

## **Great Lakes Conference**

### **Request for Proposals for Presentations, Workshops and Field Trips**

*hosted by the*

**Healing Our Waters- Great Lakes Coalition**

**Deadline for submissions: May 29, 2020**

#### **Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition**

The Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition (HOW) consists of 160 environmental groups, conservation associations, outdoor recreation organizations, zoos, aquariums and museums representing millions of people whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Lakes Conference**

HOW invites you to submit a proposal for presentations, workshops, and field trips for HOW's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Lakes Conference. This year's conference will be hosted October 7-8, 2020 at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Links to submit applications to present or host a field trip can be found at the bottom of this document.

#### **About the Conference**

Each year the HOW Coalition's Great Lakes Conference brings together a diverse group of more than 350 people from throughout the Great Lakes region. The conference provides a forum for participants to learn about the most important and up-to-date Great Lakes issues; network at the largest annual gathering of Great Lakes supporters and activists; develop strategies to advance federal, tribal, regional, and local restoration and protection goals; and learn from successes.

This unique gathering offers a tremendous opportunity to gain broad exposure to a wide range of issues facing the lakes and the communities that rely on them. The Conference is typically attended by Great Lakes and water advocates, including policy experts, project implementation staff, communications staff, community members, and executive directors of local, state, tribal, regional, and national environmental non-profits. Additionally, the conference draws representatives of city, state, tribal, and federal agencies, community groups, business, agriculture and industry. Attendees bring a broad range of knowledge about the Great Lakes and seek compelling stories that explore policy, successful restoration projects, grassroots strategies, and emerging issues at this conference.

The HOW Coalition seeks applications from individuals and local, tribal, regional, and national organizations working on issues of relevance to Great Lakes restoration. Preference will be given to projects and applicants representing culturally and racially diverse communities; groups or individuals representing or supporting work in economically distressed or disadvantaged communities throughout the Great Lakes region are strongly encouraged to apply. The Coalition is dedicated to using the conference platform to highlight all voices of the Great Lakes region and strives to be inclusive of the entire Great Lakes community. We encourage you to contact Celia Haven at [havenc@nwf.org](mailto:havenc@nwf.org) if you have questions.

#### **Field Trip Overview: Showcasing Milwaukee, the three rivers, and the surrounding community**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with the unique confluence of three rivers, is a city that has rich identity and a long history of social and environmental change. Field trips that show the current successes and emerging threats

are an important way for attendees to gain a first-hand understanding of the important work that's ongoing in Wisconsin. We are seeking field trip proposals that:

- Help conference attendees understand the dynamic connections between the ecological, economic, and community benefits of restoration by showcasing the communities, people, organizations, and landscapes that are benefiting from investment in water
- Allow participants to experience the culture and unique identity of the conference host city and surrounding areas.
- Highlight work in economically disadvantaged communities while addressing the intersection of social justice and the environment and building cultural competency
- Examine Great Lakes issues in a creative, compelling and fun way that underscores the connection of the lakes to people, the urgency needed to solve the problem, and manageable solutions.
- Allow participants to see first-hand the important work being done by Coalition members and partners
- Compliment conference topics

**We encourage you to [check out last year's Conference program book](#) for a complete list of last year's field trips!**

### **Presentation/Workshop Overview**

Workshops at the conference will provide valuable insights, unique stories, and practical hands-on training relevant to Great Lakes advocacy and restoration. This year's conference will feature restoration topics from across the Great Lakes region with a special focus on local issues from the Milwaukee area, including western Lake Michigan, the Milwaukee, Kinnickinnic, and Menomonee Rivers, and the communities that surround them.

### **Presentation/Workshop Formats**

Workshops must fit into one of the two following structures:

- A. One hour (60 minutes) session
  - A 60-minute session can be formatted in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, a presentation, workshop, working/input session, training, panel presentation, or panel discussion. We ENCOURAGE a creative approach to build an innovative and engaging session!
  - Each 60-minute session may include up to three presenters, plus one moderator (optional). Interactivity, participant engagement, and time for discussion and/or questions is HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.
- B. Fifteen (15) minute session
  - a. A 15-minute session features only ONE speaker and no PowerPoint slides.
  - b. A 15-minute session is to be a concise and compelling presentation on a relevant topic that is appropriate for the shorter session length.

### **Presentation/Workshop Categories**

The HOW Coalition seeks innovative, non-traditional, creative proposals for conference sessions. Below is a broad list of categories. These categories are shared as a starting point and are not exclusive. Additional relevant sessions outside of these categories are WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED. **We encourage you to [check out last year's Conference program book](#) for a complete list of last year's sessions, which will illustrate the breadth of topic themes.**

- **Great Lakes Policy Issues**

What are you doing to advance Great Lakes or water policy in your community? If you or your organization is advancing critical policy issues that impact the lakes, this is an opportunity to interact and strategize with a broad array of Great Lakes stakeholders on these important efforts. There are many critical policy issues that impact the lakes at all levels.

- **Innovative & Compelling Great Lakes Restoration Stories and Case Studies**  
The Great Lakes community is thriving with organizations and people that achieve inspiring outcomes thanks to projects in communities large and small. Sessions in this issue area will delve into unique and successful projects from which others can learn innovative and creative strategies for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and the communities that rely on them.
- **Addressing Environmental Injustices**  
Frontline communities bear the brunt of environmental injustices across the nation, and the Great Lakes region is no exception. The HOW Coalition is committed to ensuring that Great Lakes investments are benefiting all people in the region, and that all people have access to clean and affordable drinking water. We're committed to making sure the stories and issues of communities are heard: presentations in this category will highlight stories, issues, challenges, and threats to communities facing environmental injustices or stories of successful environmental justice initiatives, programs, campaigns and innovation in the face of challenges or threats.
- **Grassroots Action that makes a Difference**  
Many HOW Coalition members and partners are engaged in a variety of local, regional, and national campaign activities to help protect and restore the Great Lakes and surrounding communities. In many cases, these efforts include innovative strategies and tactics that have reaped tremendous gains in protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem. Presentations under this category should include stories of successful campaigns that utilized creative approaches to achieve definable victories in protecting the Great Lakes and local communities.
- **Great Lakes Research and Emerging Issues**  
We want to know what new problems are emerging in the Great Lakes and what can be done to solve them. Presentations in this category might examine new invasive species or forms of pollution, but could also delve into policy, community issues, financing structures, or emerging science.
- **Skills, Training, and Organizational Development**  
The Great Lakes Conference hopes to provide opportunities for Great Lakes advocates to improve skills needed for advancing their work. Workshops in this area should provide hands on training on a specific topic that will build capacity or provide technical assistance to participants.

[Submit your PRESENTATION/WORKSHOP proposal here](#)

[Submit your FIELD TRIP proposal here](#)

Please direct all inquiries about your application to Celia Haven at [havenc@nwf.org](mailto:havenc@nwf.org).