Coordinators to request this letter is available on our website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/coordinators.htm> or you may contact the Program Office at the address in the Agency Contacts, Section VII.

2. Permits and Approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals. In order to determine whether such permits and approvals have been obtained or requested, the applicant must include in the proposal package either: 1) an application cover letter from the Prescott applicant to the appropriate authorizing entity requesting permits (e.g., MMPA scientific research/enhancement permit, etc.) or approvals, or 2) a copy of the cover letter of the final permit or approval. The applicant must be able to provide the entire permit or approval if so requested by the Prescott Program.

If the activities proposed fall under the jurisdiction of a facility's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), the applicant must have requested or obtained approval from the IACUC prior to applying for funding under this program (as required by the regulations under the Animal Welfare Act, 9 CFR 2.30-2.31). If the proposed data collection involves intrusive research (50 CFR 216.27(c)(6)) or if animals must be held after rehabilitation has been completed (prevented from release), the applicant must also obtain a MMPA/ESA scientific research and enhancement permit before the proposal will be considered for funding. Intrusive research is defined under 50 CFR 216.3 as a procedure that involves: a break in or cutting of the skin or equivalent, insertion of an instrument or material into an orifice, introduction of a substance or object into the animals' immediate environment that is likely either to be ingested or to contact and directly affect animal tissues (i.e., chemical substances), or a stimulus directed at animals that poses a risk to the health or welfare of the animal or has the potential to impact normal function or behavior (e.g., audio broadcasts directed at animals that potentially affects behavior, brainstem auditory evoked responses, etc.).

If proposed activities will take place within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, State Parks, and other federally or state-designated protected areas, it is the applicant's responsibility to request and obtain from the appropriate government agencies any necessary federal, state, or local permits or letters of agreement for conducting the proposed activities.

Activities directly related to the individual animal's health assessment, standard diagnostics, treatment, approved post-release monitoring, or release are separately authorized by NMFS under the authorizations for stranding network participants (SAs) and therefore these activities do not require an additional permit.

For further information on permit requirements and applications procedures for federal natural resource permits, contact the NMFS Office of Protected Resources (see Section VII, Agency Contact(s)) or see the following website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/>. You may also use the pre-application guide located at: <http://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/> to help determine if your work will require additional permits or approvals.

For proposals involving construction projects (i.e., facility upgrades), it is the applicant's responsibility to request or obtain all building, water quality, air quality, wetland or other necessary permits and include documentation of such requests or approvals in the proposal package. Documentation must, to the extent possible, include environmental information that has been or will be submitted to the appropriate Federal, state, and local government offices (see Section IV, Application and Submission Information, for required information for each proposal category). These documents will help the Prescott Program in determining the potential for environmentally significant activities and ensure NMFS compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

All applications for funding NMFA/ESA science research and data under the permits will be required prior to award of funds if the proposal is selected for funding and the applicant has not yet obtained the permit. Failure to obtain other Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental assessments or documentation) will also delay the award of funds.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

This solicitation, complete proposal packages (including required federal forms) with instructions, a cost share calculator and address for application submission are available on the NMFS Prescott Program website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/>

Required forms differ based on the type of proposal. Non-construction proposals require the SF-424A and SF-424B. Construction proposals (those with 50 percent or more of their requested federal amount going to construction activities) require the federal forms for construction (i.e., SF-424D and SF-424C). The required forms are as follows:

Forms required of all proposals:

Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 NOTE: without an SF-424, an application is not considered complete and will not be considered for further review
Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters:
Drug Free Workplace Environment: CD-511

For projects not involving construction:

Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs - SF-424A

Assurances - Non-Construction Programs: SF-424B

For projects with 50 percent or more of their requested federal amount going to construction activities such as build-outs, alterations, upgrades, and renovations to existing facilities:

Budget Information - Construction Programs: SF-424C

Assurances - Construction Programs: SF-424D

Depending on the applicant, the following forms may also be required:

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)

Name Check: CD-346 (Required for the following applicants- Sole Proprietorship, Partnerships, Corporations, Joint Venture, Non-profit Organizations)

NOTE: The CD-346 Name Check form is not available through grants.gov. It may be obtained from this website: <http://www.osec.doc.gov/forms/pdf/cd346fll.pdf>

If required, please complete it, scan it and attach it to your proposal.

