INSTRUCTIONS TO PEER REVIEWERS

Proposals are evaluated in five general categories: rationale; scientific merit; budget, logistics, and qualifications; responsible conduct of research; and summary of proposal. Peer reviewers are provided with an online guided assessment form to complete. For each question, reviewers will select the descriptor that best describes their assessment of each of the five general categories of the proposal. Following each question, reviewers are asked to provide an explanation to support their choice. Explanations for your answers are critically important to help project leaders revise and improve their proposals. Reviews are anonymous, and investigators will be provided with a copy of their proposal evaluation when they receive feedback from the research board. The evaluation guide below can help guide research proposal development. Thank you for your assistance in the commission's research programs.

Proposals are evaluated by the research boards based on four general criteria:

Peer review of proposals – Every research proposal submitted to the commission is subjected to a review by scientific peers. A recommendation to the commission for funding a project will be highly dependent upon positive, favorable reviews of the proposal.

Relationships to fishery agency and commission programs – Research projects will have a high priority for funding if they relate directly to the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, the commission's Strategic Vision, Fish Community Objectives, or the research priorities identified in State of the Lake conferences, by the Lake Committees, or by the Sea Lamprey Control Board. Most projects supported by the commission's Fishery and Sea Lamprey Research Programs are organized under broad research theme areas that describe topics important to fishery or sea lamprey management in the Great Lakes. These theme areas establish key research questions and hypotheses that become the focus of specific projects. Research themes for the Fishery Research Program can be found at http://www.glfc.org/fishery-research.php. Research themes for the Sea Lamprey Research Program can be found at http://www.glfc.org/sea-lamprey-research.php.

Importance to conservation, rehabilitation, and sustainability of fisheries – Research projects will have a high priority for funding if they relate to a species of conservation or rehabilitation concern or if they are critical to the achievement of healthy Great Lakes ecosystems.

Past performance – Project leaders should have demonstrated technical expertise to complete the project or have co-investigators or appropriate partnerships with other organizations to meet all the requirements of the project. Projects must be non-duplicative with other projects. Principal and co- investigators should have had successful experience with similar projects.

Great Lakes Fishery Commission

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT FOR PEER REVIEWERS OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND TECHNICAL REPORTS

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (commission) and the Board of Technical Experts and Sea Lamprey Research Board request external reviews for full proposals submitted to the Fishery Research (FRP) and Sea Lamprey Research (SLRP) programs for funding. These peer reviews are essential to the boards' evaluation of proposals. For full program descriptions, please visit http://www.glfc.org/science-research.php.

Thank you for considering providing a peer review of a research proposal submitted for funding. **Before agreeing to conduct a review, please read the attached conflict-of-interest statement for peer reviewers.** If you are not sure whether a conflict of interest exists, please reach out to the appropriate research program associate (frp@glfc.org or slrp@glfc.org).

As a peer reviewer, you are asked to review a research proposal that will assist with Great Lakes Fishery Commission (commission) funding decisions. The performance of your review requires that you be aware of potential conflicts of interest. Please read the examples of potentially biasing affiliations or relationships below.

If you cannot conduct this review due to a conflict of interest, please contact the appropriate research program associate. Conflicts of interest are not accusations and do not imply that a reviewer's judgment is compromised.

The proposal must be kept in strict confidence. If, as a peer reviewer, you gain access to information not generally available to the public, you must not use that information for your benefit or make it available for the benefit of any other individual or organization without the permission of the authors. You are not to discuss a proposal or manuscript with its authors or other colleagues. Questions about the proposal are to be discussed only with the person coordinating the review of this proposal or with commission's science director.

The commission receives proposals and manuscripts in confidence and protects the confidentiality of their contents. For this reason, you must not quote or otherwise disclose or use material from any proposal or manuscript that you review (until it is published).

Potential Conflicts of Interest for Great Lakes Fishery Commission Peer Reviewers

Competitor for funding:

1. Direct involvement with a research proposal currently competing for funding from the same commission research program.

Relationship to applicant institution:

1. Current employment at the institution associated with the proposal or manuscript as professor, adjunct professor, visiting professor, or similar position (including multi-campus institutions).
2. Employment with the institution via consulting, an advisory arrangement, re-employment arrangement, or you are being considered for employment with the institution.
3. Employment at the same institution within the last 12 months.
4. Ownership of the institution's securities or other evidences of debt.
5. Holder of any office, governing board membership, or relevant committee chair in the institution.
6. Current enrollment as a student in the department or school of the institution that originates the proposal or manuscript.
7. Received an honorarium or award from the institution within the last 12 months.

Relationship with an investigator, author, project director, or other person who has a personal interest in the proposal or manuscript.

1. Family or close personal relationship including marriage, civil union, or other partnership.
2. Business or professional partnership.
3. Past or present relationship as a graduate committee member or graduate student.
4. Collaboration on a project or on a book, report, or paper within the last 48 months.
5. Other relationships, such as close personal friendship, that may affect your judgment or be seen as doing so by a reasonable person familiar with the relationship.

Confidentiality of Peer Reviews and Reviewer Identities

The commission's policy is that reviews and peer reviewer identities will not be disclosed, except that verbatim copies of reviews (without name and affiliation of the reviewer) will be sent to the principal investigator or lead author.

Artificial Intelligence and Peer Reviews

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in research is expanding rapidly and the commission's position is that AI, large-language models, and other generative AI technologies cannot and should not be used by reviewers in the peer-review process.

Reviewers are trusted to maintain confidentiality and to ensure the reviewed work is not shared or used outside the peer-review process. Using AI or similar technologies violates the confidentiality process and could introduce bias, misinformation, and incorrect or incomplete conclusions. The assessment provided during peer review must be the reviewer's own opinion and suggestions, based on their own experiences, expertise, and knowledge without input or influence from any kind of AI technology.

By agreeing to conduct a review, you agree to these terms and conditions.