If forms cannot be downloaded contact Angela Payne, NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring MD 20912, 301 713-2322, or by email: angela.payne@noaa.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements by the deadline of 11:59 PM, EST, Wednesday, October 1, 2008, for proposal submission. The instructions in this document are designed to help applicants in preparing and submitting an application for Federal funding under the Prescott Grant Program. Assistance in filling out required forms and avoiding common problems can be found on the NOAA Grants website at: <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/>. The Prescott Grant Program website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/> has supplemental instructions for completing all Federal forms and the budget narrative, and questions and answers related to applying for funds under the Prescott Grant Program.

Proposals should be submitted online through the Grants.gov website. If you encounter a problem and cannot submit your proposal electronically, one signed original and two signed paper copies of the complete proposal package may be submitted. The original proposal and copies should not be bound in any manner and must be printed on one side only. Proposals must be in 10-point font and double-spaced with 1 inch margins. In addition, if you submit a paper application, applicants should submit an electronic copy, on diskette or CD, of the narrative project description. The required unbound original and two copies, and the optional electronic copy must be sent to the address listed in section IV.E. of this document and postmarked by the submission deadline in order to be considered in the 2009

competition.

Applicants must choose and identify one category and the specific research priority or priorities within that category to which the proposal is responding. If the proposal addresses more than one priority, it should list first on the application the priority that most closely reflects the objective of the proposals. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the Prescott Grant Program or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Description may not exceed 10 pages for each proposal. Appendices may be included but must not exceed a total of 15 pages in length. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limitation. Additional informational material will be disregarded. Proposals must include the following information:

1. Cover Sheet: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Forms 424 and 424B (4-92) or 424D must be the cover sheets for each proposal. To complete item 10 of Standard Form 424, the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance" number is 11.439, and the title is "Marine Mammal Data Program." For item 13 of Standard Form 424, a start date no earlier than 1 June 2008 should be selected. For item 16, the Congressional district of the applicant (a) is the district which contains the mailing address of the applicant (item 8). The Congressional district of the project (16 b) includes all districts where activities will be conducted. Maps of Congressional districts are available here: <http://nationalatlas.gov/printable/congress.html>

2. Total project costs and budget narrative: Total project costs are the amount of funds required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description and include contributions and donations. Each proposal must include clear and concise budget information on the required federal forms and in narrative detail.

Proposals requesting a federal amount that does not include construction activities or in which construction activities are less than 50 percent of the total federal amount must use OMB standard form 424A, "Budget Information - Non Construction Programs" and associated form instructions. Proposals that include a requested federal amount for construction activities that is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the total federal amount requested must use OMB standard form 424C "Budget Information - Construction Programs" and associated form instructions. Construction forms may not be available through <http://www.grants.gov>; if so, you must submit the non-construction form and attach a copy of the completed construction form along with your budget narrative.

All instructions should be read before completing the appropriate form. Both Federal and non-Federal columns on these forms must be filled in completely and separately and the amounts per category and total amounts must correspond with the budget narrative and justification.

On a separate sheet, describe and justify in narrative detail and in spreadsheet form the itemized costs per category between Federal and non-Federal shares and the

corresponding direct and indirect cost totals. For the non-Federal share, the itemized costs in the budget narrative and spreadsheet should be separated into cash and in-kind contributions. If in-kind contributions are included, describe briefly the basis for estimating the value of these contributions.

If the applicant currently has a negotiated indirect cost rate with the Federal government, indirect costs can be included in the budget. Indirect costs are overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. Indirect costs can be included in both the Federal and non-Federal cost shares as long as the method of calculation is clear and certain rules are followed. However, the Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs for this Program. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount above the 25 percent level as match. If indirect costs are included, the package should include a copy of the current, approved, negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal government (see Section IV.D.2). This copy will not be included in the page limit requirements. If the applicant does not currently have a negotiated indirect cost rate with the Federal government, indirect costs may not be included in the budget. You may itemize these costs as direct costs (e.g., electric bills, rent, cell phone service, water, insurance).

Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. NOAA strongly encourages applicants to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure that your proposal is competitive. Funds for travel to professional meetings and conferences are allowable; however we encourage applicants to present at meetings when possible, rather than solely attending them.

We will not consider fees, fundraising activities, travel for federal employees, salaries for federal employees, or profits as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs you incur, including the value of in-kind contributions, in accomplishing project activities during the project period. A project begins on the effective date of an award agreement between you and the Grants Officer and ends on the date specified in the award. Accordingly, we cannot reimburse applicants for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or preparing the application, or in any discussions or negotiations with us prior to the award. We will not accept such expenditures as part of your cost share.

3. Title Page (1 page limit): A Title Page must be included for each project. The Title Page must list the project title, project duration (with a start date no earlier than 1 June 2009), applicant name, name of Principal Investigator or Contact, address and phone number of the Principal Investigator or Contact, the Prescott Grant Program Category under which the project fits (see Section I.B. of this document), the project's objective(s), and a statement of the Federal, non-Federal and total costs of the project.

4. Project summary (1 page limit): In six sentences or less, briefly

summarize: project goals and objectives as they relate to the Prescott Grant Program Categories (i.e., Category A, Category B, or Category C), Program goals and/or Regional funding priorities; proposed activities; geographic area where activities would occur; and expected outcomes and benefits from the activities (e.g., increased number of responses to live stranded cetaceans, greater and higher quality data collected from pinniped strandings, renovation and upgrade of a marine mammal rehabilitation facility, etc.) of the project. This summary may be posted on our website if the project is funded.

5. Project description (10 page limit): The narrative description of the proposed project must not exceed 10 pages (not including curriculum vitae and supplemental documentation) and must be typed in 10-point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Each project or component listed in the budget justification must be completely and accurately described in the project description. The narrative should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should: include specific objectives and performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of the need for the project; and show how the proposed project builds upon any past and current work in the subject area both inside and outside of the applicant organization, and any relevant work in related fields. Applicants should not assume that reviewers already know the relative merits of the project. Page limits for sections within the Project Description are given below to indicate relative importance of sections; not all sections should be the maximum length, in order to fit within the 10-page limit. The narrative project description must include each of the following elements in the order listed here:

a. Project goals and objectives. Identify the Prescott Grant Program Category and/or regional funding priorities, listed in Section I.B. of this document, that the project is addressing. State expected project accomplishments and its significance to the marine mammal health and stranding response and rehabilitation community. Objectives should be attainable within the time, money, and human resources available, as well as simple, understandable, and as specific and quantitative as possible. Although actual stranding events cannot be predicted, historic stranding data in the region of proposed activities should be used to assess season, species, and likelihood of future strandings. This data is critical in linking proposed project objectives with the Prescott Program's goals, regional funding priorities, and in assuring an equitable distribution of funds among regions. Therefore, we encourage applicants to provide stranding data and statistics by year and geographic area in sufficient detail to provide a regional context to the project.

b. Project management. Describe how the proposed project will be organized and managed (e.g., financial accounting systems to be used and point of contact responsible for managing those systems, etc.). One, and only one, Principal Investigator must be designated on each project. Other project participants or organizations that will have a significant role in conducting the project should be listed as Co-investigators. Organizations or individuals that support the project, for example, network members contributing data or materials, should be referred to as Cooperators. If any portion of the project will be conducted through subcontracts,

procurement guidance found in 15 CFR part 24, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments," and 15 CFR part 14, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Non-Profit, and Commercial Organizations" must be followed. Describe how provisions for competitive subcontracting will be met if applicable. If the contractor has been identified, please provide a statement of their qualifications or background.

c. Project description. This is the scientific or technical action plan of activities that are to be accomplished to ensure that the proposed project's goals and objectives are met within the proposed award period. The statement of work should include detailed descriptions of activities, collaborators, milestones, and expected products resulting from a successfully completed project. The narrative should respond to the following questions:

(1) What specific activities does the project include and how do these activities relate to the project's goals and objectives?

(2) Who will be responsible for carrying out each activity? For all projects, highlight activities that will be conducted by Co-investigators, Cooperators, sub-contractors, volunteers, etc. Use of volunteer staff time to complete project activities and oversight of those volunteers should be discussed. The Principal Investigator is responsible for all technical oversight and implementation of the approved work plan as delineated in this Statement of Work.

(3) What are the project milestones? List milestones, describing specific activities and the associated timelines necessary to meet them. Describe the time lines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2, etc.), rather than by specific dates. If dates are necessary (i.e., pupping season), explain them. Make sure your timelines are reasonable and reflect your overall project period, as proposed on the SF-424.

(4) What are the major outcomes, results, or products expected? Describe how project outcomes, results, or products will be disseminated? shared with stranding network participants and other potential users. In addition, describe how activities and results of the project will be shared outside the stranding network for education and outreach purposes. Indicate the method of information dissemination (e.g., print media, video, training manual, educational displays, peer-reviewed publication, conference presentation, etc.).

d. Project impacts. Describe the potential impacts of this proposed project on the recovery and treatment of stranded marine mammals or the collection of data from living or dead stranded marine mammals for use in scientific research on marine mammal health. Identify any other potential project impacts, including impacts on the environment.

e. Project performance evaluation. Specify the quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to be used in evaluating the relative success or failure of the project in achieving the stated project goals and objectives and project milestones.

f. Need for federal assistance. Explain the need for government financial assistance in successfully carrying out project activities. List all sources of funding received from the Federal government, either past or current, for this or a closely related project(s), with project titles and Federal funding amounts. List other sources of Federal funding being sought for this or similar projects.

g. Federal, state, and local government programs and activities. List any existing Federal, state, or local government programs or activities that this project would affect and reference any corresponding documentation (i.e., permits, approvals, and environmental assessments) included in the proposal package.

h. Participation by persons or groups other than the applicant. Describe how government and non-government entities, particularly other members of the marine mammal health and stranding response community, will participate in the project and the nature of their participation.

6. Organizational Summary (3 page limit): In three pages or less, provide a summary of your facility and the role you play in the marine mammal stranding network. Items that would be useful include: a map of your response area; response statistics (number of strandings/year in either table or chart form); organizational overview (number of paid staff, volunteers, researchers, etc.); size and capacity of your facility; a financial overview of your facility, including what funds are available for the proposed work; and a summary of your relationship with neighboring stranding network responders.

7. Appendices (15 page limit): Additional material may be provided, but must not exceed 15 pages in length. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, slide shows, and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limitation.

8. Supporting Documentation (no page limit): The following supporting documentation is required for all proposals:

- " proof of eligibility (see below);
- " necessary permits and authorizations (if any);
- " any applicable completed environmental analyses;
- " results of previous Prescott awards;
- " an abbreviated Curriculum Vitae for all named investigators (maximum 4 pages each);
- " letters of cooperation from all named Co-Investigators and Cooperators;
- " IRS documentation if applying as a 501(c)(3) non-profit;
- " indirect cost rate agreement (if applicable); and
- " any other required Federal forms (CD-346).

Further explanation of these types of supporting documentation follows.

In order to be considered for an award in this funding cycle, the applicant must provide proof of eligibility documents. This proof of eligibility will be a letter or e-mail from the Regional Stranding Coordinator (or NMFS Regional Office) that states that you are an eligible stranding network participant or researcher, in good standing, that has a history of participation in or with the stranding network or that your organization is from a local area with no pre-existing stranding response and/or rehabilitation capabilities. As of this competition, providing a copy of your SA or research authorization will not be considered proof of eligibility. Any proposal that does not provide a letter from the Regional Stranding Coordinator will not be considered eligible, and will not be considered for funding. Contact information for the Regional Stranding Coordinators to request this letter is available on our website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/coordinators.htm> or you may contact the

Program Office at the address in the Agency Contacts, Section VII.

Applicants requiring MMPA/ESA scientific research and enhancement permits must include a copy of the cover letter of their permit(s) in this section or their request for such permit. Applicants whose project requires IACUC review must include a copy of their IACUC approval or request for such approval.

If any Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator identified on the project has received support from the NOAA Prescott Grant Program in the past 3 years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided: 1) the NOAA award number, amount and period of support; 2) the title of the project; 3) a brief summary of the results of the completed work (1-2 paragraphs); 4) publications resulting from the award, if any (reprints may be submitted and are requested for documentation if available); 5) a brief description of available data, samples, physical collections and other related research projects not described elsewhere; and 6) if the current application is for renewed or continuing support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work. Copies of progress or final reports from previous awards are not necessary.

An abbreviated curriculum vitae or resume of the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators, and all other named collaborators (maximum 4 pages each) must be included in this section.

Letters of cooperation and copies of agreements between the Principal Investigator and all other named participants in the project, describing and agreeing to the specific activities each participant would perform, should be included in this section. Also, copies of any endorsements or general letters of support received from other marine mammal health and stranding response participants (such as those in adjacent geographical areas) related to this project may be included here.

Applicants applying as 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations must include a letter from the Internal Revenue Service verifying non-profit classification under the Internal Revenue Code and tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Code. If indirect costs are included, the package should include a copy of the current, approved, negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal government (see Section IV.D.2).

All other required federal forms (i.e., CD-511, SF-LLL, CD-346) must be included in this section of a paper application.

Supporting documents named in this subsection will not count as a part of the 10 page limit for the project description or the 15 page limit for appendices.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received in either electronic or postmarked in hard copy form by the program office no later than 11:59 PM, EDT, on Wednesday, October 1, 2008. Proposals received after that date and time will not be considered for funding.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this program are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State_s process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC_s are listed in the Office of Management and Budget_s home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost Rates: Regardless of any approved indirect cost rate applicable to the award, the maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which the DOC will reimburse the recipient shall be the lesser of the line item amount for the Federal share of indirect costs contained in the approved budget of the award, or the Federal share of the total allocable indirect costs of the award based on the indirect cost rate approved by an oversight or cognizant Federal agency and current at the time the cost was incurred, provided the rate is approved on or before the award end date. However, the Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs for this Program. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount above the 25 percent level as cost sharing. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

F. Other Submission Requirements

All applications must be submitted through www.Grants.gov. If an applicant does not have internet access, submit a paper proposal package (one signed original and two copies) to: NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources, Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program, Attn: Michelle Ordonez, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13620, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283, phone 301-713-2322 ext 177.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals:
This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this competition, this encompasses the following: Proposals will be evaluated on clear identification of project goals and objectives and the ability to link those goals and objectives to project activities and the applicability of the project's goals and objectives to the Prescott Program goals and regional funding priorities. Reviewers should consider: the likelihood of meeting milestones and achieving anticipated results in the time line specified in the statement of work; the contribution of potential outcomes, results, or products to the marine mammal stranding and rehabilitation communities; and, the amount of collaboration with other stranding network participants. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 40 percent)
2. Technical/scientific merit: This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For this competition, this encompasses the following: Proposals will be scored based on their clear identification of goals and objectives, performance evaluation methods, and the suitability of those methods for evaluating the success or failure of the project in terms of meeting its original goals and objectives. Proposals will also be evaluated on the sufficiency of information provided in the proposal to evaluate the project technically, and, if such information is sufficient, the strengths and/or weaknesses of the technical design relative to securing productive and meaningful results. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 30 percent)
3. Overall qualifications of applicants: This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For this competition, this encompasses the following: The management of the project will be evaluated based on documentation of previous related experience and qualifications of the project's Principal Investigator, Co-investigator(s) and other personnel, including designated contractors, consultants, and Cooperators. Consideration will be made to previous awards received by the Principal Investigator and outcomes, results, or products resulting from such awards. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 10 percent)
4. Project costs: The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For this competition, this encompasses the following: The proposed costs and overall budget of the project will be evaluated in terms of the work proposed. The itemized costs and the overall budget must be justified, clear to the reviewer, and allocated appropriately. (Score = 1-100; Weight = 10 percent)
5. Outreach and education: NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA' mission to protect the Nation' natural resources. For this competition, this encompasses the following: The proposal will be evaluated for how project outcomes, results or products will be

disseminated to or shared with stranding network participants, other potential users, and outside of the stranding network. This can encompass traditional education and outreach efforts (e.g. print media, curriculum development, videos, or websites) or sharing information within the scientific community (e.g. training manuals or videos, facility sharing, and publications in peer-reviewed journals). (Score = 1-100, Weight = 10 percent)

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 4 steps, described in detail in this section: initial screening, peer review, merit review, and final selection by the Selecting Official (the Director, NMFS Office of Protected Resources). The peer review step will involve at least 3 individual reviewers per proposal. The Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which proposals will be funded based on recommendations of the merit review team as well as policy considerations such as costs, geographical distribution, financial need, duplication with other federally funded projects, and equitable distribution of funds among the stranding regions.

1. Initial Technical Evaluation of the Applicants

The initial screening will ensure that proposals clearly relate to the 2009 Prescott Program goals or regional funding priorities, and that applicants meet all of the eligibility criteria.

Proposal packages received in the Office of Protected Resources will be screened to ensure that they: were received by the due date (see IV.C, Submission Dates and Times); provide for at least a 25-percent non-Federal cost share (see Section III.B.); and provide proof of eligibility (see Section III.F. and Section IV.B.6). Proposals that pass this initial screening will be pooled based on the proposal category (i.e., Category A, B, or C) identified by the applicant.

2. Peer Review

Each accepted proposal will undergo a peer review by participants in the U.S. marine mammal stranding network or other qualified persons (scientists, researchers, biologists, stranding network participants from foreign countries, engineers, etc.) based on the subject matter of the proposals received. Peer reviewers will be asked to evaluate individual proposals based on the Prescott Program goal or regional funding priorities identified by the applicant and the review criteria (Section V.A). Review groups will be created, and each group of proposals will be reviewed by an appropriate peer-review panel. Reviewers assigned to score each proposal will be from a different region than the applicant to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, but there may be panel members present for the discussion that are from the same regional stranding network. Each peer reviewer will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the proposal(s) they are reviewing prior

to their review. Each panelist will also be required to identify any potential conflicts of interest with proposals being reviewed on their panel and to leave the room when these proposals are being discussed, even though they may not be scoring them. Ranking and commenting on proposals will be completed during the peer-review meetings. The results from the peer review will be used to numerically rank the proposals and provide programmatic and regional stakeholder comments on each proposal.

To determine the appropriateness of each proposal to the Prescott Program's goals and/or regional funding priorities, the peer reviewers will provide independent reviews using the weighted criteria outlined above. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three peer reviewers. The reviewers will score the proposal in each criteria outlined in Section A above. An average, weighted score will be generated from each review using the numeric score per criteria and the weights assigned to each criteria. All proposals with an average weighted score less than 60 points will not be passed on to the merit review panel and will not be reviewed further.

3. Merit Review

After proposals have undergone peer review, the national and regional MMHSRP staff will conduct a merit review in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to consider the technical and peer review results and develop recommendations for funding. Merit reviewers will use the peer review comments, application materials, stranding statistics by region (i.e., geographic need for proposed projects), and number of applications received in making recommendations regarding equitable distribution of funds among regions, in ranking all proposals recommended for funding, and in justifying any discrepancies between the peer reviewers' comments and the merit reviewers' recommendations. Equitable distribution will be determined by the review of all technically sound proposals (those that score above 60 points in the peer review) pooled by stranding region. The merit review will consider proposals by region using the best available data on episodic, anomalous or unusual stranding events, average annual strandings and mortalities, and sizes of marine mammal populations within each region. They will also consider the actual stranding statistics per region, stranding network effort or coverage per region, and the applicant's history with past funding from the Prescott program, including any delinquencies in report submission. The merit review team will prepare a written justification for any recommendations for funding that fall outside the peer review ranking or equitable distribution order, or for any cost adjustments.

4. Final Selection: After applications have undergone peer and merit reviews and have been ranked, the merit review team and the Program Office will prepare recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official (the Director, NMFS Office of Protected Resources).

C. Selection Factors

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final funding recommendations. A program officer may first make recommendations to the Selecting Official applying the selection factors below. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in sections I.A. and B. above.
5. Applicant's prior award performance, including report submission.
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups.

As a result, awards are not necessarily made to the highest technically ranked projects.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the four months following the date given in this announcement that the full proposals are due to the Prescott Grant Program. Funding should begin during summer 2009 for most approved projects, subject to the availability of funds. Projects should not be expected to begin prior to June 1, 2009, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The final, exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA/NMFS representatives. If the proposed work entails substantial involvement between the applicant and NMFS, such as development of education and outreach materials for the public, training for the stranding network, or facility upgrades, a cooperative agreement will be utilized. The final determination of the funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be by NOAA Grants Management Division.

Applicants should not initiate any project in expectation of Federal funding until they receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA Grants Officer. After all awards have been issued by the Grants Management Division to successful applicants, the unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for funding, and be provided the comments from the review panel(s). Unsuccessful applications will be kept on file in the Program Office for a period of at least 12 months, then destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109), are applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the DOC be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

NEPA

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA, for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA (http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations (http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm).

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, including marine mammals, aquaculture projects, water sterilization and treatment, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

C. Reporting

Applicants awarded a grant or cooperative agreement for a project must:

1. Manage the day-to-day operations of the project, be responsible for the performance of all activities for which funds are granted, and be responsible for the satisfaction of all administrative and managerial conditions imposed by the award.
2. Keep records sufficient to document any costs incurred under the award, and allow access to these records for audit and examination by the Secretary of Commerce, the Comptroller General of the United States, or their authorized representatives; and, submit financial status reports (SF- 269) to NOAA's Grants Management Division in accordance with the award conditions.
3. Submit financial and performance (technical) reports on time. All financial reports shall be submitted electronically via Grants Online to the NOAA Grants Officer. Performance reports should be submitted electronically via Grants Online to the Prescott Program Office every six months, beginning from the project start date indicated on the SF-424. Reports must contain a description of activities conducted in the six-month period as well as an accounting of funds spent per budget category. The comprehensive final report is due 90 days after the award expiration. The final report must describe the project and include an evaluation of the work performed and the results and benefits in sufficient detail to enable us to assess the success of the completed project. A final accounting of funds spent per budget category must also be included. In addition to the final report, we request that awardees submit any publications printed with award funds (e.g., manuals, surveys, etc.) to the NMFS Program Officer for dissemination to the public. Publications may be submitted either as three hard copies or in an electronic version. Further guidance regarding what should be contained in the progress and final report is available on the Prescott

Program website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/proposals/report.htm>

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the Prescott Grant Program website at:
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/> or contact Michelle Ordonez at the NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources, Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13620, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283, by phone at (301) 713-2322, or by fax at (301) 427-2525, or by e-mail at PrescottGrantFR.comments@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information